Pastoral Letters to Timothy and Titus

Cultural changes taking place in all areas of existence also affect the Church. In the beliefs and practices we have been taught, not all comes from Christ, and consequently, many things may change. There is nevertheless a risk of distorting authentic faith. Where then is the rule of faith, to which all our opinions must submit?

This problem already arose in the Church when in 64-67 A.D. Peter and Paul died as martyrs in Rome. The Church, especially in the West, no longer had these witnesses of Christ capable of proclaiming both his deeds and his words. It was as difficult for the Greeks to accept the Christian message as it was for the Jews, and even those of good will among the listeners understood the message – as we do today – through their own ways of thinking, distorting it in proportion to the prejudices of their time.

Then came an opportunity for people eager to discuss, to recount in a better way than did the apostles, even to say what they had not said, and some even took the liberty of teaching their own doctrine. How quickly the imitation of Christ could be replaced by theories and discourses on religion!

So it was that the successors of the apostles had to defend the doctrine they had received from them. At the same time they had to take care in the choice and in the formation of the ministers of the Church for these would have to keep the genuine message. Such are the concerns that we find in these letters to Timothy and Titus.

These letters of similar origin are entitled Paul’s letters. Both the form and content of these letters show that they are not from him. They must have been written in the pressure of circumstances we have just mentioned about 90-100 A.D. It was thought well to place this teaching of the Church under the authority of Paul and doubtless some more personal paragraphs written by him have been inserted: in several passages, we certainly find Paul’s counsels to Timothy and Titus or to other of his assistants.

These three letters of Timothy and Titus are called “pastoral letters” because they address Church shepherds. They truly deserve this name for still another reason that is not always perceived. They are addressed to Paul’s delegates who, although they did not enjoy the title of apostles, were like the itinerant ministers and had authority over the local churches. They are reminded of their missionary ideal for they had devoted their life to Christ and to preaching the Word. Yet at the same time they are ordered to watch over the Church local ministers. Whether they are bishops, elders or deacons, they were elected by the community and spent part of their time in leading and in teaching their brothers and sisters; they also celebrated the sacred sacraments of the Church, baptism, Eucharist and the anointing of the sick.
So we find here two kinds of ministries which complement one another to fulfill the pastoral duties. The first, of which Timothy and Titus are examples extends the mission of the apostles, follows the patterns of their consecrated life and enjoys apostolic authority. The second, trained themselves within the community which elected them. Today we would speak of lay ministers, for they go on belonging to their family and community, although they have been ordained by a laying on of hands and have been accepted or acknowledged by the apostolic authority. We shall strive to understand this complementarity because the subsequent evolution of Latin Church unified these very different ministries in the span of some centuries framing them into one hierarchical clergy. See on this point Num 4:1 and Heb 9:1. New Testament witnesses the different organizations of the early Church in the many cultural areas of Roman Empire. For a part it wanted to be and to remain the Church founded on the apostles, on the other hand, it took example of the Jewish communities with their elders. Afterwards the ministries would evolve or become fixed according to the needs and the social context.
1 From Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus by a command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy, my true son in the faith.

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy and peace.

False teachers

• 3 When I left for Macedonia I urged you to remain in Ephesus to warn certain persons not to teach false doctrine or to concern themselves with fables and endless genealogies. These give rise to discussions rather than promoting a better service of God through faith. The aim of our warning is love which comes from a pure mind, a good conscience and sincere faith.

6 Some have turned away from such a motivation and have strayed into useless discussions. They claim to be teachers of the Law when, in fact, they understand neither what they say nor the things they speak about.

8 We know that the Law is good, as long as it serves its purpose. The Law is not for the righteous, but for the lawless and for the wicked and sinful, for those who do not respect God and religion, for those who kill their parents, for murderers, for those who indulge in unlawful sex and homosexuality, for kidnappers and exploiters, for liars and perjurers and for all that is contrary to sound doctrine, to the Gospel of the God of glory and happiness, which was entrusted to me.

12 I give thanks to Christ Jesus, our Lord, who is my strength, who has considered me trustworthy and appointed me to his service, although I had been a blasphemer, a persecutor and a rabid enemy. However he took mercy on me because I did not know what I was doing when I opposed the faith; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, together with faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

15 This saying is true and worthy of belief: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first. Because of that I was forgiven; Christ Jesus wanted to display his utmost patience so that I might be an example for all who are to believe and obtain eternal life. To the King of ages, the only God who lives beyond every perishable and visible creation – to him be honor and glory forever. Amen!

18 Timothy, my son, I command you to fight the good fight, fulfilling the prophetic words pronounced over you. Hold onto faith and a good conscience, unlike those who, ignoring conscience, have finally wrecked their faith.

20 Among them are Hymeneus and Alexander whom I have delivered to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

2 First of all I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for everyone, for rulers of states and all in authority, that we may enjoy a quiet and peaceful life in godliness and respect. This is good that saves people. Even bloody wars came out of sterile religious arguments. The center of the paragraph is doubtless verse 15: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The new masters remain with their theories instead of facing the reality of sin. It is the reality of our sin that makes the grace of God a grace, and our salvation a true salvation.

2.1 Heading the rules for every category of believers, we find rules for the community assemblies with two outstanding points:

– praying for rulers;
– the behavior of women in church.

I urge that petitions be made (v. 1). Paul
and pleases God. 4 For he wants all to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth. 5 As there is one God, there is one mediator between God and human-kind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave his life for the redemption of all. This is the testimony, given in its proper time, and of this, God has made me apostle and herald. I am not lying, I am telling the truth: He made me teacher of the nations regarding faith and truth.

8 I want the men in every place to lift pure hands in prayer to heaven without anger and dissension.

9 Let women dress with simplicity and modesty, not adorned with fancy hairstyles, gold, jewels and expensive clothes, but with good works, as is fitting for women serving God. 11 Let a woman quietly receive instruction and be submissive. 12 I allow no woman to teach or to have authority over men. Let them be quiet.

13 For Adam was created first and then Eve. 14 Adam was not deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and fell into sin. 15 But she will be saved through motherhood, provided that her life be orderly and holy, in faith and love.

Regarding overseers and deacons

1 If someone aspires to the overseer's ministry, he is without a doubt looking for a noble task. 2 It is necessary that the overseer (or bishop) be beyond reproach, the husband of one wife, responsible, judicious, of good manners, hospitable and skillful in teaching. 3 He must not be addicted to wine or quarrelsome, but gentle and peaceful, and not a lover of money, but a man whose household is well-managed, with obedient and well-man-nered children. 5 If he cannot govern his own house, how can he lead the assembly of God?

6 He must not be a recent convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must enjoy a good reputation among the outsiders, lest people...
speak evil about him and he fall into the snare of the devil.

Deacons, likewise, must be serious and sincere and moderate in drinking wine, not greedy for money, they must keep the mystery of faith with a clear conscience. Let them be first tried and, if found blameless, be accepted as deacons. In the same way the women must be conscientious, not given to gossip, but reserved and trustworthy. A deacon must be husband of one wife, and must know how to guide his children and manage his household. Those who serve well as deacons will win honorable rank, with authority to speak of Christian faith.

I give you these instructions, although I hope I will see you soon. If I delay, you will know how you ought to conduct yourself in the household of God, that is, the Church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth. How great indeed is the mystery of divine blessing!

He was shown in the flesh and sanctified by the Spirit; presented to the angels and proclaimed to all nations. The world believed in him: He was taken up in glory!

14. This short paragraph reminds us that, if indeed we are in charge of the Church of God, we are neither its founders nor its masters. The Church was born through a merciful intervention of God, when he decided that his Son should be a visible sign on which we can lean. In spite of the infidelities of the Church, God uses it to preserve true knowledge of the Father, the Son and the Spirit in the world. Without this knowledge, people cannot be free, nor can humanity reach its maturity.

The Spirit tells us clearly that in the last days some will defect from the faith and follow deceitful spirits and devilish doctrines, led by lying hypocrites whose conscience has been branded with the stamp of infamy.

These persons forbid marriage and condemn the use of certain foods which God created for those who know the truth, and which the believers receive with thanksgiving. Everything created by God is good, and all food is lawful; nothing is to be rejected if we receive it with thanksgiving, for it is blessed with the word of God and prayer, and made holy.

If you explain these things to the brothers and sisters, you will prove to be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the teachings of faith and the sound doctrine that you have followed. Reject irreligious fables and old wives’ tales. Train yourself in godliness. Physical training is of limited value; godliness, instead, is useful in every way, holding promise for the present life and for the life to come. Here you have a sure doctrine you can trust. We toil and endure because we trust in the living God, the Savior of all, especially of those who believe.

4.1 After the death of the apostles, new masters who tamper with the faith appear in the Church.

One of the numerous errors of these people is to despise all that comes from the body: they condemn marriage, forbid meat and wine. Concerning marriage, see the Introduction to Colossians. For those who said matter comes from evil powers whereas souls come from God who is good, having children was to imprison an evil body souls which later would have to be saved. This is why they condemned, not sexual relations but marriage and procreation. In this contempt of the body and of a nature created by God, there is nothing Christian (see Col 2:23).

In the last days (v. 1): these are the days beginning with Jesus’ resurrection and stretching to his second coming (Heb 1:2; James 5:3).

The Spirit tells us clearly. The prophets of the Church often predicted that people would
Advice to Timothy

11 Command and teach these things. Let no one reproach you on account of your youth. Be a model to the believers in the way you speak and act, in your love, your faith and purity of life. Devote yourself to reading, preaching and teaching, until I come. Do not neglect the spiritual gift conferred on you with prophetic words when the elders laid their hands upon you. Think about it and practice it so that your progress may be seen by all. Take heed of yourself and attend to your teaching. Be steadfast in doing this and you will save both yourself and your hearers.

The widows in the Church

Do not rebuke an older man; on the contrary, advise him as if he were your father. Treat the young as your brothers, the elder women as mothers and the young girls as your sisters, with great purity.

Take care of widows who are really widows. If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should first learn their family duties and give their parents financial help. This is correct and pleases God.

A true widow is one who, in being left alone, has set her hope in God, praying day and night to God and asking him for help. On the contrary, a widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Warn them about this that they may be blameless. Those who do not take care of their own, especially those of their household, have denied the faith and are worse than unbelievers.

Let no one be put on the list of widows unless she is sixty years old.

Come to preach their own theories, and not authentic faith.

The believers receive with thanksgiving. From the beginning, it was the custom in Christian families to give thanks to God at the family meal.

Train yourself in godliness (v. 7). Here we have another danger. Contrary to teachers who despise life and want us to live as strange characters, there are others who are totally absorbed in external things. In the Greco-Roman world there was much enthusiasm for sports and races. Without despising the body we are asked to check if we give each part the importance it deserves and the time corresponding to it.

11. Faced with all these false teachers, Timothy must be an example of a true apostle.

Let no one reproach you on account of your youth. Usually, in the Christian communities and in the Jewish ones, the leaders were older men. This is why they were called “elders” or “presbyters” (which means the same thing). Timothy, who is visiting the church on behalf of Paul, has authority over these elders, even though he is much younger than they are. The example of his sincere faith and profound knowledge of the Bible will be his strength.

Do not neglect the spiritual gift (v. 14). If someone was named to a ministry or an official position in the church, this was considered as a spiritual gift: for example, presbyters, deacons, bishops, prophets. While other gifts, such as healing the sick, came directly from the Holy Spirit, ministries were received through a laying on of hands. An apostle or a prophet would lay his hands on the candidate to transfer to him the authority that he had received in a similar way. Thus, in the Church, every leader receives his authority from Christ through a succession of people going back to the apostles.

On this occasion the prophets present would also address the candidate with exhortations and warnings (see 1:18).

Devote yourself to reading, preaching and teaching until I come. This counsel is always valid. To be steadfast in reading and study is what costs most in the majority of liberal professions. Very few people are courageous enough to persevere in study once they have passed their examinations. This is so, even in the Church. The “pastors,” clergy and lay, are constantly tempted in thinking such and such an activity is pastorally useful, that leisure is “relaxing” even at the cost of postponing study and meditation on the Word. The Church is always lacking people able to express their faith creatively – a gift that springs from spiritual knowledge and habitual contact with the Word of God: smiles, goodwill and psychology cannot replace this charism.

5.1 From the beginning, women had their own unique role in the Church. Some of them, called widows occupied an official position.

Paul sees three kinds of widows: some did not need help from the Church because they had relatives; others did need Church assistance. Finally, there were some, with or without the help of the Church, who were in charge of certain functions.

They deserve condemnation… (v. 12). This means that by leaving her position and marrying, the “widow” of the third category broke a
and has been married only once. She must be commended for her good works and the education of her children. Has she offered hospitality to, washed the feet of the saints, helped the suffering and practiced other good deeds?

11 Do not accept younger widows; they may have other desires than for Christ and want to marry; then they deserve condemnation for breaking their first commitment. Besides they form the habit of being idle, going from house to house. And it is not just idleness! They become gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.

14 So I want young widows to marry and have children, to rule their household and give adversaries no grounds for criticism. Some have already strayed to follow Satan. If any Christian woman has widows in her family, let her assist them; in this way the church will not be burdened and may assist those who are truly widows.

Regarding the presbyters

17 Let the elders who preside well receive double compensation, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. Scripture says: Do not muzzle the ox while it threshes grain, and: The worker deserves his wages. Do not accept accusations against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he continues to sin, rebuke him in the presence of the community, as a warning to the rest.

21 I urge you, in the presence of God and Christ Jesus and of the holy angels, to obey these rules with impartiality, without making distinctions. Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, thus becoming an accomplice in the sins of others. Keep yourself free from blame.

24 The sins of some people are plain to see, even before they are examined; the sins of others are known only later on. Likewise good deeds are conspicuous; even when they are not, they cannot remain hidden.

23 (Do not drink only water but take a little wine to help your digestion, because of your frequent illness.)

Let those who are slaves always show respect to their masters, so that no one may speak ill of God and his teaching. Those whose masters are Christians should not show less respect under the pretext that they are members of the church. On the contrary, they must give a better service since they are doing good works on behalf of believers and dear friends.

Love of money

Teach and stress these things. Whoever teaches in some other way, not following the sound teaching of our

commitment she had made publicly. The “widows” were dedicated to the service of Christ in the same way as religious women of today.

A true widow is she who has set her hope on God. We should read what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7 concerning the greater freedom celibates have to serve the Lord. Every baptized person is called to belong totally to Christ. If, through circumstances of life, we are alone again and free from family responsibilities, this may be an invitation from God to dedicate ourselves completely to the service of the Church and to constant prayer.

If today retired Christians looked into their lives in the light of God’s presence, the Church would have more leaders and missionaries than are necessary.

17. Paul speaks again of the elders or “presbyters” who are in charge of the local community. Paul wants the community to help its leaders spiritually and financially.

We have already noted that the elders who were in charge of the community and who presided at the Eucharist were chosen from the most esteemed believers. This paragraph shows that the primary service expected from them was the preaching of the Word.

They deserve double compensation. It is rather astonishing to see that in many parishes the council consists of more lay people competent in social or material matters than persons of the Word, learned or prophetic, capable of giving life to the community.

They must fulfill their duties. Re rebuke him in the presence of the community as a warning to the rest: the first Christians were no angels. Sometimes their enthusiastic and sincere faith
Lord Christ Jesus and true religious instruction, 4 is conceited and understands nothing. This one is crazy about controversies and discussions that result in envy, insults, 5 blows and constant arguments between people of depraved minds and far from the truth. For them, religion is merely for financial gain.

6 In reality, religion is a treasure if we are content with what we have. 7 We brought nothing into the world and we will leave it with nothing. 8 Let us then be content with having food and clothing. 9 Those who strive to be rich fall into temptations and traps. A lot of foolish and harmful ambitions plunge them into ruin and destruction. 10 Indeed, the love of money is the root of every evil. Because of this greed, some have wandered away from the faith, bringing on themselves afflictions of every kind.

11 But you, man of God, shun all this. Strive to be holy and godly. Live in faith and love, with endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith and win everlasting life to which you were called when you made the good profession of faith in the presence of so many witnesses.

13 Now, in the presence of God who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus who gave the good testimony before Pontius Pilate, 14 I command you to keep the commandment. Keep yourself pure and blameless until the glorious coming of Christ Jesus, our Lord, 15 which God will bring about at the proper time, he, the magnificent sovereign, King of kings and Lord of lords. 16 To him, alone immortal, who lives in unapproachable light and whom no one has ever seen or can see, to him be honor and power for ever and ever. Amen!

17 Command the rich of this world not to be arrogant or to put their trust in the uncertainty of wealth. Let them rather trust in God who generously gives us all we need for our happiness. 18 Let them do good, be rich in good deeds and be generous; let them share with others. 19 In this way, they shall heap up a sound capital for the future and gain true life.

20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you; avoid useless and profane words, as well as discussions arising from false knowledge. 21 Some have lost the faith in accepting such knowledge.

The grace of God be with you all.
What we have said in the Introduction to the First Letter to Timothy is equally suitable for this second letter. It is supposed to have been written by Paul from his prison in Rome, shortly before his death. There is no reason for doubting the authenticity of a few details that Paul gives on his situation while awaiting his sentence. As for the rest, both Paul and Timothy are only pseudonyms: the counsels and the warnings are actually those the unknown author wanted to give the ministers of the Church, some decades after the death of the apostle.

1 From Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of his promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus, to my dear son Timothy.

   May grace, mercy and peace be with you from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

God did not give us a spirit of bashfulness

3 I give thanks to God whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my ancestors did, as I remember you constantly, day and night, in my prayers. 4 I recall your tears and I long to see you that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, so like the faith of your grandmother Lois and of your mother Eunice, which I am sure you have inherited.

6 For this reason I invite you to fan into a flame the gift of God you received through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God did not confer on us a spirit of bashfulness, but of strength, love and good judgment. 8 Do not be ashamed of testifying to our Lord, nor of seeing me in chains. On the contrary, do your share in laboring for the Gospel with the strength of God. 9 He saved us and called us – a calling which proceeds from his holiness. This did not depend on our merits, but on his generosity and his own initiative. This calling given to us from all time in Christ Jesus has just been manifested with the glorious appearance of Christ Jesus, our Lord, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light in his Gospel. 11 Of this message I was made herald, apostle and teacher.

12 For its sake I now suffer this trial, but I am not ashamed, for I know in whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is capable of taking care of all I have entrusted to him until that day.

13 Follow the pattern of the sound
doctrine which you have heard from me, concerning faith and love in Christ Jesus. Keep this precious deposit with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

You know that all from the province of Asia have deserted me, especially Phygelus and Hermogenes.

May God bless the household of Onesiphorus, for he often came to visit me and was not ashamed of my chains.

On the contrary, on arriving in Rome he searched for me until he found me.

May the Lord grant that he find mercy from the Lord on that day. You well know all the services he rendered at Ephesus.

**Labor like a good soldier of Christ**

1. You, my son, be strong with the grace you have in Christ Jesus.
2. Entrust to reliable people everything you have learned from me in the presence of many witnesses, that they may instruct others.

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- **1.6 Fan into a flame the gift you received.** See 1 Tim 4:14. Paul tries to give his own energy to Timothy and he reminds him of God’s love and promises.

  The sound doctrine... the precious deposit... which you have heard from me (13-14): see 1 Tim 1:3. The doctrine of the faith cannot be altered, but neither can it be put in storage. It must be lived, which brings into play our creativity as well as that of the Holy Spirit that lets it be rediscovered each day.

  *He saved us and called us:* see Eph 2:8-10.

  *He is capable of taking care of all I have entrusted to him* (v. 12). These words invite us to remember the exact meaning of the word “faith.” In Hebrew, for the Old Testament, the word “faith” had the same root as “to be firm,” or “to lean on something.” In Greek, the word that has become “faith” signifies both the trust that could be had in a debtor, and the guarantee given to the creditor. So Paul considers all his apostolic life as the deposit he has placed in God’s hands. Like Paul a person of faith is not deceived by the mirages of a happy life but prefers to use his life in an often thankless labor and persevere as if he already saw what couldn’t yet be seen (Heb 11:27).

- **2.1 Entrust to reliable people** (v. 2). We have seen in Paul’s first missions that he took care to establish elders in each community (Acts 14:23; see also Titus 1:6). They must be able to preserve the faith in full. We often give more importance to immediate effectiveness of our actions rather than to doctrinal exactitude. In the long run, there is never an error that is not paid for. Saint Irenaeus affirms that the primary mission of the Church is to maintain in the world a true knowledge of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. See however the com. on Galatians 2:5.

  Then Paul invites Timothy to surrender completely, with the assurance that his efforts will be rewarded.

  *Be strong with the grace you have in Christ Jesus,* Christ’s witness must be courageous and strong, as the messenger of the victorious Christ. His own conviction will convince others. He must avoid the many ways of wasting time and getting off track in his mission: idle conversations devoid of value. Things that do not promote a better service of God (1 Tim 1:4): false religious problems unrelated to real life.

  No soldier gets involved (v. 4). It happened at times that Paul earned his living while preaching (2 Cor 11:9; 2 Thes 3:7), but now here the letter speaks for those who waste their time in working for a living when the community has the duty of seeing to their needs. For a minister of the Church, work can be a way of placing oneself in the world and in the midst of people; but it could also be a way of escaping the difficulties and humiliations of every apostolic task.
If we deny him, he will also deny us;
If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself.

Do not fight over words

Remind your people of these things and urge them in the presence of God not to fight over words, which does no good, but only ruins those who listen. Be for God an active and proved minister, a blameless worker correctly handling the word of truth. Do not take part in useless conversations, alien to the faith. This leads to a greater impiety. Such teaching spreads like gangrene: I am thinking of Hymeneus and Philetus. They strayed from the truth, holding that resurrection has already taken place; and with this they upset the faith of some. But the solid foundations laid by God are not shaken; on them it is written: The Lord knows those who are his, and: Let him who confesses the name of the Lord turn away from evil.

In a large house we find not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay. Some are reserved for special uses, others, for ordinary ones. All who clean themselves of what I speak of, will become a noble vessel, useful to the Lord, prepared for any holy purpose.

So shun the passions of youth and seek righteousness, faith, love and peace, together with those who call upon the Lord with a pure heart.

Avoid stupid and senseless discussions, since such are the cause of misunderstanding. God's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to all, always teaching and patient with those who do not understand, gently correct opponents; perhaps God may grant them to repent and discover the truth, withdrawing them from the snare of the devil who held them captive to his own will.

Be quite sure that there will be difficult times in the last days. People will become selfish, lovers of money, boastful, conceited, gossips, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy. They will be unable to love and to forgive; they will be slanderers, without self-control, cruel, enemies of good, traitors, shameless, full of pride, more in love with pleasure than with God. They will keep the appearance of piety, while rejecting its demands. Keep away from such people.

Of the same kind are those who enter houses and captivate weak women, full of sins, swayed by all kinds of passion, who are always learning but never grasping knowledge of the truth. These people of corrupt mind and false faith oppose the truth just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses. Yet they may not go very far, for their
foolly will be clear to all, as in the case of those two.

10 You, instead, have closely followed my teaching, my way of life, my projects, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions and sufferings. You know what happened to me at Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. How many trials I had to bear! Yet the Lord rescued me from them all. 12 All who want to serve God in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil persons and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

14 As for you, continue with what you have learned and what has been entrusted to you, knowing from whom you received it. Besides, you have known the Scriptures from childhood; they will give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, refuting error, for correcting and training in Christian life. Through Scripture the man of God is made expert and thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Preach the Word**

4 In the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by the hope I have of his coming and his kingdom, I urge you 2 to preach the Word, in season and out of season, reproving, rebuking or advising, always with patience and providing instruction. 3 For the time is coming when people will no longer endure sound doctrine but following their passions they will surround themselves with teachers to please their itching ears. 4 And they will abandon the truth to hear fables. So be prudent, do not mind your labor, give yourself to your work as an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

6 As for me, I am already poured out as a libation, and the moment of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness with which the Lord, the just judge, will reward me on that day; and not only me, but all those who have longed for his glorious coming.

**Final greetings**

9 Do your best to come to me quickly. 10 You must know that Demas has deserted me for the love of this world: he returned to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke remains with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is a useful helper in my work. 12 I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

13 Bring with you the cloak I left at...
Troas, in Carpos’ house and also the scrolls, especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the metalworker has caused me great harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. 15 Distrust him for he has been very much opposed to our preaching.

16 At my first hearing in court no one supported me; all deserted me. May the Lord not hold it against them. 17 But the Lord was at my side, giving me strength to proclaim the Word fully, and let all the pagans hear it. So I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. 18 The Lord will save me from all evil, bringing me to his heavenly kingdom. Glory to him for ever and ever. Amen!

19 Greetings to Prisca and Aquila and to the family of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus remained in Corinth. I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.

21 Try to come here before the winter. Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers and sisters send you greetings. 22 The Lord be with your spirit. May grace be with you all.

he will be condemned to death. He embraces his own sacrifice just as Jesus did.
We find the comparison of the soldier and the athlete that Paul liked so much. In those days athletes received a crown of laurels as a symbol of immortality: As for me the time of sacrifice has arrived, and the moment of my departure has come.
Like Timothy, Titus is one of Paul’s assistants officially consecrated to the service of the Gospel, who visited the churches with the very authority of Paul.

The commentary will be brief since this letter is very similar to the two letters to Timothy.

1 From Paul, servant of God, apostle of Christ Jesus, at the service of God’s chosen people, so that they may believe and reach the knowledge of truth and godliness.

2 The eternal life we are waiting for was promised from the very beginning by God who never lies, and as the appointed time had come, he made it known through the message entrusted to me by a command of God, our Savior.

4 Greetings to you, Titus, my true son in the faith we share. May grace and peace be with you from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

On the elders of the Church

5 I left you in Crete because I wanted you to put right what was defective and appoint elders in every town, following my instructions. They must be blameless, married only once, whose children are believers and not open to the charge of being immoral and rebellious. Since the overseer (or bishop) is the steward of God’s house, he must be beyond reproach: not proud, hot-headed, over-fond of wine, quarrelsome or greedy for gain.

6 On the contrary he must be hospitable, a lover of what is good, wise, upright, devout and self-controlled.

9 He must hold to the message of faith just as it was taught, so that, in his turn, he may teach sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

10 You know that there are many rebellious minds, talkers of nonsense, deceivers, especially the party of the circumcised. They have to be silenced when they go around disturbing whole families, teaching for low gain what should not be taught. A Cretan, one of their own prophets has said, “Cretans: always liars, wicked beasts and lazy gluttons.” This is true. For
this reason rebuke them sharply if you want them to have a sound faith instead of heeding Jewish fables and practices of people who reject the truth.

15 To the pure everything is pure; to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure: their minds and consciences have been defiled. 16 They pretend to know God but deny him with their deeds. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

Live as responsible persons

2 1 Let your words strengthen sound doctrine. 2 Tell the older men to be sober, serious, wise, sound in faith, love and perseverance.

3 The older women in like manner must behave as befits holy women, not given to gossiping or drinking wine, 4 but as good counselors, able to teach younger women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be judicious and chaste, to take care of their households, to be kind and submissive to their husbands, lest our faith be attacked.

6 Encourage the young men to be self-controlled. 7 Set them an example by your own way of doing. Let your teaching be earnest and sincere, 8 and your preaching beyond reproach. Then your opponents will feel ashamed and will have nothing to criticize.

9 Teach slaves to be subject to their masters, and to give satisfaction in every respect, instead of arguing. 10 They must not steal from them but be trustworthy. In this way they will draw everyone to admire the doctrine of God our Savior.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all,

12 teaching us to reject an irreligious way of life and worldly greed, and to live in this world as responsible persons, upright and serving God, 13 while we await our blessed hope – the glorious manifestation of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus. 14 He gave himself for us, to redeem us from every evil and to purify a people he wanted to be his own and dedicated to what is good.

15 Teach these things, encourage and...
reprove with all authority. Let no one despise you.

1. Remind the believers to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient and to be ready for every good work. Tell them to insult no one; they must not be quarrelsome but gentle and understanding with everyone.

2. We ourselves were once foolish, disobedient and misled. We were slaves of our desires, seeking pleasures of every kind. We lived in malice and envy, hateful and hating each other. But God our Savior revealed his eminent goodness and love for humankind and saved us, not because of good deeds we may have done but for the sake of his own mercy, to the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit poured over us through Christ Jesus our Savior, so that having been justified of his grace we should become heirs in hope of eternal life.

3. This is the truth. I want you to insist on these things, for those who believe in God must excel in good deeds; that is what matters and is profitable to us. Avoid stupid arguments, discussions about genealogies and quarrels about the Law, for they are useless and unimportant.

4. If anyone promotes sects in the church, warn him once and then a second time. If he still continues, break with him, knowing that such a person is misled and sinful and stands self-condemned.

5. When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, try to come to me at Nicopolis as soon as possible, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way soon, and see to it that they have everything they need. Our people must learn to be outstanding in good works and to face urgent needs, instead of remaining idle and useless.

6. All who are with me send greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all.

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3.1 Speaking to the first Christian generation, Paul had underscored the transformation of the one who has been converted: becoming Christian involved breaking away from the past. In the following generation, while the Church was being established in various provinces of the Roman Empire, the hope of an imminent return of Christ began to decline. Thus, if the Church is called to last, it is important for the Christian to appear, first of all, as a model of an ordered and just life. Since obedience was then the pillar of family and social life, this letter insists that the believer must obey from the heart in every aspect that is not opposed to his faith.

In the teaching of the New Testament, it will be easy to speak of contradictions, or opportunism: here, social loyalty and family virtues; or else ignoring one’s father and mother. Actually, they are not contradictory: obedience coming from the heart as long as there is no opposition to the will of God, but a complete rejection of dependence when a human authority presumes to replace God, disregarding the conscience and rights of a person.

What remains here is an insistence on social virtues; it was the same in 2:5; 2:10 and also 1 Tim 2:2 and 2:11.

8. Possible translations for the word Paul uses here are “sects” or “heresies” (v. 10); they are two aspects of a Greek word that means “selection.” Instead of accepting the faith as the Church transmits it, a heretic chooses what seems most important to her and what she likes the most. She rejects part of the message and leaves the Church taking with her disciples to form her own group. In preferring her own judgment to the doctrine of the Church, she loses the in-depth faith attitude; she destroys unity and condemns herself, even though she keeps a major part of the message.