**1 Timothy – Series introduction and 1 Tim 1:1-11**

**Opening “welcome” question:**

* Have you ever received, or written, a special letter?...

**Worship**

* Read 2 Cor 3:2-6…
* Give thanks to the living God - Father Son and Holy Spirit - for who he is, for the life that he gives us and for the fact that he chooses to use us to help him accomplish his Kingdom purposes.

**Introduction to 1 Timothy:**

**Who?** The apostle Paul, writing to his “true son in the faith”, Timothy (1:1-2)

**What?** A letter to instruct Timothy to counter false doctrine (1:3) and to teach that right belief leads to right behaviour.

**Where?** Timothy was pastoring the church in Ephesus (1:3)

**When?** Approximately 62-65 AD

**Why?** Out of love (1:5) and so that God’s people both know the truth and live it out accordingly – “I am writing…so that…you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.” (3:14-15)

**How?** “By the command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope” (1:1)

**1 Timothy:1-11**

**1:1-2**

* Have confidence in your calling, whatever it may be…
* Invest in relationships, with Kingdom intentionality, but no strings attached… - “investing in the one”…
* The resources for ministry come from God, not from ourselves…

**1:3-11**

* The law is “good if one uses it properly”, but if abused by false teachers who “do not know what they are talking about” it can end up promoting legalism. False doctrine distracts from the gospel of grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
* Law and gospel in fact belong together – see also Galatians 3:23-29
* Sound doctrine has love at its core and works itself out in practice through a life of love.

***Please turn over…***

**Possible questions (select a few from each section?):**

**Passage and application:**

* What is it that gives Paul his confidence and authority as an apostle? Where does your confidence and authority come from?
* Why do you think Paul calls Timothy his “true son in the faith”? Do you have a “son/daughter/mum/dad/aunt/uncle etc in the faith”?
* Paul frequently opens his letters with “grace and peace” but here (in verse 2) he also adds “mercy”. Why do you think this might be? In what type of situations do we ourselves need mercy “from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord”?
* According to Paul, what type of false doctrine existed in Ephesus and what was its impact? What kind of false doctrine should we be aware of in our context?
* How can sound doctrine be distinguished from false doctrine? Where do you go for sound Christian teaching? Can you share suggestions of helpful, reliable authors/resources etc?
* What is the ultimate goal of right teaching? How do you know if your life is reflective of this?

**Further discussion:**

* Do you agree that “right belief” is important for “right behaviour”? To what extent should we encourage people to “belong” among us, before we expect them to “believe” and “behave”?
* How can the call of God upon your life, in your situation and context, be used by him for his Kingdom purposes?
* What might it look like for you (as a group or as an individual) to “invest in the one”? Is God speaking to you in a particular way about this? Are there barriers which might prevent us from responding, and how can we overcome them?
* Discuss the following quotation: “Ministry takes place when divine resources meet human needs, through loving channels to the glory of God.” Does it leave you feeling overwhelmed, inspired, challenged, encouraged, something else?
* Discuss the following quotation: “The law is not gospel, but the gospel is not lawless.” What do you understand this to mean?
* Discuss the following quotation: The “gospel is not only a way of thinking, it is a way of living. And it always involves both doctrine and practice”. Do you agree? How does this link in with the idea of “right belief” leading to “godly behaviour”?

**Prayer:**

* Pray for each other and for us as a fellowship around your responses to the above questions. Pray that our series in 1 Timothy will be both insightful and impactful.
* Continue to pray for all involved or caught up in the war in Ukraine. Pray for peace.
* Pray for all those who have been elected in last week’s local elections.
* Pray for pastoral concerns in your group and for those in the fellowship with particular needs of which you are aware.