

Who is Timothy?

- Timothy is mentioned in Acts, 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, Romans and perhaps Hebrews (we don't know when Hebrews was written, or by whom, so we can't be absolutely sure the Timothy mentioned in 13:23 is our Timothy)
 - in 1 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians and Philippians, Timothy is a messenger or representative of Paul
 - in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians, Timothy is a co-author of the letter
 - in Acts and Romans, he is a companion, or fellow worker, with Paul, and in Acts he is also specifically identified as Silas' companion, and also a messenger or representative of Paul's.
- We have something of his background in Acts 16:
 - (1) He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. (2) The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. (3) Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.
 - so mixed parentage, spiritually and ethnically, with all the tensions that can produce
 - in this case some of the tensions were with outsiders, and their perception of Timothy as non-Jewish, and therefore unacceptable in devout Jewish circles...
 - cf Barack Obama, and his mixed heritage?
- But when and why does Paul write?
 - where are Paul and Timothy at the time?
 - Timothy is in Ephesus (1:3), but we don't know where Paul is - its quite hard to fit the references and allusions to visits into what we know from Acts
 - so some have given up and attribute the letter to someone other than Paul, perhaps writing later as if from Paul but addressing the concerns of his own day...
 - akin to someone writing a "what would Winston Churchill have said about global warming?" piece - consciously imaginative, but with a sympathy to the perspective of the hero chosen...
 - this view has become pretty much the norm amongst contemporary academic scholarship
 - but it is by no means a "done deal", despite what anyone who has done a theology degree might have had to put up with at college!
 - Acts is an incomplete account (some of the Acts of some of the Apostles!)
 - in particular, it doesn't end with Paul's death, however expected that might be - and its perfectly plausible that Paul was released, continued ministering for a time, before later being martyred (perhaps by Nero, as some early church traditions suggest)
- So, on balance of probabilities, I'm of the opinion it is Pauline, and written to a situation in Ephesus, where Timothy was in some kind of leadership, by Paul, after the end of the period covered by Acts
 - won't probably make a huge amount of difference to what we explore in the letter, but perhaps best to have a clear basis for our explorations!

On what basis does Paul write? (v.1,2)

Apostle (point)

- *Of Christ Jesus*
 - not his own authority, his own priorities
 - he is a "sent one" of Jesus, Jesus who is the Christ, the fulfilment of all the Old Testament prophecies
 - he is writing to lift Jesus higher as people follow him more closely
- *By command of God our Saviour*

- emphasising again that the authority comes from God, not himself
- note too of salvation; he is writing as a saved one, and to saved ones
- he is a fellow survivor of the storm of life, passing on life-saving advice to people, now in lifeboats, but still in the storm...
- *And of Christ Jesus our hope*
 - and he writes in the knowledge of future hope, that this faith that he and Timothy and the people in the church Timothy leads have a hope, a future, in Jesus Christ...
 - an eternal destiny...

Son/Father in faith (point)

- personal relationship, well-loved companion, deep personal concern
- (I have more concern, say, with how Tim Xenophontos-Hellen is getting on than with any of the other readers in Presbytery, because he spent some of his training time here...)
- many suggest that Timothy came to faith during Paul's first missionary journey; he is one of "Paul's" converts...

Grace, mercy and peace shown (point)

- He writes as one to whom grace, mercy and peace have been offered
 - passing on what he has already received...
 - so he writes out of not being treated as he deserved, the persecutor who has been rescued, to whom mercy has been shown
 - and he writes as one who, though beset by troubles and hardships, not least in ministry, knows the full peace of new life in Christ...

What does Paul write? (vs.3-11)

- Concern for love (v.5) - for God
 - expressed in concern for truth
 - cf compass - set off on the wrong heading and you end up miles from your destination; easy to see if you head off north when you should be going south, but harder if its only a degree or so out and you are an ship on the open ocean...
 - practically, Paul's advice to Timothy is about leadership, about teaching others, and its about encouraging Timothy to keep on with what he has already started into...
- Specific concern about the law
 - the law isn't for those who are **righteous** (who are made so by grace, not law!)
 - the law is for **lawbreakers**, those who stand outside of God's family, rebels...
 - because it shows up who they are, as we'll see, and draws them back to accepting the **glorious gospel of the blessed God** (v.11)

How does this connect with us?

- Are our roots in Scripture, in our relationship with Jesus Christ, our Saviour?
- *Do we have people who are either Paul or Timothy to us? For whom we have a deep concern in the faith, to support, to challenge, to encourage, to accept challenge and rebuke and support from?*
 - (we should have both!)
- Do we operate out of an on-going consciousness (experience?) of grace, mercy and peace in our Christian service?
- *Are we concerned with our church family, that it should not be diverted or distracted - or are we content to leave that up to others, never even bothering to pray...?*
- *And are we rooted in grace, guarding against the continual pull of the human heart towards legalism, that desire to win our own salvation by keeping to a set of rules...?*