

Introduction

- How did we get here?
 - who is Timothy? Paul's co-worker, companion and representative, serving in Ephesus
 - written to by Paul, who is apostle, Timothy's father in the faith, and one to whom grace, mercy and peace have been shown
 - for the benefit of the church, ultimately: that Timothy, and through him all God's people in Ephesus, might love God more...
 - Paul connects his story and Timothy's with the story of God's intervention in our lives, so that Timothy and all in Ephesus will persevere in following Jesus
 - one particular aspect is worship - wide-ranging, impassioned prayer encouraged
 - and women - the focus to be on God, and not anything that would distract from Him, either dress or over-liberation of women who might then feel themselves not under even God's authority...

Who should lead in the Church? (v.1-13)

- What lies behind or underpins the life and character of someone whose life would match vs.2-4?
 - as v.6 points towards, it is the fruit of a life lived consistently, over the long term, under the Lordship of Christ
 - these are results, signs of the underlying growth
 - what is the devil's trap - sin, hypocrisy, disgrace...
- Look briefly at the characteristics:
 - **above reproach:** (v.2) this is the general characteristic, explicated in the points that follow...
 - **the husband of but one wife:** (v.2) moral integrity and sexual probity
 - **temperate:** (v.2) very closely allied to self-controlled, which is next. Not driven by appetites - in use of drink, or time, or money...
 - **self-controlled:** (v.2) able to channel and direct energies to what is good, to the task at hand
 - **respectable:** (v.2) not just a veneer, but a character worthy of respect...
 - **hospitable:** (v.2) do we actually open our lives to people, generous with time, resources, home...
 - **able to teach:** (v.2) doesn't just mean stand up and talk - people learn in different ways - but able to pass on the gospel message: answer questions, pose questions in the way we order our lives, model standards in front of people in a way that connects them to our faith...
 - **not given to drunkenness:** (v.3) cf temperate
 - **not violent but gentle:** (v.3) easy to shy over this one, but what does happen in our homes? And also, the violent nature wants to force its own way - perhaps by intimidation or control of information, backing people into a corner...
 - **not quarrelsome:** (v.3) more active than just not falling out with people, but carrying the resentments around... **not my will, but yours...** as a deeply held underlying attitude
 - **not a lover of money:** (v.3) or the things that can be bought with money. How easily do we contemplate giving up the cars and electronics and houses and clothes that money can buy... or the desire to have them, the lust after more possessions...
 - **He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?):** (v.4/5) general principle is that there is consistency across every sphere of life
 - **He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil:** (v.6) value of time for growth, for kinks to be ironed, for grace to grow...
 - **He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap:** (v.7) that integrity of character needs to grow

to the point where non-Christians begin to see something different, something positive...

The noble task (v.1)

- What is the noble task of leadership?
 - change, growth, relationship, not mere task or administration...

What is the Church that these will lead? (v.14-15)

- God's household
 - precious to God
 - close to God
 - known by God
 - adopted by God
- Church of the living God
 - etymology: *kuriake* - "of the Lord" (*kurios*)
- "pillar and foundation of the truth" phrase has been problematical
 - surely church is built on truth, not the other way round?
 - words carry shades of meaning, and sometimes hard to translate - foundation might possibly be rendered *bulwark*, suggesting that part of the church's role is to hold the truth against creeping error (which is why the issue over ordination of a practising homosexual to ministry is so important)
 - certainly in practise few people come to and continue to grow in living, dynamic faith without being part of a community of believers... is the church, then, in a sense, a foundation for how the appropriate the truth of God's love and care for them?

Whose is the Church that these will lead? (v.15-16)

- Pointer to Jesus, a little hymn snippet or similar:
 - incarnation
 - baptism at the Jordan, spirit coming on him?
 - seen by angels? - obscure, perhaps "seen in the spiritual realms", the idea of the triumphant Christ showing himself victorious to the unseen spiritual powers widely believed to have influence over the world
 - preached among the nations (Gentiles?) - news spread, apostles, hope of the nations, fulfilment of the OT promises...
 - believed on by the world - Paul and Timothy right in the midst of what was an unprecedented explosion of Christian faith across the ancient world in the first years of church...
 - taken up in glory - ascension...
 - (incomplete - misses death and resurrection completely, but makes little sense without them!)
- Point is that Jesus is the subject of the whole thing:
 - he is the centre, and the church is his!
- *The church is his, and so the task of leading it is indeed a noble task!*