

## Paul's Letters to Church Leaders

1 Timothy 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-8; Titus 2:11-14

Before Jesus went to heaven, He told His followers that the Holy Spirit would give them power to share the gospel—in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. That is exactly what happened! The early church grew, spreading out in different cities as more and more people heard the gospel and trusted in Jesus. The believers met together as churches, and leaders taught them about God and about how Christians should live.

Paul wrote letters to some of the leaders in the church. Two of these leaders were Timothy and Titus. Timothy was Paul's friend. He had traveled with Paul and helped him. Now Timothy was a leader at the church in Ephesus.

Paul reminded Timothy to not let anyone look down on him because he was young. Paul said, "Be an example of what a believer says and does." Timothy could show people how to live, how to love, and how to trust God.

Paul also taught Timothy to read the Scriptures to the believers in the church. He taught him to be patient and to correct people when they do wrong things. Timothy could encourage believers by teaching them what is right. Timothy could teach God's Word and always be ready to share the gospel.

Being a leader in the church is not easy. Paul told Timothy that God had chosen him to lead. Paul wrote, "Do not be afraid to suffer for the Lord." Titus was a Gentile believer and leader. He was also a friend of Paul's.

Titus had traveled with Paul and was on the island of Crete to help train more church leaders. When Paul wrote to Titus, he explained why believers should live in a way that pleases God.

Paul explained that God is gracious to sinners. God gave us what we do not deserve when He provided the way for people to be saved from sin. Because of this, we want to do what is right. We want to live in ways that please God. Jesus died on the cross to rescue us from sin and death, and we want to do what is good because He loves us. We know that one day Jesus will come again.

*Christ Connection: Paul wrote to give Timothy and Titus advice and to help all church leaders know how to lead God's people. Church leaders help believers know what is true, and they serve the church by following the example of Jesus, who served us by dying on the cross for our sins.*