

## THE SALUTATION OF FIRST TIMOTHY I

### I Timothy 1:1-2

One of the most beautiful comradeships in history is that of Paul and Timothy.

The Salutation. I Timothy 1:1-2.

#### 1. The Writer. 1:1.

It was customary among the Greeks in the first century for the writer of a letter to mention his own name first and then specify the person to whom it was addressed. This Paul did in the introduction of his first letter to Timothy. How did the writer of this Epistle designate himself?

##### (1) By his name.

He was known first by his Hebrew name, Saul. "An Hebrew of the Hebrews," he maintained his love for his own people and his longing for their welfare throughout his ministry. Wherever he went, he always attended the services in the synagogues. His message was always "to the Jew first." By virtue of his being a Roman citizen, Saul was given the name of Paul.

##### (2) By his office.

Paul designated himself as "an apostle of Christ Jesus." This designation marked him as one of a select group. The word "apostle" means one who is sent away with proper credentials to represent someone else. The very word embodies the idea of a divine vocation. Furthermore, an apostle was clothed with the authority of the One Who sent him.

A matter of paramount concern to any true minister of Christ is that of his call to the sacred office. This call consists of a definite conviction wrought in the heart of a man by the Spirit of God that it is his God-given duty and privilege to devote himself to the preaching of the gospel and to the care of souls. Paul never had any doubt as to his divine call to the glorious ministry of Christ.

##### (3) By his possessions.

###### a. God our Saviour.

To God Paul ascribed salvation. God the Father is the fountain of our salvation in all its phases. He planned and provided for our spiritual deliverance. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Christ's death on the cross was the greatest expression of the love of God toward us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10). It is as our Saviour that we must first come to know Him. He brings us pardon for sin's guilt, cleansing from sin's stain, victory over sin's power and release from sin's domination. The word "Saviour" emphasizes our security.

###### b. Christ our Hope.

Let me remind you that when the Lord Jesus Christ was here on earth not a single friend of His ever addressed Him by His given name, Jesus. In every case He was addressed as Lord and Master. He commended their doing so. He said, "Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am" (John 13:13). That fact should be significant and meaningful to us.

As God the Father is the fountain of our salvation, so Christ the Son is the embodiment of our hope. Christ not only gives hope, but He is the very substance of it. What hope is there outside of the Lord Jesus Christ? There is infinite and glorious hope in Christ, but apart from Him there is not a single ray of hope that has any value in it. Christianity is the only religion that has a message of hope. In Christ is all our hope. We expect and hope to see Him as He is and to become like Him. What a glorious hope!

## 2. The Addressee. 1:2a.

After sounding a note of authority in connection with his apostleship, Paul addressed Timothy in a tone of true tenderness. He referred to Timothy as his true child in the sphere of the Christian faith.

On his first missionary journey Paul had visited Lystra, where lived a splendid family consisting of a Greek and his Jewish wife and their son, Timothy. The name "Timothy" is the transliteration of the Greek name made up of the words, "to honor" and "God." It means "he who honors God." Doubtless this name was given to him in his very early childhood by his mother Eunice or his grandmother Lois, both of whom were godly women. Evidently it was their hope and expectation that with the proper training the boy would grow up and exemplify the name which he bore.

Paul's use of the term "child" is an indication of his personal affection for Timothy. This designation is a very happy one, for it combined two ideas: "I have begotten you," and "You are very dear to me." Of course, Timothy was not Paul's physical son, for he had a Greek father. Having been brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ by Paul, Timothy was the son of the Apostle in the realm of the Christian faith. Therefore, he was very near and dear to Paul. There is always a close bond of love between any Christian and those whom he has led to Christ as their Saviour. If you are a Christian and have never led a soul to Christ, you have missed one of the greatest joys in this life.

It must be emphasized, however, that Paul was Timothy's father in a secondary sense only. God was his real spiritual Father, but Paul was the human channel through which the gospel of Christ was communicated to Timothy, resulting in his spiritual birth. It is doubtful if Paul ever rendered a finer service than when he landed Timothy in the gospel net.

Timothy's spiritual life was not illegitimate. Paul rejoiced greatly in the fact that Timothy was not merely a nominal believer in Christ, but proved himself to be a genuinely born-again child of God. Paul had many converts who were not saved, but Timothy was. Moreover, he had become one of Paul's traveling companions on his second missionary journey, and in that capacity had rendered service to him "like a son to a father."

## 3. The Greeting. 1:2b.

Having been separated from Timothy for some time, Paul wrote and sent this tender greeting to him whom he loved so dearly and devotedly. He longed for his friend to have three wonderful blessings. He prayed earnestly that Timothy might receive and enjoy "grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

Grace is a favor bestowed on someone who does not have any claim upon the Giver. Grace speaks of the outgoing favor of God. Grace is one of the greatest words in the New Testament, greater even than love, for grace is love in action, and therefore includes it. Grace is the unmerited response of God to man's need. It is the source of all spiritual life.

In this verse Paul was not referring to the grace which saves, because the one to whom he was writing had been saved already. He was anxious for Timothy to have the benefits of sanctifying and sustaining grace in all of the experiences of his career, regardless of how trying some of them might be. Every Christian needs the grace of God to sustain him constantly.

This word "mercy" suggests God's constant readiness and desire to forgive. Mercy turns our thoughts upon the ill desert of the recipient and upon the compassion of God. On account of daily shortcomings or failures, mercy is what every child of God needs. In the consciousness of your need of mercy remember I John 1:9; "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

It is possible that this term "mercy" was used in this verse to stress the importance of humility in the daily life and work of Timothy. While he was an ambassador of mercy to others, he must never get to the place where he did not feel his own need of mercy.

Peace suggests the state of one who is reconciled with God. Peace is the outcome of grace and mercy. Grace is the root and peace is the fruit. Peace is the experience of a soul in harmony with God.

God the Father is the fountain of grace, mercy and peace, Christ Jesus our Lord is the dispenser of these great blessings, and believers in Christ are the recipients of them.