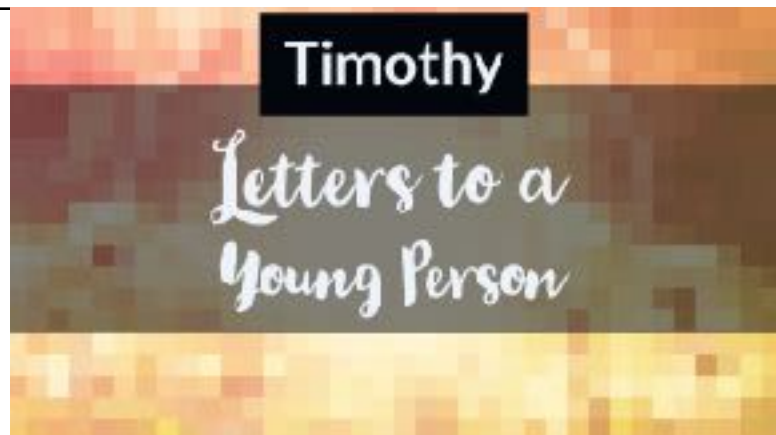

Graphics and Audio Notes

- There **will** be a sermon starter video.
- There **will** be notes and / or scripture to show on screen during the sermon.

Text highlighted in this way will have a slide prepared to be on screen.

Text highlighted in this way is a reminder for Andrew during delivery.



Key Questions

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about the relationship between Paul and Timothy and the implications that it has for us today.

Why is this sermon important?

It is important because mentoring and encouraging those younger than us is how faith is passed from one generation to the next.

What is the good news?

The good news is that, as we follow Christ, the power of God at work in Paul and Timothy, is at work in us.

What are the next action steps?

You are invited to look to those that have gone before you to learn from their example; pay attention to those that are coming after you so that you can share your faith; fix your eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

What is the context of this sermon?

This sermon is part of a series focused on 1 and 2 Timothy. It has been prepared with help from a series preached by Adam Hamilton at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in November 2011.

Metadata

Topics

4th Sunday after the Epiphany (Green)

January 29, 2017

Timothy: Letters to a Young Person - Write Letters Sermon

1 Timothy 1:1-2

First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

Preaching Target Word Count: 2,109

- Develop Leaders
- Make Disciples
- Serve

Sermon Books of the Bible

- 1 Corinthians
- 1 Timothy
- Hebrews

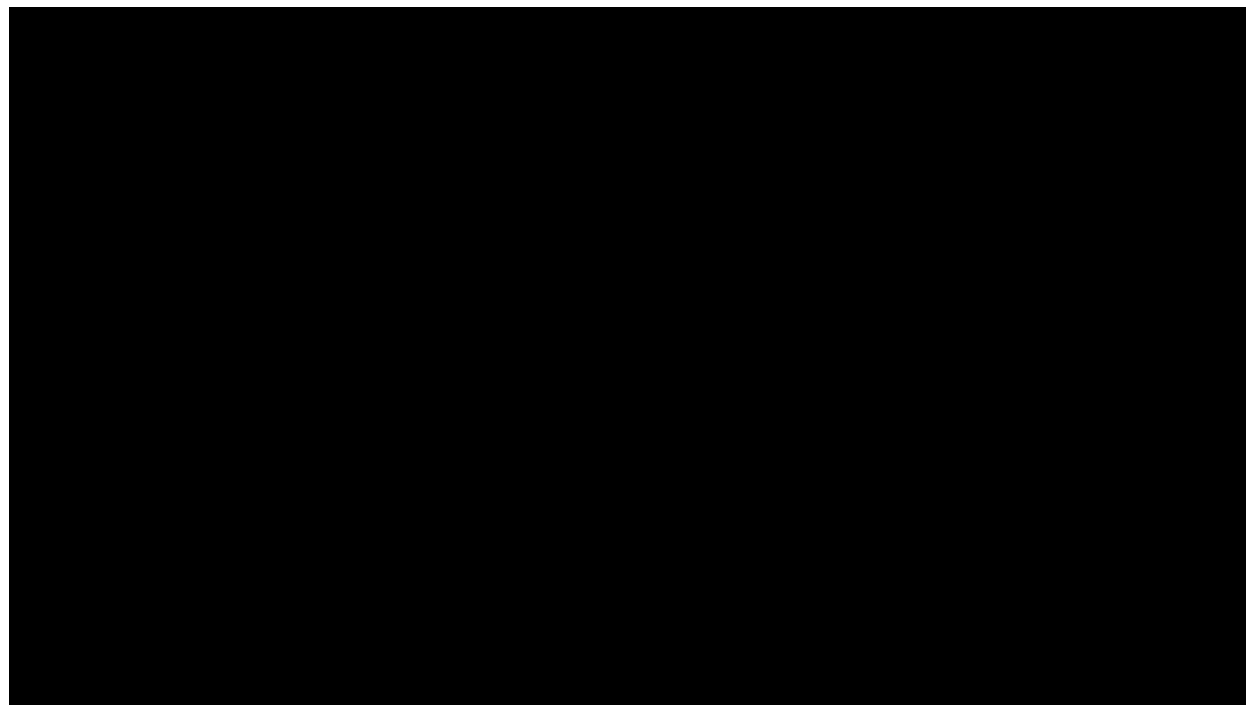
Tags

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, Timothy, Paul, mentor, mentoring, example, encouragement

Sermon Audio

9 a.m. Worship

Sermon Video



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1 Timothy 1:1-2, CEB

Response to Scripture

Sermon Starter Video

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Housekeeper

Preacher

Long distance relationship

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Introduction

1 Timothy 1:1-2, CEB

¹From Paul, who is an apostle of Jesus Christ by the command of God our savior and of Christ Jesus our hope.

²To Timothy, my true child in the faith.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord.

Response to Scripture

One: The word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

Personal Letters

From Yellowstone with Love

I spent the summer of 2004 living and working in Yellowstone National Park as part of A Christian Ministry in the National Parks.

Housekeeper

I was a housekeeper. During the week, I cleaned the cabins next to the Yellowstone Lake Hotel.

Preacher

I was a preacher. On the weekends, I lead a team of college students to lead worship in the park – in the hotel lobby, an amphitheater and campground down the road.

Long distance relationship

I was also in a long distance relationship. Nicole and I met on the first day of orientation at Wesley Theological Seminary. During the school year, we started dating. There was not a cell phone tower close by, so she and I kept in touch by writing letters to each other.

Write Letters

I tried to write to Nicole every day.

I checked for mail every day to see if there was a letter from her.

I saved each one.

Transition

It seems to be less common these days to receive a handwritten letter.

When someone takes the time to write a letter or even a note, it's significant.

It's important.

A letter can often be more meaningful than an email or a text message.

Paul's Personal Letters

During this series, we are focusing our attention on two letters which the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, a young person.

Book vs. Personal Letter

We talk about these as books of the Bible, but Paul didn't think that he was writing a book. He was just writing a letter to someone that he knew. It was like those letters that Nicole and I wrote back and forth that summer.

.....
Pause
.....

Different Relationship

Paul and Timothy had a different relationship than Nicole and I do. So, maybe the letters weren't quite the same, but you get the idea.

.....
Pause
.....

It was a personal letter – just like you would write a personal letter to someone that you care about.

Care for Groups vs. Individual Guidance

Some of Paul's letters are written to groups of people – churches that he has started. However, in this case, it is a letter written to a particular person – Timothy.

Paul seeks to care for, mentor and guide Timothy, even through these letters.

Holy Spirit in the Letters

It is unlikely that Paul could have imagined that these letters would be read by churches over 2,000 years later. Yet, we read them because we sense the Holy Spirit in these letters and that there is something in them for our lives today.

.....
Pause
.....

Transition to Understand Context

Any time you read a letter from the past it is always helpful to understand the context in which the letter was written.

What was the situation of the recipient that dictated that this letter be written?

What was the person who wrote it thinking?

I want to give you a little bit of background today.

Paul and Timothy

Paul's First Missionary Journey

The year was around AD 45.

Paul was on his first missionary journey.

Paul had come to Lystra, a little town in what is the country of Turkey today.

He had traveled to this town with Barnabas. They were preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. God had done an amazing miracle in a man's life as the result of their prayers and word had spread. There were many people who came to hear Paul and Barnabas, including many from the synagogue.

Timothy's Conversion

Likely among the crowd was a family. Lois, a grandmother, Eunice, her daughter, and Eunice young son, Timothy.

It is likely that they were devout Jews and devoted to God.

They came to hear Paul preach.

And through Paul's preaching, they came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

It may be that Paul met Timothy in the crowd.

Pause

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Five years later, Paul is back in Lystra on his second missionary journey. When he came back, he was amazed to see the teenager, Timothy.

Timothy's Faith

He was a devout follower of Jesus Christ.

He had studied the scriptures and knew them backward and forward.

He was a leader in the church, even as a teenager.

Teenage Apprentice

You remember that the average lifespan then was 35 to 40 years old.

Of course, there were people who lived into their 60s, 70s and 80s.

However, when you were a teenager, you became an apprentice to learn a trade.

Paul invites Timothy to Serve

Paul turned to Timothy in Lystra and said

I think that you have gifts to be a pastor, a missionary and a leader in the church.

Would you like to come with me and Silas and start new churches?

Timothy said yes.

Timothy became Paul's apprentice.

Ministry Together

Timothy continues on Paul's second missionary journey.

They started new churches together.

They were arrested together.

They saw God do amazing and dramatic things.

Timothy and Silas Stay

Midway through that missionary journey, Paul began to tell Timothy and Silas to stay in the towns where they visited for another month or so to confirm their faith, help them get off on the right track and then to join him in the next town.

Then Paul begins writing his letters.

Pause

Writing Letters

Co-Authorship

As you know, much of the New Testament is a collection of Paul's letters. Six of letters in the New Testament, Paul notes, are co-written by Timothy:

2 Corinthians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians

Take a look at the first verse in each of these books.

Co-Author with a Teenager

We don't often recognize this. I want you to imagine for a moment. Here is this great apostle of the faith who has started churches around the world writing letters to these churches and giving co-authorship to Timothy - a teenager.

Timothy to Ephesus

1 and 2 Timothy

When we come to the letters of 1 and 2 Timothy, it has been 15 to 20 years since Paul met Timothy. Scholars note that there is some discrepancy between the chronology of Timothy and that of Acts. However, we can look at these letters and see that as Timothy has grown up, Paul is still mentoring and encouraging him.

Paul has assigned Timothy to go to Ephesus.

Location of Ephesus

Let me show you where that is on the map.

Show map

Ephesus is in Eastern Turkey. You can see Rome



here, Greece here and Israel and Palestine over here.

Timothy's home town is to the west maybe 400 miles - about where the "u" is there in Ephesus. It is about as far as it is from El Dorado down I-35 to Dallas.

Paul and Ephesus

Paul has sent Timothy to go to Ephesus so that he can help the church there.

Paul started this church. He was there for two years and three months - the longest that he ever spent in one place. Paul loved the people of Ephesus.

Significance of Ephesus

Ephesus was the largest church in the Christian faith at that time. Ephesus was the second largest city of the Roman Empire. Paul sends Timothy, this twenty something man, who is going to try to straighten this church out because they are having some challenges.

Pause

Investing in the Next Generation

Paul Invests in Timothy

What we find in our passage today is that Paul affirms his love for Timothy and his confidence in him.

Children

Paul addresses his letter in this way:
"To Timothy, my true child in the faith."¹

Pause

Paul never had children.

Pause

Timothy was his true child in the faith.

Pause

Paul had known him since he was a young boy.
He had mentored and encouraged him throughout his life.
He had prepared and equipped him and sent him out to do the work of God.

¹ 1 Timothy 1:2, CEB.

Pause

Many have Invested in Me

There is something to having older people come alongside and encourage you.

I have had a number of people who have been like Paul to

Ray Pitman

Nancy Krause

Chuck and Mary Bloom

and some of you.

There have been a host of people in my life who have said I believe in you.

I am going stand with you.

I believe that God can use you to lead us as a church.

Scriptural Pattern of Mentoring and Encouragement

This is what I see when I look at this passage about Timothy.

There is a scriptural pattern in the relationship that Paul has with Timothy.

Every one of us as believers is meant to be raising up and investing in the next generation. We encourage, we bless, we walk alongside and then we turn over leadership to them.

Paul to Timothy

Paul could have gone back to Ephesus and lead the church, but he turned over leadership to Timothy. Paul allowed him to spread his wings and try things. This is precisely what we are called to do as followers of Jesus Christ. We see this throughout the scriptures.

Moses to Joshua

Moses invested in Joshua. Joshua helped Moses.

Together, they were a powerful team.

Then, Joshua took over for Moses when Moses' time was finished.

Elijah to Elisha

Then there was Elijah and Elisha.

Elijah, the great prophet of the Old Testament, and Elisha, his young understudy.

You remember that he began to turn over leadership to Elisha bit by bit.

Then, he covered him in his mantle and when Elijah was taken up to heaven a double share of Elijah's prophetic spirit descended on Elisha and he continued the work of God.

Elizabeth to Mary

In the New Testament, we find Mary and Elizabeth. When Mary finds that she is pregnant, she immediately finds her way to her older cousin, Elizabeth.

Of course, we find Paul and Timothy.

Pause

Your Investment in Others

Who is your Timothy?

Pause

Who are the young people that you are mentoring?
Who are you investing in that is younger than you?

Pause

Children and Youth Volunteers

Some of you do this volunteering with our children and youth today.
This isn't just filling spots, this is a sacred undertaking.
You are investing in young people.
You are helping to raise them up and encourage them.

Pause

Who is your Timothy?

Others Investing in You

And, who is your Paul?

Pause

I have never met someone who is successful in their field who didn't recognize that they stood on the shoulders of older people who had mentored them. The wisest people are those who said, I need to find someone who is older than I am who can help me to see, learn and understand.

This is how it is meant to work for the benefit of both Paul and Timothy.
What we see in Paul and Timothy can be true for each one of us.

Pause

Conclusion

Relationships like the one between Paul and Timothy are essential to passing the faith from one generation to the next.

Relationships like this only work because both are following Jesus.

Pause

In another of Paul's letters, Paul writes to the church of Corinth.

"Follow my example, just like I follow Christ's."²

Pause

Good News

The good news is that, as we follow Christ, the power of God at work in Paul and Timothy, is at work in us.

Key Example: Young Neighbor Invites Ailing 89-Year-Old To Move In

I recently saw a segment on NBC Nightly News that gives us a picture of something like this in our world today. Let's take a look...

[Play NBC Nightly News video]



Who is your Paul?
Who is your Timothy?

Pause

Call to Action

Whether you are older or younger, find someone of a different generation that you can walk alongside as we follow Christ together.

² 1 Corinthians 11:1, CEB.

Look to those that have gone before you to learn from their example.
Pay attention to those that are coming after you so that you can share your faith.
Fix your eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.³

Invitation

Will you pray with me?

Closing Prayer

O God, thank you for those who have been a mentor to me.

If you have a Paul in your life, you might pray for them by name.

O God, thank you for the opportunity to be an example for others

If you have a Timothy in your life, you might pray for them by name.

Forgive me, O God.
Wash me clean and make me new.
Thank you for Jesus.
Please fill me with your Spirit
and help me to follow you.
In your holy name, Amen.

³ Hebrews 12:2a, CEB