

Timothy

Timothy is Paul's spiritual son and his representative in Ephesus to serve there. He wrote him this first epistle from Macedonia, and from his last imprisonment he wrote him his second epistle. Timothy could be considered as the bishop of Ephesus, and the apostle as the supervisor of the bishop in the region that he was assigned to. From this fatherly character Paul advises his disciple and says: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young", because believers used to dignify the spiritual leader especially if he was an elder, and priests were called elders in the New Testament. Then he asks him to have some virtues as an example for all virtues.

He mentions "speech" first which refers to the pure suitable speech, and he also probably wanted Timothy to be an example in good preaching and this is what he will mention in a while.

Then he mentions "conduct" which means good morals. Some of these are words and others are behaviors, therefore do not let anyone stumble over a defected behavior. Purity, honesty and integrity are part of this behavior, and the climax is love and a song was written on love before this epistle in the first epistle to the Corinthians (chapter 13).

He doesn't have here any order of virtues because he mentions faith, the originator of love, after love. After this list he says: "devote yourself to reading". He means by that reading the Old Testament and the epistles that he wrote because the Gospel wasn't written yet. Then he insists on him to preach and teach. Preaching is what is done in the divine service, especially in the Liturgy, while teaching doesn't have any specific setting. It is organized and sequential lessons.

"Do not neglect your gift, which was given to you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you". Prophecy means here that no one takes the dignity of priesthood except through an inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Someone in Church expresses the inspiration of the Spirit. The Laying of hands is the ordination. In a time not so far from this epistle we see the whole community electing the bishops and deacons. Most probably, Paul ordained Timothy with the participation of the priests of Ephesus.

After these words, Paul makes all virtues in one package so that everyone sees Timothy's progress (Let your light shine before people). And the great Apostle asks his disciple to be diligent in these gifts and not to neglect any of them, as if he is saying that if you weren't decorated with virtues, how can you continue in your episcopate which is a divine commissioning? How do you respond to this commissioning if you were void from divine charity? What would you give the parish and people if the Lord wasn't dwelling in you through the Holy Spirit?

All of us have the right to remind any member that has a clerical position about the duty that God asks from him so that “God’s name wouldn’t be blasphemed because of you”.

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