Pastoral Letters to Timothy and Titus

It is impossible to present Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus, the so-called Pastoral letters, without dealing first with their authenticity. For over a century, many specialists have deemed it proven that they were not Paul’s but that they were written after the death of the apostles Peter and Paul, under the cover of their authority, to deal with the problems of a new generation of Christians.

However, all the hypotheses attributing these letters to a disciple of Paul writing long after him also raise serious objections. We will more readily accept their authenticity if we notice that they contain many medical terms which lead us to discern the collaboration of Luke, the physician (Col 4:14). Luke was with Paul when he wrote the second letter to Timothy (4:11). On the other hand, these letters are not only meant for Paul’s assistants; they could also be a type of circular letter that Paul wrote upon their request in order to help them to structure and to discipline the communities.

These three letters are addressed to pastors of souls, more precisely to two close collaborators of Paul and this is why, as a whole, they are called Pastoral Epistles. Like Paul, his delegates Timothy and Titus were like itinerant ministers. Although they did not enjoy the title of apostles (they were more like evangelists: 2 Tim 4:5; Acts 21:8 and Eph 4:11), they had authority over the local churches and they were particularly interested in the guidelines concerning the choice and responsibilities of their ministers or pastors.

So the organization of the Church is based on two types of ministries. The first, with Timothy and Titus as examples, extends the mission of the apostles and it enjoys apostolic authority. The others remain involved with the community that presented them to exercise their responsibilities (see Acts 6:1-5 and 1 Tim 5:22). Whether they are called episcopes (overseers), presbyters (elders) or deacons (in charge of serving), these ministers who perform a special role for the proclamation of the word and the Eucharist, continue to belong to their families and the community.

We will have to strive to understand this complementarity, considering the evolution of the Latin Church. Within a few centuries, it unified these very different ministries within the framework of a hierarchized clergy. See the commentaries on Numbers 4:1 and Hebrews 9:1 on this topic.
The choice of the people responsible for the churches was not the only objective of these letters. They provide guidelines for the life of Christian communities as they no longer expect an imminent return of Christ and they have to learn how to persevere. They also insist on fidelity to the tradition of the apostles. For the Greeks, the Christian message was just as difficult to accept, as it was for the Jews, and even people of good will heard the message (and distorted it), just as we do, through their own way of thinking. Some wanted to do better than the apostles, to choose what fit or did not fit the perspectives of their own culture. In the end, some people were taking the liberty of teaching their own doctrine. People are quick to replace the imitation of Christ by eloquent speeches!

Therefore, the successors of the apostles had to defend the doctrine—this term comes up more than once—that they had received and Paul reminds them that the cult of the word of God goes hand in hand with the fidelity to the message received from the apostles.
1 From Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus, by a command of God, our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, our hope, to Timothy, my true son in the faith. May God the Father, and Christ Jesus, our Lord, give you grace, mercy and peace.

False teachers

3 When I left for Macedonia, I urged you to remain in Ephesus, to warn certain persons not to teach false doctrine, or to concern themselves with fables and endless genealogies. These give rise to discussions, rather than promoting a better service of God, through faith. The aim of our warning is love, which comes from a pure mind, a good conscience and sincere faith.

6 Some have turned away from such motivation and have strayed into useless discussions. They claim to be teachers of the law when, in fact, they understand neither what they say nor the things they speak about.

8 We know that the law is good, as long as it serves its purpose. The law is not for the righteous, but for the lawless, and for the wicked and sinful, for those who do not respect God, and religion, for those who kill their parents, for murderers, for those who indulge in unlawful sex and homosexuality, for kidnappers and exploiters, for liars and perjurers, and for all that is contrary to sound doctrine, to the gospel of the God of glory and happiness, which was entrusted to me.

12 I give thanks to Christ Jesus, our Lord, who is my strength, who has considered me trustworthy, and appointed me to his service, although I had been a blasphemer, a persecutor and a fanatical enemy. However, he took mercy on me, because I did not know what I was doing when I opposed the faith; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, together with faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

15 This saying is true and worthy of belief: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first.

16 Because of that, I was forgiven; Christ Jesus wanted to display his utmost patience, so that I might be an example for all who are to believe, and obtain eternal life. To the King of ages, the only God, who lives beyond every perishable and visible creation—to him, be honor and glory forever. Amen!

18 Timothy, my son, I command you to fight the good fight, fulfilling the prophetic words pronounced over you. Hold onto faith and a good conscience, unlike those who, ignoring conscience, have finally wrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered to Satan, to be taught not to blaspheme.
1 Timothy 2

2 1 First of all, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for everyone, 2 for rulers of states, and all in authority, that we may enjoy a quiet and peaceful life, in godliness and respect. 3 This is good and pleases God. 4 For he wants all to be saved, and come to the knowledge of truth. 5 As there is one God, there is one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, 6 who gave his life for the redemption of all. This is the testimony, given in its proper time, 7 and of this, God has made me apostle and herald. I am not lying, I am telling the truth: He made me teacher of the nations regarding faith and truth.

8 I want the men, in every place, to lift pure hands, in prayer, to heaven, without anger and dissension.

9 Let women dress with simplicity and modesty, not adorned with fancy hairstyles, gold, jewels and expensive clothes, 10 but with good works, as is fitting for women serving God. 11 Let a woman quietly receive instruction and be submissive. 12 I allow no woman to teach, or to have authority over men. Let them be quiet. 13 For Adam was created first and then Eve. 14 Adam was not deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and fell into sin. 15 But she will be saved through motherhood, provided that her life be orderly and holy, in faith and love.

Regarding overseers and deacons

3 1 If someone aspires to the overseer’s ministry, he is, without a doubt, looking for a noble task. 2 It is necessary, that the overseer (or bishop)
be beyond reproach, the husband of one wife, responsible, judicious, of good manners, hospitable and skillful in teaching. 6 He must not be addicted to wine, or quarrelsome, but gentle and peaceful, and not a lover of money, but a man whose household is well-managed, with obedient and well-mannered children. 7 If he cannot govern his own house, how can he lead the assembly of God?

6 He must not be a recent convert, lest he become conceited, and fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover, he must enjoy a good reputation among the outsiders, lest people speak evil about him, and he fall into the snare of the devil.

8 Deacons, likewise, must be serious and sincere, and moderate in drinking wine, not greedy for money; 9 they must keep the mystery of faith with a clear conscience. 10 Let them be first tried and, if found blameless, be accepted as deacons. 11 In the same way, the women must be conscientious, not given to gossip, but reserved and trustworthy.

12 A deacon must be husband of one wife, and must know how to guide his children and manage his household. 13 Those who serve well as deacons will win honorable rank, with authority to speak of Christian faith.

14 I give you these instructions, although I hope I will see you soon. 15 If I delay, you will know how you ought to conduct yourself in the household of God, that is, the Church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth. 16 How great, indeed, is the mystery of divine blessing!

He was shown in the flesh and sanctified by the spirit; presented to the angels and proclaimed to all nations. The world believed in him: He was taken up in glory!

1 The Spirit tells us, clearly, that in the last days, some will defect from the faith, and follow deceitful spirits and devilish doctrines, led by lying hypocrites, whose consciences have been branded with the stamp of infamy.

3 These persons forbid marriage, and condemn the use of certain foods, which God created for those who

• 14. This short paragraph reminds us that, if indeed we are in charge of the Church of God, we are neither its founders nor its masters. The Church was born through a merciful intervention of God, when he decided that his Son should identify with the human race, as is expressed in this short poem.

Here we use divine blessing (v. 16) for a word that we translated elsewhere as “piety” or “religion” (see 2:2; 4:7; 6:3; 5; 6; 2 Tim 3:5 and Tit 1:1). In those years, the word was mostly used to mean a loving attitude toward the Father and neighbors, characteristic of true believers who simply imitate God’s example.

The Church is the pillar and foundation of the truth (v. 15). We must understand this phrase as referring to the concepts of that time: from above, from a world in which everything is truth, God lowers his Truth to the earth, as a column or a visible sign on which we can lean. In spite of all the infidelities of the Church, God uses it to preserve true knowledge of the Father, the Son and the Spirit in the world. Without this knowledge, people cannot be free, nor can humanity reach its maturity.

4.1 After the death of the apostles, new masters who tamper with the faith appear in the Church.

One of the numerous errors of these people is to despise all that comes from the body: they condemn marriage, forbid meat and wine. Concerning marriage, see the Introduction to Colossians. For those who said matter comes from evil powers whereas souls come from God who is good, having children was to imprison in an evil body souls which later would have to be saved. This is why they condemned, not sexual relations but marriage and procreation. In this contempt of the body and of a nature created by God, there is nothing Christian (see Col 2:23).

In the last days: these are the days beginning with Jesus’ resurrection and stretching to his second coming (Heb 1:2; Jas 5:3).

The Spirit tells us clearly. The prophets of the Church often predicted that people would
who know the truth, and which the believers receive with thanksgiving. 4 Everything created by God is good, and all food is lawful; nothing is to be rejected, if we receive it with thanksgiving, 5 for it is blessed with the word of God, and prayer, and made holy.

If you explain these things to the brothers and sisters, you will prove to be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the teachings of faith, and the sound doctrine that you have followed. 7 Reject irreligious fables and old wives’ tales. Train yourself in godliness. 8 Physical training is of limited value; godliness, instead, is useful in every way, holding promise for the present life and for the life to come. 9 Here, you have a sure doctrine you can trust. 10 We toil and endure, because we trust in the living God, the Savior of all, especially of those who believe.

come to preach their own theories, and not authentic faith. 4 The believers receive with thanksgiving (v. 3). From the beginning, it was the custom in Christian families to give thanks to God at the family meal.

Train yourself in godliness (v. 7). Here we have another danger. Contrary to teachers who despise life and want us to live as strange characters, there are others who are totally absorbed in external things. In the Greco–Roman world there was much enthusiasm for sports and races. Without despising the body we are asked to check if we give each part the importance it deserves and the time corresponding to it.

• 11. Faced with all these false teachers, Timothy must be an example of a true apostle. Let no one reproach you on account of your youth. Be a model to the believers, in the way you speak and act, in your love, your faith and purity of life. 13 Devote yourself to reading, preaching and teaching, until I come.

14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift conferred on you with prophetic words, when the elders laid their hands upon you. 15 Think about it, and practice it, so that your progress may be seen by all. 16 Take heed of yourself, and attend to your teaching. Be steadfast in doing this, and you will save both yourself and your hearers.

The widows in the Church

5 • 1 Do not rebuke an older man; on the contrary, advise him, as if he were your father. Treat the young

Advice to Timothy

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The widows in the Church

5 • 1 Do not rebuke an older man; on the contrary, advise him, as if he were your father. Treat the young
as your brothers, the elder women, as mothers and the young girls, as your sisters, with great purity.

3 Take care of widows who are really widows. If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should, first, learn their family duties, and give their parents financial help. This is correct and pleases God.

5 A true widow is one who, on being left alone, has set her hope on God, praying day and night to God, and asking him for help. On the contrary, a widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Warn them about this, that they may be blameless. Those who do not take care of their own, especially those of their household, have denied the faith, and are worse than unbelievers.

6 Let no one be put on the list of widows unless she is sixty years old and has been married only once. She must be commended for her good works and the education of her children. Has she offered hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, helped the suffering and practiced other good deeds?

Paul sees three kinds of widows: some did not need help from the Church because they had relatives; others did need Church assistance. Finally, there were some, with or without the help of the Church, who were in charge of certain functions.

A true widow is one who, in being left alone, has set her hope in God (v. 5). We should read what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7 concerning the greater freedom celibates have to serve the Lord. Every baptized person is called to belong totally to Christ. If, through circumstances of life, we are alone again and free from family responsibilities, this may be an invitation from God to dedicate ourselves completely to the service of the Church and to constant prayer.

If today retired Christians looked into their lives in the light of God’s presence, the Church would have more leaders and missionaries than are necessary.

They deserve condemnation... (v. 12). This means that by leaving her position and marrying, the “widow” of the third category broke a commitment she had made publicly. The “widows” were dedicated to the service of Christ in the same way as religious women of today.

11 Do not accept younger widows; they may have other desires than for Christ and want to marry; then they deserve condemnation, for breaking their first commitment. Besides, they form the habit of being idle, going from house to house. And it is not just idleness! They become gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.

14 So I want young widows to marry and have children, to rule their household and give adversaries no grounds for criticism. Some have already strayed, to follow Satan. If any Christian woman has widows in her family, let her assist them; in this way, the church will not be burdened, and may assist those who are truly widows.

Regarding the presbyters

17 Let the elders, who preside well, receive double compensation, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. Scripture says: Do not muzzle the ox while it threshes grain, and: The worker deserves his wages.

19 Do not accept accusations against an elder except on the evidence of two...
or three witnesses. \(\text{If he continues to sin, rebuke him in the presence of the community, as a warning to the rest.}\)

\(\text{Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, thus becoming an accomplice in the sins of others. Keep yourself free from blame.}\) The sins of some people are plain to see, even before they are examined; the sins of others are known only later on. \(\text{Likewise, good deeds are conspicuous; even when they are not, they cannot remain hidden.}\)

\(\text{(Do not drink only water but take a little wine to help your digestion, because of your frequent illness.)}\)

\(\text{Let those who are slaves always show respect to their masters, so that no one may speak ill of God and his teaching.}\) Those, whose masters are Christians, should not show less respect, under the pretext that, they are members of the church. On the contrary, they must give a better service, since they are doing good works, on behalf of believers, and dear friends.

### Love of money

Teach and stress these things. \(\text{Whoever teaches in some other way, not following the sound teaching of our Lord Christ Jesus, and true religious instruction,}\) is conceited, and understands nothing. This one is crazy about controversies and discussions, that result in envy, insults, blows and constant arguments between people of depraved minds, and far from the truth. For them, religion is merely for financial gain.

\(\text{In reality, religion is a treasure, if we are content with what we have.}\) Let us, then, be content with having food and clothing. \(\text{Those who strive to be rich fall into temptations and traps. A lot of foolish and harmful ambitions plunge them into ruin and destruction.}\)

\(\text{Indeed, the love of money is the root of every evil. Because of this greed, some have wandered away from the faith, bringing on themselves afflictions of every kind.}\)

faith needed strong discipline in order for them to remain faithful to their commitments. Besides when have leaders of communities not caused problems?

In verse 18 note the quotation of the Gospel: “the worker deserves his wages” (Lk 10:7). This passage shows us that when this letter was written, toward the year 90 A.D., the Gospels were already considered “Scripture.”

At the beginning and end of the chapter, the author insists on faithfulness to tradition. Faith is not a doctrine that can be adapted to one’s tastes. Leaders are required to have a respectful and humble attitude toward this treasure entrusted to them to be transmitted to others. We can already see two faults:

- instead of deepening faith, some multiply words;
- some replace surrender to God’s word with a critical attitude that attempts to judge faith and decide if it agrees with their own ideas.

Money is mentioned twice (6:10 and 6:17-19). After the first years of enthusiastic faith, the Church finds that, even for believers, everything is lost when love for money persists. That is the drama in certain countries where solid Christian groups have been caught up with the best of society in the pursuit of money: faith continues to be important for them but this faith only motivates fidelity to religious practice. Money that has become our security lessens our trust in God (6:10) and isolates us from others.

The pastors of the Church should be the most aware of the danger (6:11). Salvation for them will be to place themselves in the less secure areas of life and society, where an act of faith is constantly necessary to overcome difficulties and joyously accept sacrifices (v. 12). It is not in seeking first of all our personal fulfillment that we become God’s agent and a witness of Christ, as he himself has been the witness of the Father (6:13).

Paul calls upon Timothy to avoid all those dangers and remain true to faith and free from greed. By doing so, he will be “a man of God,” a witness of Christ.
11 But you, man of God, shun all this. Strive to be holy and godly. Live in faith and love, with endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith and win everlasting life, to which you were called, when you made the good profession of faith, in the presence of so many witnesses.

13 Now, in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Jesus Christ, who expressed before Pontius Pilate the authentic profession of faith: 14 preserve the revealed message to all. Keep yourself pure and blameless, until the glorious coming of Christ Jesus, our Lord, 15 who God will bring about at the proper time; he, the magnificent sovereign, King of kings and Lord of lords. 16 To him, alone, immortal, who lives in unapproachable light, and whom no one has ever seen or can see, to him, be honor and power, for ever and ever. Amen!

17 Command the rich of this world not to be arrogant, or to put their trust in the uncertainty of wealth. Let them, rather, trust in God, who generously gives us all we need for our happiness. 18 Let them do good, be rich in good deeds, and be generous; let them share with others. 19 In this way, they shall heap up a sound capital for the future, and gain true life.

20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you; avoid useless and profane words, as well as discussions arising from false knowledge. 21 Some have lost the faith in accepting such knowledge.

The grace of God be with you all.
Read the introduction to the first letter to Timothy.

While the first letter to Timothy showed us that Paul was still free to move about, he wrote this letter from one of his prisons. Which one? One of Paul’s remarks about the Christians who assisted him (2 Tim 1:17) seems to suggest Rome. That would be around the years 61–63 A.D., or even later, during Paul’s second captivity in Rome shortly before he was condemned to death. However, this traditional interpretation was based on a bad translation of this passage. The themes of this letter show that it must have been written from Caesarea where Paul was detained before governor Felix (Acts 24). The letter would have come only a few months after the first one.

Paul speaks about his being a prisoner, a new situation that threatens to be ongoing. Then he focuses his attention on the place of failure and suffering within God’s plan. Apparent failure of many Christian lives after a conversion and promising beginnings and the suffering of the apostle in chains on account of the Gospel. At times, he envisions the worst and appears ready to sacrifice his life, as in Philippians 1:20. But at other times, he comes back to the conviction that we also read in Philippians 1:19: this captivity forms part of his mission and it will enable him to bear witness to the Gospel before the highest authorities of the Roman Empire.

Some people think Paul could not have written Chapter 3: it seems foreign to Paul’s style and his concerns. We can easily compare 2 Timothy 3:1-5 with two paragraphs of Romans 1:29-32 and 3:10-19 and see that there is nothing new here. And the rest of this chapter takes up what we read in Romans 15:5 and 13. The style of this chapter might be surprising if it had been a letter meant to remain private but this is certainly not the case. Even though he was addressing Timothy, Paul knew that the letter, not devoid of rhetoric, would be read.

Let us not forget that since leaving Miletus and even more after his arrest in the temple (Acts 21:27), Paul had turned the page. He had said goodbye to the Jewish world as well as to the Greek world that he knew and loved. He was not mistaken to foresee a rather dark future.

Timothy was the first and the most loved of Paul’s assistants. Paul would like to pass on to him his own strength and apostolic conviction. Therefore, Paul reminds him that meditation and knowledge of the word of God form the foundation of a life of faith and of apostolic activity.
1 From Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God, for the sake of his promise of eternal life, in Christ Jesus, to my dear son Timothy.

May grace, mercy and peace be with you, from God, the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord.

God did not give us a spirit of bashfulness

1 I give thanks to God, whom I serve with a clear conscience, the way my ancestors did, as I remember you constantly, day and night, in my prayers. I recall your tears, and I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, so like the faith of your grandmother Lois and of your mother Eunice, which I am sure you have inherited.

6 For this reason, I invite you to fan into a flame, the gift of God you received, through the laying on of my hands. For God did not confer on us a spirit of fearfulness, but of strength, love and good judgment. Do not be ashamed of testifying to our Lord, nor of seeing me in chains. On the contrary, do your share in laboring for the gospel, with the strength of God. He saved us and called us—a calling which proceeds from his holiness. This did not depend on our merits, but on his generosity and his own initiative. This calling, given to us from all time, in Christ Jesus has just been manifested with the glorious appearance of Christ Jesus, our Lord, who destroyed death, and brought life and immortality to light, in his gospel. Of this message, I was made herald, apostle and teacher.

12 For its sake, I now suffer this trial, but I am not ashamed, for I know in whom I have believed, and I am convinced, that he is capable of taking care of all I have entrusted to him, until that day.

13 Follow the pattern of the sound doctrine which you have heard from me, concerning faith, and love in Christ Jesus. Keep this precious deposit, with the help of the Holy Spirit, who lives within us.

15 You must know, that those from Asia have turned away from me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord show his mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often comforted me, and was not ashamed when he found out that I was in prison. On the contrary, he showed courage, searched for me and found me. May the Lord grant, that he find mercy on that day. You know better than I, all the services he rendered in Ephesus.

Labor like a good soldier of Christ

1 You, my son, be strong with the grace you have in Christ
Jesus. 2 Entrust to reliable people everything you have learned from me in the presence of many witnesses, that they may instruct others.

3 Labor like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier gets involved in civilian trade; the soldier’s aim is to please his commanding officer. 5 No athlete is crowned, unless he competes according to the rules. 6 And again, the farmer who tills the land is the first to enjoy the fruits of the harvest. 7 Think over what I am telling you; the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

8 Remember Christ Jesus, risen from the dead, Jesus, son of David, as preached in my gospel. 9 For this gospel I labor, and even wear chains like an evildoer, but the word of God is not chained. 10 And, so, I bear everything, for the sake of the chosen people, that they, too, may obtain the salvation given to us, in Christ Jesus, and share eternal glory. 11 This statement is true:

If we have died with him, we shall also live with him;

If we endure with him, we shall reign with him;

If we deny him, he will also deny us;

12 If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself.

Do not fight over words

13 If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself.

Do not fight over words

14. Remind your people of these things, and urge them, in the presence of God, not to fight over words, which does no good, but only ruins those who listen. 15 Be for God, an active and proven minister, a blameless worker, correctly handling the word of truth. 16 Do not take part in useless conversations, alien to the faith. This leads to a greater impiety. 17 Such teaching spreads like gangrene: I am thinking of Hymeneus and Philetus. 18 They strayed from the truth, holding that the resurrection has already taken place; and with this, they upset the faith of some. 19 But the solid foundations laid by God are not shaken; on them, it is written: The Lord knows those who are his, and: Let him who confesses the name of the Lord turn away from evil.

20 In a large house, we find, not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay. Some are reserved for special uses, others, for ordinary ones. 21 All who clean themselves of what I speak of, will become a noble
vessel, useful to the Lord, prepared for any holy purpose.

So shun the passions of youth and seek righteousness, faith, love and peace, together with those who call upon the Lord with a pure heart. Avoid stupid and senseless discussions, since such are the cause of misunderstanding.

God’s servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to all, always teaching, and patient with those who do not understand, and gently correcting opponents; perhaps God may grant them to repent and discover the truth, withdrawing them from the snare of the devil, who held them captive to his own will.

Be quite sure, that there will be difficult times in the last days. People will become selfish, lovers of money, boastful, conceited, gossips, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy. They will be unable to love and to forgive; they will be slanderers, without self-control, cruel, enemies of good, traitors, shameless, full of pride, more in love with pleasure than with God. They will keep the appearance of piety, while rejecting its demands. Keep away from such people.

Of the same kind, are those who enter houses and captivate weak women, full of sins, swayed by all kinds of passion, who are always learning, but never grasping knowledge of the truth. These people of corrupt mind and false faith, oppose the truth, just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses. Yet, they may not go very far, for their folly will be clear to all, as in the case of those two.

You, instead, have closely followed my teaching, my way of life, my projects, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions and sufferings. You know what happened to me at Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. How many trials I had to bear! Yet, the Lord rescued me from them all.

All who want to serve God, in Christ
Jesus, will be persecuted; 13 while evil persons and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

14 As for you, continue with what you have learned, and what has been entrusted to you, knowing from whom you received it. 15 Besides, you have known the Scriptures from childhood; they will give you the wisdom that leads to salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God, and is useful for teaching, refuting error, for correcting and training in Christian life. 17 Through Scripture, the man of God is made expert and thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Preach the word

1 In the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by the hope I have of his coming, and his kingdom, I urge you 2 to preach the word, in season and out of season, reproving, rebuking, or advising, always with patience, and providing instruction. 3 For the time is coming, when people will no longer endure sound doctrine, but, following their passions, they will surround themselves with teachers to please their itching ears. 4 And they will abandon the truth to hear fables. 5 So be prudent, do not mind your labor, give yourself to your work as an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

6 As for me, I am already poured out as a libation, and the moment of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the just judge, will reward me, on that day, and not only me, but all those who have longed for his glorious coming.

Final greetings

9 Do your best to come to me quickly. 10 You must know, that Demas has deserted me, for the love of this world: he returned to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke remains with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is a useful helper in my work. 12 I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

13 Bring with you the cloak I left at Troas, in Carpos’ house, and also the scrolls, especially the parchments. 14 Alexander, the metalworker, has caused me great harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. 15 Distrust him, for he has been very much opposed to our preaching.

16 At my first hearing in court, no one supported me; all deserted me. May the Lord not hold it against them. 17 But the Lord was at my side, giving me strength, to proclaim the word fully, and let all the pagans hear it. So I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. 18 The Lord will save me from all evil, bringing me to his heavenly there we find the truth of God, and not in the exactitude of details and literary form, which we necessarily must adapt to our modern language.

Above all we must remember that the Word of God is the normal nourishment of faith. It is not only useful for teaching: Scripture reading has the value of a sacrament for the faithful. No preaching, no catechism even though “biblical” can replace the frequent meditative reading of the word of God for the development of faith.

• 4.1 Preach the Word (v. 2): this is Paul’s last advice. It must be the first concern of the Church and of any church leader.

Paul knows that he will not be freed and that he will be condemned to death. He embraces his own sacrifice just as Jesus did.

We find the comparison of the soldier and the athlete that Paul liked so much. In those days athletes received a crown of laurels as a symbol of immortality: As for me, I am already poured out as a libation, and the moment of my departure has come (v. 6).
kingdom. Glory to him for ever and ever. Amen!

19 Greetings to Prisca and Aquila, and to the family of Onesiphorus.
20 Erastus remained in Corinth. I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.

21 Try to come here before the winter. Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers and sisters send you greetings. 22 The Lord be with your spirit. May grace be with you all.