

1: Majoring on the Minors

worship

Spend a moment or two in quietness before you begin

Holy One, dwell within us. **Whisper in our ears;**
Glimmer in our vision; **Write upon our hearts.**
We wait **with open ears, open eyes, open hearts. Amen**

Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus to sort out problems in the young church, and there Paul writes to him. Most epistles are written to whole churches, but this one is just to Timothy. If the book of Ephesians deals with the high-level 'why?' and 'what?' of the faith, Paul's letter to Timothy deals with the 'how'. A question that will reoccur is how much of the 'how' applies to this specific situation and how much it applies to every church of every age and every context.

open it

Think back over your Christian experience.

What have been some of things that used to be seen as normal which are now not practiced? Or maybe things that our forebears would have considered unacceptable which are now common practice in the church? Try not to be critical, but think about things **you** used to do, or believe, that are different now. **How do we cope with these changes?** What processes precipitate these changes?

read it 1 Timothy 1.3-11

Paul had founded the church at Ephesus a few years before this letter to Timothy was written (around 65AD) and it seems that there were some Christians from a Jewish background who were having trouble making the changes faith in Jesus required. From our previous conversations we might understand some of their reasons, but Paul calls them 'false teachers' nevertheless.

What is the purpose of Paul's teaching? v5

What is Paul's complaint against the 'false teachers'? v6-7

Jesus made a similar point against the Pharisees, see Matthew 23.24. **Are there any ways the church today 'strains for a gnat and swallows a camel?'**

live it

Think again about verse 5. **What, in practical ways might a pure heart, a clear conscience and genuine faith look like?** Be specific!

On Sunday, we talked about those who showed a lack of love listed in verses 8-11. **Would you add anything to the list for a contemporary audience?** Again, be specific!

Paul finishes this section by referring to "the glorious Good News entrusted to me by our blessed God." v10 **How would you explain this Good News in a couple of sentences?**

pray it

Help us, O Lord, to love others when they are power hungry.

Help us, O Lord, to love others when they are inconsiderate.

Help us, O Lord, to love others when they are angry and lash out blindly.

Help us, O Lord, to love others when they are selfish and insensitive.

Help us, O Lord, **to love others so that we may abide in your love and act like the friends of Jesus. Amen.**