

**Mid-Morning
August 15, 2017
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Themes and Threads of the Holy Bible: Paul's Prison and Pastoral Epistles

Prison Epistles

Ephesians

Date: 62-63 AD

To: The Universal Church

God's Love (Ephesians 1:1-2:22)
God's Plan (Ephesians 3:1-4:31)
Relationships (Ephesians 5:1-6:9)
Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-24)

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Have you ever considered that you are God's masterpiece? What has He painted on the canvas of your heart? Some clues lie in your answers to the following questions: What makes you cry? What energizes you? What would you do, regardless of the outcome, because you love it so much? God has uniquely created you with desires and gifts to do good. What can you do today to develop and distribute those gifts?

Philippians

Date: 62-63 AD

To: The Church in Philippi, which consisted of mostly women. Philippi was named after Alexander the Great's father, Philip of Macedon in 356 BC.

Joy in Suffering (Philippians 1:1-30)
Joy in Serving (Philippians 2:1-30)
Joy in Believing (Philippians 3:1-21)
Joy in Giving (Philippians 4:1-23)

Key Verses:

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:3-5).

"And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith" (Philippians 3:9).

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Next time you worry, first thank God for the opportunity to find joy in Him, as you identify with the sufferings of Christ. Try the *Philippians 4:13 Experiment* and do everything through Christ, who will restore your heart. Trust in Christ the Giver, not the gifts, by being content enough to give your time, talent, and treasure to someone in need to advance His kingdom. You might give to a church, a Christian school, a youth organization, or even spend time with a young person needing guidance. Worry is the problem; prayer is the solution; and peace is the result, peace with God, peace with others, and peace within ourselves, discovering true contentment in Christ-sufficiency. Fully surrendering our lives to Christ brings us joy that empowers us to trust in the Giver, generously sharing with others in need because we believe in God's restoration of our hearts and our resources.

Colossians

Date: 62-63 AD

To: The Church in Colossae, a small town east of Ephesus on both sides of the Lycos River. Colossae would be destroyed in an earthquake during Nero's reign.

Supremacy of Christ (Colossians 1:1-2:15)

Scriptures (Colossians 2:16-3:11)

People of God (Colossians 3:12-4:18)

Key Verses:

"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14).

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Colossians 3:23).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Are you holding on to the pain caused by a sin someone has committed against you? Christ paid a debt He did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay. Therefore, let go of withholding forgiveness by surrendering all your heart to the Forgiver in you. He will make you new again and empower you to restore others as you follow Him wholeheartedly.

Philemon

Date: 62-63 AD

To: Philemon, most likely a wealthy member of the Colossian church, regarding Onesimus a runaway slave

Greet with Grace and Peace (Philemon 1-3)

Share Love and Faith (Philemon 4-7)

Welcome, Receive, Forgive, and Restore (Philemon 8-25)

Key Verse:

"I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ" (Philemon 6).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

How many times in the last month have you shared your faith? For many of us, the answer is zero. Pray for someone by name, asking God to open a door for you to share the grace and wisdom of Christ within the next thirty days.

Pastoral Epistles

1 Timothy

Date: 63-64 AD

To: Timothy, pastor of the Church at Ephesus, who met Paul during his third missionary journey

Warnings (1 Timothy 1:1-2:15)

Worship (1 Timothy 3:1-4:16)

Attitudes (1 Timothy 5:1-6:10)

The Good Fight (1 Timothy 6:11-21)

Key Verses:

“If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).

“Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:12).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Why is the church so important to God? Read 1 Timothy, make a list of the reasons you see, and then examine how you can serve in your local body of believers. It might be teaching a class, volunteering in a ministry, starting a new outreach, or simply praying for your pastor.

2 Timothy

Date: 63-64 AD

To: Timothy, pastor of the Church at Ephesus, believed to be Paul’s last letter

Doctrine: Foundations of Christian Service (2 Timothy 1:1-2:26)

Duty: Enduring Difficult Circumstances (2 Timothy 3:1-4:22)

Key Verses:

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Timothy 2:2).

“Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the LORD out of a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22).

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Would you like to disciple someone? Pursue the righteousness, faith, love, and peace of Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to identify anything in your heart that represents a desire for life apart from Him. After it is revealed, confess the sin and receive restoration to reflect the pure heart of Christ. Next, pursue the heart

of another person for discipleship. Meet weekly for an hour to study the Bible and pray together, so that both of you will be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Titus

Date: 63 AD

To: Titus, pastor of the Church at Crete

Church Leadership (Titus 1:1-16)

Righteous Living in the Church (Titus 2:1-15)

Righteous Living in Society (Titus 3:1-15)

Key Verse:

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11).

“But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:4-7).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Is there anything old in your life you would like to be made new again? Perhaps it is your soul. If so, make today the day you are renewed by the Holy Spirit through a fully surrendered relationship in Jesus Christ. He will use you to bring His hope of eternal life to everyone you encounter.