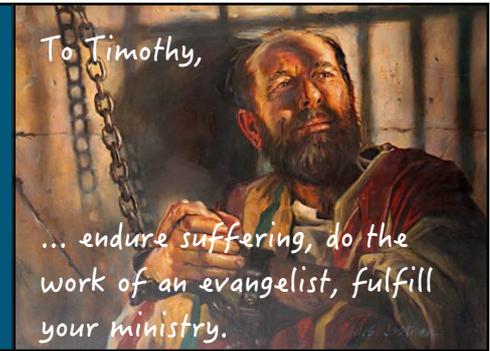


2 Timothy

Fulfill Your Ministry

Lesson 1



2 Timothy is Paul's second letter to Timothy and part of what is sometimes called the "Pastoral Epistles." By carefully reading 2 Timothy we find that Paul is a prisoner as he writes, that his first defense is over (4:16,17), and he knows he will be executed in the near future (4:6).

The clues we find in Scripture along with tradition causes us to believe that Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome about the year AD 63. He wrote 1 Timothy from Macedonia around the year AD 65 and he continued to travel and preach until he was rearrested around AD 66. It is believed that Paul was martyred during the reign of Nero in AD 67 or AD 68. 2 Timothy then was written from a Roman prison a short time before his death and is Paul's last letter.

Paul knows he will soon be put to death and writes Timothy, his son in the faith, to encourage him to carry on the work of the ministry. We glimpse the heart of Paul who in the face of imminent death is concerned for Timothy and for the continuing spread of the gospel.

Outline of 2 Timothy

1. Prove Your Faith (ch. 1)
2. Protect Your Faith (ch. 2)
3. Practice Your Faith (ch. 3)
4. Preach and Proclaim Your Faith (ch. 4)

(Outline by Gareth Reese)

Greeting 1:1-2

Paul names himself as the author immediately in verse 1 and stresses his authority as an apostle. His apostleship was not his choosing, but came to him directly by the will of God. He proclaimed the message of life that is available to all in Christ Jesus.

With the love of a father for a son, Paul calls Timothy, "*my beloved child.*"¹ Paul had been close to Timothy since his conversion in Lystra during Paul's first missionary journey. Later Timothy worked with Paul and the closeness of their relationship is seen in the tender wording of this address and in the fact that Paul chose to write his last letter to Timothy. Though he hopes to see Timothy he knows this could be their last communication.

1. If you were about to die for your faith, to whom would you write and what would you say?

¹ All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

2. What three blessings does Paul identify in 1:2 and from where do they originate?

Paul's Prayer for Timothy 1:3-5



Paul wants Timothy to know that he was praying for him. The primary benefit is that God himself hears and answers prayers. He is able to strengthen Timothy. The second benefit is the encouragement that came to Timothy in knowing that a beloved brother and mentor loves him and prays for him. Paul didn't idly mention Timothy in prayer, but he prayed for him constantly night and day.

3. Whom do you pray for daily? What do you ask the Lord to do for them?

We should be praying for others daily and our prayers should go beyond the simple and physical. Yes, we pray for a person's physical health and needs, but more important is that we pray for their spiritual growth and well-being.

Near the end of his life Paul can reflect that Christianity is not a new religion, but continues to worship the God of his ancestors. He looks over his life with a clear conscience. He had done all he could to serve God to the best of his abilities and in faithfulness to his call. He could look at his ministry without regrets.

As Paul remembers Timothy, he does so with great emotion moving him to tears. He loved Timothy as a son and longs to see him. Their closeness stems from Paul's leading him to Christ, mentoring him, and working along side him. Working for the cause of Christ with another creates a strong and lasting bond with that person.

Paul wanted to be with Timothy and share with him face to face. In 2 Timothy 4:9 Paul urges Timothy, "*Do your best to come to me soon.*" A few verses farther in 2 Timothy 4:21 he will say, "*Do your best to come before winter.*" Christian brothers and sisters who love each other and share a common labour will naturally want to spend as much time together as possible. In this time of imprisonment awaiting execution nothing would strengthen Paul like sharing with his son in the faith.

4. Do you have the type of relationship with another Christian that Paul shared with Timothy? Describe that relationship or why you don't have such a relationship.

In verse 5, Paul writes of a heritage of faith. His own faith came to him from his ancestors while Timothy's grandmother and mother were women of faith. Parents and grandparents can have a lifelong impact on a child's spiritual development. Timothy shared a "*sincere*" faith with his mother and grandmother. There was nothing in their faith that was false or self-serving.

5. Describe the influence a Christian family can have on the faith of their children and grandchildren? (See also Proverbs 22:6)



Use Your Gift 1:6-7

Paul reminds Timothy to use the gift that was given to him by God through the laying on of the apostle's hands. We can't be sure that Timothy was neglecting his gift, but Paul reinforces the principle that gifts that are used grow and those which go unused wither. The picture Paul gives is that of a fire which is fanned to produce a larger and hotter flame. It is possible that Timothy had become discouraged with Paul in prison and needed to rekindle his passion to serve Christ.

We do not know the nature of the gift that Timothy had been given, but 1 Timothy 4:14 mentions a gift given to Timothy when the elders laid their hands on him. We can assume that Paul was there surrounded by the elders and that Paul in his apostolic office conferred some spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit upon Timothy. While we are not told exactly what gift Timothy was given we can assume it was related to his work as an evangelist.²

Timothy's weakness seemed to be fear or timidity; or cowardice as this word is sometimes translated. It is quite possible that Timothy's personality was one of shyness and that he was not naturally outgoing like Paul. While this may be the case the gospel message requires a measure of boldness if it is to impact this world.

Fear or timidity is one of the greatest barriers that Satan has erected to keep us from living strong Christian lives and sharing our faith with others. In many ways we can be robbed of the power and victories that we could have if not for our own fear or timidity. Each of us have different personalities, and some will be more reserved than others, but all of us must have enough strength in our trust of God to boldly serve him to the best of our abilities.

6. What does Revelation 21:8 say about the cowardly?

7. Why did the one talent man bury his talent in Matthew 25:25?

Timothy's mentor was languishing in prison about to be executed. Timothy had faced false teachers in Ephesus. Life was difficult and threatening. Paul writes to encourage Timothy to stand up, use his gifts, and overcome his fears. From time to time all of us need to be encouraged to act in faith trusting God to take care of the results.

² It is possible the events of 1 Tim 4:14 and 2 Tim 1:6 are two separate "laying on of hands." If this is the case perhaps the Holy Spirit imparts a gift through Paul's hands and the elders lay hands on Timothy to set him apart as an evangelist.

Paul tells Timothy that fear does not come from God, but rather God gives a spirit “of power, love, and self-control.” These three characteristics describe a mature Christian faith.

A Spirit of Power

Christians can forget the power that we have at our disposal. The word for power is *dunamis* from which we get the English word “dynamite.”

Paul wrote to the Romans that the gospel is the “*power of God for salvation.*”³ In 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 we read, “*For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.*”

We are a people who have tremendous power available to us. We can approach the throne of God in prayer any time we want. We can read the Word of God which teaches us how to live and how to prepare for eternity. We live with the power of clear conscience because God has forgiven us of our sins. We share fellowship in the church which was designed by God for our benefit and strengthening. God's Holy Spirit resides within us as Christians. We live in the power of anticipation of eternity with Christ in heaven. What power is available to us! We should not be fearful.

A Spirit of Love

In addition to power, Christians have love. Paul's love for the lost moved him to dedicate his life to traveling the world telling others of Christ at the risk of his own life. Paul's love for Timothy caused him to reach out with instruction and encouragement.

Love stands in stark contrast to fear which cares for self and does not want to be embarrassed. Love cares for others more than self. The love God has for mankind is described in John 3:16 the most well known verse in the Bible.

8. What does Christ's love do for Christians according to 2 Corinthians 5:14-15?

A Spirit of Self-Control

Finally as Christians we are given a spirit of self-control. We need to know that as Christians we do not have to act on every desire. We do not have to hold on to anger. We can overcome temptation. We grow in spiritual discipline.

Paul greets Timothy and challenges him to use his gifts and to demonstrate a mature faith that stands up to the challenges he will face. Every Christian should strive to develop power, love, and self-control so that we might successfully fulfill our ministries.

³ Romans 1:16.