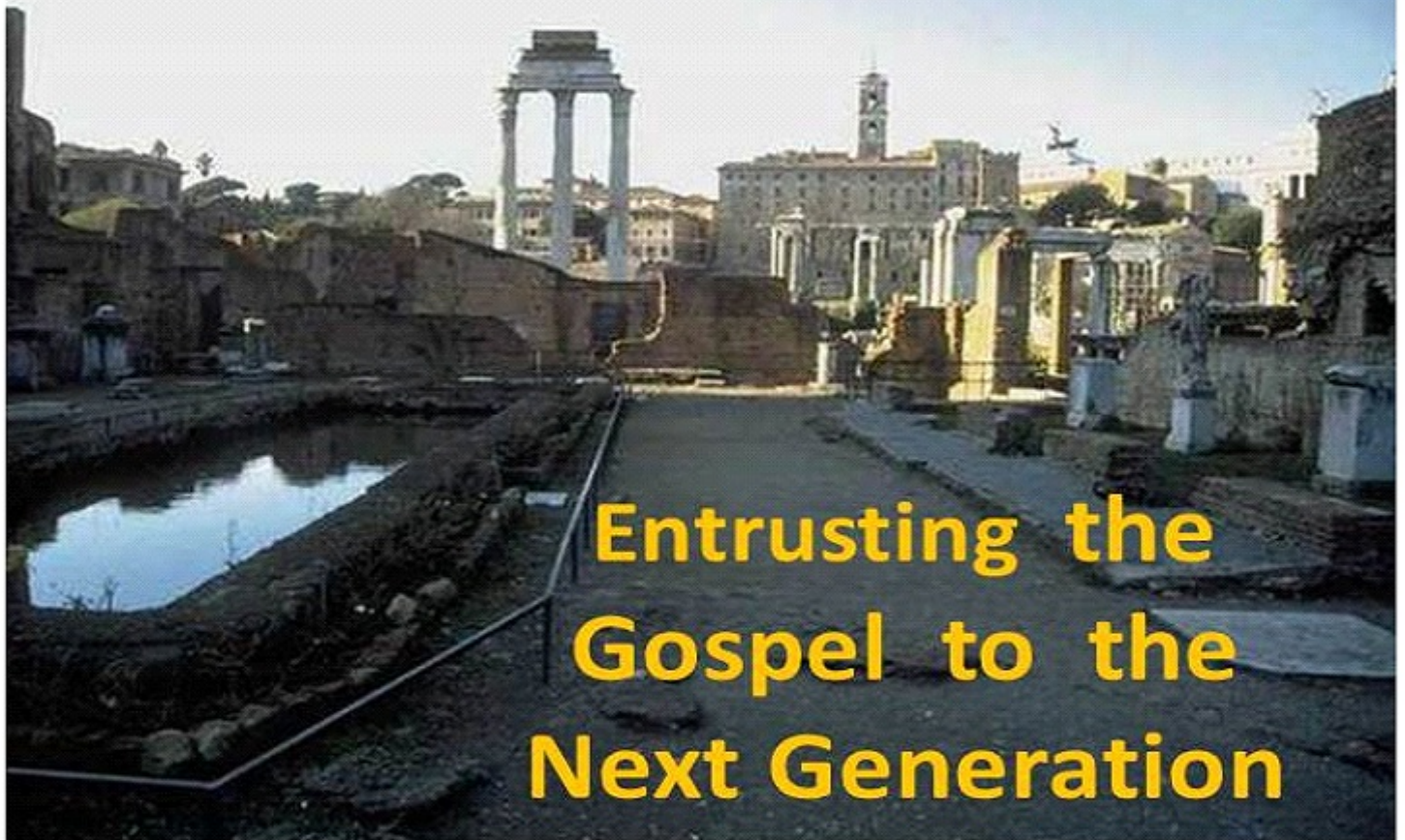


2 Timothy



**Entrusting the
Gospel to the
Next Generation**

The Forum Terrace Church of Christ

Adult Sunday Morning Bible Class Fall Quarter 2021

by Daniel R. Vess

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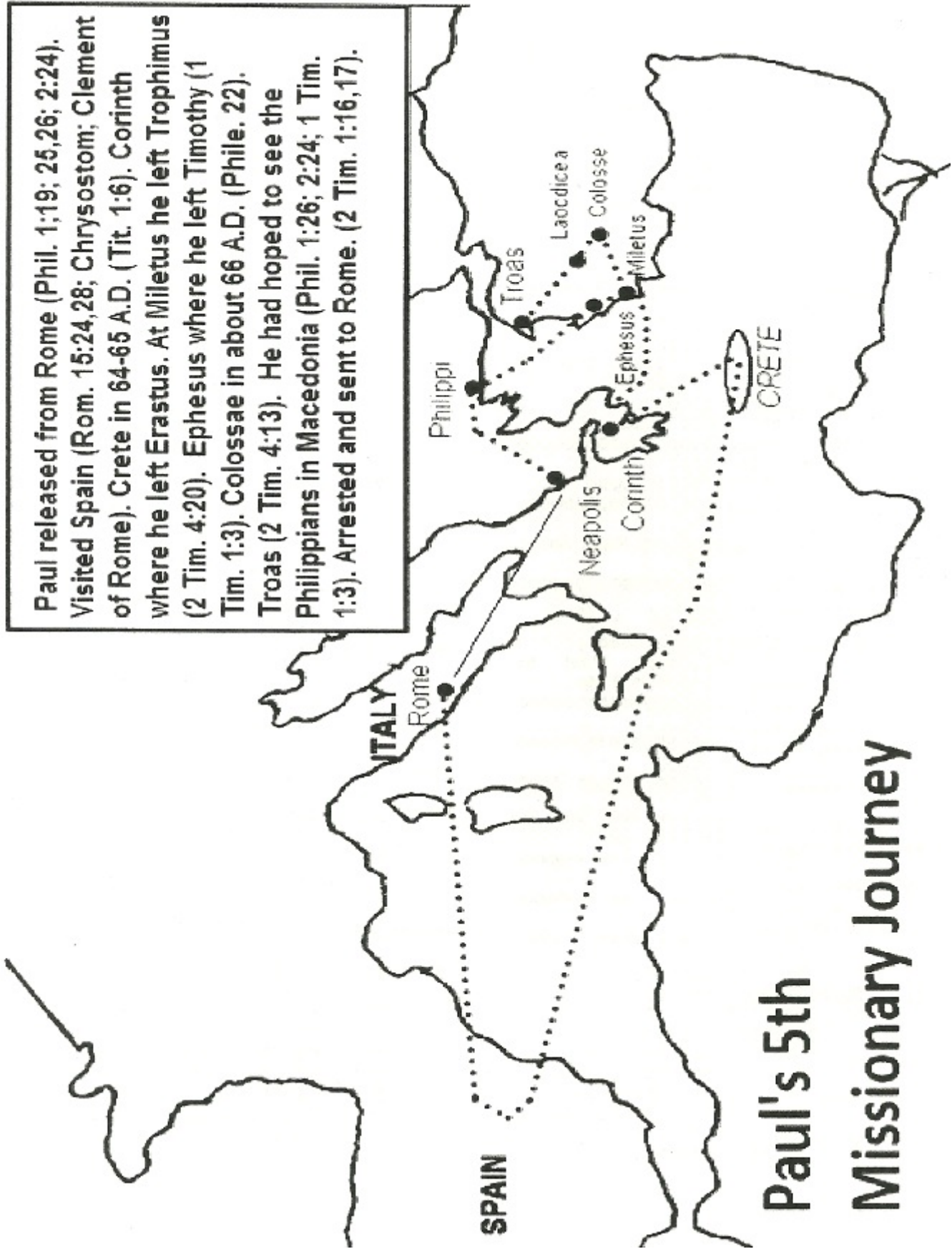
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Paul released from Rome (Phil. 1:19; 25,26; 2:24).
 Visited Spain (Rom. 15:24,28; Chrysostom; Clement of Rome). Crete in 64-65 A.D. (Tit. 1:6). Corinth where he left Erastus. At Miletus he left Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20). Ephesus where he left Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3). Colossae in about 66 A.D. (Phile. 22). Troas (2 Tim. 4:13). He had hoped to see the Philippians in Macedonia (Phil. 1:26; 2:24; 1 Tim. 1:3). Arrested and sent to Rome. (2 Tim. 1:16,17).



Paul's 5th Missionary Journey

Introduction to 2 Timothy

2 Timothy 1:1,2

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the late spring or early summer of A.D. 67 the apostle Paul writes his final epistle containing his last will and testament to his son in the faith. When Timothy receives it, he realizes that he must make every effort to make hast to beat the winter season and the sharp blade wielded by the Roman executioner if he was to see his beloved Paul again. This final farewell is like David's final encouragement to Solomon who is to build the Temple at Jerusalem which David has plan and carefully prepared. The Gospel had been entrusted to Paul and now at the end of his life he must entrust it to faithful Timothy and subsequent generations.

Authorship: Paul

"As with 1 Timothy, the internal and external evidences for pauline authorship are strong. Paul again claims to be the author (1:1)...Everything about the epistle is typically pauline and there is little reason to question Paul's claimed authorship." (King James Version Bible Commentary, 1650). 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus were written to young preachers who had worked closely with the apostle Paul. These three letters present a pronounced unity of content and style. If Paul wrote one he must have written the other. Some refer to these as the Pastoral Epistles. Since Timothy and Titus were "evangelists" and not pastors, it would be best to refer to them as the Evangelist epistles.

Once again Paul affirms his apostleship to his longtime "son." This seems strange since Timothy would have been one of the last people on earth to doubt the legitimacy of his office. Paul made mention of his apostleship's master ("*of Jesus Christ*"); authority ("*by the will of God*") and its design ("*according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus*"). Paul ranked above Timothy in spiritual authority in relationship to Christ and God's Will in the scheme of redemption. Paul's letter should be read with the understanding that this is not just a personal desire of a mentor but the inspired will of the Father and the Savior.

An apostle is one who has been sent out with the authority of the one he represents. Paul is a messenger of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul was not one of the original twelve. He was sent out by Christ with a very special mission. The Lord told Ananias to go preach salvation to Paul and told him the role Paul was to play in the plan of salvation. "*Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake*" (Acts 9:15,16).

Date: A.D. 66-67

It is possible to date the arrival of Paul in Rome for his first imprisonment, due to the fact that the procurator Festus died after a few months in office A.D. 60/61. The trip to Rome would have taken several months. Paul was most likely released after two years from his first imprisonment in Rome.

Nero began to reign in A.D. 54 at age sixteen. After marrying Poppaea, Nero became brutal and ruthless, killing his own mother, his chief adviser, Seneca, had his fortunes seized. Since Paul had appealed to Caesar, Nero would have heard the case and it is believed let him go free. This would have been before the burning of Rome and the persecution of Christians. Nero like other emperors desired

to turn Rome into the most illustrious capital in the world. However, Nero's urban renewal plans were hampered by the tall wooden apartments which dotted the hills of Rome. These were eliminated when Rome burned on July 19, AD 64. A devastating conflagration burned for seven days. According to Tacitus many Romans believed that it was Nero himself who set fire to the city.

But all human efforts, and all the lavish gifts of the emperor and the propitiations of the gods did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order by Nero. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace... Their death was made a matter of sport: they were covered in wild beasts' skins and torn to pieces by dogs; or were fastened to crosses and set on fire in order to serve as torches by night.... Nero had offered his gardens for the spectacle and gave an exhibition in his circus, mingling with the crowd in the guise of a charioteer or mounted on his chariot. Hence,... there arose a feeling of pity because it was felt that they were being sacrificed not for the common good, but to the gratify of the savagery of one man (Tacitus, Annals, 15:44).

This persecution continues until Nero's death in AD 68.

Earlier Paul told the church at Rome of his desire to visit Spain (Rom. 15:24,28). Early church writers such as Chrysostom and Jerome state that Paul did indeed travel to Spain. If Paul was released in 63 A.D., he could have spent a couple of years in Spain before traveling to Crete in 64-65 A.D. (Tit. 1:6). On his way to Asia Minor Paul may have stopped off at Corinth where he left Erastus. At some point he went to Troas (2 Tim. 4:13). At Miletus he left Trophimus because he was ill (2 Tim. 4:20). When Paul had written to Philemon he closed the letter with what might be a strange request from a man writing from prison, "*prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you*" (Phile. 22). The apostle may have visited his friend at Colossae in about 66 A.D. From there he could have traveled on to Ephesus where he left Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3). He had hoped to see the Philippians (Phil. 1:26; 2:24). He most likely wrote back to Timothy from Philippi. "*As I urged you when I went into Macedonia - remain in Ephesus*" (1 Tim. 1:3). Next, he would have written to Titus from Nicopolis in about A.D. 66. "*...be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there*" (Tit. 3:12). Sometime after this Paul either traveled to Rome where he was arrested or was arrested and sent to Rome. Titus was with Paul in Rome and from there when to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10).

Since Paul had been in Rome for two years just preceding the fire, it would have been very easy to lay this crime at Paul's door. He was arrested and taken to Rome or when he arrived for his final visit to the brethren at Rome. It was from his second imprisonment that he wrote a second letter to Timothy telling him of his inevitable demise and to urge him to come before winter.

Eusebius, a church historian who lived around A.D. 325, claimed that Paul was martyred sometime during Nero's reign (Ecclesiastical History 2:25; 3:1). The Roman Senate was declaring Nero "an enemy of the people." Paul was put to death by Emperor Nero sometime before June of A.D. 68 when the Roman Caesar committed suicide.

Paul most likely wrote his final epistle to Timothy sometime in the spring of A.D. 66 or 67.

Addressee: Timothy

Timothy had been raised on the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother. His father was a Greek. During Paul's first missionary journey he visited Lystra, Timothy's home town (Acts 14:6-23). By the time Paul met Timothy on his first missionary journey, Timothy had already distinguished himself as a young faithful Christian. It was at this time that Paul began to nurture him spiritually. Therefore, the apostle refers to him as "*a true son in the faith*" (1 Tim. 1:2). Paul explained this relationship to the church at Philippi, "*but you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel*" (Phil. 2:22). During Paul's second journey (A.D. 49-51) he had Timothy circumcised and brought him with him on his travels (Acts 16:1-3). During their close relationship Timothy sent letters with Paul to several congregations (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Cor. 1:1; 1 Th. 1:1; 2 Th. 1:1). He was Paul's

emissary on several occasions (1 Cor. 16:10-11; Phil. 2:19-24). Timothy perhaps received the last letter written from the apostle from Tychicus (4:12) before the apostle was martyred by Nero.

Letter's Origin: Roman Prison

Paul was imprisoned in Rome twice. During his first imprisonment, Paul wrote several letters, such as the one's to the churches at Ephesus and Philippi. Between these two imprisonments he wrote letters to individuals (1 Timothy, Titus, Philemon). It was during his second imprisonment that Paul wrote 2 Timothy.

A stark contrast can be seen between these two imprisonments. The first one occurred in A.D. 60-62. Paul was sent to Rome because he had appealed to Caesar's judgment when accused by Jews. This incarceration was more akin to a house arrest. He lived relatively comfortably in a rented house (Acts 28:30,31). He could receive visits from friends and had the freedom take advantage of opportunities to share the Gospel. He expected to be freed by Nero (Phil. 1:24-26). During Paul's second imprisonment in Rome (A.D. 66,67), he did not enjoy such preferential treatment. Instead he like many other Christians were being persecuted by the Roman government. Most likely he was cast into the Marmertine dungeon in the center of Rome near the Roman forum. The conditions were uncomfortable as he was chained in a cold, dark, lonely prison. He was alone except for Luke who might have wrote 2 Timothy as Paul dictated it to him. Although he did not expect to escape execution (4:6), his outlook was positive as he looked forward to his eternal reward (1:12; 2:8; 4:18).

Letter's Destination: Ephesus

About 830 miles southeast of Paul's dungeon. Paul visited the city for the first time on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:4). A riot was instigated by Demetrius and other silversmiths. They attacked Paul for his preaching which they felt threatened the Roman cult worship of Diana (Greek, Artemis) whose temple at Ephesus. During his first imprisonment in Rome he wrote an epistle to the congregation. After his release from his first imprisonment, Paul visited Ephesus and left Timothy there to work with the church (1:3). Timothy was also at Ephesus when Paul wrote his first epistle letter to him.

Purpose

The first letter to Timothy is filled with instructions on how a young preacher should conduct his work with a congregation (1 Tim 3:15; 4:16). This letter is very personal as the apostle Paul knows he is nearly at the end of his race. The letter is not filled with instructions on how to fulfill his work of ministry at Ephesus so much as it is an discharging of twenty-five general commands for Timothy to continue the work in preaching for the rest of his life. As Elijah passed on his mantle to Elisha, so Paul entrusts the Gospel into the hands of the next generation who was in turn to pass it along to the next (2:2). Just in case Paul did not get to tell Timothy this final works in person he does so in the letter.

Another obvious purpose of the epistle is Paul's longing to see his son in the faith one last time. He feels deserted (1:15) first by those in Asia (1:15) and then by those in Rome at his arrest and first defense (4:16). Others such as Titus have been sent on to work for the Gospel elsewhere. Timothy was to come to Rome as soon as possible (4:9; 21). He needed to bring Mark, Paul's cloak, and certain books with him. Presumably Paul intends to keep studying and writing until the end. Tychicus who most like brought the letter to Timothy was to take over at Ephesus.

Salutation

Paul's threefold greeting ("*grace, mercy, and peace*") in verse two of chapter one appears nowhere else except in Titus 1:4 and 1 Tim. 1:2. Why he adds "*mercy*" to his salutations to evangelists is anyone's guess.

Conclusion

It is unknown whether Timothy was able to arrive in Rome to see Paul with Mark, and give Paul his books and cloak. Tradition holds that one day Paul was led from the Mamertine Prison onto the

Ostian Way outside of Rome where he was beheaded. So ended the divine commission of the Apostle to the gentiles. He had traveled tens of thousands of miles on five missionary journeys, established many congregations, edified many more churches, was assisted by hundreds of co-workers in the faith, and trained faithful men like Timothy and Titus to continue bringing the Gospel to the next generation.

Questions:

1. Why would Paul introduce himself as an apostle in his final letter to Timothy?
2. What is an apostle? What made Paul's apostleship unique?
3. Of what did Nero accuse the Christians? How were they persecuted?
4. What date was the epistle most likely written? Explain.
5. Who was Timothy?
6. Contrast Paul's two imprisonments at Rome.
7. What was Paul's relationship with the church at Ephesus?
8. What is the purpose for Paul writing this second epistle to Timothy?
9. Why is this epistle compared to David's final words to Solomon and Elijah passing his mantle to Elisha?
10. What is distinctive about Paul's greetings to Timothy and Titus?

Words of Personal Encouragement

2 Timothy 1:3-7

Paul's personal letter to his spiritual son begins with some very personal words of encouragement that only Paul could give. Perhaps, no one knew Timothy as well as this apostle of Christ. They had been intimately associated in the spread of the Gospel for about twenty years. Paul knew Timothy's weaknesses and his strengths. Although this paragraph appears to be about Paul with several first person pronouns, it is in fact Paul's concern that he give encouragement to the one he has been mentoring. He may never see Timothy again. Timothy may not arrive in Rome in time to see Paul before the execution. The apostle knew he had one last chance to put the courage into him. He does so with several very personal affirmations of encouragement.

3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did,

"I Am Grateful to God For You"

When Paul thought of Timothy the first thing he did was thank God for putting this young man in his life. Timothy went with Paul on his second and third missionary journey's and unlike Mark, he was dependable. Paul could leave him behind to help establish a young congregation. Timothy could be trusted to go to a congregation which was in need of encouragement and edification like that of Ephesus.

Paul mentions his service or worship unto God from a pure conscience. Paul did not mean to say he was perfect. In fact he had to buffet his body daily to remain faithful (1 Cor. 9:27). His pure conscience may be to a reference to his current status of being a condemned criminal of Rome. Although he is about to be decapitated he dies with a pure conscience knowing he has done nothing worthy of death. Perhaps, he is contrasting himself with false teachers and those who have betrayed him and the faith. Most likely, he is comparing his faith with that of Timothy's which came from a faithful mother and grandmother who taught him the truth. Paul's ancestors were true Israelites who looked faithfully for the coming Messiah and His kingdom. Paul found such while on the road to Damascus. Since that day Paul could say, *"I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men"* (Acts 24:16).

3b as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day,

"I Constantly Pray for You"

Preaching the Good News to the lost would have been quite limited in a Roman prison. However, no prison or set of chains could keep Paul from praying for Timothy. Paul often prayed for congregations such as those in Rome, Corinth, Philippi, Colossae, etc. (Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3) and for individuals (Phile. 4) and the lost (Rom. 10:1). As Paul commanded the church at Thessalonica to *"pray without ceasing"* (1 Th. 5:17), he continually prays for all men. What an encouragement to know that someone is praying for you more than once a day with not only gratitude but interceding on your behalf. Praying for and being prayed for is one of the great privileges and blessings given to God's children. *"And pray for one another, ... The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much"* (James 5:16).

4 greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy,

“I Miss Spending Time With You”

How encouraging to know that someone misses being with you and having you around! Paul was not just lonely for anyone. He earnestly longed to be with Timothy because he knew that Timothy greatly cared for him. The tears of Paul's son was a reminder of how close they had become. Perhaps while chained in the Roman dungeon he remembered the last time they saw each other and parted with tears. The same was expressed by the elders of Ephesus when Paul was about to leave for Jerusalem, *“They all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him”* (Acts 20:37).

Paul gives his personal motive for wanting to see Timothy again: *“that I may be filled with joy.”* To know that our presence gives joy to another can be a powerful motivator. Although the eyes were filled with tears when they last parted, their hearts can both be filled with joy when they are reunited.

5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

“I Am Confident in Your Genuine Faith”

During Paul's first missionary journey he may have taught the gospel to Timothy's grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. By the time he returned on the second missionary journey Timothy had been taught the gospel. After all, Paul found that Timothy *“was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium”* (Acts 16:2). When Paul thought of Timothy it was his genuine faith that may his most thankful. Paul had been plagued by brethren who had a fake faith. He had seen those who made shipwreck of their faith. There were false teachers whose faith was in gold and not God. Timothy was the exception to these. His faith was the real deal. Paul's words do not express any doubt as to the quality of Timothy's faith, the apostle knows of its genuineness with great certainty.

6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

“I Want You to Keep Firing Up Your God-Given Abilities”

Paul has remembered several positive things about Timothy, now he wants to remind Timothy about the gift God has giving him. This gift could be the commission by the elders to preach the Gospel at Ephesus (1 Tim. 4:14) which came about due to a prophecy of God. It most likely is in reference to a spiritual gift of a miraculous nature than could only come to him from God by the laying on of an apostles hands (Acts 8:14-18). What gift he was given (healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, etc.) is anyone's guess.

The phrase *“stir up”* according to A. T. Robertson means *“to rekindle, to stir into flame, to keep blazing (continuous action, present time).”* Timothy had not failed to use this spiritual gift for God's work. Paul is merely encouraging him to keep the flame alive and burning bright. After all, it is possible to grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30) and quench the Spirit (1 Th. 5:19). Although preachers do not have spiritual gifts like this today, they do have blessings from God that need to be kept active. Today, Paul might advise us to keep on studying the Holy Spirit revealed Word. It is common for servants of God to suffer burnout. Words of encouragement are needed for them to keep on fanning the flames.

7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

“I Believe God Can Turn You Into a Bold Servant”

The term *“spirit”* here must refer to the human spirit of fear or timid disposition. Timothy may have not have the boldness of the apostle Paul. If he did not have a problem with being timid it is very unlikely that Paul would have brought it up. This reminder was essential since Paul was in prison under the sentence of death and Timothy had faced opposition from within by false teachers who would abuse and criticize his sound preaching.

Timothy is reminded of several God-given gifts which can counteract this timid nature. These gifts are not supernatural, but natural blessings and attributes gained by working with the supernatural God. First, God gave him “power.” This is from the same Greek word from which is derived the English terms “dynamic” or “dynamite.” Paul speaks of the Gospel being the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). He also says in 1 Cor. 2:4,5: “*And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*” Also note Eph. 3:20: “*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.*” God has never required of His servants task to perform without making available the energy to carry them out. Next, God gives “love.” This is *agape* in the Greek. It is the type of love that does what is best no matter who, what, when, where or why. A selfless love that is God’s love for the lost world for whom He sent His Son (Jn. 3:16). This gift can help timid Timothy because “*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear*” (1 John 4:18). God is the source of this gift of love because “*God is love*” (1 Jn. 4:8). The final gift from God is “*a sound mind.*” This is the self-control which is needed to counteract the flight and/or fight reaction of fear. A mastery over the emotions because he has control of his mind. Since God has given him power, love, and a sound mind, he will be well-equipped to handle the situation with boldness.

Questions:

1. What does it mean to serve God with a pure conscience?
2. Who are Paul’s forefathers? What do they have to do with his service to God from a pure conscience?
3. How often did Paul pray for Timothy?
4. Why was Paul desiring to see Timothy?
5. Whose genuine faith did Paul remember?
6. What type of gift is Timothy to stir up?
7. What does “*stir up*” mean? Can this encouragement be applied to preacher’s today? Explain.
8. What might have caused Timothy to be timid?

9. What has God given to Timothy to counter a spirit of fear?

10. What is the meaning of “agape” love? How can it help counteract fear?

Discussion:

1. Who do you prayer for on a daily basis?

2. What are some encouraging words we can give to other Christians?

Do Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel

2 Timothy 1:8-12

8a Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,

The term “therefore” not only introduces a new charge to Timothy for Paul, it focuses on the gifts of power, love, and self-control God had equipped him to proclaim the Gospel. In light of what is happening to Paul and to other Christians it might appear the God is punishing Christians. Faith in the Faith might waver even in Timothy. Paul is not saying here that Timothy is already ashamed of the Gospel. He is merely commanding him not to become very ashamed or embarrassed by the “*testimony of our Lord.*” Preaching Christ may not be popular according to public opinion. This is not to influence or discourage the stand for Truth. If Peter would deny the Lord three times in one night, surely Timothy will need encouragement in the face Paul’s imprisonment and impending death.

How is Timothy to overcome being publically embarrassed while proclaiming Christ? The rest of this paragraph answers that question.

8b nor of me His prisoner,

By Suffering for Christ

Part of Paul’s ability to deal with his suffering as a condemned criminal was to see himself not as a prisoner of the Emperor Nero, but as the prisoner for Christ. Even during his first imprisonment at Rome, which was not as intense or severe, Paul viewed himself as a prisoner for the sake of Christ. He wrote, “*my chains are in Christ*” (Phil 1:13); he was “*a prisoner of Christ Jesus*” (Philem 1:1); and the “*prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles*” (Eph 3:1). All Christians who serve Christ will suffer and when they do it is for Christ. They are His martyrs. The term for “*testimony*” here is the Greek word *maturion* from which comes the English word “martyr.” Those who suffer because of their testimony of Christ are not the victims of the enemy but are faithful servants of Christ. Keep in mind this meaning of martyrdom did not attach itself to the Greek term until late in the second century.

8b but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel

By Fellowship with Other Sufferers

Paul does not just charge Timothy with not becoming ashamed, but he is to become a fellow-sufferer. As he has experienced “*the fellowship of His suffering*” (Phil 3:10). Paul should not have to suffer alone and Timothy could join him in this suffering. In fact, Timothy would one day be arrested for his testimony. The writers of Hebrews tells us, “*Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly*” (Heb 13:23).

8c according to the power of God,

By Being Empowered of God

No one as the power to face the enemies of God without the power of God. The power is in His Word which is preached. The power through the prayers of righteous men and women (Js. 5:16). While in prison Paul wrote, “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*” (Phil 4:13).

9a who has saved us

By Recalling Who Saved Us

If God had saved Saul of Tarsus when he was at his worst as a sinner, a blasphemer, and a persecutor of Christ, surely He can save him now. Did God send His Son to suffer and die for nothing? Did Christ send Paul out to suffering and die for nothing? No Christ died to defeat sin and death and provide a way for all men to be saved. He sent Paul out to herald the Good News so all men could be saved.

9b and called us with a holy calling,

By Our Holy Calling

As God has saved from sin He also calls us to a holy life. A life separated from the world. This calling is through the Gospel (2Th. 2:14). We have been called out of a kingdom of darkness into light (Col. 1:13). In fact, the "kingdom of God" is at times referring to the church which in Greek literally means "the called out." The saints or separated ones are the called out ones. Paul is not requesting Timothy to do more than he has already done. He told the church at Ephesus, "*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called*" (Eph 4:1).

9c not according to our works,

By Recognizing our Own Impotence and Need of God's Grace

Without God man is hopelessly lost in His sins. He is without hope. Our salvation is by the grace of God. Timothy, like all men, had not done one single thing by which to earn his salvation. Paul is not promoting "grace only" or "faith only" salvation in this verse. Christians cannot be saved by the merit of their own works. They can only be saved by God's work in the plan of salvation which is by grace through faith (Eph. 2:28-10). Faith itself is a work of God which Jesus said man must work (Jn. 6:28,29). Faith without works is dead and cannot save anyone (Js. 2:23-26). Part of the plan of God saving man includes suffering. If it were left up to man he would more certainly exclude this part and opt for working out his salvation in a less painful manner.

9d but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

By Realizing Suffering is Part of God's Plan

Because our sins were forgiven, we deserved eternal imprisonment in Hell. God's eternal plan has been for His Son to suffering on earth and we in turn to have fellowship in that suffering so that man can be saved for everlasting torment. God has not been just "winging" it when it comes to the future of mankind. Before the very creation of the universe or even the very first man, Adam, God has had a plan. This plan involved suffering (see Gen. 3:15).

10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

By the Victory of Christ's Incarnation

When Paul mentions the appearing of Christ, he is often referring to the future event of the second coming of Christ followed by the day of judgment (1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim.. 4:1,8; Tit. 2:13). Here this appearing has already taken place. Which Christ came in the form of a man to live a sinless life and to suffer and die on the cross, so that He might be our Savior. Oddly enough Nero after the burning of Rome was to be the savior. Yet later he would suffering death at his own hands never to be seen again. In contrast, Christ resurrected from the dead and rendered death inoperative. "*Inasmuch then as the*

children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb 2:14-15).

Christ did not just remove the sting of death (1 Cor. 15:55), He brought life to light. In the Old Testament the afterlife and the hope of a resurrection was at times alluded to (Job 14:1-14; Dan. 12:4;etc.). However, for the most part it was shrouded in mystery. Now the New Testament shines the light on the subject and tells us that there is a life after death which is incorruptible. The earthly body will grow old, die, and decay. The Lord has promised us a resurrected body which is not of this world (1 Cor. 15:39-58; Phil. 3:21).

Since Christ has come and destroyed the hold of death and is able to even resurrect us from the dead (Jn. 5:28,29), no Christian need fear suffering and persecution even to the point of death.

11 to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

By Fulfilling Your Part in God’s Plan

When it comes to the Scheme of Redemption, God has done His part and so has Christ. What is Paul’s part in this. He is a prisoner of Christ suffering for the testimony of the Lord. However, he was appointed to perform three other tasks which have landed him in prison. First, Paul has been appointed by God to be His “*preacher.*” The term could be translated “herald.” A herald was sent out by a king to deliver a message. The message may be good or bad. The herald did not come up with the message on his own. His duty was merely to deliver the message. God’s message given through Paul was salvation in Christ for all men. His is the message which caused him to be imprisoned. Next, Paul is called to be an “*apostle*” of Christ. He is to be the envoy or ambassador representing Christ. Although a herald could accompany an envoy to deliver the message only the ambassador had the authority to represent the one who sent him. Finally, Paul was appointed to be a “*teacher.*” This term is often applied to the philosophers who went out and taught the people. They were well respected. Paul is not teaching a human philosophy but God has sent him to teach those who have heard the Gospel preached.

Timothy need not be ashamed of Paul, because he is not a criminal who has been arrested as an enemy to society. Instead, Paul is God’s preacher, Christ’s apostle, and the Gentile’s teacher. This is why he is in prison as an enemy of Rome.

12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed,

By Seeing the Example of Paul

The result of Paul fulfilling his appointed duties was a life filled with sufferings. In his second letter to the Corinthians he gives us a brief look at what he was willing to endure for being God’s herald, Christ’s ambassador, and the teacher of the disciples. “*In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*” (2 Cor 11:23-27).

Paul himself told the church at Rome, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek*” (Romans 1:16). Paul has spoken to the Jews and the Gentiles, to the educated philosophers and to the common people, to freemen and slaves, to men and women and even to kings and various political leaders of the Gentile and Jewish worlds. He has preached as the Psalmist had written, “*I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings, And will not be ashamed*” (Psalms 119:46).

12a for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have

committed to Him

By the Assurance of God Keeping Our Souls

The word “*committed*” is a financial term referring to a deposit which is entrusted to another. In other places the same Greek word is used in reference to a the entrusting of the Gospel to a preacher. However, in this context Paul has entrusted his very soul into the faithful hands of God. Even though he is in chains and awaiting execution at any moment, he is confident in entrusting his soul to Christ. The investment of his life will increase to the point of eternal life for his soul. What a great return for his interest invested in serving the Lord. Christ is not only the CEO of Paul’s heart but the CFO of his soul.

12b until that Day.

By the Hope of Vindication on Judgment Day

Paul expresses hope that one day the entrusting of his soul to Christ will pay off. “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad*” (2 Cor 5:10).

The twelve apostles, who were imprisoned, beaten, and released, were later found “*rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name*” (Acts 5:41). May all Christians have the same attitude toward the minor and meager amount of persecution they face today.

Questions:

1. According to Paul to whom was he a prisoner? Why or how?
2. Would Timothy suffer for the gospel?
3. Where does the power come from for Timothy to not be ashamed?
4. Is Paul’s suffering for nothing or for something? Explain.
5. How has God called us?
6. What role do “*our works*” play in God’s plan for saving man?
7. What role did/does suffering play in God’s plan for saving man?
8. To what does “*the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ*” refer?

9. How has the gospel brought *"immortality to light"*?

10. How has Christ removed the fear of death?

11. Define:
Preacher:
Apostle:
Teacher:

12. What all has Paul suffered for the preaching of the Gospel?

13. What has Paul committed to Christ? To what end or extent has he committed it?

Discussion:

1. How might we as Christian's today demonstrate being ashamed of the Gospel and those who preach it?

2. List some reasons why you as a Christian should faithfully entrust your soul to God.

Hold Fast the Word

2 Timothy 1:13-18

It was for holding fast and proclaiming the Gospel in an unashamed fashion which landed Paul in a Roman prison. Many had abandoned the aged apostle. Only one, Luke, was with him and only one other had sought him out, Onesiphorus. As Paul's time on earth draws to a close he wants Timothy to hold fast in his grasp certain things of great value: the everlasting Word of God and the enduring fellowship of faithful Christians.

13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

Hold Fast Sound Words

Timothy must cling to the very inspired words which he has learned from Paul. These words are healthy and life giving, despite the fact that they could land you in prison. The word "*pattern*" was used to refer to the sketching of an artist, the architectural plans for a building, etc. The teachings of Paul would serve Timothy as a outline for his preaching and teaching. The commandment is not one which would allow him to take liberties in what he proclaims. In fact, he should exercise great care in tracing the outline and copying the pattern which came from the Holy Spirit guided apostle.

The manner of holding fast the Word is twofold. First, Timothy is to hold it fast "*in faith.*" This requires that he believes these words to be healthy and sound and inspired through the apostle Paul. Without genuine conviction in the Word as the Word of God, Timothy too will abandon Paul and the Truth when faced with persecution. Second, he was to cling to the Scriptures "*in love.*" This would involve his love for God who is the author, love for the apostle Paul who revealed the Truth, love for the Truth which would make him wise unto salvation, love for the lost souls to whom he would preach it, love for the brethren who would be edified by it, and also by "*speaking the truth in love*" (Eph 4:15).

14 That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

Hold Fast What Has Been Entrusted to You

In 2 Timothy 6:20 Paul had previously given a similar command "*O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust*" (1 Tim 6:20). It is interesting that Paul uses the Greek word *phulaxon* for "guard" which refers to the guards who were to keep a close watch on prisoners. However, it could also refer to the work of a shepherd or even watchmen on the walls of a city.

What is this "*good thing*" Timothy is to guard? The Greek term for "committed" was used in verse twelve to refer to Paul's soul which he committed to God for safe keeping till Judgment Day. It means to deposit a treasure into the hands of another for them to guard. In this context, it was Paul who has committed the Word of God into the hands of Timothy for safekeeping.

How was Timothy to keep the Word safe? As he stood on guard duty over the Word, he would not be all alone. The Holy Spirit would be with him, in fact, He was dwelling in him. It was by the Holy Spirit that these Scriptures came to Timothy and it will by the supernatural aid of God that he will be able to keep them safe for perversion. Paul asked the Corinthians, "*Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*" (1 Cor 3:16) and "*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?*" (1 Cor 6:19). God has always wanted to be with us, just as any father would desire the company of his

children. He has not abandoned us with just the Word to guard by our own feeble abilities. Through the centuries the presence of God the Holy Spirit as providentially helped men like Timothy to protect the Word from those who would destroy it.

15 This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

Hold Fast Without Turning Away

Nothing is known of Phygellus and Hermogenes from any other passage than this verse. They were obviously known by Paul and Timothy. They were from Asia. This is the Roman province which would include most of what is now modern day Turkey. It is often referred to as "Asia Minor." Ephesus was the leading city of Asia Minor. The main reason these two are mentioned is that they did not hold fast the word in faith and love. Instead, like men in Asia they have turned way for the apostle when he need men to stand firm with him and support his efforts. Obviously, not every living soul in Asia had abandoned Paul. In fact, he known Timothy and Onesiphorus have not. Yet, a majority have forsaken him.

The same had happened to the Savior. When He was arrested, "*all the disciples forsook Him and fled*" (Matt 26:56).

16 The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; 17 but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. 18 The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day--and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.

Hold Fast Like Faithful Men

In contrast to Phygellus and Hermogenes and others of Asia, Onesiphorus did not forsake Paul. Just the opposite, he has gone to great lengths to help and support the imprisoned apostle. This man is singled out as an example of what others should have done for Paul. If a Christian will risk all for the messenger, he will most likely be faithful in holding fast to the message.

Ironically, the name Onesiphorus means "a bringer of help." Just how did he bring help to Paul? First, he helped Paul by refreshing him on a frequent basis. In that cold, damp dungeon of the Maritime prison Paul was dependent on outside sources for daily needs and refreshments. Second, he was not ashamed of Paul's chains. Perhaps, he saw him as a prisoner of the Lord, instead of a common criminal who stood in opposition to Roman society. At any rate, this Christian was not about to abandon Paul. Instead he was willing to go to Rome and find where Paul was being held. Next, he not only looked for Paul but sought him diligently until he found him. This is a man who was not going to give up until he was met with success. This would have been done at risk to his own life. He reminds Timothy that he had given Paul help while they were all working at Ephesus. It is one thing to help out once and twice with a particular need. Onesiphorus was willing to help out in a variety of ways time and again, in Ephesus or at Rome, while Paul was free to preach or chained up in a prison.

Paul beseeches the Lord to show mercy on him for his help not once but twice. First, he desires the Lord's mercy on his household. A household could include the man of the house as well. In which case, Paul desires Onesiphorus to be blessed with his family at the present time. His family is mentioned because they would have through his actions been a directed and indirect help to Paul. Second, Paul prays that God will reward this faithful servant with mercy on the Day of Judgment. In the parable of the sheep and the goats the Lord blesses those on the right with eternal life: "*for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.*" Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, '*Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?*' And the King will answer and say to them, '*Assuredly, I say to you,*

inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” (Matt 25:35-40).

Because Paul asked the Lord to grant mercy to Onesiphorus in the future and on his household in the present, some have concluded that Onesiphorus was dead. The Roman Catholic church has concluded that this is authority for them to instruct their followers to pray for the dead. Although it is possible that he was dead at the time of Paul’s writing, there is no absolute proof. To base a doctrine such as praying for the souls of the dead based on nothing more than the silence of God is a very haphazard application of the scriptures. Paul could have asked God’s blessings on the household of a man without him being dead (cf. 1 Cor. 16:15). If Onesiphorus had left Rome and had not yet arrived at home at Ephesus, it would fit well with the statements made by Paul about him and he would still be very much alive. Furthermore, the Hebrew writer affirms, *“and as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”* (Heb 9:27). According to the rest of the Word of God, salvation of a soul is determined by the mercy and grace he receives in life on behalf of his faithfulness till death (Rev. 2:10b). He is not saved based on the prayers and activities of others after he is dead.

Questions:

1. In what way does the sound words from Paul serve as a pattern for Timothy?
2. In what twofold manner is Timothy to hold fast the pattern?
3. What is this *“good thing”* Timothy is to guard?
4. How was Timothy to keep the Word safe?
5. Who were Phygellus and Hermogenes?
6. Who would *“all those in Asia”* (1:15) included? Which of those who were in or from *“Asia”* that would not be included?
7. What had Onesiphorus done for Paul? How could this have been a danger for Onesiphorus?
8. Where else and how much had Oneiphorus helped Paul?
9. What prayer or blessing does Paul wish for Onesiphorus and for his household?

10. The Catholic practice of praying for the dead is based on verse 16-18. How would you go about refuting this false doctrine?

Discussion:

1. Does the Holy Spirit help us today in holding fast to sound words? If so, how?
2. What can modern-day Onesiphorus' do to refresh modern-day Pauls?

Keep on Being Strong in the Grace

2 Timothy 2:1-7

In his book, *Holiness*, Bishop J. C. Ryle wrote: "I will never shrink from declaring my belief that there are no spiritual gains without pains. I should as soon expect a farmer to prosper in business who contented himself with sowing his fields and never looking at them till harvest, as expect a believer to attain much holiness who was not diligent about his Bible-reading, his prayers and the use of his Sundays. Our God is a God who works by means." Paul will refer Timothy to several illustrations of those who gain the benefits only after they have exerted the effort. Yet, reward is not obtained by personal effort alone but by grace that can only be found in Christ Jesus.

1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

The Devotion of a Son

First, Paul reminds Timothy of their spiritual relationship as father and son. The word "therefore" points back to the previous charge to "*hold fast the word.*" His continued son-like devotion to Paul meant a continued need to be strengthened as Paul now moves on to the next charge or imperative: be strong. He is not implying the Timothy is weak. But according to A.T. Robertson's Word Pictures the Greek here is present passive imperative meaning "keep on being empowered." The source of this power is Christ Jesus. The means and motive of this continuous empowerment was through grace. Timothy's strength was not temporary, it was on-going process. His strengthening was not from within, but from the Divine. His empowerment was not earned, but due to the unmerited favor of God's Son. When Paul suffered with his thorn in the flesh, his ability to have the strength to endure came about by way of the grace of God. Christ responded to his prayer for its removal, "*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness*" (2 Cor 12:9). In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul wrote, "*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me*" (1 Cor 15:10).

It is essential that all Christians realize that to keep on being empowered like the electric lines keep the energy flowing to our homes, they must stay connected to the generating source of that power. In the case of Timothy and all believers the source is not himself but Jesus Christ. The reason he is continuously connected to the source of power is not due you his efforts or keeping his bills current. The current flow of power from the Son of God to Paul's son was by the unmerited favor. Just as the Israelites did not save themselves by marching around Jericho a total of thirteen times. Just as Gideon did not realize victory out of his own military strategy. Just as the Israelites did not defeat Pharaoh's army of this own strength. So Christians are victorious through the undeserved power coming from Christ.

2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

The Instruction of a Teacher

The source of Timothy's teaching material is the same things he heard Paul preach and teach to a wide variety of audiences. The many witnesses to the teachings of Paul were the women at the riverside devotion outside of Philippi (Acts 16:13); the hostile Jews at Thessalonica (Acts 17:4); the fair-minded Bereans (Acts 17:11); the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers of Athens (Acts 17:18); the Jews

and Greeks in the hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9,10); the believers in Traos (Acts 20:7-12); etc.

What was Timothy to do with those things taught by Paul? He was to entrust them to the next generation of teachers. As he was entrusted with the Word by the inspired apostle, he was to entrust (deposit for safekeeping) with other men.

These men had to meet three qualifications in order to be the type of teachers Paul had in mind for Timothy to educate. First, they had to be faithful. This demands Timothy to find men and women who are trustworthy. Second, they had to be able or capable of teaching. Last, they had to be willing to continue this entrusting of the Word to the next generation of teachers who would in turn go out and teach others.

This verse is not upholding the Catholic doctrine of apostolic succession. Instead, it is showing that it is the entrusted Word of God being passed down from generation to generation. Apostolic authority does not reside in the individuals who have been entrusted with the Word but the Word itself.

3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

The Endurance of a Soldier

Paul was acquainted with the soldier's life. Military metaphors abound in his letters (Eph. 6:10ff; 2 Cor. 10:3-5, Phil. 2:25; etc.). He had spent several years associated with soldiers. He oft used this metaphor to show how a Christian must fight the good fight of faith as a dedicated soldier of the cross. The Greek terms used here denote difficulty and suffering. Soldiers are exposed to the elements, to danger, to times without food or shelter, deprived of friends and loved ones and so on. It's a dangerous and demanding way to live. Consider U.S. Air Force Captain Scott O'Grady, who's F-16 fighter jet was shot down in Bosnia a few years ago. Captain O'Grady evaded Bosnian Serb soldiers for six days until his rescue by a Marine Corp search and rescue team. During that time he lived by eating bugs and licking the dew from plants.

Paul had to endure many hardships throughout his travels. 2 Corinthians 11:24-33 gives us a list: three times beaten with rods; once stoned; three times shipwrecked; spent a day and a night in the deep; journeyed frequently; danger from rivers; danger from robbers; danger from his countrymen; danger from the Gentiles; danger in the city; danger in the wilderness; danger on the sea; danger among false brethren; labor and hardship; many sleepless nights; hunger and thirst; often without food; cold and naked; and in addition to all of these, he faced pressures of concern for the church.

Even the Captain of our Salvation endured much as He served the Will of God. He is not a Commander who leads his men into battle from the rear. He has led the way and suffered the most and has assured victory.

The word "*entangles*" in verse four literally means "gets tangled up in" or "to weave together." In the Roman world a soldier wasn't allowed even to get married until his enlisted time ended (Craig Keener, IVP Bible Background Commentary, p. 626). A soldier also had to stay free from civilian affairs. He did not start a business or volunteer for civil duties that would have interfered with being a soldier. Although the ads used to recruit soldiers often appeal to the joy, adventure, and learning of the individual, yet war itself is no picnic.

The good Christian soldier does not involve himself in the affairs this world to the extent that he hardly has anytime to fight the good fight. The Lord will not be any more impressed with our busy schedule than a sergeant will accept the excuse that a private has a hot dog stand on the beach that he must keep going and therefore needs to be excused from the current conflict. Before embarking on any endeavor a Christian should ask himself: Will it hamper my Christian service?

The issue of time is the reason not becoming overly involved in life's distractions is a key to a Christian's success. A preacher only has so much time to do all the things that need to be done. No one can do it all. There is not enough time in a week. So, like everyone else preachers must make choices on how they are going to redeem the time. A good soldier spends his time becoming familiar with His commander's voice by reading his Bible which is his weapon (the sword the spirit), by praying

to heaven which is his means of communicating with headquarters, by fellowshiping with fellow-Christians, and by knowing who his enemies are and their strategies.

The soldier's motivation is to "*please Him who enlisted him.*" Paul is here referring to the ancient custom of generals who recruited their own soldiers. This maintained a higher level of loyalty among the ranks. God needs us to be loyal to Him and His cause. This would exclude self-centeredness and friendship with the world (Js. 4:4).

Preachers often become involved with public education, scouts, sports, serving on community committees, etc. This is what is often expected of them by the members and society. However, they need to learn first to please the one who enlisted them. We work hard not as men pleasers, but in hope of hearing the Lord say "Well done thou good and faithful soldier" when this war is over.

Keep in mind that Paul is not excluding preachers for having a job to support themselves and their families while they preach. After all, he was a tent-maker at times. Neither does this verse speak out against him being married.

5 And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

The Discipline of an Athlete

Metaphors from athletics is another of Paul's favorite means of illustrating the Christian life. He may have even witnessed the Olympic or Isthmian games in person. "Paul would not have been content with the slogan: 'It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game.' ...Paul probably would have revised the slogan to say: 'Whether you win or lose depends totally on how you play the game!'" (Life Application Bible Commentary 180). In the Greek games, the athletes had to be a Greek citizen and to swear on oath to Zeus that they had completed a full ten months of rigorous training before they were allowed to compete in the race. "During this time he had to engage in the prescribed exercises and live a strictly separated life in regard to the ordinary and lawful pursuits of life, and he was placed on a rigid diet. Should he break training rules, he would...be a castaway...disqualified, 'barred from engaging in the athletic contest'" (Kenneth Wuest, the Pastoral Epistles, "Word Studies in the Greek New Testament," Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 129f). Jim Thorpe was one of the greatest athletes of the twentieth century, but was stripped of his gold medals for breaking the rules.

Timothy had to be a citizen of God's kingdom and was trained by the years he spent working with and for the apostle Paul. As a good athlete he could not break the rules of training or of the game. Not only was an undisciplined athlete disqualified but could be fined or even scourged. No short cuts in the pursuit of the victory. The film, *Chariots of Fire*, is the story of an athlete who wants to win, but he wants to win with honor, and he is ready to deny himself the joy of winning if he has to win without honor.

Every athlete learns that he has to deny himself certain things if he wants to win. He cannot eat just any kind of food; he has to give up chocolate sundaes, strawberry shortcake, and all the rich, luxurious indulgences that others can freely have. He does not go out for late nights, engage in wild living, revelings, carousings and drunkenness as others may indulge. A Christian is called to say "No" to many things today. Saying "yes" to the race means saying "no" to the lust of the flesh and personal goals.

Think of the ancient athlete as he trains for ten months only to receive a laurel crown that will wither away in less than ten days. He knows that he may only achieve victory by a fraction of a second. A swimmer won by a fraction of a second because she learned to keep her fingers spread slightly apart while swimming. An athlete who is not disciplined enough to meet the requirements will never win. Timothy is to be rewarded with the crown of life, if he disciplines himself according to the rules.

6 The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops.

The Industry of a Farmer

"*Hard-working*" is from a Greek verb that means "to labor to the point of exhaustion." Farming

was hard, back-breaking manual labor. It is so hard for many Americans to do this work today that most of it is performed by immigrant workers from third world countries. Still the ground is hard and the soil stubborn. Sowing the seed of the Word of God is hard enough but then we have to labor hard to keep the harvest from spoiling and returning to a world of sin. All who have labored consistently in the fields of sin to bring them in know the frustration of seeing months of hard work waste before their eyes.

Timothy's attitude needed to be like that of a farmer: patiently waiting for hard work to produce a crop. Patience is a natural requirement of those who chose a life of agriculture. A farmer knows that he cannot just drop the seed in the ground one day and go out the next morning and harvest the crop. It takes weeks and months or most of the year for the crops to reach maturity. He can do very little to speed the process along. He cannot stand around all day and watch it grow because there is a lot of weeding, watering, killing of insects, etc. to be done.

Timothy's motivation for his hard-work and patience was to *"be first to partake of the crops."* Although Christians await the final harvest of the world to receive the ultimate reward of their hard work, there are blessings that come with toiling. Timothy may receive the harvest of financial support all this is unlikely Paul's point because even Paul did not plant the Word and then await support. Paul's point here may have application to future reward as well as to possible financial remuneration for the ministry by Timothy. Perhaps, the harvest is the empowerment received by Timothy. After all, those who teach others are greatly rewarded by their efforts. However, in that case the harvest is most often realized before the sowing of the seed in the hearts of men. Most likely, the harvest is the reward of lost souls obeying the Gospel or the growth of the saints.

7 Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

The Comprehension of a Student

In every case, reward comes after effort. The teacher must be taught to teach and witness the development of the next generation of teachers. The soldier must endure hardship before he enjoys the victory. The athlete must strive according to the rules before wearing the crown. The harvest comes only after the laboring in the fields. And the understanding of all things only comes by way of the student, Timothy, carefully and fully consider what has been taught by Paul. Full comprehension comes only after giving full attention. To keep being strengthened he must read, meditate, and apply God's Word.

Paul asked Timothy to meditate on these common illustrations for success. Asking yourself: Do I seek the easy way or do I endure hardship as a good soldier? Do I look for a comfortable assignment or do I work to please the Lord? Do I long for a position far from the front lines or am I leading the charge? Am I on active duty or in training or have I gone AWOL? Do I have what it takes to train hard and bring home the gold or do I look for short cuts to heaven? Do I want to enjoy the harvest without helping to plant the seed and harvest the crops? Will I be a successful Christian?

Questions:

1. Does Paul imply that Timothy is weak in verse one?
2. How is Timothy, Paul's son?
3. What is the source and what is the means of Timothy's strength?

4. How many generations of teachers are implied in verse two?
5. Who are these witnesses to Paul's teachings?
6. What three qualifications must the men have whom Timothy was to teach?
7. Does verse two teach the Catholic doctrine of "apostolic succession"? Explain.
8. What kinds of hardships would a Christian soldier have to endure?
9. What are the entanglements with "*the affairs of this life*"?
10. What is the motivation behind the endurance and sacrifices of a good soldier?
11. What requirements were placed on a Greek athlete? How do they compare with Christians running the good race?
12. Contrast the crown of the Greek athlete with the crown prepared for the faithful Christian.
13. What is the reward anticipated by the Christian farmer?
14. How is Timothy like a student?

Discussion:

1. List some steps Timothy could take to develop the next generation of teachers.
2. Are you teaching anyone at this time? How?

Keep on Remembering Jesus Christ

2 Timothy 2:8-13

Paul has shown Timothy the means of continued empowerment from Jesus Christ in the previous paragraph. The perpetuation of the teaching of the Gospel only comes after educating faithful and able men of the next generation. Victory over the enemy comes only after enduring hardship as good soldiers. The crown is found only at the end of a successful race. Finally, farmers only reap from the first-fruits of the harvest after they have produced a crop. Now he points out that salvation comes only after the Son of David comes in the flesh and the Son of God is resurrected from the dead.

8a Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David,

Salvation from the Incarnate Messiah

As were the commands above “*be strong*”, “*entrust*,” and “*consider*,” Paul now commands Timothy to remember, that is, keep on remembering Jesus Christ. Like the slogan “Remember the Alamo” Timothy was not to forget that Jesus Christ Himself is the perfect example of one who has suffered for the salvation of mankind. Jesus was the descendant of David and the fulfilment of the covenant God made with David (2 Sam. 7). Before His incarnation an angel told Mary, “*And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end*” (Luke 1:31-33). As a descendent of King David He deserved a throne instead He was given a crucifixion. Just like all men He had to learn obedience to the Will of God (Heb. 5:8,9); suffering in life, being tempted in all points like other men (Heb. 4:15,16); become acquainted with sorrow, suffer persecution, and die. Though He did not deserve to die because He unlike all men was innocent of any sin.

Even during the first century some false teachers, who were being influenced by the Greek philosophies of the day, were denying that the Son of God came in the flesh. Although many antichrist have gone out into the world since the time of John, he wrote, “*every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world*” (1 John 4:3). To deny that Son of God came in the flesh is to deny us a King on the throne of David and salvation in Him.

8b was raised from the dead according to my gospel,

Salvation from the Resurrected Son of God

Though some may claim that Jesus was not human but only Divine; others have claimed that He is human and not God. The resurrection from the dead was God’s ultimate proof that the man, Jesus Christ, was in fact His Son. It is through this resurrection that salvation came to the world of lost souls. The apostles proclaimed, “*We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins*” (Acts 5:29-31). John also warned that those who oppose the deity of Jesus are against Christ. “*Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also*” (1 John 2:22-23).

Paul’s Gospel was simply that which was the same Good News for all men: God was dead and

now God is alive. It is his gospel in the sense that it represents the message he has obeyed, which has been entrusted to him, and he was commissioned to preach to the Gentiles.

9a for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains;

Salvation by Way of Suffering Saints

The term “*evildoer*” is the same term used to describe the two thieves between which Jesus Christ was crucified. They were criminals. One of these thieves admitted as much and knew that they were worthy of death. He told the other criminal, “*Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.*” (Luke 23:40-41). Jesus was unjustly counted among the criminals of Rome and His people. Now Paul is considered a common criminal by the Romans.

Paul is not complaining, he is merely explaining that he is willing to suffer so even to the point of imprisonment and death with hope that others can be saved. Jesus suffered and died for the same purpose: the salvation of sinful man. Saul, the pharisee who persecuted, was to become Paul the apostle would be persecuted for Christ. Christ said of him, “*For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake*” (Acts 9:16). Through his willingness to suffer for the sake of the Gospel many opportunities would be open to others to obey the Gospel.

9b but the word of God is not chained.

Salvation from the Unfettered Gospel

The Bible is replete with examples of those who have tried to stop the Word of God by imprisoning its messengers. All attempts have proven futile. In the Old Testament, King Ahab hated the prophet Micaiah and had him cast in prison “*because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil*” (1 Kings 22:8). According to the Word of God King Ahab went to battle and died. A king of the New Testament, Herod, threw John the Immerser in prison because he spoke out against his unlawful marriage to his brother Philip's wife, Herodias. Time and again the apostles were cast into prison for preaching the resurrected Christ only to be let out by an angel and go right back to preaching. Later, the Sanhedrin had them beaten and let go. “*And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ*” (Acts 5:42). After James the apostle was killed by Herod, he imprisoned Peter. One night an angel appeared and led Peter out so he could return to the brethren. Herod died, “*but the word of God grew and multiplied*” (Acts 12:24). At Philippi Paul and Silas were beaten and put in stocks in the inner prison only for God to send an earthquake and free them for their bondage. Later, at the home of the jailor “*they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized*” (Acts 16:32-33). When Paul was under house arrest during his first imprisonment at Rome, he was “*two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him*” (Acts 28:30-31). The theme of the book of Acts focuses on the fact that the Word of God will go on throughout the World unfettered or unhindered.

During the time when the Catholic church forbade a copy of the scriptures to the common people, the Bibles that were available to worship were at times found chained to the pulpit. This did not stop men like John Wycliffe and Martin Luther from translating the Word of God into the language of the people so they could read and understand the Will of God for themselves.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Salvation for the Elect

The “*elect*” in this case does not refer to those who have already answered the call of the Gospel

and have been saved. These are those who are being called by the Gospel. They are called with a view to the present salvation and also to their future salvation: *“eternal glory.”* The means of this calling is through the unfettered word preached by men like Timothy. Paul asked the Roman Christians, *“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”* (Romans 10:14).

11a This is a faithful saying:

Salvation Based on God’s Trustworthiness

The world is filled with proverbs and sayings and even promises from politicians: “I am not a crook” or “read my lips: no new taxes” or “I did not have sexual relations with that woman.” Not all of these sayings can be called faithful. The Bible however only contains sayings that are faithful. Five times in his epistles to Timothy and Titus Paul utters statements that can be counted on because they come from a faithful God (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1 4:8,9; Tit. 3:8).

Charles Swindoll describes the structure of these verses, “Paul prepared Timothy for a hymn, two pairs of epigrams expressing four paradoxical truths. He presented them as four conditional clauses, ‘if we...,’ each one followed by a result” (181). A paradox is a statement that seems to be self-contradictory yet in fact is true. Paul is telling us that these apparent contradictory statements are in truth trustworthy.

11b For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.

The first paradox is the idea of dying in order to live. A Christian is to “die” spiritually with Christ in baptism so that he can be resurrected in newness of life. *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him”* (Romans 6:3-8). Note verse eight as it is very similar to what Paul is teaching here as a faithful saying. Those who do not believe will not be baptized, thus will not die with Him, and cannot live with Him (Matt. 16:16).

This new life in Christ only begins in baptism. After baptism the old life is gone and the new life reigns. “My rights” died in baptism. “It ‘s my body” attitude ended the day you became a member of His body through baptism. Doing your own thing ended when you committed to obeying the Gospel. Putting on any clothing you want to ended when you put on Christ. Choosing your own friends ended when you chose God as your friend (Js. 4:4). A man’s life ends when he is crucified with Him in baptism. Now the old man is dead and buried while the new life is Christ is resurrected. Paul put it this way, *“have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Gal 2:20).

12a If we endure, We shall also reign with Him.

As noted above a soldier is to continue enduring hardship. If he continues he has the promise of reigning as a king with Christ the King of kings. If he runs the race as Christ ran and finished the course, he will receive a crown to reign victoriously with Christ. After all, it’s not those who start the race but those who finish the race that receive the crown of life.

12b If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

It should be noted that *“die”* is a one time action in the past (at baptism); *“endure”* is on going

action; and now “deny” is a possible future action. It carries the idea of disowning Christ in the future. This verse demonstrates the possibility of a faithful Christian turning his back on His Savior and being disowned by Christ. Jesus had warned His disciples, *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven”* (Matt 10:32-33). Calvinist see the obvious problem this poses to the doctrine of perseverance of the saints or once saved, always saved. Their commentaries scramble to shore up the levies of this false doctrine with weak arguments in a vain attempt to hold back the flood waters of Truth. Most will argue that this denial is made by false Christians, that is, those who were never true believers in the first place. Yet noted, Paul use the term “we” in addressing Timothy. Are we to believe that both Paul and Timothy are not true believers?

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

The unfaithfulness of men will in no way cancel out the faithfulness of God. God will keep His promise to save those who in faith obey the Gospel message preached. For God to save the unfaithful would deny His very nature. It would destroy His holiness. The very nature of God is His faithfulness. This aspect of God can never change or cease or fail even once. If God becomes unfaithful He ceases to be God. *“Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...”* (Heb 6:16-19).

Questions:

1. How is Jesus the seed of David? Why is this important to remember?
2. What are the consequences in denying that Jesus came in the flesh?
3. Why does Paul call it “my gospel”?
4. What are the consequences in denying the resurrection of Christ?
5. What does the term “evildoer” mean? To whom does it apply?
6. Why was Paul willing to suffering chains?
7. Give other examples in the Bible where the messengers were “chained”, but the message was not.

8. Who are the “*elect*” referred to by Paul in verse 10?
9. What is a “*faithful saying*”? How many of these are found in Paul’s letters to evangelists?
10. What is a paradox?
11. When does one die with Christ and new life with Him begin?
12. How do Calvinist deal with verse 12b?
13. Why does God remain faithful?

Discussion

1. What are some other paradoxes found in the New Testament?
2. How do the enemies of the cross attempt to chain the Gospel today?

Keep on Being a Diligent Worker

2 Timothy 2:14-19

14a Remind them of these things,

A Diligent Worker Reminds

In Paul's final epistle he keeps on reminding Timothy to keep on reminding the church. Man is a forgetful creature and needs constant reminders. The things they need to be reminded of are those which Paul has just spoken about: the need to develop teachers in the future; working and suffering before being rewarded; and remembering the salvation which comes through Jesus Christ. As Peter wrote, "I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, ...to stir you up by reminding you...to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease" (2 Peter 1:12,13,15).

14b charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit,

A Diligent Worker Charges

As Paul charges Timothy as a military commander giving orders to a subordinate, so he is to pass along the Divine orders from the headquarters in Heaven. The order is not to "strive about words." Literally, this is a war of words. This is not a prohibition against debate. The reason for the strong command is that these debates over words does not profit anything toward the salvation of souls. Once during a discussion about modesty a brother remarked that a Christian could never wear shorts. When asked about those shorts which were as long as a modest skirt, he shot back, "No! Shorts is shorts!"

This command is given "before the Lord." An order issued while the commander is watching your response is an order which will more likely be carried out. God was a witness to the commands He had Paul give to Timothy and was watching while Timothy passed them along to the brethren.

14c to the ruin of the hearers.

A Diligent Worker Averts Catastrophe

From the Greek term which is translated here as "ruin" also becomes our English word "catastrophe." Timothy can stop the war of words and avoid a great catastrophe at Ephesus. Think of the many wars and conflicts in history which could have been averted if wise men had first stopped the war of words which led to greater conflict. The term is used of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah in 2 Peter 2:6 and of the destructive effect of false teachers in 2 Pet. 2:1; 3:15,16.

15a Be diligent to present yourself approved to God,

A Diligent Worker Is Approved

The King James reads, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God." However, this passage is not specifically talking about studying the Word of God. The Greek word "spoudazo" means "to give diligence." It is so translated later in 4:9,21 and Titus 3:12. Although a diligent worker will study God's Word this passage is not a specific instruction for studying.

The motive of a diligent workers to not to have their efforts to be seen by men and meet their approval. Instead they are to work hard to please God. Paul had written, "For do I now persuade men,

or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (Gal 1:10). Timothy's work needed to be tested by God and found genuine. He works for God and his work must be judged and rewarded by God.

15b a worker who does not need to be ashamed,

A Diligent Worker is not Ashamed

God has had many workers who were not so diligent about showing to God their hard work. The one talent man failed to receive approval for this very reason. The Master told him, "*You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, ...And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*" (Matt 25:26-28,30). Although Timothy may not make everyone happy because he does not entangle himself in the war of words, he will not have to be ashamed before God.

15c rightly dividing the word of truth.

A Diligent Worker Lives the Truth

The Greek word for "rightly dividing" is only found here in the New Testament and in the Septuagint. It literally refers to "cutting straight." As a tentmaker Paul knew the value of this. It is also a term which could apply to the stone mason or the road builder. The real issue is whether it refers to a correct handling of God's Word or demonstrating a proper application of Truth in one's daily life. If one is relying on the Greek Old Testament's use of the term in Proverbs 3:6 and 11:5 then the later meaning would apply. Traditionally, many have used this passage to teach that one must show the correct distinction between the Old and New Testaments. Although this is necessary for all God's workers, this passage is not specifically teaching that concept.

16a But shun profane and idle babblings,

A Diligent Worker Shuns

Timothy is given another command to "*shun*" or stand separated from "*profane and idle babblings.*" These represent a specific time of warring words. Words that are vain, empty of any real value, a wasted discussion which is to be avoided. This type of discussion is found in far too many adult Bible classes. The teacher gives himself to ten minutes of study before class and the students come to class even less prepared. They pass each verse around from member to member in the pews to explain what they think the passage means. In the end everyone thinks they have had a great discussion but it is no more than a mutual pooling of ignorance and void of any real edification. Even good teachers can be drawn into discussions which lead to strife and wasted time and effort. Every Bible class teacher needs to heed these words of wisdom: "*In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise*" (Prov 10:19).

16b for they will increase to more ungodliness. 17 And their message will spread like cancer.

A Diligent Worker Stops the Spread

The term gangrene would be more appropriate than cancer since it is actually derived from the Greek word used in the text. The term originally meant to eat away. So gangrene sets in after the lose of circulation and eats away like cancer until it kills. Audie Murphy, the famous World War II hero, was shot in the hip and gangrene set in until nine inches of his hip had to be cut away to stop the spread. This action not only saved his life, but permitted him to return to the battlefield where he single handedly held off six German tanks and 250 infantry men. This action won him the Congregational Medal of

Honor. By stopping the spread of the warring words souls can be saved, the real battle won, and victory achieved.

17a Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

A Diligent Worker Protects the Faith of Some

Nothing is known of Philetus but what is written here. However, Paul mentioned in his first letter to Timothy that while he was at Ephesus he delivered Hymenaeus along with Alexander *“to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme”* (1 Tim 1:20). Evidently Hymenaeus was still at work using a war of words with empty discussions which were spreading like gangrene. Specifically, he and Philetus were attacking the belief in the bodily resurrection of believers in the last day. Paul already has made a defense of this to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 15:12-58). These may have been influences by the Greek philosophers who rejected the idea of a bodily resurrection. To them the body was evil and the spirit good and therefore to reunite them in a resurrection was repulsive. Since these two men were arguing that the resurrection had already passed, they may have applied it to the spiritual resurrection which takes place at baptism (Rom. 6:1-8). Jesus has made it clear that He will resurrect the dead in the end. *“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation”* (John 5:28-29).

Apparently the faith of some had already been destroyed by this false teaching about the resurrection. If Timothy is a good worker for God he will protect the faith of others by effectively dealing with those who have strayed from the truth.

19a Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands,

A Diligent Worker Has a Solid Foundation

The firm or solid foundation may refer to the truth or the church which is *“the pillar and ground of the truth”* which rest upon the foundation of Christ and His apostles (Eph. 2:20). No matter what false doctrine is spread or how many become faithless, God’s Word, the Truth will stand. False teaching and their teachers will not stand firm. They will not last as will the eternal Word.

19b having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,”

A Diligent Worker is God’s

In ancient times a seal was a sign of ownership which protect the content of a letter or a vessel. Paul mentions that there are two such seals on the foundation. Jesus said of His flock, *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand”* (John 10:27-28). As the truth is still the truth; so God’s children are still His despite all the warring of empty words. God knows those who are true, approved workers and Timothy is one of the them.

19c and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

A Diligent Worker Departs from Lawlessness

During the rebellion of Korah, Moses warned the children of Israel, *“Depart now from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins”* (Num 16:26). God said through His prophet Isaiah, *“Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord”* (Isaiah 52:11). Scholars are divided over which passage Paul may be referencing. Nonetheless, there must be a zero tolerance for error.

Questions:

1. What things does Timothy need to keep reminding the saints?
2. Why is Timothy to charge or command these things “*before the Lord*”?
3. What does “*ruin*” mean in verse 14c?
4. How does the King James Version translate verse 15a?
5. What is to be the motive behind Timothy’s diligence?
6. What does it mean to “*rightly divide the word of truth*”?
7. What are “*profane and idle babblings*”?
8. To what is the spread of “*profane and idle babblings*” compared?
9. Who are the troublemakers at Ephesus? What were they teaching? What was the result of their teaching?
10. What is the “*solid foundation*” in verse 19?
11. What was a seal used for in ancient times?
12. What is the second seal on the solid foundation?

Discussion

1. What has verse 15 been used to teach in the past which is not actually taught by the passage?
2. How can a Bible Class teacher “*shun profane and idle babblings*”?

The Lord's Servant - A Vessel of Honor

2 Timothy 2:20-26

Vessels of Honor

Having mentioned a firm foundation, Paul now used the metaphor of a great house which contains all manner of vessels or utensils. Paul was apt to use this metaphor of vessels (Rom. 9:21; 2 Cor. 4:7). However, it is wise not to assume that Paul is making the same argument when using a similar metaphor. In fact, the context will show that he uses "vessels" to teach a different lesson in this letter.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

Vessels in the Great House Vary

It is doubtless that Timothy is to be this vessel of honor in contrast with those who are like Hymenaeus and Philetus. Timothy needs to be a vessel of gold and silver. These are valuable. They are used to decorate and to serve guests. Those common everyday vessels are of wood and clay and are used for less dignified purposes, such as, a slop bucket or a chamber pot. Everyone has a variety of vessels in their home that they consider honorable whether they are a nice set of silverware or a beautiful vase used for flower arrangements. Likewise, vessels or utensils of dishonor range from the brush used to scrub the toilet bowl to the diaper pail in the nursery.

21a Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor,

Vessels of Honor are Cleansed

The "latter" are the vessels of dishonor. Sin and sinners are contagious as is false teaching. They spread "like gangrene." To be pure Timothy, desiring to be a honorable vessel, needs to avoid contamination. As Paul warned the Corinthians, "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits'" (1 Cor 15: 33). Church discipline is necessary because of the leavening effect of sinful behavior in the church. "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened" (1 Cor 5:7). False teachers are also to be identified and avoided (Rom. 16:17).

It is interesting to note that the Greek term for "cleanses" is the same in 1 Corinthians 5:7. It is from this same Greek term which is derived the English word "catharsis." It is a purging or cleansing.

21b sanctified

Vessels of Honor are Set Apart

An honorable vessel is made holy, or set apart for a special use when it is sanctified. Derived from the same root as the word sanctified is the term "saint." They are set apart from sin and set apart to God who is Holy. "...those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1 Cor 1:2).

21c and useful for the Master,

Vessels of Honor are Helpful

What good is a beautiful gravy bowl made of fine china if it has a crack in it so that the gravy

leaks out all of the table? The Master of the house would not be honored. So a Christians who is of no use is really of no value and brings no glory to God.

21d prepared for every good work.

Vessels of Honor are Prepared

Vessels of honor are prepared ahead of time to be useful. A stack of dirty expensive dishes are of no use when the guest arrive. They must have been cleaned of food remnants and dried and put up so they are ready when needed. Christians are only ready to do good works when previous prepared. Later in chapter three and verse seventeen it is the inspired Word of God which equips us for every good work.

The Servant of the Lord

Paul now introduces the vessel of honor as the servant of the Lord. This would be parallel to the “man of God” description found in the first letter. The term servant is from *doulos* meaning a slave. Above the vessel is to be useful for the Master or despot. A slave is to also to be cleaned up and ready to be useful to the Master to whom he has been set apart to. The following commands indicate how this servant is to accomplish this.

22a Flee also youthful lusts;

The Lord’s Servant Flees

Keep in mind that both the Greek and Jewish cultures considered any man under the age of forty to be young. Paul wants Timothy to be aware of the fact that his age may make certain desires stronger and thus a great temptation. “*Youthful lusts*” are not wrong in and of themselves. The term “*lust*” means “strong desire” and can be used in the good sense. God is the one who made us so that man would have a youth. He also gave us desires that are good if fulfilled according to His Will. For example, the desire for food is not wrong even when it becomes strong. However, Eve sinned when she fulfilled this desire for food by eating of the forbidden fruit. Sex is not wrong. God made man and woman with natural desires for each other. Yet fulfillment of this desire outside of marriage is the sin of fornication.

The Greek term for “*flee*” is *phuego*. Our English word “fugitive” is derived from this term. Timothy was to be a constant fugitive running from the temptations of youthful lusts. Just as Joseph fled from the advances of Potiphar’s wife.

22b but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

The Lord’s Servant Follows

Just as Timothy was told to flee the love of money in the first letter, here again, he is commanded to flee followed by the command to “*pursue*.” As a fugitive from sin he becomes a man who runs after various virtues. These four virtues come out of a pure heart. The pure heart is the same as the cleansed vessel of honor. First, he is to follow after doing the right thing before God and his fellow man, which is righteousness. He is to not only to do the right thing but be right with God. Next, he is to pursue faith. This is faithfulness to God and His Word. He must also run after love. This a the Greek *agape* which is a love not based on emotions, attraction or worthiness, but one a mindful resoluteness to put the well-being of another ahead of self. Finally, the Lord’s slave is to pursue peace. This is from the term *eirene* and the English terms “serene” and “serenity” originate from it. It is the type that Jesus presented His disciples, “*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*” (John 14:27).

23 But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.

The Lord's Servant Avoids

Notice the various commands Paul has been shooting out at Timothy one after another: cleanse, flee, pursue and now avoid. Timothy was to teach other men to teach other men and he was to deal with false teachers, however he must decline or refuse to be caught up in certain types of disputes. The word "foolish" is translated from the Greek *moros* which is the origin of our term moron. Some disputes are moronic and must be avoided. As are those discussions which are ignorant, which come from those who are ill-trained, ill-informed, and ill-disciplined.

The reason Timothy is to avoid these types of discussions is their end result: strife. By limiting the time and effort he spends on these speculations he will keep others and himself from counter-productive debates. There are some things worth the fight to defend, such as, the plan of salvation. Prolonged discussions on whether a preacher should part his hair in the middle or sport a full beard lead to nothing but harmful and divisive controversy.

24a And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel

The Lord's Servant Does Not Quarrel

Some preachers just love a good fight. Souls are not won by defeating them in an argument. The Master's slave is to win souls, not disputes.

24b but be gentle to all,

The Lord's Servant is Gentle

When dealing with controversies and those who are controversial, Timothy was to be gentle to everyone. The same word is used of Paul among the Thessalonians. "*But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children*" (1 Thess 2:7).

24c able to teach,

The Lord's Servant is Apt to Teach

Just as bishops must be apt to teach so must Timothy be able and willing to teach others. Often this means dealing with those who are trouble makers in the Bible class and even in private studies. This requires that he knows what he is talking about. More importantly he needs to have the ability to understand what his students do not know. He needs to know when to refuse a question or pursue the discussion. This ability is not found just by knowing the facts of the Gospel message but through experience dealing with various types of people and their questions. Jesus knew when to debate with the Pharisees and He knew how to shut down the discussion when it was of ill-intent.

24d patient,

The Lord's Servant is Patient

"The Greek word for 'patient' (*anexikakon*) is used only here in the New Testament; it literally means "to face ill treatment without resentment.'" (Live Application Bible Commentary, 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, 201). Jesus, of course, is the greatest example of this (1 Pet. 2:22f). A teacher needs to be willing to stand-up and take abuse for the truth.

25a in humility correcting those who are in opposition,

The Lord's Servant Meekly Corrects

At times Jesus and Paul were very firm with the opposition. Timothy would have to learn when this was necessary. This involves the misunderstood virtue of meekness. It is not weakness or cowardice. A meek man has his words and emotions under control. A colt that is domesticated to be

useful is not weakened or broken. The colt willingly is controlled by the master to be useful. As a teacher meekness would give Timothy the ability to react with restraint and act with boldness according to the situation. The idea of correction is better to be understood as a instructing or schooling of the opposition.

25b if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

The Lord's Servant Restores

The overall motive of Timothy's efforts should be the saving of souls. It is God who grants repentance. It is His desire all repent. *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9). Repentance involves a change of mind. The attitude adjustment results in the individual being able to listen to the Word of God and come to the knowledge of the Truth. If he remains, quarrelsome, moronic, ill-informed, and in opposition to sound teaching, he will never know the truth. The second result of their change of mind and attitude is a coming to their senses. Matthew Poole says this means "to awake out of a drunken sleep. A state of sin is a kind of drunkenness, in which men have lost the use of their reason." Those who soften their hard heart long enough to receive the truth experience an awakening akin to those coming out of a drunken stupor. Next, this repentance results in being freed from the devil's trap which captured them. God wants men to come to repentance. Satan wants men to be trapped in their moronic, ill-disciplined, controversial speculations which blind them to the Truth. Perhaps the devil made them do it; but only because they blindly fell into his trap and are his willing slaves.

Questions:

1. T F It is a good Bible study habit to assume that all metaphors have the same meaning and teach the same lesson when used by the same author more than once.
2. What are vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor? Who might they represent?
3. How can one become a vessel of honor?
4. How are vessels of honor used?
5. What are "youthful lusts"?
6. What virtues is the Lord's servant to pursue?

7. What is the Lord's servant to avoid? Why?
8. What does it mean to be "*apt to teach*"?
9. What is the purpose behind "*correcting those who are in opposition*"?
10. Why does Satan take men captive?

Discussion:

1. How can the Lord's servant be "*gentle to all*" and "*patient*" yet at the same time correct the opposition?
2. How can Satan take men captive today?

Keep in Mind Troublesome Times Are Here

2 Timothy 3:1-9

A United States' President has said, *"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us, then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."* (April 30, 1863, President Lincoln's Proclamation for a National Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer). Paul Harvey wisely remarked, *"In times like these, it helps to recall that there have always been times like thesees."* Solomon would have put it this way, *"there is nothing new under the sun"* (Eccl. 1:9). Paul is going command Timothy to keep in mind that there will always be periods of perilous times in the Christian Era.

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

Times of Trouble

Many students of the Bible see the phrase *"last days"* and automatically envision the period of time leading up to the return of Christ. There is no need to look at the types of troubles listed in the text as signs of the end of days. Jesus clearly said, *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only"* (Matt 24:36). Premillennial theories often color one's view of a biblical context to the point that the Bible student misses the message. However, the last days are making reference to the period of time from Christ's ascension up into Heaven and His return when the earth will be no more (Acts 2:17; 2 Pet. 3:3). God *"has in these last days spoken to us by His Son"* (Heb 1:2). *"Last days"* are akin to *"last hour"*: *"Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour"* (1 John 2:18). Thus, today Christians are still living in the *"last days"* totally unaware as to the day or hour when the Lord shall appear.

The term *"times"* is not translated from the Greek word *chronos* which refers to chronological time, but from the plural form of *kairos* meaning seasons of eras or periods of time. Timothy needs to keep on being aware that troublesome seasons will come and go. Looking at the daily newspapers from around the world and listening to the new one might conclude that the world is experiencing one of those periods of perilous times.

The Greek word for *"perilous"* is found only one other place in the New Testament. The term is used to refer to two demon-possessed men in the land of the Gergesenes who were *"exceedingly fierce"* (Matt 8:28). *"Perilous times means difficult, troublesome, trying, uneasy, hard, violent, threatening, and dangerous days"* (The Teacher's Outline & Study Bible, 72).

2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient

to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5a having a form of godliness but denying its power.

Types of Trouble

Nineteen types of sins are mentioned which will be prevalent during these various times of trouble. The first one mentioned serves as a genesis for the ones that follow. The phrase *"lovers of themselves"* literally means self-love or affection. Selfishness results not only when men merely love themselves, but when their love for self results from a superiority complex. After all, Jesus commanded that His disciples to love their neighbor's as themselves (Matt. 22:37-39).

It naturally follows that those who love self will be *"lovers of money"* which is used to satisfy every desire of self. Paul used the term in the first letter to warn, *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"* (1 Tim 6:10). This is why the health-wealth gospel has become so popular with many.

Often people who have money or at least are very fond of it will become *"boasters."* They will boast of their greatness to push themselves above others. They are narcissistic and often con artists who may be after your affections and devotions more than your money. They are empty frauds devoid of true virtue (Rom. 1:30).

Next come the *"proud."* These of course can be found in any age of man. It is through pride of life that Satan tempted Eve to sin (Gen. 3:6). All men wish to be attain a place above others and even God in their quest for superiority. Jesus warned the over-elevated Pharisees, *"And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted"* (Matt 23:12).

There are those who will be *"blasphemers."* This is often a sin of the tongue where men speak evil or ill of God or even other men. However, one can blasphemy by their actions by treating others with contempt.

No one has to look very far or very long to find those who are *"disobedient to parents."* If children do not honor their parents it is highly unlikely they will show proper respect to others in authority. In the Law of Moses disobedient and rebellious, out of control teenagers could be stone to death. However, many parents are a fault. Mothers are at work making money instead of being available for their children. Fathers have failed to *"bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord"* (Eph 6:4).

One of the reasons why so many children do not honor their parents is because they have become *"unthankful"* for all the good their parents have done. Self-centered people have a tendency to think the world owes them. They do not feel a need for gratitude. This sin effects the way they view God, *"although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful"* (Romans 1:21). This is an age where everyone demands their rights, what they feel they are entitled to, without regard to what God wants and has done from them already.

A ungrateful generation left to themselves will become more and more *"unholy."* The term speaks of those who have lost all sense of the need to show moral purity but will instead flaunt their wickedness before others. MacArthur says "it is used of a person who refused to bury a dead body or who committed incest (114)."

The term *"unloving"* is translated by others as *"without natural affection."* These men do not possess the type of love (Greek, storge) which is commonly found among family members. Natural affection would be akin to the instinctive care that animals will have for their offspring. Yet without love babies are aborted, children are murdered or abandoned, marriage partners are cast aside.

The next word *"unforgiving"* is rendered *"implacable"* in Romans 1:31 and also translated *"trucebreakers."* The breaking of truces and the unwillingness to forgive are more appropriately the end results of this little known sinful attitude. Literally the term means "without libation." Originally, this had reference to someone who would offer up a libation to a god or goddess as a peace offering. Those who will never accept an apology for a grievance, will not forgive a fought, dissolve their marriage due to irreconcilable differences, will never let anyone make amends, etc. Their bitterness over an affront to their pride will never let them just get over it and go on even when the opportunity is presented day in

and day out.

The term “*slanderers*” which is also translated “*malicious gossips*” is translated from “diabolos.” The English word “devil” comes from this Greek word which means “accuser.” Satan is the accuser of men before God. This is seen in his attempts to slander the character of Job. Men are doing the work of the Devil when ever they tear down the reputation of others.

Those who are “*without self-control*” lack restraint in their desire for sex (1 Cor. 7:9). They are like an athlete who will not follow the rules of his training because he lacks proper discipline (1 Cor. 9:25). They are literally “without power” over self.

Some men will become “*brutal.*” This is a term often applied to the fierceness of a savage beast. Violent crimes against their fellow man will result.

Although those who have a desire to become overseers must be lovers of good (1 Tit. 1:8), the wicked men of troublesome times will become “*despisers of good.*” Isaiah warned, “*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil*” (Isaiah 5:20). Abortion is not murder and homosexuality is not an abomination. They hate those who have natural affection and are pro-life and despise those who uphold the Divine institution of marriage between one man and one woman.

The “*traitors*” will seize every chance to get their own way even if they have to sacrifice a friend in the process. This is what Judas did to Jesus for a mere thirty pieces of silver. Therefore the term is aptly applied to both Judas (Luke 6:16) and to the Jews who called for Christ’s crucifixion (Acts 7:5).

Anyone who rush head long into trouble without regard for the consequences to himself and others is “*headstrong*” or rash. Like a motorcyclist who does stunts while driving down the interstate at the same time weaving in and out of traffic.

Although the “*haughty*” may be a lot like the “*proud*” they are those who are conceited to the point they puff themselves up like a cloud of smoke. They may even be blinded by their own words of high-minded self praise.

As in the beginning of the list of sins reflected in troublesome times comes other type of selfish love. Some men will become “*lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.*” Translated from the Greek term *philedonos*. This represents an affection for pleasure. And is a compound of *philos* (love) and *hedone* (pleasure). From the later comes the English words “hedonist” and “hedonism.”

The final characteristic of wicked men living in perilous times refers to those “*having a form of godliness but denying its power.*” These are the pretenders. They have external signs of religion, worship, morality and piety. Yet, in their lives and in their hearts they lack any semblance of these. These men may have been faithful Christians but are a mere shadow of godliness without any solid substance.

5b And from such people turn away!

Turn Away from Trouble

Those sins which are prevalent in the world will sooner or later overrun the local church. What is Timothy to do during times when these type men and women invade the congregation? Church discipline seems to the order. They must be avoided or shunned.

6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Targets of Trouble

Next, Paul tells Timothy why this type of troublemaker needs to be turned away. They gain entry into households through stealth and capture the minds of women. Perhaps they are even targeting easy prey in the church: gullible (lit. silly) women. Whether Paul is referring to just a select set of women who were currently at Ephesus, such as the younger widows mentioned in 1 Timothy 5: 1-13 or giving a warning that women are often the target of such false teachers is not known. Women often make up a majority of those who follow after cult leaders. such as David Koresh. Paul also remarked that the role

of women with regards to their leadership in the church and their role in the home is based on their vulnerability to deception. *“And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression”* (1 Tim 2:12-14). Another reason for their susceptibility is their being *“loaded down with sins.”* This may be a reference to their guilt. When overcome with guilt men and women will seek out those who will tell them what they want to hear in order to ease their consciences. The next cause is the strong and irresistible appeal of strong desires of various sorts. Some think Paul is referring to unrestrained sexual lusts, but these are various or a variety of desires. Like the Athenians who always loved to hear of and learn new philosophies, these women are looking for some novel doctrine. These gullible women are not ignorant and lazy but their efforts do not lead them to a deeper knowledge of the Truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;

Teachers of Trouble

Paul now focuses on the troublemakers found in troublesome times. He compares them to two men not mentioned anywhere in the Bible. Jannes and Jambres are mentioned extra-biblical writings. This legend appears in Pseudo-Philo, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Talmud, Targums, Pliny the Elder AD 23-79 and Apuleius AD 130. The pythegorean philosopher Numenius (second century AD) also speaks of these two. Paul knew these two men to be the names of the troublemakers in Pharaoh's court by means of inspiration of the Holy Spirit. According to Jewish legends these two were Pharaoh's magicians who resisted Moses (Ex. 7:11; 9:11). They oppose Moses' attempts to free the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. When Aaron's rod became a serpent, so did their rods turn into snakes. Although Aaron's snake ate theirs. When Moses turned the Nile into blood, they could only turn water into blood. After the plague of frogs these magicians were not able to compete with Moses. They are believed to have falsely joined with the Israelites and were the chief instigators behind the worship of the golden calf. This treachery led them to be killed with others by the loyal Levites.

Paul mentions several characteristics of these false teachers. First, they resist true men of God and the Truth. Next, they are of corrupt minds. Perhaps they were once faithful but no longer. Finally they will be tested and exposed as the counterfeits they really are. Like Jannes and Jambres were exposed to be frauds when they resisted Moses, so will the false teachers of Timothy's day. The term for *“disapproved”* is *adokimos*. Those testing metals would see how they react under the test of fire. They would be proven by testing to be real or counterfeit. So it was also used of test real soldiers in combat and athletes in competition.

9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

Termination of Trouble

As Jannes and Jambres could not keep up with imitating Moses' plagues so neither will these false teachers continue in their advancement in the last days. False doctrine will make inroads into the church but will sooner or later be stopped. Truth is eternal. The lies of Satan are limited and filled with folly. All such will be brought to light when compared to the Truth. Just as many other false doctrines and counterfeit churches have become extinct so will they. Remember, the hymn, "Jesus Is Coming Soon," begins, "Troublesome times are here, filling men's hearts with fear."

Questions:

1. When are the *“last days”*?

2. What does the term “*times*” mean?

3. What does the term “*perilous*” mean?

4. Matching

- | | |
|--|--|
| ___ lovers of themselves | a. Accuser |
| ___ lovers of money | b. Call evil good, and good evil |
| ___ boasters | c. Egotistical |
| ___ proud | d. Failure to honor parents |
| ___ blasphemers | e. Failure to show gratitude |
| ___ disobedient to parents | f. Fierceness of a savage beast |
| ___ unthankful | g. Flaunting wickedness |
| ___ unholy | h. Hedonist |
| ___ unloving | i. Implacable or trucebreakers |
| ___ unforgiving | j. Judas |
| ___ slanderers | k. Materialist greed |
| ___ without self-control | l. Pretenders or hypocrites |
| ___ brutal | m. Push themselves above others |
| ___ despisers of good | n. Rushing into trouble without thinking of consequences |
| ___ traitors | o. Self-love or self-centered affection |
| ___ headstrong | p. Speaking ill of God or fellow-man |
| ___ haughty | q. Without natural affection |
| ___ lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God | r. Without power of self-control |

5. What is Timothy to do with regard to such people?

6. Who will these troublemakers target?
7. What are the characteristics of those taken captive by troublemakers?
8. Who were Jannes and Jambres? Where else does one learn about them?
9. What are the characteristics of men like Jannes and Jambres?
10. Why will troublemakers not make continued progress?

Discussion:

1. How did Paul know about Jannes and Jambres? Where these real men?
2. Are we living in perilous times? Explain.

Follow the Right Example and Continue in the Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:10-17

The word “*but*” shows Paul is contrasting the “*men*” in verse two and Jannes and Jambres in verse eight with Timothy who is to be different by following after Paul. In this new paragraph Paul will point him to the past to have him continue to follow Paul’s example, look to the future when persecutions will come with evil men and imposters influencing others, and to the present continuance in the Scripture with its profitable influence.

10a But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose,

Follow the Right Mentor

The term for “*followed*” is often used of disciples who join and get so close to the teachings and daily walk of their teacher that they become like them. Paul needed to be a mentor to Timothy through the memory of their close association together. This included three characteristics of Paul which Timothy needed to always pattern his work. First, Paul’s “*doctrine*” or teachings should be remembered. Timothy would have followed Paul from the time he joined him at Lystra throughout their travels listening to the inspired apostle preach and teach the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles alike. His teachings were not like that of the feel-good philosophers of the hedonist or the abusers of the ascetics. Warren Wiersbe warns, “On radio and TV today, we have a great deal of ‘pseudo-Christianity’ which is a mixture of psychology, success motivation, and personality cults, with a little bit of Bible thrown in to make it look religious. Beware!” (251). Next, Paul’s “*manner of life*” or lifestyle was an open book to Timothy. He was able to see that Paul was the same man in private as he was in public. He did not preach one way and live another. As Paul told the Corinthians, “*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ*” (1 Cor 11:1). Finally, he was to follow the example of Paul’s “*purpose*” or life’s goal. Preachers are not to wander aimlessly in life. If they have no goals “set before” them they are sure to hit them every time and thus accomplish nothing. Paul told the church of Philippi, “*one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (Phil 3:13-14). Christ gave Paul a mission in life and Paul made a decision to make that his aim or purpose in life. Timothy must do the same.

10b faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,

Follow the Right Virtues

Timothy needed to also imitate the virtues of Paul. First, his “*faith*” or faithfulness is to be carefully followed. Paul was trustworthy when it come to the Gospel message being preached. He told the elders of Ephesus, “*I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, ... Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God*” (Acts 20:20,26,27). Timothy also needed to remember Paul’s “*longsuffering*” as he had to endure hardships while waiting for opportunities to arise to further the Gospel. Paul had the same “*love*” for others as God has from lost man and His children. Paul was not backward about sharing his fervent and genuine love for the brethren. Finally, the virtue of “*perseverance*” or endurance was to also be a part of Timothy as it was

in his mentor. The term means to “abide under.” Paul put up with and stuck to the task. He never just cut and run when the situation demanded he stand fast.

11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra--what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Follow the Right Endurance

Paul now reminds Timothy to reflect on his examples of endurance during times of “persecutions” and “afflictions.” Paul knew all too well how to persecute others; but when he became the persecuted he did so in a way that all Christians need to imitate. As a pharisee he knew how to dish it out, but as a Christian he knew even better who to take it.

Several places where Paul was persecuted and suffered for the preaching of the Gospel are mentioned. At Antioch “*Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region*” (Acts 13:50). Later at Iconium “*a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them*” (Acts 14:5). Paul and Barnabas escaped stoning at Iconium but Paul did not fair so well at Lystra, Timothy’s hometown. “*Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe*” (Acts 14:19-20).

Perhaps, many, many more examples of Paul’s sufferings were known to Timothy which have not been recorded for subsequent generations. However, persecutions were not the goal or the end result Timothy was to focus upon. The Lord had delivered Paul out of them all. This does not mean that Christians are to expect God to deliver them from every persecution, but He is to deliver us through them. Paul was delivered from Damascus through a basket and avoided death. Yet, he was stoned at Lystra and revived to go on preaching.

The other lesson learned from Paul’s meaning persecutions was the fact that “*all who desire to live godly...will suffer persecution.*” If you want to avoid suffering, live like the evil men in verse two. Notice Paul did not say that Christians “might” suffer, he said they “will” suffer persecution. Jesus warned His disciples of this fact. “*If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also*” (John 15:18-20). Paul expected persecutions throughout his ministry. He strengthened the disciples and exhorted them by saying, “*We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God*” (Acts 14:22). No; a Christian does not have to go looking for trouble, but if he, like Paul, lives like Christ trouble will find him.

13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Follow Not...

Paul is a great example and mentor for Timothy to remember and imitate carefully. However, the “*evil men*” represented by the nineteen sins in the first part of this chapter and the “*impostors*” like Jannes and Jambres of verse eight are not men worthy of following. Two reasons are given. First, they “*grow worse and worse.*” This is the natural law of spiritual, scriptural, and moral digression. Sin begets more sin. They never make any headway in their lives, they are in a constant backward movement away from Truth and righteousness. The second reason, these type of men go on “*deceiving and being deceived.*” As Jesus referred to the Pharisees as “*the blind leading the blind*” (Matt. 15:14). Some false teachers really believe their own lies and as a result continue to deceive and be deceived.

14a But you must continue in the things

Scriptures Must be Continued in

Paul now issue a command which focuses Timothy on a present and on-going need, “continue in” the Scriptures. Just as Jesus told His disciples to “abide” in the vine (John 15:1-8). He said, “*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you*” (John 15:7).

14b which you have learned

Scriptures Must be Learned

Timothy had to learn from others the scriptures. His teachers were his mother and grandmother. This necessitates study. Often adults will revolt at the idea of a continued education. This is seen in the way the did not prepare for their Bible classes or even read the assigned text.

14c and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,

Scriptures Must be Assured of

The Greek word for “*assured*” means “to make reliable, only here in the N.T.” (A.T. Robertson’s Word Pictures). Timothy has been a student long enough to be convinced that the Scriptures are reliable. He does not view the Word of God with any skepticism. Attacks on the reliability of the Bible do not cause him to doubt and reject because he has studied the issues well enough and long enough to know better.

The word “whom” is plural and most likely refers to Paul and his mother and grandmother. Paul is an inspired apostle of Jesus Christ which would add to his since of assurance they Word is reliable. Timothy is a second generation Christian and his faith must be his and not one which is inherited from his parents. This can only result if he has put them to the test and found them unerring

15a and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures,

Scriptures Must be Taught Early

Timothy was taught by his mother and grandmother from the time he was a small child. They must have done a great job, because he “*was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.*” (Acts 16:2). If there is to be a future generation of “Timothys”, mothers and fathers and grandparents of this generation need to get busy teaching their boys the Words of God from an early age. It is the duty of fathers to see to this important task (Eph. 6:4). The church can help with Bible classes and teachers, but the main responsibility is placed squarely on the shoulders of the parents. If there are to be future mothers like Eunice and grandmothers like Lois parents must also teach their daughters from childhood.

Note the “*Holy Scriptures*” are from the Greek “*hiera grammata*” which can be translated “sacred writings” or “holy letters.” Here it refers to the Old Testament scriptures which were completed and available in Greek for young Timothy to have been taught while growing up in Lystra.

15b which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Scriptures Make Wise for Salvation

The Bible is God’s revelation to man that he has sinned and God has a solution for his lost condition. Salvation can only be found through faith in Christ Jesus. As Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*” (John 14:6). James later command that Christians “*receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls*” (James 1:21).

In the Old Testament men were told of their sin and the need for redemption from the

consequences of sin which is death. They were promised the coming Messiah and told of His mission. These sacred writings of old served as a *“our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith”* (Gal 3:24). Does the study of the Old Testament have any value for the New Testament Christian? Paul said, *“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope”* (Romans 15:4). After warning of the sins of the Israelites, Paul states, *“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come”* (1 Cor 10:11).

16a All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,

Scriptures are Inspired

The Greek word translated *“inspiration”* comes from a compound word *“theopneustos”* which literally means *“God-breathed.”* The term *“pneuma”* gives us the terms *“pneumonia”* and *“pneumatic.”* It is the idea of wind or air moving something. Peter explains, *“for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”* (2 Peter 1:21). God needed to reveal His Will from His eternal mind to the minds of men so they could read and comprehend. This was done with the Holy Spirit to divinely superintended men in accurately recording the very words God wished. Paul says that *“all”* not *“some”* scripture comes from the very spirit or breath of God. This dispels the notion that only parts of the Bible are inspired. The Psalmist wrote, *“The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever”* (Ps. 119:160).

Is Paul saying that the Old Testament scriptures are inspired or could this include the New Testament as well? Note, Paul does use the same Greek terms as in verse fifteen, instead he uses the term *“graphe.”* It meanings *“writings”* (plural). Paul evidently believed that both Old and New Testaments were inspired writings *“graphe.”* He wrote, *“For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages’”* (1 Tim 5:18). He first quotes from the Old Testament (Deut. 25:4) and then he quotes Jesus from the New Testament (Luke 10:7). Peter recognized the writings of Paul as inspired scripture. He wrote *“as also our beloved brother Paul, ... has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures”* (2 Peter 3:15-16).

16b and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

Scriptures are Profitable

The Greek word for *“profitable”* is *“ophelimos,”* meaning sufficient or beneficial. This speaks to the purpose and potential of God’s Word. It is so complete that it has been *“once for all delivered to the saints”* (Jude 3) just as Christ was *“once for all”* sacrificed for man’s sins. To say there is need for more scriptures would be equivalent to someone demanding a need for an additional sacrifice for man’s sin. The Latter Day Saints will argue that they need the Book of Mormon due to the inefficiency of the Bible. Yet, the Bible as it exist today in sixty-six books needs no additions. John gave a stern warning to anyone adding to the Word (Rev. 22:18,19).

First, the inspired writings of God are profitable for *“doctrine”* or teaching. This is not the action of instructing others, but the content of what is to be taught. All the doctrines need for man is found in the Bible. Therefore, any additional doctrine is from man and is not inspired. The Word contains the basic Truths which one is to learn.

Second, the Bible is profitable for *“reproof.”* The idea is to convict man of his wrong whether it be his doctrine or his morals. Logically, learning true, inspired teaching or doctrine must precede convicting one that he is wrong.

Once a man is convinced that he is wrong he will need to learn how to correct his situation. After all, it is near impossible to teach someone the need to make correction in their lives until they first come to the conviction they are wrong. The Greek word for *“correction”* is only found here in the New

Testament. It is used of setting upright that which has been overturned. It is a restoration or reparation from sinfulness and false teaching.

Finally, once a sinner or error has been corrected comes the continued need for *“instruction in righteousness.”* The Greek word translated here as *“instruction”* means “training, correcting” which is received by a child from a parent or teacher (see Eph 6:4; Heb. 12:5f). Derived from “paideia” is “the English word ‘pedagogy’” which “is based on the idea of guiding a child to adulthood” (Swindoll 220). According Jamison, Fausset, and Brown the phrase could be rendered “instruction which is in righteousness.” To keep the student of the Bible from falling back into sin or falling for future errors in doctrine he will need the discipline and training to keep him righteous.

These four benefits of God’s inspired writings are best summed up by Warren Weirsbe, the scriptures “are profitable for doctrine (what is right), for reproof (What is not right), for correction (how to get right), and for instruction in righteousness (how to stay right)” (253).

17a that the man of God may be complete,

Scriptures Make Perfect

The phrase *“man of God”* is found in 1 Timothy 6:11 in reference to Timothy serving as an evangelist at Ephesus. A man of God must be a man of the Book.

The result of the sufficient teaching, beneficial reproof, competent correction, and useful instruction in righteousness is making the servant of God *“complete.”* The term means one who is not perfect in the sense of either moral or doctrinal perfection (although every Christian should strive for such) but instead means one who is useful because of being in a fit condition for service in God’s Kingdom.

17b thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Scriptures Equip

The second benefit of the inspired Word is that Christians are *“thoroughly equipped.”* Without the benefit of the Scriptures a Christians life is incomplete, lacking, and defunct. God does not send His soldiers out into battle without all the equipment they need to advance and survive the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:10f). No good work exist which God has not informed and prepared man for in His inspired Word. Every righteous work can be fulfilled by the Christian well furnished with the Truth from God in his heart and in his mind. No one on earth is better qualified to do God’s Work than the Christian who knows his Bible.

Questions:

1. What was Paul’s purpose in life?
2. What four virtues of Paul was Timothy told to emulate?
3. What persecutions did Paul endure at:
Antioch
Iconium

Lystra

4. What does it mean that God delivered Paul out of all his persecutions and afflictions?

5. Why must Christians, who live godly, suffer persecution?

6. What are the characteristics of “*evil men and impostors*”?

7. From whom had Timothy learned the scriptures?

8. Why is it important that the scriptures be taught from childhood?

9. How can the Old Testament scriptures make one wise unto salvation?

10. Did Paul and Peter teach that the New Testament was inspired? Explain.

11. Matching:

_____ Doctrine	a.	How to get right
_____ Reproof	b.	How to stay right
_____ Correction	c.	What is not right
_____ Instruction	d.	What is right

12. What are the two benefits of the inspired Word of God?

Discussion:

1. Does the study of the Old Testament have any value for the New Testament Christian? Explain.

2. A man has been taught that baptism comes after salvation and he was saved at the point of faith. Demonstrate what could be shown him from the Word's

Inspired teaching

Reproof

Correction

Instruction in righteousness.

Do the Work of an Evangelist

2 Timothy 4:1-5

The story is told about an old American Indian who attended a church service one Sunday morning. The preacher's message lacked real spiritual food, so he did a lot of shouting and pulpit pounding to cover up his lack of preparation. In fact, as it is sometimes said, he "preached up quite a storm." After the service, someone asked the Indian, who was a Christian, what he thought of the minister's message. Thinking for a moment, he summed up his opinion in six words: "High wind. Big thunder.but no rain." Yes, when the Scriptures are neglected, there is "no rain." Only when preaching is based on God's Word are His people blessed and refreshed.

A shortage of current philosophies on preaching and church growth does not exist on the bookshelves at the local religious bookstore. Few seem to focus on the principles laid out in the New Testament epistles which were written to instruct evangelists like Timothy and Titus. Instead, they rely on the leadership and marketing techniques found in the business world and pop-psychology.

The two epistles Paul wrote Timothy in the New Testament were motivated by a desire to teach the younger man how he ought to preach the Word. He was to be faithful in expounding the facts of the Gospel. He was to be firm in exposing false teaching. He was to be godly in his example before the world. He was to be diligent in executing his ministry. And he was to be willing to endure hardship in service to the Lord.

1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

The Command to Preach

Preaching is not a hobby to be taken up at will and to be carried out on a personal wimp. Those who preach the Gospel must do so because they are commanded by God. This does not require a personal, individual calling from Heaven. Yet, it does demand divine authority to be excepted by each man who desires to serve God in this manner.

An Evangelist Preaches Because of God. The term "charge" is a military command. This charge or command did not come from a mere apostle's delegated authority to a subordinate. The orders for preaching the Gospel came from God. Every preacher of the Word must answer to God on how he carries out his duties. In fact, is not "our preacher", but a "man of God."

An Evangelist Preaches Because Jesus is Judge. One day Timothy would stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and receive judgment on how he carried out his charge. Although all men and all women will face the Lord in the final Judgment (Rom. 14:10,12) preachers and teachers will have to answer for how they led people in the Word (Js. 3:1).

An Evangelist Preaches Jesus Will Return. The Greek term for "appearing" is epiphaneia. When the Roman Emperor ascended to the throne it was considered his epiphaneia. At this time everything was put in proper order. Everyone was properly prepared. A preacher is to do his work in such a way so all things will be ready whenever Christ the King of kings appears again. After all, no preacher knows that day or hour of His appearing.

An Evangelist Preaches Because Jesus is King of His Kingdom. Since Jesus is King of His Kingdom. All authority has been given unto Him (Mt. 28:18). It is therefore incumbent upon all His servants to carry out their duties in a way that is pleasing to the monarch.

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

Seven Characteristics of God Ordained Preaching

Seven specific commands sound out like military orders. "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2). These orders are not optional or contingent on the current expectations of a particular culture. Today, surveys that are researching what is in vogue have collected data showing churchgoers do not desire this outdated, outmoded form of preaching.

Throughout every generation of man "thus saith the Lord" has been unpopular and offensive to the majority. Christ Himself is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (1 Pet. 2:8). Paul told the Corinthians that some considered the preaching of the cross a stumbling block and foolishness (1 Cor. 1:23). Yet, Paul wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel." He told Timothy not to be "ashamed of the testimony of our Lord" (2 Tim. 1:8).

He Must Preach The Word. Regardless of what men want, God has commanded preachers to herald forth the Scriptures and give the sense of it for men to understand and obey (cf. Neh. 8:8). He is to proclaim the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). The word "preach" literally means "to proclaim as a herald." Ancient heralds did not make up their proclamation or change them. They spoke aloud for all to hear the truth, whatever it might be.

He Must Preach With Urgency. "Be prepared" or "be ready" contains the idea of standing by, taking a position of readiness. In it is the idea of eagerness like a military guard faithfully manning the post and prepared for any duty. It requires readiness and fearlessness as opposed to reluctance and hesitation. Since the souls of men and women are at stake urgency is demanded when preaching the truth that can save their souls (1 Tim. 4:16). To save someone from fire they need to be awoken to the imminent danger. As one preacher put it, "Let us either put fire in our sermons, or put our sermons in the fire."

He Must Preach With Persistency. The charge to preach is to be carried out "in season and out of season." Vincent tells us that "in season" means "to have leisure or opportunity." Marshall Keeble spoke plainly: "Preach it when they like it and don't like it." An ancient herald was not to wait till it was convenient for everyone to hear his proclamation. No matter what hour of the night, he was to herald the news.

This is a never-ending task. Wouldn't it be great if a lesson on giving, faithful attendance, overcoming temptation, consistent daily prayer and Bible study, etc. could be preached to a group just once and that would be the final sermon on the matter. Instead, the saints need persistent preaching to remind them all the time of God's Will for their lives. Winston Churchill once aptly wrote: "Men occasionally stumble over the truth but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened."

He Must Preach To Convince. Preaching must convince through reasoning with the hearers that the Word of God is the Truth. They must come to the point where they believe that their conduct is sinful, their inaction is laziness, their lives must change, their knowledge must increase, their false beliefs must be abandoned, etc. One of his fellow Athenians once told Socrates, "I hate you, because every time I meet you, you make me see what I am."

He Must Preach to Rebuke. Preaching is to rebuke the hearer, that is, reprove and convict him of his errors. It is one brother using God's Word to help another brother see the error of his ways. Like Nathan who was able to use the story of the pet lamb to convict David of his sins, so that the king could confess "I have sinned." It is a fact that no man can be saved from his sins until he first sees himself as a sinner.

He Must Preach to Exhort. Preaching is not designed by God just to point out where men are wrong. Effective preaching results when men are told what is right, where they are wrong and how to get it right. Convincing them of the Truth and rebuking for being wrong must be followed up by exhorting them to get it right. True preaching says, "Brethren, let me convince you that this is the Truth. You are

rebuked for not living according to the Truth. Now, this is how you get you life back in line with what is Truth.” Biblical preaching requires that we do all three.

He Must Preach With Patient Instruction. Since preaching is an urgent and persistent responsibility, patience is an essential attitude on the part of a preacher. People will not remain faithful to God’s Word without constant teaching. When he does not see results as quickly as he would like, there will be the temptation to take shortcuts. This is why Paul warned Timothy that difficult times would come and he would need to be longsuffering instead of compromising. Paul warned *“but know this, that in the last days perilous times will come”* (2 Tim. 3:1) and *“now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons”* (1 Tim. 4:1).

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Out of Season Audience

After telling Timothy that his authority to preach comes from God and how preaching must be carried out, Paul now warns him how many will response to his preaching. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (1 Tim. 4:3,4).

Paul knew that a time would come when Christians in Ephesus would no long love and appreciate the preaching of the Truth. The word “time” (kairos) has the same root as the words translated “season” in verse two, it will reappear in verse six referring Paul’s coming death. Therefore, when this time came Timothy was to just keep on preaching the way he had been commanded.

Jesus encouraged is disciples by saying, “You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free” (Jn. 8:32). Aldous Huxley describes for us the negative response to the preaching of truth when he wrote, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you mad.” According to some surveys the world does not believe truth.

53 percent believe that there are moral truths that are absolute

43 percent say there is no such thing as the Holy Spirit

33 percent believe that Jesus never had a physical resurrection

19 percent believe Jesus sinned while on earth

Many so-called “Christians” of the twenty-first century desire their “truth” over God’s sound doctrine. The world says abortion is a choice; God’s Word tells us it is murder. They say homosexuality is an alternative lifestyle; the Bible says it is not a lifestyle pleasing to God. The world says sleep around, just be careful not to get pregnant or a sexually transmitted disease; God’s Word tells us to not even think lustful thoughts and have sex only with you marriage partner (Matt. 5:28f; Heb. 13:4).

Preaching sound doctrine in times like these must continue. Even though they cannot endure or tolerate such preaching God wants someone to be brave and loving enough to convince, rebuke and exhort.

Why is preaching the truth so intolerable to so many? Is it because the style of preaching is so outmoded or outdated? It is because we live in a more loving and tolerant age? Paul tells us that the motive for rejecting sound preaching has nothing to do with the message or the messengers. The audience has “itching ears.” They like having their ears tickled. It is only human nature to want to do what feels good or sounds good. Most people would much rather hear Susan Boyle sing than to hear finger nails scape across a black board. We much rather hear preaching that says, “I’m okay and you’re okay.” We want someone to tell us that God wants us to be rich and happy and have an abundant life filled with all our hearts’ desires.

Preaching is not designed by God to make people feel good about themselves. Preaching is to convince people that they are WRONG. Sound doctrine or teaching is to rebuke them for being WRONG

and warn them of the dangers of being WRONG. God ordained preaching exhorts men and women to stop being WRONG and get right with Him.

This tolerant age will not long tolerate true preaching. Instead they will reject those men who faithfully follow the charge given to Timothy. Finding acceptable replacements is not hard. Throughout time teachers who will smile and tell people what they want to hear are easily found in abundance. Their ego-massaging messages will hit the spot with those who live a self-indulgent materialist life. They will tell people to just go right on being wrong because "God will understand."

People who find themselves involved in a lifestyle or practice that is contrary to the Will of God will go shopping for some "wise" man who can reassure them that their circumstances or motives make them a special exception to God's Law. Once a sister in Christ in her early sixties called me up and asked me if she had a right to marry this man who had been previously divorced for committing adultery. I simply asked her to get her Bible out and we read together what Jesus taught in the Gospel of Matthew. After asking her a few questions to make sure she understood what God's will was on the matter, she thanked me. Later, I found out that she had accepted this adulterer's marriage proposal and was leaving for Michigan. It wasn't that she did not understand the teaching of Jesus. However, she called up three other preachers and they told her it would be okay to marry the man. This sort of thing happens all too often even among those who claim to be faithful children of God.

Paul had warned Timothy of the problems with myths (1 Tim. 4:7; cf. Tit. 1:14). Those who reject the truth cannot find another truth. There is only one truth not many truths. However, there are many myths or fables. After a while, those who reject the truth and accept lies will become deaf. Those who have ears that literally itch will sometimes use dangerous objects to stick in their ears and scratch in order to find relief. However, there is a danger that the constant use of a pen or key to scratch those itching ears will result in ear damage and deafness. If people keep rejecting the Truth and turning to false teachers to scratch their ears with fables, sooner or later, they will grow deaf to the truth.

5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Duties of the Preacher

Paul has warned Timothy that preaching God's message God's way will not always be well received. How is a preacher to respond to such negative news? Should he modify his message to fit the times and the audience? Should he take a survey to find out the type or style of sermons that people want to hear? In contrast to these foolish solutions Paul told him, "But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5).

A Preacher is to Be Sober in All Things. To be sober is not just an admonition not to be drunk. A sober-minded man is in a state of mental alertness and in control of his mind and emotions. He is vigilant or watchful and every aspect of his life so that he is in control instead of any substance, person, popular idea, etc. He is so alert so as not to allow his head to be filled or his heart to be controlled by false teaching or self-serving motives. Unlike King Rehoboam who refused to accept the sound counsel given by the older men.

An alert preacher will not be so surprised by a new doctrine that he will not be prepared to respond with the Truth. No sin will sneak up behind him and enslave his heart. False brethren will not easily lure him to their side. Once, a young preacher was working with an older preacher. When the older preacher was on vacation the younger one was approached by a member who had a particular hobby horse he was particularly fond of. By being on his toes, the young preacher was able to avoid becoming tangled up in the man's pet theories.

He Is to Endure Hardship. When men will not endure sound doctrine preachers often end up enduring afflictions. These hardships may come in the form of sacrifice, scoffing, scorn, sleeplessness, silent treatment, etc. Perhaps Timothy would even have to endure imprisonment as did Paul (Heb. 13:23). Just as real godly men and women shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12), so true Gospel preachers must endure hardship. Because God's narrow truths appear to be so intolerant to a preacher's audience, his audience will become intolerant of him.

Why not just pack up and move to a congregation who will appreciate the truth? Paul did not tell Timothy to run off as soon as things got out of hand. He told him to endure hardship. He was to accept the fact that suffering for the cause of Christ is part of the job. After all, who has ever heard of a congregation without conflicts, a church without challenges or a group without a gripe.

Fujimoto broke his right knee competing in the 1976 Olympics. As a gymnast he faced a very painful dismount from the rings. Forgetting about the pain that lay ahead he perfectly executed his routine ending with a triple somersault and a firm landing on the mat. Later he told reporters. "The pain shot through me like a knife. It brought tears to my eyes. But now I have a gold medal and the pain is gone."

Preachers need to forget about the hardship and perfectly execute their duty for God.

He Is to Do the Work of an Evangelist. My uncle and his wife are crippled with polio. They contracted this dreadful disease in the 1950s. Thanks to Dr. Jonas Salk neither my wife or I have had to face this disease. We did not live in fear that our children would suffer from it. You see Dr. Salk invented a vaccine to immune children against the disease. He did his work so subsequent generations could be saved from this dreaded disease.

Preachers have something more powerful than the polio vaccine. Something more wonderful than any of the medical discoveries ever made. The Good News that Jesus has come and lived and died to overcome sin and death. The work of an evangelist is the most important job in the world.

Instead of focusing on the response the audience or the hardship to be endured, Timothy was told to focus his attention on his work. Today, so many preachers are focused on local politics, brotherhood issues, oratory style of their sermons, etc. This is why the Good News is not reaching the lost. This is why evangelists fail to evangelize.

He Is to Fulfill His Ministry. "Fulfill" means accomplish, fill it up, do it all or to make full or finish the course. Paul was about to finish the course of his life in death according to verse seven. Many begin the task of preaching and then fail to finish or complete the task.

While running cross-country in college, we had various courses to run. Once, our small college team was invited to compete with some of the big universities. As soon as the race began one of the runners sprinted ahead of everyone. I mentioned to one of my teammates that this race is over. He mentioned that it was over for the young man. A few minutes later we came across the sprinter who was worn out and bent-over in pain under a shade tree. He began well, but he never finished the race. He was not successful.

How do we define success? Is it the size of the audience being preached to? Is it the amount of money earned or the size of the offering? Perhaps, it is how much the message is enjoyed by the listeners? Successful preaching is not prosperity, power, prominence, popularity, etc. The real success comes from paying attention to your work so that you save yourself and those that hear you (1 Tim. 5:16). This type of success can only be measured in eternity. This is why Paul concludes these charges to Timothy with: "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Tim 4:6-8).

Questions:

1. By what authority and motivation is Timothy commanded to preach?
2. What would the command "*preach the Word*" exclude?

3. Why preach with such urgency?
4. When does *"in season and out of season"* occur?
5. Give Biblical examples of preaching that convinced the audience?
6. What sort of things should preaching exhort people to do?
7. Why is patience so necessary in preaching the Word?
8. Why will some not endure sound doctrine?
9. What are fables?
10. What kind of preaching tickles the ears of modern fable seekers?
11. How would a preacher demonstrate being sober in all things?
12. What kind of hardships did Paul endure while preaching?
13. What are the various duties assigned to Timothy by Paul in the epistles?
14. How does the world define a successful ministry?

15. How does the Lord define a successful ministry?

Discussion:

1. What are some doctrines preached by false teachers today which scratch the itching ears of the audience?

2. Give examples of preaching which you think will

Convince

Rebuke

Exhort

Famous Last Words

2 Timothy 4:6-8

The last words of a famous or infamous person can attain great notoriety for decades and centuries. Most of these are filled with uncertainty, dread and/or regret.

- Phillip III, King of France, “What an account I shall have to give to God! How I should like to live otherwise than I have lived.”
- Thomas Paine, his last hour in 1809, “I would give worlds, if I had them, that Age of Reason had not been published. O Lord, help me! Christ, help me! O God what have I done to suffer so much? But there is no God! But if there should be, what will become of me hereafter? Stay with me, for God’s sake! Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone. If ever the devil had an agent, I have been that one.”
- Charles IX, of France (1550-1574), “What murder! What blood! O, I have done wrong - God, pardon me.”
- Colonel Charteris, another infidel said as he died, “I would gladly give 130,000 to have it proved to my satisfaction that there is no such place as hell.”

In contrast, Jesus’ last words on the cross were filled with special spiritual and scriptural importance. Stephen, the first martyr for the cause of Christ, as he was being stoned to death said, “*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit... Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin’*” (Acts 7:59-60). In this paragraph in the final chapter of the final letter from Paul we find his final words of encouragement to Timothy before he closes with some personal pleas, warnings, and greets. Notice that Paul previously focused on Timothy’s life in chapter three and verse ten, “but you.” Now he is focusing on the end of his life: “for I,” “my departure,” “I have,” “laid up for me,” “will give me,” and “not to me only.” Paul has finished strong and know it is time for Timothy to continue being strong.

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

Contemplating Certain Death

Paul sees his death coming in the near future. He does not see it happening so soon as to preclude the possibility of Timothy arriving with his cloak or books before winter. How does he know this? Matthew Poole suggests, “he might know it by revelation from God, or from his observation of Nero’s temper, malice, or behaviour toward him.”

When contemplating death Paul does not speak of it in negative terms. Instead, he uses a metaphor of the drink offering being poured out. Marshall Patton wrote, “Obviously, in our text, Paul refers figuratively the drink offering of the OT sacrifices (Num. 15:1-10; 28:4-8). This wine libation was poured out beside the altar as the final act of the whole sacrificial ceremony” (227). Paul was not being thrown out of this world by the injustice of the Roman emperor Nero. He was willingly offering up as his life. It would be poured out at his execution not at a criminal but as a suitable sacrifice to God. Paul used similar words in his letter to the Philippians which he wrote during his first imprisonment in Rome. “*Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all*” (Phil. 2:17).

Next, Paul views his impending death as a “*departure*” which is translated from *analuseōs*. Our English word “analysis” comes from this Greek word. The term was used to refer to unwrapping a multi-

stranded rope, unyoking a pair of oxen, an army pulling the stakes of a tent and moving out; a ship hoisting aboard an anchor and setting sail and ironically enough it was used in reference to releasing a prisoner from his shackles. Again Paul used this term to refer to his readiness to die for the Lord in his letter to the Philippians. *“For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better”* (Phil. 1:23). Paul saw death as a means of striking camp and returning home after the lifetime of service in the conflict, his tent is worn out and he is moving into a more permanent dwelling (2 Cor. 5:1-8). being released from the Rome fetters to freedom above, as an oxen that has been grinding out the grain to the sweet meadows beyond, and sailing off into the sunset for that eternal shore.

The *“time”* of his death is not a specific point of time chronologically. He uses the term *kairos* to refer to a period of his life. These are the last days of Paul’s life.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Reviewing a Strong Finish

While reviewing the life he has lived for the Lord in the past thirty or so years, Paul describes it with three of his favorite metaphors: a soldier, an athlete, and a steward.

Paul often used military terms and metaphors to describe various aspects of the Christian life and spiritual warfare. As in the previous letter he told Timothy to *“fight the good fight of faith”* (1 Tim. 6:10). And earlier in this letter commanded him to endure like a good soldier (2:3,4). Keep in mind the phrase here could equally apply to striving in an athletic contest such as a race course.

It is one thing to start well it is an entirely different to finish well. When I was in college I ran on the cross country team. During one race with several other teams I was shocked to see a runner sprint away from the starting position and soon disappear from sight. Pointing this out to one of my teammates who was running next to me, I was certain we would never catch up to that runner. My teammate was a veteran of many races and assured me we would all pass him up soon. As true as prophet a few hundred yards later there was the sprinter, bent down under the shade of a tree, tossing his cookies. Teams would put in a sprinter to race ahead in hopes of throwing off the pace of the other team. However, sprinters rarely finish well in a cross-country course.

Paul is using another favorite metaphor of his by describing the life of a Christian as running a race. Life is not a 100 yard dash. It is more like a marathon. When the Greeks pulled off a stunning defeat of the Persian army near the town of Marathon in 490 B.C. a soldier ran over twenty-six miles to Athens with word of the victory. He died of exhaustion just after delivering his message. Our course is not run and the race is not over until the messengers of the Good News are dead. Paul told the elders of Ephesus, *“chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God”* (Acts 20:23b,24). Paul knew that he had to run with discipline and run by the rules if he was to run well and with certainty win the crown. *“Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty.... But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified”* (1 Cor. 9:26, 27). The Hebrew demanded of all runners, *“let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us”* (Heb. 12:1).

As Paul analysis his coming death, he reviews his life as a steward who has been entrusted with the Gospel message to the Gentiles. He has faithfully kept the faith (Word of God) which was entrusted to him. As he had entrusted it to Timothy (1:14). *“Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful”* (1 Cor. 4:2). Since Paul has been a faithful steward of the soul-saving Word that was entrusted to him he is confident of that God will reward his soul which he had entrusted to Him (1:12). So as a good servant how invested and cared for what had been entrusted to him he expects the Masters to say in the end, *“Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful...Enter into the joy of thy Lord”* (Matt. 25:23)

8a Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day,

Expecting an Eternal Reward

Because Paul has been a dedicated soldier, athlete, and steward of God, he is confident that a crown has been prepared for him and is in the safe keeping of the Almighty God. Several spiritual crowns are mentioned in the Bible. Crown of wisdom and understanding (Proverbs 4: 1-9; 1: 1-9); crown of excellent wife (Proverbs 12: 4); the Silver-haired head crown (Proverbs 16: 31; 20: 29); crown of children's children (Proverbs 17: 6); crown incorruptible (1 Cor. 9:25); crown of rejoicing (Phil. 4:1); Crown of life (Js. 1:12); Crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:4). The Greek word for "crown" in this text is *stephanos* from which is derived the name Stephen. This is the crown awarded to the victorious athlete or general. It was made of laurel, ivy or even oak. The main difference between these spiritual crowns and the literal crown is their endurance. *"And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown"* (1 Cor. 9:25).

This is a crown of righteousness. This could mean that righteousness is the reward or the source of the reward is righteousness or the very nature of this crown is righteousness. Paul was not a condemned criminal facing death by execution. He looks forward to the day when he will be exonerated as a just or righteous servant of God. His crown is the reward of a Just Judge crowning him as a justified or righteous apostle. The reward is for his righteousness and to show that he is righteous. The rewarder is none other than Jesus Christ. God the Father *"has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead"* (Acts 17:31). The unjust judges of this world have condemned an innocent man, but the heavenly Judge will overturn their judgments against Paul. Although men can be mistaken in their judgments of other men Christ never will render of false judgment.

The day of this awarding is Judgment Day. *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad"* (2 Cor. 5:10). He refers to this day which could also imply the Second coming in chapter one verses twelve and eighteen.

8b and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Considering the Possible Salvation of Others

The wreath of the ancient Greek games was awarded only to those who were victorious over all other competitors. Paul asked the Corinthians who were very aware of the nearby Isthmian Games, *"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?"* He encourages them to compete as if the heavenly reward which is incorruptible would only go to one victorious saint. *"Run in such a way that you may obtain it"* (1 Cor. 9:24). Christians are not in competition with each other for this crown, yet victory is so important that all need to strive for it as if their very soul was at stake. Paul's great finish in the Christian race was an encouragement to all others who could have the same confidence he has in eternal salvation. The same reward Paul was anticipating is the same for all victorious Christians.

He assures only those who will have "loved His appearing" in that day. Appearing could refer to the incarnation of Christ (1:10). However, here it most likely means the Second Coming. Some Christians are so carnal minded, so enslaved by mammon, so in love with this present world that they are not longing for the Lord's Appearing. Their love stands in stark contrast to Demas who abandoned Paul *"having loved this present world"* (4:10). *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself"* (Phil. 3:20,21).

Questions:

1. What was the drink offering?
2. How is it that Paul viewed his coming death as a departure?
3. What three metaphors does Paul allude to in describing his life?
4. Describe how the Christian life is like a race.
5. How has Paul been a good steward?
6. What is this "*crown of righteousness*"?
7. How is Paul's crown different from that which the Greek athletes received?
8. When did Paul hope to receive this crown?
9. How is the Christian's race for the crown different from the race of the Greeks?
10. Who, other than Paul, can receive a crown?

Discussion:

1. What would you want your last words in life to be?
2. Can a Christian end each day with the assurance that if he died in the night he would be saved throughout eternity? Explain.

Co-Workers: the Good, the Bad, the Perfect

2 Timothy 4:9-22

God never intend for Paul to fulfill his commission to take the Gospel to the Gentiles without co-workers. Throughout the book of Acts and Paul's epistles are listed dozens upon dozens of men and women who were co-workers in the Gospel. Some of these were good and some were bad. The most important co-worker on earth to Paul was Timothy.

9 Be diligent to come to me quickly; 21a Do your utmost to come before winter.

Co-Workers Who Do Their Best

Verses nine and twenty-one clearly identify Paul's need to see Timothy soon. The apostle's life is coming to a close. He has need of his trusted son in the faith. He needs to depart before winter if he is to have any chance of arriving at Rome before Paul's execution. For several weeks during the winter the ports will be closed to traffic because it is too dangerous to sail in the winter months. Paul has lost the support of Demas. He needs his cloak and books. Most of all he needs to see Timothy face to face once more.

10a for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica--

Co-Workers Who Desert

Demas has been a trusted co-worker of Paul. He sent greetings with Paul to Colossae and to Philemon (Col. 4:14; Phile. 24). He has "*forsaken*" Paul in his greatest hour of need. The Greek word here is "enkataleipo, a strong verb that means to utterly abandon and leave someone helpless in a dire situation" (MacArthur 206). His abandoning may have not been the departure from the faith entirely. He may have been ashamed of Paul's criminal status and/or fearful of the persecution of Christians by Nero. Nonetheless, it all equated to a lack of love for the apostle and a greater love for the security of the world. His trip to Thessalonica may, like Crescens and Titus, have been a desire to work with the brethren. John warns, "*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever*" (1 John 2:15-17).

10b Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.

Co-Workers Working in Distant Lands

Paul was in the habit of using his apostolic authority to send men to areas which needed their abilities to boldly preach the Gospel. Crescens was sent to Galatia where there were several congregations to whom Paul had written an epistle several years prior to his second incarceration at Rome. It was an area of northeast Asia Minor which had been settled by Gauls from France. All that is know of this disciple is found here and in tradition which says he was one of the seventy commissioned by Jesus. Titus had been one of Paul's long trusted co-workers and "*a true son in our common faith*" (Tit. 1:4). He is mentioned in the Galatian letter and nine times in Paul's second epistle to the church at Corinth. Paul had left him on the isle of Crete to "*set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint*

elders in every city" (Tit. 1:5). Paul wrote to Titus at some point wishing to meet up with him at his winter residence some months before his second imprisonment. *"When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there"* (Tit. 3:12). Having worked for Paul on Crete, he could not now be with him in Rome for Paul had sent him to Dalmatia, also called Illyricum, which is the area of the former country of Yugoslavia. "Strabo, a contemporary of Titus, called the region of Illyricum despicable 'because of the wildness of the inhabitants and their practical habits.'" (Swindoll 242).

11a Only Luke is with me.

Co-Workers Who are Supportive

Although Luke wrote a major portion of the New Testament (Gospel of Luke and Acts), he is only mention a couple of times by name. Paul referred to him as *"the beloved physician"* (Col. 4:14) and as a co-worker in his letter to Philemon. He was a travel companion of Paul starting with the second missionary journey and off and one during the third journey. He traveled with Paul to Rome for the first imprisonment. And now he is the only one who is available and willing to stand by Paul at this time.

11b Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

Co-Workers Who are Useful

Mark, also called John, was one of the earliest disciples. His mother had a prayer meeting in her home when Peter was imprisoned by Agrippa I (Acts 12:5,12). He was a cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10) and join him and Paul on their first missionary journey. For some reason Mark deserted them at Pamphylia to go back to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). His sudden departure caused a source of conflict between Paul and Barnabas when they set out on their second missionary journey. To resolve the disagreement Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus and Paul chose Silas to go with him (Acts 15:37-40). Evidently his older cousin, the Son of Encouragement, was able to strengthen Mark for he was later an assistant to the apostle Peter and wrote the first Gospel. Paul did not hold a grudge but found Mark so useful that he wanted Timothy to stop along his journey to Rome and bring Mark.

12 And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.

Co-Workers Who Relieve

Tychicus was a native of Ephesus (Acts 20:4). Paul refers to him as *"a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord"* (Col. 4:7). He was used by Paul on occasions as a courier for his epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7). He may have relieved Titus of the work on Crete (Tit. 3:12). Perhaps, Paul has once more dispatched Tychicus to Ephesus with the second letter to Timothy in hand and given him the responsibility to relieve Timothy so that he can join Paul in Rome.

13 Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come--and the books, especially the parchments.

Co-Workers Who are Trustworthy

One thing that could be said of Carpus is that Paul felt him trustworthy enough to care for some of his most valued possessions. He lived at Troas which would have been along the route Timothy would take from Ephesus to Rome. Timothy was to pick up from him Paul's cloak, books, and parchments. The cloak would have been a heavy outer garment. Perhaps it was like a poncho circular in shape with a whole cut in the middle. With winter approaching it would be an essential for the older apostle who was being kept in a damp prison. The *"books"* may have been papyrus rolls containing the Old Testament. *"Parchments"* were more valuable and this is why Paul especially wants Timothy to bring them. They

were made of more costly and durable materials such as vellum.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works.

Co-Workers Who are Harmful

Not only do some co-workers desert, but some are openly harmful. Alexander was a very popular name in the first century. The name appears five times in the New Testament. Perhaps, he went to Rome to bear witness against Paul at his first defense. He is most likely the same Alexander whom Paul disciplined along with Hymaneus while at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:18-20). After all, Paul assumes Timothy will run into him and thus a word of caution is issued in verse fifteen.

Paul is not venting a bitter statement of hate toward Alexander. He merely knows that God is the one who is to avenge the apostle. *“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord”* (Rom. 12:19). Perhaps, Paul was quoting Psalm 62:12b, *“For You render to each one according to his work.”* Due to the betrayal of Alexander, Paul is about to receive his judgment by man, but Alexander will eventually be judged by God and repaid for his evil deeds.

15 You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

Co-Workers Who Resist the Truth

Some co-workers are lazy, some worldly, some personally hostile, but Alexander stands against the truth. Many of the Jews and Judiazers followed Paul from place to place contradicting his message. He is not a lover of the truth, but an enemy of the Gospel. Timothy is warned to beware.

16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

Co-Workers Who Abandon

Of the many Christians who could have come to Paul's support. There was no one at the time of his first defense. Like his Lord, all the disciples at one time during the trials had forsaken Jesus. Perhaps, Paul realizes that they too are afraid. During his first imprisonment at Rome his co-workers came to his aid and may have helped in his acquittals (Acts 28:30,31). Paul seems to have a companionate understanding of the motives behind their action and wishes for God's acquittal of them. His words are reminiscent of Jesus on the cross *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do”* (Luke 23:43) and of Stephen's dying words *“Lord, do not charge them with this sin”* (Acts 7:60). Just as these were not a request from God to overlook sin and their need of repentance and forgiveness, neither does Paul make such a request of God.

The *“first defense”* implies that Paul make face a second one. *“the Roman legal system allowed for several steps in the prosecution of an accused criminal...Perhaps the inconclusiveness of the first hearing was causing a lengthy delay”* (Live Application bible Commentary 232). The word for *“defense”* is *apologia* from which is derived *“apology”* and *“apologetics.”* *“In the Roman court system, an accused person had two hearings, the prima actio, to clearly establish the charge, an the secunda actio, to determine guilt or innocence”* (MacArthur 212). Perhaps, Luke and Timothy will both be able to be there for Paul's second defense.

17a But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear.

Co-Workers Who Strengthen

One co-worker is all-powerful and always present. In this list of co-workers good and bad Paul does not failed to make mention of the One who will always be there. He was assured of His presence. For the Lord has promised, *“I will never leave you nor forsake you”* (Heb. 13:5). The Lord was his source

of strength. Perhaps the term could be translated “empower.” As Paul wrote during his first imprisonment in Rome, “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*” (Phil 4:13).

It was Jesus Christ who gave Paul his commission to be the apostle to the Gentiles. Christ said of Paul, “*for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake*” (Acts 9:15,16). He is about to have another chance to declare the Gospel to the spectators which will surround him when he is judged guilty or innocent. Paul may have even had the chance as he did with Felix, Festus, and Agrippa II to preach the Good News to Emperor Nero himself.

17b And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!

Co-Workers Who Deliver

Whether the meaning of the phrase “*delivered out of the mouth of the lion*” is literal or figurative has been debated. Since Paul was a Roman citizen he could not be cast into the arena with wild beasts. However, his citizenship may have come under question and had been settled by the Lord’s deliverance. Most likely Paul is referring to this in a figurative sense. Comparing his deliverance to that effected by God for Daniel who was cast in by decree of Darius (Dan. 6:22). Or as the Psalmist wrote, “*save Me from the lion’s mouth*” (Ps. 22:21). Still another possibility is a reference to Satan who “*walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Pet. 5:8).

Paul is confident that the Lord will be able to continue to deliver him as He has always done so in the past. This does not mean that he will be released by Nero a second time or that his life will be spared. Just as he was delivered by the grace of God from the thorn in the flesh so he can be delivered from death unto life eternal by the grace of God. Again Paul alludes to his confidence that he will go to heaven when life is over.

As He did in his last epistle to Timothy, Paul breaks into a doxology. Doxology comes from the Greek *doxa* meaning “*glory*.” This one is much shorter, but just as appropriate.

19a Greet Prisca and Aquila,

Co-Workers Who Risk Their Lives

Paul now asks Timothy to greet certain saints who must be at or near Ephesus. The wife/husband team of Prisca and Aquila are to receive his greetings. They lived in Rome and came to Corinth after Jews were exiled from Rome by Claudius. They were fellow tent makers with Paul. They taught Apollos about the one baptism (Acts 18:1-3; 24-26). They had a home big enough to accommodate the gathering of a congregation (1 Cor. 16:19). Paul praises them because they “*risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles*” (Rom. 16:4). They stand in contrast to those who would not stand with Paul in his first defense.

19b and the household of Onesiphorus.

Co-Workers Who Refresh

Whether Onesiphorus is dead or on a journey or head back home to Ephesus. Paul wishes to send greeting to his household. When he arrived in Rome sought out Paul and was a means of refreshing (2 Tim. 1:16-18).

20 Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.

Co-Workers Who are Sick

Miletus as not far from Ephesus. Timothy is informed that their fellow-worker had been traveling with Paul and had to stay behind. He had accompanied Paul on his third journey from Greece to Troas

and then as the apostle traveled to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4; 21:29). It was his presence with Paul at Jerusalem the Jews used to accuse Paul of bringing a Greek into the Temple. In the ensuing riot the Romans took Paul in custody. Even faithful servants of an apostle are subject to illness.

21 Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.

Co-Workers Who Greet

Several saints (all their names are Latin) from the church at Rome are sending greetings. Where were these saints when Paul faced his first defense is unknown. They were able to get greetings to Timothy through this epistle. Greeting each other is not only a blessing to one another but a commandment (Rom. 16:16). Linus is believed to have been one of the overseers of the church in Rome and Claudia his wife.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

Co-Workers Need Christ and His Grace

In the first part of verse twenty-two the desire is for Timothy personally. Knowing he could not be with Timothy and would not be on earth with him much longer, Paul did desire the Lord to be with him as Christ had been with him through his ministry.

In the second statement, Paul uses the plural “you” indicating his desire for God’s grace to come to all the saints at Ephesus. He anticipated that this letter was to be read not just by Timothy but to all in a public setting. What better way to send your final regards to the brethren than to express the hope of them be benefitted from the unmerited favor of God.

As this final letter from Paul comes to a close nothing else is known of Paul. Tradition tells us that he was found guilty of sedition against Rome in the second defense and Nero sentenced this citizen of Rome to death. Did Timothy make it in time to see his mentor and friend before the end is not known with any certainty.

Questions:

1. When does Paul want Timothy to come to Rome? Why?
2. What happened to Demas?
3. What all do we know about Titus?
4. How do we know that Luke traveled with Paul during some of the missionary journeys?
5. What problems had John Mark caused Paul?

6. What all do we know about Tychicus?
7. What had Paul left with Carpas?
8. Who did Paul much harm? How was Timothy to deal with him?
9. What is meant by "*first defense*"?
10. What was the benefit of the Lord being with Paul during his first defense?
11. Is the phrase "*delivered out of the mouth of the lion*" literal or fugitive in verse 17? Explain.
12. What do we know about Prisca and Aquila?
13. Why did Paul leave Trophimus at Miletus?
14. Why would Paul conclude his personal letter to Timothy with the plural form of "*you*"?

Discussion:

1. Make of list of what your spiritual co-workers have done for you as a Christian?
2. As an apostle of Christ Paul had the power to heal the sick. Why did he leave Trophimus at Miletus sick instead of just healing him?