

Sermon Series - 2 Timothy

Paul and Timothy: Mentor and Mentee

2 Timothy 1:1-5

- **Who was Timothy?**

- A younger colleague of Paul who became a “son in the ministry” to him (Phil. 2:22; 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2:1)
- Timothy’s father was a Greek and his mother a Jew (Acts 16:1).
- Timothy was circumcised so he could serve with Paul.
- Paul sent Timothy on several important assignments:
 1. To encourage the church in Thessalonica facing persecution (1 Thess. 3:1-10)
 2. To Corinth to remind believers of Paul’s teachings
 3. A special visit to Philippi (Phil. 2:19-24)
 4. An unspecified ministry in Macedonia (Acts 19:22)

- **A profile of 2 Timothy**

- This was a very personal letter written from a Roman prison while he was under a sentence of death.
- Paul emphasized the need for pure doctrine, godly living, and sharing Christ.
- Timothy likely received the letter in Ephesus, a major trading center and seaport on the Aegean Sea.
- Ephesus was home to one of the seven wonders of the ancient world—the temple of the goddess Artemis.
- The letter is both realistic and filled with encouragement.

- **Paul’s gratitude for Timothy (2 Tim. 1:3-5)**

- Timothy’s genuine faith
- His mother and grandmother first modeled a genuine faith

Qualities Needed in Ministry

2 Timothy 1:6-14

- **A Call for Courage (1:6-7)**
 - Timothy functioned in an environment of fear, heresy, and challenges to his leadership.
 - “Stir up the gift of God in you” describes the act of rekindling the embers of a dying fire.
 - Never stop abandoning yourself to the grace of God.
 - Never stop crying out to God for a fresh anointing.
 - Never stop growing and sharpening your tools (gifts) for service.
 - God’s Spirit does not work in us fear, timidity, or cowardice. Rather God gives:
 - Power = strength of character to be bold (not brash) in doing God’s will in ministry
 - Love = the kind that can endure even the most cantankerous opposition
“This love is not so much a love that produces ministry as a love that conquers contempt and opposition by forgiveness and refusal to seek revenge.” (Lea, 189)
 - Self-discipline = the ability to show restraint and oppose indulgence
 - Timothy did not need a new gift, but a rekindling of his gifts already received.
- **A Readiness to Suffer (1:8, 11-12)**
 - Calls to courage are not out of place even to those who have proven their strength of faith.
 - Stronger than all suffering is the power of God.
- **A Commitment to Spiritual Health (1:13-14)**
 - Truth produces health; it results in right thinking and godly behavior.
 - Timothy’s faith and love were fruits of his relationship with Christ.
 - Maintaining the purity of the gospel demands the might and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

A Gospel Worth Suffering For

2 Timothy 1:9-12

- **It is the Gospel of Salvation** - He rescues us from sin and judgment.
- **It is the Gospel of Consecration** - He liberates us from habits and attitudes that enslave us and hold us in their grip.
- **It is the Gospel of Grace** - It is not based on anything we deserve. This is the basis of our assurance.
- **It is the Gospel that Reveals Life and Immortality** (life incapable of decay or corruption)

The Hard Work of Ministry

2 Timothy 1:15 – 2:7

- **There are disappointments and encouragements (1:15-18)**
- **A vision of what can be must drive us (2:1-2)**
 1. Invest in trustworthy, reliable, faithful men who are loyal to Christ and His gospel, who are willing and able to teach others.
 2. The Goal – multiplication of strength, stability and power in God’s church
- **Biblical and realistic expectations (2:3-7)**
 1. The soldier: Endure hardship (vs. 3-4) – Paul prohibits the loss of single-mindedness and the longing for an easy life.
 2. The athlete: Show the self-discipline and stamina needed for training and preparation (v. 5) – Paul has in mind both personal behavior and inner attitude.
 3. The farmer: Labor precedes reward (v. 6) – Farming is hard work and so is ministry . . . but there is a harvest of blessing to be reaped!

Right Thinking that Promotes Effective Service
2 Timothy 2:8-13

Remember Jesus Christ (2:8-10)

- His resurrection power provides encouragement to all who face suffering.
- His coming as the fulfillment of God's promise
- His life-changing message which cannot be bound — persecution may hamper progress but cannot prevent its spread
- "God buries His workers but continues His work." (Lock, 95)

The Certainty of Reward (2:11-13)

- "If we died with him, we will also live with him" —The primary reference here is to life in heaven, though God's gift of eternal life begins the moment we trust in Christ (John 5:24).
- "If we endure, we will also reign with him" — "Endure" means bravely bearing up under the hardships that come our way because of our relationship with Christ.
- "If we disown him, he will also disown us" (cf. Matthew 10:32-33) — The one who rejects/denies Christ can expect to enter eternity separated from God.
- "If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself" — These words are not license for sin and rebellion but are given to console a frightened conscience.

Preserving the Health of the Church: The Danger of False Teaching

2 Timothy 2:14-21

- **Warn the people about useless quarreling about words (2:14, 16-18)**
 - “Disputing about words seeks not the victory of truth but the victory of the speaker.” It does not focus on the goals of Christianity.
 - Word splitting whets an appetite for argument rather than building commitment to God.
 - Such arguing ruins those who participate in it.
 - Greeks often showed contempt for the concept of physical resurrection. Because they viewed the body as evil, many had difficulty with a future bodily resurrection. The two heretics mentioned (v. 17) taught the resurrection had already taken place. They likely said that this spiritual renewal (resurrection) took place when a person received Christ and passed from death unto life. According to Paul, resurrection hope is foundational to Christianity (1 Cor. 15). The result of such heresy was “they destroy the faith of some” (v. 18).

- **The best medicine against false teaching (2:15)**
 - Do your best to conduct yourself in a way that gains God’s approval.
 - Be a diligent workman for God who has no fear of shame for poor quality work.
 - Be accurate in delivering God’s message of truth.

- **Be confident: The solid foundation of God’s church is unshakable (2:19-21)**
 - “The Lord knows those who are his”
 - “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness”
 - Who we listen to says something about us. Those who were truly God’s people would turn away from the false teaching in Ephesus.

God Never Said the Christian Life Is Easy

2 Timothy 2:22 - 3:17

- **The Challenge: Pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace (2:22-26)**
 - Determine to work for God's kingdom. Put people ahead of projects, reconciliation ahead of personal feelings, and truth ahead of acceptance.
 - Four positive traits needed to prevent quarrels (vv. 23-24):
 1. "Be kind to everyone" – describes one's outward manner
 2. Be "able to teach" – involves both the willingness and ability to teach
 3. Avoid being "resentful" – "patient when wronged" (NASB)
 4. "Gently instruct" those who oppose you

- **The Warning: Harsh times are ahead (3:1-9)**
 - We are living in what the Bible calls "the last days." These days began when Christ ascended into heaven, and they will conclude when he returns to earth.
 - The last days are characterized by increasing ungodliness. God's truth will always be opposed and distorted. A spiritual war rages. Those who commit themselves to obeying Christ will suffer (3:12) . . . often the persecution will be harsh
 - Believers can strengthen themselves against disillusionment or unfaithfulness by understanding and accepting this reality. False expectations lead to discouragement.
 1. "lovers of themselves" -- 2 Corinthians 5:15
 2. "lovers of money"
 3. "boastful, proud" -- exaggerated view of themselves
 4. "abusive" -- arrogance views others as lesser individuals. Christ left us an example of servanthood, submission, and sacrifice (Philippians 2:3-8)
 5. "disobedient to their parents" -- rebellion against authority always implies revolt against God. Harmony and stability in the home is vital to church and societal health.
 6. "ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving" -- describes people totally given to selfishness
 7. "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" -- controlled by the quest for the thrill of pleasure
 8. "having a form of godliness but denying its power" -- assumed that being religious proved they were righteous, but Paul says their hypocrisy denies the very essence of genuine Christianity.

- **Sources of strength for endurance**
 - The example of Paul (3:10-13)
 - The enrichment of Scripture (3:14-17)

Paul's Personal Charge to Timothy

2 Timothy 4:1-5

- **Remember . . . no one escapes divine judgment (4:1)**
 - *We will all face Christ the judge.* The judgment of unbelievers will involve a determination of eternal destiny (Rev. 20:11-15).
 - The judgment of believers will not focus on eternal destiny but an evaluation of works for the purpose of recognition or reward (1 Cor. 3:9-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10).
- **Preach the Word! (4:2)**
 - "be prepared" – every Christian is always on duty
 - "correct" – speak to their mind with careful instruction of God's truth
 - "rebuke" – speak to their conscience
 - "encourage" – speak to their will exhorting them to obey God
 - "with great patience" – not a harsh or censorious spirit, but longsuffering
- **The sad reality (4:3-4)**
 - The content and demands of the gospel will become unacceptable to many. They will seek out those who will tell them what they want to hear. It is important to realize that Paul was speaking these words to believers.
 - "Because they looked for someone to soothe the itch rather than to satisfy the thirst, they would leave the truth without an awareness of their desertion." Lea, 245
- **"But you" – Be the exception (4:5)**
 - "do the work of an evangelist" – tell the message of Jesus! Spread the gospel!
 - Indifference by the listeners must not keep believers from telling the gospel.

Paul's Testimony in the Face of Death: I Am Ready

2 Timothy 4:6-8

- **The sacrifice of life**

“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.” (4:6)

- Paul compared the pouring out of his life in ministry to the pouring out of the wine in an Old Testament drink offering (Romans 12:1).
- Paul was aware that he was slowly dying in God's service, and he looked at it as though the giving of his life as a martyr in death would complete the drink offering to God.

- **The service of ministry**

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (4:7)

Paul testified that he had been loyal to the trust the Father had given him to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:10-19; 26:12-18).

- **The reward and recognition of obedience**

“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” (4:8)

- The knowledge that God rewards and recognizes faithful Christian service motivates us to live a godly and obedient life.
- An expectation of reward is also a recognition of God's grace. Those who anticipate reward will not be able to boast.

How Do You Want to Be Remembered?

2 Timothy 4:9-18

- **Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me** (v. 10)
 - Paul had previously commended Demas as a fellow worker (Philemon 24).
 - Faithful service today does not guarantee future faithfulness. We must maintain a steady diligence in the present.
- **Get Mark and bring him ... because he is helpful to me in my ministry** (v. 11)
 - Behind this request lies a story of grace and restoration. Paul refused to take Mark on his second missionary journey because Mark “deserted them” on the first missionary journey (Acts 15:36-41). In time Mark demonstrated endurance and maturity.
 - Like Mark, we must be willing to receive rebuke and correction, and grow through it.
- **Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm** (v. 14)
 - Paul refused personal revenge or plots of retaliation – “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Romans 12:19).
 - Paul was neither naïve nor stupid. He warned Timothy to be careful.
 - There should be no objection to a Christian’s approval of God’s right to punish the guilty, for “if God is a moral governor, if sin is a reality, those who know themselves to be on God’s side cannot help a feeling of joy in knowing that evil will not always triumph over good.” Kelly, quoted by Lea, 255
- **Paul rejoiced in God as his strength and defender** (16-18)

“At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.”

 - Focused on the goodness of God, Paul chose forgiveness and said ‘no’ to bitterness.
 - We need never limit ourselves to our own resources.
 - God protects those who are His, guarding their souls until the time when He brings them into His eternal kingdom. No evil plot of man or Satan can snatch God’s children from his loving care.