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2 TIMOTHY

*Pass on the gospel*

WRITTEN

64 AD

KEY VERSE

*"You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."*

2:1-2

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Pass the baton on to Timothy

PURPOSE

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## INTRODUCTION

Paul's second letter to Timothy continues from the first. It seems like Timothy is still in Ephesus, and the problems mostly remain the same. One difference is that the adversity may have affected Timothy a little (1:6-8, 2:1).

This is Paul's last letter, and he does not expect to remain alive much longer (4:6-8). He is again in prison, and 2:9 indicates that this time he does not have as much freedom as during his previous prison stay (Acts 28:16, 30). This letter is Paul's instructions to Timothy to continue the work and combat heresy. He encourages him to be strong in faith, to persevere, and not to be afraid. He must complete the service, guard the truth, and pass it on to *"trustworthy people who are able to teach others"* (2:2).

2 Timothy may have been written around AD 64.

### SITUATION

* Paul is in prison again. The first hearing has already happened (4:16)
* He knows he will soon die. Last letter and “2nd to last” word to Timothy (4:6-9)
* There are false teachers in Ephesus who need to be dealt with.
* Paul’s last letter, traditionally dated to ca. AD 64

### CLUES IN THE LETTER

* quarreling about words, which ruins the listeners (2:14)
* irreverent babble and ungodliness (2:16)
* the false teaching has to be stopped before it spreads (2:17)
* Hymenaeus and Philetus have swerved from the truth and say that the resurrection has already taken place (2:17-18)
* foolish, ignorant controversies (2:23)
* come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil (2:26)
* have the appearance of godliness (3:5)
* capture weak women (3:6)
* corrupted in mind (3:8)
* myths (4:4)

### STRUCTURE

1:1 - 2:13 Encouragement to Timothy

2:14 - 4:5 Stop the false teaching

4:6-22 Paul’s situation

## APPEAL TO LOYALTY DESPITE HARDSHIP (1:6-14)

1. Do not be ashamed of:

A. the testimony about our Lord

* because of the power of the Spirit both in him and in the gospel (v. 7)

B. Paul as the Lord’s prisoner

* seemed like a criminal, and all in Asia had turned away from him (v. 15)
* Paul himself is not ashamed. He knows God will guard what he entrusted to Paul. (v. 12)

2. Share in the suﬀering for the gospel

* There are false teachers around, and people are turning away from Paul. Timothy is perhaps not exactly where he should be. Perhaps he withdrew a little. (vv. 6-7)
* *“Don’t be fearful but suﬀer!”* Doesn’t say it will all be well, but appeals to the Christian “duty” of suﬀering for the gospel, as Paul himself does. (vv. 8, 12)
* In the power/Spirit of God (vv. 7, 8, 14)

## FIRST PURPOSE OF THE LETTER:

To encourage Timothy:

1. Do not be ashamed of:

* the testimony about our Lord
* Paul as the Lord’s prisoner

2. Share in the suﬀering for the gospel

## V15-18: EXAMPLES OF DISLOYALTY AND LOYALTY

**Disloyalty:**

* *“…all who are in Asia turned away from me…”* Acts 19:10
* *“…among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.”*
* Either ashamed of Paul or left the faith altogether.

**Loyalty:**

* Onesiphorus not only “refreshed me [even Paul needed encouragement] and was not ashamed of my chains”, but even “searched for me earnestly and found me”.

Timothy should be like Onesiphorus and not like the rest of Asia (where Ephesus was).

## THE APPEAL CONTINUES (2:1-13)

Entrust the gospel to faithful men who can teach others (2nd purpose…) (v. 2)

The grace of Christ is a source of power to become like:

* a soldier (vv. 3-4): Share in the suﬀering (1:8) and don’t forget your mission
* an athlete (v. 5): The “rules” involve suﬀering
* a farmer (v. 6): Work hard and wait patiently for the results
* Jesus (v. 8): Resurrected after suﬀering
* Paul (vv. 9-10): Suﬀers like a criminal but endures everything for the sake of the elect

All of them were committed to something bigger than themselves and were willing to sacrifice and endure for a greater goal.

## RESIST THE FALSE TEACHERS (2:14-21)

v. 14: To remind them of the previous saying? To warn them and wake them up?

vv. 14, 16: Quarreling also in 1 Tim 2:8, 6:4-5, and irreverent babble in 6:20. Seem to be a common thing for the false teachers.

v. 15: rightly handling the word of truth: presenting the gospel without quarreling

v. 17: Hymenaeus → 1 Tim 1:20. Made shipwreck of his faith and is blaspheming.

v. 18: Part of the false teaching was claiming that the resurrection had already happened. Sounds like early Gnosticism…

vv. 19-21: depart from iniquity… cleanses himself from what is dishonorable: perhaps specifically turning away from the false teaching

## TIMOTHY’S RESPONSIBILITIES IN LIGHT OF THE FALSE TEACHING (2:22-26)

*"Flee"* and *"pursue"*: depart from iniquity and cleanse yourself from the dishonorable

*"The evil desires of youth"*: This can be interpreted as love of the new, stupid discussions and arguments that lead to quarreling.

Instead of quarrels: Peace, not quarrelsome, kind to everyone, patiently enduring evil, correcting opponents with gentleness

Timothy should be the opposite of these false teachers. This would be eﬃcient in convincing people who had been led astray by the false teachers.

The hope was that the false teachers themselves would wake up, repent, and escape from the snare of the devil. They have been captured by him, and Timothy should try to win them back.

## BACK TO THE FALSE TEACHERS (3:1-9)

v. 1: *"But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days."* This should not come as a surprise, though, as 1 Tim 4:1 says *"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons."*

v. 5: *"appearance of godliness but denying its power"*: empty religion

vv. 1-5 is somewhat connected to the false teachers, but more clearly vv. 6-9:

* Some issues with women in 1 Tim, especially the young widows…
* These women never understood the gospel
* Jannes & Jambres were Pharaoh’s magicians in Ex 7-9 according to Jewish tradition. Maybe the false teachers use deception in the same way? It is only folly… (v. 9)

## ANOTHER APPEAL TO LOYALTY AND ENDURANCE (3:10-17)

v. 10: *"You, however"*: Timothy as a contrast to the false teachers

Themes:

* their relationship (→ 1:4, 6, 13)
* Paul as a model of loyalty (1:8, 11-13, 2:9-10)
* suﬀering (1:8, 16, 2:3-6, 11-12)
* faith of his family (1:5)

v. 14: But as for you - Timothy as a contrast to the false teachers again. Imperative: Continue with what you have learned! (v. 14)…by:

* Remembering the past, esp. Paul’s teaching and example (vv. 10-11, 14-15)
* Using Scripture (vv. 15-17)

### A. WHAT DOES PAUL MEAN BY "SCRIPTURE"?

*"The sacred writings"* which Timothy has known from childhood: The Old Testament.

But how is the OT able to make one wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus?

The Bible shows us God's plan of salvation, where the point and the climax is *"Jesus to all nations"*

Therefore, the OT points toward Jesus but has an open ending…

The OT can lead to faith in Jesus because Jesus is the "answer" to the OT.

### B. BUT PERHAPS MORE THAN THE OT AS WELL?

1 Tim 5:18 - The gospel of Luke is called “Scripture” before 2 Tim (ca. AD 63)

2 Pet 3:15-16 → several letters of Paul called “Scripture” ca. AD 64

How could they?

* The apostles were aware of their authority and their task
* Eph 2:20 → The apostles were part of the foundation of the church
* “Scripture” grew as the apostles wrote. The result became the NT, written by “the apostolic circle”.
* Principle → now we can say that the whole Bible is “God-breathed”

It is even more clear that the OT + NT make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ. The Bible creates faith when it is read.

### C. WHAT DOES "GOD­-BREATHED " MEAN?

*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* 3:16-17

Greek: *“God-breathed”* → Latin: *“inspired by God”*

The word is used only here, but God also “breathes” at other times:

* Gen 2:7, Acts 2:2…
* Breath = Spirit. When God breathes, things happen.
* You can’t speak without breathing.
* God’s Spirit is in the Bible. He breathes life into the words. In a way, the words then become His own words.

In what way are the words of men also the word of God? The point is not the process but the result: The Spirit of God is in Scripture. Somehow the Bible ended up being how God wanted it. The Bible works on us when we read it because God has breathed His Spirit into it.

### D . HOW DOES GOD WORK THROUGH THE BIBLE?

Scripture is profitable for teaching:

* Good/sound “doctrine” is often mentioned in 1-2 Tim as a contrast to “false teaching"
* Timothy’s task: Use Scripture to give sound theological teaching in the gospel
* Obvious: The Bible gives us the right doctrine

Scripture is profitable for reproof:

* The false teachers have abused the Scriptures
* Timothy should use Scripture to expose their errors

Scripture is profitable for correction:

* Similar to reproof but more about ethics (?)
* Similar to training in righteousness
* Shows us the plan and will of God

*"that… may be competent, equipped…"*: = The purpose of the Bible

*"for every good work"*:

* stop the false teachers and help the church
* do the will of God

The purpose of studying the Bible is not to gain lots of knowledge, but so God can equip us to do his will.

When Paul knows he will soon die, he encourages Timothy to use the Scriptures. God works through them so that Timothy can be competent and equipped for the tasks when Paul is no longer there. Scripture is all Timothy needs.

### WHAT SHOULD THIS MEAN FOR US?

* We should believe that the Bible is the word of God and let it be the standard for everything else.
* We should remember that the Bible is about Jesus, not about us, and that it shows us God’s plan for the world (and then also for us).
* We should expect that God’s Spirit works in us when we read.
* We should read the Bible to get to know God and understand more of the gospel.
* We should read the Bible to grow in the faith and be kept in the faith.
* We should read the Bible to know God’s will and be equipped to do it.
* We should read the Bible with unbelievers because it connects us to the most important person in the universe and creates faith.

## FINAL CHARGE TO TIMOTHY (4:1-5)

* Eschatological overtones: An important task!
* Preach the word, and do what the Word is profitable for…
* Again, Timothy should be a contrast to the false teachers.
* Theme: Endure hardship + prepare for what follows.
* Timothy is still in the battle - while Paul has finished (v. 6-8)

## PAUL’S SITUATION (4:6-22)

* Was this news to Timothy as well?
* Timothy has to fulfill his ministry (v. 5) because Paul is done (*“For I…”*), this is the 3rd purpose. He is passing on the torch to Timothy.
* Wants to see Timothy before it is too late (v. 9, 1:4)
* Tychicus is perhaps sent to take over so that Timothy can go to Paul (v. 12)
* Alone (vv. 10-12), afraid of getting cold (v. 13), many Christians are ashamed of him… (v. 16, 1:15)
* Still not bitter (v. 16)
* Finds strength in the Lord when people desert him (v. 17)
* An example of one who suﬀered for the gospel

## PURPOSE(S) OF THE LETTER:

To encourage Timothy:

1. Do not be ashamed of:

* the testimony about our Lord
* Paul as the Lord’s prisoner

2. Share in the suﬀering for the gospel (1:8)

In light of Paul’s impending death…

1. Be ready to take over after Paul (4:5), incl. stopping false teaching.

2. Entrust the gospel to faithful men who can teach others (2:2).

Timothy is encouraged again and again to suﬀer for the gospel like Paul. According to Acts of Timothy (5th century), Timothy was clubbed to death in AD 97 (80 years old) at a pagan festival in Ephesus. If this is correct, he stayed in Ephesus and finally died in the ministry.

## APPLICATION

1. Paul’s life ended on a somewhat humiliating and sad note (from the world’s perspective). Because believing in Jesus is risky and does not give us status. Be ready to suﬀer for the gospel. Don’t withdraw because of diﬃculties.
2. Find your strength in Jesus when people let you down.
3. Trust that God will guard until that Day what has been entrusted to you.
4. Don’t be quarrelsome, but be kind to everyone. Correct your opponents with gentleness.
5. Use the Bible! Preach the Word!