

2 Timothy

Background

- Paul believed that his death was near (4:6 – 8).
- At the time of writing, Paul was a prisoner (1:8).
- Timothy was with Paul in Rome (Colossians 1:1, Philippians 1:1, 2:19, Philemon 1) but not now.
- Demas, formerly faithful (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24) abandoned the gospel (4:10).
- Therefore, Paul was back in prison after being released from prison in Rome.

Theme: Encouragements

Applications: We should encourage others in these ways.

- (1:1 – 2) **The goal**
 - God desired to send out the message and provided the means.
 - Promise of life: eternal life is “in” Jesus
 - 1 John 2:5 – 6 Those “in” Christ walk as He walked
 - Other “in Christ” passages: John 3:15, Romans 6:3, 6:11, 6:23, 8:1 – 2, 12:5, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 3:1, 2 Corinthians 3:14, 5:17, Galatians 3:27, Ephesians 1:7, 1:13, 2:13, 4:15, Colossians 1:28, 2:6 – 7, 2:10 – 11, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 2 Timothy 2:10, 1 John 5:11, 5:20
 - This life is not only future but also present.
 - Timothy already has experienced the effects of these character traits in God. Paul’s prayer is that Timothy grows “in Christ” to greater grace, mercy, and peace in himself, each of which is a gift from the Spirit. (See 1:9)
 - Encouragements we should use:
 - God planned; He is not simply reacting.
 - We have lives worth living from now into eternity.
 - We are growing into the character of Jesus.
- (1:3 – 7) **Remember your own history**
 - Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
 - As the faithful have done
 - My joy in seeing you.
 - The history of faithfulness from which you came (whether physical or spiritual).
 - Stir up the gift of God
 - We have not had Paul’s hands laid on us.
 - We each have gifts from God
 - Romans 12:6 – 8 A variety of gifts that are given as a result of God’s grace: prophecy, serving, teaching, exhorting, sharing, leading, mercy.
 - James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights.”: various trials (1:2), wisdom (1:5), low status (1:9), enduring temptation (1:12)
 - Hebrews 6:4 – 5 The heavenly gift is parallel to enlightenment, partaking of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the powers of the age to come
 - Ephesians 2:8 The faith economy is a gift
 - Romans 5:15 – 18 Gift of righteousness by grace results in justification
 - Romans 6:23 Gift of eternal life

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- 2 Corinthians 9:15 The grace of God in us is a gift
 - Ephesians 3:7, 4:7 – 16 Gift of church leadership
 - 1 Peter 4:10 – 11 Gift of service with the ability which God supplies
 - 2 Corinthians 1:11 Gift of answered prayer
 - 1 Corinthians 7:7 Contentment, “some in this manner and some in that.”
- The nature of God’s gifts includes power, love, and wisdom, not fear.
- (1:8 – 18) **Remember the history of others**
 - Be encouraged by the faith of those of history.
 - In what ways might we be shamed or suffer? Examples given:
 - “God came to earth” sounds like Greek mythology which thinking people found laughable.
 - Public setbacks generally are viewed as undesirable.
 - Not by our accomplishments implies a lack of ability.
 - Controlled by the purposes of another implies I cannot run my own life.
 - Rejection by former friends.
 - How is this potential encouraging?
 - Overcome by the power of God.
 - Called to something pure.
 - Given us gracious character according to plan.
 - Evidence.
 - Real living.
 - Confidence.
 - True friends remain.
 - In what ways does the modern church try to compete with the world?
 - In what ways does the modern church reject worldly goals but fail to follow Paul’s encouragements?
 - How might the church follow Paul’s example of encouraging Timothy?
- (2:1 – 13) **Remember the task at hand**
 - Review:
 - (1:1) According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus
 - (1:6) Stir up the gift of God that is in you
 - (1:12) I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that day.
 - (1:14) That thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.
 - To what do I compare this task?
 - Commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
 - Teaching others to teach is different than instruction.
 - This includes all Christians (see 2:24)
 - Because all are not professional teachers, what does this imply about the message and its means of transmission?
 - How well has the universal church accomplished this goal?
 - As a soldier
 - Intended as a positive illustration

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- A soldier experiences physically demanding situations. In spreading the gospel, Christians should expect to:
 - Get tired
 - Set aside common hobbies or pursuits so as to free up time
- As an athlete
 - Regular training required
 - No shortcuts
- As a farmer
 - A crop is the expected result
 - The farmer is rewarded for his labor (see 1 Corinthians 3:12 – 15)
- Am I up to this task?
 - The Lord will give you understanding in all things (1 Corinthians 2:9 – 12, Ephesians 1:17 – 19)
 - Remember the resurrection
 - The Word will succeed whether through me or through someone else
 - We endure for them, not for ourselves
 - If we love people and trust God, we will succeed
 - If we do not trust God, we will fail although God will still succeed with others
- **(2:14 – 26) Principles of teaching**
 - Striving over words (14 – 15)
 - Ruins the hearers. In what ways?
 - Where is the line between word games and proper definitions?
 - Unraveling a complex bad teaching is difficult
 - Who decides between rightly and wrongly dividing the Word?
 - Profane and idle babbling (16 – 18)
 - Results in ungodliness (counterpoint in verse 19, “depart from iniquity”)
 - Results in overthrown faith
 - One example in Paul’s time was “saying that the resurrection is already past.”
 - What might be examples in our time?
 - What is “overthrown faith”?
 - Depart from iniquity (19 – 22)
 - Who decides the boundaries of “iniquity”
 - (v20) Play on words between gold and silver vessels versus wood and clay vessels. The first group is for “honor.” The second group is for “a”-honor. This did not indicate dishonor, but rather commonness or lowliness.
 - (v21) People cannot transform clay and wood into gold and silver, so this is an apt illustration of the process of being dedicated to godly purposes
 - (v22) “Pursue” implies positive action, not retreat. “With those who call on the name of the Lord” implies a group effort based on the essential quality of Jesus.
 - Foolish and ignorant disputed (23)
 - Who decides if a difference of opinion is foolish or “rightly dividing”?
 - Can strife occur as the result of good teaching?
 - Teaching style (24 – 26)
 - Gentle, able, patient, humble: Even with these, will correction sometimes cause strife?
 - How does God “grant them repentance”?

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- The point: Sow good seed (gentle, able, patient, humble). Not all soils are good. Let God work on the soil.

Don't Let Bad Times Discourage You (3:1 – 17)

- **How does a chapter of bad news encourage me?**
 - When Jesus was on earth:
 - Opposition
 - Poverty
 - Large crowds but poor response
 - Bad news is to be expected
 - The early church
 - Organized opposition from synagogues
 - Sporadic persecution from the government
 - Frequent distortions of the gospel from within the church
 - Bad news is to be expected
 - Church history
 - Bad teaching has won many more converts than “sound” teaching
 - Defining “sound” teaching has led to many small splinters
 - Bad news is to be expected
- **How to be encouraged**
 - (1) This continual disaster is not unexpected.
 - God built something that can withstand misguided people.
 - Galatians and 1 Corinthians
 - The seven churches of Asia (Revelation)
 - Paul's last meeting with the elders of Ephesus
 - 1 Timothy 4 and Titus 2
 - (2 – 5) Overcome discouragement by remembering the power that we have (not just the power that certain people in the first century had).
 - In each place in which bad teaching is described, the “right” people were those who depended on the Spirit, not those who had the right teachings.
 - Large groups often take comfort in their numbers. They can do big projects due to volume, even if the individuals contribute (either in money or labor) little. Success beyond the limits of human effort is not apparent.
 - Small groups often take comfort in the correctness of their teaching. Therefore, those not in their groups are condemned. Success beyond the limits of human effort is not considered.
 - Those who depend on the power of the Spirit will survive.
 - (6 – 9) God promises that bad teaching will, eventually, sink.
 - Historically, denominations rise and fall. Their folly is apparent to those a few generations later.
 - The timetable is God's, not mine.
 - The house can withstand the bad weather due to the skill of the builder.
 - (10 – 13) God has a history of delivering those who are His.
 - (1:15) All those in Asia had turned away from Paul. Success was not in numbers.
 - Paul and Timothy had suffered repeatedly.

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- Deliverance on earth is through a life of joy brought by the successes of faith.
- Deliverance beyond earth is confidently awaited.
- (14 – 16) Know the Scriptures
 - Not for the sake of knowing (7) but for wisdom.
 - Through faith (trusting the promises of God as a foundation and motivation for action), not through complex or original insights.
 - The point is to burst my self-deceiving bubble

Recharge (4:1 – 17)

- **(1) Be recharged by remembering**
 - Who is in charge (Lord and King)
 - How we were rescued (Christ)
 - Jesus' example on earth
 - Judgment will come, so rescue others while time remains
- **(2) Be recharged by preparing**
 - Be ready at all times, not just at appointed times
 - Be ready with several styles as may be appropriate at the moment: logic, correction, encouragement.
 - Be patient and educational
- **(3 – 5) Be recharged by the window of opportunity**
 - The world only gets worse, not better. The “good old days” are revisionist history.
 - Groups centralize over time; get to them before the authority figures block access.
 - Taking advantage of opportunity requires difficulty; it won't get any easier.
 - Bring good news.
 - Fill your service to overflowing, not just full.
- **(6 – 8) Be recharged by stepping up**
 - Timothy needed to step up due to Paul's imminent departure.
 - Let the successes of those whom you have followed be your motivation to continue.
 - “But also to all those who have loved His appearing.” I need to step up to fill the gap.
- **(9 – 22) Be recharged both by those who fail and by those who succeed.**
 - Some will fall away. Rather than being discouraged by their bad choices, be recharged to:
 - Recognize and avoid what ruined them.
 - Step up to fill the gaps they have left.
 - Pray more that they do no further damage.
 - Some have other tasks. Rather than being discouraged by their unavailability, be recharged by
 - The good work they are doing.
 - Bringing others to fill the needs.
 - Praying that their choices, even if not the best, work out well.
 - Hardship isn't hard when viewed through its results.
 - The Lord stood with me and strengthened me and delivered me.
 - Preached fully.
 - Based on the past, the Lord will continue to do the same.
 - Remember those to whom you are connected.