

55 – 2 Timothy: Final Instructions and Personal Goodbyes

- This is **Paul’s final letter**. He knows he will be dying soon, so these chapters carry extra significance. There is a tone of sadness, but also one of triumph. This is a very personal letter, and Paul references about 25 individuals here.
- Paul indicates he is in prison in Rome, and he apparently knows he will be executed for his preaching and will not be on earth much longer. He writes this touching letter to his “son in the faith” as **an encouragement and a goodbye**. Reliable tradition tells us he was beheaded shortly after. Dating of the letter is most likely between 64 – 67 AD.
- This book is about the **personal walk and personal testimony of a true servant of Jesus**, in the day of desertion of truth, and apostasy. Already in Paul’s day this apostasy had a hold of the church. Legalism and Gnosticism were common errors in Paul’s day, and it has continued down through the ages.
- Paul sensed the coming **“falling away” of the faith**, or what is called “apostasy.” The dictionary defines apostasy as the “desertion of the principles of faith.” That would mean that apostasy is not ignorance, it is willful, a deliberate turning away from the truth. It is heresy, and an intentional falling away. One who is an “apostate” is someone who knew the truth, but deliberately turned away from it to follow lies.
- **COMMENTARY: There has never been another person like Paul, the missionary apostle. He was a man of deep faith, undying love, constant hope, tenacious conviction, and profound insight. And he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to give us God’s message. As you read 2 Timothy, know that you are reading the last words of this great man of God—his last words to Timothy and to all who would claim to follow Christ. Recommit yourself to stand courageously for the truth, knowing the Word and being empowered by the Holy Spirit.**



Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, 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...”

2 Timothy 1:8-10

Highlights

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| Ch 1 | Greetings; call to faithfulness; thanksgiving for Timothy, call to courage, guard the truth, suffer without shame, spiritual loyalty, examples of unfaithfulness and faithfulness (1:3-18) |
| Ch 2 | Challenge to endure, hardship for Christ, Jesus’ example of endurance, a “faithful saying,” faithfulness in ministry, faithfulness of conduct (examples: steward, soldier, athlete, farmer, workman, vessel, servant) |
| Ch 3 | Faithlessness (apostasy) in last days, instructions for this time, faithfully preach the truth, turn away from the false, follow those who are true, even in opposition, be faithful to God’s Word, faithfulness of Paul |
| Ch 4 | Paul’s troubles, God’s faithfulness, Paul’s enemies and friends, his deliverance by the Lord, preach the Word, fulfill your ministry, be diligent and faithful, final greetings |

- **“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”** (1:7) Timothy may have been a bit timid or easily intimidated, perhaps because of his youth. We are also fearful and timid sometimes, and need the same encouragement. Paul repeatedly reminds him to let nothing stand in the way of his duty as a minister of the Gospel, and to fulfill his calling and gift. Paul reminds Timothy of the character and qualities needed to be a faithful minister. His advice to Timothy includes several directives: **1)** remember his calling and his gifts with boldness (1:6-12), **2)** uphold the truth (1:13-18), **3)** help others follow him in ministry (2:1-2); **4)** be disciplined and able to endure persecution and suffering (2:3-7), **5)** stay focused on Jesus (2:8-13), **6)** stick with sound doctrine, reject error and avoid godless chatter (2:14-19), **7)** live a pure life (2:20-26), **8)** beware of false doctrines and those who teach them (3:1-9), **9)** remember Paul’s example (3:10-11), **10)** know the real source of opposition (the enemy) (3:12-13), **11)** find strength and power in the truth, the Word of God (3:14-17), **12)** preach the Word and fulfill your ministry until the end (4:1-4-8).
- Paul was **disappointed in the churches in the Roman province in Asia** (they had deserted the truth). Ephesus, where Timothy was, had been the chief city of this region. It was a difficult place to minister.

- Paul used the **examples of a soldier, an athlete and a farmer** to encourage Timothy. He was to fight and suffer like a good soldier, he was to play well like an athlete, and work hard like a good farmer. Paul indicates that rewards come to all these people, if they perform well. Jesus also used these same “occupations” in his teachings, as did other NT writers.
- *“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”* (3:1-5) According to this description, it would appear we are indeed living in the “last days.” These verses pretty much sum up what we see today, especially the “form of godliness” without power. Our power is the Name and blood of Jesus only, not in ourselves. The church has fallen away from this truth, and therefore has “denied its power,” but still claiming to have a form of godliness.
- *“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.”* (4:3) It was already beginning in Paul’s day, but this is specifically targeted to the “last days.” This certainly looks like today’s world. More and more people are refusing the Truth of God’s Word, for the impotent “wisdom” of man.
- The apostasy Paul speaks of **will almost blot out true faith on the earth**. There are two departures coming: one is the departure of the Church which we call the “rapture” and the other will be the departure from the true faith. When true believers are gone, the “church” will completely fall away from God and the truth to embrace a false religion. In Luke 18:18 Jesus asked if the Son of Man would find faith on earth when He returned. The construction of His question demands a negative answer. No, He won’t find true faith in the “church” of that day, but He will find it in the hearts of the martyrs and true believers who are not part of the official “church.” There is a “visible” church today which is ever more embracing this false religion, this falling away. It is the “invisible” church, the real body of believers, who hold to the truth. Paul knew what was coming, it was beginning even in that day. He outlines it clearer in this little letter more than any other place.
- Today the so-called “emergent church” and others who are considered preachers of the “social gospel” are what most of the mainstream churches are all about. **COMMENTARY: Liberal preaching, instead of presenting the grace of God to sinful man, goes out in three different directions. From some liberal pulpits we hear what is really popular psychology. It majors in topics such as this: "How to Overcome" or "How to Think Creatively" or "How to Think Affirmatively or Positively." ...A second type of liberal preaching involves ethics. It preaches a nice little sweet gospel—a sermonette preached by the preacherette to Christianettes. The message goes something like this: "Good is better than evil because it's nicer and gets you into less trouble." The picture of the average liberal church is that of a mild-mannered man standing before a group of mild-mannered people, urging them to be more mild-mannered! There's nothing quite as insipid as that. No wonder the Lord Jesus said to the church of Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev 3:15-16). ...Then there's a third type of liberal preaching which is called the social gospel. They preach better race relations, pacifism, social justice, and the Christian social order. It is Christian socialism pure and simple.** (McGee) The need for man’s atonement, the blood of Jesus that justifies and saves us, is not taught in these places. Only that mankind can create a “better world,” and everyone can be happy and rich.
- *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.”* (4:6-8) Paul knew his death was imminent. He is satisfied with how he has lived the life and gifts God gave him. He knows a crown awaits, not just for him but for each of us who “loved His appearing.” He already appeared once. His second “appearing” seems soon. Our crowns of righteousness, granted only because of the blood of Jesus, also await us.
- *“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. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 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!”* (4:17-18) What can we say to that? Amen! These are Paul’s last words. God has been faithful to him throughout, to the end. And He will be faithful to us, to the end.