



## 2 Timothy: God's Word

**Memory Verse:** 2 Timothy 4:7 "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

### Background

Second Timothy is the 55th book of the Bible and the sixteenth book in the New Testament. Paul wrote Second Timothy, his final letter, soon before his death around 67 AD, as he sat in a prison cell in Rome. In 64 AD, a terrible fire had spread throughout Rome burning more than half the city. The Roman emperor Nero was suspected of causing the fire himself so as to build a grander and better Rome. Nero, however, used this opportunity to target Christians as the scapegoats for the fire and a great wave of Christian persecution followed. Many Christians in and around Rome were arrested and put to death, often in very cruel ways. It was during this time of persecution that Paul was re-arrested, not by the Jews this time but by Rome, and was treated like a criminal (2 Timothy 2:9). At this time, Timothy had been ministering in Ephesus for about four years. Paul wrote this letter offering his final pastoral advice to Timothy, knowing that "the time for my departure is near" (4:6). He requested that Timothy do his best to come to him quickly before winter and to bring with him Paul's cloak and scrolls, especially the parchments (4:6,9, & 21). It is not known if Timothy arrived in time to visit Paul or not. Tradition has it that Paul was beheaded by Roman officials soon after writing this letter.

### The Short Story

Paul writes his final words to his beloved co-worker Timothy, passing on the ministry torch and encouraging him to be faithful in adversity.

### What's the Big Idea?

Paul knew that Timothy (his "true son in the faith") would need much encouragement and strength as he persevered in the ministry after Paul's death. Timothy would face many trials and troubles as he worked to keep the church within the bounds of sound doctrine, calling believers to live for Christ. Paul begins by giving thanks to God for Timothy, reminding Timothy of his spiritual heritage and encouraging him to be bold and unashamed of the Gospel of the Lord (1:7-8). Paul tells Timothy, "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us." (1:13-14). Timothy was not only to guard the Truth of the Gospel, but he was also to "correctly handle the word of truth" (2:15) and pass it on to those who would then be qualified to teach others (2:2). Paul forewarns Timothy of the coming apostasy, a terrible time when evil people will work hard to corrupt the Gospel and destroy the work of Christ (3:1-9). Paul warns Timothy to expect suffering and persecution as "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted," (3:12). Amidst the warnings, Paul encourages Timothy to stand firm on the Word of God, for "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). Finally, Paul instructs Timothy to "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction." (4:2).

### So What? Why is this book so important? What was God's purpose for the book?

Paul, in prison, facing death, and deserted by many of his friends, writes not about himself or the injustices that had befallen him. He has no regrets and no doubts about his work for the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting God and persevering in his faith even to the point of death. Paul uses his last days to pass on the faith and encourage those who would carry on the Lord's work after his departure. What an inspiration and model to Timothy and to believers still today. May we follow Paul's example of standing firm on God's Word, doing the work He has called us to amidst suffering and persecution, and passing on the faith to future generations. Then, like Paul, may we look back on our lives and say with joy, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 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." (4:7-8).

*\*Material taken from various sources.*

## Teaching Text

2 Timothy 4:4-5, "They will turn their ears **away from the truth** and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, **discharge all the duties of your ministry.**"

## Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- Why was Paul so adamant about pointing out the need to cling to truth in 2 Timothy? What is truth?
- According to 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; why has "Satan" blinded people from the truth of God?
- When you read 2 Corinth. 5:10 how does it make you feel or think about your actions and choices?
- What does 1 John 2:15-17 mean in your opinion? What are we to keep separate from in our lives?
- How would you apply 2 Timothy 4:8 to your life? Are you longing to see Christ appear as reigning King and Lord? What are you expecting to receive from Christ when He returns?

## Practical Application

- Why is it so hard to pin down truth in our modern culture? What do you know to be true?
- What ministry and change has God given you to carry out as your specific mission in life?
- Where have you believed something about God or scripture that latter you found to be untrue? How did it effect you? What changed your mind?
- How easy is it to get side tracked into diversions while pursuing Christ? What can you do to keep on track? What do you want to hear from Jesus? What would you like to lay at His feet?

## Hitting the Highpoints

- 1:2, "To Timothy...Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."
- 2:15, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved..."
- 3:12, "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted..."
- 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed...useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training..."
- 4:18, "The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom."

## Bonus Features

During this letter a direct and violent persecution was beginning to take place under Emperor Nero. We see time and again that those who follow Christ are persecuted in some form or another. Despite the consistency or severity of persecution we see the truth of the gospel continue on. In fact, the gospel always seems to flourish the most in the places with the highest persecution. Christ himself tells us in the beatitudes that persecution is expected and seen as a badge of honor in the service of God's Kingdom. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12)

## Personal Takeaways and Notes