

## **STUDY ON THE BOOK OF SECOND TIMOTHY**

### **BE NEITHER INTIMIDATED NOR ASHAMED!**

Read 2 Timothy 1:1-12

#### **Introduction.**

Second Timothy is one of only four letters in the New Testament written by Paul to specific individuals. The others are 1 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Timothy is the only individual to receive two individual letters from Paul in the New Testament. Second Timothy is traditionally accepted as Paul's final New Testament letter since it refers to his impending death.

This four-chapter letter focuses on Paul's final words to Timothy, emphasizing the need to persevere in the faith. Timothy was to be faithful in his work (2 Timothy 1:6), continue in sound doctrine (2 Timothy 1:13–14), and preach the Word (2 Timothy 3:15—4:5). Then, he was to pass on what he had learned to others (2 Timothy 2:2).

#### **Greetings**

*“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” (vv1-2)*

Paul's introduction here is like his other letters, with an immediate declaration that he is an apostle according to the will of God, not according to his own ambition or man's choice. Paul used the statement “according to the promise of life”, a statement unique compared to greetings in Paul's other letters. It was appropriate here because Paul was imprisoned again in Rome, and he expected to be executed (2 Timothy 4:6). Therefore, this promise of life was especially precious to him.

Paul thought much about his spiritual family — and called Timothy, a beloved son. This shows the unique and close relationship between Paul and Timothy. The greeting “grace, mercy and peace” shows that ministers need to show more mercy than others do. After all, in the beginning to his letters to churches in general, Paul only wrote grace and peace in his greeting (*Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:3, 2 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, Colossians 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:2*). But when he wrote to the pastors — Timothy and Titus — he was compelled to greet them with grace, mercy, and peace.

#### **Prayer and Longing for Timothy**

*“I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.” (vv3-5)*

Timothy was on Paul's prayer list. Praying night and day also shows how much Paul prayed: Whenever it was night or whenever it was day. Of course, one might say this was easy for Paul since he was in prison; but such prayer is never easy. Paul is to be admired for wanting to do the most for Jesus that he could wherever he was. If he could not preach, then he would pray.

Perhaps the tears Paul remembered were the tears Timothy shed at their last parting.

It made Paul genuinely happy (filled with joy) to remember the faith of faithful men like Timothy, who loved and served Jesus and His people. Timothy's genuine faith was due, in no small measure, to his godly upbringing and the influence of his grandmother and mother. However, it is not only in his grandmother

and his mother but in him also – the genuine faith. Our children, once of age to be accountable before God, must have their own relationship with Jesus Christ. Mom and dad’s relationship with God will not then bring eternal life.

The phrase genuine faith could be literally translated, unhypocritical faith — that is, faith that is not an act. It was for real, not just in appearance.

### **Exhortation to Boldness**

*“Therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” (vv6-7)*

Timothy was a gifted, valuable man for the kingdom of God; but he seems to have had a timid streak in him. For this reason, Paul often encouraged him to be strong and bold. In 1 and 2 Timothy there are no less than 25 different places where Paul encouraged Timothy to be bold, to not shy away from confrontation, to stand up where he needs to stand up and be strong. Because of who Timothy was and the responsibilities he had to bear, this was what Timothy needed to hear.

### **Stir up!**

Timothy could not be passive and just let it all happen; he needed to be bold and to stir up the gift of God which is in you. Some have gifts given to them by God, but those gifts are neglected. They need to be stirred up and put into action. This reminds us that God does not work His gifts through us as if we were robots. Even when He gives a man or a woman gifts, He leaves an element that needs the cooperation of their will, of their desire and drive, to fulfil the purpose of His gifts.

Some are waiting passively for God to use them; but God is waiting for them to stir up the gifts that are within them. Some are waiting for some dramatic new anointing from God, and God is waiting for them to stir up what He has already given. The phrase “stir up” has the idea of stirring up a fire to keep it burning bright and strong; a fire left to itself will always burn out, but God wants us to keep our gifts burning strong for Him.

### **Spirit of power, love, and a sound mind!**

Paul saw the timidity that was in Timothy; Timothy knew the fear he sometimes felt. God wanted Timothy to know that this fear wasn’t from the God he served; he needed to know that God has not given us a spirit of fear. We all face situations where we feel timid and afraid. For some, speaking in front of others makes them fear; others are afraid of confrontation, others of being made to look foolish, others are afraid of rejection. We all deal with fear.

The first step in dealing with such fears is to understand that they are not from God. It is a significant step to say, “This isn’t God making me feel like this; God hasn’t given me this.” Perhaps it is from personality, perhaps a weakness of the flesh, perhaps a demonic attack — but it isn’t from God.

The second step in dealing with such fears is understanding what God has given us: a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind.

- **God has given us a spirit of power:** When we do His work, proclaim His word, represent His kingdom, we have all His power supporting us. We are safe in His hands.
- **God has given us a spirit of love:** This tells us a lot about the power He has given us. Many think of power in terms of how much we can control others; but Jesus’ power is expressed in how much we can love and serve others. On the night before the cross, Jesus, knowing that the Father had

given all things into His hands — and what did He do with all that power? He humbly washed His disciples' feet (John 13:1-11).

- **God has given us a sound mind:** The ancient Greek word here had the idea of a calm, self-controlled mind, in contrast to the panic and confusion that comes in a fearful situation.

We don't need to accept what God has not given us (a spirit of fear), and we do need to humbly receive and walk in what He has given us (a spirit... of power and of love and of a sound mind).

### Suffering for the Gospel

*“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...” (vv8-10)*

If Timothy took the courage God gave, he would not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. We often fail to understand that it wasn't easy to follow a crucified Master. Today, we have sanitized Jesus and disinfected the cross, making it all safe. But in the day Paul wrote this, it would seem strange indeed to follow a crucified man and call him saviour. Paul knew that the plan of God in Jesus Christ seemed foolish to many; but he also knew it was the living, active, power of God to save souls and transform lives. Paul would not be ashamed of it, and neither should Timothy — or us today.

### Paul the Prisoner!

If Timothy took the courage God gave, he would not be ashamed of Paul the prisoner. It wasn't easy to support an imprisoned apostle. Note that Paul considered himself a prisoner of Jesus (nor of me His prisoner). Paul saw himself not as the prisoner of Rome, but as a prisoner of God. Paul saw God as the Lord of every circumstance, and if he was free, he was the Lord's free man; if he were imprisoned, he was the Lord's prisoner.

It wasn't enough that Paul told Timothy to not be ashamed of him and his chains; he also invited Timothy to share in all of it. We share... in the sufferings in the same way Paul spoke of in Romans 12:15: Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. We identify with our suffering brethren across the world through prayer, through a heart of concern, and through wise action.

Paul suffered according to the power of God. The power of God is always there, but it is not always there to remove the difficulty. Sometimes it is there to see us through the difficulty.

### Our Holy Calling!

We come to God as a response to His call in our lives. We did not initiate the search; we do not find God, He finds us; so, we must respond to His call when we sense it. It was not according to our works, but according to His own purpose. This explains why God called us. It wasn't anything great we were, or anything great we had done, but because it fit in with His purpose — because He wanted to. God directed His gracious work towards us when we only existed as a fact in God's knowledge. Just as a couple lovingly plans for a baby before the baby is born, so God planned for us.

Our Calling Through the gospel: The good news of who Jesus is and what He did for us can be thought of as links connected in a beautiful chain of God's work.

- God's plan of salvation began for us in eternity past before time began.
- It continued with the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ.

- It came to us when He saved us and called us.
- It continues as we live our holy calling.
- It will one day show itself in immortality — eternal life.

When we consider the greatness of this message, it is no wonder Paul called it the gospel — good news. It is good news that God thought of you and loved you before you even existed; good news that Jesus came to perfectly show us God, good news that He called us and saved us, good news that He gives us a holy calling, and good news that He shows us and gives us eternal life.

This message was worth prison to the Apostle Paul.

### **Paul's Appointed Work**

*“... to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason, I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.” (vv11-12)*

Flashing through Paul's mind were the sermons he preached (a preacher), the churches he founded and led (an apostle), and the diverse nations he brought to Jesus Christ (a teacher of the Gentiles). He no doubt thanked Jesus as he considered each one. Paul knew that though he preached a wonderful message, it cost him dearly along the way. His present suffering in prison was because of this heavenly appointment.

Paul used this phrase: “For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded” - This explains why Paul was so bold in his work, and how he could feel honoured by circumstances that might make others feel ashamed. He said that it was because I know whom I have believed. Paul knew the God he trusted and served. We must know what we believe; but it is even more important to know whom we believe. When we know how great God is; when God and His glory becomes the great fact of our lives, then we have real boldness.

Paul concludes: “And am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him” - This is a second reason that explains Paul's boldness. Paul gave Jesus his life, and knew Jesus was fully able to keep it! What was it that Paul committed to Him? Paul knew he could not keep his own life; he knew that only God could keep it. God was able; Paul was not. Knowing this made Paul full of boldness, but it wasn't boldness in self, but in God. But it wasn't only his life that Paul had committed to God. Paul had committed everything to Jesus — his life, his body, his character and reputation, his life's work, everything that was precious.