

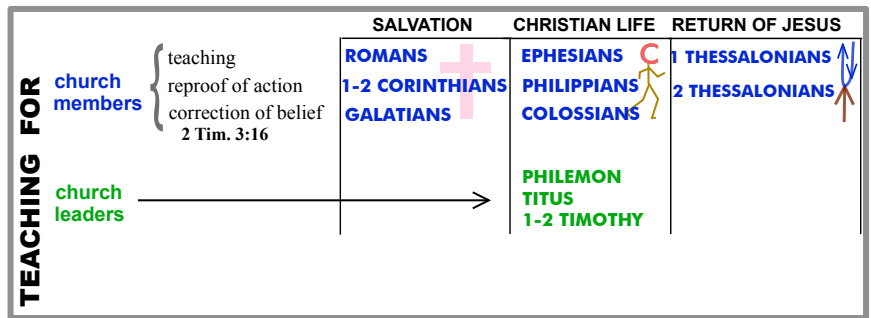
Lesson #17 - 2 TIMOTHY

Before starting this lesson, **read chapters 1-4.**

In our Bibles, we have 9 letters that Paul wrote to **church members**. They cover a period of 10 years beginning with 51 thru 60 AD.

Paul's 4 letters to **church leaders** cover the next 8 years, from 60 to 67 AD.

The first was to **PHILEMON**, pastor of the Colossian church. It was written during the final months of Paul's house arrest in Rome.



Within a few months, Paul was set free and from mid 60 to 61 AD once again began visiting the churches he had started.



During the next year, he and Titus established churches on the island of **CRETE**. In mid-62, Paul went to **EPHESUS** to deal with church problems. In early 63 AD, he went to **MACEDONIA** to resolve another church problem. That fall, while still in Macedonia, he writes **TITUS** in Crete and **TIMOTHY** in Ephesus.

Titus and Paul then spend the winter of 63-64 in western Greece (**NICOPOLIS**). Thruout the empire Christianity is growing and people are free to practice their faith. From early church writings, it

appears Paul spends the next 2 years - from 64 to 66 - giving the gospel message in **SPAIN**.

During these years, 2 historic events change everything.

In July 64 AD, a part of Rome burns and Nero blames the Christians. Over the next months, believers in Rome are taken prisoners. For entertainment, Nero uses them at the coliseum to fight with lions. He burns them as torches to give light in his gardens.

Two years later, in 66 AD, Jews rebel and attack the Roman armies in the land of Israel. Nero quickly retaliates against the Jews, first in Israel and then thruout the empire. Now, both Christians and Jews are arrested, first by the hundreds and then by the thousands. Sometime during the '60s, Peter moves from northern Turkey to Rome. In 67 AD, he is taken prisoner. Because he is not a Roman citizen, he is killed by crucifixion, without any trial.

About this same time - early 67 AD, Paul has returned from Spain and has been once again visiting the churches he established. At this point, he comes to **EPHESUS** to be with Timothy. Within a short time he is arrested and accused of some **political** offense. Thinking he may never see Paul again, Timothy is in tears.

Because Paul is a Roman citizen he is sent to **ROME**.

However, this time he is not given a rented house but is placed in a dungeon. At his trial, no one from Ephesus comes to either defend or accuse him and he is found not guilty.

But instead of being released, he is accused again, this time of being a **Christian**. At his second trial, he is found guilty and condemned to death. However, his actual death will not take place for some 6 months.

So Paul writes, asking **TIMOTHY** to come to Rome as soon as possible, bringing his (Paul's) coat and some of his books. He had left them with Timothy when he was arrested. Paul tells him, *Do your best to come before winter.* 2 Tim 4:21 This tells us it is the fall of 67 AD.

Timothy has been pastor and head teacher in the Ephesian church over the last 4 years, instructing new leaders and teachers as well as the congregation. *Since his teen years, he has been mentored by Paul – some 18 years.* The bond between them is like father and son.

But Paul has no guarantee that Timothy will get to Rome before his death. So he uses this letter to give his spiritual son some final, written instruction.

OUTLINE

Timothy's personal life - how to be faithful 1:1 – 2:10
Timothy's ministry - in the present and the future 2:11 – 4:22

TIMOTHY'S PERSONAL LIFE

His area of natural weakness.

By nature, Timothy was reserved and timid. He hated confrontation. So Paul reminds him of his spiritual gifts. *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you thru the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline* 1:6-7

At his ordination, in response to the prayer of Paul and the church leaders, the Holy Spirit gave Timothy a combination of spiritual gifts to offset his timidity. The word for *love* is *agape* which means *to do what is right*. Our equivalent in English is *tough love*. It is based on using the will. He was given power to apply “tough love” in dealing with people and situations. He was also given an extra measure of self-discipline so he could make the right choices.

Over the last 4 years Timothy has used these abilities in the Ephesian church. But this does not mean they will automatically continue the rest of his life. Paul uses picture language to explain. A blazing fire dies down to embers if it is not tended. Spiritual abilities become ineffective if they are not developed and nurtured. Timothy is commanded to keep using these spiritual gifts because he will continue to be challenged in his leadership role in the local church.

His dealing with government persecution.

It has become obvious; Rome wants to destroy the Jews and the Christians. This means persecution will increase. Being connected with church leaders will bring rejection and suffering. Christian leaders themselves will be hunted down and put to death. So Paul gives a series of commands to guide and encourage him.

Do not be ashamed. 1:8

Paul is not saying Timothy has been ashamed in the past or is ashamed in the present. He is warning him not to start. *Never be ashamed of being connected with the gospel message or ashamed of me, a representative of the gospel.*

What you heard from ME, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 1:13

Paul's teaching is the guide for Church teaching. This was true in the 1st century. It is still true today. It is why God made sure Paul's books were preserved in our Bibles. Paul's teaching about salvation, the Christian life and the return of Jesus for believers is the foundation of historic Christianity.

Paul reminds Timothy that he is to keep and guard the gospel message.

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2:1

Paul is not telling Timothy to find strength in himself or to tough it out - work it up. The Greek means *be empowered*. *Get your spiritual strength from God, who in His grace, makes it available to everyone.*

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 2:3

Paul commands Timothy to endure suffering along with him and other Christian leaders.

His potential discouragement

After Paul's death, as the suffering continues, Timothy will face opposition and despair. So Paul gives him 3 examples to use for encouragement.

The first example is a **soldier**

No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs –

he wants to please his commanding officer. 2:4

A soldier stays focused on priorities to please his commanding officer.



The second example is an **athlete**

Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive

the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. 2:5

An athlete uses self-discipline to win the prize.



The third example is a **farmer**

The farmer first must work hard before he can enjoy the harvest. 2:6

Priorities, self-discipline and hard work - this is what it will take to get thru the difficult times of rejection and suffering. So Timothy is to,

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all of this. 2:7



COMMANDS FOR TIMOTHY'S PERSONAL LIFE 1:1 - 2:10

Keep using your spiritual abilities so they remain effective.
Do not be ashamed of being connected with the gospel message and with me, Paul.
Keep and guard the gospel message in your own life.
Draw your spiritual strength from God.
Endure hardship and suffering along with other Christian leaders.

Notice that Paul's instruction does not start with Timothy's ministry. He starts with Timothy's life. His personal life needs to be spiritually sound before his ministry can be effective.

TIMOTHY'S MINISTRY – in the present

Paul believed God had entrusted or deposited him with the gospel message which includes, **SALVATION**, the **CHRISTIAN LIFE** and the **RETURN OF JESUS** for believers. He has spread this message thruout the western Roman Empire. But false teaching is also spreading thruout the area. Paul knows he has done all he can. He knows he is about to die. So he now hands his responsibility over to Timothy.

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. 2:2

Some people have used this verse as proof that only *men* are supposed to teach in the church. But the Greek word for *men* is not the word that means male gender only. The Greek word is *anthropos* - that means men and women.

In his ministry, Timothy is to **TEACH RELIABLE MEN AND WOMEN** so they can be qualified teachers.

Since older women were to teach younger women, they needed the training just as much as the men.

In addition, Timothy is to **TEACH EVERYONE** in the church congregation so they can believe and then spiritually mature.

As in all church congregations, there are 4 groups of people.

- Some in the congregation are **faithful** believers of Jesus.
- Some are believers and are going thru tremendous **suffering** for their faith.
- Some have been attending every week, but as yet, have never made any decision about Jesus.
When persecution increases, they will be the first to leave. They are **attenders**, but not believers.
- There are believers, who because of false teaching, wrong influence, or fear of persecution, have turned from God. They have **wandered** from the faith.

To put it simply, within the Ephesian church there are... faithful believers

...suffering believers

...non-believers

...wayward believers

Someone had written a hymn about these groups. (In the 1st century, hymns were used as a statement of faith or a summary of spiritual truth.) Paul quotes this hymn in his instruction to Timothy.

If we died with Him, we will also live with Him.

If we endure, we will also reign with Him.

If we disown Him, He will also disown us.

If we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown or deny Himself. 2:11



Because **all** the congregation is singing, the hymn uses the word *we*. This does not mean everyone fits all 4 groups. But as they sing, everyone is included in at least 1 group.

It was sung or quoted in the Greek language, so everyone knew exactly what it meant or did not mean. As we read it in English, instead of an encouragement, these verses have often created doubt or fear. I want to again explain about the Greek word “if” - this time with a little more detail.

Let’s start with an English example. *If I go to the beach next week, I will stay several days.* We may not realize it, but this statement has 4 possible meanings.

If and it is **true** - *I am going to the beach.*

If and it is **not true** - *I already know I am not going* - I am speaking hypothetically.

If and it **may or it may not be true** - *I have no idea if I will go or not.*

If and it is **only a wish** that I could go.

In the Greek, each meaning is written with a different form of grammar, so everyone knows what the author means. The 4 meanings are described as 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th class conditions. Verses 11-13 in chapter 2 are all 1st class condition – “if and it is true.”

In good English, when we know a statement is true, instead of saying *if I go to the beach*, we say *since I’m going to the beach, I will stay several days.*

With this background, now let’s look at the hymn that Paul quotes.

2:11 *Since we died with Him, we will also live with Him.*

This is how Paul expressed salvation in the book of Romans - *we died with Christ.*

In our day, we express salvation as...*Since we put our faith in Jesus, we will live with Him forever.* Our salvation and the guarantee of eternal life are based on accepting the payment that Jesus made for us on the cross. We died with Him.

2:12a *Since we endure, we will also reign with Him.*

Believers who are persecuted for their faith are promised they will get added honor and rewards.

2:12b *Since we disown Him, He will also disown us.*

This phrase is talking only about the non-believers in the Ephesian church. As Roman persecution increases and believers are thrown into prison, the people in the congregation who do not believe in Jesus will be quick to say they have never been followers.

If thruout the rest of their life they deny their need for Jesus’ payment, they will have to make the payment themselves. They will be separated from Him. To put it another way, if they deny their need for Jesus, Jesus will deny them entrance into heaven. This verse is about people who reject Jesus for their entire life. Judas was in this category.

2:13 *Since we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.*

This is about believers who deny Jesus because of wrong influence, wrong teaching or out of fear of torture.

Peter was in this category. Under pressure of suffering Peter denied Jesus 3 times. According to the Gospels, he denied Jesus with oaths and curses. What he and Judas did were equally as bad. The difference was - Judas did not believe in Jesus and therefore did not ask God’s forgiveness. Peter believed in Jesus. He repented; he asked for and received forgiveness.

The evidence is on the day of Pentecost and afterwards, God used Peter to establish the Church - the Body of Christ. He was given the *keys* - meaning the responsibility and privilege to open the door of salvation, first to the Jews, then the Samaritans and finally the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius. It became clear that whether a person was Jewish, part Jewish or not Jewish at all, God accepted everyone on the basis of their faith in Jesus.

It is obvious Jesus did not deny or disown Peter. He remained faithful and forgave Peter. There would be other believers in the history of the church who would panic and not remain faithful. The promise is that Jesus remains faithful to forgive because He knows those who are in His family. He will **never** disown family members. Or to put it more plainly, He is never going to *dump* anyone who is in His family.

This hymn also describes the final results of these 4 groups of people.

Believers who have put their faith in Jesus have **eternal life**.

Believers who suffer for their faith will have **additional rewards**.

Those who reject Jesus will be **separated** from Him forever.

Believers who fail will be **forgiven** by Jesus.

Timothy, as pastor/teacher, is never to let himself get caught up in arguing about trivial things. Rather, he is to get people thinking about which group they are in and the results they will have. 2:14

In his ministry, Timothy is to...

...**TEACH RELIABLE MEN AND WOMEN** so they can be qualified teachers.

...**TEACH EVERYONE** so they can believe and mature in their faith.

...**KEEP LEARNING AND STUDYING**, so he can teach God's Word correctly.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 2:15

The Greek word *correctly handles* means *to cut straight*. In those days many buildings were made of stone. It was important for the builders to cut the stones straight, so when they were put together, all the pieces fit into place.

Anybody can pick up the Bible and take a phrase to make it say anything they want to. A person can use the Bible to prove atheism if they quote only half a verse. The Bible says, "there is no God." But what a difference it makes when all the verse is quoted. *The fool - the person without wisdom - has said in his heart, there is no God.*

Whether it is Timothy in the first century, or we in our day, it is important to be accurate in our use of Scripture. When we explain it correctly, it will fit into place. One of the ways to recognize correct teaching is that it fits in the context and it fits with the rest of Scripture. There will be no contradictions.

In his ministry, Timothy is also to...

...**DEAL WITH FALSE TEACHING THRU INSTRUCTION RATHER THAN ARGUMENT**

Do not have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. 2:23

In the Ephesian church there are still problems with false teaching that are destructive. Church members are arguing that certain parts of Gnosticism might have value or could be true. But everything about Gnosticism is heresy. It is all wrong. So how ridiculous to argue over specific points. Timothy is to have nothing to do with it.

But this does not mean Timothy should ignore false teaching or let people get away with it.

The Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct. 2:24

Timothy is to use Paul's teaching as the pattern and instruct those that oppose him. This is why he needs the gift of teaching. He is to teach kindly and instruct gently. However, not everyone will accept correct teaching. If people insist on teaching false ideas, Timothy will then have to use his authority to remove them from teaching and apply church discipline. But he should always start with instruction.

1:1 – 2:10 Paul instructs **Timothy about his personal life**. Timothy is...

...to keep using and developing his spiritual gifts

...not to be ashamed of being connected with the gospel message and with Paul

...to keep and guard the gospel message

...to get his spiritual strength from God

...to endure hardship/suffering

2:11-26 Paul instructs **Timothy about his ministry in the present**. Timothy is...

...to prepare reliable men and women so they are qualified to teach

...to teach all 4 groups of people in the church

...to keep learning so he is accurate in his teaching and

...to deal with false teaching thru instruction rather than arguments

3:1 - 4:22 Paul instructs Timothy about his ministry in the future.

Things are going to get worse instead of better.

Timothy needs to understand that believers are not going to convert the Roman Empire. They are not going to bring in God's kingdom.

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God - having a form of godliness, but denying its power. 3:1-5

Paul referred to the days of Timothy as the **last** days. Since we are living 2000 years later, we could think that Paul was totally wrong. But for many Jews and Christians, the late 60's and the 70's AD will literally **be** their last days. Peter has just died. Paul is about to die. From history we know some 2 years later - in 70 AD - the Romans invaded Jerusalem, burned the temple, leveled the city, killed one million Jews and sent thousands into slavery.

Reading Paul's description and then watching the news, we know these verses are describing our days as well. For me, the most outstanding concept is that people who claim to be religious will increase. But people willing to live by God's rules will decrease. Religiosity - yes, lots of it; holiness - less and less. A form of godliness but denying its power - denying God and the holiness He requires.

In the future will be **deception**.

People will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 3:13 When people willfully deceive others, God's judgment on them is to let **them** be deceived.

But God has provided the answer for Timothy and the local churches. It is Scripture that will keep **them** from being deceived.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation thru faith in Christ Jesus. 3:14

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

Back in Timothy's day or in our day, Scripture tells us God's boundaries - what is right and what is wrong. It gives us His point of view. It also equips us for what God gives us to do.

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season - always be prepared. Correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction. 4:2

Timothy is to give God's message according to what is needed in the church. Some will need correction, some rebuke while others need encouragement. He needs to know his congregation to discern who needs what.

And he needs to do it while he has the opportunity because...

... the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4:3

The phrase *itching ears* means people wanting to hear only what agrees with their agenda - what makes them feel good or what they want to do. Eventually Scripture will be rejected. The majority - even many believers will no longer want to hear God's Word explained correctly.

Paul and Timothy **had** a lasting effect on the Ephesian church. We know this because some 20 years later the apostle John is the pastor. He then was exiled to the island of Patmos, where God used him to write the book of Revelation. In the letters to the churches, Jesus says the Ephesians do not tolerate false teachers in their church. The lesson had been learned.

2 Timothy is Paul's last letter. He is now 68 years old, a prisoner in a Roman dungeon. He has been tried and found guilty. He has only a few more months to live. Because he is a Roman citizen, instead of crucifixion, he will be killed by beheading.

Paul, in his last months in the Roman dungeon is lonely. All his former friends and helpers are gone. Some are working in other places and cannot leave. Others are afraid to visit, for fear of imprisonment. In his loneliness, Paul wants the companionship of Timothy and Mark during these last months. From the book of Hebrews, we know that Timothy gets there. (After Paul is killed, Timothy is put in prison. However, after a short time, he is released).

On a human level, Paul in his last months in that Roman dungeon is lonely.

But spiritually, Paul is encouraged. Being a sports fan, he associates his life with 2 major events in the Olympic games. He thinks of it as both a wrestling match and as a race.

Others might see him as having lost the **wrestling match** because he will soon be put to death. Paul sees himself as the athlete who has fought and won the match.



He also sees the proclamation of Jesus' message thruout all of history as a long relay race. He has been one of the first to run his lap. He received the basic truths of Christianity and established many local churches. Now he is passing the baton of faith to Timothy, who in turn will pass it on to others. In the end, not only Paul but the whole team will receive a crown of olive leaves (our gold medals.)



I have fought the good fight (I have won my wrestling match); I have finished the race, (run my lap,) 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

Paul was one of the first on that relay team. Now we are part of that team. The message of Jesus has been passed on to us. We in turn are responsible for passing it on to others, not so much by what we say, but by how we live. Sometimes we forget, it is our everyday life that most presents the message of Jesus - by the way we act and react.

This means we need to draw spiritual strength from God on a daily basis. We need His wisdom. We also need to study and learn God's Word so we can apply it to our lives and so we know how to answer others who are seeking. As we have God's strength - as we apply Scripture to our lives, people will see - Jesus really does make a difference.

ENDNOTES

4:5 "Be sober-minded" means *keep your head in all situations. Stay calm and collected in spirit.*

4:10-11; 19-20 - location of his co-workers

Dr. Luke is with me (Roman dungeon)
Demas in Thessalonica
Crescens in Galatia
Titus in Dalmatia
Erastus in Corinth
Trophimus sick in Miletus
Priscilla/Aquila, Onesiphorus in Ephesus
Tychicus sent to Ephesus