

1 & 2 Timothy Background

- I. Introduction
 - A. This quarter we will be studying two of Paul's letters that are very different from most of the New Testament – 1 and 2 Timothy.
 - 1. Most of Paul's letters were written to churches.
 - 2. These are personal letters written to the young man Timothy.
 - 3. They present a side of Paul we do not as easily see in his other letters.
 - 4. I enjoy them, I suspect mainly for that reason.
 - B. In a few moments we shall be looking at some background information about these letters.
 - 1. Part of me feels the need to apologize for that, because background information may seem dry and uninteresting to some of you.
 - 2. It may help some that this is not dry to me. I find background studies very interesting. It's like detective work of a sort.
 - 3. I hope my enthusiasm will be contagious.
 - C. At any rate, I have never figured out how to teach a textual study without it.
 - 1. Before we can properly understand and apply what the Bible says to us today, we must know what it meant to those to whom it was first written.
 - 2. Without doing that, we increase the danger of not applying it properly and perhaps even erring in our doctrine.
 - 3. Therefore, we simply must take some time to understand something about these letters before we just jump into the text.
 - D. Before we do that, however, I want to make a general application about the overall theme of 1 & 2 Timothy.
- II. Pastoral Epistles. 1 & 2 Timothy along with Titus are often referred to as the Pastoral Epistles.
 - A. The name was first applied to 1 Timothy in 1274 by Thomas Aquinas, who said,
This letter is as it were a pastoral rule which the apostle delivered to Timothy . . . in his second letter he deals with a pastoral care which should be so great that it will even accept martyrdom for the sake of the care of the flock.
 - B. The title really came in 1726 when a scholar named Paul Anton gave a series of lectures in which he referred to 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus as The Pastoral Epistles.
 - C. For convenience I will use this phrase when referring to these letters, because it has come to be widely accepted.

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- D. But we need to understand how that term applies to these letters, and indeed to us, as we study them.
- E. When the religious world at large uses the word “pastor,” to whom are they generally referring?
 - 1. Normally it is a minister or priest.
 - 2. A full-time paid position.
 - 3. And it is this person who is expected to do most of the work of the church.
 - 4. This is what the religious world refers to as clergy.
 - 5. In contrast to the clergy, the laity are simply the members at large.
 - 6. They are largely spectators, with less responsibility than the clergy.
- F. Does the New Testament recognize this kind of division?
 - 1. The answer seems kind of obvious.
 - 2. Nowhere does the New Testament outline such a distinction as clergy and laity..
- G. But I am concerned that maybe we have misunderstood the implications of that.
 - 1. 1 Peter 2:9. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
 - 2. Notice that Peter says we are a “royal priesthood.”
 - 3. I am afraid that many of us may think we have no clergy.
 - 4. I would suggest that we are all clergy, at least as the religious world uses that term.
 - a. We are all priests who have the responsibility of spreading the news of God’s love and grace to a lost world.
 - b. We are all ministers in a very real sense.
 - c. Jim, Lanny, and Terry have specific responsibilities.
 - d. The elders have their own role in the church.
 - e. The deacons fulfill specific jobs.
 - f. But every one of us is a minister of God’s word.
- H. It is in this light that I would like for us to view 1 & 2 Timothy.
 - 1. These letters have to do with ministry, and therefore they apply to each and every one of us.
 - 2. 1 Timothy is addressed to the young Timothy, and relates how he is to exercise his ministry to face the tasks and problems of the church at Ephesus.
 - 3. 2 Timothy gives us Paul’s final evaluation of his own ministry, as he looks back on his life from old age.
 - 4. Future ministry and past ministry – These letters can speak to each of

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us even today.

- I. Now let us consider something about the background of these letters.
Who wrote these letters?
- J. The answer would seem to be obvious, but we need to spend a little bit of time with it.
- K. The first verse of each book claims that the apostle Paul wrote it.
 - 1. This is not always proof, however.
 - 2. There were known instances in which books were written by someone claiming to be an apostle.
 - a. Ex: *Gospel of Thomas*
 - (1) Early 2nd century.
 - (2) Gnostic account of the life of Christ.
- L. For 1800 years no one questioned the Pauline authorship of these letters.
 - 1. In 1804 a man named J. E. C. Schmidt first suggested that Paul did not write 1 Timothy.
 - 2. He was followed in 1807 by a scholar named F. Schleiermacher.
 - 3. Soon other scholars were rejecting Paul's authorship of all three of the Pastorals.
- M. I would like to say up front that I do believe that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles – and not just as a matter of faith.
 - 1. We as Christians should not be afraid of the truth.
 - 2. There are some difficulties that need to be faced.
 - 3. But there are explanations for these difficulties, and more than sufficient reason to believe that Paul was indeed the author.
 - 4. I hope to show you that in the next few minutes.
- N. First of all, let us consider some of the problems we need to address. Those who would deny Paul's authorship usually offer several reasons. Notice that every one of these objections have to do with internal aspects of the letters.
 - 1. The vocabulary, grammar, and style of these letters are different from the way Paul normally writes. I will agree that this is true. I will deal with that issue in a moment.
 - 2. The doctrinal issues that are discussed seem to reflect the church when it was more developed, and that would suggest that the letters were written at a later date.
 - 3. There is a specific heresy that is discussed which is probably Gnosticism, and Gnosticism was not fully developed until the second century.
 - 4. Perhaps the greatest difficulty with these letters is fitting them into the framework of the book of Acts. Again, we shall discuss this more fully when we talk about the date the letters were written.

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- O. Now let us consider the evidence favoring Paul's authorship of the Pastorals. Notice that this evidence is almost exclusively external.
 - 1. There are possible allusions by Christian writers to these letters very early.
 - a. Clement – A. D. 96. Probably referred to in the New Testament as someone Paul knew and who knew Paul.

Phil. 4:3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

- b. Ignatius – A. D. 110-117
 - c. Polycarp – A. D. 115-135 definitely quotes 1 Timothy and probably 2 Timothy and Titus as well. This would mean they would had to have been written before that time.
 - 2. A number of early Christian writers tell us that Paul wrote these letters.
 - a. *Acts of Paul* – @ A. D. 160
 - b. Irenaeus – A. D. 185-189
 - c. Clement of Alexandria – A. D. 190-200
 - d. Tertullian – A. D. 150-200
 - e. The Muratorian Canon – A. D. 175-200
 - 3. The Syriac translation of the New Testament (A. D. 150-200) included these letters, again proving that they had been written earlier.
 - 4. Eusebius of Caesarea (A. D. 324) listed them as universally acknowledged to be genuine letters of Paul.
- III. If Paul's authorship is assumed, as the external evidence supports, how then can the internal problems which the skeptics list be explained?
 - A. First, as to vocabulary, grammar, and style.
 - 1. The Pastorals either quote or allude to a large number of external sources (ex: 1 Tim 1:15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.)
 - 2. The rest of the vocabulary compares favorably with accepted Pauline writings.
 - 3. We should also note that these letters contain numerous references to people, places, and events which a forger would avoid for fear of being checked.
 - B. Doctrine
 - 1. Much of the doctrine appears in the quoted sections, so it would not necessarily reflect Paul's style.

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2. Paul's imprisonment in Rome may well have influenced his style.
 - a. Paul's use of the Greek word σωτήρ (savior) may reflect Paul's opposition to the emperor cult in Rome.
 - b. His use of ευσέβεια (godliness) is paralleled only in Roman writings where the Stoic philosophy had a strong influence.
 - C. Church Organization
 1. The use of such words as πρεσβύτερος to refer both to an older man (1 Tim. 5:1) as well as the office of an elder (1 Tim. 5:7) suggests a transition period such as we would find in the infant church of the second half of the first century.
 2. 1 Tim. 4:14 indicates that Timothy was selected through prophecy. This too indicates a very early situation.
 - D. A Gnostic Heresy
 1. While Gnosticism was not fully developed until the second century, elements of it were present in the first century.
 2. Paul has to deal with something like it in the book of Colossians – a book which virtually no one doubts was written by Paul.
 3. Although the heresy had some Gnostic elements in it, it involved Jewish views as well.
 - a. It included opposition to the mission to the Gentiles, certainly a first century problem.
 - b. There was also an element that questioned Paul's apostleship, which Paul has to defend (1 Tim. 1:1).¹⁰
 - E. The last question that relates to authorship is date. How can the pastorals be fitted into the church of the first century?
 1. I will admit there is considerable difficulty finding a place for them in the book of Acts.
 2. The question I would ask is, "What if they were written after the close of the book of Acts?"
 3. I would like for us to examine that possibility.
- ## IV. The Date of the Pastorals
- A. As we mentioned, the first thing that we have to do before we can determine a date for these letters is try to fit them into a chronology of the New Testament.
 1. Titus particularly offers us some clues.
 2. In Titus 1:5 we learn that Paul has conducted a mission to the island of Crete, where presumably Titus is working.
 3. In Titus 3:12 Paul indicates that he plans to spend a winter in Nicopolis, a peninsula in Greece, NW of Athens and Corinth.
 4. In contrast to that, when we turn to 2 Timothy, we find that Paul

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expects that he will be executed soon.

B. Compare this to the close of the book of Acts.

1. Paul is in prison in Rome.
2. But his situation does not appear particularly bad.

Acts 28:30. For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.

3. He is essentially under house arrest, not in prison.
4. There is no indication that Paul anticipates that he will be executed.

C. Also, Col. 1:1 and the book of Philemon both state that Timothy was with Paul during this Roman imprisonment, so it is difficult to see how Paul could have written the letters to Timothy at this time.

D. Was Paul released from his first Roman imprisonment?

1. In other prison epistles, Paul indicates that he fully expected to be freed.
 - a. Phil 2:24 And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.
 - b. Philemon 22 And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.
2. We know that before his arrest, Paul planned a campaign in Spain (Romans 15:24, 28).
 - a. The church historian Eusebius @ A. D. 325 tells us that indeed Paul was released from this first imprisonment.
[Read pp. 74-75]
 - b. Writing in the 5th century, two other Christian scholars, Chrysostom and Jerome both confirmed, not only Paul's release but his campaign to Spain and other parts of the west.
3. It also seems strange that since Luke recorded Paul's imprisonment in Rome, that he did not record his death, if that indeed occurred.
4. It seems the inescapable conclusion is that while Paul is in prison in Rome in 2 Timothy, it is not the same imprisonment as is recorded at the close of Acts.
5. This means that we are dealing with a period in Paul's life that occurred after Luke finished writing the book of Acts.
6. I would then offer the following chronology for the Pastorals.
 - a. 1 Timothy was written @ A. D. 65.
 - b. Titus around 1 year later (A. D. 66-67)
 - c. After this Paul is again arrested.

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- d. He writes 2 Timothy @ A. D. 67-68.
- e. Paul is executed shortly after finishing 2 Timothy.
- 7. All of this seems consistent both with what we find in the letters themselves, and also with the virtually universal opinion of ancient church scholars who had access to writings and traditions that we do not. Timothy
- E. Who was Timothy, and what do we know about him?
 - 1. Timothy is actually mentioned in 21 passages in the New Testament.
 - 2. Acts 16:1-5. Paul first meets Timothy during his second missionary journey at Lystra in Galatia.

¹He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. ²The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

- 3. 2 Tim. 1:5 indicates that Timothy came from a mixed racial and apparently religious background.
 - a. He had a Greek (and apparently pagan) father.
 - b. But he also had a Jewish mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois).
 - c. Timothy had apparently been raised with some Jewish values, but he had never been circumcised.
 - (1) In Acts 16:3 Paul wishes to take Timothy with him and has him circumcised because of the Jews.

Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

- (2) But in Gal. 2:3 Paul refuses to have Titus circumcised.

Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

- (3) Why did Paul respond to these two situations differently?
- (4) Timothy was at least half Jewish; Titus was not.
 - (a) Paul had no objection to a Jewish Christian being circumcised.
 - (b) But he would not allow it to be forced on a

Gentile, because of his insistence that Gentiles did not have to observe Jewish law or rituals to become Christians.

- F. Let us consider for a moment Timothy's role.
 - 1. This has to do with our previous discussion about the role of a minister.
 - 2. We have said that he was in Ephesus, and he was serving as a minister.
 - 3. But I believe we make a mistake if we envision Timothy as being in a role similar to that of Jim Shannon.
 - 4. Timothy had served in a similar capacity before.
 - a. To Corinth – 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10.
 - b. To Thessalonica – 1 Thess. 3:2, 6.
 - c. Paul planned to send Timothy to Philippi – Phil. 2:19-24.
 - 5. Apparently Timothy was serving as a special apostolic representative sent by Paul to counter a heresy that had arisen at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:1-4).
- G. 2 Tim. 4:5 refers to Timothy as an evangelist (εὐαγγελιστής)
 - 1. This is one of only three times this word is used in the New Testament.
 - 2. The others are Acts 21:8 and Eph. 4:11.
- H. 1 Tim. 4:14 indicates that Timothy received a special miraculous call to his ministry.
 - 1. Paul will remind him of it.
 - 2. Timothy's commission was given as the result of or supported by a prophetic message.
 - 3. The situation sounds similar to Paul's own call to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1-4).
- I. So we should recognize that Timothy was given:
 - 1. A special call
 - 2. Special responsibilities
 - 3. And special authority
- J. For that reason we should be careful not to make too great an application for our day.

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V. Purpose of 1 & 2 Timothy.

- A. Timothy's specific purpose apparently was to refute a dangerous heresy which had infected the church at Ephesus.
- B. While scholars disagree on some things, certain characteristics can be deduced from what Paul says to Timothy.
 - 1. 1 Tim. 1:4. It involved speculative intellectualism. It produced and doted on questions (1 Tim. 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23).
 - 2. 1 Tim. 6:4. It produced people who were puffed up with pride, but who Paul says were actually ignorant.
 - 3. This resulted in 2 opposite extremes.
 - a. 1 Tim. 4:3-5. Asceticism
 - (1) forbidding marriage
 - (2) enforcing special dietary restrictions
 - b. 2 Tim. 3:6. Actual immorality
 - 4. 1 Tim. 6:5. This movement also included people who were Christians just for personal benefit.
 - 5. 2 Tim. 2:18. These people apparently denied the resurrection of the body.
 - 6. 1 Tim. 1:7. It was a heresy that was in some way tied up with Jewish legalism. They wanted to be teachers of the Law.
- C. The one heresy that fits these characteristics most closely is the philosophy which would mature in the second century under the name of Gnosticism.
 - 1. Paul had dealt with a very similar heresy during his first Roman imprisonment, when he wrote the book of Colossians.
- D. Gnosticism combined with some form of Judaized Christianity would meet most of the characteristics of the heresy Paul describes.
 - 1. Although you may have heard this before, a few words about Gnosticism may be beneficial.
 - 2. Gnosticism was based on the Greek word γνῶσις which means "knowledge."
 - 3. These people believed that they possessed special knowledge.
 - a. Thus they were better than everyone else.
 - b. They were smarter than everyone else.
 - c. They were more spiritual than everyone else.
 - 4. The metaphysical basis of Gnosticism had to do with what are called "emanations."

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- a. Between God and man stretched a long series of emanations from God.
 - b. Each emanation had his own name and genealogy.
 - (1) So there were endless fables and endless genealogies.
 - (2) Paul will warn Timothy specifically about these.
 - c. According to Gnosticism a person had to have a special kind of knowledge to ascend this ladder of emanations to God.
 - d. It was therefore a kind of legalism that denied the atoning power of the cross of Christ.
5. Since matter (and therefore the body) is evil, Gnosticism resulted in either:
- a. Asceticism – to punish the evil body.
 - b. Or immorality – because what the body did, since it was evil anyway, did not matter.
6. And if the body is evil, then there can surely be no such thing as the resurrection of this evil body.
- E. And so the letters to Timothy were written:
1. To encourage Timothy in fighting this heresy.
 2. And to help him in selecting leaders at Ephesus to assist him in providing for the ongoing spiritual welfare of the church at Ephesus.
 3. In the process we learn a great deal about Paul, Timothy, and the nature of our faith.
- F. Next week we will begin with the first chapter of 1 Timothy.

1 & 2 Timothy

2 Timothy 1

- I. Paul's Last Will and Testament.
 - A. I admit to having a certain fondness for 2 Timothy.
 - 1. Perhaps because it is probably the last of Paul's writings.
 - 2. The shadow of death hangs heavy over this letter.
 - 3. While it may be my imagination, I think I can see an image of the apostle that is not evident in any of his other writings.
 - 4. His personal feelings show through in ways we do not see anywhere else.
 - 5. That is especially true in chapter 4.
 - 6. 2 Timothy makes Paul seem more human.
 - B. A reminder about Chronology.
 - 1. Paul is released from his first Roman imprisonment
 - 2. He conducts a Western campaign, perhaps in Spain.
 - 3. He writes 1 Timothy (A. D. 65).
 - 4. Then he writes Titus about a year later (A. D. 66-67).
 - 5. Sometime later Paul is again arrested and imprisoned in Rome.
 - 6. It is there that he writes 2 Timothy (A. D. 67-68).
 - C. An expectation or at least premonition of his impending death pervades this final letter.
 - D. The teaching is more general rather than specific.
 - 1. 1 Timothy dealt heavily with specific issues and problems.
 - 2. There is much less of that in 2 Timothy.
 - E. It is an overview of what Paul considered important.
 - F. In one sense Paul is handing over the mantle of authority to Timothy.
- II. 1:3-5 Paul expresses his feelings for Timothy.

2 Tim 1:3-5. I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. ⁴Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

- A. Have there been occasions in which we did or did not take the opportunity to express something to someone? Looking back, how do you think about the occasion?
 - 1. I remember that shortly before my father's death, I was able to do some things that meant a lot to him.
 - 2. My mother will be celebrating her 80th birthday in March, and the children are planning something special to honor her.
 - 3. When life appears short, we sometimes recognize the need for expressing our love more than we might usually do.

4. I suppose if there is a lesson here, it is that we should not wait.
 5. We never really know how much time we have.
- B. This may have been Paul's final opportunity to express his love for Timothy. He took advantage of it.
- C. Paul recognizes in his own life as well as that of Timothy that they were what they were partially because of a line of Godly ancestors.
1. Timothy's character had been molded by his mother and grandmother.
 - a. Actually Paul lists his grandmother (Lois) first.
 - b. Since his mother had apparently married a pagan, one wonders if perhaps the primary spiritual influence on Timothy may have been his grandmother.
 2. How many of us were raised in homes where at least one parent was a Christian?
 - a. I certainly was.
 - (1) 15 minutes early or late.
 - (2) Sunday night while traveling.
 - b. If so, have you ever considered how thankful we should be for that influence?
 - (1) Thankful to God, certainly.
 - (2) But also thankful to those who by their lives instilled spiritual values within us.
 3. And we are a vital link in that process.
 4. We should never discount the power of our influence.
 - a. On our family
 - b. On other Christians
 - c. One friends and coworkers.
 5. We will probably never know how God may use us to bless another person, if we allow Him to do so.
- D. In reality faith never dies.
1. Perhaps we in the Restoration Movement have been too much influenced by the rationalism (John Locke).
 2. Faith is more than an intellectual decision we make before baptism.
 - a. It is a living force that is transferred throughout all God's people from generation to generation.
 - b. Faith is more than what we believe; it is that which controls how we live.
 3. And when we pass down that sincere faith to our children, we are one link in a process that may go on for countless generations.
 4. Let us never minimize or neglect the power of our influence.

5. That too is part of the power of the gospel to change lives.
 - a. Our own lives.
 - b. Our children's lives.
 - c. And on and on for many generations.

III. 1:8-12 Do not be ashamed to suffer.

(2 Tim 1:8 NIV) So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,

- A. What was there about the gospel that might have made Timothy ashamed to proclaim it?
 1. Christians worship a crucified God.
 - a. I am not sure we today can fully appreciate how it appeared to the first century culture.
 - b. Crucifixion was a shameful mode of death.
 - c. Of course any form of execution is shameful.
 - d. Christians had to defend a Founder Who was executed as a criminal.
 - e. Imagine if Christ had lived and died in our generation.
 - f. How hard would it be to convince someone to join a new religion who worshiped someone who had been executed in the electric chair for treason.
 2. Christianity did not attract the cream of the crop.
 - a. A large number (if not the majority) of first century Christians were slaves.
 - b. Most of the rest were poor, uneducated, illiterate.
 - c. Why do you think Christianity attracted the lower classes of society?
 - (1) It gave them hope.
 - (2) The gospel appeals to those who recognize that they are in need.
 - (3) The rich, the powerful, the arrogant usually do not understand their need, so they often see no value in the gospel.
 - (4) Like those false teachers at Ephesus. They had to make the gospel into something else – something acceptable.
 - (5) We can see the same thing happening today. The gospel is having its greatest success in areas of need.
 - (a) Poor, third world countries.
 - i) Africa
 - ii) India

- (b) Countries that were formerly controlled by the Soviet Union.
 - (6) That is why perhaps the best way to reach out to someone is to show them how Christ can meet their needs.
 - 3. Christian beliefs were often distorted and then ridiculed or made the basis for persecution.
 - 4. Do you know some of the things that early Christians were accused of?
 - a. Cannibalism (Lord's Supper)
 - b. Licentiousness (Christian fellowship)
 - c. Atheism (Didn't believe in all those gods).
 - 5. The principles of Christianity conflicted with the standards of the world.
- B. What factors might cause us to be ashamed of the gospel?
- 1. The world often still distorts our beliefs and uses that distortion against us.
 - a. If we oppose abortion, we may be equated with the radical element that shoots abortion doctors.
 - b. If we promote sexual purity, we are Victorian, prudish.
 - c. We are even told that it will not work.
 - d. In today's culture sexual abstinence is not even considered an option for teenagers.
 - 2. Another problem is that the Supernatural has a hard time fitting into the scheme of our culture.
 - a. There is a vague feeling that science has somehow made the crude supernaturalism of Christianity obsolete.
 - b. I wish some of you could have been in the class Kevin Garner has been teaching the past two quarters.
 - c. The truth is that there is an abundance of evidence for God.
 - (1) We do not have to be on the defensive when we talk about God to a modern day skeptic.
 - (2) But we do need to either understand some of these principles.
 - (3) Or at least bring in someone who can discuss them.
 - d. At the same time many people are prepared to accept a nebulous kind of god that never makes any real demands on us.
 - (1) That kind of god gives comfort.
 - (2) But doesn't require a change in our lifestyle.

3. But I believe our biggest problem hasn't changed in 2,000 years.
 - a. Whenever we advocate or even simply practice a standard higher than the world's standards, we can expect to encounter opposition.
 - b. And ridicule can be the most difficult form of opposition to resist.
 - c. Thus the temptation to be ashamed of that which the world ridicules.

C. How can we avoid being ashamed of the gospel?

1. I believe the next two verses provide a good answer to that problem. 2 Tim. 1:9-10. who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

2. We cannot be ashamed if we remember what God has done for us.
 - a. Many scholars believe that these verses incorporate an ancient Christian hymn.
 - b. If so, it demonstrates how important this principle was to the early church.
 - c. We should see our own sinfulness.
 - (1) The world really has turned values upside down.
 - (2) In the past, when people did wrong, they felt shame.
 - (3) Now the tendency is either:
 - (a) to say that no one is perfect.
 - (b) so no one has the right to criticize.
 - (c) or even to flaunt the sin.
 - d. Instead we should focus on God's love, especially as manifest in the crucifixion.
 - e. We should never forget that it is through God's grace, not our own goodness, that we are his children.

D. Verse 9 seems to teach a doctrine of predestination – This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.

1. If God's grace was given to us before the beginning of time, how do we say there is any free will involved?
2. There is no hint of a capricious God, arbitrarily selecting some for salvation and others for damnation.
3. Rather, predestination describes the totality of God's redemptive

work.

- a. It has as its object the salvation of all people.
- b. God's plan was conceived "before the beginning of time."
- c. But it's fulfillment was revealed in Christ, as we see in verse 10.

2 Tim. 1:10. but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

- 4. And I believe this gives new depth to the magnitude of God's love for us.
 - a. God is beyond time. We have trouble with understanding that.
 - b. He knows the future just as we know the past – because He is above and beyond even the future.
 - c. And so in the most distant realms of the mind of God.
 - (1) before man walked the earth
 - (2) before the universe itself even existed.
 - (3) God's redemptive plan was perfected.
 - (4) And so when God determined to create man, He knew that the cross would be at the heart of that plan.
 - d. Predestination means no more and no less than this.

E. In vv. 11-12 Paul uses his own situation, I suspect for a specific reason.

2 Tim. 1:11-12. And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹²That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

- 1. Knowing the pressure Timothy is working under, Paul perhaps feels the need to remind him that this is part of what it means to be a minister of the gospel.
- 2. Paul will have more to say about this in the next chapter.
- 3. Just now he asks Timothy to consider the price Paul has paid.
 - a. He is in prison.
 - (1) This is not the house arrest of his imprisonment in Acts.
 - (2) Paul is in a cold, dark, disease infested cell in Rome.
 - (3) He is expecting death to come shortly.
 - (4) We learn that most of his friends have deserted him.

- b. The point is that Timothy should not feel that the struggles and opposition he is facing indicate anything is wrong.
- c. Persecution in some form will come to anyone who takes the Christian life seriously.

4. In contrast to that, what is Paul's attitude?

Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day

5. Paul's faith is not in a creed, or even in a set of doctrines, but in a person – in Jesus Christ.

a. In the song *Break Thou the Bead of Life*, we sing the words, "Beyond the sacred page, I seek thee, Lord."

(1) In our previous book, that was changed to "within the sacred page."

(2) I can understand the concerns that might have caused the publisher to change the wording.

(3) We need to be careful about equating our own experiences with the truth revealed in Scripture.

(4) At the same time, we are promised that the Spirit is at work, helping us to live the Christian life.

b. In the 18th century, Deism was a popular belief that tried to reconcile religion and science.

(1) The Deists believed that God had created the universe and set it in motion.

(2) But they also believed that He did not interfere in any way after that.

c. I am afraid that we have sometimes produced Christian Deists.

(1) If God gave us the Bible and then left us alone, we are still without hope.

(2) Because Paul again and again emphasizes that we do not have the power on our own to conquer sin in our lives.

(3) Why should we pray if no one is listening?

6. But Paul's confidence is unshakeable, because it does not depend on himself.

a. For Paul Christ is more than a set of beliefs, although that is

certainly a part of it.

- b. But now, facing almost certain death, Paul centers on the core of what it means to be a Christian.
- c. And for him it is the certainty that all that Paul has entrusted to Him is waiting for him.
 - (1) Paul spent his life laying up treasures in heaven.
 - (2) The time has now come, and he expresses his confidence that Christ is safeguarding those treasures and will welcome him home.
- d. Read story about taking gold bricks to heaven.
 - (1) The story is funny.
 - (2) But it does remind us to remember what is truly important.

IV. 1:13-14 Paul closes this chapter with an exhortation to Timothy to keep the faith. 2 Tim. 1:13-14. What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

- A. Just what is Paul asking Timothy to do here?
- B. The Greek word for pattern (ὑποτύπωσις) can have two meanings.
 - 1. It is sometimes used of a rough sketch or outline.
 - a. If this is the meaning, then Paul is saying that it is not his words, but his teaching that is to be the pattern for Timothy.
 - 2. But the word can also refer to the impression made by a seal on wax.
 - 3. Kenneth Wuest (noted for his Greek word studies) feels that particular doctrines and even words are to be preserved, so that the gospel will be kept from error.
 - 4. This practice of reducing preaching to a set formula seems to have been common in the early church.
 - a. Remember, most Christians probably could not read.
 - b. The New Testament was still being written and there was no sense of a recognized Canon of Scripture.
 - c. Even if a Christian could read, he likely did not even possess a complete copy of the Old Testament, much less a gospel or one of Paul's letters.
 - d. Reducing oral teaching to formulas helped to preserve the church from error.
 - e. And, as we have seen, even so the early church had more than

its share of heresy and false teaching.

- (1) Gnosticism
- (2) Judaizing Teachers
- (3) Legalists
- (4) Cheap grace

5. All of these were reasons to protect the gospel from misinterpretation.

V. 2:1-2 Pass it on

A. As we conclude tonight's lesson, I would like to skip over to the beginning of chapter 2 where I believe Paul continues his charge to Timothy.

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

B. Remember that the chapter and verse divisions we have in our Bibles were not there originally.

1. They were added by men much later as a matter of convenience.

- a. Chapters – 1250
- b. Verses – 1560 (Geneva Bible?)

2. We should never feel bound by them in our reading or study.

C. Some scholars have seen in this passage a reference to a chain of apostolic succession.

1. According to this view, Paul is in effect imparting his mantle of authority to Timothy and at the same time entrusting Timothy to make sure this procedure is followed throughout subsequent generations.

2. One difficulty I see with this interpretation is that no such line is claimed that specifically includes Timothy.

- a. The Roman Catholic church traces Papal succession through Peter, not Paul, and the first Bishop of Rome to claim the title Pope was in the 6th century.
- b. And no unbroken Apostolic succession can be shown by any group I know of.

D. I believe Paul is more concerned here with the importance of the teaching responsibility. He is concerned with the message, not the messenger.

1. The transmission of the gospel is too important to be left to chance.

2. Just as Paul has prepared Timothy, so Timothy is to prepare others to carry on after he is gone.

E. I see in Paul's concern a sense of how important is the teaching function.

1. Historically this has been one of the strengths of the Restoration Movement.
2. In ages past when many of the members never finished high school, they still knew the Bible.
3. Children were taught at an early age to learn, to memorize, and to study.
4. I hope we are not losing that vision in our churches today.

1 & 2 Timothy

2 Timothy 2-3

I. 2:3-6. Paul gives three illustrations to encourage Timothy.

2 Tim. 2:3-6. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer. ⁵Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.

- A. In this letter I believe Paul is speaking directly to Timothy.
 - 1. While he may have intended the letter to be read to the church, its content suggests that Paul is speaking directly to the young minister.
 - 2. Once again a reminder that 2 Timothy is a very different letter from 1 Timothy.
- B. One thing these illustrations have in common is that all three are working toward a goal.
- C. I would like for us to look at these illustrations in the reverse order from the way they are presented in Timothy.
 - 1. Farmer – ⁶The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.
 - a. The worker for Christ
 - b. What is Timothy to learn from the farmer? – Perseverance
 - (1) The Christian minister has not chosen an easy life.
 - (2) I am sure Jim, Lanny, and Terry would all be willing to “amen” that.
 - (3) And I’m not sure we are always as appreciative of their work as perhaps we ought to be.
 - c. The minister is like the farmer in what he does.
 - (1) His job is to sow the seed.
 - (2) The farmer has to wait for results.
 - (3) They are neither immediate nor automatic.
 - 2. Athlete – if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules.
 - a. What is Timothy to learn from the athlete? - Discipline
 - b. Part of the rules of the Olympic Games included every athlete taking an oath that he had been in intensive training for at least 10 months.
 - c. The phrase "according to the rules" (νομίμως ἀθλήση) was used in later writings to refer to the professional athlete as opposed to the amateur.
 - d. There are two extremes to avoid when we interpret this verse.
 - (1) Christianity cannot be reduced to a set of rules or laws

- as some of our forefathers attempted to do.
- (2) But neither should we doubt that there are rules for the Christian life, and the Christian is expected to be disciplined enough to obey them.
3. Soldier – Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
- a. Paul used the soldier image in 1 Timothy as well.
 - b. As I mentioned then, I suspect there was something in Timothy’s background that made that an especially appropriate illustration for Paul to use.
 - c. What is Timothy to learn from the soldier? - Endurance
 - d. A soldier in warfare cannot be involved in anything else. No divided loyalties.
 - e. A soldier must obey without question, even when obedience may cost you your life.
Relate incident with convoy in Vietnam.
 - f. A commander must be willing to sacrifice his men to achieve victory.
 - g. And a soldier must be willing to follow those orders even when it may require his own death.
4. How can we apply these images to our own Christian walk?
- a. The farmer’s job is characterized by hard work and long hours. So must it be with the Christian.
 - b. The image of the athlete reminds us that Christianity is not intended to be a hobby.
 - (1) Where we work is our job.
 - (2) But our Christian faith must be our true profession.
 - (3) It is this to which we dedicate our life.
 - c. We should be prepared to lay down our very lives for our faith. And we must not think it inconceivable that God may require this of us.

II. 2:11-13 The Song of the Martyr

2 Tim. 2:11-13

¹¹Here is a trustworthy saying:

If we died with him,
we will also live with him;

¹²if we endure,
we will also reign with him.

If we disown him,
he will also disown us;

¹³if we are faithless,

he will remain faithful,
for he cannot disown himself.

- A. I see a connection between these verses and those we have just looked at which describe the kind of sacrificial commitment Paul says is demanded of the Christian.
- B. Some scholars believe this was originally a hymn, sung as the new convert was being baptized.
 - 1. As such it may well have been intended to strengthen the new Christian's recognition of what his faith might cost.
 - 2. And at that time the new Christian had to consider the threat of losing one's life as real indeed.
 - 3. Tell story of John McArthur. Minister visiting behind the Soviet Union.
 - a. Who has the hardest job?
 - b. One who has to challenge those for whom their faith costs little?
 - c. Or those who attend in peril of their lives?
- C. To me these verses seem the bittersweet cry of triumph of the Christian martyr. And this hymn may actually have been sung:
 - 1. in the arena as faithful Christians awaited the spring of the lions.
 - 2. at the burial of the martyr to remind his or her family (as well as the Christian community) that the martyr's death represents not defeat, but victory.

III. 3:1-5 Paul describes the Last Days

2 Tim. 3:1-5. But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ²People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them .

- A. Does Paul give any hints as to when the Last Days are to occur?
 - 1. He says in v. 5, "have nothing to do with them."
 - 2. This would indicate that Timothy could experience the Last Days.
- B. 3:2-4 The nature of evil in the Last Days
 - 1. lovers of themselves

2. lovers of money
 - C. Haven't both these sins been mentioned already in 1 Timothy?
 1. These two vices are the key to interpreting the entire list of vices.
 - a. Barclay - "Love of self is the basic sin from which all other sins flow."
 - b. Remember what we said about pride being involved in every sin we can commit.
 - c. And it seems that every age and every society, no matter how rich or how poor, must be warned about the dangers of materialism.
- IV. Has Paul been describing a society of atheists?
- A. No, because they hold to a form of godliness (μόρφωσιν εὐσεβείας)
 - B. But they deny the power of it.
 - C. Can this be a danger in our day?
 1. "The form of godliness" almost characterizes the superficial Christian.
 - a. This is the person for whom Christianity is defined solely by religious observances.
 - b. And even those may be observed only when convenient.
 - c. Remember the illustrations Paul gave in the previous chapter.
 - (1) The soldier, the athlete, and the farmer.
 - (2) The Christian life was never meant to be a social club.
 - d. I said earlier that our faith "may" cost us our life.
 - (1) I was wrong.
 - (2) It "may" require us to become a martyr for our faith.
 - (3) But whatever form it takes, our faith will cost us our life.
 - (4) Because our life must be spent in service to God.
 - (5) Nothing less is acceptable.
 2. "The form of godliness" also can describe the legalist.
 - a. This is the person who judges everything by the letter of the law.
 - b. True he or she seeks nothing less than the minimum requirements laid down.
 - c. The tragedy is that they are satisfied with that.
 - d. The spiritual dimension never touches them.
 - e. They are satisfied with ritual and doctrine.
 - f. But they miss out of a true walk with God.
 3. Finally "The form of godliness" may refer to those who deny the supernatural character of Christianity.
 - a. Remember that last week we talked about the Deists who tried to reconcile Science and Religion.
 - b. I am afraid that there are people in this world who would describe themselves as Christians, but who deny the Deity of Christ.
 - (1) They are willing to accept him as a great teacher.

- (2) Perhaps a good man.
- (3) These are willing to acknowledge Jesus, but will not accept the Christ.
- c. And so their religion has form, but the power has been taken out of it.

V. 2 Tim. 3:10-13. Paul then warns Timothy to be prepared for persecution.

2 Tim. 3:10-13. You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, ¹¹persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. ¹²In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

- A. Why do you think Paul was reminding Timothy of all he had endured?
 - 1. If you remember, Paul has already expressed concern about Timothy's wavering under pressure.
 - a. The false teachers at Ephesus were apparently a powerful group.
 - b. And they seem to have attacked Timothy's credibility, questioning his youth.
 - 2. And persecution was something about which Paul knew first hand.
 - a. He doesn't have to list what happened – just name the cities.
 - (1) Antioch (Acts 13:50). Paul and Barnabas had been driven out of the city.
 - (2) Iconium (Acts 14:5-6). Paul and Barnabas had to flee the city to avoid being stoned.
 - (3) Lystra (Acts 14:19). Paul was stoned and left for dead.
 - b. Paul knew that Timothy knew what he had endured for the sake of the gospel.
 - 3. More than that, they may have had special meaning for Timothy.
 - a. All of these examples come from Paul's first missionary journey.
 - b. And Lystra was Timothy's home town.
 - c. And so Paul may be reminding Timothy that if he had not endured these persecutions, Timothy probably would not have become a Christian.
 - d. So when Paul warns Timothy, he has credibility.
- B. In fact in verse 10 Paul seems to be saying in effect, "look at my life," perhaps even, "make me your example."
 - 1. Perhaps this is another recognition on Paul's part of his impending death.
 - 2. Timothy, I may not be here much longer to encourage you personally.

3. But you can remember what Christ has meant to me.
 4. And lean on the memory of my life after I am gone.
 5. We spoke last week about how faith never dies.
 6. That may be what Paul is saying to Timothy.
- C. In verse 12 Paul seems to say that for the faithful Christian, persecution is inevitable.
1. Do you think this is still true today?
 - a. Fortunately (perhaps), in this country we do not have to deal with the threat of physical persecution as the church did in Timothy's time.
 - b. But we should never think that this may not occur.
 - (1) In many parts of the world today, a Christian may still face imprisonment, torture, or death just for being a Christian.
 - (a) China
 - (b) India
 - (c) Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries.
 - (2) Estimates are that every year approximately 112,000 people are killed for professing faith in Christ.
 - c. Persecution in our culture may be more subtle.
 - (1) Last Sunday Jim spoke about how Christians are often looked down upon because they are not "politically correct."
 - (2) William Barclay put it this way. "If anyone proposes to accept a set of standards which are quite different from the world's standards, then he is bound to encounter trouble."
 2. Is persecution necessarily a sign that we are doing God's will? How can we judge?
 - a. Persecution may come from a number of sources and for a variety of reasons.
 - b. We should always ask ourselves:
 - (1) The source of the persecution.
 - (2) The reason for the persecution.
 - (3) And our attitude toward the persecution.
 - c. It has often been said that we should not be different just to be different.
 - (a) I would suggest that we should not even attempt to be different from anyone.
 - (b) Instead we should try with every fiber of our being to be like

Christ.

- (c) But if being like Christ causes us to be different from anyone else, then so be it.
 - (d) But our focus is not to be on the world.
 - i) to imitate it.
 - ii) or to go against it.
 - iii) Our focus is to be on Christ.
 - iv) As long as we are doing that, we need not concern ourselves with anyone's response.
- D. Ultimately, I believe we would do best to live our faith regardless of the consequences.
1. If others respond to our example, we rejoice.
 2. If persecution comes, we accept it.
 3. But I would leave us with a challenge Jim gave in his sermon Sunday.
 4. "If He's not worth dying for, He's not worth living for."
 5. In some form or other, Jesus will have our life.
 - a. Physically perhaps.
 - b. Spiritually, definitely.
 - c. He demands nothing more – or less than that.

VI. 3:14-17 Make Scripture your bedrock

2 Tim 3:14-17. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- A. In contrast to all these false beliefs, Paul reassures Timothy that his faith is based on something solid.
- B. Timothy's confidence should be based on two considerations.
 1. He had received his faith from those he could trust.
 - a. His mother Eunice
 - b. His grandmother Lois
 - c. Paul himself
 - d. How would the smooth talking false teachers at Ephesus compare?
 - (1) Did their values reflect the pious lives in Timothy's family?
 - (2) Had they upheld their teaching even under persecution?

- (3) A good principle to instill in our youth today.
 - (a) Although I have tried not to be overt about it, this is a principle I have tried to pass on to Preston.
 - (b) Whether it be college or the workplace, they will encounter a variety of people who will attempt to challenge their faith.
 - (c) It would be well, at such times, especially for our young people to compare the motives of such people.
 - (d) Consider whether their interest is in people or their own agenda.
 - (e) Weigh their influence with all that parents and church have put into molding lives which reflect solid values.
- 2. Timothy was well grounded in the holy Scriptures (ἱερὰ γράμματα)
 - a. Josephus used the phrase to refer to the Old Testament.
 - b. Undoubtedly Paul has the Old Testament (and specifically the LXX) in mind here.
- C. This verse tells us that in some sense scripture came from God.
 - 1. He was involved in its creation.
 - 2. We can rely on the principles it gives to direct our lives.
 - 3. Surprisingly the Bible says comparatively little about the inspiration process.
 - 4. The one claim Paul makes is that Scripture is the source for spiritual enlightenment and development.
 - 5. At the same time we must not worship the Bible.
 - a. This is a concern I still have.
 - b. The Bible is the word of God, but it is not God.
 - c. And certainly we should not bind on others our own preferences regarding particular translations.
 - (1) Every translation has its strengths and weaknesses, and hopefully we can become aware of those in the particular translation we seek to use. Note book by Jack Lewis, *English Translations of the Bible to the NIV*.
 - (2) And a good debate regarding our own preferences can be healthy.
 - (3) But we must never assume that divine sanction has been given to any translation, or that because a new translation is different, it is wrong.
 - (4) The only standard by which we can compare is the original text, and for that most of us must of necessity defer to the Biblical scholars who are constantly attempting to bring us ever closer to that text.
 - 6. At the same time we must recognize that it is only within the Bible that we find an accurate revelation of the One we are to worship.
 - a. It is true that God can be seen in other ways.
 - b. The sincere inquirer can find abundant evidence of God in a variety of sources.
 - (1) The physical universe

- (2) The processes of life itself
- (3) And perhaps most significantly in our own moral sense for which rationalism has no explanation.
- c. Nevertheless, while these all tell us of the existence and something of the character of God, it is only within the Bible that we can discover the history of God's dealings with man and His will and purpose for our lives.
- D. What does Paul indicate is the value of scripture?
 - 1. Teaching
 - a. Paul begins with a positive note.
 - b. Presumably the kind of teaching Paul was so concerned that Timothy be able to pass on in chapter 2.
 - 2. Rebuking
 - a. We touched on this in 1 Timothy.
 - b. While it is the negative form of instruction, there are times when rebuking is essential.
 - c. A necessary part of sound teaching is refuting false teaching.
 - d. This should be of particular concern for Timothy in light of the extensive false teaching at Ephesus which he was sent to correct.
 - e. I suspect rebuking should not normally be our first approach, but if at some point false teaching must be shown to be just that.
 - 3. Correcting
 - a. Has both positive and negative elements.
 - b. Involves the recognition of error, either in doctrine or life.
 - c. But the emphasis seems to be positive.
 - (1) Correcting includes setting the erring one on the right path.
 - (2) Not simply condemning the sinner.
 - 4. Training in righteousness
 - a. This phrase should be viewed in its ministerial sense, not as a theological statement.
 - (1) We know enough about Paul's view of grace to understand that no man is truly righteous.
 - (2) True righteousness is found only in Christ.
 - b. But Paul is speaking to Timothy as a minister entrusted with the spiritual care of the church at Ephesus.
 - (1) As much as Paul taught of salvation by faith through the atoning blood of Christ, he is also clear about the fact that regeneration transforms Christians.
 - (2) We may never (in this life) be perfect, but we can certainly live by the Spirit, rather than the flesh.
 - (3) And Timothy's job was to instruct and encourage the Christians at

Ephesus in achieving Christlike lives.

5. v. 17. And the goal of all this is “so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
 - a. The inspiration of Scripture is not an end in itself.
 - b. It is not to somehow prove the existence of God.
 - c. The purpose of Biblical inspiration is to provide a confident basis for spiritual training.
 - d. God would have us do more than believe the Bible; He intends for us to use that faith in developing our spiritual nature to its fullest potential.
 - e. And that is what these verses are really about.

1 & 2 Timothy

2 Timothy 4

- I. Hand out sheet of paper.
 - A. We mentioned during our last lesson about what you might do or say if you knew you only had one hour to live.
 - B. We are going to take about 2 minutes
 - C. I want you to write down something you would want to say if you knew it would be the last words you ever wrote.
 - D. No one will ever see what you write.
 - E. But take it seriously.
 - F. To whom would you write?
 - G. What would you say?
 - H. Do not feel any pressure, but would someone wish to share what they wrote?

II. 4:1-5 Paul's Final Charge to Timothy

- A. These are Paul's final words, at least that we have recorded.
 1. Let us look at what Paul felt to be most essential.
- B. 4:1 "I give you this charge."

2 Tim 4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:

1. Paul uses a very emphatic word (διαμαρτύρομαι) which has the force of a solemn legal pronouncement.
2. He calls God and Christ to witness.
 - a. A way of reinforcing the importance of what he is about to do.
 - b. The Greek construction indicates that the words God and Christ refer to the same Person (τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ).
 - c. In other words, Paul is affirming the deity of Christ.
 - (1) It is altogether proper to refer to Jesus as:
 - (2) the Son of God
 - (3) the Son of Man
 - (4) But it is also true that Jesus is God.
 - (5) This is one of the mysteries of the Trinity that we cannot truly understand.
 - (6) I suspect Paul wanted to emphasize one last time to the false teachers at Ephesus that they truly did not understand the true nature of Christ.
3. But I suspect Paul is really centering his remarks on Timothy.
 - a. Paul has already charged Timothy in chapters 1 and 2.
 - b. Now he does so again in verse 2.

C. 4:2 The Apostolic Commission

2 Tim 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

1. Preach the Word
 - a. This is the basic commission.
 - b. However difficult the circumstances, the task itself is easily understood.
 - c. But the command probably meant a great deal more to Timothy than we might suspect just by reading it.
 - d. Read Wuest, II, p. 154.
 - (1) Wuest's evaluation comes from an earlier time, and I am not sure I would say it quite as sternly as he does.
 - (2) This, like any cultural statement, can be taken too far.
 - (3) The preaching function, indeed the church service itself need not be a somber affair.
 - (4) Indeed I think Christians should be the happiest people in the world, and that should be obvious to others.
 - (5) But the principle is still valid.
 - (6) Behind all that we do there should be the recognition that what we are doing is serious business, and that the consequences are eternal.
2. Paul instructs Timothy to "Correct, rebuke and encourage"
 - a. Paul is repeating what he told Timothy in 2 Tim. 3:16.
 - b. The one thing that seems hard to deny is that we cannot do any of these unless we are involved in one another's lives.
 - (1) If we do not know one another:
 - (2) We will not even be aware of problems or sin that need to be addressed.
 - (3) And even if we are aware, we are not likely to be taken seriously.
 - (4) I am far more willing to listen to your criticism if I already know you and feel you are concerned about me and my welfare.
 - c. And do we even need to discuss the principle that correction or rebuke must never be done anonymously?
 - (1) What I mean by that is that if a person is doing wrong, we need to have the courage to face him or her directly.
 - (2) One does not correct or rebuke behind a person's back.
 - (3) I do not enjoy confronting someone any more than I

suspect any one of you would.

- (4) Indeed, if we enjoy correcting or rebuking someone, we need to reexamine our motives.
- (5) All of these may be necessary, but let us never forget our goal is to restore, not simply to condemn.
 - (a) Anyone can point to what is wrong.
 - (b) Our goal should be to direct a person to what is right.
- (6) If you want a place to start, I would suggest that the best place to begin is by encouraging.
 - (a) It is generally easier than correcting or rebuking.
 - (b) And you might be amazed to know how little encouraging is done.
 - (c) I would ask each of us to resolve to do or say something this week specifically designed to encourage someone else.
 - i) a card
 - ii) a telephone call
 - iii) a small gift
 - iv) or simply an appropriate word.
 - (d) We should all be in the business of encouraging one another.
 - (e) You may never know what a difference your small gesture may mean to someone else.

D. In vv. 3-5 Paul warns Timothy one final time about how dangerous false teachers can be.

2 Tim. 4:3-5. For the time will come when men 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. ⁴They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. ⁵But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

- 1. Perhaps the greatest danger you and I face is the temptation to alter the Christian message.
- 2. We want someone to tell us that what we want to believe is true.
- 3. If we look around, we see this constantly in the world in which we live.
 - a. Every four years in some form or another virtually every politician promises:
 - (1) to end war

- (2) abolish poverty
- (3) balance the budget
- (4) pay off the national debt
- (5) reduce crime
- (6) improve education
- (7) take care of the elderly
- (8) provide universal healthcare
- (9) And, at the same time, virtually abolish taxes
- b. Do you think just maybe we have developed “itching ears,” and they are just telling us what we want to hear instead of what we need to hear.
- c. We see it in business, where, too often, the officers are more interested in subordinates who are “yes men,” rather than people who will really give honest input.
- d. But it is especially devastating in the church.
 - (1) In times past God selected prophets to speak His message to Israel.
 - (2) In the church it is also critical that God’s spokesmen tell us, not what we want to hear, but what we need to hear.
- 4. And this emphasizes the importance Paul placed on knowing Scripture. Sund
 - a. Once again, Jim emphasized this last Sunday.
 - b. The Bible, after all, is the only base we have for knowing God’s will.
 - c. How can we evaluate whether or not our teaching reflects God’s will, unless we know it?
 - d. And so, for us, just as for Timothy, the key to keeping the gospel message pure is knowing God’s word.

III. Paul’s Final Look at His Life

- A. The rest of chapter 4 is pervaded by Paul’s awareness of his impending death.
- B. We can see that in verse 6.

2 Tim 4:6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.

- 1. The time has come to face what Paul apparently knew was the certainty of his impending death.
- 2. Yet Paul does not see his death as a Roman execution, rather he views it as his final offering or sacrifice to God.
 - a. Even now Paul could have escaped the executioner’s axe.

- b. The Romans would have been only too glad to spare Paul in exchange for his renunciation of Christ.
- 3. The word Paul uses that is translated departure (ἀνάλυσις) is so rich in meaning that it almost literally floods us with images.
 - a. It is used to refer to the ropes of a ship being loosed from their moorings or a soldier breaking camp. Paul sees death as a final voyage.
 - b. It refers to unyoking an animal from the plow. Death to Paul was rest from a lifetime of toil.
 - c. It is a word for loosening bonds. Paul was about to exchange a Roman prison for the courts of Heaven.
 - d. If only we had the faith and the vision to see with Paul's eyes.
- C. 2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Paul's final look at his accomplishments.

 - 1. In a real sense we have in Paul's words his own obituary.
 - a. What would you consider important in your life? For what would you like to be remembered?
 - b. Compare what Paul says of his life with what we might consider appropriate for one of our church leaders today.
 - c. "I have fought the good fight"
 - (1) The words (ἀγών and ἀγωνίζομαι) refer to an athletic contest, not a military battle.
 - (2) The verb is in the perfect tense (past action with present results).
Paul's fight is over, but it still has meaning..
 - d. "I have finished the race"
 - (1) Paul does not claim to have won the race, just that he finished. He did not give up.
 - (2) Compare to Peachtree Road Race or Boston Marathon.
 - (a) The vast majority of the people running are not trying to win.
 - (b) The prize comes just from finishing the race.
 - (3) If we could only learn that God does not call us to excel, but to keep on the Christian life – every day.
 - (4) Meet each day's challenges. That's all.
 - e. "I have kept the faith"
 - (1) Paul has safeguarded the truth God deposited with him.
 - (2) Consider all the opposition Paul faced.
 - (a) Judaizers

- (b) Gnostic teachers
 - (c) Greek philosophers
 - (d) Roman imprisonment
 - (e) Stoning
 - (f) Beating
 - (g) Shipwreck
- (3) This was no small statement for Paul to make.
 - (4) But more than anything, I suspect that Paul is simply stating that he has maintained his faith to the end.
- f. All of these statements are claims that hopefully any one of us could make.
 - g. And I can think of nothing better that could be said after I am gone.
 - (1) I have fought the good fight
 - (2) I have finished the race
 - (3) I have kept the faith
 - (4) May each of us live so that this can be said of us.
- D. 2 Tim 4:8 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.
- What is to be Paul's reward? – The crown of righteousness.
- 1. When we read these words, we may have an incorrect image in our minds.
 - 2. The word for crown is not the diadem (διάδημα) of the king, but a στέφανος, the laurel wreath of victory.
 - a. The king's crown is only found in the New Testament only in Revelation
 - (1) Twice worn by the beast (12:3; 13:1)
 - (2) Once worn by Christ (19:12)
 - b. Every other use of the word "crown" in the New Testament reflects this laurel wreath that went to the victors in the Olympic Games and in the Roman arena.
 - c. It is an important distinction, because we are rewarded for the victory we have achieved in persevering until the end.
 - d. We are not to confuse our status with that of Christ.
 - 3. The crown is not righteousness, but the reward which comes from righteousness. Paul obviously refers to eternal life.
 - 4. Paul looks forward to facing "The Lord, the righteous Judge."
 - a. He must by this time have already had his preliminary trial

(similar to a grand jury

- b. Look at verse 16. At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.
- c. He awaited the final trial before Nero. Paul has little doubt what the judgment will be.
- d. Ignoring Nero, Paul commends himself to the One whose judgment is true.
- e. And from Him he awaits the promised reward.

IV. 4:9-22 Personal Notes

A. 4:9 Paul urges Timothy to come to him in Rome as soon as possible.

2 Tim. 4:9. Do your best to come to me quickly,

- 1. This was probably his immediate motive in writing to Timothy.
- 2. What a tremendous compliment it must have been that Paul wanted Timothy, his son in the faith, to be with him as he faced death.

B. As seems to have been his custom, Paul uses the end of his letter to refer to several individuals.

- 1. Often in our reading, we may simply skim over these names.
- 2. But we may miss some insight if we do so.
- 3. So let us take a few moments to look at a few of these people.

C. 2 Tim 4:10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

- 1. Do we know anything else about Demas?
 - a. In Philemon 24 he is Paul's fellow worker.

Philemon 24. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

- (1) Notice the company Paul lists Demas with.
- (2) He includes Mark and Luke.
- (3) It would seem that Demas is an important part of their mission.

b. In Col. 4:14 Paul passed along Demas's greetings to the church at Colossae.

Col. 4:14. Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.

- c. Once again, Demas is seen to be apparently a faithful and productive Christian.
- d. But what has happened here?
 - (1) Here he has forsaken Paul, and presumably his faith as

well.

- (2) Remember what Paul said about finishing the race.
 - (a) Demas began the race with great promise.
 - (b) We are given no reason to doubt his sincerity.
 - (c) But at least at this point he has given up the race.
 - (d) The attraction of the world apparently has been too much for him.
- (3) Possibly we have recorded neither the beginning nor the end of this story.
- (4) I like to believe that Demas repented and eventually regained his faith.
- (5) But the warning is certainly clear for any of us.
- (6) Our faithfulness in the past is of no benefit, unless we finish the race.
- (7) It is only at the end that the crown is given.

2. Crescens and Titus have both been sent out on missionary efforts.

2 Tim. 4:10b. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

- a. Have you ever considered how strange that may seem?
- b. Paul is waiting for a judgment that will almost certainly mean his death.
- c. Yet these two valuable allies have been sent away.
- d. What is the message here?
- e. The work of the church is too important to halt – even for Paul.
 - (1) Even an apostle's life is not as important as the work of advancing the gospel.
 - (2) And if that means that Paul must die alone in a dark Roman cell – remember, you're a soldier Paul.
 - (a) A soldier owes absolute obedience.
 - (b) A soldier is expendable.
 - (c) Paul, it is the gospel, not your life, that is important.

D. (2 Tim 4:11 NIV) Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

1. Only Luke, Paul's trusted companion stayed to the end.
 - a. Did he ever write another volume to complete the book of Acts?

- b. Will we ever discover such a book?
- c. Or did Luke perhaps choose to perish with his friend?
- 2. Mark is undoubtedly John Mark. Their earlier disagreement (Acts 15:38) had already been resolved, because Paul commended him in Col. 4:10).
- 3. 4:12 Tychichus had been sent to Ephesus, possibly bearing this very letter to Timothy.
- E. 2 Tim 4:13. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.
 - 1. “When you come” (ἐρχόμενος – pres. mid. ptc.). Paul seems confident Timothy will come.
 - 2. What is it Paul wants Timothy to bring?
 - a. His cloak. Roman cells were cold and damp.
 - b. Scrolls (βιβλίον) Papyrus scrolls
 - c. Parchments (μεμβράνα)
 - (1) Made from animal skins
 - (2) Very expensive.
 - d. What did they contain?
 - (1) Portions of the Old Testament
 - (2) Perhaps even portions of some New Testament writings.
 - (3) Valuable documents such as Paul’s Roman citizenship papers.
 - (4) Other Christian writings.
 - e. What does this tell us about Paul’s intellectual nature?
[If time read Wuest, p. 167.]

Even at the approach of death, and in the midst of the discomforts of his dungeon, the aged apostle did not allow his normal strenuous life and his study habits to grow less intense in their nature. What a rebuke this is to those who, charged with the responsibility of expounding the Word of God, are content with a mere surface understanding, not willing to do the exhausting work of research which only will bring out the inexhaustible riches of the Bible.

Wuest, Kenneth S., *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, II, 167.

- f. Jim also reminded us last week of how important it is to be deeply involved in God’s word.
- g. I pray we never lose the zeal to do just that.
- F. 2 Tim 4:21 Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers.

1. During winter the Adriatic was virtually closed to sea traffic.
 2. 2 Timothy was probably written during late summer or early autumn.
 3. If Timothy is to come to Paul, he must leave at once.
 4. Lest Timothy not understand the urgency of his request, Paul repeats it one last time in closing.
- G. 2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.
1. Paul's closing benediction.
 2. We have the same curious construction as that with which Paul closes 1 Timothy.
 3. "The Lord be with your spirit" The "your" is singular and is intended for Timothy.
 4. "Grace be with you" The "you" is plural.
 - a. Even this letter to Timothy was expressly written with the understanding that it would be read and circulated.
 - b. And so Paul's final benediction is for any of us who reads his words.
 - (1) "Grace be with you"
 - (2) What a fitting final blessing from the apostle of grace.
- V. Closing
- A. I hope we have come to appreciate the apostle Paul a little more this quarter.
 - B. If I could ask that you take only one thing with you, it would be the understanding that our faith should be the most important thing in our lives.
 - C. The commitment we make is serious, and we should be prepared to do or take whatever is required to maintain that faith and to share it with others.
 - D. And when the time comes for our own departure from this life, may each of us be able to say with the apostle Paul:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.