

2nd Timothy - Introduction

During the Apostle Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 16:1-5)...

Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

2nd Timothy: The Apostle's Last Word

P a u l & T i m o t h y

The story of Paul and Timothy is told in bits and pieces throughout the Book of Acts and the Letters of Paul. His name is first mentioned, chronologically, in Acts 16 when Paul comes to Timothy's home town of Lystra in the Roman province of Galatia during his 2nd missionary journey (see above). It is likely that Timothy became a follower of Christ as a result of Paul's visit to Lystra as part of his 1st missionary journey (see Acts 14:8-25 & 2 Tim. 3:10-11) a year or two earlier where he taught, healed and was soon violently dragged out of the city by local religious leaders. Timothy's Jewish mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, were apparently converted at this time as well. By the time Paul returned to Lystra, Timothy, probably then about 30 years old, had matured in his faith so much that he was recognized and recommended by other Christians in the area.

Timothy's father, we learn, was a Gentile, so Timothy was the product of a mixed marriage. Paul wanted to bring Timothy with him in his continuing missionary travels, so he had him circumcised according to Jewish tradition. This is significant from a man who would write many times and with passion against the idea that a man had to keep the Jewish Law and be circumcised in order to become a Christian. Timothy's circumcision it appears was done for practical reasons, so he would not cause unnecessary offense to Jews who could see him as an apostate Jew, through his mother, rejecting their traditions because of his Gentile father.



Paul Anoints Timothy for Ministry (see 2 Timothy 1:6)

Paul on occasion helps us to know Timothy a little better. Among other things, we learn that he was fairly young, was somewhat timid of spirit and had a weak stomach (see 1 Tim. 4:12 & 5:23, & 2 Tim. 1:7 & 2:22). As Paul was writing his first letter to Timothy, he had left him in charge of the churches in Ephesus which had become a key center of Christian ministry and mission. Prior to this, Timothy had been a vital part of Paul's ministry, joining with Paul and Silas for the remainder of the 2nd missionary journey and then Paul's 3rd journey (Acts 18:23ff) as well.

Timothy is mentioned frequently by Paul as his trusted co-worker (Romans 16:21; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; 1 Corinthians 16:10; Philippians 2:22), and he is listed as a co-sender of six of Paul's letters to churches (1 & 2 Thessalonians; 2 Corinthians; Philippians; Colossians & Philemon). Prior to his appointment to the vital city of Ephesus, we know Timothy was sent by Paul as his representative to Thessalonica, Corinth and Philippi. He was perhaps Paul's most trusted emissary.

But Timothy was to Paul much more than his most useful colleague. He was Paul's friend, and the depth of this friendship is reflected in Paul's words about him...

- *That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.*
- 1 Corinthians 4:17

- *I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.* - Philippians 2:19-22
- *To Timothy, my true child in the faith...* - 1 Timothy 1:2
- *To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.* - 2 Timothy 1:2-5

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began...

- The Apostle Paul (2 Timothy 1:8-9)

There is a truth that has come from Jesus Christ to the Apostle Paul. This is what Paul is conveying to Timothy and commanding him to pass on to others. It is a truth that is to be proclaimed even in the face of cultural challenge and rejection by people who favor teaching "to suit their own passions" (4:3). The truth from God that Paul conveys is a truth that does not change from one generation to the next, but is to be guarded as it is.

John Calvin, in his *Institutes of Christian Religion (IV.8.9.)* writes of the difference between the apostles and their successors:

The former were sure and genuine scribes of the Holy Spirit, and their writings are therefore to be considered oracles of God; but the sole office of others is to teach what is provided and sealed in the Holy Scriptures. We therefore teach that faithful ministers are now not permitted to coin any new doctrine, but that they are simply to cleave to that doctrine to which God has subjected all men without exception.

Timothy, it seems, was "family" to Paul, a profound outworking in his life of what it means to be part of God's family in Christ.

It is to this beloved son in Christ that Paul at the end of his life passes on his most treasured possession: The Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is what Timothy, and those who come after him, is to guard against false teachers of all types. And it is this passionate Christ-inspired and Holy-Spirit-empowered calling to see the Good News of Jesus, the saving message of divine reconciliation, the ongoing reconciling ministry of God, preserved and protected and proclaimed that provides the historical and logical backdrop to the letter known as 2nd Timothy.

In reading this letter, one is struck by its deeply personal tone. Second Timothy, the last of Paul's letters that has been preserved, has been called the Apostle's "last will and testament" to his trusted younger colleague in the cause of the Gospel. It is, at its core, an appeal to Timothy to "remain loyal to Paul and his gospel by embracing suffering and hardship. And in this sense it also becomes a community document (hence the plural 'you' of 4:22), implicitly urging the believers to loyalty as well" (Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart, How to Read the Bible Book by Book, p.380).

Such cross-bearing loyalty in Christ's Church, the "people belonging to the Lord," is of no less value and significance today. And so, we do well to read this "Last Word of the Apostle" as a personal appeal to us as well.

WINTER 2018 SERMON SERIES, PERSONAL REFLECTION & GROUP STUDY

PASTOR JAY HULL

The Apostle's Last Word — The Book of First Timothy

January	28	-	Loyalty	2 Timothy 1:1-12
February	4	-	Good Deposit, Good Return	1:13-2:13
	11	-	Approved by God	2:14-26
	18	-	Dystopia	3:1-9
	25	-	Trust the Word, Preach the Word	3:10-4:8
March	4	-	A Friend in Need	4:9-22

Outline of 2 Timothy

(from Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts – p. 436)

I. Persevere in Present Testings

1:1-2:26

- A. Thanksgiving for Timothy's Faith 1:1-5
- B. Reminder of Timothy's Responsibility 1:16-18
- C. Characteristics of a Faithful Minister 2:1-26

II. Endure in Future Testings

3:1-4:22

- A. Approaching Day of Apostasy 3:1-17
- B. Charge to Preach the Word 4:1-5
- C. Approaching Death of Paul 4:6-22

The Bible, Plain & Simple

Three Assumptions:

1. The Bible is rooted in reality.

- **The Bible is firmly planted in real geography.** The fertile crescent, forming a land bridge linking Europe, Asia and Africa, is the geographic setting of the Bible. In this place God established His people and sent His Son into the world. It is no accident that the land itself plays a major role in God's covenant with Israel and in His plan for redemption.
- **The Bible emerges from real history.** Setting out to redeem humanity, God carries out His plan on the stage of history. The Bible must be read and understood against the backdrop of historical peoples, nations and events spanning thousands of years.



2. The Bible is a unified literary whole.

- **The Bible contains a diversity of forms and styles.** The Bible was written over 1,500 years by at least 45 different authors. It is important to consider literary forms in order best to understand what the Bible says.
- **The Bible presents a unified message.** Every part of Scripture is best studied and understood in light of the whole. Through its many forms and styles, the Bible, in its final form, is a unified literary work. It is linear in structure, its protagonist is God, its conflict is sin and its theme is redemption.

3. The Bible is the inspired Word of God

- **The Bible is the Word of God.** "All Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16), by which we understand that the Bible is inspired in the highest sense of that word, and that its human authors "...were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21) to write the very words of Scripture, all the while employing their own talents and abilities to do so.

(*With thanks to Rev. Tom Brewer & Dr. Bill Creasy of Logos Ministries, Los Angeles)

Covenant
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The "Pastoral Epistles"

The New Testament Letters of 1 Timothy, Titus and 2 Timothy, since the early 18th century, have been known as "The Pastoral Epistles." Many have

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erroneously suggested that they provide some kind of blueprint for church organization and ministry (What we see is not so much once-and-for-all instructions on how to set up a church and do ministry as it is occasional instructions on how to respond to particular critical problems at a particular time that reflect the organizational structures then in use); however, the "Pastoral" label is still apropos since these letters are addressed to individuals and in them the Apostle Paul gives instructions and advice to his younger, trusted disciples concerning how they are to serve Christ as His servant-leaders in His Church. The Apostle addresses issues related to the health of the fledgling Church—like the priority of prayer, gender roles as related to worship, the relationship of church & state, world evangelization, qualifications for church leadership, principles for the church's social work, paying and disciplining pastors and the dangers and responsibilities of the rich—as he passes the torch of pastoral leadership in recognition of the need for regional oversight in the growing church and in anticipation of his death.

The Pastoral Epistles have been challenged in terms of Pauline authorship more rigorously than any of Paul's other letters. Three main factors have contributed to this. 1) **Vocabulary**: These letters contain many words not found in Paul's other letters, and many of his standard expressions—in discussing end times, church order and salvation, for example—are not found or are expressed by different phrases. 2) **Ecclesiology**: They seem to reflect a more advanced state of development in the Church where the Church itself has become a more central theme in Christian theology. 3) **History**: The events behind the narrative of these letters are not found anywhere else in the Bible. As a result, many scholars suppose that these letters were written later and Pseudonymously (by someone else writing under Paul's name). Conservative scholars have countered by affirming that nothing in these letters logically prohibits Pauline authorship when we consider the changing circumstances in Paul's life, his advancing age, the continuing development of his thought, the changing circumstances in the churches, Paul's likely use of an "amanuensis" (a secretary who aids in the writing—some suggest this was Paul's friend and colleague, Luke), and his use of what are called "pre-formed traditions" (doxologies, credal confessions and hymns already in use in the life of the Church, which we find especially in 1 Timothy and which are introduced by formulaic phrases like "this is a trustworthy saying" and "knowing this..."). The *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (p.660) offers this conclusion to the issue: *The role of the secretary and the use of preformed traditions in the composition of the Pastorals cut the ground from under the pseudepigraphal hypothesis with its mistaken nineteenth-century assumptions about the nature of authorship. They require the critical student to give primary weight to the opening ascriptions in the letters and to the external historical evidence, both of which solidly support Pauline authorship.* And conservative theologian John Stott sums it up this way: *The most likely scenario is that Paul the apostle wrote the three Pastorals, towards the end of his life, addressing contemporary issues, and communicating through a trusted amanuensis* (*Guard the Truth: The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, p.34).

Concerning the history behind these letters, scholars piece together post-Acts events from Paul's previously expressed plans for the future and information shared in the Pastoral Letters. The 4th-century historian Eusebius provided in his *Ecclesiastical History* a plausible scenario that many follow today whereby Paul was released from his 2-year house arrest (at the end of Acts), resumed his ministry travels, & even made it to Spain as hoped (see Romans 15:24, 28). During this time Paul wrote 1 Timothy & Titus, especially to combat the ill effects of church defectors & false teachers. He was then re-arrested, re-imprisoned (a more difficult imprisonment during which he wrote 2 Tim.), re-tried, condemned & beheaded under Emperor Nero on the Ostian Way outside Rome (see map).

