

Olivet Baptist Church

3500 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21229

Wednesday Night Bible Study (7:00 pm)

Book of John – Facilitator: Rev. Alex O. Stone

Overall Theme: Endurance in Ministry (1:1–4:22)

- I. Paul's Greeting (2 Tim 1:1-2)
- II. Timothy's Faith and Heritage (2 Tim 1:3-1:7)
- III. Not Ashamed of the Gospel (2 Tim 1:8-1:12)
- IV. Be Loyal to the Faith (2 Tim 1:13-1:18)

- V. Be Strong in Grace (2:1-2:13)
- VI. Approved and Disapproved Workers (2:14-2:26)

- VII. Perilous Times and Perilous Men (3:1-3:9)
- VIII. The Man of God and the Word of God (3:10-3:17)

- IX. Preach The Word (4:1-4:5)
- X. Paul's Valedictory (4:6-4:8)
- XI. The Abandoned Apostle (4:9-4:16)
- XII. The Lord is Faithful (4:17-4:18)
 - Come Before Winter (4:19-4:21)
 - Farewell (2 Tim 4:22)

CURRENT FOCUS: "PAUL'S ATTEMPT TO ENCOURAGE TIMOTHY" (1 Tim 1:1–6:21)

Greeting

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

Timothy's Faith and Heritage

³I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, ⁴greatly desiring to

see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, ⁵ when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. ⁶Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, ¹⁰but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. ¹²For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

Be Loyal to the Faith

¹³Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. ¹⁵This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; ¹⁷but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found *me*. ¹⁸The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered *to me* at Ephesus.

Be Strong in Grace

2 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³ You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. ⁵ And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶ The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. ⁷ Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

⁸ Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, ⁹ for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. ¹⁰ Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹ *This is* a faithful saying: For if we died with *Him*, We shall also live with *Him*. ¹² If we endure, We shall also reign with *Him*. If we deny *Him*, He also will deny us. ¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

Approved and Disapproved Workers

¹⁴ Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶ But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. ¹⁷ And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, ¹⁸ who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. ¹⁹ Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

²⁰ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. ²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses

himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. ²² Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. ²³ But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. ²⁴ And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

Perilous Times and Perilous Men

3 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; ⁹ but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

The Man of God and the Word of God

¹⁰ But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. ¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. ¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*,

¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Preach the Word

4 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Paul's Valedictory

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

The Abandoned Apostle

⁹ Be diligent to come to me quickly; ¹⁰ for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. ¹² And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. ¹³ Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.

¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. ¹⁵ You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

¹⁶ At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

The Lord is Faithful

¹⁷ But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. ¹⁸ And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!

Come Before Winter

¹⁹ Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick. ²¹ Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.

Farewell

²² The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

Commentary: STRENGTH TO BE STEADFAST AND ENDURE (CHAP. 1:1-4:22)

I. Salutation (1:1–2)

2 Timothy 1:1–2. In his typical fashion **Paul** began this letter identifying himself as **an apostle of Christ Jesus**, a reminder Timothy hardly needed. No doubt this is another indication that Paul knew he was writing first to Timothy but ultimately to a much wider audience. In his first letter to the young pastor Paul said his apostleship was “by the command of God” (1 Tim. 1:1). Here Paul said it was **by the**

will of God. The two are essentially synonymous. The words **according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus** are intentionally vague. They relate to Paul’s apostleship (not the will of God), but did they refer to a promise of life Paul personally received, or to a promise he was to proclaim to others? In other words was his apostleship “because of” the promise or “in conformity to” the promise? The Greek word *kata* (here ambiguously trans. “according to”) allows the two to merge. The promise of life in Christ, the gospel, was the reason for and the yardstick of Paul’s apostleship (cf. Titus 1:2–3). **To Timothy, my dear son** (lit., “child”) once again (cf. “my true son” in 1 Tim. 1:2) emphasizes the close fatherly relationship Paul maintained with his *protégé*, if not his convert. The remainder of the greeting duplicates 1 Timothy exactly (cf. 1 Tim. 1:2). (See the chart, “Paul’s Introductions to His Epistles” at Rom. 1:1–7.)

II. Call to Faithfulness (1:3–18).

A. Thanksgiving for Timothy (1:3–7).

2 Timothy 1:3. In 1 Timothy Paul expressed thanks for his own salvation and ministry (1 Tim 1:12); here he began by expressing thanks for Timothy’s salvation and ministry. In passing, Paul ¹ referred to his own upbringing, just before he turned to Timothy’s (2 Tim. 1:5). The apostle viewed his own faith in Christ, not as a break with his Jewish **forefathers**, but in continuity with their faith. (Cf. **a clear conscience** with 1 Tim. 1:5, “a good conscience.”) As Paul prayed for Timothy **night and day**, his gratitude for Timothy kept welling up anew. Sitting chained in a Roman prison

¹ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 749–750). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

there was little else Paul could do but pray; and Timothy, perhaps Paul's closest companion, ministering to the church that Paul probably knew best, was no doubt the single most common object of his petitions.

2 Timothy 1:4. Paul remembered Timothy's **tears** on their last parting, possibly at Paul's second Roman arrest. In this letter he would ask Timothy to join him in Rome (cf. 4:9, 21). Paul had longed for Timothy's companionship which was such a **joy** to him. Even the great apostle at times became lonely, discouraged, and in need of support from fellow Christians.

2 Timothy 1:5. So many, it seems, had opposed or deserted Paul (cf. 1:15; 2:17; 3:1–9, 13; 4:3–4, 10–21) that Timothy's **sincere** (*anypokritou*, "unhypocritical"; cf. 1 Tim. 1:5) **faith** stood out in bold relief. Paul attributed Timothy's faith to the influence of his Jewish **mother Eunice** and **grandmother Lois**, both of whom were believers (cf. Acts 16:1). Timothy's father was a Gentile and probably an unbeliever; hence no mention of him is made here. According to this verse, Paul seems to attribute Timothy's conversion to his mother and grandmother (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15). References to Timothy as Paul's son in the faith (cf. 1:2; 2:1; 1 Tim. 1:2) could therefore probably be understood to mean a mentor-*protégé* relationship.

2 Timothy 1:6. Because Paul was persuaded that Timothy possessed true faith (v. 5), something he often refused to take for granted in others (e.g., 1 Thes. 3:5), he urged the young minister **to fan into flame** (or perhaps, "keep at full flame") his God-given ability for ministry. God's gifts must be used if they are to reach and maintain their full potential. In Timothy's case, Paul wrote (1 Tim. 4:14) that his **gift**

(*charisma*) had come “through” (*dia*) a prophetic message, “with” (*meta*) the laying on of the elder board’s hands. Here Paul stated that the gift came “through” (*dia*) **the laying on of his own hands**. The language is highly imprecise and may reflect nothing more in the apostle’s thinking than a general association between Timothy’s ordination (which involved both a prophetic message and the laying on of hands by Paul and the elders) and the young man’s awareness of his own abilities. Surely the language does not bear the weight of any detailed conclusions about how spiritual gifts are bestowed, much less full-blown theories of apostolic succession or of ordination as a means of grace.

2 Timothy 1:7. Why Timothy needed this reminder of his ordination, and the confidence in his own gifts he developed as a result of it, is not clear. In 1 Timothy the reference to Timothy’s ordination is associated with problems stemming from his youthfulness (cf. 1 Tim. 4:12). Perhaps he had become somewhat intimidated by the opposition to both Paul and the gospel, even in some ways threatened, defensive, and ashamed (cf. 2 Tim. 1:8) at having to defend a prisoner (cf. 2:9) and the “foolishness” which they both preached about a despised and crucified Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18–2:5). But such **timidity** (*deilias*, lit., “cowardice,” used only here in the NT) has no place in God’s service. Instead, **God gives a spirit of power** (cf. 1 Cor. 2:4), **of love** (cf. 1 Tim. 1:5), **and of self-discipline** (cf. 1 Tim. 4:7). ² These three virtues, each supplied by the Holy Spirit, should characterize Timothy.

² Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 750). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

B. Call to courage (1:8–12).

2 Timothy 1:8. If Timothy's ministry were marked by power, love, and self-discipline, he would be able to stand tall against his opponents, and would **not be ashamed to testify about our Lord** (cf. 1 Cor. 1:6), **or ashamed of Paul His prisoner.** Though Paul was held in a Roman prison (cf. 2 Tim. 1:16; 2:9), yet he called himself Christ's prisoner—that is, a prisoner for Christ's sake and purpose (cf. Eph. 3:1; Phil. 1:12–14; Phile. 1, 9). With this reminder of his own condition, which was far graver than Timothy's, Paul exhorted Timothy to **join courageously with him in suffering for the gospel** (cf. 2 Tim. 2:3), for it is just in such circumstances that **the power of God** is made manifest (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9–10).

2 Timothy 1:9–10. Having mentioned the gospel, Paul spelled out some of its most important details. God **saved us and called us to a holy life.** This is an accomplished fact, not something yet to come. Timothy could therefore count on God's power in his daily ministry. Moreover, this salvation had nothing to do with a believer's merits **but** was purely **because of His own purpose** (*prothesin*; cf. Rom. 8:28; 9:11; Eph. 1:11; 3:11) **and grace** (cf. 1 Tim. 1:14). This is the very core of the gospel (cf. Eph. 2:8–10). **Before the beginning of time** Christians were granted this unmerited favor, but were only made aware of it **through the appearing** (*epiphaneias*; 2 Thes. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13) **of our Savior, Christ Jesus.** Here and in Titus 1:4; 2:13; and 3:6 *Christ* is called Savior; in 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 2:10; and 3:4 *God* is titled Savior (cf. 2 Peter 1:1 ³ with 3:18). Clearly both are in different senses true. Christ the Son embodied God the Father's saving purpose and plan, by

³ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 750–751). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

which **death**, the saving purpose and plan, by which **death**, the product of sin (cf. Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12; 6:23), would be **destroyed** (1 Cor. 15:26), and **life and immortality** (lit., “incorruptibility”; cf. 1 Peter 1:4) would be brought into view.

2 Timothy 1:11–12. Little wonder that Paul called this **gospel** “glorious” (1 Tim. 1:11). It is the most important message ever told. Paul had been **appointed** to serve as **a herald and an apostle and a teacher** of this message (cf. 1 Tim. 2:7), three roles which merely reflect different facets of the stewardship entrusted to him (1 Tim. 1:11). Carrying out his stewardship had brought Paul much **suffering**, including his present imprisonment. In the eyes of the world he was a common criminal (cf. 2 Tim. 2:9). Yet he was able to say, **I am not ashamed**. He was trusting his own destiny to the same One who had **entrusted** him with the stewardship of the gospel. Thus, even though he was suffering abuse and humiliation, he was confident of God’s complete vindication in the end (cf. 1:18; 4:8). Throughout, of course, Paul was using his own example to bolster Timothy’s perhaps flagging courage.

C. Call to guard the truth (1:13–14).

2 Timothy 1:13. From the example of his life, Paul turned to the example or **pattern** (*hypotypōsin*; cf. 1 Tim. 1:16) of his teaching. Timothy was to view what he had **heard from** Paul as the essential outline or sketch of **sound teaching** (lit., “healthy doctrine”; cf. 1 Tim. 1:10) and was to **keep** or maintain it. Timothy was to hold the truth **with faith and love in Christ Jesus**. To be balanced, a commitment to the truth always requires faith and love, virtues which ultimately come only from being “in Christ” (1 Tim. 1:14).

2 Timothy 1:14. Paul used the notion of a “trust” (*parathēkēn*; cf. 1 Tim. 5:21; 6:20) in two ways in the Pastorals. First, he had been given a trust or stewardship from God (cf. 1 Tim. 1:11); second, he had in turn **entrusted** himself and his destiny to God (2 Tim. 1:12). Here Paul spoke of the first of these two. The stewardship of the truth he had received had now been passed along into the hands of Timothy, who was to pass it on yet again to other faithful Christians, who were to pass it on to still others (2:2). While it was in Timothy’s possession, however, he was to **guard** (*phylaxōn*; cf. 1 Tim. 5:21; 6:20) **it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.** It was Timothy’s responsibility to preserve sound teaching from becoming corrupted through distortion, dilution, deletion, and addition. Heretical teaching was not only a possibility to Paul; it was a constant threat to be guarded against. Moreover, Timothy could count on the assistance of the indwelling Spirit of God (cf. 1 John 3:24; 4:13) who desires to promote the truth about Christ (John 16:13).

D. Examples of unfaithfulness and faithfulness (1:15–18).

2 Timothy 1:15. Nothing is known of **Phygelus and Hermogenes** beyond this single reference. It is fair to conjecture that theirs may have been the most unexpected defections among the group represented by **everyone in the province of Asia**, of which Ephesus was the leading city. (See the location of Asia and of Ephesus on the map between Acts and Rom.) Perhaps they were leaders of some sort. Timothy certainly knew their situation well, in any case, and Paul singled them out. It is unnecessary to assume either (a) that “everyone” means literally every Christian, or (b) that their failure consisted of a total defection from the faith. Verses 16–18 suggest rather that there was a general failure to support the apostle in his personal time of need.

2 Timothy 1:16–18. From these sad examples of unfaithfulness, Paul turned to the sparkling instance of **Onesiphorus** (mentioned elsewhere only in 4:19), who had supported Paul not only **in Ephesus** but also **in Rome**. Repeatedly he had gone out of his way to help Paul, even to the point of following him to Rome and painstakingly seeking out his whereabouts. There, despite Paul’s imprisonment and the stigma attached to it, Onesiphorus remained unfazed, continuing his faithful ministry without hesitation. For all of this Paul commended him, twice invoking God’s **mercy** (1:16, 18) on both the faithful servant and his **household**.

The contrast between the faithful and the unfaithful, the strong and the weak, the trustworthy and the unreliable, is striking.⁴ The many in Asia (v. 15) portray the very things Paul had been warning Timothy against—cowardice, shame, self-indulgence, infidelity. Onesiphorus, on the other hand, demonstrated the characteristics Paul had been recommending to Timothy—courage, love, self-discipline, boldness, and faithfulness. Clearly the negative and the positive examples were designed to strengthen Timothy’s resolve to be counted among those who were willing to stand shoulder to shoulder with the apostle.

III. Challenge to Endurance (2:1–13).

A. Enduring hardship for Christ (2:1–7).

2 Timothy 2:1. After the reminders of Timothy’s ordination, his own example, and that of others, Paul addressed Timothy with a direct application: **You then, my son**

⁴ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 751–752). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

(*teknon*, “child,” an endearing term), **be strong** (lit. “be empowered”; cf. Eph. 6:10). Yet Timothy’s strength was not his own; it was a divine “gift” (**grace**, *charis*) found only **in Christ** (Phil. 4:13).

2 Timothy 2:2. Traveling with Paul, Timothy had **heard** the apostle address scores of diverse audiences. Among all those groups the essence of Paul’s message had not changed. It was the same body of truth Paul had taught Timothy personally. Now, with the apostle nearing the end of his own ministry, what Timothy had heard from Paul he was in turn to **entrust** (cf. 1:14) **to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others** (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). This has come to be called “the ministry of multiplication,” and it is God’s method for propagating the good news of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:3–4. Such faithfulness to God’s truth would inevitably involve Timothy in suffering, even as it had Paul. Thus without varnishing Timothy’s prospects the mentor once again called his *protégé* to share in **hardship** or suffering (cf. 1:8 for the same word used only in these two places: *synkakopathēson*, “to suffer hardship with someone”; also cf. 4:5) for the sake of Christ (cf. John 15:18–20). Paul introduced three common illustrations to emphasize his point (cf. 1 Cor. 9:7, 24 for the same three): **a ... soldier**, an athlete, and a **5** farmer (2 Tim. 2:3–6). Military images were common in Paul’s thought (cf. 1 Tim. 1:18), no doubt because the word pictures were familiar to his readers (cf. Rom. 6:13 [“instruments” can be trans. “weapons”]; Rom. 7:23; 1 Cor. 9:7; 2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 6:11–18; Phil. 2:25; Phile.

⁵ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 752). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2). A Roman soldier's single-minded purpose, rigorous discipline, and unquestioning obedience to **his commanding officer** combine to make the figure of a soldier an apt one for a servant of the gospel.

2 Timothy 2:5. With a quick change of metaphor Paul switched to **an athlete**. The thought here is similar to 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (and Heb. 12:1–2). **According to the rules** translates *nomimōs* (lit., “lawfully”). The metaphor clearly draws on athletic games such as the Olympics, but do “the rules” refer to the regulations governing each event or to those governing the training of those qualified to take part? Competitors in the Olympic games, for example, were required to swear that they had trained diligently for at least 10 months. Though the second is in some ways easier to explain, the first is required by Paul's grammar, which suggests that the issue is not whether one is qualified to compete but, among those competing, who will win the **crown**. Every athletic event has its boundaries, its rules; moreover, all who fail to discipline themselves to observe these rules are disqualified. Paul wanted Timothy to run so as to win the crown (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7–8) and not be disqualified. This requires a Christian to have strong qualities of discipline, self-control, endurance, and a certain toughness.

2 Timothy 2:6. The final image is that of a **farmer**. The language puts an emphasis on the word **hardworking**, in contrast with idle, lazy workers. The diligence Paul has just described in each case has its reward (cf. vv. 11–12): A diligent soldier gains the approval of his commanding officer; a diligent athlete wins the victory; a diligent farmer wins **the first ... share of the crops**. The three illustrations have in

common the point that success is achieved through discipline (cf. 1:7), hard work, and single-mindedness.

2 Timothy 2:7. Paul appealed to Timothy to **reflect on what I am saying**, confident that with ⁶ meditation and contemplation **the Lord** would grant the young man the **insight** (*synesis*, lit., “understanding”) **into** the wisdom of Paul’s instructions (cf. James 1:5).

B. Christ’s example of endurance (2:8–10).

2 Timothy 2:8. Paul rather abruptly introduced the ultimate example of endurance leading to success: **Jesus Christ** (cf. Heb. 12:2–3). The words **raised from the dead, descended from David** may represent a fragment of some familiar creed or catechetical formula (cf. Rom. 1:3–4). The purpose of the fleeting reference is not to expound, but simply to suggest to Timothy a rich subject for his meditation (2 Tim. 2:7), the place of suffering in the life of God’s servant (cf. 1 Peter 2:19–24). The quick reference to Jesus’ identity (via His ancestral line) and resurrection represents only a portion of Paul’s **gospel**, of course, but a central one. The Gospel writers and the messages of the apostles in Acts address both Christ’s lineage and His resurrection in great detail.

2 Timothy 2:9–10. Preaching the good news about the crucified but resurrected Son of David was what had landed Paul in a Roman jail. Much of the Book of Acts catalogs Paul’s suffering for the cause of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23–33 for a summary).

⁶ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 752–753). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

With every move as he wrote or dictated this letter, the clinking iron reminded him that he was **chained like a criminal** (*kakourgos*, lit., “evildoer”). But though he was chained, **God’s Word is not chained** (Paul equated “my gospel” with “God’s Word”; cf. 1 Thes. 2:13; 2 Thes. 3:1). God would continue to use it through Timothy, and those to whom Timothy entrusted it. Paul’s apparent shame and impotence should be no cause for alarm, discouragement, or faintheartedness. God’s Word accomplishes its purpose of calling out God’s people, **the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory**. If this process required **suffering** from Paul, so be it. He was willing to **endure** (*hypomenō*, “be steadfast under”; cf. 2 Tim. 2:12) **everything for the sake of** “the chosen ones” (*tous eklektous*; cf. Col. 3:12; Titus 1:1). The contrast with Paul’s original, natural sentiments ⁷ could not be more stark (cf. Acts 22:4; 26:9–11; 1 Tim. 1:13), giving full meaning to the apostle’s words in 1 Timothy 1:14. The greatest enemy of the saints became their greatest friend, all as a result of the gracious outpouring of Christ’s love into his heart.

C. A faithful saying (2:11–13).

2 Timothy 2:11–13. Once more Paul used the trustworthy-saying formula, so common in the Pastorals (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; Titus 3:8), to introduce a quotation. The formula serves to place Paul’s stamp of approval on the content of the quotation, which may have been part of a baptismal ceremony. The quotation sets forth four couplets, the first two of which are positive:

⁷ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 753). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

(1) If we died with Him, we will also live with Him expresses the idea so powerfully portrayed in the rite of baptism and explained in Romans 6:2–23. The reference is not to martyrdom for Christ, but rather to a believer’s mystical identification with the death and life of Christ (cf. Col. 3:3).

(2) If we endure (*hypomenomen*; cf. 2 Tim. 2:10), **we will also reign with Him** furthers the believer’s identification with Christ. In the previous couplet the focus is on the contrast between death and life; here the parallel contrast is between suffering and glorification (Rom. 8:17). Christ endured and will one day reign (1 Cor. 15:25), and those saints who endure will one day reign with Him (Rev. 3:21). The last two couplets are negative:

(3) If we disown Him, He will also disown us speaks of the possibility of apostasy (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 10:38–39; 2 John 9) and the Lord’s ultimate rejection of those who professed Christ only temporarily (cf. Matt. 10:33). Instead of identifying with Christ, the apostate finally dissociates himself with Christ.

(4) If we are faithless, He will remain faithful speaks not of the apostate, but of a true child of God who nevertheless proves unfaithful (cf. 2 Tim. 1:15).

Christ **cannot disown Himself**; therefore, He will not deny even unprofitable members of His own body. True children of God cannot become something other than children, even when disobedient and weak. Christ’s faithfulness to Christians is not contingent on their faithfulness to Him. The significance ⁸ of these couplets could hardly have been lost on Timothy.

⁸ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 753–754). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

IV. Marks of a Good Workman (2:14–26).

A. Faithfulness in ministry (2:14–19).

2 Timothy 2:14. The instruction of the previous verses was not for Timothy only. Timothy was to **keep reminding** others of **these things**. The verb is a present imperative, which means that this was to be Timothy's regular practice. The bulk of preaching to a knowledgeable audience frequently consists of reminding them of what they already know. In the case of the Christians at Ephesus, they were to be solemnly charged in the presence of God (cf. 1 Tim. 5:21) to avoid **quarreling about words** (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3–4; 4:7; 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9), a tendency in the early church (cf. Acts 18:15). Such wrangling **is of no value**, but worse, actually **ruins those who listen** (cf. 2 Tim. 2:16, 18; 3:6). The destructiveness, but especially the worthlessness, of false teaching is a recurrent note in the Pastorals.

2 Timothy 2:15. As for Timothy, he was to **do his best** (lit., “be zealous”) to be sure he would meet with God's approval, a “laborer” (*ergatēn*; cf. Matt. 20:1, 8) **who does not need to be ashamed**. Paul had spoken of shame before men (2 Tim. 1:8, 12, 16); far worse is shame before God. Timothy need not fear such shame if he would **correctly handle the Word of truth** (cf. Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5; James 1:18), which for him included both Old Testament Scripture and what he had heard orally from Paul. The Greek *orthotomounta*, “correctly handling,” found only here and in the Septuagint in Proverbs 3:6 and 11:5, means literally “to cut straight,” but just what image Paul had in mind here is uncertain. Stone masons, plowers, road builders, tentmakers, and (least likely of all) surgeons have all been suggested, but

a firm conclusion remains elusive. What is clear is that the shame of God's disapproval awaits those who mishandle His Word.

2 Timothy 2:16–18. Timothy was to **avoid godless chatter** (lit., “shun profane empty utterances”; cf. 1 Tim. 6:20) which only advances ungodliness like **gangrene** (*gangraina*). (Such godless chatter contrasts with “the Word of truth” [2 Tim. 2:15] and “the truth” [v. 18].) The medical image is striking. Participating with those who engage in such profane speculations will only, literally, “give their words a feeding place like gangrene.” They must be amputated instead. Two who deserved such treatment were **Philetus** about whom nothing is known, and **Hymenaeus**, whom Paul had already “delivered over to Satan” for chastisement (1 Tim. 1:20). These two had **wandered away from the truth** (lit., “concerning the truth missed the mark”; cf. 1 Tim. 1:6; 6:21) regarding the crucial doctrine of **the resurrection**. **Greek philosophers typically viewed the soul as immortal and the body as its temporal prison.** **The idea of the physical resurrection of the body, both Christ's and the Christians', was therefore foreign and difficult for them to grasp.** Hence **there was a natural tendency toward heresies which rejected bodily resurrection** (1 Cor. 15; Acts 17:32). The heresy of Philetus and Hymenaeus probably involved the idea that resurrection was a purely spiritual affair which occurred at conversion or baptism. But **bodily resurrection is the keystone of Christian doctrine, as Paul showed (1 Cor. 15).** **Without it, the entire edifice of the gospel collapses.** Little wonder then that Paul said that these two false teachers **destroy the faith of some** (cf. 1 Tim. 1:19).

2 Timothy 2:19. Yet the defection of these two, and their followers, must not shake Timothy's confidence. **God's solid foundation** (i.e., the church; cf. 1 Cor. 3:10–15;

Eph. 2:19–22; 1 Tim. 3:15) **stands firm**, with two inscriptions as a “seal” to indicate the structure’s authenticity and integrity (cf. Rom. 4:11; 1 Cor. 9:2). The first is a reference to the rebellion of Korah in which the Lord differentiated between the true and the false (Num. 16:5; cf. Jude 11). The second inscription is possibly a loose reference to Numbers 16:26 or more likely some other Old Testament passage such as Isaiah 52:11. The two inscriptions emphasize respectively both God’s sovereign control over the church and every Christian’s responsibility to turn away from evil. Thus Timothy did not need to fear for the destiny of God’s **g** work, but he was to make every effort to keep himself free from the contamination of the false teachers.

B. A clean instrument (2:20–21).

2 Timothy 2:20–21. Paul furthered his point about non-contamination by introducing a new but similar metaphor. The image changes from a building to a household (cf. 1 Tim. 3:5, 15). In a **large** and varied household are all sorts of containers. Some are made **of gold and silver** and others **of wood and clay**. More importantly, **some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble**. Clearly the reference so far is to the faithful and the unfaithful within the church. But Paul then shifted the metaphor slightly to show how one can **be an instrument for noble purposes**, by cleansing **himself from the** ignoble vessels. The metaphor is somewhat mixed (one would usually think of cleansing from corruption, not cleansing from the corrupted vessels), but the apostle’s point is clear: Timothy was to have nothing to do with the false teachers. In this way he would be a vessel: (1)

⁹ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 754–755). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

“for noble purposes” (“unto honor,” *timēn*), (2) **made holy** (“set apart”), (3) **useful** (“serviceable”) **to the Master, and** (4) **prepared to do any good work** (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16). What is clean and set apart for special use can easily get contaminated and be rendered unusable through contact with the corrupt. Paul was concerned that Timothy, his choicest disciple, keep himself in a usable condition for the Lord.

C. Faithfulness in conduct (2:22–26).

2 Timothy 2:22–23. Timothy was still a young man (cf. 1 Tim. 4:12), and even though he was probably mature beyond his years, he might have still displayed some of the characteristics and passions of the young: impatience, intolerance, love of argument, self-assertion, partiality. Timothy was to **flee the evil desires of youth** (probably Paul did not have sexual passions in mind here, at least not primarily), **and pursue** the opposite virtues: **righteousness, faith, love** (cf. 1 Tim. 6:11 for the same trio), **and peace**. The NIV wrongly places a comma after “peace”—the phrase should read straight through: “peace” **along with those** ¹⁰ **who call on the Lord out of a pure heart** (cf. “pure heart” in 1 Tim. 1:5). While Timothy must oppose the false teachers, he was to be at peace with his brethren who were honest before God. The clear implication is that the false teachers were dishonest before God (cf. 1 Tim. 1:5; 4:2; 6:3–5). Timothy must refuse to get caught up in **foolish and stupid arguments** (*zētēseis*, “debates”; cf. 1 Tim. 6:4; Titus 3:9) which only **produce quarrels**.

¹⁰ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 755). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2 Timothy 2:24–26. False teaching will always be divisive, but **the Lord’s servant** should **not** be a fighter but a promoter of unity, by being **kind** (“gentle”) **to everyone** (cf. 1 Thes. 2:7), **able** or ready **to teach** (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2) those who are willing to learn, and forbearing in the face of differences (*anexikakon*, lit., “ready to bear evil treatment without resentment”; used only here in the NT). He must treat even his opponents with gentle instruction characterized by “meekness,” **in the hope that God will grant them repentance** (“a change of heart and conduct”) **leading them to a knowledge** (*epignōsin*, “full knowledge”; cf. Col. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:7) **of the truth.** **The goal is always remedial, never punitive, when dealing with brethren** (cf. 2 Thes. 3:6, 15). **The purpose must always be to edify Christ’s body, not tear it down** (cf. 1 Cor. 14:26). Thus when brethren fall into false teaching they must be treated with gentleness and Christian love in the hope **that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil** (cf. Gal. 5:1; 1 Tim. 3:7; 6:9) **who has taken them captive to do his will.** False teaching and all its negative consequences in the church are always the handiwork of Satan, but God in His grace often salvages the situation through the Christlike ministry of His servants.

V. Predictions of Faithlessness (3:1–9).

2 Timothy 3:1–5. As in his previous letter, Paul warned Timothy about the collapse predicted for **the last days** (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1–3), a term which includes the entire period between the first century and Christ’s return. During this interim, according to the prediction, the world will see **terrible times** of societal degeneration. Paul

gave an extraordinary list (cf. Rom. 1:28–32) of **19 general characteristics**¹¹ **believers should expect. People will be:**

- (1) **lovers of themselves** (*philautoi*, “self-centered, narcissistic”);
- (2) **lovers of money** (*philargyroi*; cf. 1 Tim. 6:9–10);
- (3) **boastful**—the outward manifestation of the fact that inwardly they are
- (4) **proud** (“arrogant”);
- (5) **abusive** toward others, which translates *blasphēmoi* (“blasphemers”).

Several of the words which follow begin in the Greek with the **prefix α=**, meaning **“without”** (as in moral-amoral, theist-atheist), signifying absence of the designated virtue. Thus, people will be

- (6) **disobedient** (*apeitheis*) **to their parents;**
- (7) **ungrateful** (*acharistoi*);
- (8) **unholy** (*anosioi*);
- (9) **without love** (*astorgoi*, trans. “heartless” in Rom. 1:31, the only other place it is used in the NT);
- (10) **unforgiving** (*aspondoi*). **Diaboloι**, a word usually translated **“devil”** (cf. 1 Tim. 3:6–7; 2 Tim. 2:26), is used here with the root meaning
- (11) **slandorous;**
- (12) **without self-control** (*akrateis*);
- (13) **brutal** (*anēmeroi*, lit., “untamed,” the opposite of civilized);
- (14) **not lovers of the good** (*aphilagathoi*; cf. Titus 1:8; Pss. 15:4; 19:8). The next two characteristics begin in the Greek with the prefix *pro-*, indicating an aggressive inclination toward vice:
- (15) **treacherous** (*prodotai*, “disposed toward betrayal”);
- (16) **rash** (*propeteis*, “disposed toward recklessness”). The final three characteristics are
- (17) **conceited** (lit., “puffed up”; cf. 1 Tim. 3:6; 6:4);

¹¹ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 755–756). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

(18) **lovers of pleasure** (*philēdonoi*) **rather than lovers of God** (*philotheoi*; the Gr. prefix *phil*= here and in characteristics 1, 2, and 14 above signifies “lovers of ...”); (19) **having a form** (*morphōsin*, “outward shape,” used only here and in Rom. 2:20) **of godliness but denying its power** (cf. Titus 1:16).

Though these characteristics are cataloged under the auspices of a prediction about “the last days,” it is clear that Paul considered them to be already present in Ephesus. Though they would intensify with time, Timothy had to beware of such people and **have nothing to do with them**. No doubt Paul had in mind here Timothy’s official associations, since he had already instructed Timothy to be kind to everyone (cf. 2 Tim. 2:24).

2 Timothy 3:6–7. Paul focused on the specific situation in Ephesus. It was from the increasingly ¹² large group in society who displayed the preceding characteristics that the false teachers had emerged to plague the church. Their methods were insidious. They would **worm their way into homes and gain control over** those they knew were vulnerable and gullible. In the case of Ephesus the false teachers had crept in via a group of **weak-willed women who** were, literally, “heaped with sin and fed by various lusts.” Once more Paul connected false teaching with moral deficiency. Their carnality and immaturity rendered them easy targets for the false teachers (cf. Eph. 4:14). Out of a so-called “openness to learn” they evidently embraced as a fad whatever new heresy came along. Their problem was that they could not recognize the truth when they saw it. (**To acknowledge the truth** is, lit., “to come to a full knowledge of the truth”; cf. 2 Tim. 2:25.)

¹² Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 756). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2 Timothy 3:8–9. The reference to **Jannes and Jambres** and their opposition to **Moses** draws not on the Old Testament but on a widespread Jewish legend about two of Pharaoh’s magicians who competed against Moses and lost (cf. Ex. 7:11; 9:11). The comparison between the false teachers and the Egyptians, and implicitly therefore Timothy and Moses, must have encouraged the young minister. The opponents were **men of depraved** (lit., “corrupt”; cf. 1 Tim. 6:5) **minds** who **oppose the truth** and were therefore **rejected** (*adokimoi*, “disapproved”) by God in regard to any claim to be teaching **the faith** (cf. 1 Tim. 3:9). Consequently, while their influence was temporarily a serious matter in the church, in the long run **they** would **not get very far**. Like Jannes and Jambres, eventually **their folly** would **be clear to everyone** (cf. 1 Tim. 4:15; 5:24–25).

VI. Challenge to Faithful Preaching (3:10–4:8).

A. Faithfulness in the face of opposition (3:10–13).

2 Timothy 3:10–11. Paul returned (cf. 1:8, 12; 2:10) to his own example of endurance and faithfulness in another of his direct exhortations to Timothy (cf. 2:1). The contrast with the false ¹³ teachers is a strong one: **You, however...** Timothy knew intimately of Paul’s **teaching** (*didaskalia*, “content”) **way of life ... purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance** (cf. 2:10, 12), **persecutions, sufferings** (cf. 1 Tim. 6:11), along with his various missionary experiences and deliverances, and the elderly apostle was not ashamed to lift them up before his young disciple

¹³ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 756–757). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

as exemplary. The references to **Antioch** (of Pisidia), **Iconium**, and **Lystra** must have stirred Timothy's earliest memories of Paul (cf. Acts 13:14, 51; 14:6, 21; 16:1).

2 Timothy 3:12–13. It was important for Timothy, as for all Christians, to realize that persecution awaits **everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ** (cf. John 15:18–21)—hence Paul's reminder of his own past experience. Yet with the last days again in mind Paul wrote that Timothy could actually expect the situation to get worse and the pressure to intensify. False teaching would increase as **evil men and impostors** (lit., “magicians,” but here with the connotation of “charlatans”) **go from bad to worse** (lit., “advance further”), **deceiving and being deceived**. Error feeds on itself.

B. Faithfulness to God's Word (3:14–4:5).

2 Timothy 3:14–15. Again, the strong direct address, **But as for you....** begins this section (cf. 2:1; 3:10; 4:5). The exhortation is to **continue in** the things Timothy had **learned** and **become convinced of** (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1–2). These things had come from two sources, which Paul set side by side as of equal importance: his own testimony, and **the Holy Scriptures**, which at that time of course consisted of the Old Testament. Timothy's complete confidence in both sources would be enough to prevent any slippage in his commitment to the truth. Again, these verses seem to imply that Timothy's salvation occurred prior to his acquaintance with Paul (cf. 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2, 5; Acts 16:1). The Scriptures bring **salvation** only when one places his **faith in Christ Jesus**.

2 Timothy 3:16–17. Paul had just noted that the Scriptures are able to make one wise with regard to salvation, a lesson Timothy had learned long before. But now Paul wanted to reemphasize ¹⁴ to Timothy the crucial role of God’s inscripturated revelation in his present ministry. Thus, **Paul reminded Timothy that all Scripture is God-breathed** (*theopneustos*, “inspired”), that is, God’s words were given through men superintended by the Holy Spirit so that their writings are without error. This fact was virtually taken for granted by the Jews. Then Paul asserted the “usefulness” of the Word.

For each aspect of Timothy’s ministry, whatever it might be—**teaching** (instructing believers in God’s truths), **rebuking** those in sin (cf. 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2), **correcting** those in error (cf. 2 Tim. 2:25; 4:2), **and training** (*paideian*, lit., “child-training”) **in righteousness** (guiding new believers in God’s ways)—for all of these and more the written Word of God is profitable. With it **the man of God** (one who must provide spiritual leadership to others) is *artios*—“complete, capable, proficient in the sense of being able to meet all demands.” To drive home his point still more emphatically Paul added **equipped** (*exērtismenos*, “furnished”) **for every good work** (cf. 2:21). Paul placed heavy burdens of ministry on his young disciple in this letter, but he did not do so irresponsibly. He was confident of Timothy’s commitment to and dependence on the Scriptures, and he was even more confident of God’s ability to supply all Timothy’s needs through the Word.

¹⁴ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 757). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2 Timothy 4:1. It would be difficult to see how Paul could have made his **charge** to Timothy any more weighty (cf. 1 Tim. 5:21; 6:13). He adjured Timothy, not only **in the name of God and of Christ**, but in the light of the coming judgment, Christ's return (*epiphaneian*, **appearing**; cf. 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13), and the establishment of **His** millennial **kingdom**.

2 Timothy 4:2. The content of Paul's charge represents the central thrust of every minister's task: Timothy was to **preach the Word**. All the weight of verse 1 bears on this entreaty. Paul could hardly have emphasized the matter more strongly. Because the Word is inspired and profitable for all aspects of the ministry, proclaiming that Word was to be Timothy's business **in season and out of season**, that is, he was to stand by this duty ¹⁵ whether the opportunity seemed ripe or not. Those in error he was to **correct** (cf. 2:25); those who were sinning he was to **rebuke** (1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 3:16; Titus 1:13; 2:15); those who were doing well he was to **encourage**. These are the facets of public ministry: proclamation, correction, rebuke, and encouragement—all of which must be done **with great patience and careful instruction**.

2 Timothy 4:3–4. The reason Paul's charge to Timothy is so solemn is that **the time will come**—and no doubt was already partially present, **in the apostle's opinion—when men will not put up with sound** (lit., “healthy”; cf. 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:8) **doctrine**. Instead ... **they would seek out** (lit. “heap up”) **teachers, of whom many are always available, who would tell them what they**

¹⁵ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 757–758). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

wanted to hear rather than face them with the truth (cf. Rom. 1:18–32). Such teachers merely “tickle the ear” so that they turn people away from the truth on the one hand and toward myths (*mythous*; cf. 1 Tim. 1:4) on the other. Paul’s main focus in this passage was on the inclinations of the audience rather than, as was more his custom (but cf. 2 Tim. 3:6–7), the evil intent of the false teachers. For error to flourish both sides of the transaction must cooperate. This is the sixth time Paul used “truth” in this epistle (cf. 2:15, 18, 25; 3:7–8). (He referred to truth five times in 1 Tim. [2:4, 7; 3:15; 4:3; 6:5] and twice in Titus [1:1, 14].) Obviously, he was concerned about the dangers of heresies diverting people from God’s truth.

2 Timothy 4:5. Again Paul used the strong contrast **But you ...** (cf. 3:10, 14). Timothy must remain cool-headed in the face of difficulties. He must be ready to **endure hardship** (cf. 2:3) as the pressure mounted. He must **do the work of an evangelist**, proclaiming the gospel at every opportunity. (There is no reason to assume, as some suggest, that Timothy was without the gift of evangelism). In every way, Paul wrote, fulfill **your ministry** (*diakonian*, the word for voluntary “service” from which comes “deacon”).

C. Faithfulness of Paul (4:6–8).

2 Timothy 4:6. What had overshadowed the entire ¹⁶ epistle is now stated explicitly: Paul was about to die. The apostle’s strong charge in the previous verses takes on added weight with this reminder. The “But you” of verse 5 must therefore be seen in contrast not only with the false teachers of verses 3–4 but also with the **For I** of

¹⁶ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 758). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

verse 6. Paul viewed his death now as certain; he was **already being poured out like a drink offering** (cf. Phil. 2:17). This refers to the libation connected with the daily offerings of the lambs (cf. Num. 28:4–7). Paul knew, sitting in a Roman jail, that there would be no release. **The time had come for his departure** (*analyseōs*, a traveler’s term commonly used as a euphemism for death).

2 Timothy 4:7. Looking back over his life, the apostle offered a remarkable description few could honestly echo. He had **fought the good fight** (cf. 1 Tim. 6:12) **finished the race** (cf. Acts 20:24), and **kept the faith** (cf. 1 Tim. 6:20). The first two are common Pauline athletic images (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24–27), while the third draws again on the image of faithfulness in one’s stewardship of Christian truth (cf. 2 Tim. 1:14).

2 Timothy 4:8. As a result of his faithfulness to duty Paul had no fear of facing **the Lord, the righteous Judge**, but only anticipation of reward in the form of a **crown** (*stephanos*, the laurel wreath of the athletic games) **of righteousness which** was already waiting **in store for** him. “Crown of righteousness” can mean either that righteousness itself is the crown or reward, or that this crown is the reward *for* righteousness (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16). In favor of the first view is the fact that James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10 seem to say that the “crown of life” means that life *is* the crown, not that a crown is given because one has life. In either case Paul expected to receive his reward **on that day** (a reference to Christ’s return, not Paul’s death), side by side with the rest of the faithful **who have longed for His appearing** (cf. Phil. 3:20–21; Titus 2:13).

VII. Reminder of God's Faithfulness in Paul's Adversity (4:9–18).

A. Paul's enemies and friends (4:9–16).

2 Timothy 4:9. In this last section of the epistle Paul ¹⁷ twice urged Timothy to join him in Rome (vv. 9, 21). The emphasis is on speed since Paul did not know how much longer he would be allowed to live. The delivery of the epistle, followed by Timothy's travel, would occupy some months as it was; any delay on Timothy's part could make his arrival too late. Paul evidently had reason to believe that his execution was imminent (cf. v. 6).

2 Timothy 4:10. Paul's need for Timothy was intensified by the defection of **Demas** who, instead of loving the Lord's appearing (v. 8), **loved this world**. Previously mentioned among Paul's fellow workers (though, perhaps significantly, not commended) in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24, Demas **deserted** the apostle to embrace the safety, freedom, or comfort of **Thessalonica**. It should not be surprising that Paul would long for his most faithful disciple Timothy at such a time (cf. Phil. 2:20–22; 2 Tim. 1:4). Of **Crescens** nothing is known. He and **Titus** had evidently been dispatched to the Lord's work elsewhere, Crescens to **Galatia** and Titus to **Dalmatia**, now Yugoslavia. Unlike Demas, there is no hint of any defection on their part.

2 Timothy 4:11. Of all Paul's close associates, **only** the "beloved physician" **Luke** (cf. Col. 4:14) was **with** Paul. He had accompanied Paul on many of his travels and

¹⁷ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 758–759). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

had shared the first Roman imprisonment with him (cf. Col. 4:14; Phile. 24). In joining the two of them, Timothy was to pick up **Mark** along the way. It is not known where Mark might have been located. But this one whom Paul had once considered untrustworthy (Acts 15:36–40) was now considered **helpful to Paul in his ministry**. Barnabas' concern (in opposition to Paul's wishes) to salvage the young John Mark was now paying dividends to Paul himself (cf. Col. 4:10).

2 Timothy 4:12. **Tychicus**, another of Paul's faithful traveling companions (cf. Acts 20:4) and messengers (Eph. 6:21–22; Col. 4:7–9) had been **sent ... to Ephesus**. The reference is cryptic and evidently self-explanatory to Timothy. Perhaps Tychicus delivered the letter; perhaps he was even, by prior arrangement, to relieve Timothy temporarily (cf. Titus 3:12). In any case Tychicus was another **18** of Paul's absent companions.

2 Timothy 4:13. Again little is known of **Carpus** or **the cloak ... scrolls, or parchments** mentioned here. Such glimpses into the daily life of the apostle are intriguing, but any attempts to suggest what the documents might have contained, for example, are purely speculative. Paul may have needed the cloak because winter was coming on and his prison was cold, but even this is uncertain.

2 Timothy 4:14–15. **Alexander the metalworker** may be the same man named in Acts 19:33–34, or more likely, the person in 1 Timothy 1:20. But since the name Alexander was common, one cannot be certain. The Alexander referred to here was

¹⁸ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 759). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

well known to Timothy and had done **a great deal of harm** to Paul by opposing his **message**. The apostle had no desire for personal revenge, as may be seen by his reference to Psalm 62:12: **The Lord will repay him for what he has done** (cf. Rom. 12:19). Yet Paul was concerned lest Timothy run afoul of Alexander's attacks. Hence his warning to **be on your guard against him**.

2 Timothy 4:16. Paul's **first defense** evidently refers, not to his first Roman imprisonment, about which Timothy would have already known, but to a preliminary hearing leading up to his present trial. At such trials it was common to hear advocates for the accused, but in Paul's case **no one came to his support, but everyone deserted** him. The widespread desertion of the apostle may be explained by the fact that, unlike the period of his first imprisonment, it had now become dangerous to be a Christian in Rome. As early as A.D. 59–60 Roman Jews had informed Paul "that people everywhere are talking against this sect" (Acts 28:22). But the situation had gotten far worse after the fire of Rome in July of A.D. 64. Nero made the Christians scapegoats and many were tortured and died. The intensity of the anti-Christian pressure must have eased somewhat by A.D. 67, but the thought of identifying themselves with the fearless and outspoken apostle must have been more than the Roman Christians and even Paul's companions could face. In fact Paul was understanding toward their unfaithfulness, and he ¹⁹ expressed the hope that **it not be held against them** (cf. Christ's words on the cross, Luke 23:34).

¹⁹ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 759). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

B. Paul's deliverance by the Lord (4:17–18).

2 Timothy 4:17. Paul's courage in proclaiming the gospel was not dampened by the weakness of those around him. The secret to his ministry was his dependence on the strength of God (Phil. 4:13; 1 Tim. 1:12). Though nobody remained with him Paul said, **The Lord stood at my side and gave me strength.** The apostle to the Gentiles had long before discounted his own life for the sake of preaching the gospel (cf. Acts 20:24). This was simply the latest episode of many wherein Paul put his own life on the line **so that through him the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.** And once again, at least for the time being, he had been **delivered from the lion's mouth.** Some have seen in this last phrase a metaphorical reference to Nero or a literal reference to the wild animals in the Roman Coliseum. More likely Paul is drawing on a biblical image (cf. Ps. 22:21; Dan. 6:22).

2 Timothy 4:18. Paul knew that his fate in the Roman courts was sealed (cf. vv. 6–8), and he was ready to die. Yet he saw his death not as a victory for Rome but as a **rescue** of the Lord. Despite **every evil attack**, he had complete confidence that God would **bring** him **safely to His heavenly kingdom** (cf. v. 1). For this Paul, even in the face of his own death, could do nothing but praise God: **To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen** (cf. Eph. 3:21; 2 Peter 3:18).

VIII. Final Greetings (4:19–22).

2 Timothy 4:19–20. Prisca (NIV marg.; elsewhere called **Priscilla**) and **Aquila**, the well-known couple who taught Apollos in Ephesus (cf. Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19), and the faithful **household of Onesiphorus** (cf. 2 Tim. 1:16) were

singled out by the apostle for greeting. **Erastus** was an old associate of Timothy (Acts 19:22) and his whereabouts would presumably be of interest; the same would be true of the information about **Trophimus** (cf. Acts 20:4; 21:29), an Ephesian. ²⁰

2 Timothy 4:21. The appeal in verse 9 is repeated with the addition of the words **before winter**. Paul may have desired his cloak before the weather turned cold (v. 13), but he was more likely concerned about the sailing conditions on the Adriatic Sea. Of the four individuals listed, **Eubulus ... Pudens, Linus, and Claudia**, nothing is known. Though “everyone” had deserted Paul at his first defense, still, in the spirit of forgiveness expressed in verse 16, Paul had not cut the Roman Christians off. The greeting is from **all the brothers**.

2 Timothy 4:22. Paul’s closing benediction is first directed to Timothy (**your spirit**, sing.) and then to his other readers (**you**, pl.), once again demonstrating that the epistle was designed to be read widely (cf. 1 Tim. 6:21; Titus 3:15). If 2 Timothy were penned during Paul’s second Roman imprisonment, these are the last words of the apostle to have survived.

²⁰ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [2 Timothy](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 759–760). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.