



A Study of Second Timothy

I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God
2 Timothy 1:6

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Syllabus

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An All Too Familiar Greeting

2 Timothy 1:1-2

The introduction to Paul's second letter to Timothy is a familiar one. It is written in the style of the time. Paul identifies himself and Timothy. Then, he offers his heartfelt desire for Timothy to experience God's grace, mercy, and peace. Paul typically expressed these sentiments in the introductions of his letters. Most of the other New Testament authors do the same. While this may be common to us, we must not forget its significance.

The epistles are filled with commands, exhortations, admonitions, and even rebukes. Yet, the writing flowed from the authors' desire for their recipients to experience the grace, mercy, and peace of God. Also, the epistles were written to people and churches where grace, mercy, and peace were often lacking. These letters were written to people and churches with problems. In the case of this letter, Timothy was discouraged and needed to be reenergized.

When grace, mercy, and peace are not on the rise in our lives or in our churches, we may struggle to accept commands, exhortations, admonitions, or rebukes. Yet, we must remember they come from God's genuine desire for us to experience His grace, mercy, and peace.

QUESTIONS

1). What is...

Grace:

Mercy:

Peace:

2). What was preventing Timothy and the church at Ephesus from experiencing grace, mercy, and peace?

3). What prevents us from experiencing grace, mercy, and peace? What must we do to receive these blessings?

The Promise of Life

2 Timothy 1:1-2

In the introduction of this letter, Paul describes the purpose of His vocation. Paul was made an apostle by the authority of the resurrected Lord. God made Jesus king of Heaven and earth by raising Him from the dead and bringing Him back to Heaven. Jesus' lordship will not be denied. As awesome as His power is, His rule is intended to enrich our existence.

Paul had a fearsome encounter with the resurrected Lord. Surprisingly, the Lord did not destroy Paul. Instead, Paul received grace, mercy, and peace. The resurrected Lord purposed to use Paul for the promise of life.

The promise of life is an important expression. The term promise indicates an assurance of the blessing Jesus grants: life. The term promise also relates to an announcement. By the assurance of the resurrection of Jesus, Paul was used to announce life to the world.

Jesus frequently spoke about His purpose in giving life. He described His teaching as words of spirit and life (John 6:63). He promised to give believers an abundant life (John 10:10). He boldly declared that He was the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). He taught the apostles that He came to save life, not destroy life (Luke 9:54-56). He promised that death would not be able to overcome His kingdom (Matt. 16:18). He performed miracles which reversed decay and brought physical regeneration. He raised Lazarus from the dead. Ultimately, God raised Jesus from the dead to solidify His uniqueness.

QUESTIONS

- 1). In your own words, explain the promise of life.

- 2). How do we receive the promise of life?

- 3). How is the promise of life experienced presently? What does it mean to have an abundant life?

- 4). What gets in our way of receiving the promise of life?

Serving God with a Clear Conscience

2 Timothy 1:3

What is the conscience? This aspect of our mind may be hard to define. The conscience is what we use to make moral and ethical decisions: what we use to determine right and wrong. The word consists of two parts: 1) Con- "with" 2) Science- "knowledge." Putting this together, we make decisions with the knowledge we possess.

There are many factors in life which influence, educate, and form our conscience. Family, religion, media, politics, peers, laws, and customs all shape our conscience. Yet, these and other measures cannot be the final conscience shaping influences in our lives. Ultimately, the Gospel is what is to shape our conscience.

The Gospel will instill a proper awareness of right and wrong. After we are educated by the Gospel, we can begin to properly discern the world. Our decision making process will be impacted by the Gospel. When we stray and sin, our conscience will alert with guilt and shame. Our conscience will influence us to correct our sin. Just the opposite is true if our conscience is not trained by the Gospel.

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul will describe people whose consciences had been seared, unable to feel shame and regret (1 Tim. 4:1-2). When they sinned, they felt nothing. If our conscience is not protected, we will have little hope for salvation.

QUESTIONS

- 1). What are the dangers of an untrained conscience?

- 2). What are two major influences on our understanding of right and wrong?

- 3). How can the conscience be retrained?

- 4). What considerations should we make before making a decision?

I Remember You Constantly in My Prayers

2 Timothy 1:3

The letters Paul wrote Timothy convey a vast state of separation. They were separated by a great distance. Communication was difficult and rare. Yet, Paul had not forgotten Timothy. He was praying for him constantly: night and day.

There are many reasons that Paul is an example to us. Perhaps an often overlooked trait of Paul was his practice of prayer. Prayer is an often devalued exercise of the faith. This was not so with Paul. Notice several references he makes to his private prayers:

Philippians 1:3-5: "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3: "We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Corinthians 1:11: "You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many."

Prayer was used by Paul to solicit God's help and blessing. Prayer was used to bridge the divide caused by distance. He was not able to physically be in the presence of Timothy; however, Paul could pray for Timothy. Prayer was an effective way for Paul to support Timothy in his most challenging work.

QUESTIONS

- 1). What are the purposes of prayer?

- 2). Why do we often overlook prayer?

- 3). Who could you pray for like Paul prayed for Timothy?

Sincere Faith

2 Timothy 1:5

In the opening lines of the letter, Paul writes about the faith of Timothy. Paul is quite nostalgic. He calls to memory the faith of Timothy's mother and grandmother. We know little about Timothy's family. His father is only identified once in the Bible. He was simply described as a Greek. This leaves two impressions about Timothy's father: 1). He was not a believer. 2). He may have been dead when Paul met Timothy.

Timothy's mother and grandmother were the prime spiritual influences in his life. They taught him the Scriptures. When Timothy came of age, he became a believer in Jesus as the Christ and devoted his life to preaching the Gospel. Yet, he did not become a believer to please his mother or grandmother. Paul describes Timothy's faith as "sincere." Timothy's belief was a true expression of his heart and mind.

It appears that Timothy did not have the advantage of being raised by two godly parents. Yet, Timothy grew into a godly man. This was due to the power of the Gospel. Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him the word of God. Faith is created by the Gospel/word of God. The Bible compensates for whatever disadvantages one might have in life. Family certainly has an important role in the formation of faith. However, sincere faith demands that we make personal decisions about our beliefs.

QUESTIONS

- 1). What is the difference between sincere faith and insincere faith?

- 2). How can family members help form our faith?

- 3). Is faith transferrable from person to person? Explain your answer.

Fan into Flame the Gift of God

2 Timothy 1:6-7

In the opening lines of this letter, we get the sense that Timothy was discouraged. There was a sense of isolation that he felt. Paul mentions Timothy's tears during their separation. Being separated from loved ones is not preferable; yet, for the sake of the work, it was necessary. Paul looked forward to being reunited with Timothy: a joyous occasion (2 Tim. 1:4). Until then, Paul wanted Timothy to be encouraged.

Timothy had been given a gift from God. Paul made reference to this in his first letter, but does not explain any specifics of the gift. Clearly, though, the gift was sufficient to aid Timothy's work. To encourage Timothy, Paul reminds him about the power of this gift.

Paul uses the illustration of fanning a flame. An ember has diminishing energy. To grow in intensity, the ember needs oxygen. Paul was trying to intensify the use of Timothy's gift. He was concerned Timothy would burn-out in his work. Rather than becoming more confident in the gift of God, discouragement would give way to fear.

Similarly, we have been given a gift from God. We all have been endowed with a measure of grace whereby we can be profitable in God's service. These gifts are not lacking in ability. Whatever Timothy's gift was, there was nothing wrong with it. The problem that Timothy had and the problem we have is how we use the gift. If we become discouraged and doubtful about the grace of God, we will render the gift of God ineffective. Spiritual burn-out is a real concern. Therefore, we must nurture our faith for the sake of using God's gift to its full potential.

QUESTIONS

- 1). What causes our flame to dim? What causes burn-out?

- 2). How can we fan into flame our gift? Can we do this alone?

- 3). Explain how God's gift leads to...

Power:

Love:

Self-control:

Illuminating the Path to Life

2 Timothy 1:8-11

In this text, Paul offers a deep theological statement. He explains the nature and consequence of the grace of God. He uses language which paints a portrait of a person trying to find their way in a dark world. At some point in life, we will be made to confront questions basic to human existence. Questions like, "Who am I? Where am I going? How am I going to get there? What's the point of life?" The grace of God answers these questions.

Before seeking answers to these questions, we must recognize that God first had a purpose for us. As our Creator, God's purpose for humanity pre-dates humanity's existence. God has created us with intent. Seeking understanding to God's creative design is the context in which we are to seek understanding about our purpose.

Paul says that God has illuminated the path that leads to life and immortality by Jesus Christ. God has brought understanding to the world through Him. If we want to know who we are, where we are going, and how we are going to get there, we must look to the grace of God.

QUESTIONS

- 1). What does light signify in the Bible? How does its meaning relate to this passage?

- 2). What is God's purpose and grace? How are the two related?

- 3). How did God abolish or destroy death?

- 4). What are the consequences of God destroying death?

Guarding the Sacred Trust

2 Timothy 1:12-14

Paul wanted to fan the flame of the gift of God in Timothy. He wanted Timothy to be reenergized in his faith and work. In this paragraph, Paul urges Timothy to guard the sacred trust which had been committed to his care. This expression emphasizes our relationship to the gift God has given us.

Our gifts come from God. They are to be treasured and used with care. Timothy was entrusted with a great responsibility. Paul states how Timothy was to guard the sacred trust. The following points teach us how we are to guard the sacred trust committed to our care.

QUESTIONS

Explain how we are to guard the sacred trust in the following ways...

- 1). Unashamed:

- 2). Sharing in suffering:

- 3). Trusting in grace:

- 4). Teaching the Gospel:

- 5). Following the pattern of sound words:

- 6). Following the Spirit:

A True Friend

2 Timothy 1:15-18

At the close of the first chapter, we learn of another likely reason why Timothy was discouraged: Paul was imprisoned. The future for Paul was grim and Timothy knew it. Seeing his mentor suffer such injustice must have been deeply painful for Timothy. Paul's imprisonment would have been a real test of faith for Timothy. Yet, Paul tries to reassure Timothy of his condition.

While Paul does not focus on his circumstances, he does give us a glimpse into his struggle. During his imprisonment, many Christians turned their backs on him. He mentions two: Phygelus and Hermogenes. This was not the only time he experienced such abandonment. While he does not have animosity towards these brethren, it must have caused him pain. Yet, there was one man who came to his aid.

Onesiphorus went to great lengths to visit Paul. He proved to be a true friend (Prov. 17:17). Paul sends words of commendation to this man's household, leading some to think that Onesiphorus had died at this point. Onesiphorus had traveled to Rome to see Paul. He risked his life. What a surprise and encouragement it must have been when Paul laid his weary eyes on Onesiphorus.

QUESTIONS

- 1). Why did most Christians turn their backs on Paul when he was imprisoned?
- 2). Why did Onesiphorus visit Paul?
- 3). Why are our relationships as Christians important?
- 4). What can you do to be more encouraging to your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Commit to Faithful Men

2 Timothy 2:1-2

Paul was forward-thinking in his ministry. He thought about the future. He planned for the future. His concern for the future was a factor in his relationship with Timothy. Paul was not in denial that his life was rapidly nearing its end. Timothy was the future.

Paul also wanted Timothy to be forward-thinking in his ministry. Timothy could not bear the burden of the work alone. He needed help. As considered in the first letter, Timothy needed the support of godly elders and deacons to combat false teachers. In this text, Paul instructs Timothy to commit his teachings to faithful men who would also be able to teach others.

This subtle instruction is significant to the proper development of a church. Churches grow when the members individually grow. Leaders of the church, elders in particular, must cultivate up-and-coming generations for leadership. Timothy needed to find "faithful" men to support the church. This term implies men who are devoted and loyal to Christ and His Church. Such men are grounded in the Gospel and are dependable as servants. The point of entrusting the Gospel to faithful men was to equip them to teach others. This process is how the Gospel is transmitted. When this process is implemented the church will become active, Christians will grow, and God will give an increase.

QUESTIONS

- 1). Paul mentored Timothy. Now, Paul wanted Timothy to mentor other men. Why is mentorship important, especially for younger people?
- 2). What steps must churches take to prepare for the future?
- 3). What can cause churches to become short-sighted in their work?

Be Strengthened by Grace

2 Timothy 2:1-7

In the first chapter of the letter, Paul expressed his heart's desire to encourage Timothy. There were reasons why Timothy was discouraged, not the least of which was Paul's imprisonment. As Paul's exhortation continues, Paul identifies the source of strength for Timothy: the grace of Jesus Christ.

Remembering his past association with Paul would have been helpful and comforting to Timothy; however, Paul recognized that Timothy needed more than fond memories to embolden him. Timothy needed the grace of Jesus Christ.

This paragraph indicates the ability of the grace of Jesus Christ to provide our needs, especially when we are discouraged. Paul used three illustrations to describe how the grace of Christ could affect Timothy. Soldiers, athletes, and farmers were common in the world of Paul and Timothy. Each convey important aspects of the grace of Christ.

QUESTIONS

Explain how the grace of Christ...

1). Strengthens like a soldier:

2). Disciplines like an athlete:

3). Feeds like a farmer:

Remember the Resurrected Lord

2 Timothy 2:8-13

Timothy was doing difficult work as an evangelist. Paul was concerned that Timothy was losing heart. In this text, Paul reminds Timothy of the resurrection of Jesus. There is no greater source of encouragement and hope than the resurrection of Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead was the culmination of God's plan of redemption. The resurrection of Jesus was how God defeated sin, evil, and death. The resurrection empowered the blood of Jesus to forgive sins. The resurrection is the greatest evidence for us to believe in Jesus' power to save. The resurrection gives us hope of eternal life. Therefore, when we are struggling, our minds need to be stirred to remember the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Contextually, Paul draws a contrast between his present condition and the resurrection. He was bound in prison. Yet, attempts to stop the preaching of *his* gospel were futile. He may have been bound, but the Gospel was not. The spread of the Gospel is unstoppable for a clear reason: Jesus was raised. The chains of death could not hold Jesus; therefore, man's attempts to suppress the Gospel will fail.

The resurrection of Jesus empowered Paul to faithfully endure his imprisonment. This is not to say that he was unaffected by this hardship. His situation was dire; however, he dealt with this persecution through an awareness of the resurrection of Jesus. Then, he tells Timothy the personal impact the resurrection has on the lives of Christians.

QUESTIONS

Explain the following points of Paul's trustworthy saying

- 1). If we have died, we will live with Him:
- 2). If we endure, we will reign with Him:
- 3). If we deny, He will deny us:
- 4). If we are faithless, He remains faithful:

Present Yourself Approved to God

2 Timothy 2:14-19

In this paragraph, Paul emphasizes Timothy's need for proper focus as a Christian. It is easy to become entangled and distracted by endlessly arguing and debating critics of the faith. Like today, Timothy faced some who were falsely claiming that the resurrection of the dead was a past event. Their speculations would only damage faith. Instead, Paul tells Timothy to present himself approved to God.

Keeping ourselves approved before God is an ongoing process. This personal work is how we mature in the image of Christ. Timothy was to use the Gospel, the word of truth, as the standard of self-reflection. Also, Paul qualified how the word of truth was to be used: rightly. The implication, of course, is that we can handle the word of truth wrongly.

Hymenaeus and Philetus mishandled the truth. This caused them to swerve from the truth. They had come to wrong conclusions about the resurrection. Their false teaching was harming faithful Christians. Timothy needed to use the truth to protect the saints and ground them in the truth of the Gospel.

Paul concludes this thought by reaffirming the foundation of God. Even if Christians doubt basic and fundamental issues of the truth, the foundation of God remains strong.

QUESTIONS

- 1). What is required to handle the truth rightly?
- 2). What can cause us to mishandle the truth?
- 3). What makes us doubt the foundation of God?

Vessels of Honor

2 Timothy 2:20-22

Paul had a great way of using relatable analogies in his writing. In this section, Paul describes a Christian as a vessel of honor. While this was written over 2,000 years ago, the analogy resonates with readers even today. In our houses, we use mixing bowls, pots, and pans to prepare food. We use special bowls and platters to present the food at our tables. Some vessels are practical, while some vessels are special.

Paul uses the analogy of an honorable vessel to describe holiness. We are to aspire to the moral and ethical holiness of God. As Christians, we have become consecrated through our obedience to the Gospel. By this voluntary act, God sets us apart from unusable vessels. After God consecrates us for His use, we must keep ourselves pure.

Paul finishes the thought of being honorable vessels, by telling Timothy to flee youthful lusts. There are certain temptations that appeal to us at different stages of life. Youth is no exception to this danger. Fleeing youthful lusts is how younger people can become honorable vessels.

QUESTIONS

Rather than pursuing lust in youth, explain how the young are to pursue...

1). Righteousness:

2). Faith:

3.) Love:

4). Purity:

The Right Kind of Teacher

2 Timothy 2:24-26

In this chapter, Paul warns Timothy three times about interacting with false teachers. We get the sense that they were a real problem. Defending the truth and protecting the saints must have been a taxing job for Timothy. It could have been very easy for him to become bitter against false teachers. In this text, Paul reminds Timothy about being the right kind of teacher.

A teacher is a servant of the Lord. This description indicates humility and obedience. Christ is concerned about the character of His servants. Paul knew the dangers of being a teacher. Teachers can lose perspective on the purpose of their doctrine. As Paul stated in his first letter, the aim of their charge was love (1 Tim. 1:5). Therefore, there was only one acceptable approach to the work.

Paul states servants of the Lord are not to be quarrelsome or argumentative. We are not to be the fuel of debate and contention. The purpose of teaching is not to win an argument or gain a following. The purpose of our teaching is to persuade hearts and minds. Souls must be patiently led to repent. This is the only way sinners will be set free from the devil. If we do not take to heart the kind of servant Paul describes in this passage, we will do more harm than good.

QUESTIONS

- 1). What are qualities of a servant?

- 2). How does the devil capture us?

- 3). How can we gain freedom?

- 4). How does the Golden Rule apply to this passage?

Navigating Difficult Times

2 Timothy 3:1-9

Paul wrote this letter to encourage Timothy. He wanted to fan into flame Timothy's faith (2 Tim. 1:6). How, then, would writing about difficult times accomplish this purpose? Paul was being realistic about the world and giving Timothy guidance for how to deal with problems.

In the remainder of the letter, Paul gives Timothy a proper perspective for coping with hardships. He offers keys for being victorious in the face of adversity. In the third chapter, Paul states that Timothy would encounter dangerous times. In some ways, this was already true. Timothy had witnessed and experienced persecution and the effects of false teaching. He knew the challenges of being a Christian and doing the work of an evangelist.

We need to appreciate the certainty of Paul's writing. Timothy would face difficult times. We will face difficult times. We do not do ourselves any favors by ignoring danger or wishing it away. The Bible is always direct and forthright to warn of dangers to our faith. Paul wanted Timothy to open his eyes to the dangers of the world. We must be alert to our surroundings for the sake of protecting our faith and engaging with the world.

In this text, Paul lists identifying features of the times in which he and Timothy were living. Each feature is opposed to faith and godliness. These characteristics are not unique to the first century. They were present before and since. They are with us today. They may even be present within us.

The Character of Difficult Times

Lovers of self	Heartless	Reckless
Lovers of money	Unappeasable	Conceited
Proud & arrogant	Slanderous	Lovers of pleasure
Abusive	Uncontrolled	Superficial
Disobedient to parents	Brutal	Deny power of God
Ungrateful	Not loving good	Take advantage of the vulnerable
Unholy	Treacherous	

What makes being a Christian difficult today?

Persecution of Godly People

2 Timothy 3:12

This part of Paul's letter must have been distressing for Timothy. The information Paul writes about was not new to him. Timothy had known persecution since he was a young man. This was another reminder of the relentless hardships that he and other Christians would experience.

Persecution is counterintuitive to Christians. Christians expect acceptance in the world since what they do is right. However, the world largely rejects Christians. For this reason, Jesus and apostles frequently reminded Christians of the surprising treatment they would receive from the world.

Matthew 5:10-12: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Acts 14:19-22: "But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

QUESTIONS

- 1). Why are godly people persecuted?
- 2). How are godly people persecuted?
- 3). How are godly people to handle persecution?

Learning by Example

2 Timothy 3:10-13

Timothy would not be the first Christian to live in difficult times. Paul had been living through them. He had experienced everything of which he warned Timothy. Paul's conduct had been severely tested by persecution. He mentions specific events in which he had been violently harmed. Paul had been stoned and left for dead when he was preaching in the towns of Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra (Acts 14:19-22). Timothy would have remembered this well. This happened when he first met Paul. Talk about making a "first impression!"

Paul had set an important example for Timothy. Like Timothy, we learn by example. When we lack experience, we use the examples of others to deal with an issue or situation. Paul wanted Timothy to use his example in every area of his life.

QUESTIONS

Explain how Paul left Timothy an example in the following ways:

1). Teaching:

5). Patience:

2). Conduct:

6). Love:

3). Aim in life:

7). Steadfastness:

4). Faith:

8). Suffering:

Relying on the Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:14-17

The times in which Timothy was living were spiritually threatening. There were real and present dangers. As Paul continues to give guidance to Timothy about how to navigate these difficult times, he directs him to the importance of the Scriptures.

Timothy had known the Scriptures since he was a child. This was not due to some supernatural process, but as a result of the diligent teaching of his mother and grandmother. As we encounter a spiritually threatening culture, we must rely on the Scriptures to guide us.

The Scriptures to which Paul refers is the Old Testament. The Old Testament leads readers to the Messiah, Jesus. Paul says the Scriptures make us wise to salvation through faith in Christ. Also, the Scriptures include apostolic writings. The letters the apostles wrote were given to explain the Gospel, guide churches, instruct godly living, and inform about judgment. In this text, Paul explains the origin and purpose of the Scriptures.

QUESTIONS

Explain the following features of the Scriptures:

1). Inspired by God:

5). Correction:

2). Profitable:

6). Instruction:

3). Doctrine:

7). Completeness:

4). Reproof

Preach the Word

2 Timothy 4:1-5

Paul understood the challenges of being a Christian in an ungodly society. There was great pressure on Paul to compromise his beliefs and soften his preaching. Timothy was under the same pressure. Yet, Paul was unwilling to change his message.

Today, there is pressure from society to change our beliefs and message. The world rejects the miraculous aspects of Jesus. They do not believe he performed miracles or was raised from the dead. The world rejects the moral teaching of the Scriptures. They promote premarital sex, living together before marriage, and homosexuality. And, they expect Christians to change their beliefs about these topics.

This text is not just for preachers. Every Christian needs to take Paul's instructions to heart. When we are pressured to compromise and become accommodating with the world, we need to remember Paul's admonition to "Preach the word."

QUESTIONS

- 1). What is the "word" we are to preach?

- 2). What does "in season and out of season" mean?

- 3). What do people do when they become discontented with the Gospel?

- 4). How are evangelists to fulfill their ministry?

Be Hopeful

2 Timothy 4:6-8

If John 3:16 is considered the most famous saying of Jesus, then 2 Timothy 4:6-8 may be the most famous saying of Paul. Everything we know about Paul's life, work, suffering, and view of the future comes rushing into these lines. Paul knew that his death was near. Like the pagans pouring oil and wine on the head of a sacrifice, he was marked for death.

Having little time left, Paul reflected on his life's work. He had sacrificially devoted himself to preaching the Gospel. As he thought back on this, he was satisfied. Using his typical metaphors, soldiers and athletes, he says he had fought a good fight and finished his course. He had given the ministry his all. While Paul had regrets in his life, none of them were related to his work. He was at peace.

Also, Paul expresses this hope for the future. This is quite surprising. How could someone about to be executed be hopeful about the future? Faith in Christ gave Paul a calming hope. He had done his best to obey Christ in his life and work. Therefore, he was confident about his reward.

A great part of Christianity's value is that the faith shows us both how to live and how to die. We see this in Jesus. Now, we see this in Paul. Hope comes from faith in the grace of God. Faith in God's grace compelled Paul to obey the Gospel. Faith in God's grace energized Paul to preach the Gospel. Faith in God's grace gave Paul hope when facing his mortality.

QUESTIONS

- 1). How is the life of a Christian like a fight?

- 2). How is the life of a Christian like a race/course?

- 3). Describe hope? What is its source?

- 4). What tools does Christianity give us to cope with suffering and death?

Do Your Best to Come to Me Soon

2 Timothy 4:9

Paul is typically presented as a strong, rugged man. We are first introduced to him as the up-and-coming Pharisee and persecutor of Christians. After he becomes a Christian, he is a pioneer of the Gospel. He is a fierce defender of the faith. He risks his life. He suffers violence. He is often imprisoned. He boldly demands justice from corrupt political leaders. Paul fearlessly exudes strength. This is the image of Paul to which we are mostly drawn; yet, this is an incomplete profile of Paul.

Paul expresses his vulnerability in this text. He has no doubt about the direness of his situation. He tells Timothy that he is about to die. He wants to see Timothy. Timothy needs to get to him quickly. He restates this at the end of the letter, telling Timothy to come before winter.

Paul is running out of time. He seems to be trying to get things in order. This focuses his mind; however, there is a sadness in his heart. He is lonely. He has been disappointed by brethren who did not support him during this ordeal. There were a few who helped him, most surprising was John-Mark.

Paul was a strong, resilient Christian, apostle, and preacher. He did sacrificially serve in an effort to advance faith in Christ. Yet, even Paul needed the love and help of other Christians. Paul was desperate to see Timothy. He did not just want to receive a letter from him. He wanted to see him and experience the blessings of being in his presence.

QUESTIONS

1). Read Phil. 1:12-30. How does this passage differ from 2 Tim. 4:9-22?

2). Explain the blessings of friendship.

The Desertion of Demas

2 Timothy 4:10

In the last lesson, we considered the sadness and loneliness of Paul. He is isolated in a prison facing execution. Luke has been visiting him. He wants Timothy to quickly come to him before winter. Yet, he addresses the cause of some of his disappointment.

Paul writes that Demas had deserted him. Demas had forsaken and abandoned Paul. Now, Demas had not left Paul for a good reason. It was not that Demas had another commitment or that there was a church somewhere who needed his help. Paul would not have been disappointed if the Gospel was the cause of Demas' departure. Demas left Paul because of his love for the present world.

Our minds are left to wonder what specifically had captured Demas' love. What had lured him? The language of the text indicates that Demas loved a life of ease rather than a life of danger and sacrifice. Staying with Paul was risky. Demas wanted an easier life. So, he left Paul.

Whatever the details of Demas' departure might have been, we can relate to his attitude. As Christians, we are tempted to seek an easier path in life. Jesus warned about the dangers of becoming a Christian. He said that we would be persecuted and rejected from society (Matt. 5:10-12). Yet, we must be willing to endure adversity (Matt. 8:19-22).

Demas deserted Paul. Sadly, Demas deserted more than just Paul. Demas deserted the Lord. The Lord calls us to endure hardships. We cannot go looking for an easier life and remain faithful to the Lord.

QUESTIONS

- 1). Describe the relationship of Paul and Demas (Philm. 1:24; Col. 4:14).
- 2). What does it mean to desert, abandon, and/or forsake?
- 3). How does the world tempt us to leave the Lord?

The Lord Stood by Me

2 Timothy 4:17-18

The end of this letter is quite somber. Paul's death was imminent. Yet, there is an underlining hope that he expresses. Many of Paul's friends and fellow-workers had abandoned him. When he needed help and support, some went looking for cover. Some even sought to harm him. Yet, there was One who had proven faithful throughout his ordeal. Paul confidently asserts that the Lord had stood by him and strengthened him.

While Paul was imprisoned and being pushed through an unjust legal system, he could see the Lord. The lion had been after him for a long time. The Roman government had been after him. Yet, the Lord had protected him to serve his mission.

Paul could see the hand of the Lord protecting him throughout the turmoil of his ministry. As he thought of this, he remained confident that the Lord would now rescue him. The Lord's rescue would not come in the form of a pardon from the courts. Paul's rescue would come in his death. No evil act of Rome could prevent the Lord from rescuing Paul. This was Paul's comfort and hope.

There is much that can be learned from Paul. He shows us how to endure hardships. He shows us how to take disappointment. He shows us how to be hopeful when life appears hopeless. Only faith in the resurrected Lord can give us hope.

QUESTIONS

- 1). What tests our faith?

- 2). How does God stand by us in a hard time?

- 3). What are the dangers of putting our faith in people rather than God?

Lessons Learned

Paul's second letter to Timothy represents a passing of the torch. Paul's situation in the time between the first and second letter to Timothy changed for the worse. This letter represents a call to action. Paul was confident in Timothy's ability to fulfill his ministry. Timothy has been given a solid foundation of faith through his mother and grandmother. He had been mentored by Paul. Now, Timothy was to confidently assert himself in his ministry.

QUESTIONS

Explain how the letter teaches the following lessons:

- 1). We must accept our calling.

- 2). Grace is our source of strength.

- 3). The Scriptures lead us to faith in Jesus.

- 4). In our darkest hour, Christ will stand with us.

- 5). The life of a Christian involves risk and tension.