

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 TIMOTHY 1 (PART 1)

PAUL WROTE THIS SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY AROUND 64AD DURING HIS SECOND IMPRISONMENT (1:8, 16: 2:9), PERHAPS 2 YEARS AFTER HIS FIRST LETTER. HIS FIRST IMPRISONMENT, MENTIONED IN ACTS 28 WAS MORE OF HOUSE ARREST - HIS SECOND WAS NOT LIKE THAT, FOR NOW HE'S IN A ROMAN PRISON. THE TONE OF THIS LETTER IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM 1 TIMOTHY - AS WE READ THROUGH, IT SOUNDS LIKE PAUL IS ANTICIPATING HIS DEATH AND NOT BEING RELEASED FROM PRISON - THOUGH HE IS NOT A MAN WITHOUT HOPE.

1 TIMOTHY WAS WRITTEN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PAUL'S DESIRE TO ESTABLISH FAITHFUL CHURCHES LET BY CHRIST-LIKE LEADERS. 2 TIMOTHY IS WRITTEN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PAUL'S DESIRE TO ENSURE TIMOTHY AND THE OTHER CHRISTIANS OF THE REGION STAY FAITHFUL UNDER TRIAL AND TROUBLE. IT'S A LETTER OF ENCOURAGEMENT - BUT NOT IN A LIGHTEARTED "KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK BUDDY!" KIND OF WAY - BUT ENCOURAGEMENT LIKE "BE STRONG AND DO NOT LET GO OF WHAT YOU HAVE - THE LORD WILL BE WITH YOU." IF PAUL REMAINS IN PRISON OR IS EXECUTED, TIMOTHY IS BEING CALLED TO LEAD CHURCHES AND PRESERVE PAUL'S TEACHING - PAUL WANTS HIM TO BE ACQUAINTED WITH THE BURDEN THAT WILL BE.

ULTIMATELY THIS LETTER IS A CHARGE TO TIMOTHY ROOTED IN THE GOSPEL MESSAGE ITSELF. NO MATTER WHAT WILL COME, NOR WHAT MAY HAPPEN TO PAUL - THE DISCIPLE IS TO KEEP THEIR EYES ON CHRIST - WHAT HE HAS DONE, WHAT HE IS DOING AND WHAT HE WILL DO. JOHN STOTT BREAKS THESE 4 CHAPTERS DOWN WITH 4 APOSTOLIC CHARGES TO TIMOTHY, AND TO US:

- 1 - THE CHARGE TO GUARD THE GOSPEL
- 2 - THE CHARGE TO SUFFER FOR THE GOSPEL
- 3 - THE CHARGE TO CONTINUE IN THE GOSPEL
- 4 - THE CHARGE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-6 - PAUL'S INTRODUCTION

THE INTRO TO PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY IS VERY PERSONAL. PAUL CALLS TIMOTHY HIS "BELOVED SON" (1:2), REMINDS HIM OF THEIR SHARED EMOTIONS (LONGING, TEARS AND JOY, 1:4), RECALLS TIMOTHY'S MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER, AND TIMOTHY'S OWN CONVERSION OR ORDINATION (1:6). THESE TWO MEN KNOW AND LOVE EACH OTHER.

Q - WHAT DOES THIS INTRODUCTION TELL US ABOUT PAUL?

Q - WHAT DOES THIS INTRODUCTION TELL US ABOUT TIMOTHY?

PAUL ENCOURAGES TIMOTHY BY REMINDING HIM OF THE GENUINE FAITH HE HAS SEEN IN HIS LIFE - AND THE GENUINE FAITH HE SAW FROM HIS MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER WHEN THEY FIRST MET YEARS AGO. PAUL MET TIMOTHY YEARS BEFORE DURING HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY:

ACTS 16:1-2 - PAUL CAME ALSO TO DERBE AND TO LYSTRA. AND A DISCIPLE WAS THERE, NAMED TIMOTHY, THE SON OF A JEWISH WOMAN WHO WAS A BELIEVER, BUT HIS FATHER WAS A GREEK, 2 AND HE WAS WELL SPOKEN OF BY THE BRETHREN WHO WERE IN LYSTRA AND ICONIUM.

TIMOTHY HIMSELF WAS HONORABLE AND CAME FROM A FAMILY LINE OF FAITHFUL AND GODLY SAINTS - SPECIFICALLY HIS MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER. CERTAINLY THIS REMINDER AND REFERENCE WOULD HAVE ENCOURAGED TIMOTHY. IF TIMOTHY WAS TEMPTED AT ALL AS TO WHETHER OR NOT HE WAS THE RIGHT MAN FOR THIS, PAUL SAYS "TIMOTHY, I KNOW YOU, I KNOW YOUR FAMILY - YOUR FAITH IS REAL!" THE TIMOTHY-FAMILY KNOWS HOW TO LIVE FOR GOD. THAT'S A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT PERHAPS NO ONE ELSE IN TIMOTHY'S CURRENT CIRCLE COULD HAVE GIVEN AND VERY MEANINGFUL.

IT IS NOT ONLY TIMOTHY'S FAMILY TREE THAT SHOULD BUILD HIS CONFIDENCE, BUT ALSO THE FACT THAT GOD HAS GIFTED HIM WITH THE ABILITIES TO FULFILL THIS MINISTRY - PAUL REMINDS HIM OF THIS AS WELL AND ENCOURAGES HIM TO "FAN INTO FLAME" (ESV) THE GIFT OF GOD - NOT THAT THE SPIRITUAL GIFT HAD NECESSARILY DIED OUT - BUT THAT HE SHOULD RELY ON GOD'S SPIRIT AND THE POWER THAT IS AT WORK IN TIMOTHY.

REMEMBER, TIMOTHY IS YOUNG (1 TIMOTHY 4:12), POSSIBLY TIMID IN NATURE (1 COR. 16:10-11), AND POTENTIALLY PHYSICALLY WEAK (1 TIMOTHY 5:23) AT TIMES AS WELL AND SO PAUL IS SAYING: BROTHER TIMOTHY, YOU ARE GOING TO BE ALRIGHT - YOU HAVE GENUINE FAITH, YOU WERE RAISED RIGHT, AND GOD HAS GIVEN YOU ALL YOU NEED.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7-12 - GOSPEL REMINDERS & GOSPEL ENCOURAGEMENT

GOSPEL NOTES AND TRUTHS APPEAR THROUGHOUT THIS LETTER, AND FOR GOOD REASON. IF TIMOTHY IS TEMPTED TO BE AFRAID OR UNPREPARED FOR THE SITUATION HE IS IN - PAUL DECLARES GOSPEL TRUTH.

YOU'RE INADEQUATE? → GOD HAS GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF POWER, LOVE AND DISCIPLINE! (V. 7)

YOU'RE AFRAID? → GOD HAS ABOLISHED DEATH AND ILLUMINATED LIFE AND IMMORTALITY THROUGH THE GOOD NEWS! (V. 10)

YOU'RE UNSURE HOW THINGS WILL WORK OUT? → GOD IS ABLE TO GUARD WHAT YOU HAVE ENTRUSTED TO HIM (YOUR OWN LIFE!) UNTIL THE COMING OF CHRIST! (V. 12)

THE GOSPEL IS NOT ONLY THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION IN THE PAST NOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM IN THE FUTURE, IT IS THE SOURCE OF FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH FOR OUR LIVES IN THE PRESENT. BECAUSE OF THE NEWS PROCLAIMED THROUGH THE GOSPEL MESSAGE, EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT NOW! WE CAN ENCOURAGE OTHERS WITH VAPOROUS PLATITUDES "YOU CAN DO IT!", "YOU'VE GOT THIS", "YOU'RE SPECIAL", ETC - OR WE CAN DECLARE GOD'S GOSPEL TRUTH TO EACH OTHER - AND OURSELVES!

CONSIDER THE GOSPEL ENCOURAGEMENT FOUND IN JUST THE FIRST 12 VERSES:

GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS SPIRIT. (V. 7)

GOD'S SPIRIT IS MORE POWERFUL THAN OUR FEARS (V. 7)

GOD'S SPIRIT EMPOWERS US WITH LOVE AND DISCIPLINE (V. 7)

GOD HAS SAVED US (V. 9)

GOD HAS GIVEN US A HOLY CALLING, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS OR DESERVEDNESS (V. 9)

CHRIST JESUS HAS ABOLISHED DEATH (V. 10)

CHRIST JESUS HAS REVEALED THE WAY TO IMMORTALITY (V. 10)

GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY AND ABLE TO KEEP US (V. 12)

HOW ABOUT WAKING UP TO THAT EVERY MORNING! PAUL'S WRITINGS MODEL HOW WE OUGHT TO ENCOURAGE OURSELVES AND OTHERS AS WELL HOW THE GOSPEL SHOULD SATURATE OUR LIVES AS CHRISTIANS. THE GOSPEL ISN'T JUST A ONE TIME ANNOUNCEMENT.

THAT BEING SAID, IT IS ALSO HELPFUL FOR US TO CONSIDER THE ORIGINAL CONTEXT OF THE IMPORTANT AND OFTEN QUOTED 2 TIMOTHY 1:7. NOTICE THE FIRST WORD OF THE FOLLOWING VERSE: "THEREFORE..." (V. 8). PAUL IS NOT JUST SAYING TO TIMOTHY "DON'T BE SCARED OF " BECAUSE GOD IS WITH YOU - HE'S SAYING THIS IN LIGHT OF THE SUFFERING THAT TIMOTHY *IS GOING TO EXPERIENCE* AS A RESULT OF HIS STAND FOR THE GOSPEL AND HIS STANDING WITH PAUL.

THIS IS NOT JUST A VERSE TO RECITE WHEN YOU HEAR A WEIRD NOISE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT - EVERYONE, CHRISTIAN OR NOT HEARS NOISE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT - AND YES, WE CAN BE FREE FROM ALL FEARS BECAUSE GOD IS WITH US AND LOVES US - BUT, AS CHRISTIANS WE NEED TO NOT BE AFRAID EVEN THOUGH WE SHOULD ANTICIPATE TRIALS AND SUFFERINGS BECAUSE WE ARE CHRISTIANS. IN THOSE MOMENTS, WE SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID.

2 TIMOTHY 1:13-14 - GUARD THE GOSPEL

AND NOW THIS BRINGS US TO PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY: RETAIN THE STANDARD OF SOUND WORDS WHICH YOU HEARD FROM ME AND GUARD THE TREASURE WHICH HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED TO YOU. WE'LL DISCUSS THIS MORE NEXT TIME.

IT IS A RELATIVELY NEW SUGGESTION THAT CHRISTIANS WOULD SOMEHOW BE EXEMPT FROM TRIALS AND SUFFERING IN THIS EVIL AGE. NO NEW TESTAMENT WRITER TAUGHT THAT SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU HAVE FAITH IN CHRIST, YOU WILL AVOID SUFFERING. IN FACT, THEY SAY THE OPPOSITE OF THAT:

PHILIPPIANS 1:29 - FOR TO YOU IT HAS BEEN GRANTED FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, NOT ONLY TO BELIEVE IN HIM, BUT ALSO TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE,

1 PETER 2:21 - SINCE CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR YOU, LEAVING YOU AN EXAMPLE FOR YOU TO FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS,

2 TIMOTHY 3:12 - INDEED, ALL WHO DESIRE TO LIVE GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS WILL BE PERSECUTED.

MATTHEW 5:10-11 - "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN PERSECUTED FOR THE SAKE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. 11 "BLESSED ARE YOU WHEN PEOPLE INSULT YOU AND PERSECUTE YOU, AND FALSELY SAY ALL KINDS OF EVIL AGAINST YOU BECAUSE OF ME.

JOHN 15:20 - REMEMBER THE WORD THAT I SAID TO YOU, 'A SLAVE IS NOT GREATER THAN HIS MASTER.' IF THEY PERSECUTED ME, THEY WILL ALSO PERSECUTE YOU; IF THEY KEPT MY WORD, THEY WILL KEEP YOURS ALSO.

JOHN 16:33 - "THESE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU, SO THAT IN ME YOU MAY HAVE PEACE. IN THE WORLD YOU HAVE TRIBULATION, BUT TAKE COURAGE; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD."

EVERYONE WHO LIVES IN THIS EVIL WORLD HAS TROUBLE IN SOME SENSE - THERE ARE WARS, SICKNESS, RELATIONAL CONFLICT, INJUSTICE ETC - BUT THE SUFFERING WE ARE SPEAKING OF HERE IS THE SUFFERING ASSOCIATED WITH BEING A FOLLOWER OF JESUS. 1 PETER 4 EXPLAINS THIS AT LENGTH AND CONCLUDES WITH THIS:

1 PETER 4:16 - BUT IF ANYONE SUFFERS AS A CHRISTIAN, HE IS NOT TO BE ASHAMED, BUT IS TO GLORIFY GOD IN THIS NAME.

THIS IS WHAT PAUL IS PREPARING TIMOTHY FOR. HE IS SITTING IN A ROMAN PRISON, AWAITING WHAT IS LIKELY HIS DEATH SENTENCING AND HE IS USING THIS PEN TO WRITE WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND HOPE TO HIS PROTEGEE. HE IS PREPARING HIM FOR THE BATTLES TO COME. HE'S PREPARING HIM IN A FEW WAYS, AS WE WILL SEE - BUT HERE ARE TWO MAIN POINTS:

1 - YOU'RE GOING TO SUFFER AND BE TRIED. PAUL LETS TIMOTHY (AND US) KNOW THAT THIS IS GOING TO BE A HARD REALITY. ANY GOOD LEADER, TEACHER OR GENERAL IS GOING TO TELL THEIR FOLLOWERS THE TRUTH. THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT PAUL DOES. THIS LETTER IS GOING TO BE FULL OF SOBERING TRUTH.

2 - YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN. TIMOTHY IS GOING TO HAVE TO WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF HARDSHIP, BUT HE WALKS WITH GREAT HOPE. GOOD LEADERS GIVE THIS INFORMATION TOO. NO MATTER WHAT TIMOTHY WILL FACE, NO MATTER WHAT PAUL WILL FACE HERE IS OUR REFRAIN: *"OUR SAVIOR CHRIST JESUS HAS ABOLISHED DEATH"* (V. 10).

THIS INTRODUCTION TEACHES US THAT WE SHOULD OFTEN REHEARSE THE GOSPEL TO OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER. IN A WORLD OF DECEIT AND CORRUPTION WE NEED TO REMEMBER WHAT IS TRUE AND THERE IS POWER IN THE GOSPEL - TO SAVE AND SUSTAIN GOD'S PEOPLE.