

The Book Of Second Timothy

Here We Find Paul's Final Letter

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2 Timothy

OVERVIEW:

One of the most knowledgeable, influential, and beloved men of history is the apostle Paul. And we have his famous last words.

Paul was facing death. He was not dying of a disease in a sterile hospital with loved ones gathered nearby. He was very much alive, but his condition was terminal. Convicted as a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, Paul lay in a cold Roman prison, cut off from the world, with just a visitor or two and his writing materials. Paul knew that soon he would be executed (2 Tim. 4:6), and so he wrote his final thoughts to his “son” Timothy, passing to him the torch of leadership, reminding him of what was truly important, and encouraging him in the faith. Imagine how

Timothy must have read and reread every word—this was the last message from his beloved mentor, Paul. Because of the situation and the recipient, this is the most intimate and moving of all Paul’s letters, and his last.

Paul’s introduction is tender, and the love he has for Timothy exudes from every phrase (2 Tim. 1:1-5). He then reminds Timothy of the qualities necessary for a faithful minister of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:6-2:13). Timothy should remember his call and use his gifts with boldness (2 Tim. 1:6-12), keep to the truth (2 Tim. 1:13-18), prepare others to follow him in the ministry (2 Tim. 2:1-2), be disciplined and ready to endure hardship (2 Tim. 2:3-7), and keep his eyes and mind focused on Christ (2 Tim. 2:8-13).

Paul challenges Timothy to hold to sound doctrine, reject error and avoid godless chatter, correctly handle the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:14-19), and keep his life pure (2 Tim. 2:20-26).

Next, Paul warns Timothy of the opposition that he and other believers would face in the last days from self-centered people who use the church for their own gain and who teach false doctrines (2 Tim. 3:1-9). Paul tells Timothy to be prepared for these unfaithful people by remembering his example (2 Tim. 3:10-11), understanding the real source of the opposition (2 Tim. 3:12-13), and finding strength and power in the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:14-17). Then Paul gives Timothy a stirring charge—to preach the Word (2 Tim. 4:1-4) and to fulfill his ministry until the end (2 Tim. 4:5-8).

Paul concludes with personal requests and items of information. In these final words, he reveals his loneliness and his strong love for his brothers and sisters in Christ (2 Tim. 4:9-22).

There has never been another person like Paul, the missionary apostle. He was a man of deep faith, undying love, constant hope, tenacious conviction, and profound insight. And he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to give us God's message. As you read 2 Timothy, know that you are reading the last words of this great man of God—last words to Timothy and to all who would claim to follow Christ.

Recommit yourself to stand courageously for the truth, knowing the Word and being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

THE BLUEPRINT

Paul gives helpful advice to Timothy to remain solidly grounded in Christian service and to endure suffering during the difficult days to come. It is easy for us to serve Christ for the wrong reasons: because it is exciting, rewarding, or personally enriching. Without a proper foundation, however, we will find it easy to quit during difficult times. All believers need a strong foundation for their service, because Christian service does not get easier as we grow older, and it will become no easier as the time of Christ's return grows closer.

1. Foundations of Christian service (2 Tim. 1:1-2:26)

This letter is from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, sent out to tell others about the life he has promised through faith in Christ Jesus.

[2] It is written to Timothy, my dear son.

May God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace.

[3] Timothy, I thank God for you. He is the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.

[4] I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again.

[5] I know that you sincerely trust the Lord, for you have the faith of your mother, Eunice, and your grandmother, Lois. [6] This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. [7] For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. [8] So you must never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for Christ. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the proclamation of the Good News.

[9] It is God who saved us and chose us to live a holy life. He did this not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan long before the world began—to show his love and kindness to us through Christ Jesus. [10] And now he has made all of this plain to us by the coming of Christ Jesus, our Savior, who

broke the power of death and showed us the way to everlasting life through the Good News. [11] And God chose me to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of this Good News.

[12] And that is why I am suffering here in prison. But I am not ashamed of it, for I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return

[13] Hold on to the pattern of right teaching you learned from me. And remember to live in the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus. [14] With the help of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard what has been entrusted to you.

[15] As you know, all the Christians who came here from the province of Asia have deserted me; even Phygelus and Hermogenes are gone. [16] May the Lord show special kindness to Onesiphorus and all his family because he often visited and encouraged me. He was never ashamed of me because I was in prison. [17] When he came to Rome, he searched everywhere until he found me. [18] May the Lord show him special kindness on the day of Christ's return. And you know how much he helped me at Ephesus.

[2:1] Timothy, my dear son, be strong with the special favor God gives you in Christ Jesus. [2] You have heard me teach many things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Teach these great truths to trustworthy people who are able to pass them on to others.

[3] Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. [4] And as Christ's soldier, do not let yourself become tied up in the affairs of this life, for then you cannot satisfy the one who has enlisted you in his army. [5] Follow the Lord's rules for doing his work, just as an athlete either follows the rules or is disqualified and wins no prize. [6] Hardworking farmers are the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor. [7] Think about what I am saying. The Lord will give you understanding in all these things.

[8] Never forget that Jesus Christ was a man born into King David's family and that he was raised from the dead. This is the Good News I preach. [9] And because I preach this Good News, I am suffering and have been chained like a criminal. But the word of God cannot be chained. [10] I am willing to endure anything if it will bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen.

[11] This is a true saying:

If we die with him,
we will also live with him.

[12] If we endure hardship,
we will reign with him.

If we deny him,
he will deny us.

[13] If we are unfaithful,
he remains faithful,
for he cannot deny himself.

[14] Remind everyone of these things, and command them in God's name to stop fighting over words. Such arguments are useless, and they can ruin those who hear them. [15] Work hard so God can approve you. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. [16] Avoid godless, foolish discussions that lead to more and more ungodliness.

[17] This kind of talk spreads like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are examples of this. [18] They have left the path of truth, preaching the lie that the resurrection of the dead has already occurred; and they have undermined the faith of some.

[19] But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and "Those who claim they belong to the Lord must turn away from all wickedness."

[20] In a wealthy home some utensils are made of gold and silver, and some are made of wood and clay. The expensive utensils are used for special occasions, and the cheap ones are for everyday use. [21] If you keep yourself pure, you will be a utensil God can use for his purpose. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work.

[22] Run from anything that stimulates youthful lust. Follow anything that makes you want to do right. Pursue faith and love and peace, and enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts. [23] Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. [24] The Lord's servants must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone. They must be able to teach effectively and be patient with difficult people. [25] They should gently teach those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will believe the truth.

[26] Then they will come to their senses and escape from the Devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

2. Difficult times for Christian service (2 Tim. 3:1-4:22)

You should also know this, Timothy that in the last days there will be very difficult times. [2] For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. [3] They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control; they will be cruel and have no interest in what is good. [4] They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. [5] They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. You must stay away from people like that.

[6] They are the kind who work their way into people's homes and win the confidence of vulnerable women who are burdened with the guilt of sin and controlled by many desires. [7] Such women are forever following new teachings, but they never understand the truth. [8] And these teachers fight the truth just as Jannes and Jambres fought against Moses. Their minds are depraved, and their faith is counterfeit. [9] But they won't get away with this for long. Someday everyone will recognize what fools they are, just as happened with Jannes and Jambres.

[10] But you know what I teach, Timothy, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith and how long I have suffered. You know my love and my patient endurance. [11] You know how much persecution and suffering I have endured. You know all about how I was persecuted in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra—but the Lord delivered me from all of it. [12] Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. [13] But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will go on deceiving others, and they themselves will be deceived.

[14] But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. [15] You have been taught the Holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. [17] It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.

[4:1] And so I solemnly urge you before God and before Christ Jesus—who will someday judge the living and the dead when he appears to set up his Kingdom: [2]

Preach the word of God. Be persistent, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.

[3] For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to right teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever they want to hear. [4] They will reject the truth and follow strange myths.

[5] But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at bringing others to Christ. Complete the ministry God has given you.

[6] As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. [7] I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. [8] And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness that the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that great day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his glorious return.

[9] Please come as soon as you can. [10] Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus has gone to Dalmatia. [11] Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark with you when you come, for he will be helpful to me. [12] I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. [13] When you come, be sure to bring the coat I left with Carpus at Troas. Also bring my books, and especially my papers.

[14] Alexander the coppersmith has done me much harm, but the Lord will judge him for what he has done. [15] Be careful of him, for he fought against everything we said.

[16] The first time I was brought before the judge, no one was with me. Everyone had abandoned me. I hope it will not be counted against them. [17] But the Lord stood with me and gave me strength that I might preach the Good News in all its fullness for all the Gentiles to hear. And he saved me from certain death. [18] Yes, and the Lord will deliver me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly Kingdom. To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

[19] Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila and those living at the household of Onesiphorus. [20] Erastus stayed at Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick at Miletus.

[21] Hurry so you can get here before winter. Eubulus sends you greetings, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers and sisters.

[22] May the Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.

MEGATHEMES

THEME: Boldness

EXPLANATION:

In the face of opposition and persecution, Timothy was to carry out his ministry without fear or shame. Paul urged him to utilize boldly the gifts of preaching and teaching that the Holy Spirit had given him.

IMPORTANCE:

The Holy Spirit helps us to be wise and strong. God honors our confident testimony even when we suffer. To get over our fear of what people might say or do, we must take our eyes off of people and look only to God.

THEME: Faithfulness

EXPLANATION:

Christ was faithful to all of us in dying for our sin. Paul was a faithful minister even when he was in prison. Paul urged Timothy to maintain not only sound doctrine but also loyalty, diligence, and endurance.

IMPORTANCE:

We can count on opposition, suffering, and hardship as we serve Christ. But this shows that our faithfulness is having an effect on others. As we trust Christ, he counts us worthy to suffer, and he will give us the strength we need to be steadfast.

THEME: Preaching and Teaching

EXPLANATION:

Paul and Timothy were active in preaching and teaching the Good News about Jesus Christ. Paul encouraged Timothy not only to carry the torch of truth but also to train others, passing on to them sound doctrine and enthusiasm for Christ's mission.

IMPORTANCE:

We must prepare people to transmit God's Word to others so that they in turn might pass it on. Does your church carefully train others to teach?

THEME: Error

EXPLANATION:

In the final days before Christ returns, there will be false teachers, spiritual dropouts, and heretics. The remedy for error is to have a solid program for teaching Christians.

IMPORTANCE:

Because of deception and false teaching, we must be disciplined and ready to reject error. Know the Word of God as your sure defense against error and confusion.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print