

Paul's Epistles to Individuals

Lesson 15 – 2 Timothy 1:1-14

I. Review of Timeline and Authorship

Remember from the first lesson of this series that 2 Timothy is likely the last of the letters written by Paul. Probably written while during his second imprisonment in Rome (**2 Tim. 1:8**) and possibly at the same general time when the Philippian letter was written, Paul uses a phrase common to both 2 Timothy and Philippians describing his condition as *“being poured out as a drink offering”* (**Phili. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6**). The Bible does not describe Paul's death but several secular writings refer to him being martyred by Nero, executed by decapitation around 68 A.D. This probably dates 2 Timothy around the same time, shortly before his death. As previously discussed, the internal evidences show the author to be the Holy Spirit with Paul the writer, even if he dictated the words to someone else.

II. Greeting (v. 1)

Paul identifies himself as the writer, *“according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus”*, with Timothy being the audience. Paul's condition in a Roman prison, with his end of earthly life looming, certainly makes this phrase all the more meaningful. It reminds us that Christ is the purpose for his apostleship and our hope as well (**2 Tim. 1:10-12**). He also identifies himself once again as an Apostle *“by the will of God”*. This is a clear establishment of the authority by which he writes, which would have already been understood by Timothy. The fact that he cites this authority further proves that he knew the letter would be read by other Christians and would serve to instruct them as well. Although it is a personal letter, it has application to all who would read it (**1 Tim. 3:14-15; 2 Tim. 3:16-17**).

III. Paul's Love for and Confidence in Timothy (vs. 2-5)

Again Paul refers to Timothy as his “son”, indicating the closeness of the two and the fact that Paul beget Timothy in the Faith (**1 Tim. 1:2**).

A. *“I Thank God”* (v. 3)

Some might ask for what Paul might be thankful. Commentators have various ideas but the text seems to indicate his specific thanks for Timothy's faith. In the next few verses Paul expresses his love for Timothy by saying *“I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day”*. Paul commonly thanked God for faithful saints (**Eph. 1:5; 1 Thes. 1:2-3**).

B. *“The Way My Forefathers Did”* (v. 3)

Paul here reminds the reader of his Jewish heritage (**Acts 22:3, 23:1; Phili. 3:5-6**), and in doing so refutes that idea that in his conversion he had abandoned the God of Israel in preference to some alien sect. The Jews should have been like him, accepting Christ as a fulfillment of the OT scriptures as part of the promise to Abraham (**Gal. 3:8**).

C. *“Longing to See You”* (v. 4)

Paul, at the close of his life, desires to see Timothy. Noted here and toward the close of the letter (**4:9, 21**), the emotion associated with this relationship is obvious and an example for us.

D. *“Mindful of the Sincere Faith”* (v. 5)

Thankful for Timothy's faith (**1 Tim. 1:5; 6:3**) and for the faithful women who taught him, Paul is about to remind Timothy to be renewed in his efforts and in the strength of his faith in the verses that follow.

IV. **Kindle Afresh the Gift of God (vs. 6-14)**

After acknowledging Timothy's "unfeigned" faith, Paul makes a case to renew and reinforce Timothy's commitment to "the gift of God" within him. As briefly discussed in Lesson 10, regarding **1 Tim. 4:14**, this "gift" is a point of some controversy among commentators. The word "gift" is translated from the Greek "charisma" and indicates a favor received without merit. So it is a thing that cannot be earned. We know this gift was given "*through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery*" (**1 Tim. 4:14**), including Paul (**2 Tim. 1:6**). The "laying of hands" does not always indicate the passing of the Holy Spirit gifts as it was in **Acts 8:17**. Sometimes it was an acknowledgment of role, authority or a commissioning for a certain service (**Acts 13:1-3; 6:16**). Likewise, a "gift" is not always a miraculous spiritual gift (**Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11**). Even a "gift of the Holy Spirit" is not always a miraculous spiritual gift but as in **Acts 2:38**, may be the salvation availed to all who are baptized for the remission of sins. Therefore, the gift here maybe spiritual gifts passed on by the apostles, Timothy's being set apart for the work of an evangelist or a collective term addressing all aspects of gifts he has been blessed to receive, even salvation. Finally, one can't be certain about the exact nature of the gift, but the message is clear in the following verses. It is not to be neglected as the work before him is to be courageously performed. It should be noted that there is a danger of the "gift" fading from lack of use as Paul instructs Timothy to "kindle afresh" that gift (**v. 6**).

A. *Timidity/Fear Versus Power/Discipline (v. 7-9)*

The enemy of Christ is not just the one outwardly opposes Him but also the one who lacks resolve to stand unashamed for Him. The timid, fearful and weak are easily reclaimed by the world. Paul had experience with such as these (**2 Tim. 4:9, 14-16**). Remember Peter's denial (**Luke 22:55-62**). The result of this "discipline" to stand against adversity can be unfair persecution and suffering (**v. 8**), but it is according to the "*power of God*" (**v. 8**) and His "*own purpose*" (**v. 9**).

B. *Called by a Holy Calling (v. 9)*

People are called by the Gospel (**2 Thes. 2:14**), and that Gospel is God's power to save (**Rom. 1:16**). Salvation is not some nebulous concept that cannot be explained or understood. It is only through Christ (**John 6:44-59**) and only resulting through obedience to the Gospel call (**Acts 2:38; 2 Thes. 1:8**).

C. *Purpose and Grace Revealed (v. 10)*

The purpose and grace of God has been revealed in Christ. The Gospel had not been revealed in times past (**Eph. 3:3-5; Col. 1:26**) but is fully revealed in Christ (**Rom. 16:25-27**) through whom death is defeated and life everlasting is made available (**1 Cor. 15:50-58**).

D. *Paul's Commitment (vs. 11-12)*

Paul clearly establishes his authority as an appointed preacher and apostle. He willingly suffers for Christ because he is convinced and confident in the Truth of God's word, especially as described in the previous verses.

E. *Retain and Guard the Truth (vs. 13-14)*

Yet another admonition as to the need to retain the "standard of sound words", or the "doctrine conforming to Godliness" (**1 Tim. 6:3**). Here it is further described as the "treasure" which has been entrusted to Timothy (**v. 14**). This "treasure", entrusted to faithful teachers and preachers, is why the church is called the "pillar and support of the truth" (**1 Tim. 3:15**).