

PASSING THE TORCH OF LEADERSHIP

... Last Words of the Apostle Paul

A Devotional Commentary on the Book of 2 Timothy

by Paul G. Apple, November 2000

PERSEVERE IN THE HARD WORK OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY THROUGH COURAGE AND FAITHFULNESS IN PREACHING THE WORD IN THE FACE OF GROWING OPPOSITION

For each section:

- Thesis statement ... to focus on the big idea
- Analytical outline ... to guide the understanding
- Devotional questions ... to encourage life application
- Representative quotations ... to stimulate deeper insight

2 Timothy 2:2 *“And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”*

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OUTLINE OF 2 TIMOTHY

PASSING THE TORCH OF LEADERSHIP –

LAST WORDS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

PERSEVERE IN THE HARD WORK OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY THROUGH COURAGE AND FAITHFULNESS IN PREACHING THE WORD IN THE FACE OF GROWING OPPOSITION

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TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 1:1-7

TITLE: INTRODUCTION: DON'T DROP THE BATON!

BIG IDEA:

THE CHALLENGE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS IS TO BUILD ON A SOLID FOUNDATION OF FAITH WHILE UNLEASHING THEIR GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL FOR MINISTRY

I. (:1-2) GREETING

A. Author – Paul – the elder statesman

1. His Mission and Authority – “*apostle of Christ Jesus*”

He is at the close of his ministry, having fulfilled his mission; writes like a last will and testament

2. His Calling and Commendation – “*through the will of God*”

he had not chosen or pursued this ministry in selfish ambition; he deserves a hearing

Kent: “Paul had no misgivings about the will of God for his life – despite his suffering.”

3. His Hope and Confidence – “*according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus*”

Significant testimony from one facing a death sentence for the cause of Christ; Paul was not feeling sorry for himself; sets the tone for the whole epistle = Positive; forward-looking
the threat of death should not make one shy away from preaching the good news of eternal life in Christ

Stedman: “a rather remarkable description of the gospel ... it sets them free to be what God intended them to be ... everybody has a hunger for life. Nobody wants to be bored, nobody wants to live a dull, meaningless, empty, hollow life... He is talking about life as God intended it to be lived, a quality of life which one can experience right now...”

B. Recipient – Timothy – the fresh blood of emerging leadership

this is a personal letter rather than an epistle to a church

1. Family Relationship = father to his “*beloved son*”

2. Leadership Relationship = master to his disciple = the next generation of leadership

C. Salutation

1. Blessings – “the ingredients of the promise of life in Christ Jesus” (Stedman)

a. *Grace*

all of God’s rich resources which we do not deserve

b. *Mercy*

God withholds many things which we deserve in our sinfulness and tempers our trials so that we can endure

c. *Peace*

Zeisler: “This is the great ‘shalom’ of God, the inner calm that keeps you panic proof.” (quoted by **Stedman**)

2. Blessor – “from”:

a. “*God the Father*”

b. “*Christ Jesus our Lord*”

II. (:3-7) SIX WAYS TO GUARANTEE A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION IN LEADERSHIP

A. (:3A) Pass the Torch in a Spirit of Thanksgiving

1. Directed towards God – “*I thank God*”

Present tense – ongoing state of thanksgiving

No bitterness over his own condition or resentment towards the growing leadership of Timothy; Instead Paul encourages his leadership

2. Requires no unresolved baggage – “*whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did*”

Only the Lord can cleanse the conscience;

Paul had no regrets; he had been faithful in fulfilling his ministry;

Continuity of ministry with true OT saints; cf. continuity of faith in the family of Timothy

B. (:3B) Pass the Torch with a Consistent Pattern of Intercessory Prayer

“*as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day*”

lots of opportunity to pray in prison

C. (:4) Pass the Torch with Genuine Mutual Personal Affection – “*longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy*”

The reason for the tears? Possibly because Timothy realized he might never see Paul again in this life; maybe Timothy had been present when Paul was rearrested

D. (:5) Pass the Torch with Confidence in a Solid Foundation of Faith

“*For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well*”

Martindale: “Faith should be Contagious, catching, attractive to others”

E. (:6) Pass the Torch with Expectation of the Unleashing of Tremendous Ministry Potential

“And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”

Requires Fanning the Flame of your giftedness

F. (:7) Pass the Torch with a Challenge to Demonstrate Courage Based on God’s Equipping

1. Negative: *“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity”*

Where does it come from? Our fallen human nature; our enemy the devil; God has given us His Holy Spirit and accompanying fruit; Look how many times Christ commands: *“Fear not!”* Yet we find it especially difficult to obey this as a command. Timothy apparently was especially susceptible to this tendency.

2. Positive

a. *“power”* – How is this power unleashed? What form does it take?

b. *“love”* – concern for the problems and welfare of others

c. *“discipline”* / *“sound mind”* –

Stedman: “It is not fanaticism; it is not talking constantly about dreams, visions, special revelations and wonderful experiences. It is talking about sober, realistic appraisals of a situation, deciding the right thing to do, and then, steadfastly, quietly, moving to do it.”

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) What types of transfers of leadership have you seen in various Christian ministries? What made each transfer successful or problematic? What can we learn from OT examples?

2) What is the key to serving God with a *“clear conscience”*? For Paul? For us?

3) What techniques do you use to fan the flame of your spiritual gift – to develop your gift to its fullest and use it most effectively?

4) How do *“love”* and *“discipline”* stand in opposition to *“timidity”*? What type of *“power”* does the Apostle Paul have in mind here?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Martindale: Re Background – Paul on his fourth missionary journey to Spain had been recaptured and imprisoned in a dungeon in Rome (not like the easier house arrest earlier). He knows death is a certainty. He writes to Timothy who is not only his spiritual son in the faith but his closest co-worker. Paul first met Timothy in Lystra on his second missionary journey. (Acts 16:1-3) He took him along with him, and they became closest of friends and laborers together for Christ. It is important to Paul that Timothy carry on their ministry and the preaching of the gospel. Paul remembers the time that the elders laid hands on Timothy as they sent him away and the prophetic messages that were shared about him (1:18; 4:14). This text doesn't necessarily mean that the elders imparted the gift, but at least identified with it and communicated regarding it with prophetic utterances.

Stott: “Bishop Handley Moule confessed that he found it difficult to read Paul's second letter to Timothy ‘without finding something like a mist gathering in the eyes’. Understandably so. It is a very moving human document.

We are to imagine the apostle, ‘Paul, the aged’, languishing in some dark, dank dungeon in Rome, from which there is to be no escape but death. His own apostolic labours are over. ‘*I have finished the race,*’ he can say. But now he must make provision for the faith after he has gone, and especially for its transmission (uncontaminated, unalloyed) to future generations. So he sends Timothy this most solemn charge. He is to preserve what he has received, at whatever cost, and to hand it on to faithful men who in their turn will be able to teach others also (2:2).”

Kent: “The relating of Paul's faith to the historic faith of Israel is significant since he was probably facing execution for teaching an illegal religion, when actually he worshipped the God of his fathers.”

Guthrie: “For his heavy new responsibilities Timothy needs no new gift but a rekindling of that already received.”

Expositors: “For proper administration in the church, the following are needed:

- 1) force of character, which if not natural, may be inspired by consciousness of a divine appointment
- 2) love, which is not softness
- 3) self-discipline, which is opposed to all easy self-indulgence which issues in laxity of administration”

Wiersbe: “Timothy had every reason to be encouraged and to have spiritual enthusiasm in his ministry. Paul loved him and prayed for him. His experiences in life had been preparation for his ministry, and Paul was confident of the genuineness of Timothy's faith. The Spirit within him would give all the power needed for ministry. What more could he want?

Hiebert: “*The gift of God*’ which is to be kept blazing is doubtless the same gift mentioned in in 1 Timothy 4:14. It is ‘the ministerial gift, including all the gifts for the

sacred office, with special emphasis here, perhaps, on boldness in the faith” (Harvey).

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 1:8-12

TITLE: A CALL TO COURAGE

BIG IDEA:

PAUL CHALLENGES TIMOTHY TO REJECT FEAR AND EMBRACE SUFFERING IN FULFILLING HIS CALL TO THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCTION:

“*Therefore*” – based on vv.6-7

you have been called and gifted for the gospel ministry

you have received the divine empowering = “*power and love and discipline*”

I. (:8) EXHORTATION TO TIMOTHY TO REJECT FEAR AND EMBRACE SUFFERING

A. Reject Fear – “*do not be ashamed*”

(cf. Luke 9:26; Rom. 1:16; Heb. 2:11; 11:16)

1. To Bear Witness Yourself -- “*of the testimony of the Lord*”

“of testifying to our Lord” = testimony about Christ rather than testimony borne by Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:6)

Stedman: “We all can identify with that problem today...there are times when you feel ashamed that you are a Christian. You are afraid people will find out; or if, they already know that you are a Christian, you tend to keep it quiet and not say much about it. That is a universal experience if we have any contact at all with non-Christians...”

2. To Identify with Gospel Preachers -- “*or of me His prisoner*”

Paul ultimately views himself as a prisoner under the sovereignty of His Lord rather than a prisoner of Nero

“The apostle treats what outsiders might judge a disgraceful situation as a source of humble pride.” (Kelly)

B. Embrace Suffering for the Cause of the Gospel

“*join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God*”

this is the only alternative to being ashamed

“for the gospel” = Dative of interest

Paul may have coined this verb (only NT usage) – “he has a liking for compounds with *sun*” (Kelly)

cf. Rom. 1:16 – but not only is the gospel the power of God unto salvation, but God’s same power enables His witnesses to endure suffering

II. (:9-10) ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

- A. (:9A) A Holy Calling – “*who has saved us and called us with a holy calling*”
- B. (:9B) A Sovereign Calling
1. Not based on works -- “*not according to our works*”
 2. Based on His Purpose and His Grace -- “*but according to His own purpose and grace*”
(cf. Rom. 8:28; 9:11; Eph. 1:11; 3:11)
Kelly: “If it depended on our merits, our position would be at best precarious, and on a realistic estimate hopeless; but since it depends wholly on God, our confidence can be unshaken.”
 3. Centered in Christ Jesus – “*which was granted us in Christ Jesus*”
 3. Rooted in Eternity Past – “*from all eternity*”
- C. (:10) A Transformation from Death to Life
1. Accomplished in History – “*but now has been revealed by the appearing of*”
 2. Accomplished by “*our Savior Christ Jesus*”
 3. Abolishment of Death – “*who abolished death*” --
Stedman: “The death of death”
“The ancient question of Job, ‘*If a man die, shall he live again?*’ remains the fundamental question haunting all men today.”
- Very significant accomplishment! Death is the awesome reality facing everyone. It levels the playing field. Fear of death is pervasive – cf. Heb. 2:14-15; In what sense did Christ abolish death? Even Christians still die.
4. Granting of Life – “*brought life and immortality to light*”
Woychuk: “The fact that the Apostle adds ‘*immortality*,’ (more accurately translated ‘*incorruption*’), brings out the thought that this new life applies also to our bodies. Decay and corruption pertain to the body and not to the spirit; so here the ‘*incorruption*,’ the resurrection of the body of the believer, is in view... Death has not been annihilated as yet, but for the believer, death has been deprived of its terrors and power. Death for the believer is not a token of God’s displeasure, but is His wise arrangement of introducing the child of God into a life from which death is ever-excluded.”
- Hiebert**: “His redemptive work ‘brought to light,’ lighted up, illuminated as the blazing light of the noonday sun, that which previously existed but was shrouded in uncertainty. The hope of immortality was in the world before but He brought it into a certainty through His teaching and above all by His own resurrection.”

5. Summed up in the Gospel – “*through the gospel*”

III. (:11) ELECTION TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY

A. Divine Appointment – “*for which I was appointed*”

B. Specific Gospel Ministries – **Stedman**:

1. “*A Preacher*” – “a proclaimer of the good news”

2. “*An Apostle*” – “a pioneer to lay new foundations”

3. “*A Teacher*” – “an explainer of the intricacies and meanings of the truth”

IV. (:12) EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL IN REJECTING FEAR AND EMBRACING SUFFERING

A. Embracing Suffering for the Cause of the Gospel

“*For this reason I also suffer these things*”

Ministry and suffering go hand in hand; there is no separating the two

B. Rejecting Fear – “*but I am not ashamed*”

C. Explanation of His Confidence

“*for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day*”

2 Possibilities:

- the good thing that I have entrusted = himself; “Paul’s commitment to Christ”

(**Kent**)

- the good thing entrusted to me = his ministry and doctrine

Woychuk: cf. 2:2; 2:14 “the precious deposit of the gospel”

“*until that day*” = day of standing before Christ to receive rewards for faithful service

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) What are some of the practical ways we can “*join with*” our brothers and sisters around the world who are experiencing “*suffering for the gospel*”?

2) What encouragement can we draw from the mystery of election that our calling to holiness was part of God’s majestic “*purpose and grace from all eternity*” and not dependent on our merits or works ... and clearly predates any decision of our will to trust in the Lord?

3) What did Christ accomplish at His first appearing and what are we anticipating as we look forward to His coming again?

4) Are we confident that God will never let us down? Do we have the assurance that God will carry us through whatever trials and suffering we might face?”

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Kelly: Re vv. 9-10 -- “The next two verses set out, in moving terms, the reasons why Timothy, and indeed any Christian in any age, can rely on God’s power to carry him through suffering and disaster triumphant. It comes from One whose saving purpose, based wholly on grace and not on men’s achievements, has been at work since before the foundation of the world and has done what they could never have accomplished for themselves, redeeming them and in the historical mission of Christ breaking the hold of death and bestowing immortal life.”

Stott: Re vs. 10 – “The term ‘*salvation*’ urgently needs to be rescued from the mean and meagre concepts to which we tend to degrade it. ‘Salvation’ is a majestic word, denoting that comprehensive purpose of God by which he justifies, sanctifies and glorifies his people: first, pardoning our offences and accepting us as righteous in his sight through Christ, then progressively transforming us by his Spirit into the image of his Son, until finally we become like Christ in heaven, with new bodies in a new world. We must not minimize the greatness of ‘*such a great salvation*’ (Heb. 2:3).”

Stott: Re election – “We have to confess that the doctrine of election is difficult to finite minds. But it is incontrovertibly a biblical doctrine. It emphasizes that salvation is due to God’s grace alone, not to man’s merit; not to our works performed in time, but to God’s purpose conceived in eternity ... However, the doctrine of election is never introduced in Scripture either to arouse or to baffle our carnal curiosity, but always for a practical purpose. On the one hand, it engenders deep humility and gratitude, for it excludes all boasting. On the other, it brings both peace and assurance, for nothing can quite our fears for our own stability like the knowledge that our safety depends ultimately not on ourselves but on God’s own purpose of grace.”

Stott: “Such, then, is the salvation which is offered us in the gospel and which is ours in Christ. Its *character* is man’s re-creation and transformation into the holiness of Christ here and hereafter. Its *source* is God’s eternal purpose of grace. Its *ground* is Christ’s historical appearing and abolition of death.

Putting these great truths together, we seem to detect five stages by which God’s saving purpose unfolds. The first is the eternal gift to us in Christ of his grace. The second is the historical appearing of Christ to abolish death by his death and resurrection. The third is the personal call of God to sinners through the preaching of the gospel. The

fourth is the moral sanctification of believers by the Holy Spirit. And the fifth is the final heavenly perfection in which the holy calling is consummated.”

Wiersbe: “In these difficult days, it is important that we stand true to Christ and be willing to suffer for Him and not be ashamed. We may not be put into a prison, as was Paul; but we might suffer in other ways: the loss of friends, being bypassed for a promotion, loss of customers, being snubbed by people, etc. It is also important that we stand by God’s servants who are suffering for righteousness’ sake.”

Stedman: Re vs. 9 – “That is an amazing declaration. It is saying that though we know we have to make decisions or those things do not happen – we have to obey the Word, we have to follow our Lord – nevertheless, we learn also that God has determined before the world began that he would bring into our lives the factors that would make us make those decisions.”

Stedman: Re some of the hangups caused by the fear of death:

- 1) It drives us ...It hurries us ... we feel that we must make time count ...
- 2) It makes us worry ...
- 3) It sobers us ... produces a reserve, a coldness, a suspicion, a withdrawing from life on the part of many ...
- 4) It haunts us ...makes us restless ...

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 1:13-18

TITLE: A CALL TO FAITHFULNESS

BIG IDEA:

PAUL CHALLENGES TIMOTHY TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE GOSPEL MESSAGE AND TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO PAUL'S PERSONAL MINISTRY AS THE MESSENGER OF THE GOSPEL

I. (:13-14) REMAIN FAITHFUL (LOYAL) TO THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

A. (:13) Maintain Sound Doctrine

How important is sound doctrine? How much deviation is acceptable?

cf. the game of "Whispering down the Lane" – very quickly the message becomes distorted

1. A Healthy Pattern to be Maintained and Replicated

"Retain the standard of sound words"

Wiersbe: "The word '*form*' means 'a pattern, an architect's sketch.' There was a definite outline of doctrine in the early church, a standard by which teaching was tested. If Timothy changed this outline, or abandoned it, then he would have nothing by which he could test other teachers and preachers."

Hiebert: "... does not imply a fixed creedal formula to which Timothy is bound to adhere. It refers rather to the system of truth conveyed in divinely taught expressions which Timothy has heard from Paul."

2. A Good Tradition to Pass Along

"which you have heard from me"

Received from a reputable source

3. A Godly Character to Adorn the Gospel

"in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus"

- these characteristics are produced in your life by the gospel

- these characteristics must be evident in your communication of the gospel

Hiebert: "The spirit in which one clings to the truth is of vital importance. It is not to be a formal, lifeless retention of formulas... 'His theology is to be the theology of the heart, vitalized and spiritualized in the atmosphere of Christian faith and love.' (Harvey)"

B. (:14) Guard the Treasure of the Gospel Message

1. Activity of Guarding – "*Guard*"

Kent: "protection against loss, destruction or change"

2. Agent of Enabling – Indwelling Holy Spirit
“through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us”
3. Stewardship Responsibility – *“the treasure which has been entrusted to you”*
Hendriksen: “It is *precious* or *excellent* because it belongs to God and results in his glory through the salvation of those who accept it by sovereign grace”

II. (:15-18) REMAIN FAITHFUL TO GOSPEL MESSENGERS – ESPECIALLY TO PAUL’S PERSONAL MINISTRY

- A. (:15) Negative Example: Disappointment of Unfaithfulness / Desertion --
 1. Reminder of Known Facts – *“You are aware of the fact”*
 2. Description of Unfaithfulness – *“turned away from me”*
 3. Examples of Unfaithfulness
 - a. General – *“all who are in Asia”*
 - b. Specific – *“among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes”*
- B. (:16-18) Positive Example: Encouragement of Faithfulness – Onesiphorus name means “bringer of help”
Hendriksen: “He was, indeed, a ‘profit-bringer,’ a messenger of courage and cheer. The beauty of his character and the nobility of his actions stand out clearly upon the dark background of the sorry behavior of ‘*all those in Asia.*’”
 1. Worthy of Reward = the mercy of the Lord on his entire household
“The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus”
“the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day”
 2. Description of Faithfulness
 - a. Ministry of Refreshing and Encouragement
“for he often refreshed me”
 - b. Ministry of Fellowship in Suffering
“was not ashamed of my chains; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me, and found me”
 3. Consistent with His Faithful Ministry to Saints at Ephesus
“and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus”

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) How has the truth of the Word of God proved to be “*healthy*” in your life and in your relationships with others? Are we holding to “*sound doctrine*” with an attitude of love and faith or one of quarreling?

2) If this “*treasure*” that has been entrusted to us is so valuable ... what special steps have we taken to safeguard it?

3) How have we gone the extra mile to demonstrate our *loyalty* to the missionaries we are supporting? Have we experienced the heartache of others deserting us when we were counting on their support?

4) What type of special servants do we have in our church who minister sacrificially like Onesiphorus? How can we give them some extra recognition and appreciation?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Stedman: “Almost every Christian alive has heard the famous quotation from Charles Spurgeon, the great English preacher, about defending the Scripture. Spurgeon said, ‘Scripture is like a lion. Who ever heard of defending a lion? Just turn it loose; it will defend itself.’ ... Notice that it does not deny that lions sometimes need defending; it merely recognizes that the best way to do that is to turn a lion loose and it will defend itself.”

Towner: “Loyalty to the Lord is measured in perseverance in the face of opposition. We also learn that all that is needed to be this kind of Christian is provided in the Holy Spirit. In view of the gift of the Spirit, the gospel record of all that God has done for us and the human models of faithfulness and loyalty, there is no excuse for halfhearted commitment to God.”

Stott: “There is great encouragement here. Ultimately, it is God himself who is the guarantor of the gospel. It is his responsibility to preserve it ... We may see the evangelical faith, the faith of the gospel, everywhere spoken against, and the apostolic message of the New Testament ridiculed. We may have to watch an increasing apostasy in the church, as our generation abandons the faith of its fathers. Do not be afraid! God will never allow the light of the gospel to be finally extinguished.”

Kelly: “As head of the Ephesian church Timothy was well placed to have first-hand knowledge of the Asian Christians’ conduct towards Paul. It is unnecessary to press *all in Asia* too literally, as if he were complaining of widespread disaffection, or even a complete falling-away from his teaching. He is writing with the exaggeration natural in depression. Apparently all the key-friends on whom he thought he could count deserted him. Though used of doctrinal apostasy in Tit. 1:14, the verb (lit. ‘*turned away from*’) here denotes their abandonment of the Apostle personally.”

Hendriksen: “Paul states that Onesiphorus had *refreshed* him, *had*, as it were, *caused him to breathe more easily*. And Onesiphorus had done this not only once but frequently. Just how the visitor had carried out this bracing and cheering ministry is not stated. Perhaps by his very presence, a presence which implied self-sacrifice and love; furthermore, by bringing news to Paul concerning individuals and churches; by encouraging him on the basis of God’s promises; by bringing him food, drink, literature. One is reminded of the services which, with great danger to himself, Jonathan rendered to David (I Sam. 18, 19, 20). Even Paul, a man of dauntless courage and amazing faith, could use encouragement at times.”

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-2

TITLE: THE POWER OF COMPOUND INTEREST – A REPRODUCING MINISTRY

BIG IDEA:

THE PRIMARY MISSION OF DIVINELY EMPOWERED SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IS TO FAITHFULLY REPRODUCE BOTH THE MESSAGE AND THE MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION:

“Therefore” – review of what has gone before; How is it that Paul can now exhort Timothy to take on such a tremendous challenge?

I. (:1) THE FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTER TRAIT FOR SUCCESSFUL SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP = DIVINE EMPOWERMENT

“CONTINUALLY BE STRENGTHENED IN GRACE”

A. A Spiritual Leader Should Naturally Reflect His Family Parentage

“You my son”

Address of affection and encouragement;

Timothy is not being asked to do the unnatural or the impossible;

A child possesses the nature of his parents

B. Divine Empowerment is a Continual Process (Pres. Middle or Passive Imperative)

“strengthen yourself” Or “Be strengthened”

Hiebert: “It is not an appeal for him to summon up and assert his own strength. He is not asked to ‘be strong’ but ‘*be strengthened,*’ to be made strong...”

This grace is embodied in Christ Jesus who imparts it to all who are in living union with Him, just as the vine imparts its life and fruitfulness to the branches that are in abiding union with it.”

C. Divine Empowerment Depends on Grace

“in the grace”

D. Union with Christ Jesus through the Indwelling Holy Spirit is the Key

“that is in Christ Jesus”

Stott: “‘Take strength from the grace of God which is ours in Christ Jesus.’ Timothy is to find his resources for ministry not in his own nature but in Christ’s grace. It is not only for salvation that we are dependent on grace (1:9), but for service also.”

II. (:2) THE FUNDAMENTAL TASK FOR SUCCESSFUL SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP = REPRODUCE BOTH THE MESSAGE AND THE MINISTRY

The chain of gospel transmission is only as strong as its weakest link;

cf. the game: “whisper down the lane” – all it takes is for one person to blow it to affect an entire generation; fortunately we have the written Word to refer back to – even when the oral teaching is not accurate

A. The Message Received

“the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses”
the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27)

Kent: Constatative Aorist – “gathering into one all that Timothy had heard from Paul over the years”

“many witnesses” – the other apostles and prophets taught the identical truths

B. The Message Reproduced

“these entrust to faithful men”

You cannot pick or choose what elements of the teaching to pass along. You must transmit the entire body of doctrine.

Tyndale: “to entrust something to another for safekeeping”

Thayer: “to deposit, intrust, commit to one’s charge”

Thayer: Re *“faithful men”* – “of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties”

Whitcomb: “Originality in doctrine or a streamlined message would not be tolerated by Christ or Paul.”

C. The Ministry Reproduced

“who will be able to teach others also”

Stott: “The ability or competence which Timothy must look for in such men will consist partly in their integrity or faithfulness of character already mentioned and partly in their facility for teaching.”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How do we go about being strengthened *“in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”*?
- 2) Do we place the same priority on the whole counsel of God that Paul does here? Or do we minimize the importance of doctrine and say “What does it matter as long as you get the fundamentals right?” Who is the one to make the call as to what constitutes the fundamentals?
- 3) Does our ministry impact the different circles of preaching to the public masses while still spending quality time with those few faithful men who will be the key to perpetuating our ministry into the next generation?

4) How do Bible Institutes and Seminaries fit into God's program of indoctrination?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Stedman: “The first thing you have to do when things start falling apart, Paul says, is to be strong yourself in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; that is a fundamental principle of helping anybody. You can only pass on to others what you yourself have received. Head knowledge is of no value. If you merely pass on a knowledge of the truth—teaching people the various doctrines of Christianity—you have done nothing to help them at all. Unless they can see that that truth has changed you and made you different, that you speak out of the experience of having been altered by the truth you believe, you will never do anything to help someone else stand in the hour of danger. If you want to strengthen others, Paul's advice is, start with yourself: ‘*Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*’ That is the way to guard the truth. That is what Onesiphorus had done. He was strong, he was able to withstand the fear and the pressures of his day because he had found that Christ could strengthen him. So he becomes an example to Timothy and to us of how to stand in an evil day.”

Ellicott: Re connection to vs. 1 – “Timothy is to be strong himself in grace, and in the strength of it is to provide for others.”

Woychuk: “The source of strength lies in God's grace, not in our will power, nor in our spasms of earnestness. When we attempt to strengthen ourselves through self-effort, we are like the man who tried to make his stalled boat move by pushing against the mast. We exert ourselves a great deal, but actually get nowhere.”

Plummer: cf. 1:13 “*Hold fast the pattern of sound words*” – “Now Paul charges Timothy to take care that it does not perish with him.”

Lenski: “This is the true apostolic succession of the ministry: not an uninterrupted line of hands laid on which extends back to the apostles themselves so that all ordinations which are not in that line are null and void; but a succession of true apostolic doctrine, the deposit of what we still hear from Paul in his writings, this held by us in faithful hearts with competency to teach others these same things. The Apostle did not evidently expect the future teachers of the church to produce new or different teaching. The gospel is changeless in all ages.”

Tyndale: “The transmission of Christian truth must never be left to chance, and is clearly not committed fortuitously to every Christian. 2 Qualifications are necessary:
1) a demonstrated loyalty to the truth
2) an aptitude to teach (1 Tim. 3:2)”

Woychuk: “Thye must be not only true believers, but trustworthy, who will not swerve

aside because of fear or favor, who will not compromise with the spirit of the age through which they are passing.”

Stott: “The reference to the many witnesses shows that the apostolic faith was not a secret tradition handed on privately to Timothy (such as the Gnostics were claiming), whose authenticity there was no means of testing, but a public instruction, whose truth was guaranteed by the many witnesses who had heard it and who could therefore check Timothy’s teaching against the apostle’s.”

Towner: “It is unchanging, yet it is dynamic rather than static, for it produces life and must be applied in fresh ways in each generation. Attempts to amend or revise its message, such as Timothy faced, must be resisted, because God’s Word is a final word. For this reason God spoke through specially chosen servants (prophets, apostles, his Son) who together form a standard to measure the purity of the message in each generation. Paul himself was part of that standard, and what he taught Timothy had the approval of the apostles (Gal. 2:2-10).”

Stedman: “four qualities I look for in someone in order to pass on what I myself have learned:

- 1) a searching mind, a mind that is ready to learn ...
- 2) a humble heart, for somebody who has already learned that truth is bigger than he is. He will have learned that we are to set aside our own egos, that truth is not given to us in order to build up our image in the eyes of people, that we are not to manipulate people to gain standing or prestige among them, but we are to be willing to submit ourselves, to put ourselves down and not seek credit ...
- 3) an evident gift ... somebody who has a gift of the Spirit that can communicate and impart to others what he himself has learned ...
- 4) a faithful spirit ... he does not quit when the going gets tough ...”

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 2:3-7

TITLE: THE RIGHT STUFF FOR THE HARD WORK OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY
(COUNT THE COST ... AND BE WILLING TO PAY IT!)
HARDSHIPS AND REWARDS!

BIG IDEA:

PAUL USES THREE PORTRAITS TO EXHORT TIMOTHY TO DEDICATE HIMSELF TO THE HARD WORK OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY – FOCUSED ON THE ULTIMATE REWARD

INTRODUCTION:

The Gospel Ministry is no picnic; not for the weak or faint of heart; not for those looking for an easy ride; not just a lot of food, conversation and golf; For those who preach the whole counsel of God, there will be much hardship involved. But in addition to the pain, inconvenience and hardships there should also be compensation and rewards – could be referring to the right to temporal compensation, but most likely the focus is on the heavenly crown.

I. (:3-4) A DEDICATED SOLDIER WHO SUFFERS HARDSHIP TO PLEASE HIS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

A. What Makes a Good Soldier?

1. Persevering through the Hardships of Warfare
“Suffer hardship”

Wiersbe: “Many people have the idea that the ministry is a soft job. Preachers are often the butt of jokes that suggest that preachers are lazy and should be ashamed of accepting their salaries. But a dedicated Christian minister is in a battle that requires spiritual endurance. (See Eph. 6:10ff)”

2. Functioning in Unity as a Disciplined Unit
“with me”

Timothy is not alone in facing the hardships of battle

3. Remaining Loyal to your Commander and your Cause
“a good soldier of Christ Jesus”

B. His Motivation: *“so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier”*
Looking for that “Well done” from our Lord Jesus Christ

II. (:5) A DISCIPLINED ATHLETE WHO TRAINS AND COMPETES WITHIN THE RULES TO WIN THE PRIZE

A. What Makes a Champion Athlete?

1. Loves to Compete – *“if anyone competes as an athlete”*

2. “*Competes according to the rules*”

- a. Applies to how he trains
- b. Applies to how he participates

What “rules” does Paul have in mind for the Gospel ministry?
1 Cor. 3:10-15

B. His Motivation: Winning “*the prize*”

III. (:6) A DILIGENT FARMER WHO WORKS HARD AND WAITS PATIENTLY TO REAP THE FRUITS OF HIS LABOR

A. What Makes a Successful Farmer?

1. “*Hard-working*”
2. Patient – Has the long-term picture in view
willing to sacrifice immediate gratification for long-term reward

B. His Motivation: “*the first to receive his share of the crops*”

cf. how a teacher benefits most during his time of preparation and then passes on the fruits of his labors to others
Application to future reward as well as to possible financial remuneration for the ministry

(:7) CONCLUSION

“*Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.*”

Important to reflect on these principles and look to the Lord for full understanding.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What are the responsibilities the Army has to those who enlist and what are the responsibilities of those who enlist? What makes a good soldier? Have we been actively involved in the spiritual warfare?
- 2) How could we simplify our life to avoid some of the “entanglements” of everyday life? To what extent does this verse just apply to full-time Christian workers (or those with the more public gifts of teaching and preaching) and to what extent can we make application to all believers?
- 3) What were some of the “*rules*” that the Apostle Paul had in mind for Timothy and for those who would assume spiritual leadership? cf. 2 Tim. 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:10
- 4) What type of “*crops*” are available to the hardworking Christian minister of the

gospel?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Josephus: Describing the Roman soldier of that day – “Each soldier every day throws all his energy into his drill, as though he were in action. Hence that perfect ease with which they sustain the shock of battle: no confusion breaks their customary formation, no panic paralyzes, no fatigue exhausts them. All their camp duties are performed with the same discipline, the same regard for security: the procuring of wood, food-supplies, and water, as required—each party has its allotted task; nothing is done without a word of command. The same precision is maintained on the battlefield; nothing is done unadvisedly or left to chance. This perfect discipline makes the army an ornament of peace-time and in war welds the whole into a single body; so compact are their ranks, so alert their movements, so quick their eyes for signals, their hands to act upon them. None are slower than they in succumbing to suffering. (*War* 3. 72-108)”

Towner: Re vs. 6 – “The point of this picture is to connect the promise of reward with diligent service. The priority of the farmer’s interest here (*the hardworking farmer should be the first*) and the *share of the crops* due to him suggest to some the idea of remuneration for the minister (compare 1 Tim 5:17). And Paul did employ similar analogies to address this issue in 1 Corinthians 9:7, 10. However, the dominant eschatological atmosphere in 2 Timothy (1:14, 18; 2:11-12; 4:1, 8, 18) suggests that here he is underlining the certainty of final rewards on ‘*that day*’ for diligent and faithful service.”

Hiebert: Re vs. 5 – “The crowning, the goal in all the effort put forth, could be won only if he had ‘*competed lawfully*,’ according to all the rules of the game, both for the preliminary training and the actual contest. No infringement of the rules was condoned. Even so the servant of the Lord is called to be as careful as an athlete in adhering to the rules of his calling, making the revealed will of God his guiding standard in all things.””

Stott: “The blessing of God rested upon the ministry of the apostle Paul in quite exceptional measure. No doubt many explanations of this could be given. But I find myself wondering if we attribute it sufficiently to the zeal and zest, the almost obsessional devotion, with which he gave himself to the work. He gave and did not count the cost; he fought and did not heed the wounds; he toiled and did not seek for rest; he laboured and asked for no reward except the joy of doing his Lord’s will. And God prospered his efforts. Again, it is ‘*the hardworking farmer*’ who gets a good crop.”

Kelly: Re vs 7 – “With a fine tact Paul leaves it to Timothy to discover for himself the deeper implications of his three parables, particularly, perhaps, the allusion to his honorarium from the community. This exegesis is confirmed by the encouragement

which he adds, *the Lord will give you understanding in everything*, i.e. in matters like these no less than in weightier ones. For the enlightenment which God gives the spiritual man, cf. 1 Cor. ii.10; 15.”

Wuest: “Paul had used the illustration of a soldier. Timothy was to live a rugged, strenuous Christian life in which hardships as the result of serving the Lord Jesus were an expected thing. He used the simile of a Greek athlete. Timothy should live a life of rigid separation, not merely with respect to evil things, but also with regard to things which, good in themselves, would unfit him for the highest type of Christian service. Paul now uses the metaphor of a tiller of the soil. Timothy is reminded that the Christian worker who labors with wearisome effort in the Lord’s service, has the right to derive his financial support from it, so that he might be able to give all of his time and strength to his work.”

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 2:8-13

TITLE: KEEP RUNNING THE RACE

BIG IDEA:

2 MOTIVATIONS FOR PERSERVERENCE IN THE FAITH AND IN THE GOSPEL MINISTRY

I. (:8-10) KEEP RUNNING THE RACE BECAUSE OUR TESTIMONY IMPACTS THE SALVATION OF GOD'S ELECT

A. (:8) Encouragement from the Promise Fulfilled = the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The Resurrection of Christ lies at the heart of the gospel message – “*according to my gospel*”

1. “*Jesus Christ*” – the historical Messiah; Saviour
2. “*risen from the dead*” – the heart of the gospel; Truth of the Resurrection; Divinity; Lord
3. “*descendant of David*” – the seed of Promise; Truth of the Incarnation; Humanity; King (Luke 1:32-33)

Stott: “death is the gateway to life and suffering the path to glory. For he who died rose from the dead, and he who was born in lowliness as David’s seed is now reigning in glory on David’s throne. Both expressions set forth in embryonic form the contrast between humiliation and exaltation.”

B. (:9-10) Encouragement from the Power Potential = the Unleashing of the Word of God to accomplish Salvation

1. (:9) Enduring Unfair Hardship in light of the Power Potential of the Word of God
 - a. “*for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal*”
 - b. “*but the word of God is not imprisoned*” = Key thought here
cf. Phil. 1:12-18 circumstances turned out rather for the spread of the gospel
2. (:10) Enduring Unfair Hardship for the sake of the Elect
“*For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.*”

Campbell: Paul uses this word (*the elect*) a total of six times in his epistles. Five times

he uses it to designate *Divinely selected believers* (Rom.. 8:33; 16:13; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:10; Titus 1:1). He uses it once with reference to *elect angels* (1 Tim. 5:21).”

Stott: “Paul’s statement that in some sense the salvation of others is secured by his sufferings may at first astonish us. Yet it is so. Not of course that his sufferings have any redemptive efficacy like Christ’s, but that the elect are saved through the gospel and that he could not preach the gospel without suffering for it.”

II. (:11-13) KEEP RUNNING THE RACE BECAUSE GOD GUARANTEES THE OUTCOME

A. God’s Guarantee to Those Who Persevere

1. LIVE WITH HIM: Resurrection life is guaranteed –

Based on union with Christ in His death and resurrection

“For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him”

2. REIGN WITH HIM: Kingdom Glory is guaranteed –

Based on perseverance

“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him”

B. God’s Guarantee to Those Who Quit

Ultimate Rejection is Guaranteed to those who ultimately deny Christ

“If we deny Him, He also will deny us”

C. God’s Guarantee Rooted in His Own Faithfulness

1. God’s Character not changed by our Character

“If we are faithless, He remains faithful”

Campbell: “This verb is in the present tense which means that Paul is speaking about those who continue and persist in a course of faithlessness. He is not thinking about those who temporarily stumble or fall into sin, and genuinely confess it to the Lord, but he is referring to those whose lives are marked by unbelief.”

2. God’s Character is Unchanging

“for He cannot deny Himself”

God remains true to His Word; to His Promises; to His Blessings; to His Warnings; to His Judgments

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Why did Timothy need to be charged to “Remember Jesus Christ”? How does the

celebration of the Lord's Supper help us in this regard?

2) If professing Christians are unwilling to “*suffer hardship*” for the cause of the gospel and in fact end up denying Christ in an ongoing fashion, do they merely lose their reward in heaven or are they under God's wrath and actually unsaved?

3) What encouragement do we take from the truth that the “*word of God is not imprisoned*”? What are some of the ways that Satan tries to fetter the Word of God? Are we allowing God's Word to be unleashed with power in our own lives?

4) Is the sense of “*dying with Christ*” in this passage the same sense as Paul talks about in Romans 6 or is it a different sense?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Stott: Re vs. 12-13 – “What then of the second phrase ‘*if we are faithless, he remains faithful*’? It has often been taken as a comforting assurance that, even if we turn away from Christ, he will not turn away from us, for he will never be faithless as we are. And it is true, of course, that God never exhibits the fickleness or the faithlessness of man. Yet the logic of the Christian hymn, with its two pairs of balancing epigrams, really demands a different interpretation. ‘*If we deny him*’ and ‘*if we are faithless*’ are parallels, which requires that ‘*he will deny us*’ and ‘*he remains faithful*’ be parallels also. In this case his ‘*faithfulness*’ when we are faithless will be faithfulness to his warnings.”

Plummer: “It is worth noting that St. Paul places the Resurrection before the Incarnation, a fact which is quite lost in the transposed order of the Authorized Version. St. Paul's order, which at first sight seems to be illogical, was the usual order of the Apostles' preaching. They began not with the miraculous birth of Christ, but with His Resurrection. They proved by abundant testimony that Jesus had risen from the dead, and thence argued that He must have been more than man. They did not preach his birth of a virgin, and thence argue that he was Divine. How was His miraculous birth to be proved to those who were unwilling to accept His mother's word for it? But thousands of people had seen Him dead upon the cross, and hundreds had seen Him alive afterwards ... With the Resurrection proved, the foundations of the faith were laid. The incarnation followed easily after this, especially when combined with the descent from David, a fact which helped to prove His messiahship.”

Woychuk: Re “*the Word of God is not bound*” –

- 1) cannot be bound by time
- 2) cannot be bound by language barrier
- 3) cannot be bound by persecution
- 4) cannot be bound by human weakness

Towner: “A Christian’s life has an impact on others. That impact is meant to be positive and redemptive. Paul endured suffering that the church’s evangelistic mission might continue to completion, that Christians like him, willing to continue the struggle for the sake of the gospel and for others who need to hear it, might come to faith and then maturity in Christ. If Paul, then Timothy; if Timothy, then us. We all have responsibilities to other people. Through the preaching of the gospel, and only through this means (1 Cor. 1:21), people may come to know Christ Jesus, in whom alone is salvation. This is salvation from sin and its effects, God’s rescue that results in eternal life. The final phrase describing salvation, with eternal glory, is not superfluous. On the one hand, it is the final goal of the Christian pilgrimage. It is also the hope that can bring the believer through the present necessary experience of struggle for the gospel. Glory, victory, resurrection and removal from troubles are all yet to be fully experienced.

Campbell: Re denying Christ – “That you may more fully understand the meaning of this verb, let us consider how it is used in the New Testament. In Acts 3:14, Peter says, ‘*and you denied the holy and righteous one,*’ i.e., they disowned Him and asked for (owned) a murderer instead. In Titus 1:16, Paul says of the Cretans, ‘*They confess to know God, but in works they deny him.*’ This implies that the denial Paul is speaking of may be in the form of contradictory works. In First John 2:22, we read, ‘*Who is the liar except the one denying that Jesus is the Christ?*’ The use of the Greek word ‘*ouk*’ requires a positive answer, the liar *does deny* that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Anointed One, of Old Testament prophecy. Thus we have seen, this denial of Christ may be by the lips, works, or by both.”

Hendriksen: Re election – “These elect are those on whom God has set his peculiar love from eternity. Cf. Col. 3:12. They are the objects of his sovereign goodpleasure, chosen not because of their foreseen goodness or faith but because God so willed. It was not man’s faith which caused election; but election which caused man’s faith. If anyone wishes to see this for himself he should read such passages as the following: Deut. 7:7, 8; Is. 48:11; Dan. 9:19; Hos. 14:4; John 6:37, 39, 44; 10:29; 12:32; 17:2; Rom. 5:8; 9:11-13; 1 Cor. 1:27, 28; 4:7; Eph. 1:4; 2:8; 1 John 4:10, 19.

These references clearly teach that God did not choose his own because they are more numerous, but for his own sake; that he loves them freely; that they are given to the Son by the Father, drawn by the Father and the Son; and that with respect to them God exercises his own very unique kind of love. They teach that this predestinating love has as its objects sinners, viewed in all their foolishness and weakness; that it bestows its favor on those who have nothing and will never have anything except what they receive; on those who differ from other people for the simple reason that God in effectuating his decree of election causes them to differ; on those who, far from being chosen on account of their unblemished character, are chosen in order that they may be without blemish and unspotted before him; yes, on those who will love him because he first loved them! ...

But even though for the elect, salvation is certain from all eternity, it must be obtained. The scriptural doctrine of election, far from putting any restrictions on the exercise of human freedom, points to the One who makes man free indeed! The God who in his sovereign love chooses a person, in time powerfully influences his will, illumines his mind, floods his heart with love in return for God's love, so that these '*faculties*,' under the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit, begin to function to God's glory in their own right. The decree of election includes the means as well as the end. God chose his people to salvation '*through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.*' And to this salvation they are '*called through our gospel*' ..."

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 2:14-26

TITLE: *PROPER ETIQUETTE FOR USING THE UTENSILS OF TRUTH*

BIG IDEA:

THE FAITHFUL MINISTER OF GOD’S WORD PROMOTES TRUTH AND PURSUES GODLINESS AS A DILIGENT WORKMAN, A VESSEL PURIFIED FOR HONOR, AND A GENTLE BONDSERVANT (IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ERROR – AS OPPOSED TO FALSE TEACHERS)

INTRODUCTION:

I. (:14-19) STAND FOR THE SHARP KNIFE OF THE WORD OF TRUTH (WHICH PROTECTS AGAINST UNGODLINESS) – A DILIGENT WORKMAN

A. (:14) Avoid Semantical Debates

1. Major on the Important Issues – *“Remind them of these things”*
2. Maintain God’s Perspective – *“and solemnly charge them in the presence of God”*
3. Don’t Quibble Over Semantics – *“not to wrangle about words”* – Why?
Don’t make mountains out of molehills; Don’t look to pick a fight
 - a. *“useless”*
 - b. *“leads to the ruin of the hearers”*

B. (:15) Work Hard at Accurately Handling the Scriptures

1. Diligent – *“Be diligent”*
2. Accountable – *“to present yourself approved to God”*
not a man-pleaser; not swayed by popular opinion
3. Faithful – *“as a workman who does not need to be ashamed”*
4. Competent – *“handling accurately the word of truth”*

C. (:16) Avoid Meaningless Chatter

“But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness.”

Stedman: *‘empty babblings’* – “That refers to people who shoot off their mouths, who talk off the top of their heads and display a lot of emotionalism.”

D. (:17-18) Warning Against Heretical Teachers

1. Diseased Expansion – “*and their talk will spread like gangrene.*”

Stedman: Re gangrene – “It smells bad, it spreads quickly, and a whole congregation can be infected by it.”

Hiebert: “Error is a diffusive poison which, unless effectively checked, spreads rapidly through the whole body and leads to sure destruction.”

2. Detailed Examples – “*Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus*”

3. Doctrinal Deviation – “*men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place*”

Stott: “The word of truth is a target. As he shoots at this target, he will either hit it or miss it. The word of truth is a road. As he cuts this road through the forest, he will make it either straight or crooked. As a result of what he does, that is, how he teaches, others are bound to be affected, for better or for worse. If he cuts the road straight, people will be able to follow and so keep in the way. If, on the other hand, he misses the mark, the attention of the spectators will be distracted from the target and their eyes will follow the arrow however widely astray it has gone.”

4. Destructive Influence – “*and thus they upset the faith of some*”

1 Cor. 15 shows that the doctrine of the bodily resurrection of believers is critical to our faith

E. (:19) Encouragement to Remain Standing on the Foundation of Truth

1. Solid Foundation – “*Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands*”

Campbell: “Even though the doctrinal beliefs of some may be perverted, yet the foundation of God stands solid.”

2. Divine Seal – “*having this seal, ‘The Lord knows those who are His’*”

Seal indicated ownership, security and authenticity;

The Lord’s knowledge looks at the hearts rather than mere outward profession

3. Human Responsibility – “*and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness’*”

Hiebert: “True trust in God for security must reveal itself in a life of effective separation from unrighteousness.”

II. (:20-23) SEPARATE YOURSELF WITH THE FORK OF DISCERNMENT

(FROM CORRUPTING INFLUENCES AND UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS)

-- A VESSEL FOR HONOR

A. (:20) Discern Good from Evil – Recognizing the Reality of Both

Stott: “the two sets of vessels in the great house ... represent not genuine and spurious members of the church but true and false teachers in the church. Paul is still, in fact, referring to the two sets of teachers he has contrasted in the previous paragraph, the authentic like Timothy and the bogus like Hymenaeus and Alexander. The only difference is that he changes the metaphor from good and bad workmen to noble and ignoble vessels.”

B. (:21) Separate from Corrupting Teachers

C. (:22) Separate from Corrupting Temptations

D. (:23) Separate from Corrupting Thoughts

III. (:24-26) STIR YOUR WORD OF CORRECTION WITH THE SPOON OF GENTLENESS (VS. PICKING A FIGHT) – A GENTLE BONDSERVANT

A. Manner of Offering Words of Correction --

Five Fingers Holding the Spoon:

1. *“Not Quarrelsome”*

2. *“Kind to All”*

3. *“Able to Teach”*

4. *“Patient when Wronged”*

5. *“With Gentleness Correcting those who are in opposition”*

B. Goal of Offering Gentle Words of Correction

1. *“God may grant them repentance”*

2. *“leading to the knowledge of the truth”*

3. *“they may come to their senses”*

4. *“and escape the snare of the devil”*

C. Helplessness of the Heretics

1. *“having been held captive by him”*

2. “to do his will”

Should be no surprise that their opposition to the truth is so hateful and violent.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What are some examples of the types of word battles that we should avoid as opposed to some examples of types of heretical teaching which must be actively refuted?
- 2) Why does God allow false teachers to exert influence in the church? Why are the tares not separated from the wheat immediately?
- 3) Why is it wise to back away from some controversies and not get engaged rather than to try to answer every question?
- 4) Why is purity of life such a necessary accompaniment to purity of doctrine?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Wiersbe: “The pastor is a workman in the Word. The Word is a treasure that the steward must guard and invest. It is the soldier’s sword and the farmer’s seed. But it is also the workman’s tool for building, measuring, and repairing God’s people. The preacher and teacher who use the Word correctly will build their church the way God wants it to be built. But a sloppy worker will handle God’s Word deceitfully in order to make it say what he wants it to say (2 Cor. 4:2). When God tests our ministries in His local churches, some of it, sad to say, will become ashes (1 Cor. 3:10ff).”

Kent: Re vs. 14 – “Of course, Paul does not mean we should not study minutely the Word of God (he commands it in the next sentence), but mere controversy and wrangling with those whose motives are questionable and whose influence is factious and destructive must be avoided. God’s workmen must not allow such persons any opportunity to engage in their disputes.”

Stedman: Re “*rightly handling the word of truth*” – “Actually, the word used here is a very interesting one. It is a single word which means ‘*to cut straight*’ – ‘*cut straight the word of truth*,’ Paul says. Commentators have struggled as to what Paul is referring to in that metaphor.

Some have thought he meant a plowman, who sets his eye on an object, a tree or a

stake, at the end of a field, and he plows a straight course right to that object. According to that view, Paul was suggesting that as Timothy reads the Scriptures he is to get hold of the final truth and not deviate from that; he is to plow a straight course through the word of truth.

Other commentators have thought Paul was referring to the way a stonemason builds a wall: he drops a plumb line, then he is careful to cut the stone so it is straight according to the plumb line.

I think, however, that Paul is probably referring to his own experience as a tentmaker. Timothy traveled with Paul, so he must have worked many nights with him, cutting and sewing material together to make tents. That is what Paul is referring to; a figure that Timothy would well understand.

You ladies who have made garments from patterns know how important it is to cut the material straight. If you cut it on a line away from what the pattern says you will end up with a piece that is either too small or too large. When you try to fit it with other pieces it will either droop and sag because it is too large, or it will pull and pinch because it is too small.

That is what Paul is talking about. When you handle the Scriptures, he says to Timothy, be sure to cut a straight line. That is, understand the words that are used as they relate to other Scriptures that deal with the subject, so that when the whole thing is put together you will not have to pull or stretch or try to fit something in that does not quite belong; you have clearly understood what each section means, and it will all fit together naturally.”

Stott: Overview – “exhortation to Timothy to be an unashamed workman:

- 1) the kind of work the Christian workman does is teaching. He is called to handle ‘*the word of truth*’.
- 2) there are two kinds of workmen... those who are ‘*approved*’ ... and those who are not approved, because they fail the test.
- 3) the difference between these two categories concerns their handling or treatment of ‘*the word of truth*’ ...

So Paul sets these two kinds of teachers in contrast, and supplies an example of each...The good workman ‘*cuts straight*’ ... the word of truth; the bad workman ‘*swerves*’ or deviates from the truth.”

Hiebert: Re vs. 23 – “The reference is to the heretical teachers who wished to argue their senseless and useless inquiries concerning genealogies and Jewish traditions (cf. 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7).”

Hiebert: Re vs. 25-26 – “Only God can effect the change in them. he must ‘*give*’ it to them as a gift, using Timothy’s efforts as the means to work the needed ‘*repentance*’ in them. What they need is a definite change of heart and will. Their doctrinal perversions rooted in a moral perversity... ‘Only through a change in the moral

disposition do men attain to the full knowledge, the believing apprehension, of the Gospel' (Harvey).”

Kent: Re vs. 25-26 – “These persons who have been trapped by the Devil were not the same type as those described in 2:21 or Titus 3:10. From such, the minister is to remove himself. Those in 2:25, 26 are to be dealt with kindly in order to bring about a return to sober thinking. They are captured alive by Satan. There is at least an inference that these persons may be true believers who have become ensnared. If they are, the repentance and recovery may be expected, and the offenders may yet be restored to the will of God.”

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9

TITLE: TOUGH TIMES AHEAD – PART 1

BIG IDEA:

THE FAITHFUL MINISTER MUST BE PREPARED TO STAND AGAINST THE INCREASINGLY BLATANT DISPLAY OF DEPRAVITY UNLEASHED BY APOSTATE HYPOCRITES

(3:1) INTRODUCTION: WAKEUP CALL = STATEMENT OF THE DANGER LURKING AROUND THE CORNER

“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.”

cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-3

A. Forewarned is Forearmed – *“But realize this”*

B. The Future is Now and it is Almost Gone – *“in the last days”*

C. Ministry is Guaranteed to be a Tough Business – *“difficult times will come”*

Future tense seems to indicate that although we are already in these last days, times will get especially bad right before the return of Christ.

I. (:2-5A) CATALOG OF CORRUPTION / DESCRIPTION OF DEPRAVITY

A. Their Primary Interests / Motivation / Heart

1. *“lovers of self”* = this is fundamental
place themselves first in all things

Example of Christ = did not please Himself – Rom. 15:3

2. *“lovers of money”* = this follows closely after

Luke 16:14; 1 Tim. 6:10

money and materialism being the means people pursue for self-gratification

3. *“lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God”*

Church needs to be careful that it does not buy into this “entertainment” orientation

Towner: “the loving of pleasure is not something that is isolated, it is not an extracurricular activity that can be added to our schedule, apart from taking a heavy toll in another area.”

B. Their Pride

1. *“boastful”* – Rom. 1:30 – bragging about themselves

Kent: “Boasters are those swaggering, bragging persons who glory in making a

big display of themselves, whether the realm be in riches (1 Jn 2:16) or in knowledge (Rev. 3:17).”

2. “*arrogant*”

James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5 – God is opposed to the haughty

C. Their Rebellion – in Attitudes and Actions and Relationships

1. “*revilers*” – destructive speech; against both men and especially God

2. “*disobedient to parents*” – rebellious towards authority figures

Towner – one of the best indicators of rebellion – “for the attitude toward parents was understood as a reflection of a deeper attitude toward God (see Ex 20:12; Deut 21:18-21; 1 Tim 1:9).”

3. “*ungrateful*” – Luke 6:35; Rom. 1:21

Kent: “no feeling of dependence on the assistance of others”

4. “*unholy*”

5. “*unloving*” – without natural affection; cf. growing divorce rate (**Kent**)
Rom. 1:31

6. “*irreconcilable*”

not interested in pursuing peace

7. “*malicious gossips*”

8. “*without self-control*”

will not have the will power and strength necessary for a life of self-control; no restraint of their sinful lusts

9. “*brutal*”

opposite of mild or gentle; untamed and ferocious

10. “*haters of good*”

11. “*treacherous*” – betraying confidences

12. “*reckless*”

13. “*conceited*” – blinded by pride and conceit

Towner: “... the vice catalog (1 Tim 1:9-10; 6:3-5), functions like a ‘wanted’ poster, though its intention includes both identification and denunciation. While the caricature may be excessive, it makes absolutely clear the wickedness of the false teachers.”

D. Their Hypocrisy = Powerless Apostates

“holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power”

II. (:5B) CALL TO MARK AND AVOID

“avoid such men as these”

The only response to Apostasy is Separation

III. (:6-9) CONDEMNATION OF APOSTATE LEADERS

A. (:6-7) Their Methodology = Targeting Weak Women

“For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women”

“Weak Women” because they are:

1. *“weighed down with sins”* – Perfect tense

2. *“led on by various impulses”*

3. *“always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”*

B. (:8) Their Model = Jannes and Jambres in the OT – Characterized as:

(probably Egyptian magicians – Ex. 7:11-12)

Boldness of Paul in using this analogy to put himself on the same plane of Moses – deserving of respect and submission to his teaching as the truth from God

1. *“Opposing the Truth”*
by means of counterfeit miracles

2. *“Men of depraved mind”*

Hendriksen: “The very organ that was given to men in order that they might be able to receive and reflect on spiritual realities has been defiled.”

3. *“Rejected as regards the truth”*

Hiebert: “*‘Reprobate’* means that they have been tested in regard to *‘the faith,’* the Christian teaching, and like counterfeit coin have been found wanting, hence must be discarded as worthless. The truth which they claim to bring in their teaching, upon examination, is found to be counterfeit gold.”

C. (:9) Their Final Grade:

1. Failure -- *“But they will not make further progress”*

2. Exposure

“for their folly will be obvious to all”

“as also that of those two came to be”

Campbell: “The lack of sense and stupidity of these men will be so obvious to all those living in the last days, that their advancement beyond a certain point will be stymied (cf. Luke 6:11).”

Stott: “We sometimes get distressed in our day—rightly and understandably—by the false teachers who oppose the truth and trouble the church, especially by the sly and slippery methods of backdoor religious traders. But we need have no fear, even if a few weak people may be taken in, even if falsehood becomes fashionable. For there is something patently spurious about heresy, and something self-evidently true about the truth. Error may spread and be popular for a time. But it ‘*will not get very far*’. In the end it is bound to be exposed, and the truth is sure to be vindicated.”

Wiersbe: “Jannes and Jambres were finally exposed and made fools of by the judgments of God. This will also happen to the leaders of false religions in the last days. When God’s judgments fall, the true character of these counterfeits will be revealed to everyone.”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Do we live our life with the sense and urgency that we are in “*the last days*”? What is especially difficult and troubling about the times in which we live?
- 2) In reading this catalog of vices, what one jumps out at you the most as an area where you would like God to help protect you or to help you improve? What practical steps can you take to work on this area?
- 3) If dealing with apostasy requires separation, how does your church or ministry organization protect itself against deceptive attacks on the truth? What instances of separation can you recall – either steps you had to take personally to “*turn away*” or steps an organization had to implement?
- 4) In what sense is spiritual power and the fruit of the Holy Spirit a vindication of the truth of the doctrine which is held?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Towner: “The term ‘*terrible*’ characterizes the events of *the last days* as dangerously wild and out of control (compare Mt. 8:28). The surprising thing is that this is not a

prediction of the very end, but of the whole age begun by Christ which will conclude with his return... The appearance and threat of heresy is as much a part of this concluding stage of history as salvation and the church. Therefore Timothy was to view his trials as '*signs of the times*,' reminders of the presence of the Enemy and the promise of victory. The reminder would keep him on his guard and at work, awaiting the return of Christ."

Kent: "This type of woman, depressed by the guilt of sin, is easily led astray by religious quacks who may satisfy the desire for some sort of religion without demanding abandonment of sin."

Stott: "The women chosen as victims Paul refers to by the word *gynaikaria*, 'little women', a term of contempt for women who were idle, silly and weak. Their weakness was double. First, they were morally weak, '*burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses*'. Their sins were to them both a burden and a tyrant, and the false teachers, worming their way into their home, played upon their feelings of guilt and of infirmity. Secondly, they were intellectually weak, unstable, credulous, gullible. They were the kind of women who would '*listen to anybody*', while at the same time could '*never arrive at a knowledge of the truth*'. Constitutionally incapable of reaching any settled convictions, they were like little boats tossed hither and thither by a storm (cf. Eph. 4:14). In such a state of mental confusion, people will listen to any teacher, however specious."

Woychuk: What is it that makes for such *perilous times*?

- 1) Preferring the pleasures of unrighteousness (3:2-4)
- 2) Promoting of unspiritual Christianity (3:5)
- 3) Perpetrating the intellectual deception (3:6-8)

Wiersbe: "We should worship God, love people, and use things. But if we start worshiping ourselves, we will ignore God and start loving things and using people.. This is the formula for a miserable life; yet it characterizes many people today. The worldwide craving for *things* is just one evidence that people's hearts have turned away from God."

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17

TITLE: TOUGH TIMES AHEAD – PART 2

BIG IDEA:

THE EXAMPLE OF GODLY MENTORS AND THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE WORD OF GOD EQUIPS THE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL TO PERSEVERE IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION AND GROWING DECEPTION

I. (:10-14) THE EXAMPLE OF GODLY MENTORS EQUIPS THE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL TO PERSEVERE

A good model can make a tremendous impact in someone's life; Timothy had travelled with the Apostle Paul for 15 or 16 years; Paul was an open book for younger leaders to study

A. (:10) Following in Good Footsteps – “*But you followed my*”:

1 Thess. 1:6; 1 Cor. 4:17 – all of these attributes stand in stark contrast to the false teachers:

1. “*Teaching*”
2. “*Conduct*”
3. “*Purpose*”
4. “*Faith*”
5. “*Patience*”
6. “*Love*”
7. “*Perseverance*”

B. (:11-12) Enduring Persecutions

1. Nature of the Opposition

“*persecutions*”

“*sufferings*”

2. Specific Instances Cited (even though these were before the time of Timothy's personal involvement with Paul – maybe Timothy witnessed some of these events??)

- a. “*such as happened to me at Antioch*” – Acts 13:50 – Paul had to be hustled out of town

b. “*at Iconium*” – Acts 14:5ff – narrowly escaped being assaulted and stoned

c. “*and at Lystra*” – Acts 14:19 – stoned and dragged out of town and left for dead

3. Successful Outcome

a. Human Perseverance – “*what persecutions I endured*”

b. Divine Deliverance – “*and out of them all the Lord delivered me!*”

4. Pattern for All

“*And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*”

Hiebert: “The first explanation for his sufferings lies in the fact that it is the lot of all the godly. His experiences are nothing extraordinary and exceptional.”

C. (:13) Despite Growing Deception

1. Who are we up against?

a. “*evil men*”

b. “*imposters*”

2. What direction are things headed?

“*from bad to worse*”

3. What is the Fundamental Characteristic of this Opposition? Deception

“*deceiving and being deceived*”

D. (:14) Staying on Track

1. Exhortation to Stay on Track

“*You, however, continue in the things you have learned*”

2. Motivation to Stay on Track

a. Confidence in the Validity of the Truth which you have been taught

“*become convinced of*”

b. Confidence in the Validity of the Mentors whom you are following

“*from whom you have learned them*”

II. (:15-17) THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE WORD OF GOD EQUIPS THE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL TO PERSEVERE

When all else fails, read the directions ... why not study them before all else fails?

The Bible is our guidebook thru these difficult last days

(The Origin and Purpose of the Word of God is developed here – **Stott**)

A. Sufficient for Helping People of All Ages

“from childhood”

“the man of God”

B. Sufficient For Guiding One to Salvation (both initial and ultimate salvation)

1. Source – *“sacred writings”*

2. Content – *“to give you the wisdom”*

3. Objective – *“that leads to salvation”*

4. Appropriation – *“through faith which is in Christ Jesus”*

C. Sufficient in Its Totality and Authority = Doctrine of Verbal, Plenary Inspiration of Scriptures

“All Scripture is inspired by God” / “God-breathed”

D. Sufficient in Its Value = *“Profitable for”*:

1. *“Teaching”*

2. *“Reproof”*

3. *“Correction”*

4. *“Training in righteousness”*

D. Sufficient in Its Role in Equipping Spiritual Leaders

Summary: *“that the man of God may be”*: (speaking specifically about the Christian leader)

1. *“Adequate”*

2. *“equipped for every good work”*

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Do we get close enough today to the lives of our spiritual leaders that we gain the value of their personal life example? Or do we primarily know them just through their public teaching ministry? What are the benefits of close personal discipleship such as the mentoring that Timothy received?

2) How can false teachers propagate the “health and wealth” gospel in light of the stress on suffering and persecution in these verses? How are people sucked into buying such an obvious error?

3) What are the practical implications of denying the inerrancy of Scriptures or watering down the Biblical view of inspiration? Is the *Battle for the Bible* still being waged today (as described in the books by Harold Lindsell)?

4) Why do we look so many other places for our certification and equipping for ministry when we are told that it is proficiency in the Sufficient Scriptures that will equip us “*for every good work*”?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Woychuk: Re the importance of mixing faith with the Word of God – “It is true that the infidel can read God’s Word and scoff; the poet may read them and only admire their excellence; the historian may consult them only as ancient records; the religionist may read them for the sake of fulfilling prescribed routines; and even the wicked ones may read therein so as to imitate those things which God holds up to be abhorred. But *it ‘did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it’* (Heb 4:2).”

Wiersbe: Re Paul practiced what he preached – “Paul’s ‘*manner of life*’ backed up his messages. He did not preach sacrifice and live in luxury. He gave to others far more than he received from them. He stood up for the truth even when it meant losing friends and, in the end, losing his life. Paul was a servant, not a celebrity...”

I wonder how Paul would match up with today’s concept of a Christian leader. He would probably fail miserably. If he applied for service with a modern mission board, would he be accepted? He had a prison record; he had a physical affliction; he stirred up problems in just about every place he visited. He was poor, and he did not cater to the rich. Yet God used him, and we are being blessed today because Paul was faithful.”

Wiersbe: “We must not think of ‘*inspiration*’ the way the world thinks when it says, ‘Shakespeare was certainly an inspired writer.’ What we mean by biblical inspiration is that supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the Bible’s writers which guaranteed that what they wrote was accurate and trustworthy. *Revelation* means the communicating of truth to man by God; *inspiration* has to do with the recording of this communication in a way that is dependable.”

Stott: Re summary of chapter – “Never mind if the pressure to conform is very strong. Never mind if you are young, inexperienced, timid and weak. Never mind if you find yourself alone in your witness. You have followed my teaching so far. Now continue

in what you have come to believe. You know the biblical credentials of your faith. Scripture is God-breathed and profitable. Even in the midst of these grievous times in which evil men and impostors go on from bad to worse, it can make you complete and it can equip you for your work. Let the word of God make you a man of God! Remain loyal to it and it will lead you on into Christian maturity.”

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 4:1-5

TITLE: PREACH THE WORD

BIG IDEA:

**PAUL'S FINAL CHARGE TO HIS YOUNGER PROTÉGÉ:
FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY BY PREACHING THE WORD
(REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THE MESSAGE IS POPULAR)**

I. (:1) THE EYEWITNESSES OF THE CHARGE:

PAY CLOSE ATTENTION!

(Maintaining sound doctrine is serious business)

A. The Seriousness of the Charge – “*I solemnly charge you*”
Timothy had better pay close attention

B. The Eyewitnesses

1. “*in the presence of God*”

2. “*and of Christ Jesus*”

Campbell: “The fact that God the Father and Son are looking on as Paul gives this charge verifies its Divine origin and sanctions its validity. What Paul is about to say is backed up by Divine authority (cf. 1 Tim. 2:3; 5:21).”

C. The Accountability Factor – “*who is to judge the living and the dead*”

D. The Imminent Return Factor – “*and by His appearing and His kingdom*”

Sense of urgency – we don't have all the time in the world to get the job done

II. (:2) THE ESSENCE OF THE CHARGE:

PREACH THE WORD!

A. What does it Mean in a Practical Sense to “*Preach the Word*”?

cf. book by Haddon Robinson = Biblical Preaching

1. Must be an exegetical approach

2. Must be a systematic approach

3. Requires serious study and preparation

B. When is it Imperative to Preach the Word?

“*be ready in season and out of season*”

not a matter of personal convenience or comfort

C. What are Some of the Components of a Biblical Preaching Ministry?

these actions will take place publicly in the context of preaching itself

as well as privately on an individual basis as necessary

1. “*Reprove*”

Woychuk: “convict of wrong and sin by the searching light and power of the Scriptures.”

2. “*Rebuke*”

Woychuk: “This is a very strong word (*epitimao*) and means to censure, to blame, to charge and prove guilty, even in the face of opposition.”

3. “*Exhort*”

Wiersbe – cf. an old maxim for preachers: “He should afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted”

D. What is the Dominant Tone of a Biblical Preaching Ministry?

“*with great patience*”

E. What is the Primary Objective of a Biblical Preaching Ministry?

“*and instruction*”

This is a lifelong ministry of systematic indoctrination in the whole counsel of God

III. (:3-4) THE ENTERTAINMENT ALTERNATIVE:

DON'T CHANGE THE MESSAGE TO SATISFY POPULAR DEMAND!

(Sound Doctrine will not be the popular choice; but don't cave in)

(Refutation of postmill – things are not getting progressively better)

A. Apostasy is Inevitable

“*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine*”

Trace the downward, compromising path of any major Biblical institution – denomination, seminary, etc.

Books like: The Battle for the Bible and The Bible in the Balance by Lindsell

B. Accommodation Becomes the Rule

“*but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires*”

C. Adulterated Message Is the Popular Preference

1. “*turn away their ears from the truth*”

2. “*and will turn aside to myths*”

cf. how so many cultists were church goers earlier in their life

IV. (:5) THE ESSENTIALS OF THE CHARGE: FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY!

“*But you*” – in contrast to those false teachers who are willing to accommodate their message to the masses

- A. Be Serious-Minded – “*be sober in all things*”
not intoxicated by the thrill of popularity or the enticement of novel doctrines
- B. Be Strong in Facing Every Difficulty – “*endure hardship*”
- C. Be Stretched to Perform a Wide Range of Ministry – “*do the work of an evangelist*”
In fulfilling your ministry of edifying the saints and indoctrinating them in the whole counsel of God, don’t neglect the need for proclaiming the gospel to the lost.
- D. Summary: “*fulfill your ministry*”

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Are we fulfilling our ministry with the urgency and the sense that the return of Christ is right around the corner? Do we have a healthy fear of God and sense of our accountability before Him?
- 2) What is the content of this “*Word*” which we are to preach? What are some of the other terms used by the Apostle Paul in his pastoral epistles to refer to this same body of doctrine?
- 3) How has “doctrine” and “theology” received such a bad name among present-day Christians as if it is something dry and un-connected to the practical realities of our everyday living? Why do we shrink back from the concept of “preaching” or authoritatively teaching and talk instead about “sharing” with one another?
- 4) How can popularity be a dangerous measuring stick for one of God’s heralds?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Stott: Re Preaching the Word – “Paul goes on to list four marks which are to characterize Timothy’s proclamation:

- 1) An urgent proclamation... All true preaching conveys a sense of the urgent importance of what is being preached. The Christian herald knows that he is handling

matters of life and death...

2) A relevant proclamation ... He must use 'argument, reproof, and appeal' (NEB), which is almost a classification of three approaches, intellectual, moral and emotional. For some people are tormented by doubts and need to be convinced by arguments. Others have fallen into sin, and need to be rebuked. Others again are haunted by fears, and need to be encouraged. God's word does all this and more. We are to apply it relevantly.

3) A patient proclamation ... We must never resort to the use of human pressure techniques, or attempt to contrive a 'decision'. Our responsibility is to be faithful in preaching the word; the results of the proclamation are the responsibility of the Holy Spirit, and we can afford to wait patiently for him to work.

4) An intelligent proclamation ... There is an increasing need, especially as the process of urbanization continues and standards of education rise, for Christian ministers to exercise in the teeming cities of the developing world a systematic expository preaching ministry..."

Wiersbe: "The word '*preach*' means '*to preach like a herald.*' In Paul's day, a ruler had a special herald who made announcements to the people. He was commissioned by the ruler to make his announcements in a loud, clear voice so everyone could hear. He was not an ambassador with the privilege of negotiating; he was a messenger with a proclamation to be heard and heeded. Not to heed the ruler's messenger was serious; to abuse the messenger was even worse"

Woychuk: Warning against over-reliance on commentaries – "There is a story told concerning John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*: A pastor named Thomas Scott, who was a commentator, wrote notes for it, thinking that *Pilgrim's Progress* was a difficult book and he would make it easier to understand. A pious member of his congregation had a copy of *Pilgrim's Progress* and a copy of Scott's commentary. She was reading *Pilgrim's Progress* when he called. He said to her, 'Oh, I see you are reading Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Do you understand it?' She answered innocently enough, 'Oh, yes sir, I understand Mr. Bunyan very well, and I hope that one day I shall be able to understand your explanations.'"

Kent: Re work of an evangelist – "The gift of the evangelist (Eph. 4:11) was a special endowment for announcing the good news of salvation. Philip is called '*the evangelist*' (Acts 21:8). In this charge to Timothy, the absence of an article before '*evangelist*' indicates the type or quality of work is being stressed, rather than some official position. In his pastoral duties, he is not to forget the unsaved, but must always be concerned with announcing the good news of man's redemption through Christ."

Hendriksen: "In every period of history ... there will be a season during which men refuse to listen to sound doctrine. As history continues onward toward the consummation, this situation grows worse. Men will not endure or tolerate the truth,

the doctrine which because it promotes spiritual health is called *sound* ... *But, having itching ears, will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own fancies.* It is not the herald of the gospel that is at fault, but the hearing of the fickle men who make up the audience! ... Their craving is for teachers to suit their *fancies* or *perverted tastes* ...”

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8

TITLE: A VIEW FROM THE FINISH LINE –
FINAL REFLECTIONS FROM THE APOSTLE PAUL

BIG IDEA:

**A LIFE OF PERSEVERANCE EARNS A PERSPECTIVE OF CONTENTMENT,
FULFILLMENT, AND EXPECTATION**

I. (:6) PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS THE PRESENT: CONTENTMENT

A. Content to be a Living (and Dying) Sacrifice

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering”

Goal = to be pleasing to the Lord

B. Content to Depart this Pilgrim Existence

“and the time of my departure has come”

The train is pulling out of the station; Paul is weighing anchor

Woychuk: “The noun here for ‘*departure*,’ like the kindred verb in Phil. 1:23, means a detachment, a setting free, as the loosening of the tent cords when breaking up camp or the hoisting of the anchor of a ship about to sail. The voyager here is breaking loose from the scene of his earthly pilgrimage, and setting out for the heavenly harbor.”

II. (:7) PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS THE PAST: FULFILLMENT

A. Image of a Boxer or Wrestler – *“I have fought the good fight”*

Fulfillment in Fighting the Right Battles

Hiebert: “The figure is not drawn from the battlefield but from the well-known Greek games. It is the picture of an athlete struggling and contending for the prize. The underlying figure may be that of the wrestling match or the boxing arena.”

B. Image of a Marathon Runner – *“I have finished the course”*

Fulfillment in Running the Entire Course

C. Image of a Faithful Steward – *“I have kept the faith”*

With the definite article, Paul here is referring to that deposit of the entire system of sound doctrine, the gospel message in its entirety, the body of truth, to which

he had remained faithful to pass it along unchanged to the next generation of spiritual leaders.

Woychuk: “Paul encountered false prophets, deceptive followers, bitter enemies, but he guarded that Gospel with a God-given jealousy to keep it free from perversion or adulteration.”

III. (:8) PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS THE FUTURE: EXPECTATION

A. Reward = “*the crown of righteousness*”

Campbell: “speaking of the *particular crown* which belongs to the *particular righteousness*, namely, that which is in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21). All believers, clothed in the righteousness of Christ (Eph. 6:14), will be given the *crown of Christ’s righteousness* (1 Cor. 9:25) enabling them to stand in the presence of God the Father.”

Towner: “It may be objected that Paul teaches that righteousness (or justification) is already the possession of the Christian on the basis of faith in Christ (Rom 3:21-31). And this is true. But just as with the gift of salvation, which we now experience only in part, Paul can also say that ‘*we eagerly await ... the righteousness for which we hope*’ (Gal 5:5). It is this complete righteousness that Paul expects the Lord to confer on him. Does Paul now envision righteousness as something to be earned? No. But the athletic imagery implies the need for a life of faithful response on the part of Christians; God has given salvation and righteousness and along with them the responsibility to work out, implement and perform the new life in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

B. Judge = “*the Lord, the righteous Judge*”

Wallis: “... may suggest that many of the decisions Paul had received in this life were unfair, but the Lord is the Judge who can make no mistake.”

C. Timing

1. “*in the future*”

2. “*on that day*”

D. Recipients

1. Apostle Paul – “*not only to me*”

2. “*but also to all who have loved His appearing*”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How is viewing your imminent martyrdom as a “*departure*” different from viewing it as simply a “death”? Is our life on earth more precious to us than our face to face enjoyment of our Savior?
- 2) How disciplined are we willing to be to successfully face the struggles and hardships before us in the ministry to which God has called us? Do we have the mindset and will of a champion athlete?
- 3) Will all believers receive this same “*crown of righteousness*”?
- 4) Which “*appearing*” of Christ is in view in vs. 8 – His first coming or His second coming?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Woychuk: “Waiting in that dark, lower dungeon of the roman prison, Paul is fully convinced of the near approach of his death for the sake of the Gospel, and speaks of it as something already begun. He speaks of his martyrdom not as death but as an offering, a libation poured out unto the Lord.”

Stott: “the work of the apostle, and to a lesser extent of every gospel preacher and teacher, is pictured as fighting a fight, running a race, guarding a treasure. Each involves labour, sacrifice and even danger. In all three Paul has been faithful to the end.”

Hendriksen: “Since this wine was gradually poured out, was an offering, and was the final act of the entire sacrificial ceremony, it pictured most adequately the gradual ebbing away of Paul’s life, the fact that he was presenting this life to God as an offering, and the idea that while he viewed his entire career of faith as ‘*a living sacrifice*’ (Rom. 12:1; cf. 15:16), he looked upon the present stage of this career as being the final sacrificial act.”

Wallis: “This eloquent and confident testimony touches on the main points Paul has endeavored to say to Timothy: confidence in the grace of Christ; faithful transmission of the faith to others; the steadfast reliance on the blessed hope...

Paul may be thinking of the transmission of the faith through the centuries as a relay race: he has successfully finished his course and passed on the faith to others. The figure of the relay race seems to fit the following verse, for not Paul only, but the whole ‘team’ will receive the prize.”

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 4:9-22

TITLE: FINAL REQUESTS

BIG IDEA:

PAUL'S FINAL REQUESTS REFLECT HIS HEART FOR MINISTRY, HIS STRUGGLE WITH LONELINESS, AND HIS ASSURANCE OF HEAVENLY GLORY

I. (:9-12) REQUEST FOR COMPANIONSHIP AND ASSISTANCE

A. Paul Would Like to Have Timothy With Him

“Make every effort to come to me soon” – repeated in vs. 21 where “soon” is defined as *“before winter”*

Wiersbe: “All the ships would be in port during the winter since it would be too dangerous for sailing. If Timothy waited too long, he would miss his opportunity to travel to Paul; and then it would be too late.”

B. Paul is Lonely Due to the Lack of Companionship from Others

1. *“Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica”*

Stedman: “Perhaps Demas grew tired of the poverty, persecution, and hardship he had to endure as a companion of Paul, and, ‘*in love with this present age,*’ he had abandoned him. We can quite properly read into this much heartache on the part of Paul.”

2. *“Crescens has gone to Galatia”*

3. *“Titus to Dalmatia”*

Hiebert: “Paul is not censuring their absence (Crescens and Titus)... Certainly no blame is attached to their absence but is mentioned to explain Paul’s loneliness.”

C. Paul is Encouraged by the Presence of Luke

“Only Luke is with me”

D. Paul Would Like to See Mark as Well

“Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.”

Stedman: “He was the young man who had gone home to mother because he could not take the hardship on the first missionary journey, and had upset the apostle by so doing. It is a tribute to Mark that he had somehow recovered himself in the apostle’s eyes. Tradition tells us that he went down to Egypt and so ministered in the Christian

community there that he won a position of respect. Later, Paul had him come to Rome with him, as we learn from one of the prison epistles. Now he is back in Ephesus, and Paul asks Timothy to bring Mark with him ... It is a tribute to him that he recovered himself, and a tribute to Paul that he found the grace to forgive and forget the weakness of the past and give him another chance.”

E. Tychicus Has Been Dispatched to Minister Elsewhere

“But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.”

Wiersbe: “a believer from the province of Asia (Acts 20:4) who willingly accompanied Paul and probably ministered as a personal servant to the apostle. He was with Paul during his first imprisonment (Col. 4:7-8; Eph. 6:21-22). Paul sent Tychicus to Crete to relieve Titus (Titus 3:12). Now he was sending him to Ephesus to relieve Timothy. What a blessing it is to have people who can replace others!”

II. (:13) REQUEST FOR RESOURCES

A. Cloak – *“When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus”*

Stedman: “The cloak was what we today would call a poncho, a circular garment with a hole in the middle for the head, made of very warm material that Paul would doubtless need for the coming cold winter in Rome.”

B. Books – *“and the books, especially the parchments”*

Stedman: *“The books’* would seem to be a reference to papyrus books. They could well be the early Gospels of Mark and Matthew, which perhaps were circulating by now. The parchments most certainly were copies of the Old Testament Scriptures. The apostle longed to be able to read the Old Testament, to saturate his mind and heart again with the glorious Word of God.”

III. (:14-18) REQUEST FOR JUST RECOMPENSE

A. (:14-15) Judgment Against Alexander the coppersmith

1. His Crime

a. *“did me much harm”*

b. *“he vigorously opposed our teaching”*

2. His Recompense

“the Lord will repay him according to his deeds”

3. His Ongoing Threat – *“Be on guard against him yourself”*

B. (:16) Pardon for Deserters

“At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me;

may it not be counted against them.”

C. (:17-18) Deliverance from the Lord

1. (:17) Past Deliverance

a. How?

1) *“the Lord stood with me”*

2) *“and strengthened me”*

Wiersbe: “When Paul had been discouraged in Corinth, the Lord came to him and encouraged him (Acts 18:9-11). After he had been arrested in Jerusalem, Paul again was visited by the Lord and encouraged (Acts 23:11). During that terrible storm, when Paul was on board ship, the Lord had again given him strength and courage (Acts 27:22ff).”

b. Why? Paul had a heart for ministry and for the salvation of the Gentiles; not thinking primarily of his own comfort

1) *“in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished”*

2) *“and that all the Gentiles might hear”*

c. Result? *“and I was delivered out of the lion’s mouth”*

Is this a general reference to deliverance from a martyr’s death or more specifically a reference to deliverance from Satan? 1 Pet. 5:8; Ps. 22:21

Hiebert: “The Lord filled him with power, lifted him above cringing fear, and gave him boldness to present his cause.”

2. (:18a) Future Deliverance

“the Lord will deliver me from every evil deed”

“and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom”

3. (:18b) All to the Glory of the Lord

“to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

(:19-22) FINAL GREETINGS AND BENEDICTION

A. Greetings to be Passed Along

1. To Prisca and Aquila

2. To the Household of Onesiphorus

Towner: “Paul wanted those greeted to be sure of their significance to him.”

B. Personal Explanations

1. What happened to Erastus?
“remained at Corinth”

2. What happened to Trophimus
“I left sick at Miletus”

C. Personal Exhortation

“Make every effort to come before winter.”

D. Greetings to be Received

1. From Eubulus

2. From Pudens and Linus and Claudia

3. From *“all the brethren”*

E. Benediction

“The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.”

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Where does the world have an attraction and a pull on us so that we need to watch out for being diverted from the mission to which God has called us?

2) Do we see the importance of ministering as part of a fellowship team with the benefit of companionship and encouragement or are we comfortable to operate as a lone ranger? Who are the friends that come alongside of us when we are feeling lonely and all alone?

3) What are the practical benefits of leaving vengeance in the hands of the Lord to repay as He sees fit?

4) Have we experienced the strengthening ministry of the Lord in times of pressure? Have we experienced His deliverance and freedom to minister?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Towner: “It seems that it is when circumstances least warrant hope in God that the conviction and experience of God’s promises to stand near and deliver grow most clear

to the righteous. Paul's hope of salvation was never more certain than when he wrote these final words. The doxology, which proclaims the Lord's *glory*, is the fitting conclusion to this reminder of the presence, power and rescue of God."

Stott: "From his majestic survey of the past (*'I have fought the good fight ...'*) and his confident anticipation of the future (*'henceforth there is laid up for me the crown ...'*) Paul returns in thought to the present and to his personal predicament. For the great apostle Paul was also a creature of flesh and blood, a man of like nature and passions with ourselves. Although he has finished his course and is awaiting his crown, he is still a frail human being with ordinary human needs. He describes his plight in prison, and expresses in particular his loneliness.

Several factors contributed to his sense of isolation, and these he openly describes. He had been deserted by his friends (9-13); he had been opposed by Alexander the coppersmith (14, 15); and he had been unsupported at his first defence (16-18)."

Stott: "Of course some Christians today scorn reading and study altogether, and assert that they would not feel the need of books at any time, let alone in prison. Let Calvin answer them: 'Still more does this passage refute the madness of the fanatics who despise books and condemn all reading and boast only of their *enthusiasmous*, their private inspirations by God. But we should note that this passage commends continual reading to all godly men as a thing from which they can profit.'"

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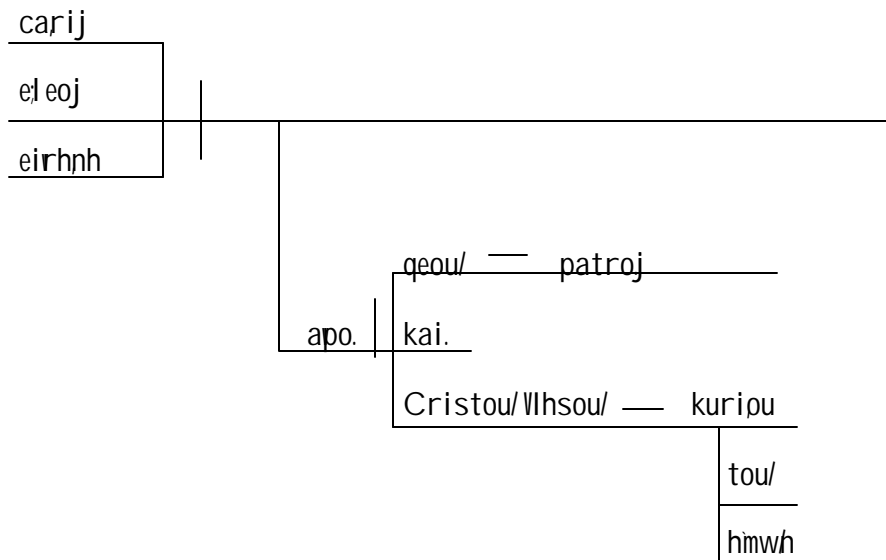
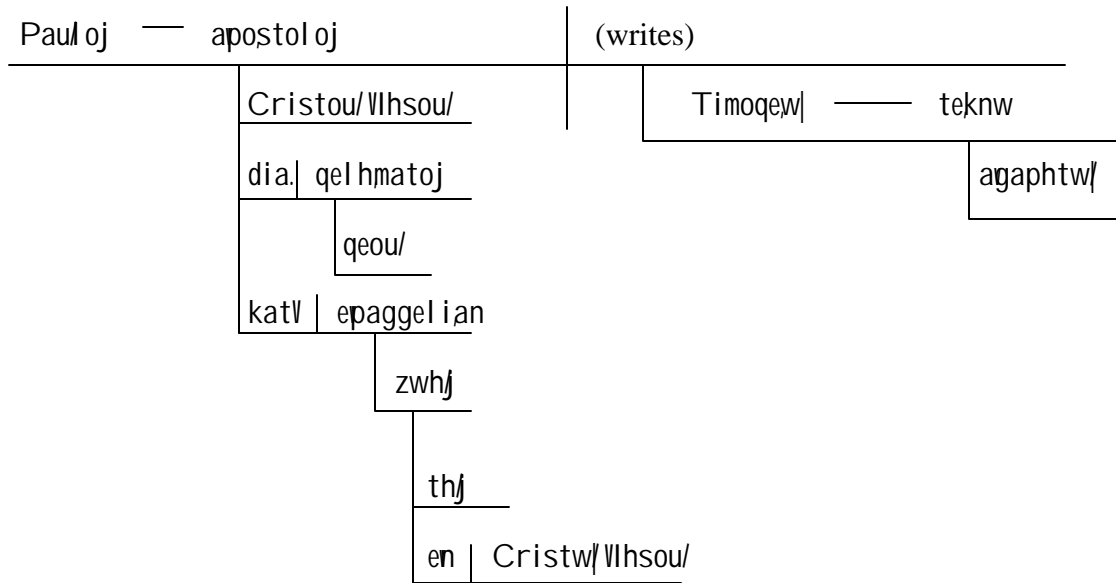
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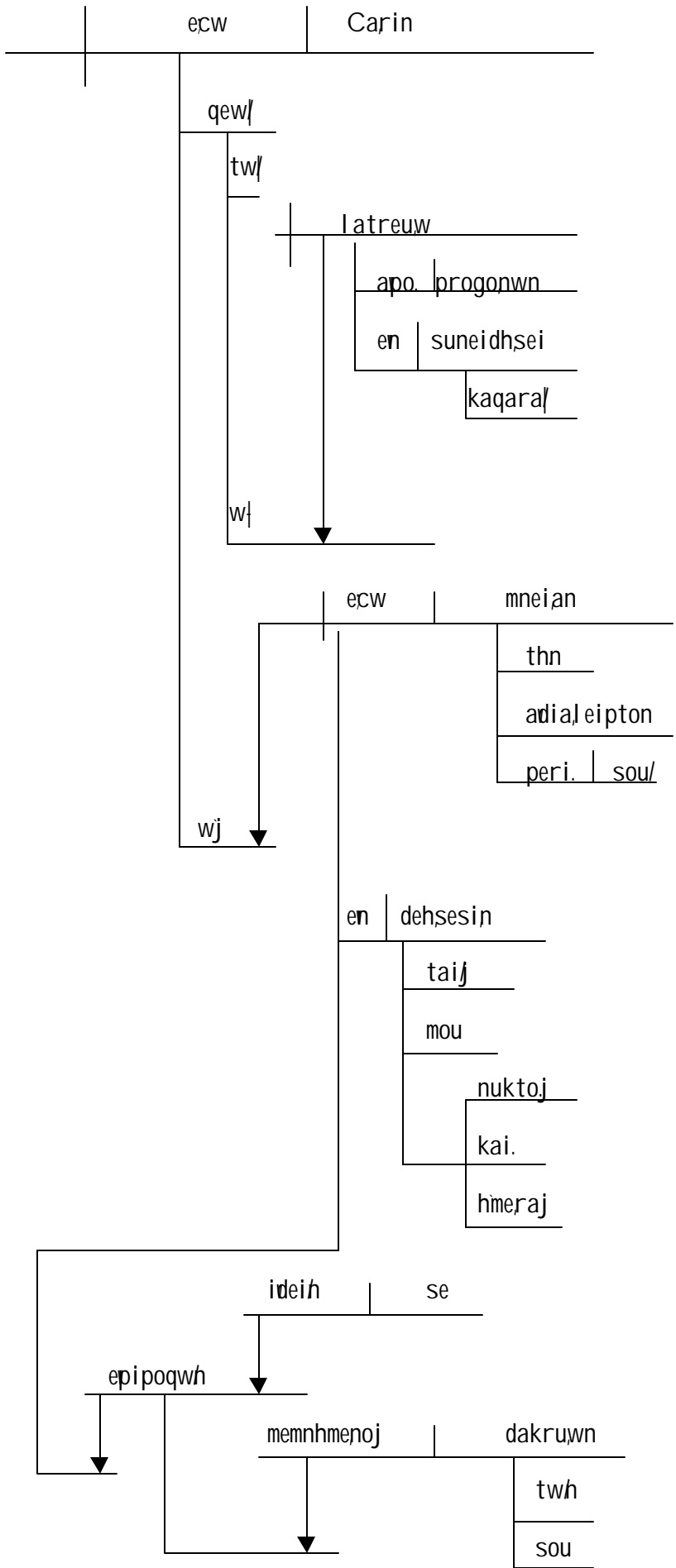
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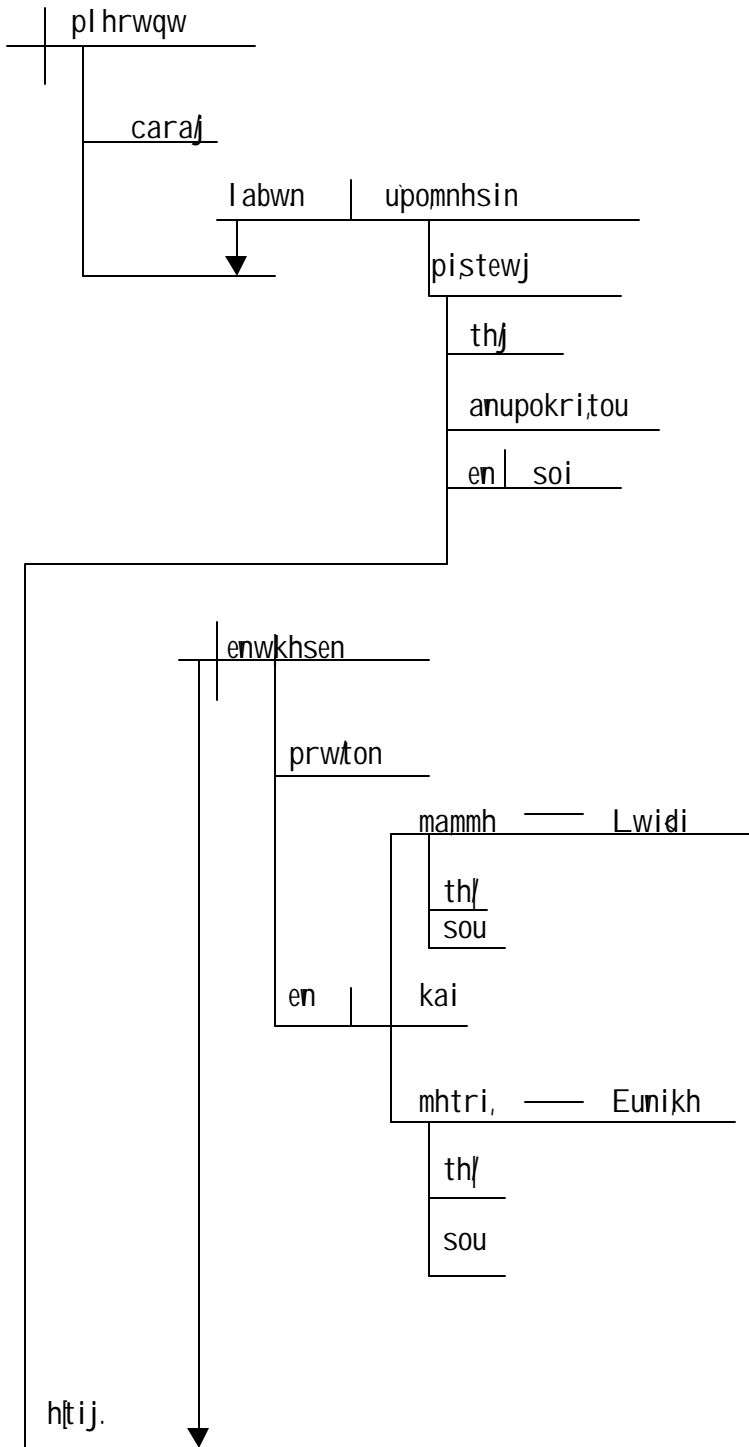
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2 Timothy 1:1-7





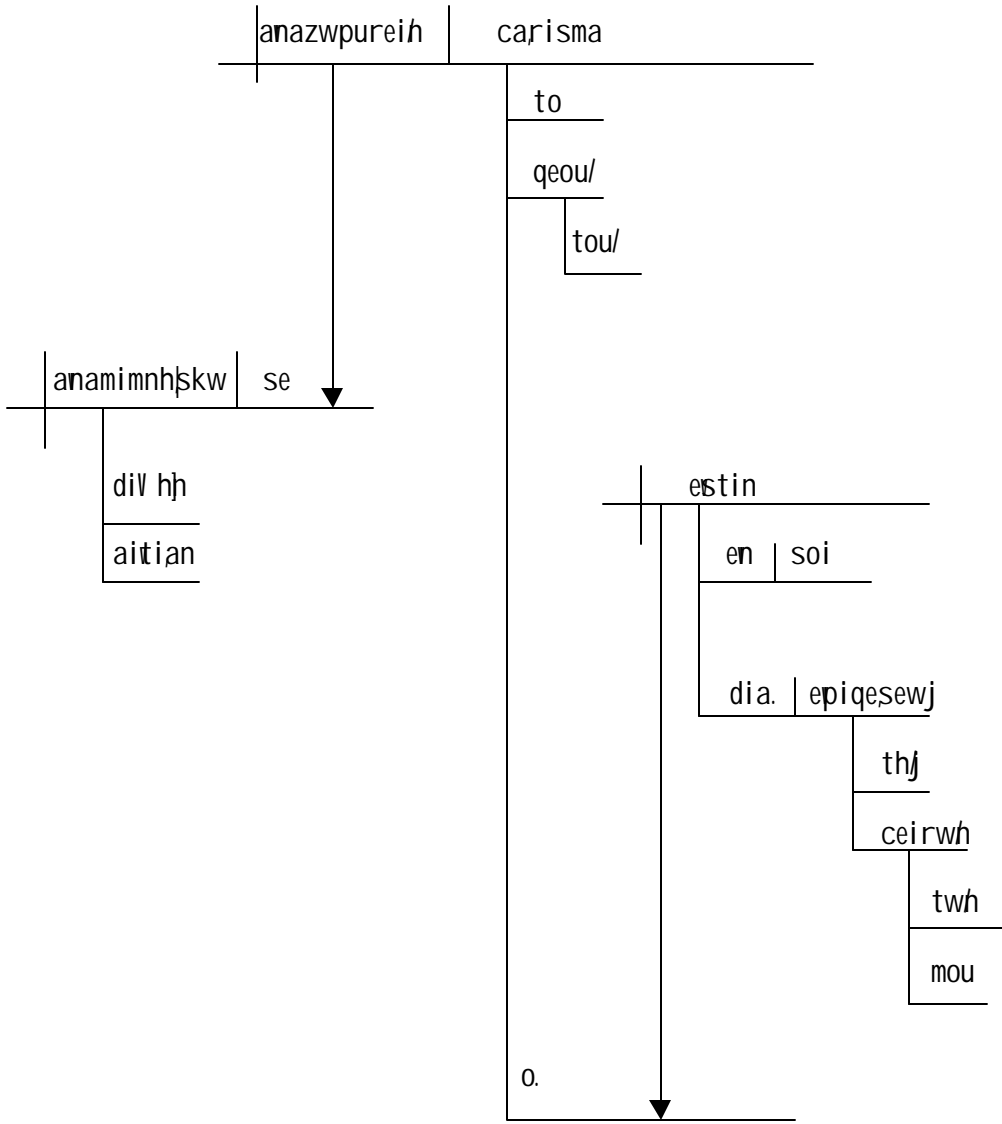
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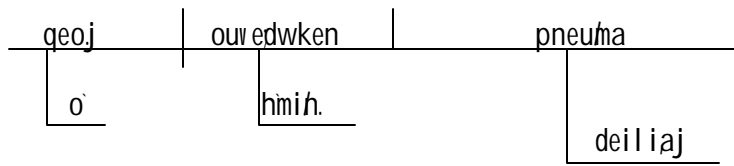
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