

A Call to Stand (2 Timothy 1:1-18)

“... everything written to Timothy—every bit of theology, ethical exhortation, and practical advice—was also written (even if unintentionally) to us.” ~ Philip Towner

I. Overview of 2 Timothy

This epistle, along with First Timothy and Titus, is referred to as the Pastoral Epistles. The nomenclature stems from the content of these epistles—instructions given to Timothy and Titus concerning ministry, church order, and personal spiritual growth. While imprisoned in Rome, Paul pens this second letter to Timothy. Most likely written in the late summer or fall of AD 67, Paul was martyred shortly thereafter in the fourteenth year of Nero, 67-68. During these mid-sixties, the church suffered the martyrdom of “a great multitude” (1 Clement 6:1), and many individuals defected from the church. The church also faced a rise in false teachers—individuals who denied Christ’s resurrection and corrupted the Gospel with elements of Judaism (e.g., Paul refers to them as the “circumcised party” in Titus 1:10). It is this context in which Paul pens these parting words to his colleague, Timothy (4:6-8). These final words of the great apostle Paul are not only critical to Timothy’s ministry, but also, for all those who claim the name of Christ.

II. Opening to 2 Timothy

A. Greeting (1:1-2)

v. 1 - Paul identifies himself as an apostle and then provides three clarifications concerning this role. First, his apostleship is directly linked with Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 9:1-19). Second, his authority as an apostle stems from the Lord (cf. 1 Tim 1:1). And third, the purpose of his apostleship is for the furtherance of the Gospel.

v. 2 - A native of Lystra, Timothy was converted during Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 16:1-3), and he joined Paul on his second missionary journey (cf. Acts 16:3; 1 Tim 4:14).

“dear child” - The phrase denotes responsibility and close filial relationship (cf. Johnson, *Scripture and Discernment*, 335).

The substance of the greeting, “grace, mercy, and peace,” is identical with 1 Timothy 1:2. These divine resources are vital to the mission set forth for Timothy.

B. Thanksgiving (1:3-18)

1. Rejoicing in Timothy’s Faith (1:3-5)

vv. 3-5 - This single sentence in the Greek is basically: “I thank God . . . because I remember your faith.”

Paul becomes both a model and a reminder to Timothy. In addition, Timothy's authentic faith also serves as a stark contrast with the false teachers and the charges leveled against Paul (cf. 1:8, 12, 15-18).

"Paul's thanksgiving-prayer is then the basis for his appeal to Timothy. It supplies encouragement—Paul prays for him and affirms his faith; it implies obligation with a note of warning—there is a heritage that requires loyalty, and a confidence that must be validated" (Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 448).

2. Renewing Timothy's Calling (1:6-14)

vv. 6-7 - "gift of God" - This phrase probably refers to the Holy Spirit. As was seen frequently in Acts, the laying on of hands confirmed the presence of faith (cf. Acts 8:17-28). Note what the Holy Spirit affords the believer:

- "power" - This quality is directly linked with the role of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:8; Eph 3:16; 1 Thess 1:5).
- "love" - Love authenticates true faith (cf. Gal 5:22-23).
- "self-control" or "discretion" - This term speaks of self-discipline and is a guard against rash behaviors or decisions.

v. 8 - Embarrassment comes from the scandalous message of the cross, Paul's imprisonment, and the Pauline presentation of the gospel.

vv. 9-10 - Why suffer for the sake of the Gospel? These two verses clearly indicate the reason for suffering—namely, Jesus Christ!

vv. 11-12 - Paul highlights that ministry and suffering go hand-in-hand. However, he does not cower because of his personal knowledge of God and His character.

vv. 13-14 - As Paul hands the ministry over to Timothy, the apostle commands his colleague to remain faithful to the Gospel and to depend upon the Holy Spirit. Note that "faith" and "love" indicates the manner in which Timothy is to fulfill his mission.

"guard the good deposit" - Commanded in 1 Timothy 6:20, the phrase refers to sound teaching, and in particular, the Gospel.

3. Recalling Models of Shame and Courage (1:15-18)

v. 15 - Phygelus and Hermogenes appear to be leaders of this "all-in-Asia" group. Unfortunately, there are no further details given as to who this "all" is and what specific situation Paul is referencing.

vv. 16-18 - This single verse in the Greek consists of two wishes for Onesiphorus:

- “grant mercy to his household” - This term is rooted in the Old Testament to speak of God’s desire to assist His people (cf. Deut 13:18; Isa 47:6). The basis for this prayer is because Onesiphorus helped Paul and persevered in doing so.
- “grant mercy to him on that day” - Paul invokes the Lord’s blessing on Onesiphorus (cf. Matt 25:34-40).

As aptly noted by one commentator, “Paul gives at length in vv. 16-18 this example of Onesiphorus (and in v. 15 the negative example of others in Asia) so that it can serve as a reinforcement of his role to Timothy not to be ashamed but to suffer the gospel (vv. 13-14)” (Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 387).

III. Intersect

A. Authentic faith requires more than merely a simple adherence to a set of doctrinal ideas. Rather, this type of faith entails loyalty and responsibility.

James 2:14-19 -

B. The very presence of the Holy Spirit and the fruit that He produces guarantees suffering. Thankfully, the Spirit provides us with the resources necessary to endure this suffering for God’s glory.

2 Timothy 3:12 -

C. Even the faint of heart can become a fearless lion when one understands the person and work of Christ, the blessings He bestows, and the rewards that await those who call upon His name.

1 Peter 5:8-12 -

“There’s a difference between knowing God and knowing about God. When you truly know God, you have energy to serve him, boldness to share him, and contentment in him.”

~ J. I. Packer