

Continuing our study of the Pastoral Epistles
Lesson 8 (2 Timothy 1)

Highlights & notes for 2 Timothy 1 -- Be Not Ashamed of Your Faith

1. Background into this Second Epistle to Timothy

a. Chronologically, this is Paul's last Epistle that he wrote, shortly before his martyrdom.

1) Recall Paul's first imprisonment for two years (AD 60-62) under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:17-31). After he was released (in AD 62/63) he then continued his missionary work, primarily this time by encouraging others in shepherding/pastoring the churches he had started in this NT Church era, in fulfillment of the Lord's Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and Promise (Acts 1:8). Some refer to that time of Paul's ministry, after those two years of imprisonment, as his "Fourth Missionary Journey," a period in his life not recorded in the Book of Acts. It was during that period of time in his ministry when Paul wrote the pastoral epistles of 1 Timothy (which we just studied) and of Titus.

2) Now we read of Paul being imprisoned again in Rome under Emperor Nero (AD 66-67). Only this second time he was in chains under harsh conditions.* "It was during this time that he wrote 2 Timothy. In contrast to his first imprisonment, when he lived in a rented house (Acts 28:30), he now languished in a cold dungeon (2 Tim. 4:13), chained like a common criminal (1:16; 2:9). His friends even had a hard time finding out where he was being kept (1:17). Paul knew that his work was done and his life was nearly at an end (4:6-8)." (CSB, Introduction to 2 Timothy, p.1857)

* Note: "One can go to Rome today and see the place where they say Paul was imprisoned. It is really just a cold dungeon, a cave in the ground, with bare walls and a little hole in the ceiling where food was dropped down. There were no windows; it was just a cold, little cell that would have been especially uncomfortable in winter." (Enduring Word Bible Commentary [EW], 2 Timothy 1:1)

b. This letter is distinctively more personal than was the first epistle to Timothy (and with less instruction about how the affairs of the congregations in Ephesus are to be conducted. (TLSB p.107)

1) During this imprisonment Paul was missing the companionship of friends, and undoubtedly lonesome, as there were some who had deserted him (2 Tim. 1:15, 4:10), and others

who were away on missions (4:10-12). Only Luke was with him during this period (4:11). (CSB p.1857; TPB p.107)

2) Paul wrote this Epistle "to request Timothy's comfort and companionship. Timothy had been guiding the congregation at Ephesus, but Paul sent a replacement (4:12) so Timothy, his son in the faith, could travel to him." (TLSB, Introduction to 2 Timothy, p.2079)

c. Why Paul wrote this second letter to Timothy:

1) Personal needs: Paul was lonely (see above). While Luke was with him, Paul also wanted very much for Timothy to join him. Timothy had been Paul's "fellow worker" (Rom. 16:21), who "as a son with his father" had served closely with Paul (Phil. 2:22; 1 Cor. 4:17). Of him Paul could say, "I have no one else like him" (Phil.2:20). Paul longed for Timothy (1:4) and twice asked him to come soon (4:9,21). Paul also asked Timothy to bring Mark with him (4:9-12), and he requested Timothy bring him his cloak and some scrolls and parchments (4:13). (CSB, p.1857; TPB, p.107)

2) Concern for Timothy and for the churches. This was a farewell letter*, and Paul wrote with special emphasis on faithfully teaching the Word in opposition to false teachers and during this time of rising persecution under Nero. He encourages Timothy "to guard the Gospel (1:14), to persevere in it (3:14), to keep on preaching it (4:2), and if necessary, to suffer for it (1:8; 2:3)." (TLSB p.2079; CSB p.1857)

* Note: 2 Timothy is not only the last letter we have from Paul, there is also a note of urgency and passion we might expect from a man who knew he would soon be executed. (EW 1:1)

3) Paul wanted to write to the churches in Ephesus through Timothy, and, to the Lord's Church throughout all generations to come during these 'last days.' "Here are final words of encouragement also for the many Timothys who are called to serve while there is still a time of grace and for the people of God whom they serve in these 'last days of sore distress.'" (CSB p.1857; TPB p.108; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; CW (hymnal) #641, "Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide" stanza 2)

d. Luther on 2 Timothy:

"This epistle is a farewell letter, in which St. Paul exhorts Timothy to go on propagating the Gospel, even as he has begun. This is quite necessary, since there are many who fall away; and false spirits and teachers keep springing up all around. Therefore it is incumbent upon a bishop always to be alert and to work at the Gospel.

"But he prophesies especially, in chapter 3 and 4, concerning the perilous time at the end of the world. It is then that a false spiritual life will lead all the world astray, with an outward show, under which every sort of wickedness and wrong will have its fling. Sad to say! we now see this prophecy of St. Paul all too amply fulfilled in our clergy." ("Luther's Works" 35:389, see references below, as quoted in TLSB p.2079 and in CSB p.1857)

2. Objectives and Introduction of this week's study (2 Timothy 1) (SG p. 93...)

a. Theme Verse: "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share in suffering for the Gospel by the power of God." (2 Timothy 1:8)

b. Objectives: "By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word, we will..."

1) ...be grateful for godly parents;

2) ...not be ashamed of our faith and of our Church;

3) ...identify the ways in which the means of grace equip us to suffer for the Gospel."

c. Introduction from our study guide: "This epistle has been called Paul's last will and testament for Timothy. The purpose of the letter is to express Paul's longing for Timothy's company and to strengthen him for that service that the apostle himself was no longer able to render to the cause of Christ. The letter is personal throughout and reveals the tenderness of a strong, loving, and heroic heart. The keynote of the epistle is *"not ashamed"* (2 Timothy 1:8, 12, 16). The whole letter throbs with the love of a father for a beloved child. Paul's work as an apostle was to publish the promise of eternal life in Christ. He had highest praise and deepest affection for his friend and helper. Sweet, blessed memories filled his heart as he was lying in prison awaiting his execution; gratefulness lifted him above all sadness...." (SG, p. 93)

3. 2 Timothy 1:1-7 -- Sincere faith

a. **vv. 1-2, Opening greeting**

1) "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus" - a unique ambassador from God to the world, chosen by Christ to proclaim the Gospel of Christ (CSB 1:1)

2) "by the will of God" - Paul did not choose to become an apostle, but God chose him. (TLSB 1:1)

* It wasn't that Paul simply obeyed God's command, but that the Holy Spirit transformed him, and Paul recognized that everything that happened to him as an apostle was "by the will of God." (TPB p.110)

** When God chooses us and uses us, it's not due to our own ambition or choice.

*** It's so important that we recognize God's will in our lives as we follow him. With the submission of faith we pray, "Your will, O Lord, be done." (TBP p.110)

3) "according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus" - "Everything Paul did as an apostle was in harmony with the Gospel of life in Christ. That is the heart and soul of a pastor's work... they serve according to the promise of life in Christ." (John 3:6, John 10:10, Resurrection life, Because He lives we also will live). (TPB pp.110-111)

* This phrase is unique compared to greetings in Paul's other letters. It was appropriate here because Paul was imprisoned again in Rome and he expected to be executed (2 Tim. 4:6). Therefore, this promise of life was especially precious to him. (EW 1:1)

4) "Timothy, my child, whom I love" (EHV) - a spiritual son, one who was closer to him than a birth child. (TPB p.111)

5) "Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

* Triad of blessings (TPB p.111)

** Words addressed to Timothy tenderly, speaking God's grace , mercy, and peace to him. As we speak to others, especially brothers & sisters in Christ, may we always season what we say with God's Word. "Give me an instructed tongue, O Lord, that I may know the Word that sustains the weary. Amen." (TLSB 1:1-2)

*** Note that in the opening greeting of Paul's other letters (those to the churches), Paul only wrote "*grace and peace*" in his greeting. But in these pastoral epistles that he wrote to the pastors – Timothy and Titus – he was compelled to greet them with "*grace, mercy, and peace.*"

Charles H. Spurgeon, a pastor himself, wrote about this interesting element of Paul's greeting to pastors: "Did you ever notice this one thing about Christian ministers, that they need even more mercy than other people? Although everybody needs mercy, ministers need it more than anybody else; and so we do, for if we are not faithful, we shall be greater sinners even than our hearers, and it needs much grace for us always to be faithful, and much mercy will be required to cover our shortcomings. So I shall take those three things to myself: 'Grace, mercy, and peace.' You may have the two, 'Grace and peace,' but I need mercy more than any of you; so I take it from my Lord's loving hand, and I will trust, and not be afraid, despite all my shortcomings, and feebleness, and blunders, and mistakes, in the course of my whole ministry." (Spurgeon quoted in EW, 2 Timothy 1:2)

b. vv. 3-7, Timothy's loyalty and his sincere faith

1) "I thank God" - in the midst of severe imprisonment, rather than blaming or complaining, Paul thanks God!

2) "clear conscience" - "Because of the forgiveness won by Christ on the cross, even the former persecutor of the Church may rejoice in a clear conscience, cleansed by Jesus' blood. This cleansed conscience allows Paul to pray continually (1 Thes. 5:17), rejoicing to speak praise to the God who saves." (TLSB 1:3)

3) **vs. 3**, "constantly remember you in my prayers, night and day" - Unable to preach & teach in prison, Paul can pray without ceasing! How important prayer is for God's work to continue, for pastors, for congregations. Without ceasing! Praying is not easy, but it is truly a necessary work.

* Discussion question (SG #61, pp.39,94): Why should we daily remember our relatives and friends in our prayers?

Brief excerpt from study guide: God hears and answers the prayers of His people; and because the "prayer of a righteous person is able to do much because it is effective" (EHV James 5:16), we may and should ask God's blessing upon all whom we love." (EHV; SG pp.94-95)

4) **vs. 4**, "tears, ... long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy" - Separation brings sorrow. Joy comes in the presence of those we love, those whose faith is genuine, is sincere.

* "Paul loved his much younger friend with great affection. Timothy's loyalty and sincerity filled Paul's heart with joy and thanksgiving to God (Philippians 2:19-22). What deep emotions he must have felt as he was writing his farewell message to his friend in faraway Ephesus!" (SG p.38)

** "Paul's last wish was to see Timothy once more before his end. This reveals how strongly he was attached to the younger man. He could not forget the tears that Timothy had shed when he had left him at Ephesus to go either to Spain or to Rome. That was proof of loyal devotion to a spiritual father. The thought of seeing Timothy once more cheered the heart of the apostle." (SG p.94)

5) **vs. 5**, "reminded of your sincere faith" (first in Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice)

* Discussion question (SG #59, pp. 39,94): Why is it a great blessing to grow up in a godly home?

A brief excerpt from study guide: "...God's grace in Christ given them in Baptism... a foundation for life."

** Discussion question (SG #60, pp. 39,94): What are the advantages of being a believer from early childhood?

A few highlights from study guide: "Knowing the Lord from early childhood means that one's personal, intellectual, and psychological developments *take place under the influence of the Holy Spirit*. The knowledge of *God's Word is rooted in the mind and heart* at the earliest stages of growth and affects a person for life." (SG p.94)

A few Scripture passages:

Deut. 6:5-7, "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words that I am commanding you today are to be on your heart. Teach them diligently to your children, and speak about them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Prov. 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Eph. 6:4, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the nurture and instruction of the Lord."

*** Discussion question (SG #62, pp. 39,95): When do we have a "sincere faith" (2 Tim. 1:5; 1 Tim. 1:5)?

Notes from study guide: "Faith is sincere when it is *the result of the Holy Spirit working through the Gospel to cause us to trust in Christ* out of repentance for our sins. It is genuine when it is what we practice before God and not merely before men. Faith that is something we just put on like an act, as if we were just playing a part, and not what the Spirit produces in our hearts in the sight of God through the Gospel, is not sincere or true faith." (SG p.65)

6) **vs. 6**, "*fan into flame the gift of God,...*" - "Because God had blessed Timothy in the past by working in him a sincere faith, "for this reason" Paul impresses on him to "fan into flame the gift of God." As Christians we cannot rest secure in the knowledge of blessings received in the past, a faith we have because of God's grace active in our lives in the past. We have *the ever present need for the Spirit-filled Word to fan the flame of faith to burn more brightly.*" (TPB pp.113-114)

7) **vs. 6**, "*the laying on of my hands*" - Ordained into his pastoral office (1 Timothy 4:14)

8) Regarding **vs. 7** - "The Word of God is powerful and empowers us (Hebrews 4:12).... What a marvelous spirit God gives us as we are called on to serve Him and His holy people! What an encouragement for Timothy and for every pastor, teacher, and Christian! While a young pastor will guard against false self-confidence, he need not labor with timidity and fear when he presents the truth revealed by God." (TPB pp.114-115)

4. 2 Timothy 1:8-14 -- Unashamed & heroic faith

a. vv.8-12, Testify without shame

1) v. 8, "do not be ashamed" -

Note: "One of two things can prevent unashamed testimony: (1) fear of a world hostile to Christ, or (2) failure to see Christ as one's 'priceless treasure.'" (TPB, p.115)

2) v. 8, "His prisoner" - Paul calls himself the Lord's prisoner. Nero might have thought that Paul was his prisoner. But that's not so, for the Lord was and is still in control. (TPB, p.115)

3) v. 8, "join with me in suffering for the Gospel. by the power of God" - "The Word is at work in those who believe (1 Thess. 2:13), strengthening them in the face of persecution, temptation, and every adversity." (TLSB 1:8)

* Paul encouraged Timothy to faithfully "keep on using the splendid gifts God had given him, bravely to confess his faith before men, and patiently to endure afflictions and persecution." (SG p.39). This comes through the means of grace, the Word through which the Lord continues to nourish us and strengthen us in faith.

4) v. 9, Luther's Small Catechism provides a clear & simple commentary here:
(TPB, p. 116, excerpts from Luther's explanation to the second and third articles of the Apostles' Creed)

"saved us" - "redeemed me...with His Holy, precious blood."

"called us" - "the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."

"to a holy life" - to "live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness."

"not because of anything we have done" - indeed, not even coming to faith was our doing, for "I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him."

That is God's way! All this happened "because of His purpose and grace."

5) **v. 9**, "before the beginning of time" - God knew, even before creation, that in "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4) He would give His Son to die for us.

* "Before we existed, yes, even before the foundation of the world was laid -- when, of course, we could do nothing good -- we were chosen by grace in Christ to salvation, according to God's purpose." (TLSB 1:9, quoting Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, XI 43)

6) **v. 10**, "through the appearing" - Jesus' incarnation (TLSB 1:10)

7) **v. 10**, "abolished death" - Jesus, by His death and resurrection, destroyed death for us. Although we will die earthly deaths, we will live eternally with Him. (TLSB 1:10)

8) **v. 10**, "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" - "Timothy wasn't there in person to witness Jesus' death and resurrection. Neither were we. How then can we know about life and immortality in Christ? about Jesus' saving work? We know 'through the Gospel.' Thus *the Lord Jesus has brought all this to light and continues to do so*. Let no pastor, let no church member ever underestimate the importance of the enlightening power of the Gospel." (TPB, p.119)

Discussion question (SG #63 pp.40,95): When things are going bad for us, how can we not brood over our sufferings but think of what God has done for us?

Notes from study guide: "In connection with his suffering for the sake of the Gospel, Paul describes the glory of being a Christian (vv. 9-11). That we should become believers was settled in eternity... There was nothing in us that moved God to call us unto eternal life (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Salvation is only by grace; what God does for us during our earthly lives is to serve His purpose of love. This gracious purpose He has revealed to us in the Gospel. He planned and willed our salvation in eternity before He created the world (Ephesians 1:4,11). Reflection on this brings joy because it fixes our thoughts not on the passing difficulties of this world but on the eternal blessings that God has promised to sinful people."

9) **v. 11**, The Lord sees to it that His enlightening Gospel is heard, as He appoints heralds [preachers], apostles, and teachers (as Paul was uniquely & specially called). "How can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard?..." (Romans 10:14-15). (TPB p. 119)

Discussion question (SG #64 pp.40,95): How can we believe and be certain that we will inherit eternal life?

A few highlights from study guide: "The Gospel is the light that shows what God has done for our salvation... The believer may at all times be certain of his or her salvation, since it is based upon Christ's work alone and since God, who cannot lie, has unconditionally promised it to us in this Word. The cross is the sign and guarantee of our salvation, and nothing can change the work it has accomplished."

10) **v. 12**, "*suffering... yet, not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed*" - "The threat of martyrdom had not silenced Paul. His present imprisonment was not a disgrace. He had no reason whatsoever to be ashamed." (TPB p.119) And because he knew Jesus, in whom he believed fully (faith alone in Christ alone), he knew the Lord would keep him and continue to preserve & proclaim His Word...

Discussion question (SG #65 pp.40,95): How can we never be ashamed of the Gospel (Romans 1:16)?

A few highlights from study guide: This Gospel was the strength and support of Paul's faith. That is why neither sufferings nor dangers could shake his faith. The one purpose of his life had been to proclaim the Gospel to everyone... He was not ashamed to bear the disgrace of being a Christian. Wicked people cannot harm the Gospel. Paul knew the Christ whom he trusted..."

11) **v. 12**, "*He is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me*" (ESV) - "Although Paul has been entrusted with the preaching of the Gospel, God ultimately sees to it that His Word is proclaimed to the world." (TLSB 1:12)

* "The Lord had placed, or deposited, His Gospel in the hands of Paul. After his death, it would be surely carried forward by others. In 2 Timothy **1:13-14**, Paul calls upon Timothy to hold and guard this same deposit. This implies that God will also keep His elect in the faith unto the end." (SG #65, pp.95-96)

** "Paul had entrusted himself and his entire salvation totally to Jesus. What he now had by faith the Lord Jesus would deliver to him in its complete reality on "that day," the day of His return... To know Jesus who had "brought life and immortality to light," is to have this conviction. To know that one's salvation is safe in the hands of the Lord Jesus is not to look anywhere else for it... The Lord will deliver what He has promised." (TPB, p. 120)

b. vv.13-14, Guard the good deposit

1) The "good deposit" is none other than the Gospel, the Word of God. (TPB p.121)

2) It must be "guarded" -- carefully kept and taught in its truth and purity. (TPB p.121)

3) "Sound teaching" is repeatedly mentioned by Paul in these Pastoral Epistles, in context with faith and in teaching (1 TIm.1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9,13; 2:1,2). The word "sound" literally means "healthy" ...unspoiled. (TPB p.121)

4) The "pattern of sound teaching" - "Paul knew that he taught by special inspiration of God. It is the writings of Paul and the apostles, of the prophets and evangelists that are inspired and serve as an infallible "pattern." All teaching in the church and all mission work must follow this pattern." (TPB p.121)

5) God's Word must be taught in its truth and purity, "with faith and love in Christ Jesus" (v. 13).

6) "Fortunately the guarding of this "good deposit" does not depend on mere humans. Left to ourselves with our natural human reason, we would soon spoil everything. Only...'through the Holy Spirit who lives in us' is this guarding accomplished." (TPB p.121)

Discussion question (SG #66 pp.40,96): How can we daily seek to grow stronger in faith? What means has God given us for this purpose?

A few highlights from study guide: Timothy's faith is to be centered in the Gospel, and he is never to forsake it. He is to use it faithfully in all his loving work... Through the means of grace alone -- Word and Sacrament -- and nothing else, does the Spirit grow us up in faith.

5. 2 Timothy 1:15-18 -- Loyalty & Faithfulness

a. v. 15, "Deserters" -- Those who had "turned away from" (EHV, ESV) Paul and the faith.

1) "in the province of Asia" - the Roman province of Asia, which would have been present-day western Turkey, where Paul had done much mission work. Its capital was Ephesus, where Timothy was serving. We might expect Christians from this province to come to Paul's defense. (TPB p.122; EW 1:15)

2) "These were dangerous times, however, and *they did not want to become involved.*" (TPB p.122)

During the rule of Emperor Nero, "it was a dangerous thing to be known as Christian, or even to take sides with a person like Paul. Fearing that they might have to suffer imprisonment and death if they were seen in the apostle's company, some of Paul's former friends from Asia Minor hastily withdrew from him and tried to conceal the fact that they were Christians. Instead of helping and encouraging the apostle, they grieved his heart by their

disloyalty. What was worse, in denying the apostle they denied Christ and showed that they had lost their faith."

3) "including Phygelus and Hermogenes" - We don't know details, but they were known to Timothy, so Paul names them. Perhaps "they may be people whom one would least expect to desert Paul." (TPB p.122) Yet, this is how they would be remembered throughout the ages.

b. **vv. 16-18**, On the other hand, there is Faithful "Onesiphorus"

1) A friend of Paul who remained faithful and showed his sincere Christian faith.

2) He made a painstaking search to find Paul and to "refresh" him (perhaps both physically and spiritually, as well as the refreshment of his presence and friendship), just as he had done for Paul in Ephesus). (TPB pp.122-123; SG p.41)

3) Onesiphorus lived up to the meaning of his name, which means "help-bringer." (EW 1:16-18)

4) Here is a very short video (just over a minute long, and where I learned how to pronounce Onesiphorus 😊). This is a good reminder to us of the significance of Onesiphorus. (This video clip is by Chad Bird, an OT/NT scholar, Hebrew/Greek scholar, author, and [Lutheran] encourager in reading through Scripture.) I hope it works for you to simply click on this link:

<https://youtu.be/hTlHuhipWjs?si=H5n13dit7qTFE2GF>

(or try this one: <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/12Cfbtyfuf7/>)

(Note: Discussion questions in Study Guide for this section, in class Friday, only as time allows.)

References:

TPB = "The People's Bible (Commentary): 1,2 Timothy, Titus" 2nd edition, by Armin W. Schuetze. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI. 2000 (2nd ed.). (Originally published 1988)

TLSB = The Lutheran Study Bible, English Standard Version, General editor Rev. Edward A. Engelbrecht. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. Published 2009.

CSB = Concordia Self-Study Bible, New International Version, General editor Robert G. Hoerber. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis MO. 1986.

SG = Study Guide used in our Women's Bible Study (by participants in-person and via Zoom): "1 and 2 Timothy, Titus: Keeping the Faith" by A.C. Mueller. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. 2006. (This is part of the Bible study series "God's Word for Today")

(EW = Enduring Word Bible Commentary, Online, for 2 Timothy 1.
<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/2-timothy-1/>, Minor supplemental resource only.)

"Luther's Catechism: The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther" (Anniversary Edition). Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI. 2017.
Luther, Martin. Luther's Works. American Edition. 56 vols. St. Louis: Concordia, and Philadelphia: Muhlenberg and Fortress, 1955-86

The Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration (1577), "Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord," Second Edition, General editor Paul Timothy McCain. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. 2005, 2006.

CW = "Christian Worship Hymnal" as authorized by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI. First edition, 2021.

Bible translations used:

EHV = Evangelical Heritage Version

ESV = English Standard Version

NIV = New International Version