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2 Timothy

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2 Timothy

A. Overview and Summary.

1. This is the second of Paul's letters to Timothy (please see the synopsis for First Timothy) written from Rome shortly before his martyrdom about 67 AD. This was the second time Paul was imprisoned in Rome. During his first imprisonment, he was under house arrest and allowed a degree of freedom to interact with people and conduct ministry (Acts 28:16-31). During that time, he expressed confidence in his future deliverance (Philippians 1:19,25,26; 2:24; Philemon 22). It is believed he was released for a short period of time during which he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus. He possibly journeyed as far west as Spain, but there is no documentation in Scripture other than an expression of his desire to go there (Romans 15:24).
2. During the time of this epistle, Nero had begun intense persecution of Christians, even to the extent of blaming the burning of Rome on them. For this reason, Paul's tone is more despondent, telling how many had deserted him except for Luke (4:9-11a). But, he proclaims that he has the assurance "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. There is reserved for me in the future the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved His appearing" (4:7-8).
3. He desires to see Timothy, whom he calls his "dearly beloved son" (1:2), one more time and urges him to come with Mark (4:11b). He also instructs him to bring a cloak he had left behind as well as the parchments (4:13). It is not known if Timothy was able to come before Paul was martyred. There is nothing in Scripture regarding a visit by Timothy, although the anonymous author of Hebrews mentions Timothy's release from prison (13:23), which could mean he was imprisoned in Rome. He may have been afraid, which is why Paul encourages him not to be (1:7).
4. In this epistle, knowing that his end is near, he passes the mantle of ministry to Timothy. He charges him to be faithful in his duties (1:6), keep sound doctrine (1:13-14), including avoidance of error (2:15-18), accept persecution for the gospel (2:3-4; 3:10-12), and to preach the Scripture (3:15-4:5).

B. Chapter One.

1. Paul says that: “he thanks God whom I serve with a clear conscience did as my ancestors” (1:3). Paul is connecting his Jewish ancestors’ faithful service to God with Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles. His ancestors served God, looking forward to the Messiah, while Paul’s service to the Gentiles proclaims that Jesus is the Messiah. He then connects Timothy’s mother’s and grandmother’s faith to this. He goes on to admonish Timothy to stir up the gift within him, as God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness (1:7).
2. He then charges Timothy: “Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God; who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, but now has been manifested by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (1:8-10).
3. He closes the chapter with: “This you know, that all in Asia turned away from me; of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains” (1:15-16). It is not known if Phygelus and Hermogenes departed from the faith, or if they had only deserted Paul. But Onesiphorus was not afraid and sought out Paul in prison to minister to him.

C. Chapter Two.

1. Paul opens the chapter with a charge that many have taken to heart: “Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2:1-2). The phrase commit to faithful men the things heard from Paul is a key to successful discipleship. Making disciples is the mission given to us by Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20). Unfortunately, this mission has mostly become an omission for many believers.
2. He continues with a promise if we endure: “Therefore, I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him: if we endure, we shall also reign with him: if we shall deny him, he also will deny us: if we are faithless, he abides faithful; for he cannot deny himself” (2:10-13). The word for endurance is from the Greek word “hypomenomen”, and

includes the idea of remaining, lasting, or suffering. This theme is found throughout 2 Timothy. True believers will reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom (Revelation chapter 20). Most Bible teachers believe those who deny Christ mentioned here are nonbelievers and He will deny them before the Father (Matthew 10:33). But within the context of Paul's words here, he is talking about believers who do not endure. It could be that although saved, they are denied by Jesus to rule and reign with Him. However, we also see the stern warning of, "if we shall deny him, he also will deny us." All believers should take heed not to fall away from their obedient faith in Jesus.

3. He exhorts Timothy to: "Give diligence to present yourself approved to God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, handling rightly the word of truth. But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness, and their word will eat as does gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some" (2:15-18). We should all strive to have our work approved by the Lord. In 1 Timothy (1:18-19), Paul warns about a Hymenaeus along with an Alexander. It is most likely that this Hymenaeus is the same person, this time linked with a Philetus. All three men were false teachers and their influence was like gangrene which eats away health tissue as an analogy of destroying the faith of some.
4. Paul closes the chapter with: "Flee from youthful passions, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. But reject foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they breed quarrels. The Lord's slave must not quarrel, but must be gentle to everyone, able to teach, and patient, instructing his opponents with gentleness. Perhaps God will grant them repentance, leading them to the knowledge of the truth. Then they may come to their senses and escape the Devil's trap, having been captured by him to do his will" (2:22-26).

D. Chapter Three.

1. Paul gives a warning about difficult times that will follow: "But know this: Difficult times will come in the last days. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good, traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of

God, holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid these people!” (3:1-5).

2. He continues with: “In fact, all those who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Evil people and impostors will become worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, and you know that from childhood you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (3:15).
3. He closes the chapter with a strong word about the Divine inspiration of Scripture: “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (3:16-17). This passage elevated and later canonized the writings of Paul and other Apostles. The authors of the New Testament wrote under the direction and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

E. Chapter Four.

1. Paul gives Timothy some parting words in this last chapter: “Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching. For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear something new. They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths. But as for you, be serious about everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (4:2-5).
2. He finishes with a confidence that “The Lord will rescue me from every evil work and will bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever!” (4:18). He then closes the book with greetings towards faithful co-workers and a request for Timothy to come before winter.

F. Discussion Questions, Application and Passing it On.

1. This epistle finds the aged Apostle in chains in a Roman prison. Many have deserted him and he is writing to a faithful son in the gospel. Do you have such faithful ones in your Christian life who will not desert you if you are in difficult situations? If not, what must you do to gain some?
2. 2 Timothy 2:2 is a strong word about how to do discipleship. Are you able to find and commit to such men and women what you have gained from your study and

knowledge of Scripture? How can you find such people?

3. Are you a faithful person who can endure much for the sake of the gospel? Does the promise to rule and reign with Christ encourage you to be such a person?
4. The verse which is stated in chapter three (3:16) as “God inspired” could also be translated as “God breathed”. Do you realize being emersed in God’s Word can fill you with His Holy breath? Do you have a daily habit of reading the Bible? If not, make that to become a priority.
5. Paul charged Timothy to proclaim the message regardless if it was convenient or not. Do you proclaim the message? If not, what is preventing you from doing so?

This New Testament survey was provided by Joshua Nations (JoshuaNations.org)