

Commentary on 2 Timothy Chapter 1 by Chuck Smith 7.28.24

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May memory verse Romans 6:8 (NKJV)

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

June memory verse Romans 6:9 (NKJV)

knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

July memory verse Romans 6:10 (NKJV)

For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.

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This is the last epistle that Paul wrote. He is again in prison in Rome. It would seem that he was released from the first imprisonment and allowed a little more time of liberty to preach the Gospel. And putting together from the various epistles and from the book of Acts, it would seem that he went to Miletus and then on over to Corinth and to Troas, probably to Ephesus, and then on back where he was arrested and taken back to Rome.

Paul realizes that the situation is now changed in Rome. He realizes that the sentence of death is upon him. He knows that his time is very short, that he will soon be executed by Nero for his faith in Jesus Christ. And so realizing that his execution is only a matter of time, Paul writes his final letter to Timothy, his son in the faith. This young man that Paul had discipled and spent so much time with to invest in Timothy's life so that he could carry on the work of Paul once he was gone.

So Paul now is writing his final epistle, this is the last of Paul's epistles. Shortly after this, he was beheaded there on the Appian Way just outside of Rome.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus (2Ti 1:1),

You see, the sentence of death is now hanging on him. So what's he talk about? Life in Christ Jesus, that eternal life. Jesus said, "Don't be afraid of those who can kill your body, and after that they don't have any power" (Matthew 10:28). And so as Paul is writing with the sentence of death upon him, knowing that his execution is only a matter of time, it is interesting how he writes about life. I'm "an apostle by the will of God, according to the promise of life," not of death but "of life which is in Christ Jesus."

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John tells us, "This is the record, God has given to us eternal life, and that life is in the Son. And he who has the Son has life" (1 John 5:11). "According to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus." Oh thank God, even with the sentence of death hanging over us, we can talk about life, that eternal life, that age-abiding life that we have in Christ Jesus. When the rich young ruler came to Jesus and fell there at His feet, he said, "Good Master, what good thing must I do to inherit this age-abiding life" (Matthew 19:16)? He saw in Christ that quality of life and he desired it, that quality of life that is ours through our faith in Jesus Christ. "He who has the Son has life."

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son (2Ti 1:2):

Notice the endearing terms of Paul now towards Timothy as he realizes this is probably the last time I'm going to write, be able to write to him "my dearly beloved son." And so there's a lot of emotion, a lot of pathos in this second letter to Timothy because of the background of this whole epistle.

Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (2Ti 1:2).

These beautiful gifts of God: His grace, His mercy, His peace.

I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with a pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day (2Ti 1:3);

The men that God uses are men of prayer. Paul is constantly in his epistles referring to his prayer life. He was a man who lived and slept and breathed prayer. He lived in close relationship with God and with Jesus Christ, and so is the case with those men that God uses, they are men of prayer. And here Paul speaks about his praying for Timothy without ceasing night and day, because Paul realized that if the ministry of the Word was to be carried on in truth, really the heavy burden was going to be upon Timothy once Paul left. When Paul sent Timothy to the church in Philippi, he said, "I have sent unto you my beloved son Timothy because I don't have anyone else who is likeminded as I am, who really has you at his heart" (Philippians 2:19-20).

Timothy was one that had really modeled his life after Paul. Paul could say, hey, this young man has caught the vision. This young man knows my heart. And so he realized that Timothy was going to be the natural one to carry on that same ministry of the grace of God to the people. And that is no doubt why Paul invested so much time in prayer for Timothy, night and day. Oh Lord, he's a young man. Lord, he doesn't have the background and the experience but God, use him, help him, bless him, Lord. Oh, wouldn't you love to have Paul praying for you night and day?

And Paul said,

I greatly desire to see you, because I remember your tears (2Ti 1:4),

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No doubt the last time Paul had seen Timothy there at Ephesus and had to leave him, Timothy was crying, probably wanted to go with Paul. Paul, they believed, was arrested in Ephesus at this time when the Roman government began to persecute the church again. And probably as they bound Paul to take him back to Rome, as he said his farewell to Timothy, Timothy was just weeping and sobbing. And yet it was necessary that he stay and establish those brethren in the church of Ephesus, which were being harassed by the false teachers that had come in. And so Timothy, weeping; and Paul had vividly in his mind this beloved co-laborer, his son in the Lord, he had in his mind the tears as they were coming down Timothy's face. He said, Oh, I greatly desire to see you. I remember your tears and I love to see you.

that I might be filled with joy (2Ti 1:4);

What a beautiful bond is created through Jesus Christ among men and among women. This family of God, it exceeds even our natural family. The bond that God creates in our hearts and in our lives for each other, that love that is there. Paul said,

I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith (2Ti 1:5)

Or the pure faith.

that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and in your mother Eunice; and I am persuaded is also in you (2Ti 1:5).

So he came from a good line, you know, a godly heritage. What a blessing it is. What a blessing to have a godly grandmother. What a blessing to have a godly mother, the faith that was in my grandmother, the faith that was in my mother, the faith that God has planted in my heart.

Paul said I know the faith that was in your grandmother Lois and also in your mother Eunice and I know it's in you. Oh, the greatest thing that we can offer and give to our children is this heritage of trusting God in faith. How important that we pass it on.

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that you stir up the gift of God, that is in thee by the putting on of my hands (2Ti 1:6).

Now Paul has a couple of times already made reference to this. When Timothy was a young man and began to join Paul in the ministry there in Lystra, the elders laid hands on Timothy and prayed for him. And as they did, the Lord gave to Paul a word of prophecy in which the Lord spoke to Timothy, telling him the gifts that the Lord was giving to him and outlining somewhat the ministry that Timothy was to fulfill. And Paul has made mention before of this experience that Timothy had when the elders laid hands on him and he received the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit and the word of prophecy directing his life and his ministry. And so Paul said, remember and stir up the gift that is in you that you received when the hands were laid upon you and the gift of prophecy was exercised.

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It is possible for us to neglect the gifts of God within our lives, but God did not give us these gifts to be neglected. He gave us these gifts to be used. And so Paul's exhortation to Timothy, "Stir up that gift that is in you," begin to exercise it again. By faith, begin to exercise again that gift of the Spirit that God has given unto you.

For God has not given us the spirit of fear (2Ti 1:7);

Now evidently, Timothy became a little fearful in the exercise of this gift. And I think that that is a tool that Satan often uses to discourage our exercises of the gifts of the Spirit. Fear. I don't know what people are going to think, you know, if I say that to them. And we have this fear that many times restricts us from the exercise of gifts. But "God hasn't given us the spirit of fear;"

but of power, love, and a sound mind (2Ti 1:7).

Spirit of power. Oh, thank God, the spirit of love, how important, and a sound mind.

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God (2Ti 1:8);

Now there are a lot of situations where we can just keep our mouths shut and stay out of trouble when we really ought to be opening our mouths and getting into trouble. You know, when people are saying blasphemous things we can just keep our mouth shut and sort of shrug and say, you know, poor stupid soul. Or we can say to them, Do you realize what you are saying? What a filthy mouth you have! Doesn't it bother you to have such a filthy mind and mouth?

I've often said to people when they are using the name of Jesus in a blasphemous way, Hey, that hurts me. You're talking about a man who I love more than anyone else, who died to save me from my sins, and it hurts me to hear you talk about Him that way. Hey. They sometimes get upset and they, you know, look like, Who do you think you are, you know, and all that kind of stuff. But yet Paul tells Timothy that "God has given us the power of the spirit of power, of love and of a sound mind." Therefore, don't be ashamed of our Lord but be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, we'll get to a little bit, "They who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). The promise in the Bible that I hate the most.

The power of God; Who hath 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 the world began (2Ti 1:9),

So God who called us and saved us, but it wasn't according to our works. We are not saved according to our works but according to the purposes of God.

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Now this was the message that Paul was proclaiming and the message that was being perverted by the legalism that was creeping into the church. Now remember that Timothy was ministering there in Ephesus, to the church in Ephesus. And already there were those seeds of legalism that had taken root and were beginning to turn the people away from the glorious gospel of grace that Paul had proclaimed. And Paul speaks to Timothy of his concern that they were turning away from the grace of God, and for him to establish them in the grace of God.

And so Paul is encouraging him, in the grace God has called us, with this holy calling. But God didn't call you because of your works or because you were deserving or worthy of it, but just to accomplish His purposes of love and of grace which was given us in Christ before the world began.

But it is now made manifest (2Ti 1:10)

God has always loved us but the love was manifested.

by the appearing of Jesus Christ (2Ti 1:10),

You see, "Heavens declare the glory of God; the earth shows his handiwork. Day unto day they utter their speech" (Psalm 19:1,2). I have no argument with the man who says, God speaks to me in nature. God speaks to me in nature. And how I love for God to speak to me through nature. How I love to walk along the beach. How I love to get into the surf. How I love to watch a beautiful sunset. How I love to sit under the stars out in the desert and just look up into the heavens and the vastness of the galaxies and all. How I love to see the raging streams.

But what nature cannot and does not tell you is how much God loves you. It took more than nature to reveal that. It took Jesus Christ. It is interesting that whenever God wants to show you His love or to prove His love to you, He always points to the cross. And so God who loved us before the world ever existed, but has manifested it by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ.

who has abolished death (2Ti 1:10),

Now here Paul got the death sentence. Nero says, you know, death sentence is upon him, but Paul says God has abolished death. Oh, thank God for the life that is ours.

and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2Ti 1:10):

The Christian does not die. It is wrong to say of a child of God he died. The Christian does not die. Paul the apostle said "we know that when the earthly tent of our body is dissolved," when my body goes back to dust, decomposes and goes back to dust, I "have a building of God, not made with hands, that's eternal in the heavens. So then we who are in these bodies, in these tents, do often groan, earnestly desiring to move out of this old tent: not to be unembodied spirit, but to be clothed upon with a new body

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which is from heaven. For we know that, as long as we are living in these bodies, we are absent from the Lord: but we would choose rather to be absent from these bodies, to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

So when a Christian dies, rather than saying, Oh, he died last week, we should say, Oh, he moved last week. Have you seen John lately? Oh, didn't you know, he moved into a beautiful mansion. He's no longer living in that old tent. "Who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality."

Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life:" Yes, Lord, I know on the last day he's going to rise. No, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life." I'm here now, and "he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And if you live and believe in me, you'll never die". He said, "Do you believe this?" (John 11:25,26) That's the Gospel. That's the good news that we have to proclaim. The Lord has abolished death. He who lives and believes shall never die. Oh, move, yes. That's important and that's desirable. I wouldn't want to live in this dumb, old tent forever.

Everyday I live the Lord is making it just a little bit easier, more desirable to move. I'm getting aches and creaks that I've never had before. I've had the most difficult time walking across the floor the first thing in the morning. I mean, it takes awhile now to get warmed up. My feet just kill me in the morning, especially after a few sets of tennis. Not a funny thing, it's miserable, growing old. The old tent slowly dissolving, but I have a building of God for God has abolished death and brought us life and immortality.

Whereunto [he said] I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles (2Ti 1:11).

The three things that Paul was called to do. He was a preacher, he was an apostle, he was a teacher. Preaching is ordained by God to bring the unbeliever to a faith in Jesus Christ. Preaching is not for the Christian or the saint or the church, preaching is for the unregenerate. For in the preaching, I am proclaiming to the unregenerate God's good news to man. You don't have to go on in sin and die in your sin and trespasses. You can have eternal life through Jesus Christ. Repent; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that's preaching.

Teaching is what the church needs. Now the weakness of the church today is that there is too much preaching and not enough teaching in the church. The church has been preached almost to death, and what the church needs is teaching. Teaching us how to walk, teaching us how to grow, teaching us how to develop in our relationship with God. That's what the church needs, the teaching of the Word, and that's where the church is failing in a real teaching ministry. So Paul had a combination of a preaching and a teaching ministry, called as an apostle.

For the which cause [he said] I also suffer these things: nevertheless (2Ti 1:12)

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These things you know, I'm in prison, I've been sentenced to death and it's because of my teaching and preaching that I'm here in prison. Nevertheless, he said,

I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed (2Ti 1:12),

Now notice, he didn't say I know what I believe. Now there's a lot of people today say, Well I know what I believe. You know, I believe in the Orthodoxy. I believe in the Apostle's Creed. I believe, and they know what they believe. But it's not what you believe or in what you believe but it's in whom you believe that's important. "I know in whom I have believed."

and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (2Ti 1:12).

I have committed my life to Him. I am persuaded He's able to keep it. I know in whom I have believed. Correct orthodoxy is important, but a Creed can't save you, only Jesus Christ can save you. It's not belief in a system. It's not belief in a religion. It's not belief in a doctrinal position. It's belief in a person that brings salvation. It's the belief in Jesus Christ. And so we know, we need to know in whom we have believed.

Paul said, "I'm persuaded He's able to keep that which I have committed". That word "I have committed" in the Greek is an interesting word. It's a word that is used for making a bank deposit. I've entrusted it. So I've entrusted my life to Him. He's able to keep it. Nero may take my head off but He's going to keep my life because I know in whom I have believed. I am persuaded He's able to keep me.

Hold fast that form of sound words, which you have heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (2Ti 1:13).

As these false teachers were beginning to come along. And you remember Paul in his last recorded visit in the book of Acts, with the elders of Ephesus, as he had come to Miletus and he had sent a message to the elders in Ephesus to meet him in Miletus because he was in a hurry to get back to Jerusalem, wanted to get back there before the feast, that he might take the offering back to the church in Jerusalem that he had collected among the Gentile churches. And so they met him on the beach, the ship was offshore waiting for Paul. And he was talking with the elders of the church of Ephesus. He said I'm going to Jerusalem. I don't know what's going to happen. All I know is everywhere I'm going, the Spirit's warning me I'm going to be bound and so forth. Beyond that, I really don't know, the Lord hasn't shown me.

But I want you to bear record, that night and day I bore faithful witness of Jesus Christ as I lived among you and I told you and I showed you the things of the Lord. Now he said I know that after I depart, grievous wolves are going to come in not really with pure motives. They're not going to spare the flock of God. They're going to bring in these pernicious doctrines. And even from your own midst, men are going to rise up and trying to draw men after themselves, trying to create little factious groups. And Paul was

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weeping. He said I know that this is going to happen. I can't stop it. But he encouraged them to the faithfulness of the Word and the faithfulness of the teaching that he had given to them.

Well, it was true. After Paul left, these men did come in. And so as Timothy is there and trying to buck these doctrines that are raising up their ugly heads within the church of Ephesus and these men who are trying to create these little divisions by getting these weird doctrines and espousing some strange thing and all. Paul says, "hold fast that form of sound doctrine or words which you have heard of me."

That good thing which was committed unto you (2Ti 1:14)

That is, the truth, the word of God.

keep by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us. For this you know, that all of them which are in Asia have turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes (2Ti 1:14-15).

Those in Asia had now turned their backs upon Paul. He was no longer able to be a strong influence there. They didn't have to fear him coming in apostolic power to correct their false doctrines anymore and they were becoming emboldened in their heresies and in the drawing of people after themselves. Paul names a couple of them, "they've turned away from me". What a sad thing. Paul was really pretty much forsaken now. With the sentence of death upon him, even Demas who had been a companion for so long had forsaken him. Others have fled. Luke only was remaining with him there in Rome, but there was one faithful brother, Onesiphorus.

The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains (2Ti 1:16):

Paul was chained there in a dungeon in Rome and Onesiphorus went to Rome and searched through dungeon after dungeon until he finally found Paul and there ministered to him and encouraged him.

But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and he found me. And the Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, you know very well (2Ti 1:17-18).

So this Onesiphorus had been just a blessed man and had ministered to Paul while Paul was in Ephesus and then came to Rome and searched until he found him and there ministered to him. Paul praised God's mercy and blessing upon him for it.

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Title

This epistle is the second of two inspired letters Paul the apostle wrote to his son in the faith, Timothy (1:2; 2:1). It is titled, as are the other personal letters of Paul to individuals (1 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon), with the name of the addressee (1:2).

Author and Date

Paul's wrote all three of the Pastoral Epistles. Paul wrote 2 Timothy, the last of his inspired letters, shortly before his martyrdom (ca. A.D. 67).

Background and Setting

Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment for a short period of ministry during which he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus. Second Timothy, however, finds Paul once again in a Roman prison (1:16; 2:9), apparently rearrested as part of Nero's persecution of Christians. Unlike Paul's confident hope of release during his first imprisonment (Phil. 1:19, 25, 26; 2:24; Philem. 22), this time he had no such hopes (4:6-8). In his first imprisonment in Rome (ca. A.D. 60-62), before Nero had begun the persecution of Christians (A.D. 64), he was only under house arrest and had opportunity for much interaction with people and ministry (Acts 28:16-31). At this time, 5 or 6 years later (ca. A.D. 66-67), however, he was in a cold cell (4:13), in chains (2:9), and with no hope of deliverance (4:6). Abandoned by virtually all of those close to him for fear of persecution (cf. 1:15; 4:9-12, 16) and facing imminent execution, Paul wrote to Timothy, urging him to hasten to Rome for one last visit with the apostle (4:9, 21). Whether Timothy made it to Rome before Paul's execution is not known. According to tradition, Paul was not released from this second Roman imprisonment, but suffered the martyrdom he had foreseen (4:6).

In this letter, Paul, aware the end was near, passed the non-apostolic mantle of ministry to Timothy (cf. 2:2) and exhorted him to continue faithful in his duties (1:6), hold on to sound doctrine (1:13, 14), avoid error (2:15-18), accept persecution for the gospel (2:3, 4; 3:10-12), put his confidence in the Scripture, and preach it relentlessly (3:15-4:5).

Historical and Theological Themes

It seems that Paul may have had reason to fear that Timothy was in danger of weakening spiritually. This would have been a grave concern for Paul since Timothy needed to carry on Paul's work (cf. 2:2). While there are no historical indications elsewhere in the NT as to why Paul was so concerned, there is evidence in the epistle itself from what he wrote. This concern is evident, for example, in Paul's exhortation to "stir up" his gift (1:6), to replace fear with power, love, and a sound mind (1:7), to not be ashamed of Paul and the Lord, but willingly suffer for the gospel (1:8), and to hold on to the truth (1:13, 14). Summing up the potential problem of Timothy, who might be weakening under the pressure of the church and the persecution of the world, Paul calls him to 1) generally "be strong" (2:11), the key exhortation of the first part of the letter,

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and to 2) continue to “preach the word” (4:2), the main admonition of the last part. These final words to Timothy include few commendations but many admonitions, including about 25 imperatives.

Since Timothy was well versed in Paul’s theology, the apostle did not instruct him further doctrinally. He did, however, allude to several important doctrines, including salvation by God’s sovereign grace (1:9, 10; 2:10), the person of Christ (2:8; 4:1, 8), and perseverance (2:11–13); plus Paul wrote the crucial text of the NT on the inspiration of Scripture (3:16, 17).