



Paul's 2nd Letter to Timothy

Passing on the Baton

Autumn 2017



2 Timothy 2: 1-13

(sermons: Sept 17)

2 Tim 1:1-7 Preserving and Suffering for the Faith

- v.1 *my son* – as in 2 Tim 1:2 ‘my dear son’ and 1 Tim 1:2 ‘my true son in the faith’ . Paul had been used by God to bring Timothy and his family to faith in their home-town of Lystra (Acts 16:1-4).
 - v.1 *be strong* – or ‘be strengthened’: ‘Take strength from the grace of God which is ours in Christ Jesus.’
 - v.1 *in Christ Jesus* – Paul often used this phrase, sometimes translated ‘in union with Christ Jesus’; all that we have as Christians comes from our relationship with Jesus; the strength and gifts that he gives us (‘grace’) are developed within that relationship, rather than handed over to us to use on our own.
 - v.2 *entrust to reliable men* – Timothy is told to hand over the body of Paul’s teaching as a valuable package that is to be preserved intact, as Paul received it from Christ (Galatians 1:11-12); he is to hand it over to those who are ‘reliable’ (or ‘faithful’) and who have the gift of teaching it to others.
 - v.3 *Endure hardship with us* – or ‘take your share of suffering with us’: Paul is aware of the growing persecution under Emperor Nero, but also of the increased pressure Timothy will be under as a leader
 - v.4 *gets involved in civilian affairs* – literally ‘ gets entangled with the actions of (everyday) life’: it’s a question of priorities for Timothy, as a leader in the church
 - v.5 *the victor’s crown* – the evergreen wreath for the winner of the event, although all Christians can have such a reward for faithfully completing the ‘race’ of life; it isn’t a competition (see 2 Tim 4:8)
 - v.5 *according to the rules* – not just the rules of the athletic event but the prescribed training regime that maintained the standard of the games. The parallel is with living according to Christian standards, shown in the life and teaching of Jesus and passed-on by Paul.
 - v.6 *the hard-working farmer* – the point of this illustration may be that Timothy can expect to be supported financially, so he doesn’t need to spend his time earning a living (similar to point in v.4)
1. What is Timothy told to do with the teaching that Paul has given him (verses 1 & 2)?
How can we make sure that the Christian message is passed on faithfully to the next generation?
 2. What sort of ‘hardship’ might Timothy face? How does Paul tell him to face it?
Do we expect to face hardship for our faith? What forms might it take? How can we face it?
 3. What is the point of each of the illustrations, of the soldier, the athlete and the farmer, in verses 3-7:
for Timothy? for us individually? for us as a growth-group and as a church?
Which illustration speaks to us most, in our own situation?

2 Tim 1:8-13 Remaining Faithful

- v.8 *Remember Jesus Christ* – call to mind Jesus as ‘Christ’: a Greek title, meaning ‘Anointed One’, the same as the Hebrew title ‘Messiah’: God’s Chosen One / King, promised in the Old Testament, the true successor to King David, whom the first Christians recognized as Jesus. Compare Romans 1:1-4.
- v.8 *raised from the dead* – not just risen as a historical fact but encountered alive today.

- v.10 *for the sake of the elect – for the sake of those whom God has chosen. Throughout Paul’s writing he emphasizes the truths both of God’s sovereignty and of our human responsibility : that God always takes the initiative and has chosen us (eg Ephesians 1:3-6); and that we are responsible for our response of faith to that calling (eg Romans 3:22, 28; 10:13).*
- v.11 *a trustworthy saying – the rest of verses 11-13 seem to be a Christian poem/hymn that may have been known to the Ephesian Christians, which Paul has incorporated into his letter*
- v.11 *if we died with him – probably in the sense of died to ourselves when converted & baptised, when we were united with Christ who died for our sins; Paul develops this idea in Romans 6:1-11.*
- v.12 *if we disown him, he will also disown us – similar to Jesus’ words in Mark 8:34-38 . Christians at this time (c.66AD?) were being persecuted and might be ordered to deny that Christ was their Lord and to worship the Emperor instead.*
- v.13 *If we are faithless – does this refer to times when we doubt, or fail in some way, or give in to temptation, or run away from a challenge; but without completely denying our faith? Can we then rely on Christ’s ‘faithfulness’ to rescue us and restore us? See 1 John 1:8-9. Or is it possible that ‘he will remain faithful’ is not a word of reassurance, but, rather, a warning that Jesus will fulfil his words of judgement towards those who deny him?*
4. What are the key elements in ‘my (Paul’s) gospel’ (v.8)? Are they key elements in our presentation of the Christian faith? If not, what do we leave out, or what else would we add in?
5. ‘God’s word is not chained’ (verse 8). What does this mean? Compare Isaiah 55:10-11, Phil 1:12-18. Do we have the same confidence in the power of God’s written Word in the Bible? What difference should this make to our use of the Bible in our teaching and outreach to others?
6. Do we understand the poem in verses 11 to 13? Which couplet (2 lines) challenges or inspires us? Can we think of hymns or modern songs that say the same things?
7. Looking at this passage as a whole, it has many serious challenges for us to be prepared to suffer in various ways to preserve and to pass on our Christian faith? Take time to pray for each other about the challenges that we each face, and that we face as a church.

Isaiah 55:10-11

¹⁰ As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Romans 1:1-4

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— ² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³ regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, ⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 John 1:8-9

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.