



# Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to Timothy

## Passing on the Baton

Autumn 2017



### 2 Timothy 2: 14-19

(sermons: Sept 24)

#### Introduction

*In 2 Timothy 2:14-26 Paul explains Timothy's leadership role in the church in Ephesus and how he should deal with false teaching, distracting teaching and unworthy behaviour. The focus in today's verses 14 to 19 is on good teaching.*

#### 2 Tim 1:14-19 Greetings

- v.14 keep reminding them of these things – 'them' must be the 'reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others' (2 Tim 2:2) to whom Timothy is to pass on 'these things', that is 'the pattern of sound teaching' (2 Tim 1:13), that Paul has passed on to Timothy, including the preceding 2 Tim 2:8-13.*
- v.14 warn them before God – preserving correct doctrine and countering false or distracting teaching is a serious business.*
- v.14 quarrelling about words – it is unclear what Paul has in mind here but it is like 1 Timothy 6:3-5.*
- v.14 ruins those who listen – literally 'turns them upside down'; Paul uses the Greek word 'catastrophe'.*
- v.15 as one approved – Timothy is to seek God's approval, not human popularity or admiration*
- v.15 correctly handles the word of truth – literally 'cuts straight through': Timothy is to teach clearly and straightforwardly, keeping to the 'straight line' of the teaching Paul has passed on to him; 'can carve out a straight path for the word of truth' (Wright).*
- v.16 godless chatter – or 'empty talk', as in 1 Timothy 6:20: false, speculative teaching that will undermine the character of the teacher, as well as the truth of their teaching.*
- v.17 Hymenaeus and Philetus – Hymenaeus had been excluded from the Ephesian church for his subversive teaching (1 Timothy 1:20) but his influence seems to have continued.*
- v.18 they say that the resurrection has already taken place – this does not refer to the resurrection of Jesus but to the future resurrection of all believers to eternal life with him. Presumably these false teachers were saying that 'the resurrection' was only a spiritual experience that had already happened in this life, undermining the Christians' hope for a future new life in new bodies (as Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 15 especially verses 42-44, 51-52, 57-58).*
- v.19 God's solid foundation stands firm – the picture of God laying a cornerstone is in Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22-23; it was picked up by Jesus to refer to himself (Matthew 21:42) and by Peter when preaching soon after Pentecost (Acts 4:10-12) and in his 1<sup>st</sup> Letter (1 Peter 2:1-6). Here, Paul is thinking of the 'building' of the church, as well as its foundation, as also in 1 Timothy 3:15.*
- v.19 'The Lord knows those that are his' – the quotations are from Numbers 16:5, 26 (clearer in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament); it comes from the time when some Levites under Korah (who helped with public worship) rebelled against Moses' leadership in the desert. So those Christians in Ephesus who were troubled by false teachers and their followers being around at their meetings were being reassured that God knew who was truly following him.*

*Since this is a short passage, it may be worth going through it first, making sure everyone is clear what it means – before trying to apply any of it to our lives today.*

*For this passage, most of the questions relate to all 6 verses and there is some overlap between them.*

1. How does Paul show how seriously he takes the matter of Timothy teaching the truth and passing it on to others?  
Do we have a similar concern for Biblical teaching: in choosing a new minister? in deciding who is invited to preach? in choosing those who teach our young people? when leading groups?
2. What makes a good teacher of God's Word, whether in preaching, or leading a group, or advising a friend?  
How can we 'carve out a straight path' for God's Word, rather than getting entangled in unimportant matters, or diverted into side issues?  
How and why might teachers of the Bible be tempted to seek popularity and acceptance from their congregations and from society, rather than aiming to be '*workmen approved by God*' (v.15)?
3. What is around today that is like '*quarrelling about words*' (v.14), '*godless chatter*' (v.16) and '*wandering away from the truth*' (v.16) ?  
Are there people today who '*say that the resurrection has already taken place*' (v.18) and deny that there is a future hope and judgement?  
What effect can such teaching and behaviour have on Christians' faith and effectiveness for Christ?  
How can we spot such teaching? By comparing it with the Bible? By seeing its negative effects on people's lives? By looking out for single-issue-movements that divert people from sharing and living out their faith? By noticing the tone of such teaching and the spirit in which it is given?
4. Can you find some encouragements in this passage to set alongside the warnings?