



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

## Passing on the Baton

Autumn 2017



### 2 Timothy 2: 20-26

(sermons: Oct 8)

#### Introduction

*Since this is a short passage, this might be a good opportunity for the group to share how they feel about the changes in leadership in the church, especially Adrian leaving and the period without a rector; also to make sure people are clear about the arrangements for this time and for choosing a new rector.*

*Please pass on any concerns or questions to a churchwarden, member of staff, or PCC member.*

*The previous passage (2:14-19) was also about leadership and service in the church but the focus was on good teaching. This week the focus in verses 20-26 is more on Christian character and behaviour.*

#### 2 Tim 2:20-22 Clean and Ready for Use

v.20 *noble purposes* – in the picture of household equipment, this might be items for special occasions; this may mean whether we are used for moral purposes, to serve God, or for immoral purposes and for selfish ends. Paul may be thinking particularly of good teachers or false teachers (as in 2:17).

v.21 *holy* – the basic meaning of the word 'holy' is 'separate': both separate from everything that is wrong, and separated for what is good, so set aside for God and dedicated to his service.

v.22 *the evil desires of youth* – Timothy was comparatively young (early 30's?)

v.22 *righteousness* – here meaning not so much 'a right standing with God' (as elsewhere in Paul especially Romans) but a right standing with other human beings: justice, fairness, right dealings?

v.22 *faith* – not only trust in God but 'faithfulness' (trustworthiness, dependability) to other people

v.22 *a pure heart* – not only free from sin but 'undivided' allegiance, completely committed to the Lord

1. What is the point of Paul's illustration of the household objects?

What differences between us are represented by the 'gold... silver...wood... clay'? Do they matter?

What could be 'noble purposes' or 'ignoble purposes' in the way we use our gifts, personalities, resources and opportunities? Is this only about avoiding immoral actions, or does it also involve our priorities and the ways that we treat people?

2. How can we help each other to be 'holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work'?

What practical steps can we take, as well as encouraging words? (Training? Mentoring? ....)

3. Pray for anyone in the group who is considering a new step in discipleship or service.

4. What might Paul mean by 'the evil desires of youth'? What are the pressures on young people today?

How do we 'flee' such situations? (compare Jesus' words in Matthew 5:29-30)

What positive desires should we follow instead? (verse 22; see also Philippians 4:8-9)

## **2 Tim 2:23-26 Avoiding Arguments**

v.23 *foolish and stupid arguments* – we don't know exactly what these were but 1 Timothy refers to: myths & genealogies 1 Tim 1:4; ascetic practices 1 Tim 4:3; linked to status or exploitation 1 Tim 6:1-5

v.24 *The Lord's servant* – a title first applied to Jesus, the Messiah who fulfils the prophecies of Isaiah. Then we in turn are the servants of the Servant.

5. What might Paul mean by '*foolish and stupid arguments*' in verse 23?

Are there similar issues today that distract Christians today from what God is calling them to do:  
comparatively unimportant doctrinal issues? speculation about some biblical topics?  
disagreements about religious practices? about activities that Christians should avoid?

How can all such arguments undermine the church and our witness to the world around us?

Can there be a deeper spiritual struggle behind such division?

How do we distinguish between '*stupid arguments*' that should be avoided and opposition, or false teaching, against which we must stand firm and '*guard the good deposit*' (2 Tim 1:14)?

6. How can Christian leaders, or those with any influence (most of us?) deal with such disagreements?

What should be our attitude towards those with whom we disagree?

What did Jesus do? How are to be '*the Lord's servant*'? (compare *Philippians 2:(1) 5-11.*)