



Paul's 2nd Letter to Timothy

Passing on the Baton

Autumn 2017



2 Timothy 1: 1-10

(sermons: Sept 3)

2 Tim 1:1-2 Greetings

v.1 *apostle* – the word means ‘sent’; in the New Testament it is usually restricted to Paul and the original 12 disciples (as Luke 6:15, 12 – Judas + Matthias whose choice in Acts 1:21-22 shows the criteria for being a replacement for Judas). Paul based his claim to be an apostle on his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus and his commission from him (eg Acts 9:15, 1 Cor 9:1-2, 1 Tim 2:7). Paul also refers to ‘apostles’ in the list of callings in 1 Cor 12:28: probably those who established the first church in an area. In this verse and similar verses at the beginning of his letters, Paul is claiming a God-given authority to define and teach the message about Jesus. Although he is writing to Timothy, the church at Ephesus would probably also hear this Letter.

v.1 *the promise of life* – fullness of life now (as John 10:10) and eternal life hereafter (John 3:16)

v.1 *Christ* – a Greek title, meaning ‘Anointed One’, the same as the Hebrew title ‘Messiah’: God’s Chosen One / King, promised in the Old Testament, whom the first Christians recognized to be Jesus.

v.1 *my dear son* – ‘my true son in the faith’ (1 Tim 1:2)

v.1 *grace* – undeserved favour, God’s gifts

v.1 *mercy* – forgiveness, help for the weak

v.1 *peace* – acceptance, reconciliation, wholeness, fulfilment

1. What reasons does Paul give in the first verse why we should take this Letter seriously?
2. How do we begin and end our emails, or other messages? Do greetings and farewells matter? What do we wish and pray for our Christian brothers and sisters?

2 Tim 1:3-7 Timothy’s Faith and Calling

v.3 *as my forefathers did* – for Paul his Christian faith was a fulfilment of his earlier Jewish faith

v.4 *recalling your tears* – presumably when Paul left him in Ephesus to lead the church (1 Tim 1:3)

v.5 *your mother Eunice* – described as a Jew who was a ‘believer’ (Christian) in Acts 16:1 when Paul revisited Lystra, her home town, where Timothy was then a ‘disciple’. Paul implies here that Timothy’s grandmother Lois and mother Eunice had come to faith before him, presumably on Paul’s first visit.

v.6 *to fan into flame* – ‘stir up that inner fire’ (J B Phillips), ‘bring it back to a blazing fire’ (N T Wright)

v.6 *the gift of God, which is in you through the laying-on of my hands* – this is probably the same as the gift of teaching and leadership given when Timothy was marked out by a word of prophecy and commissioned by the church leaders, presumably including Paul, in 1 Tim 4:13-14.

v.7 *a spirit of timidity* – shyness, or lack of confidence that leads us to shrink back from doing what God calls us to do; in a way this shows a lack of trust in God to give us all we need to serve him.

v.7 *a spirit of power* – includes the ideas of courage and boldness

v.7 *a spirit of self-discipline* – Paul is aware of the temptations Timothy may face (2 Tim 2:22) and develops the idea of spiritual discipline in 2 Tim 2:3-6.

3. What do these verses show about the relationship between Paul and Timothy?
Can we learn anything for our own relationships in the church, especially with those who are less experienced Christians?
4. Share your experience of people (family, friends, church) who have helped you come to faith, or to grow as a Christian, or been an example to you?
Can we be too dependent on someone else's faith? Why might this be dangerous? How can we help people to develop their own relationship with God?
5. Do we recognize the gifts or responsibilities that God has given us? Are we neglecting any of them?
Do we need to 'fan into flame' any gift? How does God revive our spiritual energy?
6. *'Every Christian worker engaged in however small a task requires assurance that God never commissions anyone to a task without imparting a special gift appropriate to it.'* (D Guthrie)
Do you agree?

2 Tim 1:8-10 The Gospel of Jesus

- v.8 *to testify about our Lord – to speak out the truth about Jesus, like a witness in the court of our 'front-line' encounters with other people, following Jesus' command in Acts 1:8 to be 'witnesses'.*
 - v.8 *or ashamed of me his prisoner – unlike those who had deserted Paul when he was re-arrested in Rome (2 Tim 1:15, 4:10)*
 - v.8 *suffering for the gospel – suffering in the cause of spreading the Christian message, or by our association with it. Compare Jesus' stern words in Mark 8:38.*
 - v.9 *saved us and called us to a holy life – forgiveness before service but for service, as Ephesians 2:8-10*
 - v.9 *before the beginning of time – God's plan to rescue human beings was in his mind before creation as he foresaw how we would turn away from him*
 - v.10 *who has destroyed death – this cannot mean that death ceases to exist but that Jesus has defeated the power that death (both physical and spiritual) used to have over human beings. Because of what Jesus has done, physical death is no longer the end; we can have spiritual life; and that life never ends.*
 - v.10 *has brought life and immortality to life through the gospel – this suggests that we do not naturally have an 'immortal soul' but that immortality is a gift of God.*
7. Have we ever been ashamed or embarrassed about our faith, or fellow Christians? What is there about the Christian message, or about ourselves, that might contribute to that sense of embarrassment?
How can we help each other to be more open and confident about our faith?
 8. What does Paul say here about the gospel, or good news, of Jesus?
How many different aspects can you find of what God offers us and of what Jesus has done for us?
What is the basis of, or reason for, what God has done for us?
How are we called to respond?