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2 Timothy

As far as we know, the book of 2 Timothy is the last letter Paul wrote. He wrote it from prison in Rome. He had been arrested many times before in his life. Once, he even defended himself in a Roman court. But the book of 2 Timothy has a different tone than the books of Ephesians or Philemon or Paul's other letters from prison. In 2 Timothy, Paul writes as if he is expecting to die soon. And he wants to see Timothy before that happens. Many years later, a church historian named Eusebius wrote that Paul was killed by the Roman government. He said that it happened during the time that the Emperor Nero persecuted followers of Jesus. No one knows if Timothy made the trip to Rome in time to see Paul before he was executed.

It is clear from what Paul says in this letter that his situation was serious. He says he had been arrested as a criminal, like someone who had really done something wrong. Most of his friends had left him. Paul says that even his close friend Demas had abandoned him. It seems that only one friend had been faithful to him. This friend, named Onesiphorus, had found Paul in prison after looking all over Rome for him.

Paul also had enemies who were causing him problems. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul wrote that he had to punish some people who were doing wrong. One of them was named Alexander. Here in 2 Timothy, Paul again mentions the name Alexander as someone who

had caused him so much harm. Some have thought that this person might have been the cause of Paul's final arrest. Now Paul is in prison awaiting trial. To make matters worse, winter is coming. So Paul mentions the need for some warmer clothes.

In this second letter to Timothy, Paul asks his friend to come and see him. He wants him to come before the cold winter arrives. He also gives Timothy some last words of instruction and encouragement. They were both facing serious challenges. Paul knew that Timothy was still going through difficult times with the church in Ephesus. And he himself was facing death in Rome. But in spite of these difficulties, Paul tells Timothy to be bold and to trust God, as he had always done.

In this second letter to Timothy, Paul...

Greets Timothy and is thankful for Timothy's family (1:1-5)

Encourages Timothy to use his gifts boldly in the face of suffering (1:6-14)

Mentions examples of those who have been bold and those who have not (1:15-18)

Tells Timothy to be strong and remember that God is faithful (2:1-13)

Tells Timothy to avoid arguments, serve faithfully and teach patiently (2:14-26)

Says they live in the "last days," so don't be surprised by trouble (3:1-9)

Points to himself as an example for Timothy (3:10-17)

Encourages Timothy to continue telling God's message (4:1-5)

Expects that he is near the end and wants to see Timothy soon (4:6-22)

1 Greetings from Paul, an apostle for Christ Jesus.* I am an apostle because that is what God wanted. He wanted me to tell people about the promise of life for those united with Christ Jesus.

²To Timothy, a dear son to me.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanksgiving and Encouragement

³In my prayers, night and day, I always remember you. And I thank God for you. He is the God my ancestors served, and I have always served him with a clear conscience. ⁴When I think about your tears when I left, it makes me eager to see you again. I will be so happy when that day comes. ⁵I remember your sincere faith. It's the kind of faith that first belonged to your grandmother Lois and to your mother Eunice. And I know that's the faith you now have. ⁶That's why I ask you not to forget the gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. Use it so it will grow, like a small flame grows into a fire. ⁷The Spirit God gave us does not make us afraid. His Spirit is a source of power and love and self-control.

⁸So don't be ashamed to tell people about our Lord Jesus. And don't be ashamed of me—I am in prison for the Lord. But suffer with me for the Good News. God gives us the strength to do that.

⁹God saved us and chose us to be his holy people, but not because of anything we ourselves did. God saved us and made us his people because this was his plan before time began—to give us

his grace through Christ Jesus. ¹⁰And now it has been shown to us in the coming of Christ Jesus, our Saviour. He defeated death and through the Good News showed us the way to life that will never end.

¹¹I was chosen to tell people this message as an apostle and teacher. ¹²And I suffer now because of that work. But I am not ashamed. I know the one I have put my trust in, and I am sure that he is able to protect what I have put into his care[†] until that Day.

¹³What you heard me teach is an example of what you should teach. Follow this model of true teaching with the same faithfulness and love that Christ Jesus has shown us. ¹⁴This teaching is a treasure that you have been trusted with. Protect it with the help of the Holy Spirit, who lives inside us.

¹⁵You know that everyone in Asia has left me. Even Phygelus and Hermogenes have left me. ¹⁶I pray that the Lord will show mercy to the family of Onesiphorus. Many times Onesiphorus encouraged me. He was not ashamed that I was in prison. ¹⁷No, he was not ashamed. When he came to Rome, he looked and looked for me until he found me. ¹⁸I pray that the Lord Jesus will make sure Onesiphorus receives mercy from the Lord God on that Day. You know how many ways this brother helped me in Ephesus.

A Loyal Soldier of Christ Jesus

2 Timothy, my son, depend on God's grace for the strength you need—the grace he gives you because you belong to Christ Jesus. ²What you have heard me teach publicly you should teach to

***1:1** *Christ Jesus* Or “King Jesus”. The term “Christ” is a Greek translation of the Hebrew word “Messiah”, a royal title. See Mark 15:32; Luke 23:2. See also Christ and Messiah in the Word List.

[†]**1:12** *what ... care* Or “what he has trusted me with.”

others. Share these teachings with people you can trust. Then they will be able to teach others the same things. ³As a good soldier of Christ Jesus, accept your share of the troubles we have. ⁴A soldier wants to please his commanding officer, so he does not spend any time on activities that are not a part of his duty. ⁵Athletes in a race must obey all the rules to win. ⁶The farmer who works hard deserves the first part of the harvest. ⁷Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you understand it all.

⁸Remember that Jesus Christ, from the family of David, was raised to life after his death. This is the Good News that I tell people. ⁹And because I tell that message, I am suffering. I am even bound with chains like someone who has really done wrong. But God's message is not bound. ¹⁰So I patiently accept all these troubles. I do this to help the people God has chosen. I want them to have the salvation and eternal glory that come with belonging to Christ Jesus.

¹¹Here is a true statement:

If we died with him,
we will also live with him.

¹²If we remain faithful even in suffering,
we will also rule with him.

If we refuse to say we know him,
he will refuse to say he knows us.

¹³If we are not faithful,
he will still be faithful
because he cannot be false to himself.

A Worker Who Pleases God

¹⁴Keep on telling everyone these truths. And warn them before God not to argue about words. Such arguments don't help anyone, and they ruin those who listen to them. ¹⁵Do your best to be the kind of person God will accept, and give yourself to him. Be a worker who

has no reason to be ashamed of his work, one who applies the true teaching in the right way.

¹⁶Stay away from people who talk about useless things that are not from God. That kind of talk will lead a person further and further away from God. ¹⁷Their evil teaching will spread like a sickness inside the body. Hymenaeus and Philetus are men like that. ¹⁸They have left the true teaching. They say that the day when people will be raised from death has already come and gone. And they are destroying the faith of some people.

¹⁹But God's strong foundation never moves, and these words are written on it: "The Lord knows those who belong to him"[‡] and "Everyone who says they believe in the Lord must stop doing wrong."

²⁰In a large house there are things made of gold and silver. But there are also things made of wood and clay. Some of these are used for special purposes, others for ordinary jobs. ²¹The Lord wants to use you for special purposes, so make yourself clean from all evil. Then you will be holy, and the Master can use you. You will be ready for any good work.

²²Stay away from the evil things a young person like you typically wants to do. Always try to do what is right and to have faith, love and peace, together with others who trust in the Lord with pure hearts. ²³Stay away from foolish and stupid arguments. You know that these arguments grow into bigger arguments. ²⁴As a servant of the Lord, you must not argue. You must be kind to everyone. You must be a good teacher, and you must be patient. ²⁵You must gently teach those who don't agree with

[‡]2:19 Quote from Num. 16:5.

you. Maybe God will let them change their hearts so that they can accept the truth. ²⁶The devil has trapped them and now makes them do what he wants. But maybe they can wake up to see what is happening and free themselves from the devil's trap.

Many People Will Stop Loving God

3 Remember this: there are some terrible times coming in the last days. ²People will love only themselves and money. They will be proud and boast about themselves. They will abuse others with insults. They will not obey their parents. They will be ungrateful and against all that is pleasing to God. ³They will have no love for others and will refuse to forgive anyone. They will talk about others to hurt them and will have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴People will turn against their friends. They will do foolish things without thinking and will be so proud of themselves. Instead of loving God, they will love pleasure. ⁵They will pretend to honour God, but they will refuse the power that helps us truly honour and please him. Stay away from these people!

⁶Some of them go into homes and get control over weak women, whose lives are full of sin—women who are led into sin by all the things they want. ⁷These women always want to learn something new, but they are never able to fully understand the truth. ⁸Just as Jannes and Jambres^f fought against Moses, these people fight against the truth. Their thinking has been confused. The faith they have and teach is worthless. ⁹But they will not succeed in what they are

trying to do. Everyone will see how foolish they are. That is what happened to Jannes and Jambres.

Last Instructions

¹⁰But you know all about me. You know what I teach and the way I live. You know my goal in life. You know my faith, my patience and my love. You know that I never stop trying. ¹¹You know about my persecutions and my sufferings. You know all the things that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra—the persecution I suffered in those places. But the Lord saved me from all those troubles. ¹²In fact, every believer united with Christ Jesus who wants to live in a way that honours God will be persecuted. ¹³People who are evil and cheat others will become worse and worse. They will fool others, but they will also be fooling themselves.

¹⁴But you should continue following the teaching you learned. You know it is true, because you know you can trust those who taught you. ¹⁵You have known the Holy Scriptures[§] since you were a child. These Scriptures are able to make you wise. And that wisdom leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is given by God. And all Scripture is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching the right way to live. ¹⁷Using the Scriptures, those who serve God will be prepared and will have everything they need to do every good work.

4 Christ Jesus is the one who will judge all people—those who are living and those who have died. He is com-

^f**3:8 Jannes and Jambres** Probably the magicians who opposed Moses in Pharaoh's court. See Exod. 7:11-12,22.

[§]**3:15 Holy Scriptures** Writings that Jews and followers of Christ accepted to be from God—the Old Testament.

ing again to rule in his kingdom. So before him and before God himself, I give you this command: ²tell everyone God's message. Be ready at all times to do whatever is needed. Tell people what they need to do, tell them when they are doing wrong, and encourage them. Do this with great patience and careful teaching.

³The time will come when people will not listen to the true teaching. But people will find more and more teachers who please them. They will find teachers who say what they want to hear. ⁴People will stop listening to the truth. They will begin to follow the teaching in false stories. ⁵But you should control yourself at all times. When troubles come, accept them. Do the work of telling the Good News. Do your full duty as a servant of God.

⁶My life is being given as an offering for God. The time has come for me to leave this life here. ⁷I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have served the Lord faithfully. ⁸Now, a prize is waiting for me—the crown that will show I am right with God. The Lord, the judge who judges rightly, will give it to me on that Day. Yes, he will give it to me and to everyone else who is eagerly looking forward to his coming.

Personal Notes

⁹Do your best to come to me as soon as you can. ¹⁰Demas loved this world too much. That is why he left me. He went to Thessalonica. Crescens went to Galatia. And Titus went to Dalmatia. ¹¹Luke is the only one still with me. Get Mark and

bring him with you when you come. He can help me in my work here. ¹²I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

¹³When I was in Troas, I left my coat there with Carpus. So when you come, bring it to me. Also, bring my books. The books written on parchment are the ones I need.

¹⁴Alexander the metalworker caused me so much harm. The Lord will punish him for what he did. ¹⁵He fought against everything we teach. You should be careful that he doesn't hurt you too.

¹⁶The first time I defended myself, no one helped me. Everyone left me. I pray that God will forgive them. ¹⁷But the Lord stayed with me. The Lord gave me strength so that I could tell the Good News everywhere. He wanted all those who are not Jews to hear that Good News. So I was saved from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will save me when anyone tries to hurt me. He will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. Glory for ever and ever be the Lord's. Amen.

Final Greetings

¹⁹Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila and to the family of Onesiphorus. ²⁰Erastus stayed in Corinth. And I left Trophimus in Miletus—he was sick. ²¹Try as hard as you can to come to me before winter.

Greetings to you from Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers and sisters here.

²²Timothy, I pray that the Lord will be with your spirit. And may his grace be with you all.