

# An Encouragement to Timothy – Part 1

## Introduction

### a. objectives

1. subject – Paul opens 2 Timothy by encouraging his protégé to fan into flame the gift of God
2. aim – to cause us to grow in assurance, not being ashamed of the gospel in Christ Jesus
3. passage – 2 Timothy 1:1-18

### b. outline

1. Fan the Flame of Faith (2 Timothy 1:1-7)
2. Do Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel (2 Timothy 1:8-14)
3. Guard the Good Deposit (2 Timothy 1:15-18)

### c. opening

1. the **reasons** for the second letter to continue the first
  - a. a choice to preach two books that I have had little *connection to* from the pulpit
    1. I have never preached 2 Timothy *systematically*, nor from any *individual* passages in it
  - b. a choice to combine two books that are *similar (see now)*, yet *different (see below)*
    1. both letters were written by the same apostle, to the same man (and church), fairly close together in time, and in a similar *historical reality* and *application* to the life of the early church
      - a. a similar dating – c. 64AD & c. 66 AD (Titus c. 65AD)
        1. Paul was released from his (Acts) imprisonment (c. 62AD), traveled *back* to Asia Minor through Crete (c. 62-64AD), wrote 1 Timothy (c. 64AD) and Titus (c. 65AD), arrested again (in Rome?), wrote 2 Timothy (c. 66AD), and was martyred under Nero (c. 67AD)
        2. the similarity in style and content of 2 Timothy to Titus suggests both were written near the end of Paul's life (**e.g.** he requests Timothy to visit him [2 Tim. 4:21] probably for the same reason he requests a visit from Titus [Tit. 3:12])
      - b. a similar audience – the church at Ephesus *through* Timothy (**i.e.** written to the man himself, but *clearly* intended by Paul to communicate to the church “behind” Timothy)
        1. **e.g.** the *plural* “you” at the end of both letters
      - c. a similar content – the second letter will “echo” a number of statements made in the first:
        1. **e.g.** 1:14 ← 6:20 – “guard the good deposit entrusted to you”
        2. **e.g.** 2:16 ← 6:20 – “avoid irreverent babble”
        3. **e.g.** 2:22 ← 6:11 – “flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness”
        4. **e.g.** 3:6 ← 5:13 – “those who creep into households and capture weak women”
        5. **e.g.** 4:1 ← 4:11 – “I charge you ... preach the word”
    2. **question:** if the letters have so many similarities, why bother to preach the second one?
      - a. **answer #1:** if we truly embrace both *sola Scriptura* and *tota Scriptura*, and recognize that God *inspired* and *preserved* two such books, does it not follow that the Spirit *intended* for the church *now* to **doubly** get the point that Paul was making *then*?
      - b. **answer #2:** 2 Timothy is *not* a “carbon copy” of 1 Timothy – there are many differences between the two, and it is in the *differences* that new sources of encouragement are found
2. the **differences** between the second letter and the first
  - a. 2 Timothy is about 1/3 shorter than 1 Timothy (4 vs. 6 chapters)
  - b. 2 Timothy appears to be much more “compact” – as though it was written *faster (hastier)*
    1. **e.g.** no clearly revealed rhetorical structure of indicative-imperative
  - c. 2 Timothy has a strong sense of *urgency* – as Paul's fate awaits him, he urgently writes
  - d. 2 Timothy appears much more *personal* in nature –
    1. **e.g.** references to his mother/grandmother in **chap. 1**; Paul's suffering in Timothy's hometown in **chap. 3**; the double-call for Timothy to come to him in **chap. 4**; the naming of old friends in **chap. 4**; and, the betrayal Paul feels from some of them in **chap. 4**; etc.
  - e. 2 Timothy is much more an *encouragement* to Timothy, rather than the *exhortation* of 1 Timothy
    1. **i.e.** the urgency of Paul's circumstances causes him to be much more *encouraging*
    2. **irony: the letter strives to encourage Timothy to faithfulness, endurance, etc. in the face of opposition, which Paul was experiencing himself first-hand!!**
      - a. **i.e.** the *now-being* persecuted becomes an encouragement to the *future-being* persecuted
    3. **IOW:** the beginning of 1 Timothy is a **charge** – 2 Timothy starts as an **encouragement**

3. the **main point** of the second letter as compared to the first
  - a. the genre of 1 Timothy was an *epistle [specific letter of advice or instruction] to godliness* (i.e. in the face of those who would preach “false” doctrines leading away from godliness)
  - b. the genre of 2 Timothy is similar to a **farewell discourse** = a final statement by a teacher to his students [or a leader to his subjects] before he goes away or dies
    1. e.g. by Moses (**Deuteronomy**); Joshua (**Joshua 23-24**); David (**1 Chron. 28-29**); the Upper Room Discourse by Jesus (**John 13-17**) – containing:
      - a. an announcement of departure (**4:6**),
      - b. directives to remain faithful to the Lord and his commands (**2:22ff**),
      - c. predictions of what would come after he has departed (**3:1ff**),
      - d. words of comfort and instruction for those who will remain behind (**4:1ff**), and
      - e. appeals to remember what they have learned from him and use it well (**1:13f**)
    2. all of these are found in this letter (**see above**), with a *special emphasis* on the prediction that Timothy (and the church) will suffer persecution, along with instruction on how Timothy (and the church) is to survive such attack
  - c. **2 Timothy is a personal call for perseverance in the truth of the gospel in spite of opposition**
  - d. the “pivot” verses (i.e. the verses summarizing the theme of the letter) are **2 Tim. 3:12-15**
    1. the prediction (warning) that *persecution was inevitable*, how the attack *would come* (imposters deceiving people), and an encouragement for Timothy to stand firm in the faith *that so many people had taught him along the way* (**John 16:32-33**)  
“Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”
    2. **application:** the “great clash” has now arrived between a post-Christian culture (trying to “divorce” itself from its history with Christianity) and a church that is going to be forced to “take sides” between the culture or its own historic teachings and traditions – the persecution will be the hatred directed towards those in the church *who will not capitulate fully to the culture*
      - a. **2 Timothy (then) is a very relevant letter of encouragement to the church for us to stay faithful to the apostolic message in the midst of great compromise all around us**

## I. Fan the Flame of Faith (2 Timothy 1:1-7)

### Content

#### a. Paul’s greeting (vv. 1-2)

1. **note:** this greeting is *virtually* identical to 1 Timothy, with only a few inconsequential differences
  - a. therefore, we do not need to exegete it again; I would refer to previous letter for more information
2. **one exception:** Paul credits his role as an apostle to the “*promise of life that is in Christ Jesus*”
  - a. compared to “*Christ Jesus our hope*” in 1 Timothy – given that Paul is anticipating that the end of his earthly life is near, he is focused on a “*promise of life*” (i.e. eternal life) for him beyond this life
  - b. **IOW:** it’s a trivial difference, but it helps shed light on how Paul is thinking now

#### b. Paul’s personal connection (vv. 3-5)

1. these sentences are similar to most of Paul’s letters, where he starts by reflecting on the *good qualities* in the audience to which he is writing
  - a. he is thankful to God for Timothy (both the *man* and his *life*)
    1. he identifies this God as *Yahweh*, the God of his “*ancestors*” = the One True and Living God
    2. he identifies his relationship to God as “*with a clear conscience*” = he can say that his gratitude before Yahweh is based on truth and honesty, not any hidden agenda or sin
  - b. he “*remembers*” Timothy “*constantly in [his] prayers*” = Timothy is important to him *to the point* that he will pray regularly for him (**question: for whom in your life do you pray regularly?**)
  - c. he “*longs*” to see Timothy to “*be filled with joy*” = the young man’s presence is a help and a hope to him (i.e. thus the reason Paul will [later] request for Timothy to come to him)
  - d. he is “*reminded*” of the *legacy of faith* that Timothy possesses = his *family* of faith
    1. **remember:** Timothy was converted under Paul’s preaching during his first journey to Lystra
      - a. his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice also came to faith at the same time (**Acts 16:1**)
      - b. their background fit well with the idea of faith, being devout Jews and now Christians
      - c. when Paul returned to Lystra about a year later, he found the three of them still committed to Christ, growing in faith together in the local church; he took Timothy with him at that point
    2. so, for Paul, Timothy’s legacy is one of a *continuing faith*, starting with a devout mother and grandmother, and then continuing into him and remaining strong over time

### c. Paul's encouragement to faith (vv. 6-7)

1. "for this reason" = because Timothy has a legacy of faith; because he has demonstrated the *staying power* of trust in Christ, commitment to Paul and his teachings, and a faithfulness to the church
  - a. as part of his **farewell discourse**, Paul appeals to Timothy to remember what he has been given
2. "fan into flame" = rekindle; reactive; lit. stir from embers to flame, like using a bellows
3. "the gift of God" = what you possess, what came down to you from your mother and grandmother
  - a. what *burst into flame* through the preaching of the gospel to your half-Jewish ears (i.e. the "laying on of my hands") – the Jewish faith you *originally had* that turned to Christian faith with the preaching of the gospel
  - b. **IOW:** you have a legacy of faithfulness within you, now take that faith and put it to good use
    1. do not "fear" what is to come (i.e. persecution)
    2. but exercise your faith as "power and love and self-control" (i.e. obedience and service)
4. **Paul encourages Timothy to see himself rightly – to recognize that one who comes to Christ must remain in this Christ and must serve this Christ under the power of this Christ**
5. **the church is to fan into flame a deep and lasting and growing trust in Christ within everyone**
  - a. is your trust in this Christ a spark, a flicker – or is it a raging bonfire of faithfulness in all things?
  - b. **danger: a spark is easily extinguishable by the cold water of secularism**