

# Studies in 2 Timothy-02 2 Timothy-2

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald explores the themes of encouragement, faithfulness, and the importance of guarding the truth in his sermon on 2 Timothy.*

**Duration:** 28:49

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 1:6

**Topics:** "Studies"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of the separation of the spirit from the body. However, they emphasize that the coming of Jesus has changed this understanding. Through his sacrifice, Jesus has brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel. The speaker also highlights the hope that believers have beyond the grave, as they can depart and be with Christ, which is far better. The sermon is based on the first chapter of 2 Timothy, where the apostle Paul expresses his gratitude, encourages Timothy to rekindle his gift from God, urges him to face suffering courageously, and emphasizes the importance of guarding the truth of God.

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## Transcript

Turn back this morning to 2 Timothy and consider this first chapter, at least a part of it this morning. Perhaps first of all we could get an overview of the chapter. You'll notice that in verses 1 and 2, Paul gives his greetings, and we'll look at them more in detail.

And then, as he often does, he breaks into thanksgiving. The Apostle Paul had a thankful heart, and wherever there was cause for thanksgiving, he was not slow to find it. Verses 3 through 5. In verses 6 and 7, he urges Timothy to rekindle the gift of God that has been given to him.

In verses 8 through 12, he encourages him to face suffering courageously. In verses 13 and 14, his great exhortation is to guard the truth of God. And finally, in verses 15 through 18, he urges Timothy not to be ashamed of God's prisoner, God's servant in prison.

This is Paul's last letter. The shadow of death is drawing near. What is Paul thinking about as he approaches that time when he's going to seal his testimony with his blood? Well, I tell you, he's not thinking about the roses in the garden.

When George Aply was dying, his friends all crowded around to hear what his last words would be, and he said, Don't disturb the rosebushes. Nothing the matter with rosebushes, but that's just not enough for a man who's going out to meet God. Paul wasn't concerned with the rosebushes.

He didn't talk to Timothy about securities that are not secure, or about real estate that is not real. This epistle has to do with spiritual values, and as you read this letter, you hear the heartbeat of the great Apostle Paul. His burden is for the ongoing of the work of God, for the guarding of the truth of God, and for the ministry of his esteemed young brother, Timothy.

Paul, of course, was prepared to face death. This letter was written probably from a dungeon prison, but there's no smell of a prison about it. You'd never get that idea, really.

It's a letter of triumph and a letter of courage all the way through. And when Paul passes off the scene, it's very clear what he's going to leave behind. His life has been a benediction to everyone whose path he has crossed, and he's going to leave behind an imperishable heritage of spiritual truth.

What will you and I leave behind when we pass off the scene? A few diplomas, a few trophies, a few newspaper clippings, a short obituary, and a moderately-sized funeral? There's more than that, and you find that out as you read this letter. Verse 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. Paul speaks of his Christian service as a matter of great dignity.

An apostle of Christ Jesus. I like what Spurgeon said to his son. He said, My son, God has called you to be his servant.

I should not like to see you dribble down into a king. And Paul had something of that feeling, too. Paul, chief of sinners, saved by the matchless grace of God and dignified with the honor of serving the Lord Christ.

An apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, not by the ordination of man. Actually, it wasn't something that he chose himself. With the divine compulsion that was laid upon him to preach the gospel, he said, Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.

Now, his call to be an apostle was in harmony with the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. It was in accordance with that. It was connected with that.

As an apostle, he went forth and proclaimed to men and women everywhere that there is life, abundance life, and eternal life. And it's all wrapped up in a person, and that person's name is Jesus. And when you have him, you have the life that is life indeed.

The letter is addressed to Timothy, my dearly beloved child. We are not sure that Paul actually led Timothy to the Lord. It seems in the book of Acts that when Paul first met him, Timothy was already a believer, well reported of by the brethren.

We're not sure. He may have. He may have led him to Christ in a previous system.

But this word child can be used in different ways. It could mean that he was a child because Paul had led him to the Lord. It could also mean a child by imitation.

In other words, Paul says of Timothy in Philippians chapter 2, I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state. Timothy worked with Paul. He learned from Paul.

He imitated Paul. His ministry was similar to Paul. And then that lovely salutation, Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Those are three lovely words, grace, mercy, and peace. Grace for every form of service that you, Timothy, will be called to perform. Grace means all the needed strength that will be required of you as you serve the Lord Christ.

Mercy for every time of failure. And there is failure, of course, in the work of the Lord. The message is always greater than the messenger.

And then peace in all the circumstances of life. Peace in all the changing circumstances of life. And if a saint of God has grace, mercy, and peace, there's not much more that he could ask for in this side of eternity.

If you have that, you're fabulously wealthy. It's interesting to me that Paul, with death looming so near, he isn't interested about Timothy's health so much, even about his personal safety. He's interested in his spiritual well-being.

Notice Paul traces grace, mercy, and peace to God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul honors the Son even as he honors the Father.

Paul held tenaciously to the absolute deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I like that expression, Christ Jesus our Lord, because Christians at this time were being persecuted, they were being oppressed, they were being compelled, or at least the attempt was made to compel them to acknowledge Caesar as Lord. Emperor worship in Rome.

And Paul will have none of it, of course. Christ Jesus our Lord. That's a wonderful time in anyone's life when, as Dan was speaking, when a man gets down and acknowledges Jesus Christ to be Lord of his life.

Then Paul breaks out into thanksgiving. I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day. When Paul says whom I serve, notice serve present tense, he didn't always serve God.

On that trip to Damascus, on the road to Damascus, he thought he was serving God, but it wasn't so. But he said whom I serve from my forefathers, it really means after the example of my forefathers. It doesn't mean that Paul had always done that.

When you read the verse first, it sounds that way. It sounds that from the very beginning he had served God. But that isn't what it means.

I'm now serving God after the example of my forefathers. He's thinking back to the godly heritage, the Jewish patriarchs, and their conscience void of offense toward God and man, and that was the God he was serving. Without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.

It would have been interesting to travel with the Apostle Paul, to live with him, and to share something of the prayer life of this great man of God. Someone has said, I measure my influence by the number of people I pray for and the number who pray for me. That's a good way to measure our influence.

Not by the number of messages we've given or the number of books we've written, but by the number of people we pray for and the number who pray for us. I think one of the most humbling experiences that some of us have is to meet people whom we hardly know and have them say to us, I pray for you every day. That really explains a lot to me.

That's what Paul could say concerning Timothy. I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy. If you use a little sanctified imagination in verse four, you might see Paul and Timothy one day out in devoted service for the Lord when suddenly the police close in.

They grab Paul and yank him away and drag him off to jail. And Timothy stands there weeping. And as he is dragged away, Paul looks back and sees the tears of this young servant of the Lord.

And those tears made an indelible impression upon him. He said, when your name comes before me in prayer as I pray night and day, I think back to that time when we were forcibly separated and you wept unashamedly, greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy. Then in verse five we have the importance of the Christian home, of the godly Christian home, don't we? When I call to remembrance the unfamed faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also.

Our brother Dan has already spoken to us of the godly Christian home in which he was raised. Many of us can bear testimony to the same fact. And here Paul is reminding Timothy of that, too.

But there's someone missing in verse five. Who is missing? There's no mention of Timothy's father. That's rather a sad note, isn't it? Wouldn't it have been nice if Paul could have spoken of Timothy's father, too, as being a great man of faith? But he is not mentioned.

A lot of fathers think that Christianity is for women and children, but not for them. No dead fathers feel that way. Whenever a man like that dies, he becomes suddenly evangelistic.

As we're reminded in the parable, in the story of the rich man, and he cried out in Hades, Oh, that someone would go and tell my brothers that they come not into this place of torment. But we're not surprised to find Timothy's mother and grandmother mentioned here, because certainly in the pages of the New Testament, and perhaps in the whole Bible, women outshine men as far as devotedness to Christ is concerned. We see it on every hand.

We see the women on the mission field today, brave souls, where men are strangely absent. And so then comes this word of encouragement to Timothy. Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hand.

Timothy had received a gift from God, but he was naturally of a timorous nature, and he needed this word of encouragement. God has given you a gift, Timothy, stir it up. What Paul is saying here is, Timothy, get on fire for the Lord Jesus, and keep burning for him.

There's a young fellow working with Operation Mobilization overseas, he writes to me frequently, and he always puts down at the end, keep burning for Jesus. Well, I think that's what Paul is saying to Timothy here. Keep burning for Jesus.

Maintain the spiritual glow. Now, that's an interesting expression at the end of the verse, the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hand. Turn back to 1 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 18, please, and we find a definite progression in connection with this gift.

It says in verse 18 of 1 Timothy 1, I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare. Now, it seems in verse 18 that certain prophetic utterances were made in the assembly in connection with Timothy. Certain prophecies were uttered concerning the work, the gift that was to be given to him and the work that he was to do.

Now, turn to 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 14. It says there, neglect not the gift that is in thee which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery or the elders. Now, when you put all these verses together, they seem to say this.

They seem to say, as we saw already, certain prophetic utterances were made. Timothy was to receive this gift from God, was to be entrusted with this ministry. The apostle Paul, as an apostle of the Lord Jesus, laid his hands upon Timothy, and by that act the spiritual gift was communicated to him.

Paul was the instrument under the Holy Spirit of doing that. Then the elders came and laid their hands on Timothy. That didn't confer anything, but expressed their fellowship with what the Spirit of God was doing.

So, Paul's hands were the instrument and the elders' hands were accompanying what took place. The gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. And then we get a little insight into the disposition, the temperament of Timothy in verses 7 and 8. Paul says, For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

And there the word, perhaps better would be discipline. God has not given us the spirit of fear. When God gives a gift to a man, he gives him the grace to carry out that gift.

If God has a work for you to do, God will give you all the needed strength to do that work. But naturally speaking, we hold back. I believe that in every genuine call to Christian service, there is a measure of human reluctance, a feeling of human inadequacy, and perhaps a sense of human fear.

And Timothy certainly had that. He had butterflies, and sometimes his butterflies had butterflies too. And so, Paul says, God has not given us the spirit of fear.

It doesn't come from God, but of power and of love and of discipline. Lovely to hear this senior servant of Christ fortifying the younger believer to go forth into the battle. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.

That word, ashamed, appears three times in this chapter. Here, don't you be ashamed of the testimony, Timothy. Verse 12, for the which nevertheless I am not ashamed.

And then in verse 16, Onesiphorus was not ashamed of my shame. Lovely the way you get these little triads in the scripture, isn't it? Almost as if the Trinity put a brand mark in the sacred scriptures. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.

Once again, I would emphasize that this was a day in which the pressure was on everybody to acknowledge Caesar as Lord. And the rallying cry of the Christians at this time was, Jesus Christ is Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, his prisoner.

Well, of course, there was a measure of risk as far as one's personal life was concerned in openly identifying with a man like the Apostle Paul. Paul says, Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. It would be interesting to see what would happen in the United States if persecution and affliction came because of the gospel.

Certainly there would be a measure of weeding out that would go on. It would not be such a popular thing then to be known as one who was born again. And the truth of the matter is that we as Christians need opposition.

We need affliction. We need oppression. It brings out the very best.

Notice verse 9. God, the power of God, who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling. Paul is continually reminded of the tremendous height to which the believer in Christ has raised up from the dung heap, up from the valley of death, and seated with Christ in heavenly places. If you want to know what is meant by that expression, holy calling, all you have to do is turn back to the first three chapters of Ephesians, and there you have a fairly full presentation of the holy calling.

Blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, redeemed, forgiven, accepted in the Beloved, given the earnest of the Spirit, given the seal of the Spirit unto the day of redemption. And Paul catalogs the wonderful riches that belong to all who are in Christ Jesus. And Paul never gets over the sense of amazement at what the grace of God has done.

And as Dan said already, there was no thought that this had anything to do with our works. All our righteousnesses, Isaiah reminds us, are as filthy rag, but God's wonderful calling is according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. It's really wonderful.

Why did God love us? Why did he send his Son to die for us? Only God would have ever done it. No one else would have ever bothered. Why did he do it? Well, this is the best answer that you can find, according to his own purpose and grace.

He is a God of grace. He's a God of love. He's a God of mercy, and he must act according to his character.

And just to close with verse 10, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. This is a wonderful verse of scripture. It tells of the wonderful change that has come as a result of the appearing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It says he's brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel. Incorruption there really refers to the resurrection of the body. Now, it's hard for you and for me to really appreciate this today, but if you go back to the Psalms and the book of Isaiah, you'll find the men speaking like this.

They'll say, shall the dust praise thee? You know, David is in some terrible danger, and he fears that he may be falling into the grave soon, and his argument to God is, don't let me die. If I die, you won't get any praise from me. And the whole realm of the departed was a very shadowy area as far as the Old Testament saints were concerned.

You might just look at one or two verses, and we'll do it quickly. Isaiah chapter 38 and 18 says, For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee, they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy

truth. Well, that's what the saints thought in the Old Testament.

With a dim, gray, shadowy area, what happens after death? Well, they say, shiol. It means the spirit is separated from the body. But a very little clear comprehension.

Well, the coming of the Lord Jesus has changed all that, hasn't it? He's brought life and incorruption to light by the gospel. And we know that to die is gain. It's to depart.

For the child of God, it's to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. What a wonderful message the child of God has to blaze unto the world. There is hope.

There is hope beyond the grave for those who come the blood-sprinkled way and trust the sinner's Savior. Next week, Lord willing, we'll go on with verse 11 and work our way, hopefully, through the epistle. Shall we look to God in closing prayer? Father, we thank you this morning for this testimony of our brother Dan.

We thank you for what your grace has done in his family and in his own life. We realize that grace is a beautiful jewel, and we just worship and praise you for what you've done. And, Father, we thank you for this word that we have before us today, the sacred scriptures.

We thank you for this message of the apostle to Timothy. We pray that, Lord, you will speak to our hearts through which we must, Lord. We pray from the perishing things of this world, help us to realize that we're men and women of destiny, that we have a long eternity before us, and help us to live for those things which really count.

We pray for each one in the meeting today. We think of some who may be here with heavy burdens, deep needs. And, Lord, we thank you that you are the all-sufficient One.

Draw near, we pray, to any such. And if there should be those who have never come with the clear confession, Jesus Christ is Lord, we pray that before it is eternally too late, they might do that. We ask it as we give thanks in the Savior's worthy name.

Amen.

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