The Epistle of 2nd Timothy;

Introduction and Chapter 1

Good morning. Today we start on the second of the three pastoral epistles written by Paul the Apostle, this one was to Timothy whom Paul had assigned previously to take over the Church in Ephesus, and get things straightened out and organized, get the doctrine settled and set, and train the leadership. Timothy was a young convert of Paul’s, and Paul had placed great trust in him in sending him to Ephesus, primarily because Timothy had been a student, follower and messenger, but his ministry at Ephesus was a first. At this point in history, after two or three years from Timothy’s commission to Ephesus, Timothy has moved on from there, and Tychicus has probably taken over the ministry there.

When was this written? This is probably Paul’s last recorded letter. There were probably others, but they are lost to the dust. The date of this letter is probably around late AD 66 to early AD 67, Paul has been arrested for the second time, some historians say near Nicopolis, but which Nicopolis? There seems to be two cities named Nicopolis, one on the western shore of Greece and the other inland of Philippi in Macedonia, below Thrace off the Aegean Sea. Historians are all over the place as to which city is the right one. However, Paul is again arrested, supposedly at whichever Nicopolis and taken to Rome, and this stay won’t be so pleasant. He has few helpers now, many are out on their own missions, or as messengers, a couple may have left the ministry, and possibly Luke will be the one constant companion.

There is the distinct possibility, Paul did make a mission journey to Spain after his first imprisonment, but that is speculation, since Paul apparently did go back to Asia Minor or Macedonia after his release from the first imprisonment, (and possibly Jerusalem for a debrief with the brethren) and time is a factor. Paul had been released from the Roman imprisonment about AD 62 or so and this arrest will be about AD 65 or early AD 66. These imprisonments were both during the reign of Nero, (Emperor from AD 54 to AD 68). And during those years Nero had become more and more demented and by the mid AD 60’s had enough of the unsettling news of the growing Christian movement. He had it in mind, Paul and his people were preaching insurrection against Rome.

I doubt, Paul, as many writers claim, was in the Mamertine hole, a 12’ deep cistern, below a larger cell room that would have held other prisoners because that was the last location before trial and execution of a prisoner. (the survival rate in that hole was short because let’s face it a hole, maybe, 4 to 5’ in diameter (?) and 12’ deep, and one did his defecations right where he stood. The Mamertine was a whole prison complex with rooms where folks could have certain privileges, or the main floor cell room that accommodated a group, and below was the ‘cell’ The first imprisonment was in an apartment near the prison complex or in the cell room above. This time he was under more of a lock and key and probably had limited visitors, maybe allowed one or two close associates, and quick outside visits. However, with the known mental condition of Nero, Paul also knows that his days are limited, and needs to see Timothy at least one more time, and time is of the essence.

A] 2 Timothy 1: 1 & 2; (read)

1] “*Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, Mercy and Peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

As we begin this letter, we note the same formal introduction was used there. Paul was an Apostle chosen by God, it being God’s will that, he Paul, was to be used in this manner to bring to all who would hear and believe, the promise God has offered regarding eternal life through Christ Jesus. Do we understand this? Then Paul acknowledges Timothy, ‘To Timothy a beloved son’. As we now know, Paul had a special affinity for Timothy, partly because of Tim’s grandmother and mother, and partly because Timothy being a special conversion and follower, has been with Paul since that conversion, just as Elisha was as close to the Prophet Elijah. Or the Apostle John was as close as he was to Jesus.

Then we come again to the ‘big three’ Grace, Mercy and Peace! As we studied before, Grace was God’s unmerited or unearned favor, Mercy is God’s protecting love, and Peace or God’s loving rest in Him. This is a blessing for Timothy for the work he is doing, all for the sake of the work of Christ being done on the Cross. So, Timothy, I want you to have, God’s unmerited favor, coupled with His special protecting love, and may the peace that come from Christ Jesus just enfold you in His loving arms. Doesn’t this sound comforting?

B] 2 Timothy 1: 3 through 7; (read)

1] “*I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, --”*

We’ll take this verse up separately. Paul is in a prison, and I am sure he does not have the alone time he had with his previous arrest. He may have Luke as a frequent visitor, but now he is relegated to prayer on a continuing basis, and frankly being a prayer warrior is a massively important job, few are willing to take on. His conscience is pure, he knows he has done his job as God has commanded, and harbors no guilt, aware of the complete forgiveness he has in Jesus. And speaking of his forefathers, Pharisee was probably the family business, and in Paul’s case dad and granddad may have been truly righteous men in their own right, and a brother or an in-law might also have been a Pharisee, and not getting caught in the religious politics of the day.

2]--”*greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears , that I may be filled with joy,--”*

When we get as close to our loved ones as Paul was to his many missionaries and aides, tears are shed, as one takes leave of another. As our children have left the nest, for college or marriage, we cry for them, of good friends leave for another place, tears can be shed at the prospect of not having them near. We can understand any tears Timothy might be shedding as the prospect of losing Paul to the executioner blade, and Paul understands this, and is desiring to see Timothy once again.

3]--”*when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and I am persuaded is in you also.”*

Paul had just explained his background as a Jewish Pharisee and not called by God to minister to Gentiles, and he longs to see his prize pupil, who also was raised up in probably a Christian home through mother and grandmother as believers. We know that Timothy’s father was a Greek, but what is not known is whether he became a believer. Frankly, because he or his name is never mentioned my guess is, he died young and never came to faith. However, isn’t it a blessing to us when our children and grandchildren continue on in the faith?

4] “*Therefore I remind you to stir up the Gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”*

I am reminded that as Paul is a prisoner and not in the best of situations, and that for these years Timothy has battled the enemies of the faith in Ephesus as well as in other areas, plus the fact, he, Timothy knows about Paul’s predicament and obvious ending to come, is probably dispirited, and a bit demoralized. It has been a never-ending fight and sometimes we can grow weary with the incessant, continuous striving for the ministry of Christ. How many Pastors have to take a break, today, because of the pressures and responsibilities of their position? And then think of the inner turmoil Timothy is feeling. Paul is trying to encourage him in this time, “Buck it up boy, remember who you are!”

5] “*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*

Timothy not only fears for his friend and mentor, or for the ministry at Ephesus and other places he goes, but the constant specter of arrest and death at the hands of Nero have to play havoc with one’s mind. Frankly just knowing that around the corner is a contingent of soldiers waiting to arrest me for preaching the gospel does give one the jitters. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand does not support a spirit of fear and doubt, and if we know we have the Holy Spirit within us, we should be able to face the warfare that comes against the Christian with bold reserve. This is the point Paul is trying to get across.

C] 2 Timothy 8 through 12; (read)

1] “*Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the Power of God,--”*

Are we getting the picture here? Put yourself in Timothy’s sandals, he had faced much opposition in Ephesus, had been with his teacher and mentor Paul, during his first incarceration, and is seeing and feeling the hot breath of Nero, closing in. How would you all feel at this point? Would you or I stand with boldness preaching about the saving grace of Jesus Christ, full well knowing a squad of Roman soldiers may be just around the corner? Am I able to even stand with the Holy Spirit in me anticipating a Roman spear hitting me at any time? Am I brave like Paul?

2]--”*who has saved us and called with us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,--”*

This ministry is not just something we do, but we are ordained by God Himself. Why do you think He has given to us, first Jesus the Messiah, to save us for His purposes, and then also the Holy Spirit to abide in us to stand with us through the trials of this world? That boldness does not come from within our physical lives but from God Himself through the Holy Spirit, because without God and the Holy Spirit we could do nothing. Are we getting this? Do you think Timothy is?

3]--”*but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an Apostle and a teacher to the Gentiles.”*

So we take the complete thought Paul is trying to get across, Timothy as well as Paul and others ARE APPOINTED to the task of bringing the gift of Salvation to the Gentile people, dangerous as that may be. Again and again we need to be reminded that God had this great creation and only the mankind part of His creation rebelled against Him, But being a God of Love He has provided that way back to Him, through the Sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ, and this is the commission to us, to continue to bring sinners to Salvation, and If Jesus was to face His torture and death on a cross, can we do no less? Paul then adds This is why he was commissioned.

4] “*For this reason I also suffer these things; never-the-less I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that day.”*

So as Paul explains in the verse before, this is then, the reason, why he is going through these things, but it is not any shameful thing to be put in prison, not for any crime, but the sake of preaching Jesus. Paul is saying, “*Timothy, this was to be, and I go because I have done my job, and I am assured that God is real, Jesus is real, this is who I believe in, and I am not wrong or mistaken in what I had to do, this was my commitment to God and Jesus and I have committed my very soul to God’s keeping and then, this I know that when my time here is finished, I will be with the God I love and serve.”*

D] 2 Timothy 1: 13 through 18; (read)

1] “*Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”*

What I found most interesting about Paul, was the fact early on his ministry, Paul faced Peter down on doctrine, and this was, then, a man that did not waver in his beliefs and purpose. He was firm in his belief, and he now wants Timothy to emulate what he, Timothy, has heard and read. Paul has shown Timothy what Scriptural Truth is, and expects Timothy to follow it and to live it. This could also mean that Timothy should follow the pattern of speaking and the exact words used, that was Paul’s talent. But that would almost be saying that all who were associate pastors under Dr. D. James Kennedy, should affect the same clipped speech that Dr. Kennedy used and the same dictionary he used.

My explanation would be more like, stay to the scripture as I have taught and don’t deviate for simplicity sake. Now remember there was no gospels as we have today, although the writings of Matthew and Mark would possibly have been out there, but the gospel Paul would have is the preaching of the whole of the Tanakh and expressly the prophets, pointing to Jesus and this is what Timothy should do.

2] “*That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.”*

As Paul had given himself completely to God, so has Timothy, and Timothy has then accepted the ministry with the anointing, and the Salvation ‘that good thing’, and through the Power of the Holy Spirit he is led and therefore he will stand strong as the Holy Spirit is in us to make us strong. Do you catch the point Paul is making. It is all through the Holy Spirit.

3] “*This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.”*

Today, how many have fled the ministry because it got too difficult to handle or retranslated the scripture to make ‘religion’ more palatable? This is what has happened to Paul, so many of the ‘loyal followers’ have fled away from the dangers that Rome presented, and that Paul is now in prison for. We can sit here studying these words, and aver that we would be ever strong, but friends I can only imagine the fear each day as I stepped out on the street to witness the word, and at the same time be looking over my shoulder to see a Roman cop, spear to the ready.

Now, Phygellus we no nothing about, except as he is mentioned here along with Hermogenes. But apparently under the intense pressure rising against the disciples and teachers of this new ‘way’ many wilted and backed away. Also in investigating Hermogenes, this also is the only mention of him. This would have been a blow because finding and keeping good teachers in any era is difficult at best. Now it is suggested these men were in Asia Minor, not in Rome, and by their names were of Greek extraction and probably from the Ephesus region.

4] “*The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; but when he arrived in Rome he sought me out very zealously and found me.”*

We know very little of Onesiphorus, but suffice it to say, he was a friend of Paul’s, and was probably from Ephesus, and was in the ministry of serving, which is why he may have gone to Rome to look up Paul and see to his needs, (some scholars say he may have been there on other business and while there looked up Paul-----very plausible). While he is with Paul, Paul wants to see that the needs of Onesiphorus’s family are met while he is away. What he has found, is Paul back in prison and this time not as comfortable as he was before. But Onesiphorus doesn’t back away, he steps up to minister.

5] “*The Lord grant to him, that he may find mercy from the Lord on that day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.”*

This might just refer to when Paul, as he had been preaching the word, was set upon and beaten, apparently pretty badly, and probably needed medical attention. Timothy may have been there at that event. So we do know that it was Onesiphorus who is found administering healing help, food and shelter to a battered and bloody Paul.