

Paul's Second Letter to TIMOTHY

My Dear Son Timothy:

This is from Paul, chosen by God to be a messenger of Jesus Christ. And the message I'm to give is that God now promises everlasting life to mankind because of what Christ Jesus suffered for us.

²May God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord continue to grant you favor you never could have earned, resulting in God being merciful to you and giving you great peace of mind.

Encouragement to Faithfulness

³I thank God for you, Timothy—the God whom I serve with a pure conscience, just as my ancestors did—as I continually remember you in prayer, both day and night.

⁴I so deeply long to see you, and it will be pure joy when we meet again. I remember so well how your tears flowed as we parted.

⁵When I think of the genuine faith you have, it awakens memories of the faith that was first so real in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice. And I'm sure that your faith is now just as strong and sincere as theirs.

⁶That's why I'm reminding you to continue to fan into flame the gift God gave you when I laid my hands upon your head and prayed that God would bless and use you.

⁷Because God has not given us a cowardly spirit^a; He wants us to serve Him courageously, with power, love, and mature judgment.

⁸That's why you should never be ashamed or fearful to speak out^a and tell everyone the Great News about our Lord. Nor should you be ashamed of me either, a prisoner of the Lord because I refuse to be silenced. Instead, you should take your stand with me, and, with God's power strengthening and sustaining you, endure whatever sufferings God may allow as you give the full

message of the Great News!

⁹*Ob, what a God we have!*^a Not only did He save us and call us to live holy lives, but He also did all this in a way so praiseworthy and honorable. He didn't save us because of anything we ourselves had done, but before there was even an earth or a sun by which time could be reckoned, in His eternal mind He gave us Christ Jesus.^b He did this for His own reasons and out of the kindness of His great and loving heart.^c

¹⁰But it wasn't until recently that all of this was revealed to us thru the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. And the heart of the Great News is that Jesus has utterly destroyed the strangle hold that death had on us, and He has made it clear that we can now receive life that will never end!

¹¹And God has appointed me to be a messenger to preach and teach this Great News to everyone everywhere.

¹²That's also why I'm suffering here in jail.^a But I'm not ashamed about being here, because I know I can fully rely on the One in whom I have put my trust. I'm absolutely certain that He will take good care of all that I've entrusted into His care, until that Great Day.^b

¹³When preaching the Great News, stay with the outline of solid truth you've heard me preach. The main points are faith in who Jesus Christ is, and in what He has done for us. Then point out the genuine love we must have for such a One as He is, and for everyone else as well.

¹⁴Be sure to carefully guard the great treasure of truth which has been entrusted to your care. Look to the Holy Spirit, who lives within each of us, to be your help in preserving it.^a

¹⁵As you know, everyone who came here from the province of Asia has now deserted me, including Phygellus and Hermogenes.

¹⁶But not Onesiphorus. He has so often encouraged and cheered me up, and has never been

1:7a Revelation 21:8.

1:8a Romans 10:9-10.

1:9a Implied.

1:9b ... to suffer and die for us. 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8b.

1:9c Ephesians 1:3-5.

1:12a ... because the Jews don't want me to

preach to everyone. They think they are the only ones God will save.

1:12b ... when He returns to earth to glorify all who have been true followers of His, and to reign on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords!

1:14a ... Don't let anything be added to it or taken from it.

ashamed of my chains. May God show mercy to him and to all his family.

¹⁷In fact, when he arrived in Rome he looked all over for me until he finally found me.

¹⁸You know all about the many ways he helped me in Ephesus. May the Lord God grant that he will find mercy from the Lord Jesus on that Great Day.

A Loyal Soldier for Jesus Christ

2 As for you, my son, continue to be strong in your stand for the truth, with all the strength at your disposal^a thru the undeserved kindness of Christ Jesus.

²And the foundation truths of our faith, which you heard me declare so often in the presence of many witnesses, those same truths you must now teach to trustworthy men who are qualified to teach them to others also.

³As a good soldier of Jesus Christ, you must demonstrate endurance in times of trial and hardship.

⁴In the first place, no one truly engaged in warfare allows himself to get entangled in civilian affairs, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

⁵Then look at it from an athlete's viewpoint: No one is crowned as champion unless he competes according to the rules.

⁶Likewise, a farmer knows he must first of all work hard if he expects to enjoy the fruits of a good harvest.

⁷Think over what I've written here, and may the Lord help you to see how it all applies to you.

⁸Be sure to remember that the Great News I

preach is that Jesus Christ, who was born into King David's family, came back to life after being dead.^a

⁹And for preaching that truth, I'm suffering as a criminal, even to being chained. But God's Great News isn't chained.

¹⁰That's why I'm willing to endure everything necessary in order to bring God's message to those He has chosen,^a so that they too may obtain the salvation and eternal glory which He so graciously offers thru Christ Jesus.

¹¹Here are some very true statements:

If we have indeed died with Christ,^a we will also live with Him.

¹²If we don't give up^a as true followers of the Lord, we will also reign with Him.

But if we disown Him, He will also disown us.^b

¹³But even if we are unfaithful, He will always remain faithful, because He cannot be unfaithful to either His promises or His warnings.^a

An Approved Workman

¹⁴You must continually remind the preachers and teachers of these vital truths. And earnestly warn them and everyone else that you are calling on God to be your witness as you charge them that they must stop quibbling about certain words and their shades of meaning. Such unprofitable, dry preaching, which isn't spiritually helpful, will result in the spiritual ruin of those who listen to them.^a

¹⁵Be diligent in making sure that your work for God meets His approval! Be a faithful worker who won't need to be ashamed when God finally tests your work with fire.^a Be absolutely honest and correct in presenting the truth when you are

2:1a Ephesians 6:10-18; Philippians 2:13.

2:8a After faithfully serving God and suffering as His soldier, even unto death, God raised Him back to life. He will do the same for you if you continue faithful. Colossians 1:22-23.

2:10a Romans 8:28-30.

2:11a See Romans 8:12-14; Mark 8:34-38.

2:12a The Greek word here means to patiently suffer temptations and trials, and refuse to yield to those temptations or allow the trials to discourage us. The word also means to *endure*, meaning to endure temptations and trials, and persevere in the faith, continuing firm in faith and practice.

Keep short accounts with God. If you should fall to temptation, and sin, go to God immediately and ask forgiveness. 1 John 1:9. Also ask Him to help you to overcome that temptation, and persevere with Him. Only those who persevere against the temptations to sin will reign with Christ!

2:12b That is, if we disown Him by what we say or how we live—or by what we refuse to say or live. Take a bold stand for Christ, both in your living for Him and in your witnessing for Him, and be willing to take whatever consequences come. A Christian soldier must always be on the offensive for Christ, always looking for someone to help and someone to speak to for Jesus.

2:13a You can always count on God to keep His word.

2:14a ... *when such vital issues are at stake, and need to be dealt with.* Such preaching is a waste of intellectual energy, a waste of time for those who listen, and causes loss of interest and doubt in the true message. In other words, emphasize the main intent of the message in the Scripture, instead of using a text as a springboard to take off on all kinds of unprofitable issues! See 4:1-5.

2:15a 1 Corinthians 3:5-17.

teaching God's word.^b

¹⁶Continue to avoid godless, empty chatter that has nothing to do with God and right living. The result of such hollow preaching only drives people farther away from God.

¹⁷Such ineffective and spineless teaching will slowly eat away and spread like cancer.^a Hymenaeus and Philetus are examples of such teachers.

¹⁸They've strayed so far from the truth that now they're teaching that the time of the resurrection of the dead has already come and gone; as a result they are destroying the faith of some.

¹⁹But the solid foundation of God's truth stands firm, and cannot be moved. It has these words written on it: "The Lord knows who those people are who truly belong to Him," and, "Everyone who claims to be a follower of Christ must stop living in sin!"

²⁰In any large mansion there are not only containers made of gold and silver, but also of wood, and some of clay. Some are used for noble purposes, while others are for humble, ordinary use.

²¹So if you thoroughly clean out whatever is impure and sinful in your life, you will be an honorable container, clean and serviceable, ready to be used by Christ Himself for His most noble assignments.

²²For that reason, you must make it your practice to literally run from impure thoughts and desires that plague youth. Instead, you must earnestly pursue right living, faith, love, and peace of mind by enjoying the companionship of those who call out to the Lord from lives that are pure.^a

²³Always refuse to get involved in foolish and

unprofitable arguments that only cause hard feelings and angry disputes.

²⁴A servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome; he must be gentle with everyone, skillful in teaching, and he must be patient when teaching those who are wrong in their understanding of the truth.

²⁵Be humble in your attitude when you are trying to teach those who are in error and who oppose the truth, in the hope that God will lead them to change their minds^a and admit the truth.

²⁶Hopefully, they will come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, who has taken them captive to do whatever he wants them to do.

Warnings About the Last Days

3 Now here's something else you need to know: During the last days fierce and savage times^a will come.

²Most people will love only themselves and money. They will be boastful and proud, foul-mouthed, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, and thoroughly sinful.

³They won't even love the members of their own family! They'll be unforgiving, and always ready to tear down the reputation of others—without self-control, and brutal. They will hate and despise anyone who stands firmly for what's good and right.

⁴They will be treacherous traitors, reckless and headstrong in their sinning, and conceited. They will be lovers of pleasure instead of lovers of God.^a

⁵Many who go to church will go thru all the motions of worshiping God, but they won't allow God to control them.^a Don't have anything to do with such people!

2:15b Be most fearful to tamper with God's word, or to water it down to please yourself or others.

2:17a ... *until the people's dedication to Christ is dead.*

2:22a Determine in your heart with strong resolve to do and say only what pleases God, at all times and in every situation!

2:25a *God's word is alive and powerful, and pierces the mind and heart like a two-edged sword.* Hebrews 4:12. God pierces the heart when His truth is given, but even then He never forces His will on anyone. But we must speak out and give God's message to others so it may do its work.

3:1a The Greek word here can also be translated: *hard, difficult, violent, dangerous times.*

3:1-4a We are right now in the midst of those *perilous times*, and the perils will increase. But the frightful thing is that many of these sinful people will be members of churches. v 5. They may even

be members of good evangelical churches.

3:5a They may be called Christians, but they are still in rebellion against God, and lost. To be born again means to surrender to the will of God, and to be obedient to Him. Romans 2:8; 6:16; Hebrews 5:9.

They will *go thru all the motions* ... Whom do they think they are fooling? Evidently they are trying to fool our all-wise God. But *God looks upon the heart.* 1 Samuel 16:7. Their false worship is a very thin cover-up for their self-centered living.

They won't allow God to control them. They excuse their sins by claiming that salvation is "all of grace". They feel, therefore, that they have absolutely no responsibility. But the Lord tells us here, thru the apostle Paul, *Don't have anything to do with such people!* We should try to help them realize the lost condition of their souls, but never agree that they are one with us in Christ—for they are not. See Philipians 3:9-14.

⁶They're the kind who gain the confidence of families, and then captivate weak-willed women in those homes who are already loaded with the guilt of their sins and driven by all kinds of evil desires.

⁷They are always learning, but they never seem to understand the real nature of what the truth really is.^a

⁸Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, the same is true with these who oppose and resist the truth. Their minds have been utterly ruined, and as far as their standing with God is concerned, they have utterly failed the test.

⁹But they won't get any further, because their foolishness will finally be right out there for everyone to see, just as was the case with Jannes and Jambres.

Paul's Last Instructions to Timothy

¹⁰But you, my son, are well acquainted with what I teach, how I live, my only goal and purpose in life, my faith, patience, love, perseverance, and the persecutions and sufferings I've endured for the sake of the truth.

3:6-7a Many times it is these who claim everything by "grace, plus nothing" who turn the liberty of the Great News into license to sin. There has been no dying to self in their experience. They are still alive to all the lusts of the flesh. They live for the pleasures of life. They have no real, honest concern for the souls of others. Their only real concern centers in themselves. Many of these may even be diligent Bible students. *They are always learning, but never able to admit that it's the truth* that must now be put into action in their own lives.

3:12a Don't be surprised when persecution and rejection come, even from some members of your own church, as you insist on teaching the full truth of God's word, and live it. A true Christian is a marked person. A true Christian lives to do the will of Christ, and he *will suffer persecution* and isolation just as surely as this Scripture is true. See the notes on Romans 8:16-17.

Additional Scriptures about Christian persecution include Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:18-21; 16:33; 17:14; Acts 14:22; Hebrews 11:32-38; 1 Peter 4:12-14; Revelation 7:13-14. The real fulfillment of the words of this verse are taking place in our own time, in the days of the end.

3:15a Our faith in Christ must be twofold: Faith in what He did for us on the cross (our justification), and obedient faith in what He taught us about how we must now live and serve (our regeneration). Instead of *regeneration* here, some would call it *the process of sanctification or continued obedience*.

¹¹You know all about the persecutions I endured at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. But the Lord rescued me out of all of them!

¹²In fact, everyone who determines to live for Christ Jesus in a way that will truly please God will be persecuted.^a

¹³But evil men, many of them even pretending to be Christians, will go from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived themselves.

¹⁴But as for you, my son Timothy, you must continue to believe and live by the things you learned and are convinced are the truth, because you know the lives of those from whom you learned them.

¹⁵Remember that you were taught the Holy Scriptures from the time you were an infant. And it is those very Scriptures that have the power to give you the wisdom necessary to realize that you can obtain salvation only by a sincere and active faith in Jesus Christ.^a

¹⁶All Scripture has been given to us by inspiration from God, and is profitable for teaching us, showing us our guilt, correcting us, and training us as to what is right and pleasing to God,

See Acts 20:20-21, and the note; Deuteronomy 18:15; Hebrews 5:9.

3:16-17a Just consider from these two verses how very important it is to bathe your soul in the Scriptures daily, and to allow them to mold you into the very likeness of Christ. To be blessed and used by God, we *must* read and obey the Scriptures!

4:1a When Christ returns, He will *judge both the living and those who have passed away*. Christians who are alive and those who are in their graves will all rise to meet Him at His coming. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17. Christians will be *judged* at the Judgment Seat of Christ for rewards. See notes on 1 Corinthians 3:1-23.

As for the unconverted, only the living will be *judged* at Christ's return. See notes on Matthew 25:31-46. The ungodly dead will not be *judged* until Christ has reigned on earth 1,000 years. Revelation 20:5, 11-15. But they will be in Hell during all of that time. Luke 16:19-31.

4:2a What does it really mean to *preach God's message*? See Appendix 225, page 486.

4:2b How can I be most effective in witnessing to others about Christ? See Appendixes 212 and 226.

4:3a Are you one of the unregenerate people in our churches making these demands? If so, consider your latter end! *Unless you are living a holy life you will never see God!* Hebrews 12:14. See also 2 Peter 2:1-9.

4:4a Even in many so-called evangelical churches today, the preaching is so soft and shallow that it

¹⁷so that every person who truly belongs to God may be perfectly prepared and thoroughly equipped to do every good work that God has for him to do.^a

4 Because of the seriousness of the above words, I call on God, and on the Lord Jesus Christ who will judge both those who are still living and those who have passed away,^a when in majesty and power He appears to set up His Kingdom, to witness this most solemn charge which I now give you:

²Preach God's message!^a Be prepared to preach it every chance you get: when people are anxious to listen and when they're not, when you feel like it and when you don't, when it's convenient and when it's not, when you have a large audience or only one person. And as you do so, give the full message: preach the warnings that will convince of guilt, rebuke them for their sin, and encourage them with God's wonderful promises. Do all this with great loving patience and careful instruction.^b

³Because the time will come when the people

convicts no one, moves no one to action or decision, and is not really intended to do so, and is therefore worthless trash!

But this worthless rap is the type of preaching most people want. So, many of our evangelical churches are well on the way to modernism.

The people have *itching ears*, Paul says. They want to be told what they want to hear—nothing more. They want wimpy preachers who will allow them to continue in their sins of omission and commission without making them feel uncomfortable. They will praise the preacher for a sermon that feeds their ego and jolts them just a little. But woe to him if he proclaims the commands and warnings as they are written. They like to play church. 2 Timothy 3:5. But they don't want real Church.

When this happens, they literally turn their ears away from the truth, and instead, listen to half-truths, which in reality are lies. In fact, they are worse than lies, because it's like a capsule of deadly arsenic coated with *some truth*.

Many of the great teachings of the Bible are totally ignored today by many preachers—especially the warnings. If they do preach on these portions they either explain away the warnings or skip the verses which may cause them trouble with the people. Often God tells His people “Thou shalt NOT;” as well as “Thou shalt.” We must warn against the poison as well as point out the good food. And inasmuch as the people are seldom, if ever, encouraged and

will not allow the full truth of the Scriptures to be preached in their churches. But in order to satisfy their own desires, they will surround themselves with preachers and teachers who will compromise and teach them only what their itching ears want to hear, nothing more.^a

⁴They will actually turn their ears away from the truth, and instead listen to half-truths and statements that aren't true at all.^a

⁵But as for you, Timothy, be constantly vigilant in proclaiming the whole truth. Never be afraid of suffering for the Lord for doing so. Faithfully explain the Great News by giving a complete explanation of all that's involved.^a

⁶As for me, I am already being poured out as a drink offering. The time has come for me to leave this life.

⁷I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. Without compromise I have remained true to the faith.

⁸What's ahead for me now is to receive the crown that's been reserved for me for saying and doing what was right,^a which the Lord, the Judge who always does what's right, will give me on that

challenged to read the Bible for themselves, they remain unconverted. A half converted person is still unconverted—and therefore lost!

* * *

The apostate preacher, who once knew the real truth but has turned from it to soft, entertaining preaching, will receive even “greater damnation” (2 Peter 2:3), unless he repents, and begins to preach the whole truth in earnest, without compromise.

Just as a rough wash cloth or brush is needed to search out the dirt in the pores of the body, a sermon is often needed that gets down to where the dirt is, in order to flush out the crud that has invaded our lives. A smooth sermon is like a smooth wash cloth; it may feel good, but it is worthless, and accomplishes nothing of any value. It is, in fact, very harmful, by leaving dirt that is life-threatening, and must be removed.

Also, be warned by what happened as a result of erroneous preaching in Isaiah's time. Isaiah 9:13-17.

For a further *most important* note on this matter turn to Appendix 226A, page 488.

4:5a We must believe on Jesus as Savior, but we must also fully surrender to Him as Lord, or there has been no conversion, and therefore no salvation. To accept only half of the truth is to accept and believe a lie. Matthew 7:21-29; Romans 10:9-10.

4:8a The *crown for saying and doing what was right* is for those who have been faithful. While God

Day, and not only to me but also to all who have looked forward in joyful and keen anticipation to His appearing.^b

Personal Remarks

⁹Do your very best to come to me as soon as possible.^a

¹⁰Demas has deserted me. He's gone off to Thessalonica because of his love for the good things of this present life. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

¹¹Only Luke is with me. Get Mark to come with you when you come. He's been a real help to me in my work for the Lord.

¹²As for Tychicus, I've sent him to Ephesus.

¹³When you come, please bring the coat that I left in Troas with Carpus. Also bring the books, especially the parchments.

¹⁴Alexander the coppersmith has done me much harm. But the Lord will pay him back for what he's done.

¹⁵You must also be on your guard against him, because he's violently opposed to everything we teach.

¹⁶The first time I was brought into court, no one stood with me in my defense. Everyone deserted

me. I pray that this will not be charged against them.

¹⁷But the Lord stood with me, and He gave me strength to preach the full salvation message for all the Gentiles to hear. I was literally delivered out of the lion's mouth.^a

¹⁸And the Lord will continue to rescue me from every evil attack, and bring me safely to His Heavenly Kingdom.^a May all the glory be His for ages upon multiplied ages. So be it!

Final Greetings

¹⁹Greet Priscilla and Aquila for me, and also each member of the household of Onesiphorus.

²⁰Erastus stayed in Corinth, but I had to leave Trophimus in Miletus because he was sick.

²¹Do your best to arrive here before winter. Eubulus sends you his greetings, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the other followers of the Lord here.

²²May the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. And may God's blessings literally shower upon you. So be it!

Sincerely in Christ,
Paul

does not demand great successes, He does demand *truth* and *faithfulness*. Paul did not fail to *give the people God's complete message*. Acts 20:27. He was not a people pleaser. As a result, he was stoned, imprisoned, and hated by many. But he was dearly loved by the Lord. This was Paul's only concern.

This *crown for saying and doing what was right* will be given to all who love and look forward to the appearing and return of Jesus Christ. Those who want only part of the Bible preached to them, and that with gentleness, cannot love the appearing of Christ. His appearing for them will be *as judge* and *not as Savior*. The same goes for the preachers who have been willing to apply soothing ointment when there was need for major surgery. Without the operation of the removal of *self will*, the patient will die in his lost condition!

This is not a crown given for having ambition, or

a crown won in struggles for distinction, but a crown given by the Lord to all who have lived and served in obedience to what was right and honorable in God's eyes.

4:8b Only those who live to obey the Lord can look forward with joy to His appearing. For others it can be only a fearful looking forward to judgment.

4:9a Paul was again in prison in Rome. Timothy was in Ephesus.

4:17a Referring to Nero, or to the lions in the arena.

4:18a Paul had confidence that as a faithful servant of the Lord, Christ would bring him *safely to His Heavenly Kingdom*. We can, with Paul, have assured confidence of this also, if we are faithful and true to the teaching of Christ's word, both in teaching it and in obeying it.

Because the time will come when the people will not allow the full truth of the Scriptures to be preached in their churches. But in order to satisfy their own desires, they will surround themselves with preachers and teachers who will compromise and teach them only what their itching ears want to hear, nothing more.

—2 Timothy 4:3