

Note

2 Timothy – Part 1 of 1

Summary

2 Timothy - Part 1 of 12

Paul, in his last letter to Timothy, draws parallel the sacrificial love of God demonstrated through His Son and the expectant cross His believers are called to bare. Following Jesus involves sacrifices and inviting sufferings; embracing difficult and uncomfortable situations. Such circumstances are not signs of Christ's absence in our lives but rather the contrary – Jesus' grace and favour is sufficient. Through Christ, we can face trials, tribulations and birth endurance to finally become vessels worthy to carry God's glory. Reject the temptations of this world, keep the faith and finish your race in steadfastness.

Transcript

2 Timothy – Part 1 of 1

We now come to 2 Timothy, it's probably the last epistle that Paul wrote. Paul is now all alone in a prison cell awaiting his execution. He's pretty sure he's going to die. He's abandoned by all except Luke his faithful follower. He had been betrayed by Alexander, the coppersmith he names as a bad guy.

2 Timothy chapter 1:2 ESV

To Timothy, my beloved child," (he's longing for Timothy, his son in the faith)

Verse 4 As I remember your tears, I longed to see you that I may be filled with joy.

He's so lonely now in a sense, and just dying to see his spiritual son before he goes, so we see the heart of Timothy for his disciple, his mentee.

verse 7 and 8

for God gave us a spirit, not of fear but of power and of love and self-control. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.

He tells Timothy that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of self-control. Why does he write this to Timothy? If we look at Paul's writings to him, Timothy tended to be on the timid side. He's not one of those naturally bold people. He was made bold by the Spirit of God. And then he tells him, you shouldn't have the spirit of fear, keep on going.

And he says in verse 8, don't be ashamed of me, the prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel. I want you to know this word, suffering occurs many times in this short epistle. If we look at this epistle, it's not about us just doing practical work but working to the extent of sacrifice and suffering. Again, very alien to Christianity today. Our idea of Christianity is

scholarship, not sacrifice and suffering, and that word occurs several times in this epistle.

Verse 15

You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

Paul's alone in jail, he's probably the most faithful disciple of God, and yet where does he end up? In jail, all alone, abandoned in a sense. What a terrible position to be in. But this is very alien to Christianity today. Christians believe that if you are a believer today, all will be well.

If you are part of the prosperity gospel cult, you believe that if you're a Christian today, everything will be prosperous, beautiful. Sitting in jail by yourself abandoned by everybody for having been faithful to God all these years, is that prosperity gospel? If anybody can believe the prosperity gospel, he's never even read the Bible. He's read what his prosperity gospel cult leader has told him. To me, it's just simple as that. Why do people believe him? Simple. You don't know the Bible. All you know is the bits and pieces that are thrown at you and you grab it and you read their books and you hear their sermons. What do you expect? Do you feel sorry for them? To some extent, yes. But if you ask for trouble, you get it. You don't want to find truth, you won't find it. Simple as that.

So to me, Paul, just looking at Paul. People say you're a faithful Christian, is anybody more faithful than Paul? Name one. Anybody suffered like him, shipwrecked, beaten, stoned? Paul's a prisoner. So you want to read the Bible, you want to pull out verses that can support your lives? Of course, anybody can pull out a verse, anybody can pull out a speech out of the best guy and make him sound bad. It's no challenge.

Chapter 2:3-7 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ. Does it sound like the Christianity we have today? Soldiers in church? Scholars in class? Yes plenty. Students in classroom? Yes plenty. Soldiers? Have to look around,

can't find any. Suffering soldiers? Probably don't exist even in our dreams or nightmares. The athletes in those days trained extremely hard, they were brutally trained. The farmer worked extremely hard-these are examples. You want to follow me, this is what you should be, soldier, athlete and farmer. Hard work and sacrifice to get the goal you want. Not be a tourist on a cruise ship enjoying the luxury of the Christian life. Join the SS prosperity cruise ship.

Chapter 2:10

Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Would 'endure', you'll find it quite a bit in this little epistle, not 'enjoy', 'endure'.

V20 Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also wood and clay, some for honourable, use some for dishonourable.

So basically as a Christian, we are vessels to carry God's glory. God uses us as His vessels. If we prepare ourselves, then we are vessels for honour, God will use us for greater things for His glory, not prosperity but for His glory.

If you're not prepared, then you will be a vessel for lesser things. Just like in the house there are vessels to carry precious ointment or precious perfume or your precious cosmetics, and there are also containers to carry your refuse and your waste. Which one you want to be? You decide how you prepare yourself. Many people are never used by God because they were never prepared to be used by God. To make a vessel that carries precious things needs more skill, more effort. You ask anyone who makes a beautiful bottle to carry something or one who makes a crude container to carry human waste.

Chapter 3:1-9

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture

weak women, burdened with sins, and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at the knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

It tells us the last days, we will see all these awful behavior patterns - lovers of selves, lovers of money, lovers of pleasure, arrogant, proud, disobedient to parents - we see more and more of these behaviors, and not that it was not present in the past, but it's getting more extreme in the present. These are signs of the last days but what does it say about this? It says that these people will creep (verse 6) into households and capture weak women burdened with sins and led astray by various passions. They will fool a lot of people.

It says women in particular, maybe because women are more gullible. These are women who like pleasure or beauty, and they will be always learning, and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. You learn and learn but never get the truth. It's kind of like almost real, I mean, it's so visible. Never more Bible studies in human history since the church started. Never more books, never more sermons available, and yet less Christ-like behaviour than ever.

Learning more but less Christ-like behaviour. Something's wrong. And he says finally, but they will not get very far for their folly will be plain to all, like the two men Jannes and Jambres who were the two magicians of Pharaoh. They tried to imitate what Moses did but they couldn't because they did not have God's power.

So these men would sooner or later be found out. They fall into adultery, all these so called spiritual leaders. They come under all banners, not just the fringe Christians, even mainstream Christians, the number of so called men of God who fall into sin is scary. That's the state of the church today. Is that going to be better or worse?

v10

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra- which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all

who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Paul says, Timothy, you've seen my teaching, my conduct my life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecution, my suffering.

How did Paul teach Timothy? Classroom? No, by his life, as he went out. Timothy saw all those things. He wasn't taught in a class, he wasn't theory expert, he was practically trained by Paul. That is the kind of discipleship we have to do today, life on life discipleship. But even our life on life discipleship is in a classroom or in a coffee shop, not in life. I don't know, we call it life on life, but it's not life on life.

He goes on to say, but what about evil men verse 13, "evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived." As they deceive people, they get deceived themselves, they actually believe what they say. If you meet some of these people, they actually believe that they're teaching the truth. If you tell the lie to people 100 times, after a while, they believe, and you also believe the lie. And then, you know the end-God will deal with anyone who uses his name in vain.

Chapter 3:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

The Word is pure because it is breathed by God. But it also tells us all Scripture is good, not only certain verses. I know Christians who have never read the Old Testament, who don't even know anything about the Old Testament. Know all Scripture, that's the purpose of this beautiful book.

Chapter 4:3-4

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

I think the time has arrived where doctrine is not really appreciated, but people love to hear myths, stories and testimonies. The time has come when there are itching ears, not a real hunger for the Word of God.

Chapter 4:7

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

I hope we can all say that, "fought the good fight" and finished the race God has given you. Your race is not my race. We all run a different race. We never run on the same track. We never compete with one another because each one has to run his race. I have to run my race, you have to run your race. I hope you finish it. I hope I finish it, but let's all keep the faith. The faith is common, the race is personal.

Chapter 4:9

Paul says, "Do your best come to me." He's pleading for Timothy to come and see him. He says, please bring my coat, it's going to be winter. Please bring some of the important documents, I'm going to die, I want to hand over my ministry to you. Whether Timothy ever reached in time before Paul was executed (Ephesus is quite far from Rome) we don't know.

But the last part 4:17 says

But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.

Paul is all alone in a very real sense, but he's not alone, the Lord stood by him. It's kind of unusual that he wrote this, the Lord stood by me. In times when you feel all alone are times when you sense God's presence the most; but when you've got so many people around you, so much support around you, you cannot sense the presence of God. When the visible is not there, the invisible becomes clear, and God's presence was right in the cell with him. That was almost Paul's last words. So do you really want to know God? Sometimes you just have to go through all trials and difficulties to enjoy the real presence of God.

What did we learn in 2 Timothy?

Suffering, endurance. What did we learn about God, about Jesus in 2 Timothy? God is a sacrificial God. He gave his Son, he suffered when He gave His Son to us, remember that. When Jesus came to this earth to be man, He left the glory of heaven. For how long? 33 years, then he went back but he went back as what? As God the Son? Yes, but also as Son of Man. Jesus, 2000 years ago became man, and today He's still, still, repeat, still 100% God, 100% man. Is that a sacrifice?

Ask yourself a question. Glorious God from eternity, Son of God, infinite, and then 2000 years ago incarnated into man. So no more 100% God alone, but 100% God 100% man. Is that a sacrifice? Is that a permanent sacrifice since that time? Yes. Do you know how much Jesus sacrificed for you? Not 33 years, not just the cross. But to be with you, He became man to be with us in eternity, in the eternal new heaven new earth, He is God Man with us. Is that a sacrifice? Yes. Do you know the God who sacrificed, who gave His Son, that His Son would thenceforth always be God Man?

I hope today when you see the sufferings of Paul in this letter you will see God, amazing God who not only loves us, but loves us with a sacrificial love. May God bless you!