

FEBRUARY 17, 2020

Apostle Paul's Final Words

2 Timothy Chapter 1

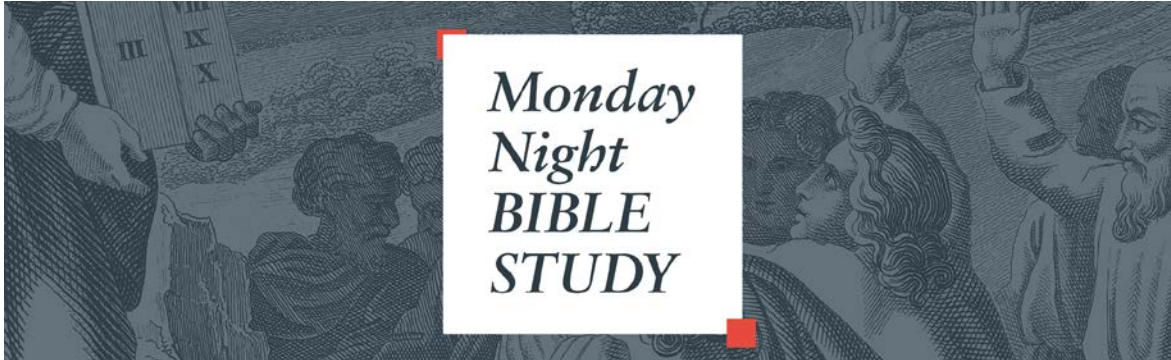
Erik Luchetta

In this first chapter of 2 Timothy, we'll explore what Paul is facing during this time in his apostleship. Since Paul is imprisoned and near death, what does he need to do quickly before he dies? And what emotions does he feel since he knows that his life will end soon?

This is Paul's final and most personal letter. This letter was written while he was in prison. Things have gotten worse for Paul since he wrote his first letter to Timothy. Paul is in the middle of his court trial now and it is not going well. He is on trial for preaching Jesus. He seems sure that he's not going to survive and that he'll be executed for preaching Jesus. He asks Timothy if he can come visit him in prison, so that he can pass on to him the church planting mission he started and to remind him of the teachings he gave Timothy about Jesus.

False teachers have sprung up nearly everywhere and Paul wants to make sure Timothy is well anchored in the truth of his teachings. There are two parts to this letter – the first where Paul encourages Timothy to fully embrace his calling as a pastor and leader in the church, and then before he comes to visit him, deal with the false teachers who are causing problems in the church. He calls Timothy to reject any temptation to be ashamed of the good news about Jesus or of being ashamed of Paul who is branded a lowly criminal for preaching about Jesus. The reason Paul needs to emphasize this is the negative stigma that he gained by his numerous times in prison. In that day, being a known criminal carried a stigma perhaps even worse than today. Eventually, it even made some of Paul's fellow coworkers in preaching the gospel doubt his calling as an apostle. We'll see in chapter one, two of Paul's closest coworkers deserted Paul because they were ashamed to be associated with Paul who was so often in prison.

This letter is laced with all kinds of emotions from sadness due to abandonment from close friends, to a deep concern of what will become of his churches and the gospel he preached once he dies. But there is also a feeling of hope and excitement that soon he'll see Jesus, the love of his life, if he is killed after this court trial.



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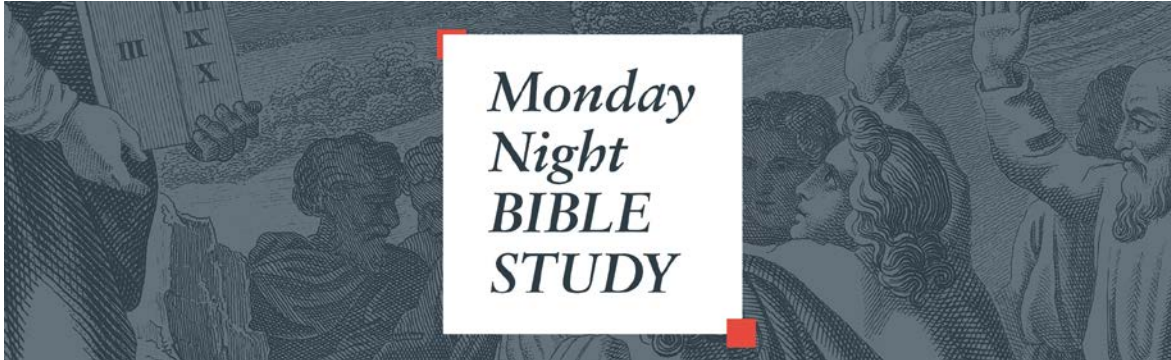
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2 Timothy 1:3-5 - Paul starts the letter by thanking God – something he does in nearly all of his letters. And he thanks God for Timothy's family, specifically his mother and grandmother. They immersed young Timothy in the Old Testament scriptures and they instilled in him a deep faith in Jesus Christ. Paul also recalls Timothy's tears the last time they met. Timothy demonstrated such love and appreciation for Paul through his tears. Those tears of love meant the world to Paul at this exact moment in time. As we'll see, Paul is experiencing the sting of his other companions and friends completely abandoning him.

Timothy 1:6-7 - Because of his firm faith given to him by his mother and grandmother, Paul gives his first challenge to Timothy - stir up the gift within him. Paul tells Timothy that the Spirit which is at work in him is God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is not a spirit of fearfulness or timidity, but One that brings with it power, love and self- control. If Timothy is going to be true to his calling as a pastor and leader, he must learn to act with all three of these qualities – all given by the Holy Spirit. The first quality is power. But "power" here isn't really referring to power as it relates to miracles. Rather, it refers to power as we're most familiar with – being in charge of a group, or being in charge of others. And that's the sort of power Timothy needs. He needs to be able to gently lead others, direct others, instruct others in the things of God as Pastor of his church. Paul is telling Timothy that the Holy Spirit is giving the sort of power that will enable him to bring order, harmony, and direction to the church he is pastoring. And the Holy Spirit also gives us the same ability to bring order when there is disorder, direction where there is confusion, and harmony where there is conflict.

Paul is telling Timothy that he has been given gifts for leading his church. It is clear from Paul's letters that Timothy is not only young, but he doesn't seem to have a very forceful or charismatic personality. He needs to be encouraged to trust God for the power to lead people without being afraid. As he brings order and direction to his church, he'll have to do it in love. Power without love quickly becomes destructive. But when a person who is exercising power is known to be kind, generous, and self-giving, others are naturally more inclined to follow and heed their instructions. Paul is telling Timothy that the Spirit enables God's own self-giving love to work in him as he leads his church family.

The Holy Spirit also gives self-discipline. This is the ability to think clearly about what needs to be done and how best to do it. This, of course, must naturally begin with Timothy's own personal life. The Spirit will help Timothy learn moderation and self-control so that he can, in turn, bring control



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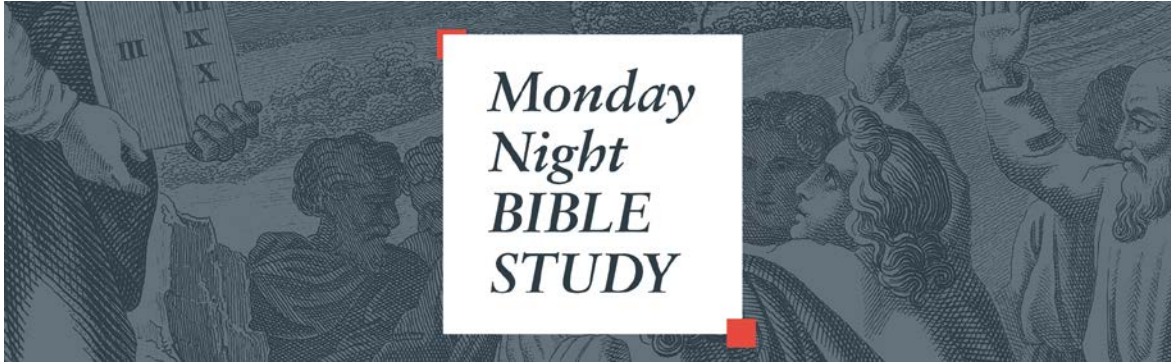
and moderation to his community. He must be disciplined in order to raise up disciplined Christians in his church. We can imagine how easily, even in the church, jealousy, self-promotion, and petty rivalries can spring up. That is why church leaders should allow the Holy Spirit to work within them self-control, so they can contribute to creating an ordered and harmonious community that reflects God into the world.

The gifts that God has given are those that empower Timothy to lead his church. If God has empowered him to lead, then there is no need for him to be afraid or timid. He encourages Timothy to fan the flame by stepping out and using his gifts. The first act of stepping out is to deal with the false teachers and not to shrink back from confronting them. If Timothy does this, as we'll see in the next chapter, Timothy will be a good soldier for Christ. Timothy will be "joining" in with Paul in suffering for the gospel.

2 Timothy 1:8 - Use the gift God has given you. Use it to its full – fan it to blazing flame. Let your gift of leadership blaze rather than shrinking back and being afraid of what others will think of you. Paul is telling Timothy not to fall away like the others who have abandoned him. Instead, he tells him not to be afraid of being called a criminal, and for being persecuted for believing and preaching that Jesus is the true king. This is what Paul means by, "suffer with me for the sake of the gospel."

2 Timothy 1:9-12 - Through Jesus' death and resurrection God has defeated death and brought about immortality. What does Paul mean by immortality? Immortality is to live bodily forever where death can't touch us again. Immortality isn't living forever as a spirit without a body. Paul preached that when Jesus returns (the Day of the Lord) we will be raised bodily and live in a new heaven and new earth.

Jesus destroyed death when He rose again bodily. He has achieved immortality and therefore promises to raise His church bodily when He returns in the future. Paul's message, his gospel, was simple. Jesus Christ is Lord. God raised Him from the dead. And if He defeated death, the world's greatest power – then all people should submit their allegiance to Him. And for those who do acknowledge Him as Lord, to those who believe He was raised from the dead, they too will also be raised from the dead when He returns. And if Jesus defeated death, then He must be now in the present and forevermore, superior over all things. This is what Paul preached. If Jesus is Lord, then Caesar isn't. And someone preaching a message that says someone other than Caesar is the true king is treasonous and likely to be put to death. This is why Paul says that he is suffering so much (v.12) and he asks Timothy to suffer with him if need be (v.8)



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For Paul, it looks bad in the natural. False teachers have crept in, his gospel is being distorted, his coworkers and close friends have abandoned him. And all of this at the worst possible time, the time of his impending death. He needs to pray and entrust his work to God, that it won't all be for nothing. That in the end the false teachers will fail in their attempts to ruin his churches and his life's work. Paul will soon no longer be there to help, guide, and correct his churches so he must entrust it to God that his work will last. And not just entrust it to God, but to also entrust it to Timothy.

Timothy 1:13-14 - Since there are now fewer coworkers to carry on Paul's work after he dies, he really needs Timothy to stay strong, step up to the plate and carry out his calling as a pastor and leader. In a sense, Paul is telling Timothy that he is going to inherit a large part of his ministry. Therefore, Timothy must not end up like those who abandoned Paul and stopped preaching the gospel. Instead, Timothy must guard it because it was given to him to look after. Paul wants to make sure the gospel continues to go forth accurately and is protected from false teachers. Timothy must face and correct their false teachings. Timothy should not be afraid of this task. He has the Holy Spirit within him giving him the power, love, and self-control to be successful in carrying on Paul's gospel and the work within his churches.

2 Timothy 1:15-18 - Paul closes out this chapter speaking about how he is currently alone and has been deserted by his close friends with the exception of one person. Paul remembers the love and support from Onesiphorus. He brought him aid when he needed it and demonstrated that he wasn't embarrassed by Paul being a criminal. As a result, in v.18 Paul prays that God would give a special reward to Onesiphorus for helping him. He prays that he will receive the reward on the Day of Jesus Christ. That is the Day of Jesus' return where He raises his church bodily and we receive rewards for what we've done for Him and the gospel. Paul will move on in chapter 2 with more on how Timothy should handle the false teachers and those who listen to them.