I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.

C. S. Lewis

Prayer Study #498

2nd TIMOTHY 1

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INTRODUCTION

Paul writes 2nd Timothy from a dark, dirty Roman prison. He begins by assuring Timothy of his love and prayers and by reminding him of the wonderful spiritual heritage from which he comes. He also reminds Timothy that, whether he is in the role of a soldier, athlete, farmer, or minister, he must persevere to reach the goal of the high calling in Christ Jesus. Paul himself serves as an example for Timothy as one who has persevered in his own faith in Christ in spite of his personal trials and imprisonments.

Concerning the dates of the life events that serve as an example of Paul's steadfast perseverance, we can only approximate. Scholars are in general believe the following dates are reasonable guesses:

AD 58: Paul is arrested in Jerusalem.

AD 61: Paul arrives in Rome.

AD 61-63: Paul is put under house arrest during his first Roman imprisonment.

AD 64-67: Paul is released from prison probably because the Jews did not want to travel from Jerusalem to Rome of a court case. Since Paul was a Roman citizen, he was treated justly and had certain rights and privileges and could not be convicted and condemned without a trial with witnesses. It was during this time period Paul wrote 1st Timothy and Titus. Paul was a free man in Macedonia at the time. During these years Paul was still very active and possibly went on a final missionary journey perhaps even as far as Spain.

AD 67: Paul was arrested again.
AD 68: Paul was beheaded in Rome but not before he was able to finish this very personal letter to Timothy.

Second Timothy is a very personal letter, in which Paul speaks of approximately 25 individuals by name, and the final communication of Paul, who knows his departure from this life is near. Paul's desire is to give his mantle to his beloved spiritual son Timothy. He knows that Timothy will continue the Gospel work that Paul has started. Naturally there is a sadness in this letter that is not found in his other epistles. Nevertheless there is also great triumph as Paul declares: *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith!"* (2nd Timothy 4:7)

In 1st Timothy the new Church is growing by leaps and bounds. It looks like revival! It is an exciting but also challenging time to be a young pastor. Then, however, something happens that affects the entire Christian movement. Rome burns, probably under Nero's secret orders. This maniac, insane, deceitful emperor falsely and intentionally blames Christians for the fire, unleasing terrible persecution and violence against the believers. Fearing for their lives and the lives of their family members, many Christian believers fled from the Church and denied Christ and became apostates. This is a stern warning to modern believers who may be, in the future, faced with the choice of death or denying Christ. Apostasy is not due to ignorance but is a deliberate, intentional departure from the truth of the Gospel and the doctrines of faith. This was a time of great apostasy, and the Word makes it perfectly clear that the end times will be marked by great apostasy.

The antidote to apostasy is "doing" the Word. Paul therefore goes to great lengths to emphasize the Word of God more so than he does in any of his other epistles. The Word show us the complete depravity of man and the wonderful grace of Jesus, whose blood *only* can cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

J. Vernon McGee reminds us all: "Man is in such a state that he cannot be saved by perfect obedience, because he cannot render it. Neither can he be saved by imperfect obedience, because God will

not accept it. Therefore, the only solution is the gospel of the grace of God, which reaches down and saves the sinner on the basis of the death and resurrection of Christ."

Paul found in Timothy a gifted teacher who was trustworthy and diligent in spite of his timidity (2nd Timothy 1:7); his youthfulness (1st Timothy 4:12); and his health issues (1st Timothy 5:23). Paul calls *"a good soldier of Jesus Christ"* (2nd Timothy 2:3) and writes 2nd Timothy as a combat manual for spiritual warfare, urging Timothy to *"be strong"* (2nd Timothy 2:1), *"endure hardship"* (2nd Timothy 2:3), *"stir up"* (2nd Timothy 1:6), and *"hold fast"* (2nd Timothy 1:13). He urges Timothy to stand firm in the power of the Gospel and to overcome any fear of possible persecution. He tells Timothy that he must not waver in using the Scriptures to correct doctrinal error and to combat immorality, regardless of the opposition and persecution that he will face.

Paul ends this letter urging Timothy to come from Ephesus to see him one more time. He knows his time is short, and he wants to see his spiritual son one more time on this side of eternity.

2 Timothy 1Amplified Bible (AMP)

Timothy Charged to Guard His Trust

1 *Paul, an apostle (special messenger, personally chosen representative) of Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed) by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,*

2 *to Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace [inner calm and spiritual well-being] from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

3 *I thank God, whom I worship and serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers*

*night and day, **4** and as I recall your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. **5** I remember your sincere and unqualified faith [the surrendering of your entire self to God in Christ with confident trust in His power, wisdom and goodness, a faith] which first lived in [the heart of] your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am confident that it is in you as well. **6** That is why I remind you to [fan into flame the gracious gift of God, [that inner fire—the special endowment] which is in you through the laying on of my hands [with those of the elders at your ordination]. **7** For God did not give us a spirit of timidity or cowardice or fear, but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of sound judgment and personal discipline [abilities that result in a calm, well-balanced mind and self-control].*

Paul writes this letter to strengthen, encourage, and inspire Timothy. He writes as an apostle, chosen by the will of God, to his beloved spiritual son Timothy. Paul reminds Timothy of the confidence he has in him and reminds Timothy of the wonderful spiritual heritage in the Christian faith that he (Timothy) comes from. Furthermore, he wants Timothy to know that he is on Paul's daily prayer list.

We know Paul greatly loved Timothy, but we can read between the lines and conclude that Timothy greatly loved Paul. In fact, Timothy

cried when they were separated, at Paul's arrest the second time.

Paul's spiritual heritage was Judaism, and he was raised as a very strict Jew. Timothy, however, was not raised Jewish but raised as a Christian. Unlike Paul, he was brought up in a home with a praying grandmother and a godly Christian mother.

Paul always encouraged Timothy in Timothy's teaching ability. When Paul lays hands on Timothy, the gift of teaching was stirred up in Timothy. Paul himself was a great teacher, and, as I have already stated, I believe that Paul intended for his mantle to be given to Timothy. He had already said of Timothy in his letter to the Philippines, "…I have no man like-minded…" (Philippians 2:20) Furthermore, Paul wanted to encourage Timothy to teach and preach the whole counsel of God's Word. Paul, having lived in Ephesus, knew the evil allurements there. These evil influences could only be nullified by the Word of God.

Verse 7 is one of the most quoted verses in the Bible, although some misquote it putting *love* before *power* instead of how the Holy Spirit rendered it. The word *fear* would more accurately be translated *cowardice.* Paul is specifically talking about how one should teach the Word, (i.e. without cowardice but with power and love and a sound mind), although

the verse is applicable to other context as well.

In teaching the Word, one should not hold back in a cowardly way, afraid of offending people, but should speak with a sense of power in the face of opposition; with a sense of love for the brothers and sisters, speaking the truth even when to do so is unpopular and could bring opposition and threats, because the pastor-teacher is to lay his life down in service to the people and wants them to know the truth; and with a sound mind. *Sound mind* could better be translated in our day as *self-control* or *self-discipline.* The idea here is that the Christian believer should be willing to speak the truth with self-discipline and control in the face of panic or passion in the hearers.

A GOSPEL WORTH SUFFERING FOR

8 *So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord or about me His prisoner, but with me take your share of suffering for the gospel [continue to preach regardless of the circumstances], in accordance with the power of God [for His power is invincible],* ***9*** *for He delivered us and saved us and called us with a holy calling [a calling that leads to a consecrated life—a life set apart—a life of purpose], not because of our works [or because of any personal merit—we could do nothing to earn this], but because of His own purpose and*

grace [His amazing, undeserved favor] which was granted to us in Christ Jesus before the world began [eternal ages ago], ***10*** *but now [that extraordinary purpose and grace] has been fully disclosed and realized by us through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus who [through His incarnation and earthly ministry] abolished death [making it null and void] and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,* ***11*** *for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher [of this good news regarding salvation].*

We should never, ever be ashamed of the Gospel and must always be loyal to Jesus and His servants, even those who are regarded as criminals for doing the Lord's work, by secular society, which has no relationship with Jesus.

The Gospel is worth suffering for, and to the Christians in the ancient world where persecution was common, the Gospel gave power to live even when life seemed unbearable. These people knew that the power to overcome came not from themselves or their achievements, i.e. there was no way to earn this power, but it came from God's grace and love operating in them. Only He could give them the power to walk in consecration and holiness, and He did this because from the beginning of mankind, His love searched for us. This love caused God to give us grace and

purpose even before the world began and was further manifested through Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is the gospel of life and immortality. The ancient people either feared death or saw it as mere extinction. Yet Jesus defeated the power of death and brought to mankind eternal life for whosever would accept His gift.

Paul saw his role in all of this as being the bearer of the message of the Gospel, an apostle or ambassadorial spokesman for Jesus to the world, and a teacher teaching the meaning and discipline of the Christian faith. Ultimately, however, the Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus Christ who was and is and will be the full manifestation of God to the world.

TRUST

12 *This is why I suffer as I do. Still, I am not ashamed; for I know Him [and I am personally acquainted with Him] whom I have believed [with absolute trust and confidence in Him and in the truth of His deity], and I am persuaded [beyond any doubt] that He is able to guard that which I have entrusted to Him until]that day [when I stand before Him].* ***13*** *Keep and follow the pattern of sound teaching (doctrine) which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.* ***14*** *Guard [with greatest care] and keep unchanged, the treasure [that precious truth] which has been*

entrusted to you [that is, the good news about salvation through personal faith in Christ Jesus], through [the help of] the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

Paul's suffering was because of his stand for Christ, and his suffering involved the imprisonment he was not suffering and his death which was coming up soon. As he is in prison awaiting certain death, he maintains his belief in Jesus and was not ashamed of the Gospel. He had made a deposit in God by way of his work and his life, and God had made a deposit in him of gifts of the Holy Spirit and personal relationship with Jesus.

I find it interesting that in this passage Paul does not emphasize *what* he believes but *WHO* he believes. He knew the Lord personally and intimately, and he trusted Him and knew without any doubt that, no matter what happened in his life, nothing could "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39).

Paul urges Timothy *"to hold fast the pattern of sound words."* He is basically telling Timothy to maintain the pureness of the Gospel, recognizing it as the inspiration and authority of the Holy Spirit, and not to allow false teachings. He must not be slack in faith. Faith involves two aspects here: First, being faithful, and secondly, having faith that

destroys discouragement and despair. Also, Timothy must always walk and talk in love. To love others is simply to see them as God sees them. Finally Paul reminds Timothy that it is the Holy Spirit who is able to help us live the Christian life in power.

THE FAITHFUL MANY AND THE FAITHFUL ONE

15 *You are aware of the fact that all who are in [the province of] Asia turned away and deserted me, Phygelus and Hermogenes among them.* ***16*** *The Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and showed me kindness [comforting and reviving me like fresh air] and he was not ashamed of my chains [for Christ's sake];* ***17*** *but [instead] when he reached Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me—* ***18*** *the Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord on [c]that [great] day. You know very well how many things he did for me and what a help he was at Ephesus [you know better than I can tell you].*

This is one of those truly sad portions of scripture. Here Paul, whom many consider the greatest Christian who ever lived, comes to the end of his very fruitful ministry and finds all his friends have left him. I hope he found comfort in the fact that all of Jesus' friends except

perhaps John, forsook him in the end too. They dropped Paul like a hot potato because they feared the Romans and the horrible persecution that was going on in the Roman empire against the Christians. Paul was considered a dangerous troublemaker worthy of being put to death, and these men from Asia Minor deserted him. Paul even calls out two of these supposed friends and records their names for eternity. Phygellus and Hermogenes go down in history as traitors.

The only bright spot in this passage is a man by the name of Onesiphorus (O-nes-iph'-orus). This man came to Rome from Asia Minor (most probably from Ephesus) looking for him. He found Paul chained to a Roman soldier in a dark prison. He came back again and again, even though he knew it was dangerous to be visiting Paul. He could have easily lost his own life because he was a regular visitor to a man the Romans saw as a dissident interested in overthrowing the government. We know little about this friend of Paul, but his name will forever be praised by Christian believers for his loyalty not only to Paul but to Christ. Perhaps in the end, even this man lost his life but gained eternal life.