

**SUFFER FOR THE GOSPEL GUARD THE GOSPEL,  
AND SERVE THE GOSPEL!**  
**2 TIMOTHY CH1:8-18**

**ILLUSTRATION**

*“We must be global Christians with a global vision because our God is a global God” John Stott.*

**Remember** we talked about the “context” meaning the circumstances that formed the setting, where we ask the “What, Who, Where, Why, When and How.” In order to help us, we will continue to go over every week the following:

The key to understanding 2 Timothy lies in recognizing Paul’s altered circumstances. He is no longer free to pursue his task of proclaiming the gospel to the gentiles. Arrested (probably in Troas Ch4:13) and now a prisoner in Rome (Ch1:16-17; 2;9). Having already undergone a preliminary hearing (Ch4:16-18) and awaiting his final trial, from which he has little hope of anything except death (Ch4:6-8). Some have ministered to his needs (Ch1:16-18), others have gone out on ministries (Ch4:10,12) and at least one has abandoned him (Ch4:10). Meanwhile the situation in Ephesus has worsened with some deserting the gospel (Ch1:15) and despite his previous excommunication (1 Timothy Ch1:20) of Hymenaeus, he is still at work overthrowing the faith of many (Ch2:17-18). In the midst of these circumstances Paul sends his second letter to Timothy.

Timothy meanwhile is facing pressures from within the church Ch1:8 – distance and shame of the Gospel and its servants, Ch1:15 – desertion, Ch2:17-18 - wandering from the truth, Ch3:8 – men who are opposing the truth. Running alongside this, Timothy is facing pressures from outside the church – Ch3:11-12 + Ch4:14-15 in the form of persecution. It is these circumstances that form the setting for Timothy, and because of these circumstances, he may not complete what God has asked him to do (Ch4:5)!

**LOYAL SAVIOUR AND SERVANT OF THE GOSPEL! v8-12**

Timothy is being called to remember and once he has done this he is to re-focus. You see, you can have the best starts,

A faithful family v5!

A faithful friend v4!

A faithful God v6+7!

however, you still need to take individual responsibility. Responsibility to “fan into flame the gift”. Paul is urging Timothy to remember and to re-focus on his gift. What other obstacles is Timothy facing? V8 – The thought of suffering. ***The Gospel does promise us something, suffering! Jesus suffered, this is the genuine mark of a Saviour, Paul suffered, and this is the genuine mark of a disciple.*** Is Timothy prepared to suffer?

What is this suffering? Paul is imprisoned, awaiting death; he’s been beaten, stoned, persecuted, plotted against, deserted. These are the marks of a genuine disciple. And Paul calls Timothy to join with him. Its no wonder Timothy has a sense of shame! He has seen what Paul has gone through. According to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians Ch11:23-28:

- Flogged more severely!
- Flogged on 5 separate occasions!
- Flogged a total of 195 times!
- Three times beaten with rods!
- Almost stoned to death!
- Shipwrecked three times!
- 24 hrs in the sea!
- Danger from rivers, bandits, his own countrymen, from false brothers!

This does not necessarily appeal to Timothy! Who would it appeal to? Every Christian is Christ's witness, and it is possible to be embarrassed to be associated to Christ, Christ's People and Christ's Gospel, and therefore be not willing to suffer for them! Think about it! ***In the eyes of men, Christ died a shameful death, Paul is a shameful prisoner of the Emperor and facing death, whilst the Gospel is a shameful message, what matters, is how God sees things!***

Therefore, we need to bear in mind Mark Ch8:38 and the words of Jesus ***“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.”*** Along with the Apostle Paul “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew and then for the gentile.” Romans Ch1:16

How can Timothy possibly join Paul? V8 – Only by the power of God! What is the most powerful weapon available to the suffering servant? V10 – The Gospel, which has destroyed death and brought life and immortality

to light! The life and immortality that was lost through sin, is won back through Christ!

There is a significant danger that Timothy will become ashamed of Christ, Paul, and the Gospel! So Paul reminds Timothy in verses 9-10 by defining the source and the work of the Gospel!

### **LOYAL STEWARD OF THE GOSPEL! v13-14**

What is Timothy to do with the Gospel? V14 – Guard it, with the help of the Holy Spirit (v6 fan into flame, v8 testify or proclaim it). ***As this happens, there will be men who desert v15 and men who “search hard”, v16-18.*** The Gospel is not to be locked away like money in a safe, to guard it. It is to be preached, proclaimed and testified. This is how it is guarded.

### **LOYAL SAINT OF THE GOSPEL PEOPLE! v15-18**

According to Christopher Green “The prisons in Rome were squalled and physically dangerous, and delays in court procedures meant that they were usually overcrowded way beyond their capacity. Unheated, sleep was almost impossible on the rough pallets or floor, with no bedding provided. Paul would also be wearing heavy chains, perhaps linked to other prisoners to prevent anyone escaping. The iron, reacting to the prisoners' sweat, rusted making their flesh rot; the heaviness weakened limbs already short of food, and (as many prisoners commented) the constant noise of chains on stone was yet another factor making sleep impossible. Food, beyond a meagre prison ration which was barely enough to sustain life, was the prisoner's own responsibility.” (Cited in *Finishing the Race*, Christopher Green, pg66-67).

In verse 15, Paul reveals to Timothy, how the Christian people that he thought would have remained loyal, have deserted! Ring leaders, high profile Christians are named, that would have shocked Timothy!

But in verses 16-18, Paul reveals how one loyal servant of the Gospel remains loyal, Onesiphorus! This has probably cost him his life ( Ch1:16 + Ch4:19) as Paul references “household”, rather than to Onesiphorus as an individual! This is not the first time that Onesiphorus has come to his aid, v18 tells us how this was a consistent gift!

Onesiphorus, a loyal servant of the gospel!

### **APPLICATION**

*We have seen that the Gospel is good news of salvation, that comes through faith, promised in eternity before time, secured by Christ on the cross, for sinners who repent!*

*We have a duty to guard this gospel, by putting it on display through communicating it, with the sound pattern and teaching from which it was received!*

*As we do, the gospel promises us, that we will suffer! Remaining loyal to the Gospel, its saviour and its people, leads to suffering!*