

FINISHING THE RACE!
2nd TIMOTHY CH1:1-2

ILLUSTRATION

According to Christopher Green “Approximately one third of the Christian Church today must operate in conditions of secrecy, under similar threats of punishment and extermination.” The degree of such hostility, violence and persecution, surely varies, whether through subtle pressures of favouritism, acceptance, being valued and loved or more dangerous issues pertaining to life, food, housing, jobs and imprisonment, many Christians experience that their faith causes them and their families trouble!

Under such circumstances and experiences, why would people become Christians or indeed choose to remain being one? How many would turn up on a Sunday morning, or at Connect Groups, or at an organised Church event? More so, what would persuade people to become or remain Church Leaders under such pressure?

“The greatest pressure that Timothy faced was to be ashamed of the Gospel, its Lord and Paul, his prisoner. As the theme becomes clearer the issue becomes not one of mere embarrassment, but that in Timothy's culture and to some extent in Timothy's Church, he would pay for being loyal to Paul's teaching. Many Christians today live in cultures where loyalty to the Gospel is a matter of ridicule or even illegality, and the letter is for those times and places. Sadly, some belong to denominations like that and this letter is for them, too” (Christopher Green, Finishing the Race pg26 -27).

This is why 2nd Timothy is so important to study! A significant amount of this letter concerns, courage, standing for the gospel and enduring for the sake of Christ's elect, whilst under immense pressure! Suffering for the authentic Gospel is inevitable!

“Timothy is the first line of defence in Ephesus, and much of Paul's work is concerned to drive him back to his work of evangelism and teaching. He is also to ensure that when he leaves Ephesus there are equipped teachers for the Church's future” (Christopher Green, Finishing the Race pg26).

“The key to understanding this letter lies in recognizing Paul's altered circumstances. He is no longer free to pursue his itinerant ministry. Arrested once again (probably in Troas Ch4:13), he is now in confined imprisonment in Rome (Ch1:16-17; 2:9). He has already undergone a preliminary hearing (Ch4:16-18) and is awaiting his final trial, from which he has little hope of anything except death (Ch4:6-8). His confinement is an obvious hardship for him. 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. Some from whom Paul had expected better things, have deserted him and his gospel (Ch1:15), and, despite his previous excommunication, Hymenaeus is still at work overthrowing the faith of many (Ch2:17-18)” cited in Gordon Fee New International Bible Commentary, 1+2 Timothy and Titus, pg 12-13.

“The primary reason for writing is simple – to call Timothy to his side. But the larger reason is to appeal to Timothy's loyalty, especially in light of so many defections and Paul's own imprisonment” cited in Gordon Fee New International Bible Commentary, 1+2 Timothy and Titus, pg 13.

PAUL AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST! VI

Paint a picture of Paul!

Birth of Paul
Death of Jesus
Persecution of Christians

5 BC – 10 AD
AD 29/30
30 - 33

Conversion	33
Ministry in Arabia/Damascus	34 - 37
Jerusalem (1 st Visit)	37
Syria and Cilicia	37 - 46
Antioch	47
Jerusalem	47 - 48
First Missionary Journey	47 - 49
Antioch (Peter confronted – Gal Ch2:11-14)	49?
Apostolic Council (Acts Ch15)	49
Letter to the Galatians	49
Second Missionary journey	49 - 51
1 - 2 Thessalonians	51
Antioch via Jerusalem (Acts Ch18:22)	51 - 52?
Third Missionary journey	52 - 57?
Time in Ephesus	52 - 55?
1 – 2 Corinthians	
Philippi	55
Corinth	55 - 56
Letter to Romans	
Jerusalem (Final Time)	57
Imprisonment in Caesarea	57 - 59
Journey to Rome	59 - 60?
House arrest in Rome	60 - 62
Letter to Colossians, Philippians, Philemon	
Second imprisonment	63 - 68?
Letter to Ephesians, and Pastoral Epistles	65 – 68?
Martyred by beheading	68?

According to 2nd 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!

They've been together now for over 15 years! So why start with “Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God?” Surely Timothy knew this!

It is a reminder to Timothy of the grand divine authority of the Gospel and that this same Gospel, needs to be protected, passed on and promoted rather than being ashamed of! The Gospel came to Paul and saved him, because this was God's will. Jesus revealed himself to Paul and commissioned him with a divine task, Paul not only had a name change from Saul to Paul in Acts Ch13:9, but he also had a heart change in Acts Ch9:17, and a new purpose for living in Acts Ch13:3-4!

Paul re-orientated his life, in light of the glorious Gospel! Or, you could put it this way and would still be correct, “the Gospel re-orientated the whole of Paul's life” and he is reminding Timothy of the power and source of the Gospel in the opening of the letter!

At the start of a new year, let's allow the glorious gospel to re-orientate us where this is needed!
THE PROMISE OF LIFE IN CHRIST! V1

Paint a picture of the “promise of life”, “the gospel does more than offer life; it promises life to all who are in Christ” (John Stott, The Message of 2nd Timothy, pg 25).

Life is a gift from God, as God breathed into Adam (Genesis Ch2:7), but the moment that Adam and Eve sinned the “Tree of Life” had to be protected and human beings had to leave the presence of God in the Garden of Eden! God then cursed Satan and the ground and increased the pain for human beings, but showing them grace by allowing them to procreate before dying! Because the wages of sin is death, both spiritual and physical death!

Who will undo the curse!

Since that time and because he is the father of all lies (John Ch8:44), the originator of sin (1 John Ch3:8 + 2 Cor Ch11:3), Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy life! So what will God do in light of this, He asks Jesus to leave heaven and to be born as a human and to die on a cross, and so Jesus comes to give life and give life to the full by being God's atonement for sin (John Ch10:10)! Thus undoing the curse! Praise God!

In doing so, people who look to Jesus for forgiveness of sins, receive the promise of life and will partake of the “Tree of Life” according to the last Book and last chapter of the Bible (Rev Ch22:1-4)! ***But for those who continually reject Jesus, the full penalty and force of the curse will be delivered by Jesus on Judgement day!***

PARENTAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST! V2

Timothy could have been saved when Paul visited Lystra during his first missionary journey AD 47-49, either Acts Ch14:6 or Acts Ch14:21, which may account for Paul's use of “To Timothy, my dear son.” Timothy made excellent development in his growth as a Christian and Paul heard about him (Acts Ch16:2) from Christians at Timothy's home church and the one at Iconium. The pair hit it off and did mission together. ***There are some amazing relationships that start, are sustained and will succeed until the end, through mission!***

How does Paul describe him?

1 Cor Ch4:17 – Faithful in the LORD
Philippians Ch2:19-23 – No-one else like him
1 Thes Ch3:2-6 – God's fellow worker in spreading the Gospel
Hebrews Ch13:23 – A prisoner, released

A co-writer with Paul in no less than 6 Books -

Romans Ch16:21
2 Corinthians Ch1;1
Philippians Ch1:1
1 Thessalonians Ch1:1
2 Thessalonians Ch1:1
Philemon Ch1:1

“Paul variously calls Timothy his “beloved and faithful son in the Lord” (1 Cor Ch4:7; Phil Ch2:22; 1 Tim Ch1:2; 2 Tim Ch1:2) and his “fellow worker” (Rom Ch16:21; 1 Thess Ch3:2; 1 Cor Ch16:10; Phil Ch2:22). As his son, he became Paul's most intimate and enduring companion, who followed

him closely (1 Tim Ch4:6; 2 Tim Ch3:10-11; 2 Tim Ch1:13; 2:2), shared his point of view (Phil Ch2:20) and could articulate his ways to the Churches (1 Thess Ch3:2-3; 1 Cor Ch4:17)” cited in Gordon Fee New International Bible Commentary, 1+2 Timothy and Titus, pg2.

“While Paul was in Athens Timothy was sent on his first extended solo mission to encourage and strengthen the young Church in Thessalonica (1st Thessalonians Ch3:2). He rejoined Paul in Corinth (Acts Ch18:5) and seems to have spent most of the 18 months there with Paul, and most of the subsequent 3 years with him in Athens. During this time Timothy was sent on an extended trip to Macedonia (Acts Ch19:22), and perhaps this was the time he was sent into the difficult waters of the Church in Corinth (1st Corinthians Ch4:17). Timothy was with Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem (Acts Ch20:4) and was obviously with him as he wrote subsequently from Prison to the Churches in Philippi, Colossae and to Philemon” (Christopher Green, Finishing the Race, pg14-15).

Timothy has become a dear son to Paul, in the Gospel!

You will remember from our recent study in Philippians when William Barclay said “When Paul put together these two great words, grace and peace, (*charis and eirene*), he was doing something very wonderful. He was taking the normal greeting phrases of two great nations and moulding them into one. *Charis* is the greeting with which Greek letters always began and *eirene* the greeting with which Jews met each other. Each of these words had its own flavour and each was deepened by the new meaning which Christianity poured into it.

Charis is a lovely word; the basic ideas in it are joy and pleasure, brightness and beauty; it is, in fact, connected with the English word *charm*. But with Jesus Christ there comes a new beauty to add to the beauty that was there. And that beauty is born of a new relationship to God. With Christ life becomes lovely because man is no longer the victim of God's law but the child of his love.

Eirene is a comprehensive word. We translate it *peace*; but it never means a negative peace, never simply the absence of trouble. It means total well-being, everything that makes for a man's highest good.

So, when Paul prays for *grace* and *peace* on his people he is praying that they should have joy of knowing God as Father and the peace of being reconciled to God, to men, and to themselves – ***and that grace and peace can only come through Jesus Christ.***” (Cited in The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, pg12)

Paul adds mercy, to his opening greeting, mercy being not receiving what we deserve because of our sin! It is yet another reminder and form of blessing for Timothy from Paul! We are compelled to live out our lives in light of the mercy we have been granted from our Lord Jesus Christ!

APPLICATION

Allow the Gospel to re-orientate us in the areas that need reorientating!

Paint a picture of your conversion for your family – write it down, video yourself, narrate it to someone else!

What do you understand about the “according to the promise of life” statement in v1?

How would you explain this?

