

2 Timothy

Summary

By the point in church history when 2 Timothy was written, Paul was a seasoned apostle providing leadership for churches throughout the known world. Timothy, his young co-worker, had been sent to minister to the vastly expanding church in Ephesus. While the letter to the Ephesians provides Paul's guiding words to the church as a whole, the books of 1 and 2 Timothy are Paul's letters addressed specifically to the young pastor, Timothy. In this second letter, Paul is in a more perilous state than when he wrote his first letter to Timothy. He is writing from a prison in Rome where he is awaiting his impending execution. As a result, this second letter is particularly personal. Paul urges the young pastor to stand firm in the faith, and continue the ministry that they began together. While Paul will soon be with Jesus, he calls Timothy to pass on what he has been taught, the true gospel of the joy, peace, and salvation that only Jesus Christ can bring.

Author

The apostle Paul wrote this second letter to Timothy. The style is different from many of Paul's other letters, but the variances can be attributed to the fact that Paul is writing to an individual and not an entire church.

Date

The date given by most scholars for Paul's second letter to Timothy is A.D. 66-67, shortly before Paul was put to death in A.D. 68.

Primary Characters

Paul (2 Timothy 1-6)

Timothy (2 Timothy 1-6)

Historical Moments

Paul Writes His Second Letter to Timothy (2 Timothy 1-6)

Paul Imprisoned in Rome (2 Timothy 1)

Major Theological Themes

The Journey of Faithfulness Can Be a Hard Road - Paul uses images to paint a picture of the Christian life: A soldier, a farmer, and an athlete. None of these are easy. All have challenges. Each one demands discipline and a willingness to deny self and work hard. Following Jesus with a faithful heart calls us to willingly suffer and count the cost.

There Are False Teachers in Every Generation - Paul called Timothy and the people he pastored to recognize when someone was teaching falsely. There is a correct way to handle the Word of God. We need to carefully handle God's Word of Truth. If someone in a local church is teaching falsely, they should be corrected.

The Scriptures Are the Word of God and Breathed by His Spirit - All of the Bible, from the first word of Genesis to the last word of Revelation and every book in between, is inspired by God. The Bible is true from beginning to end. It is powerful and life-transforming. The Holy Spirit gave us the Scriptures and speaks to us every time we read the Bible.

Lessons Learned from 2 Timothy

Generational Faith Is an Amazing Gift - Paul points out that Timothy had three generations of faithful believers in his family. This generational faith is a gift that all of us should appreciate if we have experienced it. We should also pass it on to our children and grandchildren. If you have Christian parents, thank God for them. And, seek to pass on your faith to the next generation. There is no better inheritance. What are you doing right now to share your faith with those who are coming behind you?

Sin Creeps Into Churches and Christian Homes, So Beware - A Christian church and home are not exempt from deceptive and dangerous people. There are actually people who prey on those who are too trusting and who are not discerning. Do not be paranoid, but do be wise. Beware of those who come in sheep's clothing but have the teeth of a wolf. Stay on your toes, keep your eyes open, and make sure you do not become a victim of deceitful, counterfeit Christians.

Run the Race Hard, All the Way to the End - You and I will grow weary along the way. As we follow Jesus, as we serve hard, and run the race, there will be times when we feel we cannot press on. In those moments, cry out to Jesus, ask for the filling of His Spirit, and press on. Finish well. Do not quit. It will all be worth it. One day you will fall across the finish line and hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Until then, never give up. Jesus is with you.