



MURRIETA MEN

A sepia-toned photograph of a hand holding a quill pen, writing on a piece of parchment or a scroll. The hand is wearing a textured, possibly leather, glove. The background is dark and out of focus.

THE FINAL CHARGE

2 TIMOTHY

FALL 2026

The Final Charge

A Study in 2 Timothy

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Calvary Murrieta Men's Ministry

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Study Schedule

September 8 – November 24, 2026 • 7:00 PM

1 – Guarding the Heritage

September 8 Fellowship Hall

September 15 Small Groups

2 – Faithful Men

September 22 Fellowship Hall

September 29 Small Groups

3 – Vessels of Honor

October 6 Fellowship Hall

October 13 Small Groups

4 – The Last Days

October 20 Fellowship Hall

October 27 Small Groups

5 – The Breath of God

November 3 Fellowship Hall

November 10 Small Groups

6 – Faithful Family

November 17 Fellowship Hall

November 24 Small Groups

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Introduction

At this time, Timothy was still leading the Ephesian network of churches in what is today Turkey. Paul was writing from prison in Rome, however, there we must read between the lines a little to understand the context.

The details of Paul's career are somewhat difficult to follow, partly as he was in prison several times in his life. The book of Acts describes his journey to Rome as a prisoner appealing to Caesar. At first, he was placed in a dungeon but then was allowed to live under house arrest. This is where Acts closes. Early church writers said that Paul was released and continued his ministry but was re-arrested under Emperor Nero. In 64 AD Rome caught fire and Nero used the incident to blame Christians for Rome's ills. He enacted the first persecution of Christians from the Roman government itself. Church historical tradition says that Paul was executed at this time.

It is likely, therefore, that Paul was writing to Timothy during this final imprisonment. His writing is dire and has a painful sting of finality. We see Paul weakened – tortured perhaps and in his words, “poured out as a drink offering.” He both exhorts Timothy concerning doctrine and asks for his cloak to keep him warm. We witness Paul captive but not defeated, facing death yet fully alive.

In this short book we will see what it is to be a faithful minister, the vital need for true teaching, and what hope in the face of pain and death.

This is not an in-depth dive into II Timothy; it is a study and discussion guide intended to bring out themes in the book. Each section will include an introduction, notes on words where a little more exposition is helpful, and discussion questions. These notes are based on the ESV translation.

Even if your group does not cover each and every discussion question, invest in the study by writing at least brief answers to each

before your group meets. Actually, writing the answer will help you commit to your ideas more clearly. Questions that may not be covered in the group will still serve for good reflection for you.

God bless you and your group as you see Him through the lens of Paul's writing in II Timothy.

Interpreting the Bible well

This study requires you to look at the Bible for yourself. Whether you are confident doing this or not, you should keep in mind that the Bible is understandable and approachable, but that interpreting is an art and science which takes discipline. Use these basic interpretative principles each week as you approach the text.

Pray

Before coming to the text, focus yourself and pray that the Lord will give you wisdom. The Bible is not a secret God is keeping from you, but you need the Holy Spirit to guide you in reading it.

Serve

Studying the Bible well is an act of service. The others in your group will benefit from your studies. However, Christ teaches us to look first at ourselves before trying to help someone else. Apply the text first to your own life, then share what you find with others.

Keep it About Jesus

We have a natural tendency when interpreting the Bible to jump to ourselves. In looking for what the Scripture says about us, we tend to inadvertently cut Jesus out of the Bible, missing the point for ourselves in the process. Use this rule of thumb: if what you found would make equal sense to a Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, or even an upstanding non-religious person, you have not found the gospel in the text. Likely, you have found a means for behavior modification. For example, is Philippians 2 only about being humble, or about a

humble Jesus to whom we respond in humility?

Ask simple questions of the Bible that give a lot of interpretive traction, such as: "What does this tell me about God, His people, the world, and how these interact?"

Stick to What is There

It is very irritating when someone takes something important that you are being careful to communicate well and twists, ignores, or doesn't pay attention to your words. Have you started to tell someone something only for them to immediately spin off into what they want to discuss, rather than what you brought up? We should not do that with the Bible. Not every passage is giving the sum of Christian truth, nor does every passage relate to everything on your mind. When interpreting, keep disciplined to stay focused on the topic at hand. Avoid rabbit trails when interpreting the Bible.

More extreme and egregious than rabbit trailing is manipulating your interpretation. Do not force the Bible to say what you wish it said. The doctrine of special revelation is that God has spoken to us through the Word from outside our experience and understanding so that we could discover Him in ways we never would have arrived at on our own. This requires that we let Him speak to us without us trying to change what He is saying. Likewise, not every interpretation is equally legitimate. While a specific application or outcome of Scripture may be personal to you (e.g. the area of your life that needs to respond to Christ's humility), the general interpretation of Scripture is not personal. You may respectfully disagree with someone's interpretation that clearly does not align with the text.

Stay Informed

This study guide will give you historical and grammatical notes to help you interpret the text. While no one needs to be a Bible expert to interpret Scripture, we have information available to help us see the things that the earliest readers of the Bible would have known. We don't live in the First Century Mediterranean world and we don't

speak Greek. Use the notes to help you see what is under the surface of the text.

Give it Time

Interpreting well takes time. During the week, give yourself some time with the passage. Read it several times, slowly. Pray and meditate on it. You will be surprised by what you see simply by spending time in the passage.

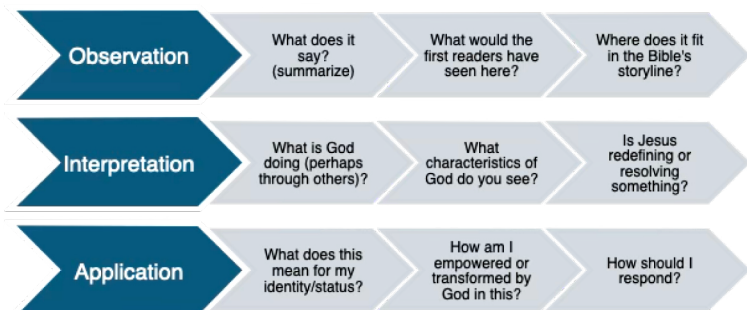
Interpreting also takes time because it is a skill that grows with years of practice. If this is new for you, look forward to your growth in the coming years!

The discussion questions will give you some places to aim your reading, but you will still need to exercise Christ-centered interpretation. These questions are a helpful framework for interpreting the Bible. You may not be able to answer all of them each week, nor will the study ask you to. However, they are a useful tool for you to go forward.

Interpretive Questions

You can get a lot of traction out of simple questions of the text such as, "What does this tell me about God, His people, the World, and how these interact?"

However, here is a more thorough set of suggested questions. The most difficult to answer is "What would the first readers have seen here?" The study notes are there to help answer that for you.



Session One: 1:1-18

Guarding the Heritage

We do not spawn out of the ether, fully formed as believers, ready for life and ministry. Every Christian benefits from the inheritance of the believers who have come before them. Timothy was blessed two generations back when his grandmother rerouted a family's entire history by leading her daughter and grandson toward Jesus. Perhaps you were blessed enough to have been raised with family members who knew the Lord. Perhaps someone prayed over you and represented Christ to you. You cannot thank God enough for these people. Later, we will consider this letter from Paul's perspective, but in this session, we can consider Timothy.

Timothy's mother was Jewish and had found the fulfillment of her faith in Christ as the Messiah. But at this time, the Jewish people had been scattered around the Roman Empire and beyond for hundreds of years, and many had assimilated into Greco-Roman world. Timothy's mother had married a Greek man and there is no mention of him having any faith in Christ. While we are reading into the situation somewhat, we can easily picture Timothy growing up under the wing of his mother and grandmother, living in the shadow of his father's derision. Greco-Roman fathers had little time for underperforming mama's boys. Perhaps Timothy strove for success in the world and his father's eyes. He did, after all, grow to be hand-picked by Paul as his apprentice and the key Church leader in the Ephesian area. Nevertheless, Timothy was not a bold man like Paul.

But this younger man who was raised by women, whose father lived always in another world, had found a new spiritual father in his mentor. This was the man who saw something in him, trained him, introduced him to a life of gospel risk and reward. But now Timothy's spiritual father was again in prison, and this time, his words were different – darker, surrounded, exhausted. And yet, he told Timothy that he thanked God for him and thought of him constantly. He

reminded Timothy of who he was and where God had brought him from.

Timothy was to stir up the Spirit's gifting, trusting and participating in God's power in his life. He was to take the deposit that had been left with him, being part of growing the gospel impact on a darkening world. His family and Paul had invested in him, and now the Holy Spirit would take him from there.

An apostle of Christ (1-2)

It would seem odd and overly formal that Paul would address Timothy by reminding him of Paul's apostleship. Paul is not writing to admonish Timothy, so he needs to be reminded of Paul's position, like in some other epistles. Rather, Paul more likely has in mind that this is a sort of open letter to the Church at large. Others, including us, are privy to this spiritual communication and instruction between Paul and his protégé. He refers to Timothy as his "beloved child," reaching out from prison to one of the few who were still by Paul's side, even from a great distance.

Paul adds to his typical description as an apostle "by the will of God" with "according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus." From the beginning of the book, he has death and life heavy on his spirit. He is an apostle – one sent in Christ's authority – for the purpose and promise of the life that is in Christ.

I remember you constantly (v. 3) Although Paul is the one in prison, his focus is constantly on others.

Fear (v. 7) Paul uses a word that was somewhat old at the time and had a specific connotation of cowardice, not fear in general. Paul says we do not have a spirit of fear, in contrast with the fanning into "flame" of the gift in verse 6. Flame is a reference to the Holy Spirit in us, as opposed to our fallen natural spirit. Also, the Greek construction of "do not be ashamed" in verse 8 implies that Timothy is not currently ashamed, so the implication is that Paul knows it is a

risk for him in the future.

That day (v. 12, 18)

Paul is referring to the Day of the Lord or the Day of Jesus Christ, the time when all is judged and made right under Christ the victorious King.

Which is why I suffer as I do (v. 12)

Paul attributes his suffering to his role in God's Kingdom. It is not a punishment or a result of foolishness. This flies in the face of thinking that following God and His ways will lead to happiness and ease.

Guard the deposit entrusted to you (v. 14)

Paul is referring to the gospel message he had trained Timothy in. The word "deposit" is like a down payment or investment, something that Paul expects to grow and spread under Timothy's ministry.

All those who are in Asia turned away from me (v. 15)

It is not clear exactly what Paul is referring to but he either means that the other believers in Asia (where Timothy is) would not help Paul in Rome or that the Asian believers in Rome abandoned him there.

Discussion

1. Who are you thankful for as your spiritual heritage? Think of family, spiritual mentors, or – even if you did not have those – historical Christians whose work has shaped you. How have they benefited you?

2. In what ways does a being in a trial affect how you focus on or treat others?

3. In what ways have you seen the Spirit overcome your cowardice with power, love, and self-control? Include all three in your answer.

4. Paul says that he is suffering because he is an apostle. In what ways does this shape your understanding of life?

5. What spiritual roles have you been entrusted with? How are you stirring your gifting and/or growing this deposit?

6. What is one thing you can do before the next session in response to this passage?

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Session Two: 2:1-13

Faithful Men

When the chips were down and Paul was facing death in prison, when the gospel baton needed to pass to the next generation of leaders, when many had cut and run from persecution and pain, when Timothy was still young, getting his bearings in a role that was always a bit oversized, he was being called to faithful devotion.

Paul uses three metaphors in this passage: that of a soldier, athlete, and farmer. Each one brings out an aspect of devotion and discipline in the life of a disciple. We should keep in mind that Paul is writing all of this to Timothy in the context of his role as a church leader in Ephesus. This section, particularly, should be understood as speaking primarily to those in a leadership role. However, as men are so often assigned leadership roles in marriage, parenting, at work, or simply through godly influence.

Each of these three metaphors imply difficulty and discipline. When we are committed to following Christ, it will always cost us our comfort, safety, money, time, privacy, dreams, relationships, and perhaps our health. Are we ready to follow in Paul's steps?

In the last session, we saw that Paul was reminding Timothy where he came from. He has a spiritual heritage from his mother and grandmother and training under Paul. But he and we also share a larger heritage. Christ has been Head of the Church for two thousand years, with all its nuance, oddities, errors, strength, and beauty. We may have benefited from our immediate influences – those who led us to and trained us in following Jesus. But Church history is a rich ocean of those who suffered to pass the faith down to us. We did not invent the gospel- it is well attested to. Nor did we invent our practices- they reach into the past more than we know. This passage makes several references to the larger tradition and encourages us to get to know those who came before us. Likewise, as Paul tells

Timothy to further pass the doctrine to faithful men who are able to teach, he is not only outlining a strategy but expressing hope. Every generation comes to a place of concern – even disdain – for the next. Every generation must at some point submit to the passing of leadership and allow things to take shape. Every Christian generation must ultimately trust the Head of the Church to teach the next generation the gospel and to draw out from them new shades of it. He remains ever faithful.

Whether you are seasoned and settled, the man who has learned from regrets, losses, success, and failure, or you are the younger man still a bit seasick in life, this passage speaks to you. If you are a newer disciple of Jesus of at any age, or a long-time believer at any age, this passage is for you.

My child (v. 1)

There are different Greek words for “child”, and the one Paul uses is not diminutive, but about relationship. He is not disrespecting Timothy by calling him something like “kid” but rather the implication is, like in chapter one, Paul speaks to him as a son.

Be strengthened (v. 1)

The Greek here is in an ongoing sense so that this could be translated as “continue in a process of being strengthened.” The strengthening is continual from Christ’s grace because the grace is always there and because we must continually participate in receiving it, rather than “downloading” it passively once-and-for-all.

In the presence of many witnesses (v. 2)

It is not clear who Paul is talking about here. The most likely meaning is that he is saying that Timothy did not receive a gospel from only Paul, but one that multitudes of people have attested to.

Entangled in civilian pursuits (v. 4)

We may misunderstand the force of what Paul is saying if we think

of modern military service. Roman soldiers enlisted for sixteen to twenty years, depending on which emperor they served under. They were not allowed to marry during their service and could only return home on a limited basis and with permission. The Romans wanted a completely dedicated military with nothing distracting them from their duty. Paul is not saying that all serious ministers or dedicated Christians should live like monks but is pressing Timothy to be unencumbered by earthly distraction as his gospel service is of utmost importance.

To please the one who enlisted him (v. 4)

Paul is not specifically talking about pleasing a recruiter. Like today, Roman soldiers moved on from contact with recruiters when they were assigned to a legion. In context and theologically, Paul is likely referring metaphorically to Christ as the one Timothy should seek to please.

The saying is trustworthy (v. 11)

Paul is very likely referring to a known early hymn. Likewise, when he writes of Jesus as the seed of David, he may be referencing an early creedal statement. He is making yet another nod to the heritage Timothy is receiving.

Discussion

1. Consider Paul's three metaphors of a Christian as a soldier, athlete, and farmer. What angles or elements do you see in each one's picture of a Christian worker?

2. Paul tells Timothy to further contemplate what Paul is saying. What benefits come when we meditate on Scripture?

3. Paul calls Timothy "child" without disrespecting him. What strategies can men use to build up younger, less experienced men without talking down to them?

4. This passage continues to focus on the heritage of those who came before Timothy. If you have studied church history or tradition, in what ways has it strengthened your faith?

5. Timothy is told to entrust the gospel to faithful men. What areas of concern or hope do you have for the upcoming generation of Christians?

6. What worldly pursuits, even if innocent ones, have entangled your devotion to Christ? Where do you see the Lord calling you to more?

Sermon Notes

[illegible]

Session Three: 2:14-26

Vessels of Honor

The gospel is nothing if it lives only on paper. It is a lived truth; one borne on the back of Spirit-transformed lives. In the last session, we saw Timothy's call to devotion. In this passage, Paul outlines what the devoted disciple looks like and how he relates to those around him.

This passage shows us that God knows those who are truly His. While outward behavior is not evidence alone that we are fully surrendered and made new in Him, it is certainly fruit that can be measured. God alone knows the soul of a person. But as those who are truly His, we live transformed lives shaped around our position as beloved sons. Both identity and obedience are in view in this passage.

There is a difference between teaching divisiveness and a teaching that divides. A mark of false teaching is that it often uses an “us-vs.-them” mentality that fosters pride and fear. The gospel divides because it draws a line and calls all to make a response. Divisive teaching loves to twist the truth and divide people. True teaching draws a straight line and calls all to unite around Christ.

Some topics that are given many words, videos, posts, and the like are actually the emptiest. They cry out that we need to “know more”, “go deeper”, “be enlightened”, and “level up”, but they only thrash around angrily in the dark, with no substance to lead people to the truth. They call for argument and outrage but not for the gospel, and if we think these empty debates are not present in churches, Paul is here to correct us. Instead of debates, we should look for lives made new, faithfully following Jesus our Truth.

Remind them (v. 14)

The Greek sense here is of a continual process of reminding.

Saying that the resurrection has already happened (v. 18)

This is not to be confused with Christ's resurrection, which had indeed already happened. Paul is talking about the resurrection of the dead which is still future even for us today. In the context of the time, it is very possible that this particular heretical message was that the resurrection was only a spiritual event that took place at one's conversion or baptism, not bodily in the future. There is similar messaging even today which sees the resurrection as a way of speaking about newness of life, not the glorified, eternal, bodily presence with Christ.

Youthful passions (v. 22)

This does not necessarily denote sexual passions but is a general idea of the zeal of immaturity. The contrast is with verse 15 where Paul says, "do your best" (ESV), which is more literally translated, "be zealous." Timothy is to be passionate but maturely and about the gospel.

Discussion

1. Timothy is to continually remind the believers of the truth. What are the reasons we need constant reminders of what we are taught?

2. Paul says that arguing about words ruins the hearers. What dangers come with empty debates over doctrine? What are the differences between being careful about doctrine and empty quibbling?

3. What areas of empty debate do you find yourself listening to or engaging in? What is the draw for you?

4. What are some areas of “youthful passion” Paul might have in mind? In other words, what are areas young or immature Christian men may get caught up?

5. Look back at verse 19. What is the relationship between belonging to God and departing from sin?

6. Look back at verses 22-25. Which of these characteristics is God most working on in you currently?

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Session Four: 3:1-9

The Last Days

In this passage Paul speaks in a sort of time warp. He speaks seamlessly of the past, present, and future – almost like three simultaneous layers of evil all happening at once. Reaching back, he references the court sorcerers of Egypt who battled with Moses. Looking forward, he foretells a time of increasing depravity, but he also stitches this to the present as though they are all part of a whole. We get a glimpse of the perspective of a God who is outside of time, seeing the course of human history all together, in which evil is at once always worsening and always the same.

It is a little difficult to know precisely whom Paul is talking about in this passage, but they certainly seem to be people in and around the church community. They are in Christian households and appear to be godly. Paul speaks here of those who have a form of godliness but deny its power. They put on a good show, but their lives imply that God has no power over them or in them. But the warning in this passage goes both ways – against denying the power of godliness and against denying the power of evil, especially in our midst. As you study this passage, know that the focus of Paul’s moral rebuke is on those who call themselves Christians.

Paul is writing to Timothy in a world that in a sense is very different from our own. Roman culture and morality would have been alien to us. The first century is different from the twenty-first, and thus differently ungodly. But what does not change is that we are in an ungodly world still – even if specifics do not align. We are simply another brand of ungodliness. And yet, as much as immorality is a long binging thread of connection from our time to Paul’s, so is God’s faithfulness to His Church.

In the last days (v. 1)

The New Testament uses this phrase in two ways. In one sense, it means the time of the final victory over and judgment of evil. Other terms are “the Day of the Lord” or “the Day of Jesus Christ.” But in another sense, the last days begin with Jesus coming and announcing that the Kingdom is among us already. Acts 2:17 and Heb. 1:2 say that the last days have arrived already. We should understand Paul here saying that in the future, as the world approaches its end, these things will be more commonplace, but that they are already present for Timothy as well.

Lovers of self, lovers of money, etc. (v. 2-5)

Much of this list in Greek denotes being “without” – that is, these people are devoid of Godliness and defined by what they lack. It is difficult to translate each word so looking at a different English translation can help.

Avoid such people (v. 5)

Paul elsewhere told Timothy to be kind to all people (2:24), and that we cannot cease to associate with the immoral people of the world, but those remaining unrepentant in the church community (1 Cor. 5:10). Here then he is either referring to the ungodly in the Church or telling Timothy as a regional leader not to have official relationships with these people.

Those who creep into households (v. 5)

The word “creep” in Greek means “worm” and is more like our term “to weasel your way in.” These people were religious con artists, although we are not sure if they had a central message or not.

Weak women (v. 6)

The Greek term is “little women” and means something like “silly” or “gullible.” This is not a comment on women in general nor on all false teachers. Paul says that “among them” are these con artists. The

women are ones who are immature and buried in the guilt of their sin. This does not describe all women. However, there is some significance to this happening to women. Donald Guthrie says that as women are trusting, as a gift from God, they can be taken advantage of as well.

Various passions (v. 6)

The Greek word here sometimes is translated as “lusts” but is not at all limited to sexual desire. Rather, it is a general term for overriding, obsessive desires that take God’s place in our hearts.

Jannes and Jambres (v. 8)

These names are not found in the Bible. Jewish legend assigned these names to two of the Pharaoh’s magicians in Exodus. Paul can refer to them by these names without causing a problem of scriptural inaccuracy. This is not the only time the Bible refers to tradition, writer, or custom by way of cultural reference, without endorsing the accuracy or source of the information. Paul’s reference is to the power of Egyptian court magicians who were able to perform certain miraculous feats but still fell short in their contest with God’s power through Moses and Aaron.

Discussion

1. How do you make sense of the fact that Paul writes about the corruption of the last days but also morality in his own day?

2. In what ways does knowing the world will darken toward the end affect how you see or interact with the world now?

3. In what ways might men protect women in their sphere from spiritual manipulation?

4. What are some themes you notice in the list of moral issues Paul describes?

5. What are a few of the problems Paul lists that you see most prominently around you? Are there any you see in yourself?

6. Who can you pray or act protectively? Try to think beyond only family.

Sermon Notes

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Session Five: 3:10-4:5

The Breath of God

If you were to give perhaps your last instructions to someone, what would you say? What would be most important? Paul brings Timothy back to the vital need for truth in his life and ministry. As Paul knows the world inevitably darkens, Timothy must carry on God's truth. Paul speaks here with fervency, reminding Timothy that God judges all – weighing the lives of the repentant believers and condemning unrepentant unbelievers.

Scripture is God's revelation to us. As much as we peer back through millennia to see Paul's message to Timothy, we have equally here God's message to us. God breathed Scripture out through chosen vessels and through it He breaths into us. But the truth must take hold and grow us; it cannot be a nice idea held neatly in well-bound Bibles.

One of the ways the truth of the Bible takes up its place in our souls is through suffering. Paul here looks back on his life of painful sacrifice and assures Timothy that suffering comes for all who follow Christ. Suffering actually makes Scripture come alive to us. It causes us to learn by experience what we may have heard many times. It causes us to know Christ and understand those who went before us with greater depth as we feel a little of what they did. It also tests our beliefs, for what we truly cling to when things are darkest is sometimes not as biblical as we assumed when they were bright.

Even in these dire warnings, there is hope. God's Word is mighty and His people are formed by it. We are called to be lights in darkness because there is hope for the world, as long as we remember that our hope is Christ.

You followed (v. 10)

The word here can mean followed in the sense of “following the news” or of participating in Paul’s life (like “following Jesus”). Paul used it in the second sense in 1 Timothy, but it is best to read it here in both senses. The locations Paul mentions are from his first missionary journey, when he met Timothy, but some were from before Timothy was with him. All in all, Timothy was invested in Paul’s ministry through learning, experiencing Paul’s life, and keeping up with what happened to him.

All Scripture (v. 16)

This verse has been read by some as saying, “every Scripture”, meaning that not the whole Bible but certain portions rise to the level of Scripture and those alone are the parts Paul is referring to. It has been said that only the portions of the Bible that speak directly of spiritual things are truly Scripture from God. However, nowhere in the Bible do we have any distinction between different levels of Scripture. Rather, Paul is referring to the whole Bible as God’s Word. He would have had in mind the whole Old Testament, but even in these very early days of the Church, his own writings were considered Scripture (2 Peter 3:16).

Inspired (v. 16)

This word does not at all mean that the writers of the Bible were inspired like an artist finding inspiration. This term predates that usage and means “God-breathed”. Peter refers to this as the writers being “carried along” by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). Scripture is given by God through human authors and is – like Christ – fully human and divine. It may seem more human in parts (such as Paul asking for his cloak, books, and parchments in 4:13) but all of it is from God.

Complete (v. 17)

Some translations say “perfect” here, but “complete” is the best

sense of the term. Paul is not saying that Scripture makes one morally perfect, but whole and able to serve God’s purposes.

Discussion

1. Look at 4:2 and 5. Which of these characteristics or needs is God working in you currently?

2. Which specific places in Scripture have formed your character?

3. In what ways has suffering molded your walk with Jesus?

4. In what ways might knowing all will be judged (4:1) motivate Paul's exhortation to Timothy?

5. Looking at 4:3-4, in what ways have you seen this around you – in the world or in the Church? Remember that “passions” here means any fleshly or worldly desire. What are the effects of listening to what “suits your passions”?

6. Paul says to Timothy amid the wickedness around him, “But as for you...” (3:14). What is your current “as for you”, an area you are being called to faithfulness regardless of what others do?

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Session Six: 4:6-22

Faithful Family

Paul, who normally writes with the strength and clarity we marvel, here is more frail. He wants his cloak and papers. He is sharply honest about those who betrayed him, possibly the very ones carrying this letter. He knows the walls are narrowing as he moves through his life and toward its end.

Men look over their lives and desire to rest in the knowledge that they have accomplished something worthwhile. As men are created for purpose, they survive on significance. Men create, disciple, serve, guide. But despair begins to leak in if the things that have shaped one's life are only temporary. If a man's work dies with him, facing death is a horrendous double-loss. God designed us for eternity, so men seek what will last. They pass on words, family history, tools that made and repaired the simple items of life. Paul here faces eternity, confident of a crown, settled in how he spent his life. The one thing he most wanted to pass on to Timothy was the gospel, the “deposit” or “investment” he entrusted to his protégé.

So many of those who had served with Paul, travelled with him, and started off at his side in Rome, and fled when he was put on trial. Paul now knew what Jesus must have felt. Like an unwelcome time machine, suffering is perhaps our best experiential link to Jesus's life. God made men able to suffer greatly because this puts us near Christ. Men often lead lives of quiet loneliness. As leaders, their needs are last in line. Many have lost friends, co-workers, and even wives. Whether through decisions we regret, or through being abandoned, men often know deep isolation.

However, Paul still had many relationships around the Mediterranean. He had a faithful family who were still there. Even as he was languishing in prison, many were still carrying on the work of the gospel. They helped and supported him. And there in the dark,

Paul would have always known that Jesus Himself was with him, and Paul would be soon closer to Him than he could understand.

The time of my departure (v. 6)

The word for “departure” implied death.

Drink offering (v. 6)

The drink offering was used in addition to a sacrifice in the Old Testament times. It was never the main sacrifice. We can understand Paul as saying that his death accompanies Christ’s sacrifice.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

(v. 7)

In Greek, the word for fight here is *agonia*, where we get the English word “agony.”

Translated more literally, it would read, “I have agonized the good agony.” The word was used for the struggle in athletic, military, or courtroom competition. These three verbs (have fought, have finished, and have kept) are in the perfect tense, signifying past completed actions with ongoing results. When Paul says he has kept the faith, it is more likely he is saying that he has preserved and passed on the apostolic teaching, not that he has not lost his personal belief.

Crown (v. 7)

This type of crown, a *stephanos*, was the temporary wreath used as a trophy for the winner of a race, not a permanent ruler’s crown. In contrast to the temporary earthly crown, Paul is referring to one that lasts forever. When he calls it a “crown of righteousness”, we can read this either as a crown because he is righteous or that righteousness itself is the reward or crown. This second reading is best as it lines up with James mentioning a “crown of life.” It would

not make sense to say that one receives a crown for having life, but that eternal life is the reward.

Do your best to come to me soon. (v. 9)

It would have taken several months for this letter to get to Timothy at Ephesus and for his return journey to see Paul in Rome, and Paul did not know how much longer he would live. It is unknown if Timothy arrived in time to see Paul.

Demas (v. 10)

Demas is mentioned in Col. 4:14 as a close associate of Paul's. Paul does not say in Greek that he loves "this world" but "the present age." Paul is focusing on the future eternity, while Demas loves his current life.

Only Luke is with me (v. 11)

This does not mean that everyone in Paul's circle had abandoned him, but that he sent some on assignments (like Tychicus). Luke likely was tending to Paul's needs and health, as Roman prisons did not provide these services.

Get Mark and bring him with you (v. 11)

Church tradition going back to Papias in the early second century says that this is Barnabas's nephew Mark who deserted Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas later wanted to give Mark another chance, but Paul did not, taking Silas with him on his next missionary journey instead. Church tradition also held that this Mark is the author of the gospel we call "Mark" who received his information from Peter. There is some tradition that he is the young man who fled naked when Jesus was arrested, but this is less reliable than the tradition about his authorship.

Tychicus I am sending to Ephesus (v. 12)

Tychicus had travelled with Paul on his third missionary journey and was earlier sent to Colosse. Here he is possibly delivering this letter to Timothy in Ephesus and then staying to fill in while Timothy leaves for Rome.

The cloak, the scrolls, and the parchments (v. 13)

This type of cloak was like a heavy poncho, and the specific nature of this very down-to-earth request is evidence of the authenticity of this letter. It is impossible to know what the scrolls and parchments were specifically, but they may have been legal papers, such as Paul's proof of Roman citizenship, and perhaps portions of Scripture.

At my first defense (v. 16)

The events of Paul's legal process at this time are not clear. But it seems that he had a sort of preliminary trial at which all his team abandoned him, likely out of fear of persecution. It also seems that some returned to him while he was in prison as he says that they sent greetings.

Prisca and Aquilla (v. 19)

This is the same couple mentioned in Acts, Romans, and 1 Corinthians. Prisca is the full name, and Priscilla is a diminutive, like Katherine and Kathy.

Discussion

1. As you age, what things have become most important to you?
What gospel truths would you most want to pass along?

2. In what ways does looking forward to your eternity affect how you handle suffering and success in this life?

3. In what ways has being abandoned and alone helped you connect with Christ and others?

4. Paul says that his death is an accompaniment to Christ's sacrifice. How does this make you see Christ, Paul, and yourself?

5. Paul closes his letter mentioning a number of specific people. What relationships are you most grateful for in your walk with Christ? If you do not have these kinds of relationships, why not? What first step toward them can you take?

6. At the close of this study, what is your top revelation and your top point of application?

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Group Contact Information

[illegible]

Group Prayer Requests

[illegible]



MURRIETA MEN