

This Lord's Day we begin a new year and a new letter from Paul to his spiritual son Timothy. I study the Word of God as the foundation to preach and teach, and you are called to study and hear for the purpose of growing spiritually. My goal is the same as Paul's, **"Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me."** (Colossians 1:28–29) Do you see it? Paul said he toils, but not by his strength, for he says, **"struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me."** Whose energy? God the Holy Spirit's energy, that lived within Paul and lives within me and lives within you. Neither Paul nor I nor you possess power apart from the Word of God and His Spirit that lives within us. Jesus was explaining why men did not understand the things of God when He said, **"Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?"** (Mark 12:24) The energy and power comes from the Word of God and the Holy Spirit that lives within, without these – life is out of balance, life is wrong. So the purpose of all scripture is to grow us spiritually, making us more Christ-like in our ability to love and serve others while showing honor and glory toward the only true God. If we sit here Sunday after Sunday unchanged, both you and I will have failed in what God is asking of us. We are to come together in corporate worship to strengthen each other, serve each other and love each other as we hear God's Word and take it into our hearts and minds, letting it change who we are. I pray this is the result of our time spent in Paul's second letter to Timothy – that it will change who we are.

Let's begin this morning with prayer. Seeking God with all our hearts, minds and souls.

Background

Let me begin by giving a some background concerning the writing of 2nd Timothy. As far as can be determined, the Apostle Paul was released from Roman imprisonment shortly after the Book of Acts written by Luke around 62 AD. Paul once again began missionary work, traveling as far as Spain. However, his time to preach the gospel was short for Emperor Nero began the persecution of Christians in 64 AD. Nero ordered the torching of Rome, which burned for 6 days. As the city burned not just the wooden homes of the poorer classes went up in flames, but also the mansions of the rich were consumed. The large public buildings and the temples were also burned. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote, “**But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor and the propitiations of the gods did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order by Nero.** Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened guilt and inflicted the most tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace.” Nero shifted the focus of Rome’s problems from his poor leadership to the escape-goat of followers of “The Way” as Luke called Christians in the Books of Acts. The general population feared Christians because they did not understand them and because of the lies spread by Nero and others about them. By order of Nero, Paul is arrested for the second time, possibly in Troas located on the Northwest coast of Turkey and he is brought back to Rome and imprisoned while he awaited trial. We do not know why Paul is arrested this time. However, concerning Paul’s first hearing after his arrest, he writes, “**At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them!**” (2 Timothy 4:16) All have left Paul for one reason or another and Luke is the only one that remains. In a way similar to Christ, those he had served and loved the most forsook Paul in his time of need.

Paul's first imprisonment in Rome was a house arrest with the ability of his friends to come and go, visiting with ease. His second imprisonment is much different for he is now in a dungeon and access to him by others is limited. During his first imprisonment he expected to be released, but now as he sits in a dark dungeon waiting for his trial and he rightly expects it to result in his execution.

At the writing of this second letter to Timothy only Luke remains with Paul while he is in prison and Paul feels isolated and alone. Timothy is still in Ephesus and continues teaching and working to refute the false teachers Paul had addressed in his first letter. Satan's efforts to keep people from the true Word of God have never stopped and we see it in many apostate churches today. As Paul's time grows short he longs for his spiritual child, he longs to see Timothy one last time.

It appears Paul had two main reasons for writing this letter. First, requesting Timothy to come and see him and instructing who and what to bring. Second, he wants to provide Timothy with a final letter of encouragement for him to continue in ministry. Ministry is difficult and can be discouraging at times. Paul's primary concern throughout his ministry was the church and its ability to preach the true gospel to both the saved and the lost world. It is the church that is the bastion of God's Word and is called to fight to keep even the smallest falsehood out. This epic battle for God's unaltered truth will not end until our King returns. Paul's letter is written to Timothy but we know he also intended it for the church by how he ends the letter. Paul wants to influence and instruct both Timothy and the churches in Ephesus and he intends to influence those of the future church, you and me.

Recognizing that Timothy might not be able to come or arrive before he is executed Paul quickly packs many things into this letter. His letter would have to travel by land and ship for 1200 to 1300 miles taking at least 6 weeks to reach Timothy in Ephesus. This letter is not constructed in as orderly fashion as most of Paul's letters, even though it does not appear as Paul's last letter in the canon order of the

Bible, this is Paul's last letter. Many have referred to it as his last will and testament. At times Paul is terse and to the point, but at other times he is also tender and warm. His emotions pour out as if he feels the urgency to write to Timothy while there is still time. Second Timothy reveals Paul's emotions more strongly than his intellect because Paul is speaking from his heart. This letter is unique from all of Paul's other letters in his outpouring of his inner emotions.

Authority Received and Given

As we begin our study of 2nd Timothy we observe that Paul's instructions to Timothy begin in verse 6. The first 5 verses are his greeting and motivational in nature. Yet even these personal opening verses reflect the principal of authority. Authority is necessary in discipling, parenting, preaching and teaching. To effectively help others grow in maturity in Jesus Christ requires authority. Even though Paul and Timothy had a deeply close relationship, he begins, [“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,² to Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”](#) (2 Timothy 1:1-2) Despite their close relationship Paul is making it clear that he ranks above Timothy in spiritual authority because it is he that brought the Word of God and the Gospel of Christ and he is writing in his capacity as Christ's apostle.

Intimacy does not preclude authority. We see this is the structure God places within marriage and with parents and children. If the parent-children relationship, which is based on love, does not have the proper authority structure it is doomed to tragedy and adversely affects the entire family. A business cannot properly function if employees do not recognize and submit to the authority of the employer. Timothy needs to submit to Paul's authority, just as Paul submitted to Christ's authority and Christ, while here on earth, submitted to the authority of God the Father. Only God the Father submits only to Himself. As the one preaching I must submit to the

authority of God's Word and ask that you place your lives under its authority as well.

Paul makes clear he is “an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.” The word “apostle” means “one who is sent out” or the “ambassador” of one who has authority. In Luke we read that Jesus called His disciples “His apostles” for they had the authority to represent Him and His gospel. After His ascension Jesus called Paul to be His apostle or ambassador giving Paul His authority. Jesus uses this term for Himself in His prayer found in John 17, “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3) The word “sent” is “*apostello*”. Jesus is the eternal apostle of God the Father from whom He receives His authority.

So Paul's opening, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus” makes clearly known that he is divinely commissioned by Christ to bring God's truth in his writings and his writings have a divine purpose. This is why they still speak with authority to us today. Paul's phrase “in Christ Jesus” is one of his favorites and signified his own union with Jesus as his Lord and Savior through His life, death and resurrection. Jesus made clear the path to be in union with Him, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) Every believer is united with Paul through Christ and has eternal life by their believing in Christ as their Savior.

Paul experienced a deep, loving and fulfilling relationship with God through Christ and he expresses this same deep relationship with his spiritual son Timothy. Paul's submission to the authority of Christ gave him authority over Timothy and entrusted Timothy with the authority to continue in the ministry of Christ, teaching and preaching the Words of authority Paul and the other apostles wrote. Luke wrote the clear purpose of every church “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’

teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42)

The church is to “devote themselves to the apostles’ teaching.” The “apostles teaching” is the divinely inspired writings of the New Testament. This is what Paul and other writers wrote and Timothy taught and what I continue to teach and am asking you to hear with your heart and mind.

Paul closes his greeting with “Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” (v.2) This is Paul’s desire for Timothy’s life as he serves Christ. It is Paul’s desire and it is God’s desire, for those who believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior. Even though we live, as Paul and Timothy lived, in a world of turmoil, through Christ we are able to experience God’s grace, mercy and peace. As we battle to preserve God’s Word we are able to experience grace, mercy and peace. In fact Christians are the only people who are able to experience these, as God desires and gifts them through the Holy Spirit.

Appreciation of God and the Brethren

If we are truly God’s children we not only appreciate Him and our salvation through Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, but we appreciate those who God has given as gifts in our life. Paul continues, “I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.” (2 Timothy 1:3) Paul deeply appreciated Timothy and Timothy deeply appreciated Paul. We have many acquaintances in life, but how many friends does one have? Who is in your life that if you called at 3 am they would come without hesitation? Who do you have in your life that you can bear your soul to and they will entrust what they hear as scared and keep your confidence? Men who do you have in your life that you can expose your fears to and even cry in front of and not receive judgment but love and compassion? My beloved who is in your life that you pray for night and day and they pray for you? Paul and Timothy were such friends and a key to their deep friendship was they both loved Christ. For me I have but a few

true friends. First and foremost is my wife Joyce and this only became true because Christ saved us and we have placed Him above all else in this life.

Paul did not spend time worrying over his impending execution, but he gave his energy to sharing Christ and writing Timothy. I do not know about you, but I can say my life's journey so far is not just as I pictured it when I was 20. Christ has packed a lot into my life. When I was young I did not have a mentor, a true friend who knew Christ and knew how to help me grow spiritually. What encouragement it would have been to have a Paul in my young life. This is why I want to be a Paul in other people's lives. I want to encourage others in their relationship with Christ. Paul understood the power of encouraging others, especially Timothy. Paul wrote to Timothy, ["The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."](#) (1 Timothy 1:5) When we love others with a pure heart, a heart of flesh that God has given, it is then, no matter the outcome we can have as both 1st and 2nd Timothy says, a "good and clear conscience."

Appealing to God

Paul's love for Timothy is genuine and we can see this partly because Paul puts energy and effort into this relationship. Paul wrote, ["I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day."](#) Paul put his energy where he also put his mouth. Paul spent time appealing to God for the benefit of Timothy, and for the believers in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 5:17), the brethren in Rome (Rms. 1:9-10), and the churches in Corinth and Philippi (1 Cor. 1:4 and Phil. 1:3-4). Paul was a man of action with his love. How about you? How much time do you spend praying for those you love? What better way to encourage others than to regularly pray for them and to let them know that you love them so deeply that you are praying for them. Praying for someone and on their behalf is a sign of our deep love and appreciation of both them and Christ. Christ loves us so very deeply He makes intercession before God the Father constantly. The writer of Hebrews wrote, Christ ["is able to save to the](#)

uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews 7:25) Christ does not give up and we should not give up either. Pray for other believers and pray for the salvation of the lost. Joyce prayed for my salvation unceasingly for 13 years before she saw the fruit of her labor.

Affections of the Heart

Christ gives us the ability to love others. He gives us the ability to express our love without fear. Paul wrote, “As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.” (2 Timothy 1:4) Paul truly loved Timothy and deeply misses him. Paul reinforced his deep desire to see Timothy later writing, “Do your best to come to me soon.” (2 Timothy 4:9) Paul was a man of purpose and great strength of character, but he was also a man whose heart Christ had made tender. He remembers the tears at his last parting with Timothy and desires to see him again and be filled with joy. Paul had a similar experience with the elders of the churches in Ephesus as they parted after Paul had preached and taught them the gospel for a period of time. “And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, ³⁸ being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again.” (Acts 20:36–38) Oh, Joyce and I have had these partings with those we have come to love in other countries and know we will most likely not see them again until heaven. But knowing that we will see them again, like Paul, fills us with hope and joy.

Affirmation of Faith

Paul ends his opening with “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.” (v.5) Paul had told Timothy that he prays for him continually and

he remembers his tears at their parting. Now, Paul brings forth their association by their faith. Paul affirms the history of Timothy's faith that begun in the heart of his grandmother and then his mother. Paul affirms that Timothy's faith in true and sincere and is evident by his love of Christ and then family and then fellow believers.

Peter wrote of the same faith based on love of Christ lived out by loving others. "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God." (1 Peter 1:22-23) James wrote of how Christians are to live, "the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere."¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (James 3:17-18) It is this unwavering love of Christ and each other that sets believers apart from the world. It is Christ that enables us to be strong and stand for right and truth, to do battle with evil and at the same time have hearts that are tender with His mercy and love. Just as Paul lived we are to live.

We see in the opening of Paul second letter that he lived, Timothy lived, Lois and Eunice lived with a true faith based on a love of Christ and each other. They fulfilled Jesus great command, just as we are called to also, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 'And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'³¹ The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.'" (Mark 12:29-31) Now, we have come full circle from authority to appreciation to appeal to affection back to our affirmation of our love of the Lord our God. This is the life of a Christian. This is our life! Amen!