

DAILY READ – 2 TIMOTHY

Devotional notes on 2 Timothy adapted from Matthew Henry's Commentary.

Introduction

"Paul wrote this second letter to Timothy from Rome, when he was a prisoner there and his life was in danger." He writes knowing that his death was not far away.

2 Timothy 1

v1-2: The blessings of grace, mercy, and peace are blessings that we need each day. We need grace to help us *"in times of need,"* and *"mercy to pardon what is wrong"* in us, so we can have the assurance of peace with God. These blessings come from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord and so we *"should seek God and Christ for them."*

v3: When we pray, we mustn't forget to pray for our friends, especially those who serve as pastors or other gospel workers. To our shame we often do. Thank God that He *"puts it into our hearts to remember certain people in our prayers."*

v4-5: *"When children imitate the faith and holiness of their godly parents and follow in their steps"* it is so encouraging. This should be a cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving to God.

v6: All Christians have been given spiritual gifts and graces to serve Jesus with and to use to build up His church. The gifts we have are to be used and to be increased - to be fanned into flame - and *"the best way to increase them"* is to *"take every opportunity to use"* them.

v7: One of the reasons why we don't use the gifts which God has given to us is because of fear. But we don't need to be afraid, because God has given us the spirit of power, *"of courage and resolution to encounter difficulties and dangers";* the spirit of love for God and His people, which stirs us up to keep serving in the face of opposition; and the spirit of sound judgment to assess ourselves and our ministry rightly and not be discouraged *"by the figments of our own imagination."*

v8: Sharing in suffering for the gospel means *"not only [sympathising] with those who suffer for it, but also [being] ready to suffer with them and suffer like them."* We can trust that when we are called to suffer afflictions for the gospel's sake, God will *"enable us to bear them."*

v9: The call to suffer for the gospel is the call *"to suffer for what we hope to be saved by."* This salvation that comes to us in the gospel is undeserved and is a gracious gift from God.

v10: Our Lord Jesus has defeated death and now shows us the way to life and immortality. *"Death, which was once an enemy, has become a friend; it is the gate by which we pass out of this troublesome, sinful world into a world of perfect peace and purity; its power is broken, for death does not triumph over those who believe the Gospel; they triumph over it."*

v11: Telling people the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ is a *"cause worth suffering for."* Do we believe this?

v12: When we commit our souls to Jesus Christ, it is a great comfort to know that we can be certain that He is able to save us and preserve us for heaven.

v13-14: There is a real danger that the churches can lose the gospel, or the gospel can become corrupted. This is why church leaders especially, but members too, must firstly, continue in the gospel by remaining faithful to what Scripture teaches, but also to protect the gospel from error so that it is passed on faithfully to next generation.

v15: In every period of church history there have been *"those who had accepted the Christian faith but later rebelled from it."*

v16-17: What a wonderful way to be described! Someone who refreshes, who seeks out *"opportunities to do good and will not turn away from any that offer themselves."* Onesiphorus refreshed Paul *"with his letters, advice, and encouragement, and he was not ashamed of his chains,"* and we would do well to learn from his example.

v18: On the day of our deaths and the day of judgment, our greatest need is God's mercy. *"if you want to have mercy then, you must seek it from the Lord now."* May it be that we all find His mercy on that day.

2 Timothy 2

v1: To remain faithful to Christ and to persevere in His work, we must not try to be strong in our own strength or trust in our own resources, *"but in the grace that is in Jesus Christ."* Wonderfully there is enough grace in Jesus for every one of us and to enable us to do everything He wants us to do for Him.

v2: A pressing need is for men to be trained up for ministry to serve as pastors and elders who will *"keep and pass on"* the gospel *"pure and whole to others."* Two qualities needed in those who are being trained are faithfulness and skilfulness in teaching others. They must be trustworthy persons who *"aim at the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the welfare of souls, and the advancement of the kingdom"* and *"they must not only be knowledgeable themselves but also be able to teach others."*

v3: Those who desire to faithfully serve Christ must share in suffering, that is, *"we must expect it and count on it in this world, must endure and get used to it and bear it patiently when it comes, and not be moved by it from our integrity."*

v4: *"The great concern of Christians should be to please Christ."* If we are to please Him, we must follow His orders and not be diverted and drawn away from these by getting caught up in the affairs of the world.

v5: Like an athlete cannot expect to win the prize if they do not compete according to the rules, so a Christian cannot expect receive the crown at the end of their life if they do not *"observe the laws"* given to us by God. With the help of the Holy Spirit *"we must seek to control our own sinful desires and corruptions"* and *"to excel in what is good"* as evidence of our faith in Christ.

v6: The full blessings of salvation will come, but we need to wait for them to arrive. While we wait *"we must first work as the farmer does, with great diligence and patience."*

v7: *"Reflection is the way to understand, remember, and practice what we hear or read."* We are *"to reflect on the things of God,"* praying that as we do, God will give us understanding.

v8-9: *"Preachers of the word are often in chains,"* but *"the word never is."* Persecution may silence or restrain preachers, *"but they cannot prevent the operation of the word of God on human hearts and consciences."*

v10: *"Next to the salvation of our own souls, we should be willing to do and suffer anything to advance the salvation of the souls of others."* We can be assured that God will use our service for Him to benefit His people *"to strengthen and encourage them."*

v11-13: Jesus is *"faithful to his threats"* and He is *"faithful to his promises."* If we *"remain faithful to Christ and to his truths and his ways, whatever it may cost"* us, *"he will certainly be faithful to us"* and will reward us for this in a better world where we will *"be with him forever."* If we are unfaithful to him, *"he will be faithful to his threats"* and will deny us before his Father.

v14: A key task of pastors and elders is to remind those in their care *"of what they already know."*

v15: Those entrusted to preach the word are to handle it correctly. This will require *"great wisdom, study, and care,"* and will demand *"considerable effort."*

v16-18: *"When errors or heresies come into the church, the infecting of one often leads to the infecting of many, or the infecting of the same person with one error often leads to the infecting of that same person with many errors."* The way error often comes is not by *"boldly and openly"* confronting the word of Christ but via *"a corrupt interpretation"* of it.

v19: *"The Lord knows those that are his, and those who are not. He knows them, that is, he recognises them, recognises them so that he will never lose them... No one can destroy the faith of anyone whom God has chosen."* This is a great comfort to us, and this comfort brings with it the duty of turning away from wickedness.

v20-21: The church is like a well-furnished house with some of the furniture being of great value and other of little value. There are instruments who bring honour to the church by their devotion to Christ and holy living, while others bring dishonour *"by their corrupt opinions and evil lives."* If we are to be instruments of honour and fit for our Master's use, *"we must cleanse ourselves from corruption and wickedness."*

v22: We must not think we are safe from the evil desires of youth like *"the lusts of the flesh,"* which is why we need to be warned to flee from them. An excellent antidote against them, is to pursue righteousness, faith, and love, and to maintain fellowship with believers because this *"will take us away from... fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness."*

v23: It is *"remarkable how often... the apostle warns Timothy against disputes in religion."* This shows how important it is for us to focus on *"believing and practicing what God requires"* and to avoid getting caught up in quarrels over non-essential matters.

v24-26: Those who are in error needed be instructed with the Scripture. *"The same God who"* reveals *"the truth, brings us by his grace to acknowledge it."* This is *"how sinners come to their senses and escape from the trap of Satan,"* otherwise they would continue in opposition to the truth. Pray that God would be gracious to them.

2 Timothy 3

v1: We are living in difficult times *"when there is a general corruption in people's conduct and attitude,"* which *"makes the times dangerous to live in, for it is hard to maintain our integrity in the midst of general corruption."*

v2-4: Even among those in the church there can be found *"an excessive, sinful self-love"* where people put *"their own gratification before the church's edification."* When believers are more concerned about looking after themselves than pleasing God *"many sins and troubles"* follow, and what is seen the world around creeps into the life of the church.

v5: *"A great deal of damage to the church"* is done by those who say they are Christians, who have publicly professed their faith in baptism, who give the appearance that they are following Christ, but are seen to be lovers of themselves and worldly by their behaviour.

v6: Those who would wish to deceive us into believing what is false *"seek corners and love obscurity, for they are afraid to appear in public."* Most of them won't be found in pulpits, but will *"turn to particular individuals, visiting them in their homes... to worm their way into the affections and good opinion of people... to draw them over to their side."* They will target *"those who are least able to defend themselves"* against their teaching.

v7: All of us should *"be constantly learning"* if by that we mean *"growing in knowledge... to know the Lord"* and *"pressing forward in the faith."* But we must take care that always learning does not mean being *"eager to take in every new idea"* and *"never reaching a right understanding of the truth in Jesus."*

v8-9: False teachers have corrupt minds, and they resist the truth being *"biased and prejudiced"* against it, and they will eventually be shown to be the imposters that they are. *"Although the spirit of error may be let loose for a time, God has it on a chain. Satan can deceive the nations and the churches no further and no longer than God will permit him."*

v10-11: When training future leaders for Christ's church, attention needs to be given to their teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, and endurance in face of persecution and suffering. Their teaching is to be *"the whole will of God."* Their way of life needs to be *"consistent with [their] teaching"* and *"not contradict it."* Their aim should be *"the glory of God and the good of people's souls."* Their character must be marked by *"integrity and faithfulness,"* patience towards those they preach to and lead, *"love toward all,"* and endurance when they suffer *"wrong for doing well."*

v12: Those who profess faith in Christ and want to live a godly life will suffer persecution. *"Persecution will not always be the same"* for every follower of Jesus but *"those who have decided to wear the uniform and bear the name of the crucified Redeemer"* must expect it to come.

v13: Just as believers, by the grace of God, grow to become more like Christ, so also unbelievers, *"through the subtlety of Satan and the power of their own corruptions"* grow in their sinfulness. *"The way of sin is downhill."*

v14: The truth of God that we have learned and been instructed in, we must continue in, and persevere in, to the end. Also, we must *"seek to be more and more assured of, so that, being well established in the truth, we may be protected against error."*

v15: *"It is a great happiness to know the Holy Scriptures from childhood."* Christian parents should be keen for their children to *"gain knowledge of the Scriptures at an early age,"* for they are *"a sure guide to [the] way to eternal life."*

v16a: The Scriptures are the Word of God. This is confirmed by *"the majesty of its style, from the truth, purity, and sublimity of the doctrines it contains, from the harmony of its different parts, from its power and effectiveness on the minds of multitudes who have dealings with it, from the fulfilment of many prophecies about things beyond all human foresight, and from the... miracles that were performed to prove its divine origin."*

v16b: What we find in God's Word *"instructs us in what is true, rebukes us for what is wrong, directs us in what is good. It is useful to all, for we all need to be instructed, corrected, and rebuked."*

v17: Pastors who have responsibility for giving *"instruction, correction, and rebuke"* in the church will find the Scriptures sufficient to equip them *"for whatever duty [they] have to do,"* and *"whatever service is required from [them]."*

2 Timothy 4

v1: We should seriously consider that *"the eyes of God and Jesus Christ"* are on us, and that we must give an account *"to Jesus Christ of all that has been entrusted to us."* For those who have been given the responsibility of preaching the Word, they must do this knowing that this is *"an absolutely necessary task."*

v2: It is the Word of God we need to hear preached, not the ideas and imaginations of the preacher. Opportunities for preaching the Word must not be allowed to slip by and those who preach must not shirk their duty, *"claiming that the time is not right."*

v3-4: A time will come when people won't put up *"with preaching that is searching, plain, and to the point"* and they will grow weary of hearing the truth. To prepare for this, pastors must *"make the most of present time, when they will endure it"* and get busy sowing the seed of God's Word.

v5: Ministers must not let suffering *"discourage them in the work."* They need to be reminded to *"get used to hardships"* and to get on and do their work.

v6: Death for a Christian is *"a departure to the enjoyment of another world."* When this happens, those who are left *"will be needed more"* because *"the fewer the hands available to work, the more diligent those hands that work must be."*

v7: The life of God's people is both a warfare and a race. It is a fight to fight, and a course to finish. *"We must not give up until we are made more than conquerors through him who has loved us."* As those who came before you completed the work of their day and generation, so you *"must complete the work of your day and generation."*

v8: All the hardships and toils we experience in this life will be abundantly rewarded in the life we will live in the future.

v9: Friends to follow Christ with are a great blessing and gift from God. The help and encouragement they can give to us is much needed.

v10: *"Love for this present world is often the reason why people turn away from the truths and ways of Jesus Christ."* Let us not forget our first love for Christ and His gospel.

v11-12: The reconciliation of Paul with Mark *"teaches us to have a forgiving spirit"* toward those who *"have done wrong in the past."*

v13: *"As long as we live, we must continue to learn."*

v14-15: We should be on our guard against those who have a spirit and attitude that strongly opposes God's Word, *"for they will do us no good, but all the trouble they can."*

v16: Some sins are sins of weakness. They are sins nonetheless, but there is a distinction to be made *"between sins of presumption and sins of infirmity."*

v17: The Lord is willing and able to *"strengthen us in times of difficulty and danger."* He preserves us because He has work left for us to do.

v18: There is a heavenly kingdom, and the certain hope we have is that Jesus will bring us safely into it.

v19-22: *"The best prayer we can offer for our friends is that the Lord Jesus Christ may be with their spirits to sanctify and save them, and that he will eventually receive them to himself." God's grace "makes us holy... keeps us humble, and... enables us to persevere to the end."*