

[2 Timothy]

Leader's Guide

Written by Miles O'Neill and Erin Smith

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Cornerstone



2 Timothy Introduction

Welcome to the book of 2 Timothy. This 'Pastoral' Epistle is a great book to study as a group and I am excited that you are taking the time to lead others through it. It is one of the three Pastoral Epistles, 1st Timothy, 2nd Timothy and Titus. While it comes before Titus in the Bible, most scholars believe that it actually follows Titus in its chronology. Therefore it is probably the last letter we have of Paul as he anticipates his death imminently. 4:6- *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure has come.* Last words are always significant and often give us an overarching glimpse into the passions of the speaker. This is what we have here in 2 Timothy. Paul is soon to leave and he gives his last instructions to the church he has given his life for. It is an exciting book. We sit on the precipice of the beginnings of the Church of Jesus. It is challenging as Paul exhorts Timothy and us as well to stay the course and to not be timid but live out the grace that we have been given. The famous scene from Braveheart comes to mind. William Wallace in front of his gathered troops stirring their hearts to action for the cause of the homeland. Here, Paul stirs our hearts to action for the cause of the Gospel.

Your task as a leader will be to take the lessons that follow and use the framework to lead the particular group you have according to the level and pace that they can handle. You can add or delete questions in order to tailor the study to your particular group. Sit down ahead of time and go through the lessons yourselves. Use a red pen and write in the margins. What are the questions that you have as you read the letter alongside the lessons? Where would you want to go deeper, where would you want to simply read the comments included? (Read the included article 'Asking Christ Centered Questions' to gain valuable insight into asking good questions). There is a lot of room to use the study as a framework and make it your own.

Furthermore, I highly recommend purchasing the 1 and 2 Timothy/Titus commentary in the **NIV Application Commentary** series. You can find it on Amazon for about \$15. It will help you gain rich insight into the letter and give you confidence as you lead through it.

In this study, you will find that we are attempting to focus on some key elements of which you must help your group see. First of all, you want to help them see a process of studying the Bible. You want to help them see that context is hugely important to understanding the author's intentions. You want to focus on certain details of the text but zoom out often to help them see where it fits into Paul's reasoning and the flow of the letter. Even more than that, where does the letter fit into the story of the whole Bible? **This is the perhaps the number one weakness I find as students approach the Bible. They ignore the bigger picture and focus in on particular phrases often misinterpreting them in the course.** *In light of this there is a short quiz to take before you enter into the study of the book.*

These and other application questions are marked with a



Secondly, you will see an intention to build a solid foundation in the Christian life on the Gospel, the good news of what Jesus has done for us. It is both the starting place and the continuing place from which all growth must take place. (As Tim Keller says, it is both the ABC's and the A to Z's of the Christian life)¹. You will constantly see questions directed at both Paul's and the group member's inner motivation. I am attempting to help you lead people to expose their hearts and not just their actions. So you must also help build a foundation in the beautiful Gospel of Christ's love and acceptance so that Christ becomes compelling in the process of change. Guilt, a standard of performance, pressure, a desire for a moral or satisfying life will never change a person's heart. Only as Christ becomes more beautiful and compelling will real, time enduring life change occur! Sound difficult? It is! In fact you can't cause it. You can be a part and God wants to use you to do it, but relax, your part is just showing up being prepared. God promises to use His word to richly impact lives. The pressure is off so experience the freedom of the Gospel as you teach about the Gospel!

Finally, you will see that we attempt to ask some questions that will help your group grow in depth together as they grow deeper in their understanding of Christ. Pray often through the questions that help people reveal their hearts with one-another. As God exposes peoples' hearts, their sins, their hopes, dreams, fears and pains, an environment that can really promote deep change begins to form. As light opens up into people's lives, God surgically removes pain, pressure, and heartache and replaces them with joy and freedom. Take steps of faith and don't shy away from initiating intimate conversation where vulnerability can take place. And remember, you can only take your group where you are willing to go yourself.

At the end of the last lesson, we ask the following questions in review. You may want to keep them in the back of your mind during the whole study and even ask them of your group from time to time over the weeks you meet. They summarize the lessons that can be learned from the inspired words of this letter well.

- What have you learned about who God is?
- ✓ What have you learned about who you are?
- ✓ What have you learned about who others are?
- ✓ What have you learned about what you are called to?
- ✓ What heart motivations are there to follow Christ?
- ✓ Summarize how Paul proposes to help the Church grow in Christ?

Asking Christ-Centered Questions That Target the Heart

Rick Hove

In the process of leading a small group, you will employ a wide variety of questions. You will ask questions that help participants see important details in the text. You will ask questions that encourage participants to wrestle with the meaning of the text. You will ask questions that encourage participants to consider the significance of what they have read. You will ask questions that help participants discover the big idea. Ideally all of these questions should prepare people for the application that is the goal of your study. As you lead people respond to God through his Word, ask Christ-centered questions that target their hearts.

Why ask questions that target the heart?

First, life-change rarely occurs from simple knowledge. Think of all the things you know you should do. You know you should exercise. Does knowing this insure you will do it? You know you should control your eating. Does knowing this insure you will do it? You know you should guard your thoughts. Does knowing this insure you will do it? You know you should share your faith. Does knowing this insure you will do it? Life-change rarely occurs simply from “knowing” we should do something. Instead, life-change is more often like this: knowledge ⇒ “want to” ⇒ action. Someone can know, for example, that he should end a particular dating relationship but he will not do it until, at some level, he *wants to*. In other words, the *heart* is central to life-change. Thus, we need to ask questions that target the heart both to expose the ugly parts of our hearts and also to point our hearts to Christ so that we will *want* to change in response to who He is. If all the questions we ask in our study are merely “knowledge” or “how to” questions, we will not help people become who God wants them to be.

Second, one of the central motifs of the Scriptures is that God wants our hearts. Much of Christianity today fails to touch the heart. Furthermore, the root of sin lies at the heart level – cursing God, resisting God, ignoring God, making ourselves God, etc. When questions target the heart they expose sin and point the way to the glorious Savior and the awesome gospel.

Why ask questions that are “Christ-centered”?

From this point in salvation-history believers view the entire Bible through the lens of Christ. This isn’t to say that Christ is hiding in some obscure verse in Lamentations. Rather, it is saying that we read Lamentations, Psalms, Matthew and all Scripture from a post-Christ perspective, aware of who Christ is and what he has done. Christ, then, should be at the center of the Christian life. It only makes sense that our “sub-text” should be “Isn’t Christ great?” One of the major themes of the New Testament is our resistance to Christ. We may, for example, judge others but at the root of this sin is some sort of resistance to Christ. Making questions “Christ-centered” gets to both the root of the problem and the solution to the problem.

What do “Christ-Centered questions that target the heart” look like?

Here are some examples of Christ-centered questions that target the heart:

- Think of some of the darkest thoughts that have ever crossed your mind – thoughts which deeply haunt you. Christ knows these thoughts. How does this make you feel?
- What are you turning to for love in your life right now? If you turned to Christ for love, how would it affect your relationships with others?
- Think of your relationship with Christ. Is Christ most often an “end” – the object of your enthrallment and interest? Or is Christ a “means” – someone who is pursued to get you something else? Why is this the case?

- Why is a slain Lamb who conquered so beautiful and worthy of adoration?
- What are things apart from God on which you build your identity? If your identity was in Christ how would you be different?
- What's the most soul-gripping thing you've ever anticipated . . . something, some person, or some event that you LONGED for? Tell us about it. Do you LONG for the appearing of Christ with the same soul-gripping intensity that you long for other things? If not, why not?
- The greatest insult to Christ was the cross. It was the place of greatest shame. He was naked. He was hung as a criminal though he was innocent. He was suspended on a tree he made. He was taunted by jeers to save himself (like he couldn't). Isaiah puts it so powerfully: *"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth."* Is53:7 What is uniquely beautiful about Christ at this moment? Or, put another way, how is his beauty different at this moment than, say, when he raised Lazarus from the dead? What is beautiful about a God like this?

Although you might use "Christ-centered" questions at various points in your study, they will be most helpful as you move to "application." As you help your group members respond to God through his Word, ask questions that target the heart (especially heart-resistance toward God) and point them to beauty of Christ and sufficiency of the gospel.

How to Study the Bible: Inductive Bible Study Method

Miles O'Neill

**Inductive Bible Study Method is a method of studying the Bible that helps guide the process through a system of steps that help us grasp what a book's author intends for us to learn and apply. The focus of the method is in Observation technique as detailed below. I have personally found it very helpful to have some guidelines and ideas that help and motivate me to know where I am going and how to get the most out of what I am reading. The following will help explain the process, but ask a staff member for more details as needed.*

- Here are some quotes establishing an overall thought in studying the Bible:
 - “God is building a kingdom of redeemed people for Himself.” *Unknown author*
 - “Establish thy word as that which produces reverence in thee.” *Unknown author*
 - “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”
Hebrews 4:12
- ✓ What is the theme of these quotes? What is similar? Different?

(These quotes serve to communicate that the Bible is doing something! It is moving, living, powerful and purposeful. We should never approach the Bible as a benign object, rather as a living object used by God to move us and change us and build His kingdom on Earth.)

Inductive Bible study method

- ✓ Hook: Which is the most difficult of the following #1-#3 below?
(Perhaps observation is really the most important, if we would do it well, it would leave far less to interpretation and even figuring out how to apply, the application will jump out at us as we observe well.)
- ✓ Hook: Which is the one we do the most poorly?
(Especially of late, there has been widespread interpretation which has been done very poorly and has become very dangerous...’Jesus Seminar’, Open Theism etc. Once again, if we would observe well, context, genre, intent, we would need to interpret far less and application would become compellingly apparent.)

****Therefore, we need to focus on Observation as the key to studying the scriptures. There are commentaries written by far smarter and more educated people to help us interpret well. Focus here on Observation.***

1. Observation

- **Context-** *One of the central tasks of observing well is to be aware of the context in which a portion of the Bible was written, (or any piece of literature for that matter.) The context in which a letter or book was written helps us decipher the author's potential intentions. If we can determine the writer's intentions, it helps us see what he is actually saying and leads to interpreting well and also applying well. Thus there are many contextual issues to become familiar with as you observe a book of the Bible well: time, place, culture, and setting of the particular writing to name a few. Then, on an even broader scale, we must also look at where the writing takes place in light of the whole history of scripture. As you look at the particulars of a certain book, find out where that book fits in compared to what all of scripture has to say about God outworking of His divine plan. In light of that greater picture, this quote is worth reading:*

**"Scripture- the Old and New Testaments- is the story of creation and new creation. Within that, there is the story of covenant and new covenant. When we read scripture as Christians, we read it precisely as people of the*

new covenant and of the new creation. We do not read it, in other words, as a flat, uniform list of regulations or doctrines. We read it as the narrative in which we ourselves are now called to take part. We read it to discover “the story so far” and also “how it’s supposed to end.” To put it another way, we live somewhere between the end of Acts and the closing scene of Revelation. If we want to understand scripture and to find it doing its proper work in and through us, we must learn to read and understand it in the light of that overall story.

As we do this- as groups, churches, and individuals- we must allow the power of God’s promised future to have its way with us. As we read the Gospels, we must remind ourselves again and again [of the overall story] because the pull of western culture is so strong that if we don’t it will suck us back down into dualism- [that there is a physical world and a spiritual world and they are disconnected, not tied together in one big story as the Bible really communicates].....it is the story of how God’s kingdom was established on earth as in heaven in and through the work of Jesus, fulfilling Israel’s great story, defeating the power of evil, and launching God’s new world. As we read the letters, we must remind ourselves that these are the documents designed to shape and direct the community of the new covenant, the people who were called to take forward the work of new creation. As we read Revelation, we must not allow the wonderful heavenly vision in chapters 4 and 5 to lull us into imagining that this is the final scene in the story, as though the narrative were simply to concluded with the redeemed casting their crowns before the throne. This is a vision of present reality, seen in its heavenly dimension. We must read on to the end, to the final vision of Revelation 21 and 22, the chapters that give final meaning to all that has gone before and indeed to the entire canon.

Likewise, when we read the Old Testament, we must read it- as it manifestly asks to be read- as the long and winding story of how God chose a people to take forward his plan to rescue creation, not the story of how God had a shot at calling a people whom he would save from the world and how this was aborted, forcing him to try some things else (a caricature, I know, but one many will recognize). And this means that through the Old Testament must be read as part of “our story” as Christians, we must not imagine that we are still living within that moment in the story. The story itself points beyond itself, like a set of parallel lines meeting in the infinitely rich narrative of the gospels and the sudden outburst of new life in Acts and the letters. [brackets added]

-Surprised by Hope, NT Wright pp. 281-282

- We must study whole books to understand the message in its context

(Illustration: reading a letter from a girl/boyfriend. What if you read the middle paragraph sentence that says ‘I can’t stand you, I don’t want to be around you!’ You call the friend and cuss them out and break up! They e-mail you, (you won’t answer the phone of course...) and in words of tears ask, ‘didn’t you read the sentence before that’? It read, ‘I love you! I can never imagine saying ‘.....’! Context! Read it all in one sitting, don’t just read the middle and use ‘tweezer theology’ (plucking some bit out ignoring the surrounding context) or you may end up getting the wrong message!)

“Whenever we pick up the Bible and read it, even in a contemporary version like the Good News Bible, we are conscious of stepping back two millennia or (in the case of the OT) even more. We travel backwards in time, behind the microchip revolution and the industrial revolution, until we find ourselves in an alien world which long ago ceased to exist. In consequence, the Bible feels odd, sounds archaic, looks obsolete and smells musty.” John Stott

**Therefore, a system of studying the Bible that looks for contextual clues to the author’s intentions is very important. The inductive Bible Study Method is just that.*

Study Process:

1. First time read through 1x in one sitting to gain a broad feel of the letter.

2. Read through 2nd time and begin recording the following in a journal: *Who, What, Where, When, Why*

- *Who: Paul (vs.1)*
- *Where: From prison in Rome*

- *When: About A.D. 64?*
- *What: Living unashamedly for Christ by His Grace*
- *Why: There seems to have been some false teachings being proclaimed. Paul sends Timothy to correct the errors. Though Timothy is young and has a timid disposition, Paul calls him to live out the Gospel of grace in a broken world.*

3. Read through 3rd time focusing on a search for THEMES.

(Ask, what do you know about themes in 2 Timothy? Any verses or sections you know of? Have them work on this during the week. Use Titus, 1Timothy, and 2 Timothy. Have them write down all the themes they find with references.)

*Persecution/Suffering
 Shame/Power
 Power of the Word
 Handle the Word accurately
 Finish Strong
 Remember your story
 Gift of God
 Grace for Right Living
 Spiritual Multiplication
 The last letter of Paul to his understudy
 Hard Work
 Soldier
 Farmer
 Athlete
 Foundation on Christ
 Holy Living
 Keep from foolish arguments
 Cultural Awareness
 Live out ministry*

**A key to studying a Pauline letter is discovering its theme. If you are confused about a section....remember the theme to help interpret it.*

- ✓ *In light of the main themes, why might Paul have written 2 Timothy?*
(correct false teaching in the church)
- ✓ *How about Chapter 1?*
(give Timothy encouragement to accomplish the difficult task that he was being given)
- ✓ *How about Chapter 4?*
(admonition to correct the false teaching with sound teaching)

4. Observe Repeated words, Transition words.

(Ask: What are some transition words and why might they be important? ie. therefore, so, for etc.)
-Paul is usually making a strong point with transition words...ie. Chapter 2:1
(Ask: What are some repeated words that you have seen in 2 Timothy?)

Grace, Word, Ashamed, Christ Jesus; these all point to significant themes Paul is addressing and thinks are very important.)

5. Observe Questions, Confusing statements and ideas.

Write down the questions and ideas that you want to pursue more at a later time.

6. Look for a Controlling verse

Select a verse that you could memorize that summarizes the book well. Perhaps 2 Timothy 4:1-2? This will help you remember the theme of the book and help you hold onto the main message and even help you live and apply. 5 years later you will be able to grasp some of what you have studied as you memorize the controlling verse.

7. Outline main sections

This and the following step are the meat of what you will spend time on in the Inductive Method.

Outlining is key to gaining a grasp on the intention of the author of NT writings.

If you were to use roman numerals in an outline, how would you arrange 2 Timothy? Perhaps there are 4 main sections...5, 6...How would you outline it and what would you call each section? (this helps gain an overall view of the letter and helps put the details in each section in the larger context of what Paul is intending to write.)

9. Outline further detail

If you chose 4 main sections...now outline each section in further detail.

10. Diagram sections

Create a grammatical diagram for sections that you really want to dig deeper into. (For information on diagramming ask a staff member).

11. Do word studies

Choose a key word and dig deeper to gain a fuller understanding. 'In Christ' is mentioned 31 times in Ephesians...Paul may be telling us something!? Try and dig deeper to understand that phrase better. Use cross references to other letters, look it up in a commentary you own or on-line, look the words up in a dictionary...may not apply to this phrase... This will help you grasp the word and meditate on its significance.

12. Create a Chart

5 Years later, what will you remember from the letter? Creating a chart can give you a quick glance overview and refresh your memory years later. Begin with your outline of the main sections. (Below is the chart for Ephesians. Use it as a model but make your own for 2 Timothy after you study the book.) Place the titles you choose under the main heading. Then briefly outline each of the 3 headings you just chose under them. Do that for all the sections you come up with. Finally, under the whole chart, write out your controlling verse. You have now created a chart that you can quickly glance at and remember all the work you have done in the book. At this point you will really 'own' the book for yourself for years to come.

Ephesians

Being Chapters 1-3

- **1:1-2:10 Identity in Christ**
 - 1:1-3 Intro
 - 1:3-2:10 Blessings
 - vv. 3-12: Chosen, Predestined, Redeemed, Revealed
 - vv. 13-14: Spirit
 - vv. 15-23: Knowledge
 - vv. 2:1-10: Death vs. Life
- **2:11-22 Unity in Christ**
 - vs. 11: circumcision
 - vv. 12-22: citizens of heaven
- **3:1-21 Purpose in Christ**
 - vv. 1-13 Paul's calling
 - vv. 14-21 Paul's prayer

Doing Chapters 4-6

Controlling Verse: Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not of your own doing; it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

2. Interpretation

What is the Author's Big Idea (ABI) given the context in which the passage is found? All interpretation must be done in light of the ABI. Use commentaries to get a wide range of opinions about confusing questions. (Try BibleGateway.com for a sampling of commentaries for free.

3. Application

- **View of God:** What have I learned about one of the persons or all of the Trinity? What do I need to believe about God? What am I not believing about God? What are the ramifications in my life of not thinking rightly about God?
- **Action:** What should I do according to the Bible? Is there a command to obey?
- **Character:** What should I be? What must I change if I am to be holy? How can I become more like Christ? Is there a lesson to learn? Is there a sin to confess?
- **Goals:** To what causes should I devote my life energy? What can I do to change the world so it conforms to God's plans?
- **Discernment:** How can we distinguish truth from error? How can I gain discernment? How can I gain wisdom from God and the church?
- **Meditation:** Ask God to reveal where He wants you to apply the passage you are studying. Memorize a section to remember and allow it to permeate your heart and mind.

***Assignment:**

- Read article: 'The Music of the Gospel' by Keith Johnson
- Do the Application of the next section '2 Timothy Overview'

Suggested Reading:

- How to Read the Bible for all its Worth, Fee/Stuart
- God's Big Picture, Vaughan Roberts

2 Timothy Overview

(Told by John MacArthur)- Some years ago I had the wonderful opportunity of visiting the magnificent and rather stunning city of Rome and spending several days wandering about in that great place, seeing all that history has to say and to visually represent through the art and the architecture and the structures of that ancient place. My mind was staggered at the scope of history represented in Rome because it goes back so many thousands of years. I was stunned by the magnificent architecture and the great works of art that I saw everywhere, from the Raphael statues in the little plazas of the city to the great works of art at the Vatican.

But one thing in my visit to Rome stood out above all other things and that was visiting the ruins of what was known as the Mamertine(?) Prison in the ancient city of Rome. When I say ruins I don't want to misrepresent the situation. What is now remaining of the Mamertine Prison is a dungeon in the ground, literally a circular pit about 30 feet in diameter with a hole at the top a little larger than that of a manhole in the street. That was the place of incarceration for the criminals of the time of the Apostle Paul. That prison today has on top of it a building and to see the prison you climb the stairs, enter the building and you're given a little bit of a tour. You look through the hole and you can see the pit underneath with its stone floor and stone walls in the shape of a circle. We were then allowed to go down into the pit and found there just a couple of things of interest. First of all, there was an altar built there by some Roman Catholics at some point in history. And then against one section of that circular pit there was a door, a great large door that was able to be pulled up and then dropped back down in place.

The guide instructed us concerning the altar which had been built in somewhat recent centuries and then told us that the door basically was there for execution purposes, that it was common to place prisoners, dropping them through the hole into the dungeon, up to about 30 to 35 prisoners. And then in order to make room for the next group of criminals, the door would be pulled open and running alongside that cell was the city sewage system of Rome. As the door was pulled open, the cell or dungeon would fill with the sewage and drown all of the prisoners and wash them back out. The door would be shut, the place would be drained and ready for another 30 to 35 criminals.

It was a moving experience not only because you could stand there and imagine what went on in that place with sanitation, without light, without any of the comforts that we might imagine to be absolutely necessary for existence. And you can imagine it jammed with 30 bitter, angry criminals about to be executed. But what made it so very stunning was that one of the people who has had a greater impact on my life than almost anyone who ever lived, one of the men who has been my teacher in many ways through the years of my ministry, one of the men whom I love beyond other men spent the last days of his life in that very hole in the ground. His name is the Apostle Paul. And I was moved deep within my heart as I contemplated him in that place awaiting execution. In a very public display of hatred for the Christ he taught and the gospel he preached, he was not drowned in sewage, he was taken out of that place and his head was placed on a block and an axe cut it off his body. And publicly the Romans said, "We will not tolerate the teaching of Jesus Christ nor anyone who represents Him."

And when you can think back and imagine the life of the Apostle Paul, a life of self-sacrifice on behalf of the spread of the gospel, the life of a man who lived literally to communicate the greatest message the world has ever heard in order that men might know joy and grace and mercy and forgiveness and peace, when you imagine that that's how he ended his life it seems like such a tragic and ungrateful expression of man's

response. What an unjust reward for an innocent man. Not just an innocent man but a man who had brought the good news of salvation to the very people who took his life. He had endured so much. In 2 Corinthians he chronicles a bit when he says, "In far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death, five times I received from the Jews 39 lashes, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys and dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren. I have been in labor and hardship through many sleepless nights in hunger and thirst, often without food and cold and exposure and apart from such external things there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches," 2 Corinthians 11:23 and following.

All of this he endured, selflessly sacrificing his life and any comfort that anyone might assume to be just basic for the sake of reaching people with the wonderful good news of salvation in Jesus Christ and this is how it ends...in a stinking dark damp unsanitary pit in the ground occupied by a bunch of criminals, we find him. It's not the first time he's been in prison. He was in prison in Jerusalem. He was in prison in Caesarea. He was in prison in Philippi and he has been in prison even in Rome before this. His earlier imprisonment in Rome, however, was much more mild than this one. In fact then he was in house arrest and not actually in a prison at all. Under Roman guard but in a house where his friends could come and go freely and he could control the environment to some degree and there were comforts to be had in that place. In fact, in his house imprisonment he was able to write Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and the wonderful little letter to his friend Philemon. It was a productive time, a time when he could win many of Caesar's household to faith and so at the end of Philippians says, "Those in Caesar's household who are in the faith greet you." But that was five or six years before this.

He had been released from that first house arrest and having been released, you remember, he went to Ephesus, met Timothy his son in the faith there, left Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus to set it right for it wandered in terms of doctrine and behavior. And then pursued a missionary tour again from which he soon wrote a letter called 1 Timothy to tell Timothy exactly what to do in the church at Ephesus where he had left him. After writing 1 Timothy it's apparent that for a few years he wandered around preaching and teaching and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, if we can put the pieces together, we assume that he went from Ephesus over to Macedonia, visited Nicopolis, Crete, Militus and some think he may even as well have gone as far as Spain. He also very likely went to Troas. Now there's no chronicle of that, those are bits and pieces that we illicit out of his letters. We really have no specific record like we do in the book of Acts for his time prior to being imprisoned, for the time after his imprisonment gives us no such record. But no doubt for those five or six years between the first epistle and the second one, he is moving about ministering, preaching as he always did.

Suddenly in the midst of this new-found freedom he is arrested. Very likely at the place called Nicopolis. What caused it to be, what made it happen that halted his progress? Well in 64 A.D. Nero who was an insane madman torched the city of Rome. He set a match to the place and burned it. Not wanting to bear the public shame and the public wrath for that kind of thing, he pushed it off on this group called Christians and blamed them for the burning of the city of Rome. As a result of that, an avalanche of animosity broke out against the believers in Jesus Christ and it was in the radiating of that animosity out of Rome that permeated the whole Roman Empire that finally caught the Apostle Paul eventually and caused him to be arrested because he was the leading spokesman for the Christian faith. He was then taken back to Rome and dropped into the hole in the ground at the Mamortine Prison.

And so he is there because of a furious wave of persecution. The leading Christians have been arrested, many have been executed and Paul, of course, is next. As we come to 2 Timothy that's the scene in which we find the

Apostle Paul, sitting in the dungeon. His liberty of a few years has now ended and he is back in the most difficult incarceration of his life. And in that dungeon he sets out to write the last letter he ever wrote. This is his "swan song." This is the final will and testament of the Apostle Paul. These are his last words and as such we should listen to them with great concern and commitment.

Now he chooses to write to Timothy. Of all the people that he might have written to, of all the churches that he might have written to, he chooses to write to Timothy and there is great reason for that which we shall see in a moment.

Application Questions:

- ✓ What are the different theories on authorship? On audience?
- ✓ What are the different themes including 1 Tim and Titus? Categorize 5 major themes.
- ✓ Survey- how would you break up/divide the book of 2 Timothy? Develop a brief outline and assemble the most forceful passages in each theme mentioned above?
- ✓ What are the controversial passages/themes in 2 Timothy and what are the different responses?
- ✓ How does the situation of the audience play into what is included in these Pastorals.

The Big Picture:

- ✓ Where does 2nd Timothy fit into the whole story of the Bible? Take the following quiz.
You must know some about the Old Testament if you are to understand the New Testament. Sometimes the OT seems out of place and archaic, but it is essential to understand its context if you are to grasp the significance of what the New Testament teaches. Give this quiz at the end of a group session and tell members to work on it during the week. Come back together and discuss the answer.

1. Put the following persons or events in sequence: (if you have no idea, look them up)
David, Jesus, Trinity, Captivity in Egypt, Captivity in Babylon, Abraham, Noah, Joshua



2. Look at the following Passages under each heading. Write a brief summary of the topic and how it is explained by the passage or its themes:

Creation: Genesis 1 and 2

Fall: Genesis 3

Redemption: Gen 4- 2 Timothy (this one is a bit of a broad section of course. Can you trace briefly what God is going throughout the history of the Bible to redeem His people from the calamity of Genesis 3? Bring your thoughts together as a group and see if you can piece together the different members thoughts into a coherent story line of God's work of redeeming 'Israel'.

Restoration: Revelation

2 Timothy: 1:1-7

Remember and Stay Strong

Hook/Intro

Here is the setting of the first chapter.....Paul is in chains. He remarks about not being 'ashamed of my chains in 1:16'. Furthermore, in verse 17 it says that when Onesiphorus came to Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me...which means to say it was an obscure place, hard to find. Perhaps there were not too many people who were in the Christian network who wanted at all to be associated with Paul at that time. Those who sought to find him may have had great difficulty in doing so. So he was in a place hard to find and a place where he was chained....prison.

Chapter 2 verse 9 goes on to tell us he was in a place with criminals, an imprisonment as a criminal. Even so the Word of God, he acknowledges, is not imprisoned. Further in chapter 4 we get a little closer to the heart of this man. He knows he's near his own execution, chapter 4 verse 6, "I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure has come." He knows his death is imminent, he knows it is near. And what makes it so very sad, down in verse 16, when he was arrested and set to defend himself it says, "At my first offense no one supported me but all deserted me," and then says with such loving kindness, "May it not be counted against them," which sounds like Stephen when he was being stoned praying for the ones who stoned him and like Christ who when being crucified asked the Father to forgive His crucifiers. But he says, "At my first offense no one supported me," everyone was afraid of the persecution and they left him on his own. That is the situation. Not only is he experiencing physical discomfort but the deep emotional pain of having been deserted by everybody. That's the gratitude that a redeemed church has for the beloved source of that message of redemption? That's all he can expect out of people to whom literally he gave his life in the expounding of the gospel of Jesus Christ? He only has one friend with him, verse 11, only Luke is with me. Only Luke was somewhere nearby and it may be that Luke was a part of the letter in the sense that it could have been even dictated to him, if not written by Paul in that dungeon.

Going back to chapter 1 for a moment and verse 15, we find a little more about his situation and the sorrow and sadness of it. In verse 15 it says, "You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia...that's Asia Minor...all of them in the area of Ephesus and the surrounding area turned away from me." Not only is there no one to his defense, not only is there no one but Luke in Rome to be alongside of him, but no one in Asia Minor has stuck true to the Apostle. They've all defected. What sadness. What a way to come to the end of your ministry. When you should be having accolades and you should be literally embraced by all the people who have loved you because you brought them Christ, instead you're alone, you're in a pit in the company of criminals and no one around to care.

In chapter 4 we get a little deeper into the heart of Paul in the sadness of the time. Verse 10 he says, "For Demas having loved this present world has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica," must have broken his heart. "Crescens, he's gone to Galatia; Titus, he's gone to Dalmatia." Verse 12, "Tychicus I sent to Ephesus." Backing up one verse to 11 again, "Only Luke is with me." What a sad time. Nobody to defend him. Nobody to be with him. And he's still so concerned about ministry, one man forsakes him, Demas, and the other he sends on missions of the gospel...Titus, Tychicus and Crescens have gone to minister and I'm alone.

Boy, when I think about that I wonder how it would be to spend your whole life in absolute total self-sacrifice, giving yourself up for a people so they might come to know Christ and then be literally alone at the end. Sad time. And he has needs...he has needs. He is lonely. Chapter 1 verse 4 he says, "I long to see you, Timothy...I long to see you," it's a very strong word as we shall see in a moment. He literally hurts inside over the pain of wanting to have the companionship of Timothy.

Chapter 4 verse 9 he repeats to Timothy, "Make every effort to come to me soon. I need you, Timothy, and I don't think I have very long." And then in verse 11 he says, "Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service." That was the same Mark that once Paul said "I don't want him in my company, he's a coward, he doesn't have courage," and he split up with Barnabas over that issue, now he wants Timothy to come and bring that beloved child in the faith also, Mark.

And then in verse 13 he says, "And when you come, bring the cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus and the books, especially the parchments." He needed things for his own physical comfort. Bring me the cloak, at least it will be a place on the stone where I can lie down and it will keep me warm when I need that. Bring me that cloak, a cloak of warmth, a cloak of rest, a cloak of privacy, if nothing else. And bring the books, the parchments, the things most dear to his heart, the things on which was written the Word of God. In verse 21, again he says, "Make every effort to come before winter." Please hurry, Timothy.

Your heart almost breaks when you come to understand the scene. Apparently Nero had wanted to kill him already one time but something had stopped Nero and he had been spared from the lions of death, as it were. If for no other reason God spared him then in order that he might write this marvelous second epistle that we might be blessed by it. So it's probably about 67 A.D. or so as he takes up pen or dictates to Luke and this is what's on his heart. He's coming to the end of his life. He says in chapter 4, "I have finished the course, I fought the good fight, I've kept the faith, I'm ready to be offered, this is it. And I want to say this before I go..." And he writes to Timothy because Timothy is the key to carrying on the work. So what he is doing in 2 Timothy is passing the torch, passing the baton, passing the mantle, as it were, of the prophet. He at this particular time is in his upper sixties, maybe 66 or 67 years of age and having spent his life now ready to go to be with the Lord, having accomplished all that God wanted him to accomplish. Timothy is in his upper thirties, maybe 36 or 37, and carries the brunt of responsibility for ministry and extending the kingdom in the next generation. Timothy is his child in the faith, his protégé, his student, his disciple. And Timothy faces tough times, persecution, hostility, animosity, resentment to the message, resistance to the truth. And it will not be easy.

We believe that at the time of the writing of this, Timothy is still in Ephesus. He's been there three to five years. Sometime between when Paul left him there and when Paul writes this letter he has seen him. Perhaps he went back to Ephesus and they met there, but Timothy is still in Ephesus. We believe that because of the reference to Ephesus in chapter 1:18 and also a further reference to Ephesus in chapter 4 verse 12 where he says, "I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus." In other words, I know you're coming to be with me, so I sent Tychicus to take over for you there. So we assume from that that he is still at Ephesus. It's been three to five years trying to set that church right, it's been a very very difficult time. But Paul wants to be sure Timothy carries on the work.

Can I give you a little insight into great men of God? They have a sense of mission that expands beyond their own life. They are not driven by ambition, they are driven by mission. They are not driven by their own sense of success or their own need to attain, they are consumed by the bigger picture. And it was far more important to Paul that the work go on than that his life go on. He does not write his last letter and say, "Woe is me, look what's happened, all of this I have given and now I have nothing." He does not write and castigate the people who have refused to show their heads and identify with him. He writes to carry on the mission because great men of God are moved not by personal comfort, personal success, personal attainment, but by mission. They

see themselves as engulfed in something beyond their own life time. And the desire of his heart is to pass the baton and carry on the work and build up a new generation of godly men. The specific instruction to Timothy is with that in regard. "Timothy, you'll have to do this to carry on the work." And the work must carry on. The work that Jesus began must carry on until Jesus comes and finishes it Himself.

*Now, with that as a general understanding, his instruction to Timothy begins in chapter 1 verse 6 and runs all the way to the end of the epistle. The whole epistle is basically instruction to Timothy for how Timothy is to carry on the mission, the work, the mandate, the Kingdom ministry. It's clear, it's direct, it is demanding exhortation. It calls for the best that Timothy or any other man or woman of God has to offer. But what you have to understand beneath the surface is, it is very impassioned because Paul is very concerned. Listen carefully. He is concerned not only about the mission itself but about the state of Timothy. He's concerned about Timothy...knows him well, knows his strengths, knows his weaknesses. He cares for Timothy and the work that Christ wants to do through him. **John Macarthur***

Audience and Theme: *The Pastoral Epistles were probably written to the Ephesian church. For sure, there were some false teachings being spread that were damaging the Church. Paul sees the teaching as serious enough that he must give authority for it to be addressed. Titus and Timothy are younger leaders in the church whom Paul authorizes to teach and rebuke in His and Christ's name. The two recipients were not 'Pastors' in our traditional sense, but rather leaders sent with authority sent to instruct believers for an unspecified time. They were sent on a mission of sorts to accurately defend the truth of the Gospel and so restore some to true faith as well as 'liberate some from death'!*

There are two major opinions amongst commentators on the situation to which Paul is addressing in these Epistles. One thought is that there seemed to be a false teaching going around related to an 'over-realized eschatology'. There were some that were teaching 'the resurrection had already taken place'. (2 Timothy 2:18) This is pretty elaborate wording I know. Essentially some seem to have been teaching that the resurrection of Jesus that believers were waiting for to free them from this life had already happened. They taught that the blessings that the afterlife promised were already here! They believed eternal salvation had come. This changed a lot about how they saw life and the world around them.

They were starting to live ascetic lives of spiritual pride essentially removing themselves from the world that surrounded them. Some gave up marriage! They lived strict 'spiritual' lives apart from the world. There were believers that were disregarding Biblical teaching about the ethics of living out the Christian life. They weren't living as lights for the Gospel in hope of salvation to come. Before you judge them as crazy, one can actually easily correlate the situation to today. The ever-present Christian sub-culture flourishes wherever Christians gather and cloister together. We can remove ourselves from the culture and live lives that lack influence for the Gospel. It goes to show that theology does matter!

Another thought is that there was a false teaching related to legalism in the Church. You can see it at the beginning of 1 Timothy- 'charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith' 1:3-4 or 'some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared. Who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.' 4:1-4

Perhaps there was a teaching circulating to reign in the actions of believers. Maybe some were taking liberties in the freedom of the Gospel and some teachers were putting legalism into the process of returning to ethical Christian behavior? Faith seems to be on the line vs. a legalistic requirement of righteous living.

Either way, the words from the pastoral epistles from Paul are important to us who want to live for the Gospel in our world today. Whether from legalism or from another bad doctrine, there was bad teaching that was affecting the way Christian faith was being lived out. So also today we are in a culture where one can find any teaching under the sun from the Bible that they could want to find if they so choose. We need to be a part of harnessing the power of the true Gospel that interacts with culture and changes culture, but does not acquiesce to culture. Keep these thoughts constantly in mind as you study 2 Timothy. It will continually be a cipher to help us understand and apply what Paul has to say to us today.

If you want to learn more about the issues surrounding the audience, listen to D.A. Carson's Flow Thought in 1 Timothy 2: <http://www.cbmw.org/Conferences/Different-by-Design-2009/Session-1-The-Flow-of-Thought-in-1-Timothy-2>

Look

1. Introduction (1:1-2)

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus"

- ✓ What is an apostle?

One who is sent on a mission, we are all therefore little 'a' apostles. Specifically Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ sent on a mission by him directly at Damascus.

Go back and read Acts 9:1-32. Observe together what happens.

- ✓ Why was it important here for Paul to emphasize his apostleship sent by God?

He was coming against false teaching in the church. He had to establish credibility. In this sense it was not boasting for Paul to mention his authority. He was not saying that he was special on his own, but rather had a special role given by God. In other words....listen up!

- ✓ Given that this comes through Paul from God....what is the significance for us today as readers in modern times?

It has authority for us today as well! God's commands and exhortations are timeless.

There may be some cultural attachments that we need to think through, but the overall message is still binding on us today.

- ✓ What is similar to your own stories of conversion?

- ✓ What is not similar?

- ✓ What is it that Paul understood at his conversion?

There was an incredible understanding of Jesus' Lordship that Paul saw right away. He realized that giving his life to Christ demanded everything of Him. He was compelled by such to preach the message of Christ immediately. Acts 9:20- Immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." Imagine what was happening in Paul's heart and mind. Just days ago he was persecuting followers of Jesus! He understood the radical transformation that had taken place. He realized his incredible need for the rescue of a savior and as such fell wholeheartedly in love with He who had saved him from such waywardness.

- ✓ To what 'promises' might he be referring to? Where do we see the promises of God in the big picture of the Bible? What are some OT promises vs. NT promises?

Comment: *You must see the NT and its individual books in light of the big story of the Bible. You are in danger of interpreting or applying the individual NT books and exhortations incorrectly if you do not.*

A glaring example: Many say that the God of the OT is mean and harsh, while the God of the NT is loving and benevolent. Those ideas come from a lack of understanding of the connection between the Old and New Testaments. In the OT we do have pictures of God acting in seemingly harsh ways. We also quickly see the loving character of Christ stand out in the NT. However, look a little closer. As you see the grand plan of God play out in the OT, you see not only his harsh treatment of those that stray from Him. But right alongside that demeanor you see the loving, patient, long-suffering relationship with His chosen people,

Israel. What is more, in the NT, through Christ's mouth, you have some of the most harsh language explicating the terrors of hell that you find anywhere in the Bible.

Often times our disconnect comes from the temporal vs. eternal nature of God's punishment displayed. We are a natural, physical culture that sees life in the here and now instead of the reality of eternity. When, in the OT we see God's character of justice being played out in the temporal we become uncomfortable and reject that aspect. ie. Harsh punishments for Israel and its foes. His love on the other hand is actually much more long-term in the OT and you must not miss that. It is seen fully in the context of the whole story of God working out salvation over hundreds and hundreds of years. We have a hard time seeing life in that context.

On the other hand in the NT we see God's love temporally displayed in Christ. He heals the weak and feeds the poor. Our culture loves that kind of display. It is easy to grasp. Yet we quickly overlook the long term, eternal nature of his justice communicated. It is not lessened but actually ramped up in the NT. Look at Revelation 14. That is really scary stuff and it is meant to scare us indeed! The reality is that Western life is centered around the here and now and indeed much of life is aimed at extending it....diet, exercise, safety etc. In such a culture we will miss the big picture of God's character and will be in danger of not 'Seeing Him Rightly' and in the end not 'Living Rightly'.

Back to 2 Timothy: Here we have a very significant statement right at the beginning of the letter. Paul's work is 'according to the promise of life'. What promise is he referring to? Many scholars think that he is actually referring back to the story of God's promise for us.

Genesis 1-2: God created the heavens and the earth...so on and so on. On the 7th day, different from every previous day, there is no end....and God rested. Why was there no night nor end to the day? It is as if God were indeed inviting us into that same rest that he experienced. It is not that He no longer works, but His work is done out of a state of rest, that all is complete. He invites us into a state where we acknowledge that all is done and there is nothing left outside of His control. That is real life!

Abraham: God made a covenant with Abraham. You must understand the ramifications of this covenant in the establishment of 'life' for us.

Genesis 15:5-6 "Look toward Heaven and number the stars, if you are able to number them. Then he said to him, "so shall your offspring be." And he believed the Lord and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Do you understand the magnitude of that promise? It was then established in blood! God was promising life to people through the man Abraham and his descendants. These people would come to be known as the nation of Israel. It was both a physical nation but now also analogous to anyone who is in covenant relationship with Jesus. Jesus' blood was foreshadowed in the covenant establishing blood of circumcision given to Abraham.

God has been carrying out his plan for 'life' for his people from the beginning of time. And this whole plan leads to God being seen as more glorious and beautiful. That is indeed the greatest thing in all the universe. The greatest thing, God, being greatly seen is the greatest thing! You and I being in the plan of God are part of the greatest thing in all the world!

So, Paul, starting his letter off to Timothy, remarks that his ministry, Timothy's ministry and by extension, our ministry, has been given to us before the beginning of time in God's divine plan of giving life to his people and so giving Glory to Himself! Whew....we are only one verse in! The Bible is loaded with great stuff if you dig a little deeper and ask 'why is this here'?

In others words, long before the creation of the world, God had Paul and Timothy in mind to extend His glory. When God then promised 'life' to Abraham thousands of years before he had Paul and Timothy in mind to carry out that promise! So you and I by extension, followers of Paul and Timothy in Christ are called for 'such a time as this'. We are part of God's divine plan to extend God's fame throughout the earth! (end comment)

- ✓ How do you find Grace, Mercy and Peace? What do those words mean to you? Why does Paul pray them for Timothy?

Think about what living out this important calling of extending God's fame would do to you and those around you if it were not lived out of grace, mercy and peace.....what would the affects be if it were lived out of striving to earn something from God? What if you were desperately trying to find 'life' through what you do for God? What if you truly were to live a passionate life for God's glory from a place of grace, mercy and peace? Contrast the two different types of 'life'.

2. Thanksgiving and Encouragement (1:3-7)

- ✓ What are the main points Paul is communicating in this section? Why is it here?
Paul Prays for Timothy often
Paul has great fondness for Timothy- members him with tears and longs to see him
Reminds Timothy of his faith and when it began
Encourages Timothy to move still forward- Fan the flame
Reminds Timothy to not be fearful

Comment: *Can you imagine what these words would be like to Timothy? Imagine that you know John Piper or for that matter, Martin Luther, or John Calvin. Imagine that one of them wrote you an intensely personal letter reminding you of their concern for you and their joy in knowing you and longing to see you. Then they remind you of your salvation of which they were a witness to see come about. Imagine what sort of confidence that would give you as you perhaps were headed of to college....or are headed off overseas to a ministry field. That would be powerful coming from one of them for sure....how about coming from the apostle Paul...sent by Jesus Christ before the beginning of time according to the promise of life?!*

- ✓ Do you have anyone in your life that encourages you this way? Have you ever?
- ✓ Why does Paul say that he has a clear conscience?

Comment: *There could be two ways to look at this. One, he has a clear conscience because he prays often. Therefore his conscience is clear because he has done his part, done his duty. What do you think about that way of looking at it in light of what Paul has already said in this chapter? Secondly, it could be that as he reflects on the great story that he is a part of, called by God through the grace of Jesus, his conscience is clear so that he can indeed pray from that place of peace and life. How do you see it?*

- ✓ What will give you a clear conscience before God?
There is only once place where a clear conscience will come from before God. That is from the grace and mercy that he offers! Grace means getting something we don't deserve. Mercy means not getting something that we do deserve. Do you see the difference and the

importance of both? Life and ministry to Paul must be lived from here. Often it is said how great Paul was. Really, it was how great he thought God to be. That God's grace and mercy was so profound to him that he lived in abandonment to his own pursuit of life and peace.

- ✓ Why do you think Paul refer to his 'ancestors'?

Hopefully you are getting this already. Paul does not see Christianity as a 'new' religion. He does not see the OT as unrelated to his mission. There is a seamless link with the past history of God and his people that is continuing on in the new covenant of which Paul represents. Paul continually sees the big picture and so his theology reflects such. Like Paul, for us to understand the great message of Christ and communicate it to our culture, we need to see the big context of the story and not truncate the overarching beauty of the grand narrative.

Transition: Paul goes on to encourage Timothy in three main areas. He tells him to remember his: **Conversion, Confidence, and Contribution**

Discuss together:

- ✓ What is your **Conversion** story?
 - *Share with the group if you have time. Maybe one or two each week.*
- ✓ Is it significant that Timothy's father is not mentioned in his conversion?

Comment: *I think it may be very significant. Where is Timothy's dad? The females in the family are the ones that have had the spiritual formation influence in Timothy's life. Now what does Timothy struggle with? Timidity..... Might that not be the case if his father was more involved in his life? This is all speculation and argument from silence, but it is worth thinking about. Just as we live in a culture today where male role models are often absent in the church....so was it the same 2000 years ago? Is this another case of the 'Silence of Adam'? If you are a male going through this study, take head. The church needs you to step up! If Paul were to write today....would he find Timothy's father present in his spiritual formation? Would he find males in the church responding to Jesus' call?*

- ✓ What is your **Confidence** now? What is evidence of His reality in your life, what builds your confidence? How have you seen it at work?
- ✓ What is your **Contribution**? Do you know how God has wired you uniquely to make a difference for His kingdom?

Took

- Write a short letter to yourself. What would you want someone of influence to say to you as an encouragement in your Conversion, Confidence and Contribution? Keep the letter in your Bible and as you near the end of this study, you will review it and see what you would add or take away.

2 Timothy: 1:8-18

A Holy Calling

Hook

- ✓ Do you feel shame ever about being a Christian? Why? What circumstances in particular bring shame?
- ✓ In Contrast, when do you feel 'strongest' for God? When are you the most confident?

Transition:

This is a powerful section where Paul tells us about his calling and exhorts Timothy....and us to join him. This is one of the first major sections of scripture that I personally memorized and it has stayed with me. Power amidst suffering, purpose and grace, death and life, shame and confidence, desertion and steadfastness; there are many contrasts in this passage painting a poignant backdrop for Paul's words to stay the course and follow Christ to the end.

Look

1. Entrusted with the Gospel 1:8-12

- ✓ What is the argument in this section...what are the main points Paul is communicating?
 - Perhaps give some time here in your group for self-discovery. Give 10 minutes to examine the passage and come up with a short outline of what the essence of Paul's exhortation is in this section.
 - Don't be ashamed of Christ- Why? Their suffering is a chance to experience the power of God. Would you believe that some of the most powerful movements in the history of the church were carried out largely by suffering Christians under persecution? China is a great example today.
 - We were saved for a purpose!
 - Not because of our greatness. Do you really believe that? How would that be lived out practically if we really believed that is by NOTHING that we have done that we have been saved?
 - Assurance and Confidence in Christ is what has lead Paul away from shame.
- ✓ Referring back to 1:1-7, why was Paul not ashamed and why should Timothy not be ashamed?
 - "Never forget in the dark what you learn in the light." I am not sure who said that, but it is a great quote. Paul remembers and causes Timothy to reflect on what he learned and was given in the 'light'. Now that things are a bit tough...a 'dark' time, he is...we are, tempted to doubt and be timid. Timothy needs to remember. That is always one of our biggest issues. We forget what God has done in the past, just like Israel did. Such a short time after God freed them from Egypt and they crossed the Red Sea, they started wining, grumbling and complaining. How quickly we forget!
- ✓ From where does our culture derive purpose? What is the contrast from which Paul steers the foundation of our purpose? What are the implications?

Comment: We are a people, perhaps more now than ever before in a desperate search to validate our existence. There was a time, when life was about surviving. It was about living, eating, and going on

to the next day. Still in a large portion of our world, people work to eat and survive. In American culture there has been a radical shift. We work in order to play! We work in order to consume more. We are not known for what we create but rather for what we have. In such a culture, our identity is left to evaluate in comparison to the person next to us. How do I measure up to the Jones' down the street. How do I compare to the others in my class etc.

Paul's identity and purpose is grounded in an entirely different sphere. He is grounded firstly in grace. He realizes how desperately in need of Christ he is. I imagine he often reflects on what life would be like without Christ. This may be a good exercise for your group. What would your lives look like w/o Christ? Of course there is danger if they would not look anything different. Second, grace does not lead him to stand on the sidelines because he has his fire insurance. Grace leads Paul to get busy with the purposes that God has laid out for him. He is called to a Holy Calling. His purpose is in line with God's restoration that has been going on since Genesis 3. He realizes that he is swept up in God's wonderful plan that transcends history. Paul has a reason to wake up every day. It is not to consume more or prove his worth. It is to honor God and live out his Holy Calling!

- ✓ Of what significance is the death and resurrection of Jesus to Paul? What foundations does he derive from it?

Comment: It is everything. It is the foundation on which Paul's very life his very identity rests. Is your group convinced of the death and resurrection of Jesus? Talk about it. Ask some tough questions. How do they know it really happened? Some questions follow.

It says that Jesus abolished **death** on the cross. Examine that for a bit together. What does it mean? There is a word that is important in the NT in this regard. 'Propitiation'. Jesus had to make 'propitiation' for the sins of the people is what Hebrews 2:17 says. Here is what Wikipedia says about the word: (In Christianity, Propitiation is a theological term denoting that by which God is rendered propitious, i.e., that 'satisfaction' or 'appeasement' by which it becomes consistent with His character and government to pardon and bless sinners. The propitiation does not procure His love or make Him loving; rather, it renders it consistent for Him to exercise His love towards sinners.) That is a good definition. Therefore Jesus propitiates the Father or satisfies the father's justice...and his justice requires a death penalty for sin. The Father is made propitious to where He no longer needs to carry out his penalty of death against the sinner because the Son has taken that penalty. This is called penal substitutionary atonement, a very important concept. Now get this. Jesus is both the propitiation (n.) and the propitiator (v.) because He and the Father are one. There is incredible depth and beauty here. He satisfies himself with His own death. Therefore He pays the price that only he can pay and yet keeps his perfect character of love and justice intact. If he just cancelled death....he would not be just...he would cease to be God. You may say that you want him to just cancel the death penalty. But you really don't want him to do that. That would mean that there is no justice any longer. When the Holocaust is accounted for...there would be no justice carried out. We need a God who is both loving and just and Jesus' propitiation is what makes that possible.

- ✓ What happened on the cross?
- ✓ Why did Jesus have to die on the cross? Couldn't he have just forgiven us?

2. Hold Fast: 1:12-18

- ✓ Are you convinced....honestly? How do we become convinced? How would your life be different if you truly were convinced? What has been entrusted to you?

- ✓ Talk about your faith...is your faith solid? Would Jesus call you 'full of faith'? What are the dangers to your faith that lurk around you in particular?
- ✓ What would it mean to guard the good deposit well? How is the Holy Spirit connected here? What will keep you in the game for the long haul?

The Holy Spirit is the key here. If this stuff is all true, then we have a counselor, and advocate for us. We are not alone in this race! You must remember that and you must remind your group of that. He wants you to guard the deposit even more than you do yourself! We are dead in the water without the Holy Spirit coming alongside. You may want to take your group to John 14:15-15:11 to explore the connection to the HS further in this context. Paul was desperately in need of the Holy Spirit and communicated such often. How would we not also see that need as well. So you had better understand some teaching related to the HS. If you or your group does not, perhaps take a week to go through some material. There are several resources on the 'resources' page at www.unccornerstone.com.

Took

- Do you know your calling? As Paul challenges Timothy to adopt his calling amidst the letter's overall context of a growing, Christian, safe sub-culture, are there areas in which you need to leave timidity? This week journal related to these topics. Perhaps search other Pauline letters for other statements of Paul's purpose: Ephesians 3:1-11, Philippians 1:12-30, Colossians 1:24-2:15. What are themes of Paul's calling that you would perhaps adopt as your calling as well?

2 Timothy 2:1-7

A Life of Endurance

Review

Spend a few minutes reviewing what we've talked about so far in the study. Have each person share:

- ✓ What are one or two things Paul has shared with Timothy so far that have stuck with you?
We want everyone to remember we're reading an entire book, so each section relates with the ones we have previously studied. And remember, those also fall in the broader context of the Bible as a whole, too!

Hook

- ✓ Who has had the biggest impact on you spiritually? Why? What characteristics about this person do you respect?

Transition: In this passage, Paul encourages Timothy towards 3 things: strength, a multiplied life and endurance. We'll dive into more of what each of those mean in this study.

Look

1. Strength (v.1)

- ✓ We notice in v. 1 that Paul says "you, **then...**" Whenever you see a transition word, such as "therefore" or "then" in this case, it means it ties in with what the author has previously been talking about. So, how does v.1-2 tie in with what we read last week?

Remember that last week Paul spoke a lot about shame. That we are not to be ashamed of the Gospel, which we have been entrusted with (and the Gospel that has changed our lives!) So Paul is saying, Timothy, be proud, not ashamed of the Gospel. IN LIGHT OF THAT, then, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus and bold to share the Gospel with others.

- ✓ What do you think "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" means? How might the world apply this passage and how might followers of Christ follow this exhortation? What difference would there be in the resulting fruit?

Timothy is exhorted throughout this letter to be strong and to be bold. Paul is reminding him here, though, that he can't just muster up courage. He can't just try really hard and produce strength. Paul is telling him, he can be strong in the circumstances he is facing through the GRACE he has in Christ. "The grace of Christ enables Timothy to be strong" (NIV Commentary). So what does that even mean?! If we are dependant on our own strength and effort, the Gospel tells us, we will inevitably fail. But one of the beautiful things about the Gospel is that grace is extended to us. It is as we depend on Christ and his power at work within us (through the Holy Spirit) that we are made strong. The focus is on Christ and his power at work in Timothy, not on Timothy's gifts, knowledge or strength. Paul is essentially reminding Timothy to remember that God's grace will sustain him and give him strength as he takes on all the hardships he will face as a leader. This would be encouraging that the pressure is off, so to speak, for Timothy to just try to be strong in and of himself. He is called, just like we are, to be dependant on Christ, not muster up strength by our own effort.

One can imagine in the world, a person trying on their own to be full of grace. Some people might even come across that way. But you have to wonder what the underlying heart condition might be. A person disciplined to live on some sort of grace motivation, actually very quickly moves to being

motivated by their performance in their discipline and so the opposite of grace. Have you ever experienced that?

- ✓ How would you say our culture defines strength? How is that different from the view Scripture gives us?

Our culture really screams at us that we need to be self-sufficient. We need to have it all together, be strong, and not need anyone or anything else. If we have weakness we need to hide it or pretend it doesn't exist. That's pretty different from what Scripture tells us. Jesus repeatedly tells us that it is actually the broken hearted he welcomes and is near to. Look at what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. That is a true picture of a strength rooted in Christ. The main point here is that Paul is calling Timothy to be strong, and that is one characteristic that should mark his life as he leads this church in Ephesus. But again, this is a strength produced by Christ as we are yielded to him.

2. A multiplied life: 2:2

- ✓ What “things” is Paul talking about in this verse?

Paul is talking about the Gospel here. Remember that there were false teachings, either related to legalism or view of eschatology, going on at this time in Ephesus (refer back to Intro portion of the study for specifics). Especially in light of that, it is essential that Timothy protects the truths of the Gospel and passes them on to others. What he has heard Paul teach and base his life and ministry on, he is exhorting Timothy to protect and pass on.

- ✓ What does the word “entrust” mean/imply? Why do you think Paul uses that language when talking about the Gospel?

Notice that not only is Timothy told here to “entrust” the Gospel to others, he was also reminded in 1:14 that the Gospel was entrusted to him as well. When something is entrusted to you, it is something of value. If someone entrusts something to you, then they are trusting you to care for something of great worth. So Paul is saying that his teachings (i.e. the Gospel) are valuable and need to be well taken care of as it's passed to others.

Example: *Renting vs. Owning.....Paul is asking Timothy and indeed us, to be ‘owners’ not just renters! Have you ever owned something vs. renting it. How about a rental car. How do you treat a rental car vs. the one you own? When you own something you invest into it. You take great care of it....it is entrusted to you. When you rent, you simply use it and return it in any shape. Be owners!*

- ✓ What characteristics is Timothy supposed to look for in those he entrusts the Gospel to? Why would those things be important especially given the context of the letter? What might he be looking for in today's world?

Those who are reliable and qualified to teach others is what Timothy should look for. A better translation for qualified might be “competent,” Another way to phrase “reliable” is faithful. It is important for Timothy to look for people who are faithful to this Gospel they will be entrusted with. Remember again the context...there are false teachings prevalent at this time. It is crucial that the Gospel is passed down through people who will be faithful not to distort it. It is crucial that these people will also be competent to teach these same unaltered truths to others. Paul is so concerned about this because he loves the Gospel. Remember that he knows he is about to die soon. One of the main things he wants to challenge Timothy to do is make sure the Gospel is preserved and goes forth to others unaltered. And the main way he is to do that, according to this passage, is to pour into the lives of believers and train them up in the Gospel.

- ✓ How many generations of people are represented in this verse (v.2)? How does this strike you?
4 generations – The things you have heard me (Paul-1) say in the presence of many witnesses (including Timothy 2) entrust to reliable men (3) who will also be qualified to teach others (4).
- ✓ This is a picture of what is sometimes called “spiritual multiplication.” How have you seen this play out in your life? How was the Gospel entrusted to you? How have you entrusted it to others?
*I usually like to take a minute and draw out a diagram of what this looks like. For example, my discipler in college, Lisa, shared the Gospel with me and poured into my life when I was a freshman. As I began to grow in my faith I led a study and began pouring into others. One of those girls was named Shannon. She heard the Gospel her freshman year and her life changed. Later in college, she began to disciple other UNC women. She ended up going on STINT in Lebanon and poured into women’s lives there. The point is (and it makes it clearer to draw it out and have a visual) that Lisa had no idea the impact she would have on Shannon’s life and even in the lives of women in Lebanon. But she was faithful to pour into me, I into Shannon and so on, so that the Gospel moves forward. As a leader, it would be really neat for you to diagram this out. Who poured into your life? Now, who are you pouring into in the study? And since you may be leading older people now, who are they pouring into as well. This is what we mean by spiritual multiplication...that the Gospel more effectively moves forward as we pour into and train people that can turn around and do the same in other people’s lives. Consider this quote:
“The sound teaching Timothy has learned from Paul is to be passed on to those capable of transmitting it to other generations. This is the lifeline of Christianity. It has been said that Christianity is only one generation away from extinction. While that is improbable, it is theoretically true in that unless the life, faith, and teachings of vital Christianity are actively committed to the next generation, Christianity could become a footnote of history.” (NIV Commentary on 2 Timothy)*

3. Endurance: 2:3-7

- ✓ What do these 3 illustrations (soldier, athlete and farmer) have in common? Bring out all that you think of.....
Although they seem pretty disjointed at first, each of them are pictures of endurance. There is some extent of waiting involved in each illustration- waiting to win the battle, get the crown, to see the crops yielded. Each of these people sacrifice and suffer to some extent for something down the road. Why does the soldier fight?....Because of his devotion to his officer. He is able to endure the hardship of fighting because of the greater good of pleasing the officer. Why does the athlete run? Because of what is promised for him ahead. He is able to endure and face the hardships of the race because of the greater good of winning and receiving the crown ahead. And the farmer is able to endure because what he sows now he will reap later.
- ✓ Why are the soldier, athlete and farmer willing to sacrifice/suffer?
They sacrifice because of what they’re sacrificing FOR. The end justifies the means. Because of the outcome (pleasing the commander, winning the crown, receiving the crops) enduring is worth it.
- ✓ So why is Paul saying this to Timothy? What is his point with these illustrations?
Paul, throughout this letter, is reminding Timothy that the Gospel is worth it. It is worth suffering for. It is worth standing up to false teachers for. It is worth not being ashamed of. It is worth even giving your life for, which Paul will soon do. He is using these illustrations to remind Timothy that he must endure for the sake of the Gospel and it going forth. Be strong, Timothy, because this Gospel is worthy and beautiful. Be pouring your life into others, Timothy, because it is a message important enough for them to hear. Endure, Timothy, because this life isn’t all there is and we have hope past what we can see in

our current circumstances. Paul wants to convey to Timothy that whatever he might come up against, he should stay strong and endure for the sake of the Gospel- because it's worth it!

Took

- Do you really believe the Gospel is worth sacrificing for? If it truly was, how might life look different?
- What in your life can be more important than Jesus and the gospel? Be honest.
- What might God be calling you to surrender now (like the soldier, athlete, and farmer) for the greater good of the Gospel?
- FOR NEXT TIME: Before we can entrust the Gospel to others, we need to know it ourselves, right? As homework to discuss next time, have each person in the study write out the Gospel in their own words. If you were explaining this good news to someone who had never heard, what would be essential to include? (Also have them look at “What’s so good about the good news?” resource to discuss next time).

What’s so Good About Good News?

(from CCC NSD resources)

In the following passages identify everything that is good news about the gospel.

Ephesians 1:1-14

Ephesians 2:1-10

Romans 5:1-11

Colossians 2:8-15

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

1 Peter 1:3-9

Compare these findings with **Romans 3:9-28**. List everything you learn about the lost nature of people

2 Timothy 2:8-13

A Future Hope

Hook

- ✓ What is something you hope for but don't have yet? How does that hope effect your life?

Transition:

One of the big themes of 2 Timothy as a whole is encouragement to be faithful and endure (which we talked about last week). Paul knows that he has a limited amount of time on earth left and one of the main things he wants to leave with his disciple Timothy is to remain faithful. Last week we looked at our call to endure. In this section, Paul reminds Timothy (and us) of WHY/HOW we can endure.

Look:

1. Remember: 2:8-10

- ✓ What specific things does Paul want Timothy to remember? Why would those in particular be encouraging for Timothy to remember?

He wants him to:

(1) Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead.

(2) Jesus Christ, descended from David. Why these things? This is the essence of the Gospel, Christ's death and resurrection. That is what Paul has based his life and ministry on and must be what Timothy does as well. In all the overwhelming circumstances Timothy was facing and would face in the future, Paul boils it down for him: focus on Christ. It would also be encouraging, with all that Timothy will face, to remember specifically Jesus' resurrection because he has conquered death and is victorious. Whatever Timothy may face (his mentor being executed soon, false teachers infiltrating his church, persecution, etc) the bottom line is that Jesus is who he claimed to be (seen through the resurrection) and is already victorious (also seen through his "rising from the dead"). Why would Paul include the fact that Jesus is descended from David? There is a theme running throughout this letter of Paul reminding Timothy that the Gospel is far bigger and more important than just his life. Throughout even these first 2 chapters Paul has reminded Timothy about his heritage (1:5). It is as if Paul wants Timothy to grasp that he is part of such a larger story. Yes God will use him to help the Gospel move forward but it won't stop once Timothy's life is over. And God has been at work long before Timothy was even born. Paul reminds him of this with even that one mention of Jesus descending from David...God's plan for redeeming mankind has eternally existed. And even more substantial than that, Paul mentions David here to remind Timothy that Jesus descending from David is a picture/reminder that God fulfills his promises. The Messiah that would come through the lineage of David came and died and was resurrected.

- ✓ Why is it important to "remember" who Christ is and what he has done in our life?

We can get so focused on the here and now. What I need to do today. The monotony of school. Relationships can be in the forefront of life. It is so crucial for me to remember, like we talked about earlier in this study, that I have a purpose, a holy calling. I need to remember Jesus' work so I will grow in my knowledge and experience of him and for a renewed perspective of what life is really all about. If there is time, a great passage where we're called to remember is Deuteronomy 8:2-18. Our sinful default is to make life about us and what our hard work has accomplished. Remembering who Christ is

and what he's done in my life reminds me of God's grace in my life, how dependent on him I really am, and should drive me towards worship!

- ✓ What do you, personally, tend to forget about the Gospel and who you are in Christ?
Have each person share if possible. Some things we can tend to forget is that our righteousness and justification is based solely on faith in Christ's work, not our works. We can forget our adoption, that we are God's sons and daughters and the security that means for us. There are lots of things people could share, those are just some examples (Look at resource in Gospel Transformation, p.121).

Note in v. 8 Paul says THIS is my Gospel. Paul is saying Jesus and his resurrection is the essence of that good news. And this is WHY (remember Paul is big in this letter at reminding Timothy of the WHYS) he can endure suffering. Because Christ is worth it and death no longer has victory (over Christ, Paul or Timothy).

- ✓ In v. 9 Paul says that although he is chained up, God's Word isn't. Why do you think he paints that contrast? Why would that be encouraging to Timothy?
From the world's perspective Paul's imprisonment is the final word. He's chained up in prison, end of story. But Paul has a different perspective. Yes he is in chains but God's word is his hope. And that will never be able to be chained or imprisoned. Paul is saying here, live for the eternal. 3 things are eternal- the Trinity, God's Word and the souls of men. It's as if Paul is saying, sure I'm in prison suffering, but this is not all there is. God's word is his hope. You can kill me (which they will) but God's word will go forth. What a comfort this must be for Timothy! Put yourself in his shoes for a minute. His mentor of many many years is about to die. How overwhelming that could have been! But again, Paul reminds Timothy to press on and hope in God's word and see the bigger picture that stretches far beyond Paul, or even Timothy's life, for that matter.
- ✓ What is the connection of Paul's suffering and the elect experiencing Christ?
Throughout his letters Paul says that his suffering is worth it if it brings others to Christ. It's not something we necessarily like to think about, but as you look back at the history of the Christian church, it is often through persecution and suffering that others see the value of Christ. That is often a picture to others of how a Christian's hope is not found on earth AND a picture, like we talked about last week, of the Gospel being worth even giving your life for.

2. Reign 2:11-13

Note: Now Paul will go on in these verses to expound on Christ's death and resurrection, which he mentioned in v. 8. As they ESV study Bible puts it (v.11-13), "this trustworthy statement moves from comfort to challenge and back to comfort: v.11b is a reminder of life even in the face of death; v.12 calls for perseverance; v.13 is a reminder of God's preserving power and faithfulness."

- ✓ What does it mean that "if we died with him, we will also live with him?"
Look at Romans 6:5-11 for more detail on what that means (it unpacks this truth more). As believers, the old self (our flesh) has been crucified and in that we share in Christ's death. We also share in his life, or resurrection. Keep in mind that Paul has been focusing in this passage on Christ being raised from the dead (v.8). So the main thing he is probably conveying here, is for Timothy to remember that since Jesus was raised from the dead, we will also share in that and experience a physical resurrection one day. Again, this would be an encouragement to Timothy with the fear of persecution and maybe death looming over him.

- ✓ Paul then goes on to say “if we endure we will also reign with him.” How would this be encouraging to Timothy?

This ties in with the illustration we talked about last week of the athlete. How can Timothy persevere? Well one reason is that he will be rewarded one day. That shouldn't be his main motivator but it is reality. As believers we both ARE and will one day BE co-heirs with Christ. That would be encouraging when all other things from an earthly perspective may seem chaotic to Timothy. Also remember that Nero is in power in Rome during this time and has been brutal to Christians. From an earthly perspective it may have looked like he was winning and in control. Timothy is reminded by his friend here that Christ is reigning even in the midst of such suffering and he will one day reign with Christ.

- ✓ Paul then says that “if we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.” How can we reconcile what Paul is saying here? Isn't he contradicting himself? What's the difference in disowning and being faithless?

The Greek word for “disown” here may mean “deny/refuse/say no to.” Ultimately if we deny Jesus as Savior he will HAVE TO (because of his justice and what he has said in his word) deny us after death because we haven't believed in him. To deny is in direct opposition of believing/trusting in, which is how we have salvation. Look at 1 John 2:20-23 for another passage on this. So how is this different from being faithless? Here is a good summary, again, from the ESV Study Bible: “in this context, to deny him must entail a more serious offense than being faithless [because there is a distinction made b/w the two in this passage]. Denying Christ envisions final apostasy, in contrast with a temporary lapse in trusting Christ (“if we are faithless”). Those who deny Jesus will be judged forever; but all believers sin, and God is faithful and will pardon, restore, and keep those who are truly his.” So part of the distinction here is that those denying Christ are not believers. What Paul is saying in that last verse is that God is faithful regardless of our degree of faith (provided we have placed our trust in him). God can't NOT be faithful to his children because that would go against his own character.

Took

- What are the implications in your life that even when we are faithless, God will remain faithful?
- How does the promise of reigning with Christ encourage us to persevere?
- We each place our hope in things other than Christ. What might that be in your life?

2 Timothy: 2:14-26

Power of Words

Hook

- ✓ Have you ever said anything careless that you wish you could take back? What were the results? What would you have done differently?

Transition:

Jesus is the Word. God reveals himself through language and He is the very author and foundation of language. Today's academic culture is marked by a philosophy first devised in France called Deconstructionism. History, Language, and even Math are all 'deconstructed' today. They are evaluated in light of the historical and cultural paradigms in which they were and are communicated. Look for it in your classes. They are deconstructed as they relate to a cultural understanding through which the topics are understood. What we think of history is inextricably linked to how we culturally view life, purpose, reality etc. So all of the above subjects are re-evaluated in light of the cultural baggage that we bring into our understanding of each discipline. Therefore it is questioned whether we can really know anything concrete about History. Language is said to be culturally understood. As cultures diverge, who knows if the interpretation once recorded would be the same as we would interpret had it been written today? This thinking transcends into all facets of life and knowledge.

For example: How do we know that what you mean by the word 'tree' is what I mean by the word 'tree'? Your understanding of 'tree' is connected to all sorts of background events and circumstances. You fell out of a tree when you were 5 and broke your arm. A tree fell on your house 5 years ago. Your grandfather was a logger. All these experiences shape your understanding of the word 'tree'. How are we then to communicate in a meaningful rational way where we can be sure that what you are trying to say is heard the same way by the opposite party? Whew....academic and irrelevant you say? Well, let's bring it closer to home.

How do we know that when Jesus used the word 'Sheol' meaning 'Hell' that He meant what we think of when we think of 'Hell'? How do we know that when you say 'God' it is what I think of when I say 'God'? And so how are we to blame anyone if their concept of 'God' does not include the Trinitarian formula with Jesus as Son of God? These are real questions that are really being asked today and are even very alive within the Church.

This section of 2 Timothy talks about 'Words' and Paul says that words matter! They are powerful. A Biblical understanding of language is very important. Without a foundational pattern of language, there actually is room for great doubt whether rational communication is available. Of course our experience tells us that rational communication is indeed possible and so we trust it daily. However apart from Biblical faith, there really is no foundation. And here we have Paul reminding us about the power of words.

Go back to Genesis 1. In the very beginning, God SPOKE! He used words to create. In John 1:1 we are told that "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made." That is powerful related to the thoughts in these paragraphs. The Word...language personified in Christ was there before the beginning of time. Language is valuable to God. It is in fact part of His very essence. Communication between He and the others of the Trinity; between He and us; and that between humanity is important to God. Therefore your words matter! Do you get it? It is not enough just to say "watch what you say to others" today. "Why?" it may be asked, "they are just words and I can say what I want to say". But they

are not just words. Words are a foundational part of our existence and one of the reasons for which God created us...to use words. Words matter to God. What you say...what you don't say. How you say it. Do you use them carelessly? Words affect eternity. Words affect life today. Words matter to God!

Look

- ✓ In light of the theme of the Pastoral Epistles, why is this section here?

This is pretty clear at this point I hope. This is the very issue going on in the church. There are some using words inappropriately teaching some sort of wrong doctrine. It is either a doctrine of legalism or a doctrine related to an over-realized eschatology that said that the resurrection of believers has already happened.

1. Keep Reminding

Note: Paul uses words and he uses them poignantly and powerfully. When you come to this section he starts with 'remind them'. He has already told us to 'remember'. And he has remembered with Timothy what has happened in the past. Remembering is an important theme in the Bible. It is when we forget that we fall away. This form of 'Remind' and the following 'warn' in the NIV and 'charge' in the ESV are complimentary words in the 'present' tense in Greek. They therefore have a more specific meaning of 'Keep Reminding' and concurrently, 'Keep Warning'. One does not remind one time and go on, but we are to constantly remind...and be reminded of what Paul is saying here.

- ✓ What does Paul tell Timothy to 'remind them' as he moves on to some specific warnings and teachings? What are 'these things'?

This is actually a very important clause in the pastoral epistles. 'These things' though not specifically delineated is a phrase used several times in 1/2 Timothy and Titus. If we look directly preceding this section to 2:1-13, here are probably several things here that are here referred to that are important to the Church and that you and I are reminded of: Immediately preceding is a great promise: If we did with Him, we will also live with him etc.... The lineage of what they are involved in...back the great patriarch David 1:8. There will be suffering 1:9 but there is hope amidst suffering!

Perhaps the most important previous reference is in 2:2, "what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses". What were these things?

- ✓ What are 'these things' that might be the central teaching of Christianity that we need to be constantly reminded? (make a list together)

ie. Death and resurrection of Jesus, substitutionary atonement (remember from before), salvation by faith

2. Charge

- ✓ What are the quarrels that arise amongst Christians?

ie. Literal 7 day creation or figurative, predestination, end times, women's roles in the church, alcohol issues, infant baptism etc. Are these things important? Yes....but are they issues to spend time in quarreling?

- ✓ Which ones are valid and which not so valid? How do we know?

Do they 'ruin the hearers'? Are people being built up and unity growing or is there division that arises?

- ✓ Are your arguments about Biblical knowledge usually with Christians or non-Christians?

3. Present

- ✓ What would it mean to present your self to God in the topic that Paul is addressing? Do you think about presenting yourself to God in your use of words?
This is powerful. Do we measure our words as before the living God who sees and hears all things? Our presentation is first to God and then to the people with whom we are communicating. Our we concerned with approval before God or before man? Pursue that question some with your group. What is the affect on our words in relation to whom we are seeking approval?
- ✓ Follow the argument closely. Is this 'shame' the same type of 'shame' as vs. 1:8? Why, why not?
This 'shame' is indeed not the shame of previous. This is not being ashamed of Lord. This is being sure that no shame comes from what we 'do' before the Lord. How would you measure or evaluate whether there is shame in what you do before God? Psalm 115:1 says 'not to us oh Lord, not to us but to your name give glory'. How might that be a determining principle for what words bring shame to us?

4. Handle Rightly

- ✓ What does it mean to rightly handle the Word of truth in your context? What practical ways can you 'handle the Word rightly'?

Comment: We need to hear this and process it! I am very concerned about the lack of Biblical literacy amongst students today....even those with a church background. Very few have handled the word rightly. Very few have really ever studied a book of the Bible. Very few have ever read through the Bible in its entirety and yet they claim to believe it. Most of the conversations that happen related to Biblical knowledge consist of several students sitting around speculating out of their common ignorance. We need to learn to go to the Biblical source or pursue others who have more wisdom in the Bible to find answers. Ouch, sorry, discuss what you think about this.....

Discuss amongst your group: what would it look like as a group to commit to handling the word of truth rightly? Will they commit to 'owning' a book of the Bible by studying it with the inductive method for the semester? Will they commit to using a reading plan and read through the Bible? Will the commit to avoid 'godless chatter' about Biblical issues that they know very little about and pursue learning more before they speak?

- ✓ How will you know if you are handling it rightly?
Get them to focus on the text. Paul gives us an answer here to reflect on. There will be 'Godliness' that flows out in the hearers. Also, people will depart from iniquity. This is actually an example within the answer to this question. Rightly handling the word of truth means to 'Observe' well what scripture says. Watch the eyes of your group members when you ask the question above. Do they look up and start thinking for themselves? Or do they look to the Word and ask the questions of the text?

5. Avoid

Comment: *You don't want to be Hymenaeus or Philetus! Can you imagine being in the Bible for your irreverent babble!? They may actually be the prime sources of the issue that the pastoral epistles are concerned with....'Saying that the resurrection has already happened' 2:18b (remember from the background about over-realized eschatology). We are not sure if this is the main issue like I said, but it certainly was an issue.*

- ✓ Reflect on 2:19- In light of this section, what comfort is this for us as we try with diligence to live rightly before God handling the Word of truth in a diverse and changing culture?

There is great assurance that though we are responsible to carry out Reminding, Charging, Presenting Handling Rightly and Avoiding God is in control! We have a part but God has control in all this. We don't full understand how the two work together in God's economy but His plans will not be thwarted.

Took

- What is an issue that you perhaps have talked about with your friends, but in which you actually have very little Biblical insight? Perhaps Calvinism? Perhaps the end-times? This week do some research in that area. Use www.biblegateway.com as a start if you need. Don't do the research in an effort to have some information to dominate a discussion with your friends. Do it to handle the word of truth rightly and not be ashamed before God!

2 Timothy 3:1-9

Appearances can be Deceiving

Hook

- ✓ What are some common problems that unbelievers have with the Church and Christians? Do you think those are well founded? Why or why not?

Transition: In these verses Paul becomes more serious as he describes the “terrible days” which have already begun to happen and will continue. A main theme in these verses is being on guard against those who may appear to be believers but actually aren’t. In the previous passage, Paul has been talking about hoping that some of the false teachers will repent. Chapter 3 begins with the word “but” which signals a transition. Paul wants to give Timothy the realistic picture that while some of these false teachers may repent, some will not and opposition will continue. Paul is specifically describing the false teachers Timothy has already encountered. But the warning is important for us, not just Timothy, to heed. Paul describes these un-genuine “Christians” in two main ways: as having misplaced love and the (false) appearance of godliness.

Look

1. Misplaced Love 3:1-4

Note: When Paul uses the words “last days” he is referring to when the letter was written but these last days also refer to the time up until Christ’s return. Acts 2:17 marks the “last days” as beginning with the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. So these “terrible times” Paul refers to have already begun to be fulfilled and will continue in the future. So today we are still living in these “last days” because Christ has not returned yet.

- ✓ What sticks out about what Paul notices in the false teachers? What significance is it that “lovers of themselves” is listed first? How is that a picture of the problem of *all* of humanity?
It is interesting that “lovers of themselves” is listed first. Really all of those other things flow out of that heart condition. We love ourselves. We love being comfortable, being our own authority, being happy. The essence of sin is rebellion against God and we see that correlate to being “lovers of themselves.” Essentially I love myself and what I want to do over loving, honoring and obeying God. When we look at our sin up close, often there is a heart condition of loving ourselves more than God. We sin and rebel against God because we love and desire something more than Him.
- ✓ How do you see loving yourself at the root of your sin? Be specific.

Comment: What is so important to see is that our sinful behaviors come from something going on in the heart. You may have heard this analogy but when we see “fruit” on a tree we know its there because its connected to a “root” that’s causing it to grow. When we see negative fruit (sin) pop up in our life, a lot of times we are tempted to deal with it on the surface, behavior level. “I just need to stop doing this! I need to read my Bible more. I need to stop hanging out with so and so” are some things we may tell ourselves. Those steps may be necessary but if we deal with things on that level, we are never addressing what is going on in our hearts (the “root” level). Going back to the root analogy, think about

gardening. If you pull up weeds just from what you can see, the weeds may be gone temporarily but until you dig it up from the root, you will keep having weeds pop up. So why am I saying all this? It's important to see that sin that we deal with always goes back to something going on in our hearts. Someone doesn't just sleep with my boyfriend/girlfriend for no reason. Something is going on at a heart level. It could be boredom. It could be looking for intimacy. It could be a number of different things, but we must ask the question "Why" when we see sin in our lives: Why is that there? What am I desiring or looking for at a heart level? And a lot of the time, what is essentially going on in our hearts is that I love myself and having my desires met MY way, not through God's timing and design.

- ✓ What, essentially, does my life reflect that I love the most?

This may be repetitive, so toss it out if you feel like it is. But again, the point here is that humanity's problem is that we love other things and live life centered around those things rather than Christ. We might SAY my life is lived with Christ at the middle, but subtly (or not so subtly!) we start to be more enamored with relationships, success, approval, happiness, comfort, etc.

- ✓ What insight does this give us into our culture, to know that everyone is loving/worshipping something?

So for the non-believer they wouldn't be worshipping God, but I need to remember in my conversations with them that they are worshipping something. It is a misplaced worship, or misplaced love. That should help us relate with those who don't know Christ-because we have the same heart condition.

2. Appearance of Godliness 3:5-9

Note: It is important to clarify here. Paul is describing what false teachers will look like in the "last days." He is going to add in verse 5 that they are not really believers, they might just appear to be. Although we can pull out some important conclusions about sin and what that even looks like in our lives, not all of this passage applies or describes us as believers. We need to remember this is specifically describing false teachers/those that appear to be believers but aren't. What sin looks like in our lives can still be extracted and applied from this passage, but if we have really placed our faith in Christ, the portions of this passage about not truly being believers obviously doesn't apply or describe us.

- ✓ What do you think v.5 means that people can have "a form of godliness but deny its power?" (ESV translates "appearance of godliness")

Paul makes it clear here that although these teachers are around the church, in the church, maybe "look the part," they are not really believers. While these people "have the external appearance of godliness, they do not have its real essence" (ESV Study Bible). The word for "godliness" here means "piety or religion." Paul is saying that people can be in church, profess to be believers or look religious but not be actually connected to Christ. When it says that they deny its power, they are literally cut off from the source of power for the Christian- the Holy Spirit (because they aren't a believer and would therefore not have the Spirit). So for these folks Paul is referring to, there is no relationship with Christ there. They aren't experiencing the Spirit's power and work in their lives. It is just moralism. It is these people, who profess to be believers but never genuinely repent and trust Christ that we are told to have nothing to do with.

- ✓ How do we see this "appearance of godliness" happen today?

There are a lot of people in our culture (and probably some in Cornerstone even) that think that going to church equates with being a Christian. That is never what the Bible teaches. It is about a relationship with Christ. Ask 5 people on campus how they would define Christianity and you'll probably get 5 different answers. There are many people in churches that are moral but are doing that in their own

effort. It is nothing that is connected to Jesus whatsoever, its just moral living. It's an important question for us to think through...am I just doing the Christian things (going to church, reading my Bible, being nice to people) or have I actually trusted in Jesus and what he's done for me?

Note: In v. 6 Paul describes one particular way these false teachers are affecting the church. A group of women have been taken advantage of by them. Paul is not saying that all women are weak here, just as he is not saying all men will take advantage of such women. He is referencing a specific thing that happened in the church there. The NIV commentary points out that the Greek wording used here may indicate that these women were "recent converts, possibly from lives of religious perversion or prostitution." What he's communicating here is not an attack on women, but a description on how these particular women were especially susceptible to these false teachers.

Paul then references two men, Jannes and Jambres, who opposed Moses. Although their names are not mentioned in the Old Testament, those are the names given (in Jewish tradition) to the two magicians Moses encountered in the book of Exodus. Look at Exodus 7:8-13 and 9:8-12.

- ✓ Why do you think Paul brings up these 2 men? How should we apply the section?
What might seem godly or powerful can be false and dangerous. For Timothy and other Jews reading this, these names would have been easily recognized as 2 people who greatly opposed God and his truth. Both the magicians and the false teachers of Timothy's day stand opposed to the truth. Paul says here that they have depraved minds and are "rejected" or aren't believers. Bringing up these examples helps Timothy remember that opposition like this is really nothing new in a sense. There have been and will continue to be people infiltrating the church with this type of falsehood.

It gets a little tricky in application. Are we to carefully expose all the Jannes and Jambres in the church? The most quoted passage in our current culture is no longer John 3:16, but now Matthew 7:1 'Judge not lest you may be judged'. We are afraid therefore to call anyone out on how they are living in light of what they profess in order 'not to judge'. I think this might be a misapplication of the Matthew passage. Actually, there are great warning passages in the Bible when it talks about our responsibility to encourage one-another in truth towards holiness. This Matthew passage as well as others similar ones are actually talking about Believers judging non-Believers. We are not to do that, for they don't have Christ. However, if one does have Christ, then we are to encourage one-another towards holiness. It is not our role to expose the Jannes and Jambres in the church. But what would it look like to look out for our professing brothers and sisters and stimulate them towards Christ?

- ✓ What is the encouragement as the passage ends? What is the encouragement for us?
Just like the Egyptian magicians were shown to be foolish, the false teachers will be shown for what they really are, too. Even when it seems like we're in an overwhelming battle, like Timothy probably felt like, we have hope that Christ is victorious and nothing will thwart him or his plans.

Took

- Reflect on your own: Have I really placed my faith in Christ or am I just doing the Christian thing?
- How have other loves slipped in and taken my devotion away from Christ?
- In light of that, how can I reorient my life to focus on Christ?

2 Timothy 3:10-17

The Real Thing

Hook

- ✓ What one or two things do you want to be true of your life? How would you want people to remember you after your life on earth?

Transition: *One of the main themes throughout 2 Timothy is the idea of leaving a legacy. Paul will leave a legacy of the Gospel being central and powerful in his life. He wants Timothy to live well in order to leave a legacy of other people knowing the Gospel through his life. But sometimes we lose that bigger view and get focused on the here and now of life. Our faith can be placed on the back burner and we can live lives focused on ourselves rather than Christ.*

✓ *Paul has this mentality in view throughout the letter as he's writing. He wants Timothy to stand firm in his faith, be genuine in his faith, in the midst of the persecution he endures. In this particular passage Paul will address how Timothy can stay faithful when there are so many unfaithful, false teachers around him. You'll notice that this passage starts with "you, however." Not to belabor the point, but the word "however" shows that a transition or comparison is happening. Paul is contrasting the ungodliness and insincerity of the false teachers with what real faith should look like. How do we combat falsehood, like what Timothy was encountering all around him? Paul focuses on 3 things: **consistency, embracing suffering and remaining rooted in the Scriptures.***

Look

*You may want to spend a little time reviewing again. You could split your study up into pairs or small groups and assign each group one of the sections (ch 1, 2:1-13, 2:14-26, 3:1-9). They can then "teach" the group by reviewing what the main point was from that section AND what specific advice Timothy is being given. As the leader, also refer back to the intro section and remind your group what the main theme of the book as a whole is.

1. Consistent living 3:10-11

- ✓ Why do you think Paul begins by referencing his own life/example? Isn't that arrogant?
Although Paul knows he isn't perfect and is still a sinner (look at Romans 7 if you don't believe me!) he is confident that he has lived a life pleasing to the Lord and that God has used him. He is therefore able to encourage Timothy to follow his example. It's not that Paul is so great, it's that the Gospel has radically been at work in his life and he has centered his life around the Gospel. Paul has also just described what the corrupt life of the false teachers looked like. So he is making a case, so to speak, of why his faith is genuine. He specifically brings up his teachings, way of life, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions and sufferings. Those things (esp. patience, love, faith) are fruit of the Spirit. He is not bragging here, but giving a testimony to what God has done in his life. And don't forget Paul's conversion either! God has done these things in his life and radically changed him. He will go on

to talk more about the sufferings he's endured (which we will talk more about later). Why is he bringing that up? It is through the suffering and having to endure that our faith is really shown to be genuine.

- ✓ Why does our “way of life” (or how we live) matter to God if we are saved by grace?
How I live reflects what I believe! For example, when I am overwhelmingly anxious all the time, what does that communicate that I believe about God? It shows that I don't trust him very much and feel that I am really the one needing to be in control. Look at Titus 1:15-16. Although this is specifically addressing non-believers there is a good warning for us in there, as well. We can claim to know God but if our way of life doesn't match up, there is a disconnect. Essentially we are denying him through our actions. We will all continue to struggle with sin, that's not what we're getting at. We are all broken people. But there should be fruit in our life and how we live really does matter to God (and to others who are watching us!). I apologize for the throwback to an old Christian group from the 90s, but I think this quote from DC Talk really does sum up well why our way of life matters: “The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, then walk out the door and deny him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.”

2. Embrace suffering 3:11-13

Paul references the suffering he has endured and shares about 3 different instances. If there's time, look up these verses for background on what he is talking about: Antioch (Acts 13:42-52), Iconium (Acts 14:1-7) and Lystra (14:8-20). If you don't have time, at least share these references with your group and they can look it up later.

- ✓ The book of Acts records three major sufferings Paul endured. (13:42-52, 14:1-7, 14:8-20) Referring to these passages, what insight into Paul do you gain?
He has suffered very often! And like we talked about earlier in the study, he is not only suffering physically, but he is lonely and feels deserted. It is really hard for us to grasp the depth of suffering he endured because we don't face that same persecution now in America. But remember, these are real experiences that happened to a real person.
- ✓ As he looks back on this suffering in the 2 Timothy passage, what is Paul's perspective and attitude?
In all of those instances, he says the Lord rescued him each time. He preserved his life each time and not only that, but worked in Paul's heart to give him power to keep faithfully following Christ. We know that this time will be different, and Paul knows that too. He will not be spared from death this time. But Paul has the perspective that suffering is part of the life of the Christian. He even says to live a godly life, means that you will encounter suffering. Again, he wants to be honest and candid with Timothy so he will be prepared and keep walking with Christ when things get hard. One thing that comes up over and over again in this letter is that although Paul has endured and will continue to endure so much suffering, the Gospel is WORTH it to him. Remember his words in Philippians 3 that all things, even his life, is rubbish compared to the greatness of knowing Christ.

Note: So Paul reminds us here that persecution is inevitable. When you become a Christian you aren't signing up for an easy life free of pain. Quite the contrary, enduring suffering is to be expected for believers. And over and over again in the New Testament we are told that it is actually through suffering that our faith will be tested, grow and be proved genuine. In v. 12 Paul points out a connection to suffering and godliness. A true godliness (verses just the “appearance” of it) shines through when we suffer. For the genuine believer, godliness is revealed in trials.

- ✓ How can suffering allow true godliness to shine through?

3. Remain in the Word 3:14-17

- ✓ What view does Paul have of the Scriptures? What sticks out about what he tells Timothy in v. 14-15?
He again exhorts Timothy to cling to what he has already learned, the Gospel, which Paul has preached to him over the years. Don't deviate from those truths. The idea of "continuing in what he has learned" gives the impression that there is some movement forward. He is not to move past the Gospel, but deeper into it. We never check off the Gospel and move to something more advanced. The Gospel is what we need for salvation but also for our sanctification. We don't move past it but will continue on searching the depths of it and its implications for our lives. So Paul encourages him to continue on in what he's learned. He also mentions that Timothy has been "convinced of" those teachings. In a time when false teachings abound, Paul tells him essentially to think back, remember that he knows deep down of the truth. When temptation comes to believe something else, Timothy, remember the truth you are confident in. That's hammered home when he reminds him that from long ago he has known these Scriptures and through being rooted in them, he has grown. And one last thing Paul points out is that Timothy needs to remember "from whom" he learned the Gospel. Paul is telling him to cling to the Gospel, remember its work in his life, and from whom he learned it- Paul himself, whose faith has been proved true and genuine. Paul definitely has a very high view of Scripture. Remember, these are Paul's last words to Timothy. Shouldn't he be telling him specifics about ministry... certain things to do, tools to use, way to do ministry? But he chooses to focus on Timothy being reliant of Scripture. That is how he will stay strong personally and how his ministry will flourish.
- ✓ Why do you read the Bible? Why do you think God has given us his Word?
Through studying the Bible we grow to understand who God is and experience Him through that. We are called to meet with God in his word to grow in our relationship with him and because it glorifies him. If we are honest with ourselves, though, our motivation can be to check it off a list or because it is just what I'm supposed to do. Spending time in the Bible is definitely a discipline that we need to have in our lives, but sometimes we can have the skewed perspective that spending time in the Word causes God to love us more. When I don't spend time, he loves me less. That mentality is not true and will lead us to meet with God in his word out of obligation or fear rather than out of gratitude and a heart that wants to genuinely know God.
- ✓ Why is it significant that "all Scripture is God-breathed?"
The ESV Study Bible summarized this well: The term God-breathed "stresses the divine origin and thus the authority of Scripture....Whereas it seems that Paul and Timothy's opponents stressed certain aspects or portions of Scripture, Paul stresses the authoritativeness of all of Scripture. The divine origin of Scripture is the reason for its power to convert (2 Tim 3:15) and its usefulness in training (v.17). Because Scripture comes from God himself, all of it is profitable in a range of ways, ultimately leading to righteousness." When I read the Bible it is really a battle sometimes to remember this is REALLY God's words. This Word really IS living and active in my life, as Hebrews points out. God really spoke these things and they have authority in my life. This is true and if we really grasped that at a heart level, we would have lives more rooted in the Bible and be more motivated to spend time reading it.
- ✓ Work out all the functions of scripture....how would you explain each term practically? Why are each of the functions of Scripture listed important?
The functions pointed out here: teach, rebuke, correct and train in righteousness. And all of those IN ORDER THAT believers will be equipped in every way. God teaches us about himself through the Bible. The Spirit works in our hearts convicting and rebuking us as we read Scripture. But God not only uses

the Bible to rebuke, Scripture also works to correct, or produce life-change in me. And God uses his word to grow us in righteousness, or help me understand what a holy and pleasing life looks like. Paul has such a high view (and correct view) of the power of God's word. It is what we need to be thoroughly equipped!

It is helpful to keep these purposes of Scripture in mind as we spend time reading the Bible. Here are some questions you can think through for each of those functions:

- Teaching: What did I learn from the passage I read? (You could specifically ask: what did I learn about God, myself and others?)
- Rebuking: Where do I fall short? And more importantly, WHY do I fall short? (this should drive us to see our need for Christ, not just trying harder in our own effort)
- Correction: what needs to change in my life? How, through God's power, will it be corrected?
- Training in righteousness: What does it look like to move towards holiness in this area and see consistent victory?

Took

- What is the biggest hindrance for you personally in spending consistent, quality time reading the Bible? (it would be good here to revisit our MOTIVATIONS of spending time in the Bible. If I have a skewed view of why I'm called to read the Bible in the first place, it'll be purely a discipline.)
- In what ways do you want to move forward in being more rooted and consistent in God's word?

2 Timothy 4:1-8

Itching Ears

Hook

- ✓ What are some things our culture “preaches” that are counter to the Gospel? (of course other religious beliefs apply here, but think about how this can perhaps happen more subtly) What about those things can seem attractive or believable?

Transition:

Last week we focused on the role of the Bible in our lives as believers. Paul reiterated many times to Timothy that it is essential for him to be deeply rooted in God’s word, specifically telling him at the end of chapter 3 to do so that he “may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (3:17). The passage we’ll dig into this week picks right back up there. Paul will be explaining how this “good work” will get played out in Timothy’s ministry. God’s Word will equip him, but what exactly is he supposed to do? Here Paul will give Timothy 5 commands for his life and ministry. But remember, this is on the heels of Paul’s discussion of the importance and power of Scripture- Timothy is not being given commands he must do in his own power, but in dependence.

Look

2. Paul’s final charge 4:1-2

*Like we’ve been talking about throughout this book, these are Paul’s last words to Timothy, his beloved disciple. This chapter would be the last of the last words. So, this might be important! In these first 5 verses Paul gives Timothy 5 commands in the first 2 verses: **preach, be prepared, correct, rebuke and encourage**. We’ll dig deeper into why each of those are important later on. Paul begins this section though with some authority to his charge. The commands he’s given are not from Paul alone, but God. He’s telling Timothy to remember he’s not to focus on what Paul thinks about his ministry, other people, etc. but to honor the Lord as he moves forward in ministry.*

- ✓ Paul focuses on two things in the future: future judgment and Christ’s appearing/coming kingdom. In light of the commands he’s about to give Timothy, why do you think Paul mentions these two things in particular?

Paul wants Timothy to remember the reality of those future things. Christ will judge and Christ will come again. There is urgency and importance in what Timothy is called to do and it’s not Paul who has called him, it’s God. If Timothy really lived in light of these two things, his focus would be Christ and his approval, not the circumstances around him. This also adds a lot of authority to what Paul is about to command him to do. It’s not just Paul’s ideas for successful living and ministry. He wants Timothy to remember that how he conducts himself and leads the church is under God’s sight. There is also urgency implied here. Christ will come back and will judge all people...the ministry of the Gospel is urgent!

- ✓ Pick out the 5 commands Timothy is given in v.1-2 and perhaps underline them in your Bible? (look for the verbs!) In light of the context once again, why are each of these tasks so crucial?

- a. Preach the Word: this is not a new charge, Paul has said this throughout this letter. But he reminds him once more of the centrality of the Word. That must be central to Timothy's (and our) ministry. With the Gospel being watered down, changed, abandoned this is obviously crucial for the church to move forward (in Timothy's day and ours!).
- b. Be prepared: he's told to be prepared in season and out of season. There needs to be a sense where we are ready and willing whenever God presents an opportunity to us.

✓ What does it mean to be prepared in season and out of season?

As the ESV Study Bible says, being prepared "when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient." Obviously being prepared at all times. We need to think through ways we might not feel prepared. Do I know how I would even communicate the Gospel to someone? Could I communicate what God has done in my life clearly? Give it some thought as to ways you might want to be more prepared. Being alert is another way to think about what Paul is saying here—we need to be on our guard to the false teaching around us and alert to opportunities we may have. Again, keeping in mind the future coming and judgment of Christ. What Paul is NOT saying is that we must be 100% confident. We'll probably never feel fully prepared and there needs to be a dependence on God's Spirit of course. But we don't want to neglect being ready at the same time.

- c. Correct: these last 3 commands tie in together and specifically address the false teachings Timothy is having to deal with in and around his church. Because of the importance of the Gospel message not being distorted it is of utmost importance for Timothy to correct those with false doctrine. He must not shy away from doing that otherwise the Gospel gets compromised.
- d. Rebuke: Like correcting but a bit stronger. Timothy is commanded to rebuke (speak truth and call people to repent, is another way to think about it) those that need to be called out in his ministry. Why? For the sake of protecting the Gospel and the church moving forward.
- e. Encourage: his role is also to encourage people towards Christ. And notice all of these commands are to be done with patience and careful instruction. Both attitude (patience) and teaching (careful instruction) are important here.

Note: Now Paul will explain WHY he is giving these commands. So we have this progression going on here. At the end of chapter 3 Timothy is told to be rooted in the Word so that he can carry out the tasks he's been given. Now we've just looked at what those tasks (or commands) are. Now we'll look at why he's been given these particular commands anyways (or the REASON for the charge he was just given).

3. The Gospel's opposition (v.3-5)

✓ What does Paul warn will happen? (v.3-4)

Paul says that a time is coming, and had already partly come, people would not tolerate sound doctrine. What that means is that people would move away from the truth claims of the Gospel. That might look like watering the Gospel down, adding to it, taking parts away. But bottom line is, a time is coming where people will try and distort the Gospel. Paul warns that to give authority or weight to their claims these people will gather others around them to agree with them. We get the picture here of people drifting away from the Gospel, making their own "gospel" and propping themselves up with people around them who will agree with them. One other interesting thing to note: Paul says here that a "time" is coming. The word "time" there is from the same root word as the word translated "season" in v.2. So already we're seeing a "season" that Timothy needs to be prepared for.

- ✓ Let's dig deeper. WHY does he say this will happen? (v.3-4)
It's so interesting what Paul says here about why this will happen. He says people will not put up any longer with sound doctrine because of their "itching ears." What an image! When something itches, we scratch it, right? Paul says that is what will happen...people will get an itch for something else to be true, to distort part of the Gospel or throw it out altogether, and many of them will "scratch" that itch. Paul says people will do this "to suit their own desires." So what you have going on here is a Lordship issue. My desires, or what I WANT or WISH to be true, takes precedent over what is actually true according to God's word. It is a heart-level, desire issue going on at the root. And Paul says that they will gather teachers around them to cater to their desires. (These are not teachers of truth, therefore.)
- ✓ How do you see this "itching ears" situation playing out in our culture?
There are tons of examples you could share. One that comes to mind most is the tolerance mentality of today that says any doctrine that makes exclusive claims must be false. It's fine for you to believe what you believe but don't try to say that should be true for everyone. Our itching ears want to be scratched with tolerance over what is actually true according to Christ's claims. You can see this played out in churches even. One example is a focus in some churches on the "prosperity gospel." The idea that God promises us as believers to bless us financially, with health, an easy life, etc. and if we just serve him enough, pray enough, give enough tithe that we are owed that by God. My itching ears DO want to be promised a life of ease and lots of money. But that isn't what the Gospel ever claims.
- ✓ Let's get a little closer to home. Where do you see "itching ears" in your own life? In what ways/areas of your life do your desires take precedence over God's word?
There can be lots of answers with this of course. I'd say one area I see this a lot is in the area of sexual purity. I've had countless conversations over the years with students that are apathetic in this area. The standard is very much what other people are doing and how I measure up NOT what God's word says about it. That's just one example, there are lots of things people could share. And we are affected and can buy into a lot of what our culture says, as well, which we talked about in the previous question.

Note: Throughout this letter Paul contrasts Timothy's genuine faith to the false "faith" of some around him. He does that again here. Paul now makes a contrast. "But you" starts out verse 5, contrasting how Timothy should move forward and be prepared for seasons where the Gospel is abandoned by people. Paul's final charge continues...

- ✓ What things does Paul encourage Timothy to do in v.5? Why do you think these things would be important?
We're going to look at the ESV translation of this verse which I think is helpful (and the homework for this week is to listen to a talk by Crawford Loritts who uses this translation.) Here's how the ESV says it:
"As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."
Don't spend a ton of time here, but do look at what Paul is charging Timothy to do here.
First of all, be sober-minded. NIV says, keep your head in all situations. This ties in with what we talked about earlier about being prepared for what's to come and alert. Don't be tossed by and forth by circumstances and false teachings. Stay focused and alert.
Secondly, endure suffering. This is not a new charge either. Paul is realistic with Timothy that he will face suffering. And remember, Paul is very much experiencing it as he speaks! Bottom line, though, is that the Gospel is worth it and Paul reiterates that to Timothy throughout the letter. Next, he tells him to do the work of an evangelist. The point in all this is the Gospel moving forth. So Timothy should never get so bogged down with other tasks that the Gospel isn't being proclaimed in his ministry.

Finally, fulfill your ministry. Essentially, persevere and finish well. And what a model of finishing well he has seen through Paul!

So Paul has just given a final charge to Timothy, some of his last words to his disciple. We just looked at v.5 where he has essentially told Timothy to finish well. In the next few verses we get a glimpse into Paul's life as he reflects back on it. We also get a picture of what it looks like to finish the race well.

4. Finishing well (v.6-8)

Note: We get another glimpse in v.6 that Paul knows he's about to die. He says he has already been poured out and his time of departure is near. Although he has been in prison before, his tone shows that he knows this time he will not be released.

- ✓ What do you think it means when Paul says he is being poured out like a drink offering? Why this illustration?

In order to get the whole picture of what Paul is saying here, we need to look at what a drink offering is. Look at Exodus 29:39-41 and Numbers 28:7-8. Two things about these drink offerings.

First, these drink offerings in the OT were a sacrifice made to the Lord- something is sacrificed so that God is honored.

Secondly, as you see in both passages, the drink offerings produce an aroma pleasing to the Lord. Paul is saying (1) that his life is worth sacrificing for the sake of the Lord and His Gospel. And (2) that Paul sees his life as an offering to the Lord which he desires to be pleasing to God.

Look also at 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 where Paul also uses this language. He rightly sees his life as an offering to God, and he wants to live it in such a way that God is honored and a sweet aroma to God and others is produced. Notice also in the 2 Timothy passage that God is doing the pouring out.

- ✓ What sticks out to you about Paul's reflection on how he lived his life? His motivation?

Once again Paul goes back to a favorite illustration of his- the race image. He can look back on his life and be confident that he finished well. Remember Paul's story though- he persecuted Christians for part of his life! This isn't boasting here, but confidence that God has worked powerfully in his life and used him as a vessel in ministry. He is saying that the task God had given him had been accomplished (that's why this isn't a prideful thing he's saying). One thing that sticks out is that he kept the faith. He endured many hard things and suffered a lot. But he found the Gospel worthy of pressing on for. And why would this be encouraging to Timothy? Again it's a call to Timothy to press on too. Why? Because the Gospel, Jesus himself, is worth it.

Look at v. 8 in particular. We have talked about this some already, but here we see Paul's focus is on the future here. Yes life has been full of suffering, but that is not the end of the story and he has life and rewards promised to him after death. This is so significant when we remember that he is facing death. He lives in light of the reality that Christ will judge and come again. Because of the Gospel's work in Paul's life that isn't a scary thing but something to anticipate and which motivates how he lives. We do see in Scripture that there are rewards, or crowns, we will be given in heaven. We need to keep in mind, though, that anything rewarded is because of God's grace and we will lay those crowns at Jesus' feet anyways.

Took

- Do you see life as an offering to God? (like we talked about in v.6) What can keep me from having this perspective?
- What motivates you in how you live life? If you really “longed for” Christ’s appearing (v.8), how might that change?
- Listen to a talk on this passage by Crawford Loritts before next week and be prepared to discuss anything else that stuck out to you about this passage.

2 Timothy: 4:9-22

Ministry is People

Hook

- ✓ What influence have 'people' had in your upbringing? How have they shape your attitudes, passions and calling in life? Positive and negative.....

Transition:

Often the parting conclusion is the part of a book that we quickly skip over due to its seeming irrelevant, usually very specific and personal nature. Here it would be a great error to quickly move on without giving this section adequate time. It is indeed specific and profoundly personal. Yet instead of causing irrelevance, it actually gives us a great glimpse into the whole context of the letter and helps us understand Paul and his heart with increasing clarity. Perhaps one should read this last section at the beginning of the letter as it really helps us see into the intense personal struggles that have surrounded Paul and his work for the Gospel.

Life and ministry are about people and relationships. If you have a tendency to de-humanize and over-spiritualize Paul, this section comes as a corrective. This is Paul the human. This is a man deeply affected by people and relationships around him so that he writes with passion to Timothy warning him against similar folly. This is the greatest man of God in the New Testament and people he has led, have fallen away! He has been hurt and frustrated. People have deeply affected Paul.

As we have been challenged by this letter and now as we come to the end of its study, don't forget that ministry is about people. Life is about people. Though Timothy is sent to a task in the church, his task is related to caring about people and their souls. When people are involved, there will be highs and lows, peace and conflict. But don't be discouraged. God has been doing something since the beginning of time, from Paul's ancestors v.1:2 through the church, through Paul, through Timothy and you and I. Continue on and fight the good fight!

Look

1. Real Life

- ✓ How would you describe Paul's mood here in this section?
 - Make a list of the people whom Paul mentions....one with two columns, good/bad.
- ✓ What are the characteristics of the people on each side of the chart?
- ✓ After reading the whole letter now, what caused Paul to persevere despite the emotional setbacks of some of these hard situations?

Comment: *There is something really awe-inspiring here. Paul was hurt. You can see that in this intensely personal language. Hurt like this has caused many to give up the cause of Christ. In fact I have heard many students use the words 'Burn-out' when they talk about one or two short years of ministry on campus where people don't respond the way they would like them to. For Paul, I believe the words 'Burn-out' were not in his vocabulary. He did not view rejection or desertion from those around him cause to give up on his calling. Christ was too great for those things to side-line him. However, there is a great error in looking at Paul and exclaiming...."wow, look at Paul, we should be like him!" I mean yes and no. Of course we should want to live lives like him if we are Christ followers. But it really isn't that Paul was that great, but it is that Christ was that great to Paul. Paul was so convinced that he was living for an audience of one and that one in the audience was worth everything. He saw God rightly and that affected him to the very core. One of the pieces we must see in this letter is that Paul lived for Christ who was the very greatest, greater than any other thing or person to Paul. That is ultimately where the Christian life is lived from. Jonathan Edwards said that the difference between a Christian and non-Christian is that the latter sees Jesus as 'useful' but the former sees Jesus as 'Beautiful'. Ponder that thought. How do you see Him?*

Took

- What have you learned about who God is?
- What have you learned about who you are?
- What have you learned about who others are?
- What have you learned about what you are called to?
- What heart motivations are there to follow Christ?
- Summarize how Paul proposes to help the Church grow in Christ?