

# **2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy**

## **Guard the Gospel**



We will be studying the second letter of Paul to a young man named Timothy. Timothy is a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation believer. His grandmother, his mother, and he came to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. His father was a Gentile. He has been called into the ministry and Paul has taken him under his wing, considering him a son in the ministry. Paul has written this second letter to Timothy. He is not sharing with Timothy how the church should behave as the family of God, but he is writing, personally, that he wants Timothy to come to him because he wants to see him. The reason Paul wants to see him is because he is in a Roman prison, not under house arrest, but in a dungeon. He wants the cloak that he left at Troas to be brought to him by Timothy because winter is approaching, and it is going to get cold in that Roman prison. He also wants Timothy to bring the books and the parchments. So he tells Timothy he wants to see him. Why does Paul want to see Timothy? He is under an order of execution. Shortly, Nero will have him beheaded because of the gospel.

Can you imagine being Timothy? He has received a second letter from the apostle Paul, and soon, he will realize this is the last letter Paul ever wrote, and it was written to him. This is the last letter the great Apostle Paul ever wrote under the leadership of God's Holy Spirit. When I received a letter from RC Sproul, I framed it. I don't believe Timothy framed this letter. I

think he probably carried it around with him, and just like you and I might do, I think Timothy opened it on many occasions, and it encouraged him. I pray that is what this letter does for us.

## Scripture

***"By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you."***

In my mind, 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy chapter 1:14 has the theme of the letter. Notice that the purpose of this letter begins the way 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy ended, with Paul telling Timothy to guard the deposit that has been entrusted to him. I believe the big storyline of 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy is guard the gospel. We will learn that this big deposit that has been entrusted to Timothy is actually the gospel itself. This letter is a charge to Timothy. Now remember, Paul wanted to say this face to face to Timothy. I don't believe the reason he wrote such a compassionate letter was because he needed a coat and some books. The reason Paul wants to say these things to Timothy face to face was because he knew there was a good chance his head would be severed from his body before he could see Timothy. So for the last time, he tells Timothy to guard the deposit that has been entrusted to him.

"*The good deposit entrusted to you*" is actually just one word in the Greek New Testament, but it takes these several words for us to capture the idea. It is a picture in the oriental world of something valuable that has been given to someone. The reason it was given to someone was so they could safeguard it because its intention was not really for that person; it was someone else but they were not for it yet. So it has been given to this person to keep it, safeguard it, and protect it until the person it is to be given to is ready to receive it. In the Biblical world, you would either entrust it to a person, (as Paul does Timothy here) or you would entrust it to a temple. Temples were arranged so if you had something valuable and you wanted it to be protected, you would bring it to the temple, like you would a bank today.

The best way to capture this in today's world is to think of a trust fund, and you are the guardian of that trust fund. An example would be that your sibling has set up a trust for the education of their children in the case of their unfortunate death, and you are the guardian. You are to guard that money until the children are ready to be educated. Paul is telling Timothy he has been entrusted with the gospel. Wow! Can you imagine being a young preacher boy, possibly pastoring the church at Ephesus and the great Apostle Paul is reminding you that you have a charge to guard the gospel?

As you read this letter, you see that there is a call to suffer, a call to share, and a call to see. That is basics of what Paul will tell Timothy. He tells him that because he is guarding the gospel, he will suffer. He will have to share it and entrust it to others, as it had been entrusted to him. Then Paul tells him to open his eyes and see that the day in which Timothy lives will be different from the day in which Paul is living, because things are getting worse. But Paul says, 'I have had it good.' Here is a guy who is getting ready to lose his head for the gospel, and he is telling Timothy that things will be going from bad to worse.

Can you imagine me telling you that things are going to go from really bad to worse? Do you realize that the majority of us have been entrusted with the gospel? Therefore, it is a call to suffer, a call to share, and a call to see. If you are contemplating repenting of sin and following Christ, I am not going to promise health and wealth. I will promise you that if you take the gospel into your care, you will suffer because of it. The best way to protect it is to give it away, to share it, and to realize it wasn't given to you for you, but it was given to you for others, and to recognize that this day and age in which we live is a difficult day. Paul tells Timothy that people are not going to flock to him to hear him preach the Word because people are going to stray from the truth. They will no longer hear what God has to say but will actually turn to themselves and employ teachers to tell them what they want to hear. Wow!

Let me show you the glory of 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy. In this letter that talks about guarding the gospel and how it is a call to suffering, a call to share, and a call to see, we learn three great things, three great pictures.

- 1. The Glory of God's Salvation (Chapter 1:8-10)**
- 2. The Glory of God's Messiah (Chapter 2:8-13)**
- 3. The Glory of God's Word (Chapter 3:14-4:8)**

We are going to focus our attention on these three things. These things are why we suffer, why we share with others, and ultimately, that is why we have to look around and see that the day and age in which we are living is a very difficult time. It is not going to be easy.

## **The Glory of God's Salvation**

- **His Purpose and Grace**

Paul tells Timothy to share in suffering. He says, 'don't be ashamed of me being in prison; don't be ashamed of the gospel, and, come along beside me and share in the suffering.' William Barkley comments regarding this next line of thinking in verse 9 that Paul reveals the most complete and magnificent portrait of salvation, probably, in the entire Bible. Paul says (talking about God), *"...who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of His own purpose and grace..."* If we could summarize the glory of God's salvation, this is it, not of works but of grace! The world doesn't want us telling them that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and our righteousness is as a filthy rag. When Isaiah used that phrase, he picked a word out of Hebrew culture that meant the dirty menstrual napkin of a woman. That is the best you have to offer!

I met with a young man last week who told me he had been reared to believe that on the Day of Judgment God would put his good works on one side and his bad works on the other. His hope for salvation was that his good outweighed his bad. If you happen to be one of those moral people who honestly believe that, remember that the best you have is like a

woman's menstrual napkin in the sight of God. Woe is me if I believe I can earn a right relationship with God! That would not be a good salvation.

The glory of salvation is that it is not of our own works, but His own purpose and grace. Before God ever saved you, or called you to the place of service you have in the Church and in the Kingdom, He had a purpose. Wow! You haven't been called according to your purpose; you have been called according to God's purpose. You have been called and saved, not according to your works, but according to His grace. Many of us have the belief that when God put Jesus on the cross that is when grace started. No, the Bible says that grace is actually a gift to us, and He gave us this grace before the founding of the world in Christ. You know that before God ever created man, He knew what man would do. Before He ever created man, He already had a desire and a plan to redeem man to Himself.

- **Abolished Death**

Therefore, Christ was ordained to die in our place before the creation of the world; and in Christ, He graced us. Paul said that grace appeared; it was manifested. Grace became evident to us when Jesus appeared. When He came the first time, He brought the enactment of grace to you and me. And Paul is quick to the point when he goes on to say that Jesus who brought grace to us, "*abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel...*" Paul says it is for this very reason he is suffering because he has been called to be a preacher, called to be an apostle, and called to be a teacher.

Let's note this, the reason God's salvation is so glorious is because when Jesus appeared, He abolished death. This word, abolish, doesn't mean annihilate. It means 'to render powerless.' It means 'to idle' death. When Jesus Christ came, He not only took on life and lived a sinless, perfect life; He went to the cross and He took on death! The word, death, basically means 'to be separated.' On the cross, Jesus took on Himself the penalty of our sin, which is separation from God. On that cross when He took our sin, He took on death. He paid the penalty of our sin, and He died. It looked

like death had won, but in reality, death was defeated that day, and death died. Please hear me! On that cross, Jesus Christ suffered the wrath of God. God hurled His holy hatred of sin upon His Son because His Son took our sin! On that cross, we can't imagine it, but He was separated from the Father and He paid our debt.

- **Brought Life to Light**

Paul didn't stop there. Christ didn't just abolish death; He brought life to light. The thing that had been hidden was that man didn't know how to live. Man feared life hereafter. You have to realize that up until Christ came and defeated death, man had always been born dead to God and alive to sin, and had lived a self-centered life. When Jesus Christ came and enacted God's grace to us, He showed us what life is all about. Life is not to be lived for ourselves, but for others, and ultimately, for the glory of God. Because of the salvation of God, you and I are no longer dead to God and alive to sin. We are now dead to sin and alive to God. We are no longer dead to God and alive to the power of sin, but actually dead to the power of sin within us and alive to God, so that we can live a life that is not centered on self, but centered on God and others. That is the way life is meant to be lived. You have to understand that before Christ came, the world feared death. People still fear death.

I read a story years ago about a man who was captured and imprisoned. There were doors in front of him. He was told that everything behind the doors was horrible, and there were different ways of death behind each one. There was one death behind one door, however, that he wasn't told about. The prisoner chose to die a horrible death rather than open the door to the unknown. Man, in his sub-consciousness, fears the unknown more than anything.

- **Herald of the Gospel**

Do you understand what Jesus brought to us? He brought to light that there is no need to fear death because of the glorious life that is hereafter

for those who know Christ. To die is gain! Yes, to live is Christ, but to die is gain, which is far better because to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord! Until recently, I had only known what it would be like to bury a grandparent or someone I loved in this church. I cannot imagine what it would be like to bury a child, but I now know what it is like to bury a mother that you love. I can't imagine burying a loved one if I did not know what was on the other side of death. Our loved ones are not in the ground; Jesus took on death and He came out victorious on the other side! Because of Jesus and the glory of God's salvation, you and I know that one day we will not only live life here the way it was meant to be lived, we will live life forever, bringing honor and glory to God on a new heaven and a new earth. It is the glory of our salvation. Therefore, we have been called to suffer, because right now doesn't just count for right now, right now counts forever. This is why Paul says he is a herald of the gospel. Herald is the word for preacher here.

My wife took me to see Cinderella twice. She has gone three times. There is a part in the movie where the prince doesn't want to marry who his dad wants him to. So he has this hope of finding a bride and prepares to throw a ball and decide to invite all the maidens of the land. The prince doesn't step forward in the village. Do you know who steps forward? The herald does. He has two funnily dressed guys beside him and he opens up this little scroll and says, "Hear ye, hear ye." Then he announces the good news that all the maidens have been invited to the ball.

The herald is the town crier. He is the person who goes through the streets crying, "Hear ye, hear ye." He is not speaking on his own authority; he is speaking on the authority of another. Paul tells Timothy he is suffering because he is a herald. Later in the letter, he tells Timothy to preach the Word, using that same word. Herald the news! What is the news? No one can be made right based on what they do. We can only be made right based on what God has done for us in Christ. It is the glory of God's salvation.

## The Glory of God's Messiah

Secondly, we see the glory of God's Messiah. In chapter 2, Paul tells Timothy he has to share this. Some of us think that to safeguard something means to keep it protected from everyone else. But the way you guard the gospel is to entrust it to others. The Bible teaches that Paul entrusted Timothy with the gospel, Timothy was to entrust it to someone else, and then they were to entrust it to someone else. Do you remember the person who entrusted the gospel to you? Now with who are you entrusting it? Who have you chosen to entrust with what you know, knowing that they will entrust it to someone else? It was a comfort to Paul to know that within a few weeks, maybe a few months, when his head would be separated from his body, Timothy would carry on the gospel. A pastor has many young men that we entrust the gospel to. These young men are entrusting it to others, who are going to entrust it to others. Who are you entrusting it to, and who will they entrust? It sounds like a glorious job, but Paul says to "*share in suffering*." He knows that to truly pour your life into someone else who is going to pour his life into someone else is going to cause you to be uncomfortable. You will have to give up some things that you possibly want to do because there is a higher calling in life. That is to entrust the gospel to others.

- **Remember Jesus Christ**

In verses 1-7, Paul gives an example of a soldier, an athlete, and then a farmer. Then in verse 8, he says, "*Remember Jesus Christ...*" Throughout Paul's letter, he always said, Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus. Christ, or Messiah, is His title, and Jesus is the name He was given at birth because the angels said He would save His people from their sins, therefore, He was to be called Jesus. Only here in this letter does Paul call Him Jesus Christ. He puts the personal name first and then His title, Messiah. Paul says to remember Jesus Christ. Do you day to day remember Jesus and the life He lived, the death He died, and that He is seated at the right hand throne of God making intercession for you? Do you ever find



that you get through your day without thinking of Jesus at all? Have you ever gone a whole week?

- **Risen from the Dead**

Paul says to remember Jesus Christ, and the first thing he says about Him is "risen from the dead." Paul is not telling us to remember the historical fact of the resurrection because he does not use the past tense verb here. He uses a perfect tense verb, meaning the action has been completed in the past, but the results of that action are still on going in the present and will never end. When Paul said to remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, he was saying remember Jesus is not dead, He is alive right now! We do not serve a dead God! We serve a God who took upon human flesh, went to a cross, and died. But He didn't stay dead; He got back up and is still up at this very moment! We are to remember that when we are suffering for the gospel and when we are sharing the gospel with others.

- **Offspring of David**

He is the Messiah. He is the offspring of David. That takes us back to 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel chapter 7 where God made a promise to David that one of his seed would sit on his throne and he would reign over his kingdom forever and would build the House of God. That seed is Jesus. And Paul says, 'this is the reason I am in prison, but I endure suffering for the sake of the elect.' I know there are a lot of people who don't know what to do with this word. It is a beautiful word. Paul said, 'I suffer what I suffer because I know there is a group of people that has been chosen by God, and I want them to obtain the salvation that is in Christ, therefore, I suffer.' This is telling us that you and I are not making this happen; God is making this happen. The elect do not obtain salvation until they are given the gospel, which means you are not given the gospel for you, you are given the gospel for someone else so that someone else can give it to someone else, because you are not the only one God wants to save. There is a whole bunch of people out there, and we are part of God's redemptive plan. If we are going to hear anything from 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, let us hear this, we are part of God's

redemptive plan. No one gets saved until they are entrusted with the gospel.

## **The Glory of God's Word**

- **God Breathed**

The last thing we see is the glory of God's Word. I don't want you to quote the verse that all Scripture is God breathed and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness without seeing this context. Right before Paul delivered that word to Timothy, he told him it is going to be bad for him. He said, 'you are called to pastor a church in a difficult time when people are actually going from bad to worse, and they are not going to care a thing about the Word. But I want you to continue in the Word and remember that it was the Word that brought you to faith in Jesus Christ.' Wow! Let me say this as a pastor, you and I are going to live in an age in which we are going to be tempted to change, alter, the Word of God because the people we are going to deliver it to, the people who live in our communities, aren't going to like God's Word. I didn't coin this, but the moment we change the gospel, it is no longer the gospel. When the Church changes the Word of God, the church will go the way of the world. But we have been called to preach the Word, because it is God breathed. It bears the very breath of God.

I had the privilege of meeting with an Islamic student who attends Murray State University. He had been challenged by a girl to read the Bible and he challenged her to read the Quran. They started reading each other's Bibles. We met and sitting in my office, he told me that after he started to read the Bible, it was as if someone were talking to him. He said, "That had never happened when I read the Quran." Wow!

- **Profitable**

The Bible is the very Word of God! They are not just words on a page; it is the very breath of God. The Bible teaches it is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, training in righteousness. This means that as we live in

the last days, (as Paul thought Timothy was in the last days) people will no longer trust theology; they are going to trust philosophy. People are going to change what they believe God would believe according to what man believes, because we will mold God after our highest level of reasoning. We will hear in the last days, "Well, God wouldn't..." I say to this, God will! He has given us His Word. Those of us who have been entrusted with the gospel cannot build our lives on the philosophical reasoning of the world around us. We must build our lives around the truth of God's Word, and Paul says there will come a day when those who desire to live a godly life will be persecuted!

## **Fulfill Your Ministry**

Then Paul tells Timothy to fulfill his ministry. Paul says he has poured out his life like a drink offering. It is the picture from the Old Testament where they brought the offering of wine and poured it on the side of the altar. They would pour it all out. As Paul waited in a Roman dungeon to be beheaded, when he looked at his life there was nothing left. He said, "*I have fought a good fight.*" Can you see him in that dungeon, armed with the armor of God? He has finished the race. There is no more life left in his legs, and he has kept the faith. He said, "*Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.*"

When you come to the end of your life, how much will still be in the cup? How much will still be in the body? Will you be able to say, before God, I gave it my all? I didn't hold back anything. My all is on the altar of God. Is your all on the altar of God? Do you believe you have been entrusted with the gospel? Are you entrusting it to others? What is your reaction to suffering? When you come to the end, you shouldn't want anything to be left. Accomplish your ministry, fight the fight, and finish the race. Be able to say you have kept the faith.