

## PAUL, THE APOSTLE PSYCHOLOGIST

## Chapter One - Sermon #1

Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy during his first imprisonment in Rome in A.D. 62/63. During that imprisonment Paul had full reign of a rented house.

His second letter to Timothy was written during his second imprisonment in Rome under Nero in A.D. 66/67, during which time he was kept in a **dark, cold dungeon**. By this time Paul knew most of his work was done and that his life was about over. Paul wrote about his situation in 2 Timothy 4.

2 Timothy 4:6-8:

*<sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out as an offering, and the time for me to depart is at hand. <sup>7</sup> I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith! <sup>8</sup> Finally the crown of righteousness is reserved for me. The Lord, the righteous Judge, will award it to me **in that day** – and not to me only, but also to all who have set their affection on his appearing.*

At the time Paul wrote this letter he was concerned about the churches because of the persecution of Christians under Nero, so he wanted to pass along some **final instructions** to this church in Ephesus of which Timothy was the pastor. Ephesus was the capital of the province of Asia, and the location today is in the country of Turkey.

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-18:

*<sup>1</sup> Paul, **an apostle** of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,*

*<sup>2</sup> To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from **God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord**.*

*<sup>3</sup> I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day,*

*<sup>4</sup> **longing to see you**, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy.*

*<sup>5</sup> For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother **Lois** and your mother **Eunice**, and I am sure that it is in you as well.*

*<sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the **gift of God** which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

*<sup>7</sup> For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.*

*<sup>8</sup> Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,*

*<sup>9</sup> who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ*

*Jesus from all eternity,*

<sup>10</sup> *but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior **Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,***

<sup>11</sup> *for which I was appointed a preacher and **an apostle** and a teacher.*

<sup>12</sup> *For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.*

<sup>13</sup> *Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.*

<sup>14</sup> ***Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.***

<sup>15</sup> *You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are **Phygelus** and **Hermogenes**.*

<sup>16</sup> *The Lord grant mercy to the house of **Onesiphorus**, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains;*

<sup>17</sup> *but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me—*

<sup>18</sup> *the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus.*

Now before we begin we would like to introduce you to a fellow who really understands what it means to be humble. He is a computer expert who was on a shuttle flight from Buffalo, N.Y. to Cleveland, Ohio. It was a very small plane which could seat about eight passengers, but there were only two additional passengers beside himself on board, a minister and a Boy Scout.

*“The pilot came back to the cabin and said that the plane was going down and there were only three parachutes and four people. The pilot added, ‘I should have one of the parachutes because I have a wife and three small children.’ So he took one and jumped. The computer expert said, ‘I should have one of the parachutes because I am the smartest man in the world and everyone needs me.’ So he took one and jumped. The minister turned to the Boy Scout and with a sad smile said, ‘You are young and I have lived a rich life, so you take the remaining parachute, and I’ll go down with the plane.’ The Boy Scout said, ‘Relax, Reverend, the smartest man in the world just picked up my backpack and jumped out!’”<sup>1</sup>*

This is not what we believe Jesus had in mind when he taught that His followers should all be humble. In verse 7, Paul reminds Timothy that although humility is a very important characteristic for a Christ follower, we do not have to be timid because we have been equipped by the Holy Spirit with power and love and discipline (verse 7). And that power begins with prayer. Listen to the words of J. Hudson Taylor

<sup>1</sup> Michael P. Green, ed., “Pride,” in *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 287.

“The power of prayer has never been tried to its full capacity in any church. If we want to see mighty wonders of divine power and grace wrought in the place of weakness, failure and disappointment, let the whole church answer God's standing challenge: *‘Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not.’*”

(Jeremiah 33:3)

—J. Hudson Taylor<sup>2</sup>

“*‘Pistol’ Pete Maravich* was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1987. He rewrote the NCAA scoring records as a collegiate player, averaging **44.2 points per game** in his four years at Louisiana State University. During his ten year professional career, Maravich averaged 24.2 points and 5.4 assists per game.

‘When asked the reason for his excellence, Maravich called himself a *‘basketball android’* as a boy. He explained, *‘I even took a basketball to bed with me until I was 14 years old. I would just lie there in bed throwing it up and doing fingertip drills. When I was 8 and 9 years old, I would dribble the ball 2-1/2 miles into town and 2-1/2 miles back. When I got a little older, I would dribble it into town while riding my bike. Whatever I did, wherever I went, I had the basketball with me. It just became an extension of my hand.’* Any wonder he became a magician with the basketball?

“**Excellence** in any area is not automatically achieved. **Excellence is a by-product of discipline.** Discipline provides the impetus to repeat an activity until it becomes ingrained in our lives as a habit.”<sup>3</sup>

Now, with these illustrations fresh in our minds, let us begin with verse 1 of 2 Timothy chapter 1, and see just what it is that Paul wants Timothy to remember.

Lutzer concludes by saying, "Alexander the Great conquered many cities. He conquered many countries, but he failed miserably to conquer his own self."

## **2 TIMOTHY 1:1:**

*From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to further the promise of life in Christ Jesus.*

**Apostles** were appointed to preach and explain the Good News that **eternal life is available to all who will receive it through faith in Jesus Christ.**

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>[Brian Harbour, *Rising Above the Crowd*. Nashville: Broadman, 1988, p. 61]Brian L. Harbour, ed., “*Discipline*,” in *Notable Harbour Illustrations – Volume 9: 125 Illustrations*, WORDsearch CROSS e-book, under: “Discipline”.

**2 TIMOTHY 1:2:**

*To Timothy, my dear child. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord!*

“*My dear child*” Emphasizes the close fatherly relationship Paul felt for Timothy. “*Grace*” is undeserved favor from God. “*Peace*” refers to well-being. “*Mercy*” speaks of loving kindness.

What more could you ask for in life? There can be no greater gifts from God for those who open their hearts and minds to God and Jesus, and if you then ask to understand God’s truth, God will give you that understanding.

As in his first letter to Timothy, Paul here calls himself an apostle of Christ Jesus, which is what Jesus called him to be. Paul belonged to those first teachers of the New Testament Church that had been taught and equipped with an unusual number of gifts for the work of founding Christ’s Church in the world. Paul was not interviewed for this position, nor did he major in Apostolic Behavior in college. Paul was placed in this position by God and it had nothing to do with what he wanted. God took control of Paul and sent him on a journey that he would never have thought possible. He therefore performed the duties of this office, not for his own feeling of importance, but for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and teaching others **how joyful life can be** when they live it for Christ and obey what He teaches them. A life which God originally intended for man from the very beginning, a life potential which was fully revealed by the Son of God,<sup>4</sup> the life which we shall enjoy in its richest measure in eternity,<sup>5</sup> that is the life which is proclaimed in God’s Word, that is the content of all preaching by the apostles. It is the life in Christ Jesus, for without Him there can be no true life. Having thus characterized his office and given a summary of his preaching, **Paul addresses Timothy as his beloved son** with whom he was united in a most affectionate and fatherly love.<sup>6 7</sup>

Paul’s greeting here in his second letter to Timothy is identical with that of the first letter: “*Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus, our Lord.*” One who has been **reconciled** to God by the grace of God and by faith can with full confidence know the assurance of the merciful love of God in Christ for him/her. Further that person can be convinced that **the peace of God which passes all understanding** is the guaranteed gift of God to all that believe.

Having been justified by faith, having become one who has been given the gift of the grace and mercy of God, we have peace with God, a peace that we are given by God only because of the sacrifice Jesus Christ was willing to suffer for us.

**Romans 5:1 (NLT):**

<sup>4</sup> John 1:4; 1 John 1:2

<sup>5</sup> Colossians 3:3-4; Galatians 6:8; Romans 5:17,

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:20-22.

<sup>7</sup> *New Testament Volume 2*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 398-400.

*Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.*

Paul now begins to encourage Timothy.

**2 TIMOTHY 1:3-7 (NLT):**

<sup>3</sup> *Timothy, I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.*

<sup>4</sup> *I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again.*

<sup>5</sup> *I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you.*

<sup>6</sup> *This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you.*

<sup>7</sup> *For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.*

Paul becomes very emotional here as he begins speaking with the young man that he loved as a son. Paul always finds reasons to be thankful to God, no matter how discouraging the circumstances with which he may be battling. In spite of the fact that he had long years of hard struggle and suffering behind him and was most likely facing an early execution, he still feels gratitude toward God. **Paul was satisfied** with the things he had accomplished for his God and Savior, and rightfully so.<sup>8</sup> How many of us have that same confidence in our service to God and Jesus?

If you don't love someone more than yourself, you cannot experience what true love is.

Paul certainly seems to be speaking here of the fact that the faith that is required of both Paul and Timothy is the same faith and hope that was required by their forefathers in Old Testament times. In this faith and hope Paul had been instructed from his youth, as his forefathers had been before him. It was true that Paul had done a terrible thing by persecuting the Christians and blaspheming Christ and the Christian religion. But, as he himself said, this attitude had been **due to ignorance**. Before his conversion on the Damascus Road, Paul believed then in a Messiah that was to come as much as he later believed in the Messiah, Jesus, that had already come. And so his worship of God had been performed with a pure conscience, foolish as it was in view of the fact that the Messiah had already appeared; Paul offered this as an explanation, not as an excuse.

2 Timothy 1:4 probably refers to Timothy's tears when Paul left him to journey to Macedonia. It shows that Timothy truly loved Paul, and by what we can piece together here, Timothy could have been very dependent on Paul.

Paul continues by expressing his love for Timothy and stating that he keeps him in prayer continually. His heart was filled with longing to see his young friend, especially since he could

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

not get rid of the memory of the tears which Timothy had shed at their last meeting. Please read the following two passages to better understand Timothy's parting feeling when he last saw Paul.

Acts 20:1 (NLT):

<sup>1</sup> *When the uproar was over, Paul sent for the believers and encouraged them. Then he said good-bye and left for Macedonia.*

Acts 20:36-38 (NLT): [Paul is speaking]

<sup>36</sup> *When he had finished speaking, he knelt and prayed with them.*

<sup>37</sup> **They all cried** as they embraced and kissed him good-bye.

<sup>38</sup> *They were sad most of all because he had said that they would never see him again. Then they escorted him down to the ship.*

The difficult ministry in which Timothy found himself was making him feel inadequate to the task. His inexperience was **raising doubts in his mind** as to whether he could continue. Paul refers to it as "*faint-heartedness.*" As Paul thought of this last good-bye and of the fact that he had not been able to see Timothy since that time, he began feeling a loneliness as he thought of the young man he loved as if he were his own son. As Paul thanked God for Timothy he allowed his mind to drift back to remember Timothy's mother, Eunice, and her mother, Lois, Timothy's grandmother, both of whom were faithful women of God, and he saw that same faith in Timothy.

**1 TIMOTHY 1:5**

*I recall your sincere faith that was alive first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am sure is in you.*

Paul knew that Timothy's faith was strong and that he desired to serve His Lord. He had the same kind of sincere faith that both his mother and grandmother had. The influence family has on how a child develops is usually a very important factor in their lives.

Timothy's mother was a Jewish Christian and so was his grandmother. His father, however, was a Greek and apparently an unbeliever as we're told in Acts 16:1: "*He also came to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple named Timothy was there, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but whose father was a Greek.*"<sup>5</sup>

**1 TIMOTHY 1:6:**

*Because of this I remind you to rekindle (remember)<sup>9</sup> God's gift that you possess through the laying on of my hands.*

The gift from God was the Holy Spirit that came to dwell in Timothy, giving him the ability to preach the gospel message.

<sup>9</sup> Parentheses ours.