**Simple Studies**

**in**

**Second Timothy**

**by**

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All Chapters are in Memory

**Introduction**

In his Second Epistle to Timothy we have Paul’s farewell words, written from the Roman prison just before his execution. There is a marked difference between this and the First Epistle. The churches in Asia, in whose founding the apostle had had so large a part, had already in a large measure turned away from his teachings, and legalism had taken the place of grace. Second Timothy points out the path for the Christian in a day of spiritual darkness, and teaches that this spiritual darkness will increase to the end of the church age. Throughout the age there will be numerous churches calling themselves Christian, though they will become largely anti-Christian in fact. But all the time there will be a remnant of the faithful, and they will find instructions for their walk in this Epistle. The keynotes of the Epistle are, “All they which are in Asia turned away from me,” and “A good soldier of Jesus Christ” (**2Ti. 1:15**; **2Ti. 2:3**).

***I. Paul... to Timothy (chapter 1).***

1. “Paul, an apostle by the will of God, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son” (**2Ti. 1:1-7**). In his First Epistle Paul saluted Timothy as his gnesios teknon, his “genuine child.” In his Second Epistle he greets him as his agapetos teknon, his “beloved child.” He expresses his thanks to God for Timothy and declares that without ceasing he prays for him, greatly desiring to see him, being mindful of his tears. He calls to remembrance the unfeigned faith which had begun in Timothy’s family with his grandmother Lois; then it had come to his mother Eunice; and then to Timothy himself. He exhorts Timothy to stir up the gift of God which had been transmitted to him through the laying on of the apostle’s hands. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

2. “Be not thou therefore ashamed” (**2Ti. 1:8-12**). It might be natural to be ashamed of fellowship with a prisoner, but Timothy was not to be ashamed either of the testimony of our Lord or of Paul his prisoner. Rather, he must be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, “who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,” whereunto Paul had been “appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” It was for these things that Paul was suffering, but Paul himself was not ashamed, for he knew whom he had believed, and was persuaded that he was able to keep that which he had committed unto him (“my deposit,” Greek) against that day.

The words “abolished death,” written here by a man facing physical death, refers to the death which is death indeed, that spiritual death which is eternal separation from God, the source of life.

3. “Hold fast the form of sound words” (**2Ti. 1:13-14**). Words are important things, especially in a preacher, therefore let the preacher be careful that his words are sound words. The message which Paul had committed to Timothy must be kept “by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us.”

4. “This thou know, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me” (**2Ti. 1:15**). Compare **2Ti. 4:10-16.**

5. “The Lord give mercy unto the house of, Onesiphorus” (**2Ti. 1:16-18**). Upon this tenuous thread some have tried to support the doctrine of prayers for the dead. But there is no evidence that either Onesiphorus or his family had died. His name is mentioned nowhere outside of Second Timothy. In this first chapter Paul declares that Onesiphorus had often refreshed him, and was not ashamed of Paul’s chain; but, when he was in Rome, he diligently sought Paul out and found him, and Paul prays “that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day; and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knows very well.” The other mention of the name of Onesiphorus is in 4:19, where Paul sent his greetings to Prisca and Aquila, “and the household of Onesiphorus.” Apparently Onesiphorus lived in Ephesus, and wherever he was he was faithful. Paul thanked God for him, and we thank God for him; but what has all that to do with prayers for the dead?

***II. A Sevenfold Composite Picture of a Christian and His Duties (chapter 2).***

In this chapter the Christian is presented in seven successive pictures, and in each of these pictures his duties are pointed out, appropriate in each case to the picture itself.

1. “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (**2Ti. 2:1-2**). A Christian is a son, and as such he is to be strong in grace. And it is the duty of each one of us, as much as it was of Timothy, that the things which we have received we should commit to faithful men able to teach others also.

2. “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (**2Ti. 2:3-4**). Being a soldier is quite different from being a son. A son in his father’s house may be strong in grace, but a soldier in the army must endure hardship, and he must separate himself from everything in order to devote himself absolutely to the task in hand. “No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

3. “And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully” (**2Ti. 2:5**). Here the Christian is pictured as an athlete contending for a prize. Just as a contestant in the athletic games must observe the rules or be disqualified, so the Christian in the struggle in which he engages must carefully observe the instructions for his guidance laid down in the Word of God. Of course the prize for which the Christian is striving is not salvation, for that is a gift. It is rather the reward promised the faithful servant (**1Cor. 3:11-15**).

4. “The husbandman that labors must be first partaker of the fruits” (**2Ti. 2:6**). The Christian here is pictured as a farmer, and a farmer must labor if he is to partake of the fruits of his farming. The Revised Version reads: “The husbandman that labors must be the first to -partake of the fruits

**2Ti. 2:7-14** do not need detailed exposition. It is interesting to point out that in the 8th verse, instead of “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised,” etc., the Revision reads: “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel.” It is a good word. Let us by all means “Remember Jesus Christ.”

Then in **2Ti. 2:12-13** the Revision is also an improvement: “If we endure, we shall also reign with him: if we shall deny him, he also will deny us: if we are faithless, he abides faithful; for he cannot deny himself.” It is a wonderful thing to remember that nothing can affect the faithfulness of God (compare **1Cor. 1:1-9**).

5. “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (**2Ti. 2:15-19**). Here the Christian is presented as a skilled workman, an artisan, and as such he must study, always with the object before him that he might be approved unto God. He must learn how to “rightly divide the Word of Truth,” for the truth has certain right divisions. The Bible is built according to a certain law of structure, and it is only as this law of structure is observed and obeyed, that the Christian workman may obtain God’s approval. The Word of God must not be set aside to give way to “profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker (gangrene, Greek).” Hymenaeus and Philetus had departed from the truth and were teaching that there was no future resurrection, and had overthrown the faith of some. “Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure,” having a seal with two inscriptions, one on either side; first, “The Lord knows them that are his,” and, second, “Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

6. “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these (that is, from the vessels to dishonor), he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (**2Ti. 2:20-22**). Here the Christian is presented as a vessel, and as such he must be a clean vessel, sanctified, or set apart, and meet, that is, fit, for the Master’s use. And in order that he might qualify for the Master’s use and be prepared unto good work he must “flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” He must avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they do gender strife’s.

7. “And the servant of the Lord must not strive” (**2Ti. 2:24-26**). Notice the contrast between the picture of the Christian as a soldier9 and the picture of a Christian as a servant. As a soldier the Christian's business is to strive, to earnestly contend (**Jud. 1:3**); but as a servant of the Lord he must not strive, he must be submissive. He must “be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God per ad venture will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

***III. Shadows in the End Time (chapter 3).***

1. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come (**2Ti. 3:1-9**). These marks of the end time are enumerated: “Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;” — and all the time “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” Real Christianity will give way to religious form. There will be plenty of motion but little life. “From such,” says the apostle, “turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

In **2Ti. 3:8-9** we learn the names of the magicians of Egypt who withstood Moses (**Ex. 7:11-12**; **Ex. 7:22; Ex. 8:7**; **Ex. 9:11**). “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.”

2. “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, afflictions” (**2Ti. 3:10-13**). Paul was a great sufferer (**2Cor. 11:1-33**). He endured great persecutions, but out of them all the Lord delivered him. “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” That is not a threat, but a promise, like the similar word of our Lord Jesus in Joh\_16:33, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” There is no use looking for improvement in the end-time, for “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

3. “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of” (**2Ti. 3:14-17**). Timothy had learned these things of the Holy Scriptures through his grandmother, through his mother, through the Apostle Paul, and through others; but he had learned them from the Holy Spirit himself. From a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” The Holy Scriptures are from God. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God (“God breathed” Greek), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Here we have a statement concerning the Word of God, and it is a statement which may be tested, like a proposition in algebra or chemistry. It may be reduced to a demonstration. And wherever or whenever men have applied the test they have found that the Word of God is indeed profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; and that its study is what makes the man of God “complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (RV).

***IV. A Man About To Die Speaks His Final Word (chapter 4).***

1. “I charge thee” (**2Ti. 4:1-6**). Here the aged apostle, who has so long and so faithfully held aloft the light of truth, hands the torch to his faithful friend and follower, his beloved child, Timothy, reminding him of the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. Paul says to this young preacher: “Preach the word.” That is the principal thing. Let the preacher know that his business is to preach the Word. For the time will come when they will not endure sound teaching; but after their own desires, having itching ears, they will heap to themselves teachers to tickle their ears; and just because they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables, therefore it is the more important that the preacher should be urgent in season and out of season, reproving, rebuking, exhorting, with all longsuffering and teaching. Let the preacher watch in all things, endure affliction, preach the gospel as an evangelist, fulfilling his ministry.

2. “I have fought a good fight” (**2Ti. 4:7-8**). The Revision is better: “I have fought the good fight.” He is not referring to the manner in which he himself had fought, but rather to the nature of the fight itself. It was a good fight, all along the line, and he was glad to have had a part in it. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.” Observe that Paul emphasizes the righteousness of his Judge. He is not depending upon a gracious Judge, but rather a righteous Judge. It is no part of a judge’s office to be gracious. It is his business to be righteous. He does not preside in a court of mercy, but rather in a court of justice. The grace of God went all the way when the Son of God was nailed to the cross of Calvary for our sins. But, having “laid our sins on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, who bore them all and frees us from the accursed load,” the righteousness of God now demands that those who come unto him by the Lord Jesus shall be received and welcomed and given eternal life, and protected and preserved, and rewarded for their faithful service. The crown spoken of here, like the other crowns of the New Testament, is a symbol of reward, and here it is promised to all them that have loved his appearing. Of course the crown is not salvation. Salvation is a gift, and Paul long ago had received that gift. But he is looking forward to the crown at the end of the race when he shall hear the voice of his righteous Judge say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

3. “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me” (**2Ti. 4:9-13**). In these verses we have a picture of the loneliness of the apostle. He wanted Timothy to come to him, for Demas had forsaken him, having loved this present age, and had gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke was with him. He wanted Timothy to bring Mark with him when he came, “for he is useful to me for ministering” (**2Ti. 4:11**, RV). Tychicus had gone to Ephesus, being sent by Paul. He wants Timothy to bring the cloak that he had left at Troas, for it was probably not always quite comfortable in the Roman dungeon. Then, too, Paul wanted Timothy to bring “the books, but especially the parchments.” We may not know what these books and parchments were. Paul would have opportunity in prison for study which he could not have otherwise.

4. “Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil” (**2Ti. 4:14-15**). Paul commits this evil worker to the Lord that he might be rewarded according to his works, and he warns Timothy against him, “for he hath greatly withstood our words.”

5. “At my first answer no man stood with me” (**2Ti. 4:16-18**). Evidently there had been a first trial for Paul, and, though he had not been fully acquitted, there had been, so to speak, an adjournment of his trial. Humanly speaking he had to stand alone at that first hearing. All men had forsaken him, and he prays God that it might not be laid to their charge (compare **Luke 23:34**; **Acts 7:60**). But though all men forsook him the Lord stood with him and strengthened him, “that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

There has been much conjecture about “the mouth of the lion.” Some have thought it meant, that Paul escaped being thrown into the arena to be destroyed by lions. Others have said that the emperor Nero who then occupied the Roman throne was often called “the lion.” But it seems more reasonable to suppose that by “the mouth of the lion” Paul was using a figure of speech to describe some great peril that had threatened him.

6. “Salute Prisca and Aquila” (**2Ti. 4:19-22**). Here we have the final words of greeting to and from friends. He sends personal messages to our old friends Aquila and Priscilla, and to the family of Onesiphorus. He tells of Erastus abiding at Corinth, “but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” Again, he beseeches Timothy to come to him before winter. Then he sends personal greetings from Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren, closing with the apostolic benediction.

A word needs to be said about Paul having left Trophimus sick at Miletum. There had been a time when “God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them” (**Acts 19:11-12**). Indeed, there had been times when Paul was used of God even to raise the dead (**Acts 20:7-12**). Why then had he been obliged to leave Trophimus at Miletum sick? The answer is, that in the beginning of the New Testament Church, before the writing of the New Testament was completed, it pleased God to support the testimony of his servants by working miracles through them. But as the New Testament books neared completion the spectacular gifts, such as speaking with tongues, healing the sick, raising the dead, and other miracles, were gradually withdrawn. So that having the Scriptures complete in its possession the church of God is now called upon to walk by faith and not by sight.