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Introduction. 2 Timothy is the second of two letters written from the Apostle Paul to his younger fellow-servant and protégé whose name supplies the book's title. Whereas the first letter was dominantly instructional (concerning leadership and church life especially), this letter, while continuing with much instruction, takes on the tone of great comfort and encouragement as well. From the letter's beginning we are informed of Timothy's sadness (being mindful of your tears, 1:4), and the Apostle's attempts to uplift his young mentee are scattered throughout. Why the sadness? No doubt Timothy is aware of what Paul himself is prepared for, the time of my departure is at hand (i.e., his death, 4:6). Timothy is discouraged.

None of this is to suggest that 2 Timothy is a gloomy letter... not at all! It is actually quite the opposite. It is the letter of a man who, after giving and sacrificing everything in this life to serve the Lord Jesus, is fully confident of the correctness of his message and value of his work. He has walked with the Lord Jesus Christ. People of this world had forsaken him, despised him, left him. Perhaps even Timothy is tempted to do the same. After all, following all the great, bold teachings and promises, Paul found himself almost totally alone, in prison, waiting to die. The elder minister would not budge from what may have seemed to some to be an old, tired-out message. What would most of us do? Would we question what we have done with our lives, thinking we had nothing to show for it? Not Paul. The persecution only made him more bold. The abandonment only made him more assured. Seeming to some to be an earthly failure, as some must have also perceived the Lord Jesus Himself to be, only made him more confident that he was a heavenly success.

Paul boldly declared later in this Chapter that in spite of his current situation - that of a condemned prisoner - he is not at all ashamed. Why? HE KNOWS JESUS CHRIST. And he knows that Jesus will be faithful to the end, able to save his soul, to keep His promises. Therefore, he is not ashamed, not at all. Nor should you and I be when we faithfully serve our Lord Jesus, no matter what that brings in this life. The first half of this Chapter emphasizes encouragement needed to press on through the hard times.

1. Verses 1-2 - Beloved son: the Apostle addresses his torchbearer.

- v.1 - **Paul, an apostle... by the will of God...** Apostles aren't just people who decide they are apostles. It's not some rank that you work to achieve. Pastors come to their work with desire in their heart (1 Tim. 3:1), but Apostles were called by God, and their apostleship was confirmed with miraculous works. **according to the promise of life...** Paul never forgot why he did what he was doing. Let us never forget our work: we bear the news of *life* to the world, life that is only **in Christ Jesus!**

- v.2 - **Timothy** is the addressee of the letter. The close relationship between mentor and mentee is obvious. The greeting written here is one Timothy must have been very familiar with Paul using. **Grace** is God's unmerited favor towards us, His **mercy** is His compassionate, forgiving tenderness to us, and as a result, through faith we are at **peace** with Him. Notice also the linking of **Father** and Son: they are clearly presented as a unit here, pointing to **Christ's** deity.

2. Verses 3-7 - Enduring difficulty: encouragement for Christian warrior.

- v.3a - **pure conscience...** Paul's life's work was controversial, and he was suffering for it. But he was fully convinced. He had all the confidence of the Holy Spirit at work in him. **as my forefathers did...** Paul was often persecuted by Jews who saw themselves as defenders of their religion and

therefore servants of God. Yet Paul here points out that by preaching Jesus as Messiah it is actually he who truly served God as the forefathers did. Timothy may have been struggling with this; perhaps all of Paul's detractors were right... Paul boldly asserts here who the true servant of God is: the one who preaches the Lord Jesus Christ and endures whatever comes because of it.

- vv.3b-4 - **mindful of your tears...** Timothy was struggling. He loved Paul, he loved the Lord, but he needed encouragement. This letter, along with Paul's **prayers**, would bring it. *We need to pray for each other that the power of this world does not cause us to get off track in following and serving Jesus.*

- v.5 - Encouragement #1: the letter itself. #2: Paul's prayers (see v.3). #3: here, the affirmation of the genuineness of Timothy's **faith** (and his **mother's** and **grandmother's**). *If you know that a brother or sister is fruitful and truly serving God, but perhaps struggling, be an encourager: remind them that you have seen the reality of their faith at work.*

- v.6 - Timothy needed to make sure a difficult season did not cause him to neglect his **gift**, his teaching and leadership. **the laying on of my hands...** Encouragement #4: Paul reminds Timothy that he knows his gifts are real and are to be used to the full.

- v.7 - An indication that Timothy's discouragement may have caused him to become a bit fearful, encouragement #5 is that God has **given us a spirit... of power and of love and of a sound mind**. All of those things are supplied in abundance through the Holy Spirit: power, love, soundness of mind. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit!