

August 14, 2011 by Steve Brandon



Fan the Flame; Fight the Fight

2 Timothy 1:1-2

1. Paul (verse 1)

2. Timothy (verse 2)

About a year ago, I was in DeKalb with some pastors, meditating over the Scripture together. Our text for those few days together was the second epistle of Paul to Timothy, commonly known as 2 Timothy. It was a great time of encouragement for me, personally, as a pastor. It helped to clarify for me what the ministry is all about. It helped to explain for me some of the difficulties that I have faced as a pastor over the years. It set the course for my meditation this past year. And for the past year it has been a constant source of meditation. It has helped me, with renewed vigor to press on in the ministry, through the difficulties. Because, quite frankly, the ministry is difficult. Indeed -- living the Christian life is difficult.

G. K Chesterton once wrote, "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried." Indeed, the Christian life is difficult. As Mark Twain once said, "It ain't the parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand." The book of 2 Timothy lays some of the difficulties of the Christian life, more particularly the difficulties of the Christian ministry. When it comes to 2 Timothy, its help to us is this: when times are hard, know that this is what we ought to expect as followers of Christ.

I'm thrilled to begin to open up this epistle this morning. My prayer is that you will come to love this book as much as I have. While we were on vacation, we had the chance to talk with a friend of ours. She asked what I was preaching about these days. I told her that I had just finished preaching through the book of Hebrews, and that I would start on 2 Timothy when we returned from vacation. She commented on how she loves the book of 2 Timothy. She mentioned how passionate and engaging a letter it is. I agree.

My message this morning is an overview of the entire book of 2 Timothy. Next week, we will begin the detail of chapter 1. But, this morning, I want to set before you some of the major themes of this book. Then, I want to run through the entire book, with you listening for these themes. Then, we'll focus on a few verses in preparation to celebrate the Lord's Supper this morning.

So, let's begin by reading the first two verses for you, as they set the stage to this letter.

2 Timothy 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Here we see the two major figures of this letter: Paul (verse 1) and Timothy (verse 2). Paul wrote the letter. Timothy received the letter. At the point of this writing, Paul had known Timothy for many years. They met in Lystra, as Paul was on his second missionary journey. Something happened between them, which instantly formed a life-long bond. Within a few days of meeting, Paul invited Timothy to join them in the missionary work (Acts 16:1-5). And so, for the next few years, they ministered together in places like Philippi and Thessalonica and Berea and Corinth (Acts 16-18). Eventually, Timothy ended up in Ephesus, becoming their pastor, where, presumably, he still was ministering.

For more than 15 years, these two had a close relationship. Timothy considered Paul his spiritual father (2 Tim. 1:2; 2:1), and served with Paul in the furtherance of the gospel (Phil. 2:22). Timothy was like a child serving his father. Paul considered Timothy one of his most faithful disciples. He called him a "kindred spirit" (Phil. 2:20). He was a man of "proven worth" (Phil. 2:22). Paul greatly loved Timothy (Phil. 2:23).

The difficulty of the letter is that **Paul needs Timothy** now (2 Tim 4:9, 21). Like a dying parent needs a child for help, so Paul needs Timothy. But, **Timothy also needs Paul**. Timothy needs to hear Paul's counsel.

Now, this isn't the first time that Paul had written counsel to Timothy. It's not called, "2 Timothy" for no reason. A "1 Timothy" exists. It's in our Bible, appearing just before 2 Timothy. The occasion for each of these letters differs widely. In 1 Timothy, Paul was writing about the affairs of the church. He wrote to Timothy, so that he might "know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15).

But, 2 Timothy is different. In 2 Timothy, Paul was writing about the affairs of Timothy's soul. All is not well with Timothy. He was struggling in the ministry. He was facing great opposition from some (2:25). Despite his efforts, false teaching was spreading (2:17). Ungodliness was spreading (2:16-17). Some put on a great show of righteousness, but in reality, they knew nothing of genuine righteousness (3:5). Some seemingly never grasped the gospel (3:7). Others were seeking to kick him out of the church (4:3-4). Timothy is discouraged.

Christian ministry can be a very discouraging place to be. You pour your heart out to people, and the church never really gets very big. You love those in the church with your whole heart. You sacrifice for them. And seek to do all that you can do for them. And often it's great. They return your love with love. "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity" (Ps. 133:1). I know of this. I experience this. I'm grateful for this. My love for you abounds!

But, other times, it's not so great. There are times when you bring God's word to people, but they love their sin instead. In love you come to them and speak with them and put the glories of Jesus before them, but they turn their back on you and on the church, desiring their sin instead. They know what you believe and reject it all!

At other times, people simply drift away from you and from the church. It's not so much that they are in outward sin and rebellion, as much as it is that their hearts have grown lukewarm to Jesus. So, off they go in search of another church that might help them where I haven't been able to help them. When people leave the church, more often than not it's because of a deficiency in me. In some way, I have not been the leader, the preacher, the counselor, or the friend they think they need me to be. Their leaving shows a big deficiency in me. While I know that I cannot be all things to all people, this is still discouraging.

Then, there are times when people grow angry at you. For some reason, you offend somebody with something that you said or did. Often, it's my own sin. Sometimes, they won't even tell you why they were offended. And they turn and bite you and are ungrateful for all that you have sought to do for them. And it hurts. It hurts bad. Psalm 55:12-14 tells of the pain, ...

Psalm 55:12-14

For it is not an enemy who reproaches me,
Then I could bear it;
Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me,
Then I could hide myself from him.
But it is you, a man my equal,
My companion and my familiar friend;
We who had sweet fellowship together
Walked in the house of God in the throng.

Timothy was a hurting man. Reading between the lines, I think that Timothy was so discouraged that he was on the border of quitting the ministry -- not because of sin in his life, but because of the hardship of ministry. The pressures were getting to him. He had been hurt by others. He was ready to throw in the towel. Perhaps this is why the book of 2 Timothy has so resonated with my heart. Because, I've been where Timothy was. I've been hurt by others. I've been on the edge of quitting. But, I know of the sustaining power of God's grace. And 2 Timothy has been a great encouragement to me to press on in the ministry, to stay true to the gospel, to trust the Lord to help in need.

Timothy's discouragement is the major reason why Paul wrote this letter. He wrote it to encourage Timothy to press on in the ministry. You can see this in chapter 1, verses 5 and 7:

2 Timothy 1:5-7

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. For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

In other words, "Timothy, I have seen your faith. I know that it is true and genuine. So, fan the fire afresh in your heart, and press on. Because, God hasn't called us to shrink back. Rather, he has called us to a life of spiritual power and genuine love and discipline through the gospel. So, don't give up. Fight the fight. Finish your course. Keep the faith. Fulfill your ministry."

This is the big idea of the book of 2 Timothy: "Fan the Flame; Fight the Fight." The first part comes from verse 6, "For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God." The English Standard Version reads this way, "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God." In other words, "do what you can do to see the fire of God blaze in your bones." "You focus your effort on fanning the flame. You trust in God's work to provide the heat." That's the only way that you are going to endure in the ministry -- if God burns brightly in your life. This is true of the Christian life as well. If you try to do it on your own strength, you are sunk. So, "Fan the Flame; Fight the Fight."

The second part of this big idea comes from chapter 4. Turn over there. Look at chapter 4, verses 6 and 7. Speaking about himself, Paul writes, ...

2 Timothy 4:6-7

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.

"Timothy, I have been in the ministry for many years now. I've suffered great hardship as well. So, I can sympathize with you. In fact, even right now, my life is being poured out of me. I feel like a drink offering (this is when they take an animal, slit its neck, and let the blood flow). I'm soon to die. But, I have remained faithful. There has been a fight, and I have fought it. There has been a course, and I have run it. I have made it through. You can do it too. So, join me and fight the fight." Indeed, Paul is at the end of his life. In fact, this is the last of Paul's letters contained in our New Testament. It is his final advice.

I love how personal it is. In fact, much of it is autobiographical, where Paul lays out his own sufferings as an example for Timothy to follow. 1 Corinthians 11:1 instructs, "Imitate me as I also imitate Christ." Look back in chapter 1, verse 8. He tells Timothy, "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" (1:8).

Paul was suffering, but this is part and parcel to the ministry. The ministry of Jesus was filled with suffering. He came to the lost sheep of the

house of Israel and was rejected (Matt. 15:24; 27:22, 25). The religious leaders were against him. At the time of greatest need, all of His disciples deserted Him (Matt. 26:31). He was betrayed with a kiss (Matt. 26:48-49). Jesus was crucified upon the cross, all alone.

Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of the Messiah, "He was ... a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Is. 53:3). Such was the life of Christ -- filled with suffering. Why would His servants expect anything else? Jesus, Himself had even told His disciples that this would take place, "A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). This is Paul's point. "Timothy, I'm suffering. Just like Jesus. So, join me in suffering for the gospel. Just like any in the ministry of the gospel."

This wasn't the only time that Paul called Timothy to suffer. Look over in chapter 2. In verse 3, there is a clear call, "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2:3). I'm suffering hardship; join me. Look at chapter 4, verse 5, "But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship." This is all an acknowledgement of how difficult the ministry is. It's hard. Suffering is to be expected.

And lest you think that 2 Timothy is only for pastors, think again. There is a message for all who are in the pew as well. Chapter 3, verse 12 says, "Indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (3:12). 2 Timothy isn't merely for pastors. It isn't merely those in the ministry. It's for "all" followers of Christ. It is a promise we sometimes gloss over. You can expect persecution to come.

In this way, the Christian life can be every bit as discouraging as the Christian ministry is. You have come to know and love Jesus. You have seen that His suffering upon the cross was not in vain. You have embraced the fact that He died in your place for your sins. You have repented of your sins. You have believed in the gospel. You have experienced the forgiveness of sins! You have seen the Lord's faithfulness in your life. And you want others to share in your joy. And so, you share the wonderful news of the gospel with others, and what do you get? More often than not, people are cold to the things that you tell them. You are seeing things that they don't see. You are feeling things that they don't feel. Their eyes are blinded, and their hearts are dull.

It's OK when only one person you speak with doesn't believe. But, when the vast majority of those you speak with refuse to believe the gospel, it can be discouraging. Especially, when they are in your own family, and you have had opportunity to give testimony to the Lord over many, many years. And when they have witnessed the change that God has made in your life, and still they don't believe. That's discouraging.

But, at other times, it gets worse. There are times when people turn against you for sharing the gospel with them. Not only are they cold, but they turn to be hostile toward you. This isn't pleasant. But, it is the Christian life. There is a way that a spiritual leaders often bears the brunt of the hostility. Paul lays out his sufferings in 2 Timothy. "For this reason I also suffer these things." You say, "For what reason"? The reason is divine. You go back to verse 11 and see that God appointed Paul "a preacher and an apostle and a teacher" of the gospel (verse 10). Verse 1:1 says that God appointed him "By the will of God." And, as a preacher and apostle and teacher of the gospel, you can expect some suffering.

It didn't come about by accident. It came about by God's sovereign purpose. Spiritual leaders will suffer. Look over in chapter 2 to see more of his suffering. Verse 9 says that for gospel, "I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal." Now, Paul was no criminal. He was an incredibly righteous, religious man, who sought the good for every soul that he encountered. But, the governmental authorities considered him to be a criminal, because he was upsetting the peace. The Jews hated Him, because he preached Jesus as the Messiah (who, in fact, the Jews had killed). The Gentiles hated Him, because he took business away from their idol factories. In preaching the gospel, Paul became a prisoner. Such suffering goes with the territory.

But, in verse 10, he puts it all in perspective. He says, "I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory" (2:10). The elect are in the world. Those whom God has chosen for salvation from the foundation of the world are in the world. They need to hear the gospel, so that they might believe. There is a way that suffering for the cause of Christ is helpful in the furtherance of the gospel. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he explains this. He says, ...

Philippians 1:12-14

Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

In other words, Paul had an opportunity to preach the gospel among the guards of the prison. This was an opportunity that he would never had had if he wasn't arrested as a criminal. Furthermore, when others heard of Paul's suffering for the gospel, it encouraged them to speak out with more boldness than ever before. "If Paul is willing to go to prison for the gospel, then certainly, I'm able to speak up when I have opportunity." Since Paul saw his suffering as furthering the gospel, he was very willing to endure it. He saw his suffering as the means by which the elect could hear the gospel and be saved.

Not only does Paul speak of his present suffering, but he brings in some of his past sufferings as well. He brings up some of the trials that he faced during his first missionary journey, before he ever met Timothy. Chapter 3, verse 11 speaks of, "persecutions and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!" (3:11). You can read about this in Acts 13 and 14. He preached the gospel in each of these three towns. And was physically kicked out of each city for doing so. At Lystra, they even pelted Paul with stones "and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead" (Acts 14:19).

That's only a bit of what Paul experienced in his life. He could have given many more examples, as he did in 2 Corinthians 11:21-33. But, he only mentions these three cities, because the point has well be made. Paul's life had been a life of suffering for the gospel. It came as no surprise. When Jesus first called Him to faith, Paul was told "how much he must suffer for [the name of Christ]" (Acts 9:16). And he suffered!

Paul's suffering continued up to the very moment of his writing this letter. Near the end, he is pleading with Timothy, "Make every effort to come to me soon, for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. ... Only Luke is with me" (4:9-11). Paul is in prison, alone (except for Dr. Luke). He's lonely. He's cold--he asks that Timothy bring a coat for him (4:13). He's seeking Timothy's companionship. He repeats his desire near the very end of the letter with a bit more urgency, "Make every effort to come to me before winter." In other words, "Timothy, I want to see you soon! Timothy, I need your encouragement in my last days upon the earth." We even saw Paul's heart for Timothy in the earliest paragraph of the letter, "I am longing to see you" (1:4). This is the deep passion and desire of Paul's heart--to see Timothy.

Reflecting upon his time in Ephesus, he remembered the hurt that a man named Alexander caused him, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds" (4:14). You can read about him in 1 Timothy 1:20. He suffered shipwreck in regards to his faith. Paul handed him over to Satan so that he would be taught not to blaspheme. In verse 16, he brought up the time when he was deserted by many. "At my first defense, no one supported me, but all deserted me, may it not be counted against them" (4:16). That is, all the Christians who were in Asia when he stood before the Romans who sentenced him to death, they deserted Paul. Like the disciples of Jesus, they were nowhere to be found.

Timothy knew all about this. Paul had already mentioned this in chapter 1, "You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me" (1:15). Paul, in his moment of need, needed someone to stand up and testify on his behalf. There was silence. Nobody defended him.

This book may well be about the hurting soul of Timothy, but it also deals with the pains of Paul. He was hurting as well. He was in need of help. He desperately wanted Timothy to come and be with him and minister to him before he would be martyred for the gospel.

Now, we don't know if Timothy ever made it to see him. But we do know that One greater than Timothy was present to minister to him. "But, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom" (4:17-18). Such was the faith of Paul; it was in the Lord. Through all the trials, through all the difficulties, the Lord sustained Paul through them all. That's why Paul is encouraging Timothy to "Fan the Flame." Fire up God's power in you. He is the only one who will be able to sustain you in these days.

Paul had a future confidence in the Lord to keep him going. That's the point of Paul's confidence, "In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but to all who have loved His appearing" (4:8). Paul knew that his hope for glory was not here upon the earth. No, his hope was in heaven. Christ will return and will award him the crown he has been seeking. He may be a prisoner upon the earth, but he will be a prince in glory. From the very first verse of this letter, it has been upon the heart of Paul, when he mentioned "the promise of life in Christ Jesus" (1:1). Paul was looking for the life, the everlasting life that comes through faith in Jesus. Most all of us know the promise of life in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

So, Paul says, "Fan the Flame", Timothy. Fan your desire for God in your heart. Trust in Him completely to sustain you. But, he's also telling Him to "Fight the Fight." Paul's own endurance through suffering was an example for Timothy to follow.

Throughout the letter, there are encouragements to persevere. "Retain the standard of sound words" (1:13). Don't drift from your course. Press on. "Guard ... the treasure which has been entrusted to you" (1:14). You have been given the treasure of the gospel. Keep it. Guard it. Protect it. Don't let the message of Christ crucified for forgiveness of sins ever be watered down and diluted. Keep it pure. Do not let it be added to. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2:1). Rely upon Jesus, not upon your own strength. Rely upon Jesus; don't falter in your faith. "Continue in the things that you have learned and become convinced of" (3:14). Keep the course. Don't be persuaded into any new teaching or fad or ministry method. Know that the simple gospel is good enough to save and sanctify. "Preach the word, ... in season and out of season" (4:2). Be steady and consistent about your work. Always put forth the word of God before people. Be ready at all times with the gospel upon your lips.

Throughout the entire letter, Paul counsels Timothy on how to deal with those who oppose the gospel. There were many who were in opposition to him. Paul mentions them by name. Chapter 1 mentions Phygelus and Hermogenes (1:15), who turned away from Christ. Chapter 2 mentions Hymenaeus and Philetus (2:17), who claimed that the resurrection had already taken place. Chapter 3 mentions the bad examples of Jannes and Jambres (3:8-9), who opposed Moses. These men are just like others who were opposing Timothy. Chapter 4 mentions Demas and Alexander (4:10, 14-15), who had deserted their faith, and were hostile toward them.

Paul counsels Timothy in the way one of God's servants are to deal with those who contradict. 2 Timothy 2:14 says, "[Don't] wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers." When someone wants to come and argue, harping on the technicalities of what you said, don't enter into the fray. Let them alone. Chapter 2, verse 16 counsels to, "Avoid worldly and empty chatter." Let your speech always be excellent. Let it be about good and profitable things, not worldly, empty things. Chapter 2 also says that, "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, ... patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition (2:24-25). That's how you win people. It's not by crushing them in their foolishness. But, rather, by gently correcting them. And 2 Timothy 4:15 warns, "Be on guard against [Alexander]." Know that he intends you harm.

At this point, with the themes of 2 Timothy in your mind, I encourage you to read the entire letter. Listen for Paul's encouraging Timothy in his discouragement. Listen for Paul's own example of suffering, which is a part of the Christian ministry. Listen for Paul's hope in the sustaining power of God. Listen for Paul's counsel regarding dealing with others.

To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 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, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. 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.

For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. 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, 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, 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, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. 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. Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me -- 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.

Chapter 2

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. It is a trustworthy statement:

For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.

Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness." Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

Chapter 3

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also.

Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired

by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Chapter 4

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Make every effort to come to me soon; for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching.

At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus. Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren. The Lord be with your spirit Grace be with you.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on August 14, 2011 by Steve Brandon.
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