II Timothy Series Commentary

**New Life Community Church**

II Timothy

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**II Timothy**

**II Timothy 1:1-7**

v.1:1- The introduction of this book displays the structure and themes that are found throughout the book; Paul would give the structure by which the book is to be understood in the first verse by affirming that his apostleship is found only in the will of the Lord. This idea shows the indispensable need for the will of God to be the most important variable in conversion. Paul’s knowledge of the will of God comes as an example of Ananias’ affirmation in Acts 22:4-5; that he would know the “will of God.” This same knowledge also parallels a similar testimonial that Paul made in I Timothy 1:12-16 to this radical change in his life. This calling and understanding of the will of God is the structure that Paul structures his writing off of; especially when addressing Timothy in this second letter, clarifying the calling in his life that is being revealed.

v.1:2- It would be in this second verse that the calling Paul is revealing in Timothy’s life becomes relational and personal. What makes this letter polarizing is that Paul uses the language “beloved child” to describe Timothy, which is an advancement on the previous letter he sent him, which addressed Timothy as “genuine child” in the first verse. This same title is the one that Paul used in addressing Titus, showing some similarity in their statuses. But now Paul is calling Timothy a “beloved child,” which is a term that Paul uses in descriptions of father-son relationships in his writing. This same address is the one that Paul used to describe Timothy to the Corinthians because he had “begotten” him spiritually, meaning that he personally and spiritually saw to the existence of Timothy’s life with God. This address in the book of II Timothy is to remind him of the way that Paul thinks of him and how he views him. This spiritual begetting of Timothy is describing not merely the teaching that Paul has passed down to him, but rather describes a complete investment in the life of Timothy and the continuation of God’s ministry in his life. The father-son relationship that is described transcends worldly definitions of a father-son relationship; alluding to the spiritual nature of their relationship, demonstrating to Timothy the reminder of Paul’s complete investment in his development into the leader that God has called him to be[[1]](#footnote-1).

v.1:3: The typical structuring of Pauline epistles begins with a greeting and are followed by a prayer. This letter is no exception to this literary structure as v. 3 demonstrates Paul’s consistent prayer of thanks to God. However, he highlights very specific particulars in his prayer of thanks. The first particular being that his prayer of thanks is one that his ancestors did as well. This reference could be pertaining to the faithful Old Testament saints who served God faithfully; they are unlikely pertaining to his mother and father or others in his family, because he came from a Pharisaic background that likely permeated his family. Paul never does reveal the members of his family, but the reference to his ancestors is likely to Old Testament saints such as Abraham, Moses, etc. that faithfully followed the Lord. The second particular of this prayer of thanksgiving is that he mentions that he gave it with a clear conscience. It is possible that Paul felt the need to specify the nature of his prayer in the wake of early corruption in the Christian faith. However, the need to pray with a clear conscience is a problem that humanity still encounters to this day. Corrupted prayer for selfish and prideful gain was also a problem for many of the ancient churches as it can be for this day. It was important that Paul emphasized his prayer in clear conscience to remind Timothy of the increasing need to remain faithful to God in a time of early corruption, which is a strong theme that runs through Paul exhortation to Timothy in this book. The final particular of this prayer is that it was done as he remembered Timothy during the night and day. Because the prayer of thanksgiving was done as he was remembering Timothy, it is important that the previous particulars are applied to this final one because they are details of the prayer of thanksgiving that is done in remembrance of Timothy. This means that Paul’s prayer of thanksgiving that is done to parallel the actions of his ancestors, and done with a clear conscience, is done in order to reflect the importance of this remembrance to Paul and how meaningful his relationship with Timothy actually is.

v.1:4: The absolute loyalty that Timothy showed Paul was evident in this verse, describing Paul’s desire to see Timothy in his remembrance of his emotionality. The details of what even Paul is referring to is not yet known, but speculation has driven many to believe that the tears are in reference to I Timothy 1:3, where Paul talks about his departure from Timothy. Others have wondered if Timothy was present for the events in Acts 20:37. Regardless of the event that it took place in, Paul was demonstrating that he remembered the tears that Timothy shed in his presence and longed to be with him again. In this context, it is much easier to conceive of a man crying; much more so than it is in the west. Paul uses it as the object of his longing to be with Timothy; many have speculated that Paul says this out of his own loneliness in confinement, which is ultimately holding him away from the ones that he loves. This verse only adds to the relational theme that Paul is communicating to Timothy in his writing first demonstrated in v. 2 of this book[[2]](#footnote-2).

v.1:5: Paul would emphasize the sincere faith of Timothy as it relates to his mother and grandmother, and he does so by using similar language that parallels language that he used in v. 3. He uses the word “sincere” to describe the nature of Timothy’s faith, which could be similar to Paul’s prayer of thanksgiving in “clear conscience.” Sincerity and clear consciences are practically synonymous in the Christian faith, demonstrating that the absolute faith of a Christian is one practiced with no selfish or prideful intent, thus sincerity is the nature of a clear conscience in faith. This principle is not only applied to Timothy, but also to his mother and grandmother, who stood faithful to the Old Testament prophecy of the Messiah. The idea that sincere faith could be in Timothy along with his mother and grandmother, is connected to the sincerity of Paul’s faith, considering the truth of his begetting of Timothy’s spiritual life. It is, however, quite interesting that Paul would use language like “beloved child” to demonstrate a father-son relationship between him and Timothy, and then recognize Timothy’s faith in abstraction to his teaching; which is found instead in the teaching of his mother and grandmother. This must demonstrate that Paul is recognizing the foundation upon which he built. It was not his teaching that saved Timothy’s life, nor his mother and grandmother’s, but rather it was the will of God proven in the existence of his spiritual life as Paul affirms in v. 1. This remains true even for Paul asserting that he had begotten the teaching in Timothy spiritually, because this could not have been done without the potentiality of the action being created by the will of God. Human begetting is not done without the initial begetting of God himself.

v.1:6: It is through the thankfulness that Paul has, his relational and familial love, and the will of God that he then exhorts Timothy to remember this same foundation that Paul recognizes and “fan the flame,” which is the gift of God. This verse is quite interesting because it isn’t just about recognizing the gift, but about recognizing who gave it. This theme would begin to get confusing as it the verse transitions into the next clause, which states that the existence of the gift of God found in Timothy came through the laying of hands by Paul. In many western forms of language, it would be assumed that the source of the granted gift of God for Timothy was Paul. However, the meaning of this clause is not that the source of the gift was the act of Paul laying hands on Timothy; rather that, by the will of God, Paul served as a vessel through which the will of God was done. Paul was nothing more than a messenger for the will of God, his act of “laying hands” on Timothy had no power in itself outside of God. This same act, which is defined as enacting the will of God within someone else’s life, is what Paul uses as fuel to exhort Timothy to continue to work in his faith and to make it stronger. All of these acts are done similarly to the nature of Paul’s “laying of hands” on Timothy, which is the nature of the will of God.

v.1:7: The final verse of this thematic section is a short theological teaching on Paul’s part, that is done to brief Timothy on the purpose of his letter. Because the theme of this book is one that encourages Timothy to remain in the faith, Paul is prefacing this theme by ending the introduction with teaching on the nature of God as it is enacted in the adverse life of the Christian. Paul certainly recognizes the circumstances, especially considering his need to emphasize praying with a “clear mind” (v. 3). He knows of the corruption of the world and in Christendom, and v. 6 plays on this truth by exhorting Timothy to remain faithful by gaining strength in his faith. But it is in this verse that Paul recognizes the existing fear that Timothy has in pushing forward in his leadership in the faith, and highlights the fact that Timothy must not be fearful in his growing strength. He says this only to give a short command for the powerful reasoning that he presents: that God gave them a spirit of power, love, and self-control, not one of fear. Of course, power, love, and fear are attributes of the character of God and they serve as the contradiction of the spirit of fear, which cannot ever be good. Paul is not only exhorting Timothy to grow stronger in his faith, but to also remember to remain above reproach, which is an essential quality of any Christian leader.

**II Timothy 1:8-14**

v.1:8: In recognition of the growing opposition that Christianity was facing, Paul gives Timothy the imperative that He must not become ashamed of God or of him. This is now the second characteristic that Paul has highlighted that is not included in the character of God, and it is important for the context that Paul is preparing Timothy for. As a leader, Paul wanted to make sure that Timothy was prepared to defend the gospel and the work of God; this could possibly allude to the work of God in Paul’s life because he also exhorts Timothy to not be ashamed of him. It is important to know that Paul was not being selfish when he asked Timothy to refrain from being ashamed of him, rather it was the work of God revealed in Timothy that came by the laid hand of Paul that Timothy was not to be ashamed of. Paul would not go as far as to request Timothy to defend his honor, because Paul denied it and his own life in Acts 20:24, along with other letters to the early churches. Yet, this work that Paul is exhorting Timothy to take on is also accepting him, and not being ashamed of the work that he has done simultaneously. Paul means to demonstrate that he cannot forget the work of the Lord as being the foundation upon which the ministry is built, but that a part of the ministry was affirming his connection and love for Paul, regardless of whether or not he was an inmate. While a confusing and paradoxical connection, this affirms that Paul is taking responsibility for his actions and the ministry that he took part in that eventually led to his imprisonment. But he also recognizes the work of God as the substance of the ministry that he was a part of. This then leads Paul to emphasize the worldly shame that could come from such affirmations, recognizing the strength needed to remain hopeful for the work of God in suffering for the gospel. The suffering in this case is remaining steadfast and faithful to the work of God, which is demonstrated in Paul’s life and as revealed previously by him, also in Timothy’s life.

v.1:9: As a basis for his continued instruction to Timothy, Paul speaks in a creedal way through his affirmation of the saving work of Christ before the beginning of the world. In his typical style, Paul would mention the will of God in the wording “His own purpose and grace” which parallels his affirmation of the same will in v. 1[[3]](#footnote-3). This doctrine is encompassed in his assertion of salvation coming through the work of Christ alone and not by ours; he would then assert the eternality of Christ describing His work as one done before all things began. Not only does this demonstrate man’s utter inability to save himself, but it also demonstrates the hilarity of man’s attempts to save himself from something that has already been conquered. Because it is impossible to comprehend the way that time works outside of how we understand, it is important to affirm that the mercy and grace man needed to take part in salvation has already been granted. This same teaching is one that Paul passes on to Timothy, which is important for his circumstance in early Christendom. This same reason is also why Paul gave Timothy the paradox of keeping from being ashamed of him, but also remembering to deny him because it is not his work that he took part in. Paul is emulating the principle of compatibilism, in that he affirms the ultimate and temporal sovereignty of God, but he commands Timothy to remember this sovereignty and put it into practice as if he had a responsibility. The comforting thought of having all events known makes daily ministry easier, which is a principle that Paul is trying to get Timothy to remember in order that he can refrain from being ashamed of the gospel.

v.1:10: This verse being the encapsulation of the doctrine raised in the previous one, Paul drives home the ultimate application of God’s work in eternity to secure His people, and that is the appearance of Christ in this world. This verse is the perfect display of God’s decree going straight into action; what has been deemed true in eternity was coming to be communicated to man through God himself. This gospel is the one that Paul highlights, in that Christ brought the message of eternal life and light which abolished the effects of death. This gospel ultimately meant that while Christians would still endure bodily death, they would no longer have to suffer its effects. This verse also corresponds with the principle mentioned earlier, that while the gospel was an eternal decree and demonstrated the sovereignty of God it still remained the responsibility of man to choose because of that choice demonstrated in the gospel. This conclusive end to the reign of death was something that Paul needed to remind Timothy of in order that he may communicate that same gospel to those in the early church. It was a message that he was not to be ashamed of, and instead he was to proclaim it confidently because it was already true. It had become true in the death and resurrection of Christ simultaneously as it had already been true.

v.1:11: Because Paul was taking so much time to prepare Timothy in this letter, it was imperative the he begin to remind Timothy of the place that he had and possibly the eventual result of his calling. Paul described three different titles that all pointed to his appointment through the gospel message. He described himself as preacher (herald in other translations), apostle, and teacher, all of which fell into the category for what it meant to be a leader in the early church. Paul does not mention these titles to increase his pride or to boast, he mentions them to remind Timothy of the gospel call that he received. He was not necessarily highlighting his personal authority, but more abundantly the authority of the gospel. Not only would he say this to remind Timothy of the authority of his message, but it would allude to the implications of the calling that he has also taken on. He was preparing Timothy for the likelihood of his parallel imprisonment, or of his suffering as is the message of the epistle.

v.1:12: Paul used the authority of the gospel to then explain to Timothy the role of the messenger in light of his circumstances in imprisonment. As he attempted to fulfill his calling, he had been placed in prison with the thought of impending execution on his mind. This would likely cause anyone shame and fear, but Paul reference to these feelings demonstrate his lack of them. He knew that his execution could come, and he remained encouraged by the hope of the gospel message, which was a hope that was also available to Timothy. Paul would not say this to remind Timothy of what he already knows, but he would say this in light of the calling that Timothy had received; that it was likely that he would suffer a similar set of circumstances or endure duplicate levels of suffering. Paul would also reference the eternality of the promise made to him by Christ in the gospel message, that his hope did not come from his need to cope with his circumstances, but rather that it came from a completely legitimate source; a source of life. His shame did not exist because he knew what waited for him in bodily death.

v.1:13: While Paul had taken steps to demonstrate to Timothy how the decree of the gospel was made manifest in Christ, he wanted to demonstrate to him how it applied to his present circumstances. While this meaning remained implicit in his appeal to Timothy describing his circumstances, he would then explain what Timothy was to do with the appeal and how he would react to circumstances of his own. Earlier in the passage, Paul had demonstrated to Timothy a set of doctrinal beliefs that he was to hold to. Now he is exhorting him to put them into practice in his ministry as an early church leader. This would be the “sound words” that Paul had spoken and then mentioned in this verse. But what he doesn’t say is that he is to do so by the faith that is found in him, but instead Paul commands Timothy to follow his sound words by the faith that is in Christ Jesus. This demonstrates once again that principle that Paul had mentioned in his doctrinal decrees, that it was not because of our works that we find our faith. Paul instead tells Timothy to believe in his teaching by the faith that is found in Christ, which gives greater weight to the idea that all of faith is done by a “sound mind” in “sincerity.” Paul is reminding Timothy that the idea of praying with a sound mind and in sincerity parallels that of complete reliance on the faith that Christ had and not our own. There is no power within us that can grant us a sincere faith or a sound mind, but only the faith that Christ has. This idea is then made practical in the as he proceeds into the next verse.

v.1:14: While this verse is non-concurrent with the structuring of the previous verse and how the passage lays out, it is important that both the first clause is how one performs the second clause and how one also performs the previous verse. Meaning, that by the Holy Spirit we are to guard the good deposit entrusted to us, and by the Holy Spirit entrust sound words in the faith and love of Jesus. All of the teaching that Paul is giving to Timothy is to be accepted in the faith and love of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. And concurrently with this teaching, Paul is commanding Timothy to guard these sound words by the power of the Holy Spirit in this verse. Both v. 13 and v. 14 are two sides of the same coin, we are to trust the sound words of the teaching of God in the faith and love of Christ; and we are to guard these sound words by the power of the Holy Spirit. Guarding the sound words (or good deposit) is the same act as following them. We cannot defend the word without following it, and we cannot follow the word without defending it. This verse serves as the end of the introduction, giving Paul room to now elaborate on his teaching further as he proceeds into the next chapters.

**II Timothy 1:15-2:13**

v.1:15: It is in this verse that Paul begins to show Timothy the problem of apostasy and the prevalence that it had among the early church. When referring to Asia in this context, Paul is most likely meaning sections of western Turkey, which included the city of Ephesus in this time, He reminds Timothy of those in Asia who had left the gospel message behind, and makes them an example for Timothy not to follow. Interestingly enough, Paul states that those who had turned from the gospel in Asia had actually turned away from him. This in no way means that these individuals had turned from him personally, rather it means that they had turned from what Paul stands for, which is the gospel. So, while many may interpret this verse as a “personal apostasy,” it is more accurate to say that Paul is commenting on the act of these individuals leaving the faith and apostasizing from the gospel message that he preached. As stated before, Paul had already denied his own life in Acts, meaning that there is no possibility that Paul actually cared for the damage done to him by these people. But it does mean that he cared for the eternity of these people, and they turned on Paul because the gospel message was deeply engrained within his being. Pertaining to the individuals that Paul highlighted, Phygelus and Hermogenes, there is no record of them in any other canonical book. This may demonstrate that they played a background role in the ministry in Asia, or they never made an impact, which is possible considering their apostasy.

v.1:16: While Paul was making Timothy aware of the common threat that they had, he was also reminding him of the great many brothers and sisters that they had throughout the early church. Paul would mention with great joy the refreshment he always received from Onesiphorus. He would also go on to mention how Onesiphorus was never ashamed of his chains, meaning his imprisonment. In this situation, Paul’s reference to his chains possibly meant more than merely being ashamed of his status as an inmate; it likely meant that Onesiphorus was not ashamed of the reason Paul was imprisoned. This exact principle is the teaching that Paul is trying to pass onto a hesitant Timothy, that he should not be ashamed of the very reasoning that Paul is imprisoned. This verse, along with the previous one serves as a warning within an encouragement; in that, Paul is demonstrating the threat within the early church, but also encouraging him with evidence of the growing influence of Christianity.

v.1:17: Following the previous theme of warning within encouragement, Paul uses this verse to show Timothy the great lengths that a good brother in Christ will go to defend the message of God. This principle would be demonstrated in Onesiphorus searching Rome, and eventually finding Paul. This act was done in defense of the message of God and for his deeply loved brother; Paul meant to make Onesiphorus an example for Timothy to follow. He wanted Timothy to consistently be confident in Paul regardless of his imprisonment, because the message that he preached was the very thing that was imprisoned. The misunderstood message of God was what put Paul in jail, and he wanted Timothy to embrace the suffering because it is what Christianity was met with in this context.

v.1:18: In similar fashion to the previous verses, Paul is giving examples to Timothy to spur him into confidence in the message that he proclaims. He uses his and Timothy’s common memory of their ministry to show Timothy the example that he is to following Onesiphorus. He does this by mentioning his recollection of his and Timothy’s common memory of their ministry in Ephesus. The details of this are not clear, it could have been when Paul was in Ephesus with Timothy, or it could have been the instance where they were both in Ephesus before Paul went into Macedonia[[4]](#footnote-4). Regardless of when it happened, Paul is referencing the Christlike character that Onesiphorus exhibited in order that Timothy may find encouragement in Paul’s chains similarly. Paul would revere Onesiphorus and mention the wish that he had for him to find mercy from the Lord in the “that day.” This day is in reference to the second advent of Christ, in His return to the world to lift up the saints. This remark is also highly important, because it shows that Paul recognizes that only the Lord’s mercy can save him in that day, and not any work that he has done himself.

v.2:1: The culmination of the examples that Paul gave climaxes in his command to Timothy in this verse. He would simply tell Timothy to be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ. But the same teaching that Paul has been giving Timothy all along in this book is one that is also demonstrated here. Concurrent with v. 14, Paul displays to Timothy the fact that the strength he needs to follow his calling is not found within himself, but it is found within the grace of Christ alone. When combined with the teaching of v. 14, it can be best communicated as finding the strength to fulfill one’s calling through the power of the Holy Spirit to peer into the work of Christ to see that we have been saved from the beginning of the ages to do the work that we were called to do. A principle that Christ demonstrated in John 14 that demonstrated his divinity was His ability to see the work that God was doing and had done to then demonstrate it to humanity. This is ultimately what Paul is communicating to Timothy; that Christ has granted us the ability to see the work that He is doing to find confidence in our calling and the proclamation of the gospel. While man is imperfect and incapable of seeing the work of Christ as it happens, He still gives us remembrances of the moments in which He did work. This is what Paul is telling Timothy to find confidence in and fulfill his calling through. He can only fulfill his calling through confidence and hope in Christ and the gospel that He proclaimed.

v.2:2: The practicality of the first verse in chapter two now begins to come into play in verse two. Paul would use the command of being strengthened by the grace found only in Christ to then commission Timothy to begin spreading the same message to the early church and beyond. Not only is this a commission to spread the gospel included in the previous command, but it is the resource and foundation upon which it is to be spread. The very strength of the ministry is what the ministry is also communicating itself. This highlights the fact that the grace found only in Christ is not only for salvation, as implicitly communicated by Paul, but it is also for service to Him and to His people. However, the deeper meaning behind this command that Paul gave is similar to that of Old Testament scribes who were commissioned by the Kings of Israel to pass the teaching of God down through the generations. Paul recognizes that his death is coming, and it was imperative that the teaching of God continued through the generations just as the kings and scribes were commanded to pass the teaching of God through the generations . So, the latency of this command is unveiled in his command for Timothy to continue to spread the message of the gospel to the early church out of the same heart that commanded the kings and scribes to do so, the heart of God. However, the incompetency of some Israelite kings was quite present, which is why Paul would tell Timothy to entrust the message to “faithful men,” knowing that the message of God should be held by those who can be trusted with it. Along with this, Paul tells Timothy that the men whom will be trusted with the gospel message must be able to teach; this demonstrates that the message not only needed to be in the hands of those who were trustworthy, but who were also capable of teaching it themselves. Paul gave this command with the purpose of ensuring the survival of the gospel message[[5]](#footnote-5).

v.2:3: The first metaphor that Paul uses to demonstrate the ideal position that he would like Timothy to take is one of a dedicated and faithful soldier. The context that Paul is writing this out of most likely explains his use of the term considering he was consistently surrounded by Roman Soldiers in his imprisonment in the city of Rome. His time and ability to meditate on the commitment that these soldiers had to their country and to Caesar gave Paul ample time to think through his metaphors. And just as a Roman Soldier is committed to Rome, Paul commands Timothy to be committed to the Lord, whom is the gospel message.

v.2:4: The explanation that Paul gives of his metaphor merely confirms that which has been said in this commentary; a soldier is not distracted from his commitment to those who are in charge. It is almost unknown as to the internal motivations of these soldiers abstracted from their commitment to their superiors. It is obvious that not every soldier is working for the benefit of their superiors, which ultimately leads Paul to use the adjective “good” to imply that a good soldier is one that is motivated to enforce the message of his superior. And in this case, Paul is saying it to give Timothy a sense of what he also must be motivated by in his ministry, which is the advancement of his God’s gospel message.

v.2:5: there is much speculation as to why Paul would communicate his metaphor of the athlete as abiding by the rules of the game. While it is imperative for the nature of an athletic event to be rule-abiding, it is interesting that Paul uses this metaphor to communicate some kind of rule that Timothy must follow when communicating the gospel message. The most likely explanation of this metaphor is that Paul is commissioning Timothy to communicate the gospel message in a law-abiding way, meaning the Law of God. While this Law was made complete in the work of Christ, it is still important that it be made manifest in the lives of Christians. This is true because of the message that the book of James communicates, which is that faith without works is dead (James 2:20). Death in faith is by nature a lack of the Spirit, which means that these works must be made manifest by the working of Jesus, and through the power of the Spirit in the Christian. Paul only means to communicate that Timothy is the make the Law manifest in his communicating of the gospel in the same way that an athlete abides by the rules of the game.

v.2:6: Unlike the position or life of an athlete or soldier, a farmer is one that works without much excitement. True, the life of a farmer is not consistently rewarding as are the victories of a soldier and an athlete, but the harvest that he receives at the end of his work is one that pays off more abundantly than that of the soldier or the athlete. The reward for Timothy, in this case, is a field full of spiritual fruit. This fruit is to be made manifest in others as much as it is to be made in Timothy; this means that the harvest could ultimately mean true life in death. While this is mere speculation, it is important that the qualities of diligence, perseverance, and discipline are highlighted within the character of a farmer. These characteristics demonstrate that above all, the ministry of God is not work that we can sleep on and rest through. It requires our active attention and our consistent work in enacting the will of God. What this metaphor implies is that the life of faith is as much a responsibility of the farmer as it is the sovereignty and providence of the One who provides the harvest.

v.2:7: Being the conclusion of the first paragraph in the second chapter, Paul concludes with a command for Timothy, that he must think over the teachings of Paul, because the Lord will give him understanding in everything. This sentence is quite paradoxical in the scope of human understanding, because it seems as though Timothy must search for the truth of what Paul says, but Paul also asserts that the Lord will provide the understanding for his words. How is one to expect to think through the truth of Scripture when the Spirit ultimately provides the understanding for its truth. This paradox is seen as an encouragement rather than a confusing command to think through. Paul is encouraging Timothy to think deeply through the truth of Scripture while also trusting that the truth of Scripture will be revealed to him by the power of the Spirit.

v.2:8: The next paragraph introduces a new set of teachings, but it remains within the same theme that Paul has been demonstrating to Timothy all along. This theme of suffering for the sake of the gospel message is one that permeated the first set of metaphors that Paul used, and it now permeates the theological teaching that he is giving Timothy now. Paul would tell Timothy to remember the truth of the resurrection, which came out of the promised line of David. He would remind Timothy of this to give him reasoning to think back through all of the ways that God has provided, in the same way that He promised the coming of His Son and provided for His people Israel. In the theme of suffering, it was important that Paul reminded Timothy of the truth of the gospel that he preaches and to use it as energy for ministry. Paul would even continue with displaying his possession of the gospel message by saying “my gospel,” which displays his possession of the gospel truth, not necessarily his creation of the truth.

v.2:9: The culmination of all the implicit teaching that Paul has been leaving in latency comes to a head in this verse. He would describe his suffering for the message that he highlighted in the previous verse, showing his chains as a result of his proclamation of the gospel message. But, the glorious truth of Paul’s chains is that the gospel message that he proclaims is not chained. He demonstrates this in his sending of epistles to the early church, and his ministry to those while imprisoned. However, his chains and the freedom of the gospel message are actually not contrasting events in any way. Rather, it was through Paul’s imprisonment that the gospel message was proclaimed. The very text of the Bible came through the epistles that he wrote in prison. So, while Paul’s imprisonment seems to be a hindrance, it paradoxically became his greatest strength because it was the ultimate reduction of Paul as a man. He could not be humbled any more than he already was, he was completely emptied of anything hindering the spread of the gospel message while imprisoned. He was nothing more than a shell filled with the glory and purpose of the gospel. Paul’s imprisonment was his greatest strength.

v.2:10: In response to the previous verse, Paul begins this verse with a “therefore,” implying the result of what had previously been spoken. This result includes being encouraged by the freedom of the gospel message in divergence with his imprisonment, recognizing that this imprisonment is actually the spreading of the gospel through an emptying of himself. His humility in this moment gives him the strength to endure his continuing imprisonment and likely death because he knows that he is still a vessel for the communication of the gospel message. He endures for the sake of the ones chosen before the ages, reminding Timothy that they still actively obtain their salvation. This is confusing language, but it is theological truth that has been repeated multiple times in this letter whenever Paul refers to the chosen elect and the sovereignty of God. The idea of “obtaining” salvation is not producing it for oneself, but instead searching for it by the power and guidance of the Spirit. This idea refutes any notion that the elect are capable of producing the way to salvation or finding it alone; Paul affirms this by simultaneously reminding Timothy of the presence of election, while using terminology like “obtain” to display the truth of human responsibility.

v.2:11: Through the teaching and testimony of Paul, some general axioms for the Christian faith are then made present in his encouragement to Timothy. Paul poses these general axioms in a format of contrasting epigrams. These epigrams come with two clauses each that apply to the black and white nature of faith; Paul would use the first pair to refer to those who endure similarly to him, and the second to those who fail in the faith and are faithless. In this verse specifically, Paul gives the first clause of the first epigram by stating that those who have died with Christ will also live with Him. This truth is one that Timothy likely knows by this time, but it was important that Paul enlightened Timothy to the truth in his current imprisonment. The truth of the gospel is found in emptying oneself through death of the past self and life in the new self in Christ. This axiom is one that applies directly to Paul’s life in that moment, because he had been emptied to the point of imprisonment, and his coming death was the guarantee of eternal life with Christ. This first axiom was a direct reference to his circumstances.[[6]](#footnote-6)

v.2:12: The continuation of the first epigram comes with the explicit teaching on the axiom of the enduring in the faith. Paul would finish the first epigram that references the enduring and faithful Christian by stating that the eventual result of enduring in the faith is reigning with Christ eternally. This truth parallels that of the metaphors that Paul gives Timothy for the purpose of demonstrating the need for endurance and perseverance in the Christian life because of its nature as being the only way to live and reign with Christ eternally. Paul would then begin his second epigram, displaying the faithless individual who denies Christ. His wording, “if we deny Him, he will also deny us” parallels that of Christ in Matthew 10:33. This command demonstrates that the eventual result of searching for life outside of Christ will lead to eternal death and separation from Him.

v.2:13: Paul would end the second chapter of his second letter to Timothy by giving the second clause of his second epigram that highlights the result of one who does not endure and suffer for the sake of the gospel. The truth spoken by Paul in this clause does not parallel the structure that the first clause took, which demonstrated a similar action on the part of Christ in response to ours. This clause demonstrates that in response to the faithless having no faith, Christ remains faithful. Paul would supplement this truth with a disclaimer that Christ cannot deny himself in the way that the faithless deny Him, because He cannot deny himself. This slightly comedic response to the faithless demonstrates that Christ affirming himself is the ideal of true human fulfillment. Because Christ is the most human of all, He is fundamentally the true image of God, which is not an image that the faithless can take on. Therefore, not only is Christ unable to deny himself, He is completely and utterly incapable of doing anything different than what the Father does, and His goodness does not include denying himself. The faithless find themselves incapable of being fundamentally human because they deny what is most fundamentally human, and that is Christ.

**II Timothy 2:14-3:9**

v.2:14: The next few verses will serve as a teaching through yet another metaphor that Paul will be giving Timothy. But, v. 14 is spoken prior to Paul using the workman as a metaphor; nonetheless, it falls into his description because similar characteristics of the workman are then spoken in the verse afterward. For the purpose of gathering meaning and attributing it to the metaphor of the workman, we will use v. 14 as description for this metaphor. Paul is charging Timothy to warn the teachers that he entrusts with the message of the gospel not to quarrel over their words, because it will damage the hearers of the Word and taint the image of God to them. While God is responsible for the way that He is embodied in His sovereignty, there is still responsibility that man has in reflecting Him and the Spirit that is within them. This same principle was one that was reflected in Moses when he brought water from the rock. His responsibility was to refrain from an emotional outbreak in order that he may represent the Lord well to His people Israel. And when he failed and struck the rock in anger, he was cursed with the inability to enter the Land. This is what Paul is reflecting in his teaching to Timothy, that the teachers are responsible for the reflection of God to the people who do not yet know Him; they should be trustworthy people that will not quarrel over their words and faithfully represent the gospel message.

v.2:15: Paul’s metaphor for the workman is characterized by a proper handling of the truth, and a lack of shame because of his understanding of the gospel message. The idea of properly handling the truth is one that parallels the previous command that he gave to Timothy; he must handle the truth by commissioning teachers to speak without quarrelling over words, because this would be a mishandling of the gospel message. This important characteristic that Paul is demonstrating to Timothy not only emulates his need to speak of the character of God in a biblical way, but it is more so for the purpose of handling the Word by commissioning the right teachers who will teach the Word faithfully. This handling of the Word is also what produces a lack of shame, because an understanding of the Word supplemented by the commissioning of trustworthy individuals to pass it through the generations comes from an understanding of the gospel message that produces this lack of shame through the understanding of grace and mercy.

v.2:16: Paul would then continue the metaphor of what a good workman looks like by stating that a good workman is one who refrains from irreverent babble, which enlivens the idea that the handling of the Word is not merely dividing it up among trustworthy teachers, but that a true understanding of the Word is a leader in itself among men. Paul is charging Timothy with speaking truly about the Word and never reducing his teaching back to anything but the truth. So, not only was Paul commissioning Timothy to find trustworthy teachers, but he was commanding him to clear a path of good teaching for those who are entrusted with the Word to follow. This means that Timothy was commissioned to teach rightly so that the teaching would continue through the generations in a faithful way, not only for the purpose of raising more teachers, but for the purpose of the true teaching of God being brought through the generations. Paul would warn Timothy of the possibility of ungodliness if this command was not followed faithfully, and he would issue this warning in light of the apostasy and unfaithfulness found in the early church which he had referenced earlier in this book.

v.2:17: Paul would elaborate more on the warning that he issued, by stating that ungodliness will spread if Timothy does not follow the commission to handle the truth. He would reference Hymenaeus and Philetus, two other figures similar to Hermogenes and Phygelus who have strayed from the faith. This verse mostly serves nothing more than giving the example of Hymenaeus and Philetus, and explaining the nature of ungodliness as it spreads in response to a mishandling of the Word. But Paul would also use this verse to begin his metaphor for what a bad workman will look like; this is continued in the next verse.

v.2:18: Because a good workman is one who provides a way for others to follow when teaching the generations to come, it is safe to assume that the nature of a bad workman is to provide a crooked path, one that can eventually lead to the abandonment of faith altogether. Paul would communicate to Timothy the example of Hermogenes and Philetus so that he could then demonstrate their atrocious theology that the body had already been resurrected. Granted, this theology is true in that the body of Christ has risen and we will be risen again with Him in eternity, but this is still the future for us. This could demonstrate an improper understanding of the philosophy of time or and radicalization of the nature of eternity. The other possibility of this teaching is that Hermogenes and Philetus were likely preaching a theology that coincided with their ascetic theology. A theology like this most likely would have originated in a Gnostic society produced by Platonic thought. Whichever ideology this tends to fall under, it falls short of what is truly biblical and cannot be fully true or life-giving. Paul meant to demonstrate that the spreading of ungodliness by bad workmen produces theologies like this, and that he is to be warry of this train of thought.

v.2:19: Regardless of the growing presence of the ungodly, Paul finds comfort in knowing that the presence of God cannot be vanquished or overcome. This same hope and confidence are imparted to a troubled Timothy within this verse. He would state that the presence of God in the world and in people has a firm foundation; a seal upon them that describes the individual as one that belongs to the Lord. This same seal is one that God uses to command His people to refrain from iniquity. While this teaching is quite general in comparison to the many teachings that Paul has been giving Timothy, it still remains in the theme of a good workman, who is to keep away from iniquity through the handling of the word through commission of trustworthy teachers and communicating the Word in a way that makes the way of the Lord straight.

v.2:20: While there is a clear distinction between a bad and a good workman, Paul still affirms that a workman is one nonetheless. He would display this through the metaphor of a gold and silver vessels versus wood and clay. Because some are for honorable use, they are used for the Lord’s many good purposes through the enacting of His will. And for the dishonorable, do not suffice for the uses of the Lord because they have not made themselves into an honorable vessel. Regardless, both are vessels in the house of the Lord, present to impart His will and to bring about goodness and holiness. This, however, does not mean that the dishonorable are faithful. Rather, they are mere tools that bring about goodness regardless of their dishonor. An example of this could be those who imprisoned Paul and brought immense dishonor upon him. While he had been emptied of any worldly value and status, he became a vessel full of the Spirit that then produced canonical texts. While worldly dishonor is certainly on the table for Christians, eternal honor is one that comes in return.

v.2:21: Paul’s explanation of his metaphor on vessels comes to an explanation that serves not only as a warning, but also as an encouragement to Timothy. This similar posture is one that he took consistently through the first chapter that acts as an encouragement and warning simultaneously. Paul states that it is imperative that Timothy be cleansed of dishonor in order that he may be useful to the Lord, for the purpose of doing His good alone. This is stated to contrast the ideal of Timothy from that of a bad workman; Paul would use this ideal to give Timothy hope and confidence to do what is honorable in order that he can be a vessel for the Lord in the same way that Paul is a vessel in his imprisonment. This hope and confidence is put at odds with those of dishonor, preparing Timothy for what characteristics he must look out for that fall under the realm of dishonor.

v.2:22: Paul would answer the question of what attributes fall under the realm of dishonor, by equating them with that of youthful passions. This is likely a parallel with that of spiritual immaturity, considering many teachings bring holy characteristics into a category of spiritual maturity. This would then place characteristics of unholiness and dishonor in a category of spiritual immaturity, thus making way for Paul to demonstrate what attributes fall into a posture of spiritual maturity and honor. He would state that faith, love and peace are attributes of the honorable, along with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart. The final attribute is one that also describes Paul’s implicit commission to Timothy to pray from a sound mind and do all things in “sincerity.” Paul is demonstrating to Timothy that the work of a teacher is one that must be done in sincerity and with a pure heart. Anything different than calling upon the Lord from a pure heart is dishonor; Paul would list it last not because it is the least important attribute, but because it is the foundation of all the other attributes. The previous characteristics could not be done without a calling out to the Lord; holiness is found in Him, not us.

v.2:23: The transitionary statement that Paul uses in this verse branches two separate metaphors, but this statement remains consistent for both. Paul would commission Timothy to avoid ignorant controversies that ultimately lead to greater conflict, because it is not within the holy character to cause conflict for foolish reasons. There is a possibility that Paul is referring to specific controversies due to their prevalence in the early church; it was easy to be a member of the early church and also be exposed to an ancient philosophy, which also means that it was easy to argue about a topic that did not matter. This is not Paul’s refute of philosophy, but rather a refutation of ignorant controversies that ultimately result in the lack of Christian character. Paul also references Timothy’s preexisting knowledge of quarrelling, most likely because they experienced quarrel among the early church together while in the missionary journeys. Paul is likely referencing this not only as a warning against ignorant controversy but also as a reminder of the events that transpired in the wake of a collective experience viewing controversy in the church.

v.2:24: Paul would begin his next metaphor by directly referencing the character that he was commanding Timothy to fulfill, and that is the servant of God. He would reference his transitionary command by stating again that the servant of the Lord is not to be quarrelsome, which would guide his next teaching on the character of God by stating that His servant must be kind to everyone. But the ability to refrain from quarrel through kindness to everyone does not mean that a holy individual is to refrain from speaking out against evil. Quarrelling, in this context, is meant to convey the controversy that Paul described in his transitionary command: to have nothing to do with foolish and ignorant ones. In fact, Paul demonstrates in this metaphor that a servant of the Lord is able to teach, and teaching in the early church age likely means speaking out against pagan philosophies and illegitimate beliefs. Paul would complete the list of characteristics by giving the foundation for the previous characteristics, which is to endure evil in patience. Because of the vagueness of this remark, it can be assumed that the nature of such a characteristic is what fuels the rest of them. It is unlikely that a faithful Christian could exhibit impatience in their endurance of evil, mostly because an impatience in this kind of endurance likely means a wavering of hope and confidence in the will of the Lord; which is the destruction of evil.

v.2:25: In his direction to Timothy through this metaphor, Paul would then address the tension of being a strong and confident teacher of the Word and also remaining patient through the abstinence from ignorant quarrel. He would state that teaching the truth through the patient endurance of evil requires gentle correction of conversational opponents. Paul would then take this teaching deeper by stating that the outcome of such gentle corrections is found in the will of Lord and not within the willpower of man. Because it is so difficult to confidently and gently correct someone simultaneously, Paul exhorts Timothy to trust that the Lord may change the minds and hearts of those who are corrected and bring them into repentance. In any correction, there always comes some kind of decision on the part of the corrected to either take what was stated or reject it. Paul is stating that the inner workings of such a decision is bound by God and His ability to change the hearts of man. This is the hope and confidence that a servant of God is supposed to have, that the decision to take correction in maturity is bound by His will alone and not by the ability of the servant to convince someone of their position. Such is the foundation upon which an apologetic set in the reformed tradition is formulated.

v.2:26: Paul would continue his elaboration of the spiritual foundation of biblical controversy by explaining the state of those who reject correction. He would state that the act of coming to one’s senses is escaping the snare or trap of the devil. This entrapment is one that falls onto everyone, and Paul would use a past-tense verb when describing the nature of this entrapment. He states that the entrapment of the devil comes “after being captured by him to do his will.” This statement is not stated as a hypothetical situation, Paul means to display that there was an event that led to the entrapment of humanity by the devil. This is most definitely the events that transpired in the Garden that led to the fall, and Paul is affirming the state of humanity as being snared by the will of the devil. This snare is one that humanity must be freed from in order to take correction in a mature way. Such is done only through the will of the Lord, for Paul has asserted time and time again that there is no power that man has to grant himself salvation.

v.3:1: In the beginning of this chapter, Paul braces Timothy for a set of circumstances that he will have to endure. He mentions the existence of the “last days,” which is no doubt a form of speech referring to the second advent and return of Christ. Paul would state that there will be difficulty that arises in these last days; the details of which are revealed in this chapter. But the interesting implication behind Paul’s command to Timothy to “understand this” is the existence of evil and opposition to the gospel. Although, the letter has already mentioned the great evil that will be present when Timothy takes on a leadership position. He has mentioned the need to be of sound mind in sincere and authentic prayer, has emphasized clearly the presence of evil in quarrelling throughout the early church, and even given Timothy multiple metaphors that allude to the Christlike character that he must emulated in his ministry. So, why does Paul take time to command Timothy to understand the presence of evil when it has already been emphasized? This command is likely a reference to the presence of evil throughout the generations, and the fact that it will be present throughout the course of human history. This gives weight to the clear path that Timothy must make by entrusting the message of the gospel to trustworthy teachers and speaking truthfully about the gospel to give them a path to follow as the message traverses the generations. This is especially true because of Paul’s reference to the last days, showing that evil will persevere until the very end in the second advent.

v.3:2: The next three verses are the workings of an intense list of evil characteristics that Paul relays to Timothy for the purpose of defining what He must look out for in his ministry. They all follow a specific structure that Paul tends to use frequently when he uses lists; he formats it as listing initial characteristics that are more explicitly understood, and then ends his list with one overlying characteristic that defines and gives foundation to the rest of them. In this verse, Paul would mention the love of self and of money, which then leads to pride and arrogance, and produces abuse in a fundamental sense. These characteristics are then followed by disobedience to parents and authorities, that can produce ungratefulness. All of these characteristics are branches of one fundamental truth, which is the last characteristic in this list, and that is unholiness. This list functions in a descending format, describing characteristics and then giving a root for said characteristic further in the list. However, this in no way is an exhaustive list of causes and effects. Many of these characteristics are rooted in different circumstances, but this is why the ultimate foundation upon which these characteristics is listed last. This foundation is unholiness.

v.3:3: Paul would continue his pattern of a descending list that results in a foundational characteristic that explains it all, and this is more of a list of random characteristics that all point to one foundation instead of its predecessor that falls more into a descending order. This list would mention the attributes of the evil: heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, lacking self-control, which would guide evil into producing brutality. While these attributes are not cause-and-effect, the absolute cause of all of these attributes in found in the final listing, which is the ability to not love good. Similarly to the first list, this is in no way exhaustive of the many characteristics of those who do not love good. Rather, it is Paul attempting to encapsulate the many attributes that Timothy must look out for in the ministry that he is called to.

v.3:4: While all of these lists have a chief end that describes them in foundational and fundamental sense, this final list is not only a cause-and-effect format for this verse, but it is a list that describes the foundation for the evil characteristics found in all of the previous verses. Paul references the attributes of treacherousness, recklessness, and swollenness with conceit; all of these characteristics point to one fundamental idea. This idea is that an evil man is a lover of pleasure instead of God. Pleasure, in this sense, is a simplified version of worldly pleasure; this gives Paul the room to display not only the characteristics that Timothy must look out for, but also the root and cause of each of them. The true evil is found in pointing our love away from God, which is immense idolatry producing all of these attributes. Paul not only commissions Timothy to watch out for these characteristics, but he similarly ties them to the characteristics of those in the end times. This demonstrates above all that evil in humanity does not change, the passions remain the same no matter what they are pointed at. These evil attributes transcend all generations, giving greater weight to Paul’s commission to Timothy to handle the Word in order that its truth may transcend generations.

v.3:5: While Paul had completed his listing of specific attributes that are connected to the character of evil, he continues in his description of the evil character by referencing the appearance of such attributes, which to many has appeared as godly. It is likely that many who demonstrated such characteristics also layered their appearance in manipulation to give themselves power over those who believed them to be holy. Many early philosophies likely would have appeared this way to many, but they were all foundational in something other than God. This division in morality and religion ultimately defines many groups of people in the early church and in the times of the Old Testament; Pharisees were characters that appeared infinitely holy to those around them, but the means by which they achieved this holiness was on the backs of privilege, greed, and dishonesty and done for their own benefit and social status with no regard for those they were supposed to minister to. The prophet Amos condemned Israelite in the time of Jeroboam II for worshipping with materials with which they had no ownership (Amos 2:8). Similarly, Isaiah would condemn the Israelites for something very similar (Isaiah 1:14-17)[[7]](#footnote-7). Paul seems to recognize such men, and gives the command to avoid such men to Timothy, which ultimately shows the desire for Paul to marry his morality with his religion, to avoid a Pharisaic attempt at faith.

v.3:6: Paul would demonstrate to Timothy the very present problem of those ungodly men burdened with an unholy philosophy sneaking into the homes of weakened women to convince them of their ideology. Not only is Paul identifying the problem of these evil men sneaking their way into these homes, but he is identifying the present problem of spiritual weakness in people. And because this context did not favor women in spiritual roles, it was likely that Paul used “weak women” because of the frequency of women who did become spiritually weak in sin. The false teachers would worm their way into the homes when only the weak were home, in order to prey upon their spirits. This same tactic that these evil men use is one that the serpent employed in the swaying of Eve; sneaking in to manipulate the weak to convince the strong is the work of evil, and Paul emphasizes this greatly. While it would seem that Paul is speaking down to women, it is likely that he does not think little of women, but it is more likely that he is identifying the need to nobly serve the weak in spirit instead of sneaking Christian theology into their household. Paul means the condemn act of manipulation, and highlight the alternative, which is speaking openly about the truth of gospel. While this is not the major principle that Paul is communicating in this verse, it is important to recognize that the act of manipulation in any context is unholy, and it is many times employed by cults such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, who work door-to-door attempting to manipulate others into the evil that they hold.

v.3:7: Because Paul means to demonstrate the problem of those weak in spirit being swayed by manipulative and untrue ideologies, he feels it necessary to describe to Timothy the nature of those who are weak, in order to speak out against such weakness. Paul would emphasize that the nature of those who are weak in spirit would consistently learn, but never arrive at the truth. This same principle is one that conspiracy theorists arrive at consistently in our day and age, where they claim truth of some conspiracy with no regard for the dissonance in such a theory or the ways that it is amply untrue. In the context that Timothy is being prepared for, ancient philosophies were easily pressed upon people for its mental exercise and intellectual depth. But they were never true, and Paul means to prepare Timothy for the likelihood that he encounters these philosophies ravaging the weak in spirit. However, Paul emphasizes the need for guidance not because God is incapable of reshaping the way that these individuals think, but rather that he is emphasizing his compatibilist theology where he demonstrates that God exercises His sovereignty and power through the ordained act of Timothy’s teaching to these people, which is also done by the responsibility of Timothy. Paul gives the command to give responsibility, but also to foretell of the likelihood of Timothy’s encounter with such people.

v.3:8: Paul would return to his description of those who carried false ideology in order to make a very important comparison that even gravitated towards Paul likening himself with Moses. He would compare those who manipulate the weak in spirit with their false philosophies with Jannes and Jambres, who were the magicians that opposed Moses when the ten plagues were brought upon Egypt. He would state that such men opposed the truth, which is something that both Paul and Moses held in their respective contexts; this same truth is one that Paul passes down to Timothy. He would equate the apostolic transmission of the truth to that of Moses transmission of the Law. This is a lofty comparison, but it is one that remains necessary to show Timothy the gravity of saving the weak in spirit from the evil and manipulative. It is important that while reading this text, the reader should not interpret Paul’s vocabulary of “disqualified regarding the faith” as any teaching that alludes to likelihood of these people’s salvation. Paul was never one to speculate about the future of one’s spiritual life or the likelihood of their salvation, he merely speaks of the theoretical; the likelihood that someone persists in evil would grant them eternal damnation. This is the nature of Paul’s vocabulary here, he does not mean to say that these individuals are automatically cut from the inheritance of the Lord, but that their message would grant eternal separation from God if persisted in. Paul does not assert that an evil message automatically sends individuals into hell, this is not the true nature of faith; faith is available to all who accept Christ in life and in death.

v.3:9: Paul gives one last description of these men to give hope and confidence to Timothy in his ministry, even when it is in opposition to such evil and manipulation. He would explain very plainly that the future of such evil philosophy will result in exposure, and exposure of the truth in it. Just as Jannes and Jambres were exposed for their magic not being able to match that of the power of God, evil philosophy will be exposed for its weakness in the wake of the truth of God. It is important though, that not only is the philosophy being exposed, but the “folly” of such men. Paul explicitly states that the men will be humbled and exposed for their lies and manipulation; which raises the argument of whether or not God hates people. This argument is important to think through to understand why specific men are being targeted and not a philosophy itself. Because our Lord deals with the health of the spirit, His hatred of these men is born out of His love for humanity, and His desire for them to know Him. Therefore, God’s intention is to humble such men to the point of no return to their old philosophies to grant some illumination to the folly of their ways. This is only one side of the argument, and is not a perfect encapsulation of the way God reacts to those who sin; but it is a starting point for thinking through the holy and godly hatred of our Lord. How is hatred made holy? Can it be made holy?

**II Timothy 3:10-4:8**

v.3:10: Now that Paul had established the character of those who embody evil, he now writes to Timothy on the virtuous traits of someone who follows God. Paul would first reference his teaching and conduct, which demonstrates the ways that Timothy has observed and followed that way that Paul walks and the teachings that he provided. But these must be considered the basis for the following attributes, meaning that the list of explicit attributes could begin with the third listing. He highlights first that Timothy had followed his aim in life; this “aim in life” is Paul’s dedication to the transmission of the gospel message through the centuries through the commands that he had given to Timothy in regards to the handling of the message. This also regarded his hope and confidence in the gospel that gave him a longing for eternity; this principle had also been passed down to Timothy. The second attribute that Timothy has emulated from Paul is his faith, meaning that the nature and sincerity of Paul’s faith had also been passed down to Timothy. This particular in the list refers back to Paul’s numerous references to the sincerity of faith and prayer with a clear conscience, because the nature of faith is determined by one’s closeness with the Lord, measured in sincerity and conscience. Paul would state that this is something that Timothy took on himself, meaning that his faith is one of sincerity and of sound conscience. Paul would then highlight Timothy’s patience as the third trait that he had taken from his time with Paul, which is a direct ministerial reference to the ways that Timothy interacts with others and with the pressures of temptation and evil. Paul and Timothy had encountered a lot together, and Paul is most definitely referencing the many missions that they went on and the ways that Timothy’s patience had paralleled his. This virtuous trait was necessary for the many perverse ways of man in the early church, and Paul was honoring Timothy for his patience in those moments. The fourth trait, love, parallels the context that Paul experienced Timothy’s ministerial qualities in. It is likely that Timothy’s decision to choose to love those who were lost was simultaneously a cause and an effect of his patience. Paul was honoring this work of God within him, and these ministerial virtues led to one foundation, which is consistent with Paul’s usual format for lists. The final listing was Timothy’s steadfastness, demonstrating his ability to remain in his faith which produced all of the other listings. This direct reference to the perseverance of Timothy’s faith is another reference to Paul’s compatibilist theology, demonstrating that Timothy possessed the virtue of steadfastness, but also affirming his faith in the same list. Both are listed and worded as a responsibility of man, but Paul also deeply believes in the sovereignty of God as spoken in by other epistles. These virtues would be the basis for next section of Paul’s second letter to Timothy, and would provide a figure to refer back to when making references to Timothy’s character.

v.3:11: While grammatically this verse appears a part of the list Paul provided in the previous verse; it appears that Paul is instead providing examples of events where these characteristics were exhibited. But Paul also makes references to his sufferings, demonstrating the need for a foundational quality of steadfastness for the work and ministry ahead. He makes direct connections with events in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra (Acts 13-14), but does not explicitly mention Timothy’s presence at those events. However, this in no way denigrates the likelihood that Timothy heard about the sufferings of Paul and mourned deeply with his brother. Regardless of whether or not Timothy was present, he still followed Paul and emulated his characteristics, showing that he was prepared for such sufferings. This perseverance that Paul had to exhibit all resulted in his saving by the Lord. This verse is not only demonstrating the ways that Timothy has been prepared for the sufferings of ministry, but also the instillation of hope and confidence in the Lord for the many ways that He provides for His people.

v.3:12: While Paul had ended his previous remark with a call to hope for Timothy, he again emphasizes the presence of persecution. This was very unlikely a ploy to convince Timothy out of ministry, but instead a great emphasis on the nature of persecution in the life of a Christian. This, however, not only referenced Paul’s sufferings in the three cities he listed; it was a turn away from himself to speak on the nature of persecution as it is encountered in life. This could reference the present temptation of falling into the belief of a false philosophy, or it could be the practice of paganism. It could even reference the internal struggles of temptation. No matter what this clause references, it is a testament to the presence of sufferings and persecution. There is an important distinction that Paul makes in this clause; he would state that persecution is present for those who desire to live a godly life. This means that for those who are considered lukewarm by the standards of Revelation 3, or for those who do not fully desire a holy life for the purpose of sincerity or for a clear conscience, persecution of similar caliber likely would not be experienced. This is no way can be considered a quantitative measurement, but the persecutions that Paul is referring to would likely not affect those who do not desire a holy life. They would experience the sufferings of separation from God, which proves to be eternally worse than that of a Christian.

v.3:13: Paul references the eternal sufferings of those who do not desire a holy life, by stating that their lives “will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” This is most definitely a reference to the spiritual deterioration of the ungodly; it would also serve as Paul’s conviction of those who are ungodly, demonstrating that they are sentenced to a life of unfulfillment and will serve an eternity of separation from what is fundamentally true about them. Paul speaking into the ungodly seeking to deceive and be deceived is likely a spiritual reference to their ability to accept the temptation to do evil, and also a practical reference to their continuous attempts to deceive others. This connects back to his lists of attributes alluding to the character of evil, and references those with perverse philosophies that convince those who are weak in spirit of their philosophy.

v.3:14: Referring to his steadfastness, Paul would command Timothy to remain steadfast in what he had “learned and have firmly believed.” This is most definitely Paul commanding Timothy to remember the teachings that he had given him, and to remain in them for the purpose of being able to survive persecutions and sufferings that he had spoken on. He would then directly connect Timothy’s steadfastness to the teachings that he had received, telling him that he must remain in them for the purpose of persevering in ministry. Paul would use the plural, “from whom” to demonstrate that Timothy had multiple teachers and teachings that he is to remain steadfast in[[8]](#footnote-8). Was it possible that Paul may have not trusted the teachings that he did not give Timothy himself? Not likely, he sees the work that Timothy had produced and sees what he will produce in ministry. The example that Timothy has given Paul has likely trumped his desire for Timothy to only learn from him. This verse is a major dividing line between Paul and his own human selfishness; it shows that Paul is more worried about the fruit of the teachers of the Bible because it shows what is happening internally and within the faith of a teacher. He trusts the teachings that he did not give himself because Timothy is exhibiting the godly character that he had pieced together in v. 10.

v.3:15: What Timothy had learned in the past from the teachers that he had, was now being used in his study of Scripture in that present day. Paul would reference v. 1:5 and Timothy’s childhood faith; this reference was to Timothy’s grandmother and mother, who both had great faith. Paul would make this reference for the purpose of demonstrating the lifelong progression of growing strong in faith. And it was this progression that he would then mention in the last clause of the verse; this is demonstrated in the language of potentiality, where Paul would highlight that Scripture was able to make him wise. Paul would use interesting language towards the end of the second clause by stating that the wisdom that Timothy obtains was “for” the progression towards salvation through faith in Christ. This likely demonstrates some congruency for the doctrine of faith, showing that wisdom parallels and connects to the salvation and faith of a Christian. “For” does not demonstrate that wisdom must come before salvation as if there was any wisdom of God that we could obtain outside of God; rather this language pertains to the nature of their connection, not their “step-by-step” nature.

v.3:16: This verse falls under some of the deepest theology in the book; Paul would state that Scripture remains authoritative and unchanging and then states that it is used for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. The foundation and basis for which Scripture remains authoritative is its status as being “breathed out by God,” which likely means God’s inspiration of biblical writers in communication of His divine truth. While was produced physically by an imperfect and human writer, it remains infallible and perfect in communicating the truth of God because His inspiration emerges from the words for whoever reads and believes. The truth of Scripture is only understood and available to those who have sincere faith in Christ, with sound conscience; and is produced by the impartation of the Spirit. For those who have true and sincere faith, Scripture becomes a tool for them to teach, rebuke, correct, and train for the purpose of growing in wisdom and finding the hope and confidence of Christ and in His eternal reign. Scripture produces exactly what Paul had commanded Timothy to do in the previous verse; the way that Timothy is to grow in wisdom for salvation in Christ is by growing wise in the truth of Scripture.

v.3:17: Paul uses the wisdom and power of Scripture to then speak on the nature of those who believe in the authority of it. He would say that the man who believes in the authority of Scripture would be complete and equipped for every good work. The first characteristic is quite ambiguous, to be complete in biblical terms could likely mean the rest of man in his fundamental image as the image of God, found in the first chapter of Genesis. “Complete” must be a reference to man’s return back to what is fundamentally human. Sin had damaged humanity; completion could be the nature of man reclaiming what had been damaged by sin, which is the image of God. This completion and reclamation of holiness would ultimately prepare man for every good work, most likely referencing the good and holy works of God, which is His will.

v.4:1: The beginning of Paul’s final command to Timothy starts with a powerful commission before the Lord in legal language. Similar to the ways that covenants were made before the Lord, Paul means to commission Timothy before the Lord. This commission is then said to be spoken before Christ, which brings in the element of the gospel. This likely means that Paul is commanding Timothy for the purpose of advancing the gospel message which could reference the “handling of the message” that Paul had greatly emphasized in the later part of the second chapter. There is a final apocalyptic attribute, which gives greater weight to the command because of the imminence of Christ’s return. This imminence is demonstrated in Paul’s use of the wording “who is to,” denoting the coming of Christ. All of these elements point to one central character, and that is the character of God. Paul is not merely commissioning Timothy on the basis of the gospel or the imminence of Christ’s return, but because both of these events are so fundamental to the character of God, he is giving physical and narrative examples of His existence and His kingdom. Paul emphasizes this existence to give validity to his command to Timothy, and it gives weight to the conclusion of the book and the following verses.

v.4:2: The command that Paul had given weight to in the previous verse is finally stated in this verse, which is his commission not only for the purpose demonstrating the basis upon which the rest of the book is to be understood, but also the commission that originates in all that he had prepared Timothy for in the previous verses. Paul commands Timothy to preach the word when it is in season and even when it is out of season, likely meaning that Timothy must preach the word when it is convenient for him and even when it is not convenient for him; when he is comfortable preaching and when he is uncomfortable preaching. The need for the Word to be preached consistently shows the denial of self that Paul exhibits in his letters and even in this one. This is an important characteristic that Paul emphasizes, because it refers back to previous chapters where he emphasized the need to not quarrel in the position of teacher. Because this verse can be used as a direct representation of Moses’ act in bringing water from the rock, Paul likely states that Timothy is to preach the word in and out of season for the purpose of not perverting the gospel message by choosing when it is to be preached and to whom is must be taught to. Paul would then reflect the characteristics in v. 3:16 similarly when he states that Timothy must reprove, rebuke, and exhort with patience and teaching. However, this list has more structure than Paul’s previous lists; it seems as though initial attributes are contingent upon the following ones. It is possible that Paul commanded Timothy to reprove, rebuke, and exhort through his patience and by teaching. This is not just a list of commands that Paul is giving Timothy, but instead a few commands that need specifications attached to them in order that they be done in a holy way. These specifications are stated to set the precedent for the following verses.

v.4:3: Paul begins to communicate a very specific situation that reigns true among the world for generations. He would describe the likelihood that human beings will begin to only listen to teachings that connect with and support their passions, instead of listening to the true word of Scripture which defines and strengthens passions. The grammatical structure of this verse displays that this specific situation is one that needs the characteristics listed in the previous verse. Sound teaching and rebuke, along with exhortation are needed for the purpose of combatting the indulgence in one’s passions that determines the teaching to which they will lend a listening ear. This specific situation is also contingent on Timothy’s belief in the authority of Scripture that Paul displays in v. 3:16. This command comes with the sincerity and clear conscience that lies implicit in the teachings of Paul throughout this book; without them the indulging in unholy passions continues.

v.4:4: Paul continues to elaborate upon the specific situation that he highlighted in the previous verse and would practically simplify what he had said not in order to explain it to Timothy as if he was incapable of understanding, but rather for emphasis. While its repetition alludes to the emphasis he was trying to put on the situation, its explicit detail does the same. He states that those who follow their unholy passions will stop listening to the truth and wander off into myths; this assertion is built off of Paul’s belief in the authoritative word of Scripture, which would justify a belief that any other belief is mythical. However, this is not Paul affirming that people following their passions is mythical, but rather the teaching that makes passion unholy is what is to be considered mythical.

v.4:5: In parallel with his structure of vice-to-virtue, Paul would use the description of the previous situation as a chance to give Timothy another list of attributes that he must follow in order to combat the evil that is found within it. This list would be congruent with other lists and similar in the characteristics, but one sticks out because it is a recurring theme that Paul has been using in his letter to Timothy. The first listing: sober-minded is similar to the attributes of clear conscience and sincerity which gives greater strength to the idea that the proclamation of the gospel must come from a heart that truly desires the Lord. This is then followed with the explicit theme of the book, which is to endure suffering; this command serves as the outpouring of a sincere faith and the patience developed by a clear conscience in faith with Christ. It is only through a sober mind that the enduring of suffering is possible, which is the work of an evangelist as follows in this list. Paul would cap this list of attributes with the command to fulfill his ministry. This final command is much harder to grasp than the concrete and explicit commands given previously. To “fulfill one’s ministry” typically is a term that lies ambiguous unless applied to one person who has been called by God into a ministry. For Timothy, it is likely that the fulfillment of his ministry is found in the previous commands, which is to be sober-minded for the purpose of enduring suffering which is more explicitly the work of an evangelist. Paul gives this command in recognition of his death to come, recognizing the church’s need for a preacher.

v.4:6: The beginning of this new paragraph and its grammatical structure is headlined by the initial word “for;” the purpose being to connect the commands that he is giving Timothy to that of his final work in suffering. This comparison is not written to equate the acts of Timothy with those of Paul, but rather demonstrating the final days of Paul’s ministry and evangelism and displaying the need for a teacher. The language used by Paul is meant to emulate the idea that the final drops of his offering were being poured out, and his suffering on earth was coming to an end; and gives imagery of the ritual performed pre-gospel where an offering of wine was poured on the altar prior to a sacrifice[[9]](#footnote-9). This verse ends with an abrupt and short description of the meaning of his metaphor where he states that the time for his “departure” is here, and it is Timothy’s time to take up the suffering of an evangelist.

v.4:7: Paul continues in his elaboration on his coming death by calling back to some of the metaphors that he gave Timothy in chapter 2. His remark “I have fought the good fight,” is a reference to his metaphor of the soldier, while the second clause “I have finished the race,” is a call back to the metaphor of the athlete. The listing is more of an abstraction than the previous two, but it could refer to his metaphor of the farmer and his faith in the coming harvest. All of these actions serve as completions and endings to the metaphors given previously. And they also serve as a continued comparison between him and Timothy for the purpose of growing on his commands to Timothy and giving him reason to reflect the actions and teachings of Paul.

v.4:8: This message section reaches its conclusion with Paul using apocalyptic language to describe the abstract and ambiguous events that transpire in bodily death. Paul states that in heaven there is a crown of righteousness waiting for him as a gift for his completion of earthly life in faith. He would then reference “that day,” the coming of Christ as the day in which this gift will be given to him. This heavy apocalyptic language then makes way for deep eschatology when he states that ultimately all those who have “loved His appearing” will receive the same crown. To love the appearing of Christ is to have faith that it will happen, giving weight to the ultimate end of the lives of those in faith and what they are eventually granted. Paul does not simply say this to preach to the choir, but he says it for the purpose of demonstrating that the fulfillment of Timothy’s ministry results in the same crown. Because this final passage is an implicit comparison for the purpose of commissioning Timothy to follow Paul’s teaching, then it must be understood that all that follow Paul’s teaching results in the crown of righteousness, which is the teaching of Christ. The culmination of all the teachings and commands that Paul is granting Timothy is for the purpose of receiving a crown of righteousness and an eternity with God.

**II Timothy 4:9-22**

v.4:9: The final section of Paul’s second letter to Timothy seems to be written to conclude with a different set of instructions along with a different focus in message. Verse 9 implicitly introduces this theme when Paul commands Timothy to come to him, which partially builds off of his possible feeling of loneliness while in imprisonment. In fact, Paul’s desire for Timothy to come to him was so great that it is a command repeated two other times in this passage. Paul likely gives this command in order that he can see Timothy one final time before his death, and this same command illuminates a major ministerial need that is hinted at throughout this letter. Paul would call upon Timothy to come to him to be joined with him communally, just as a holy community would in a situation of grief or of rejoicing. Thus, introducing the concluding need for an evangelist, and that need is community.

v.4:10: The continued elaboration that Paul gives Timothy on this need for community that he has in his final moments is given greater weight when he mentions his isolation in relation to one who has left him. When he would mention the names of those who have deserted him, Paul uses it as an object for his metaphors on evil or to make commissions for Timothy to follow; the opposing side would be Paul using positive figures in his life as cause for examples for Timothy to follow. In this case, Paul mentions Demas, who has “fallen in love with the world” and gone to Thessalonica. This is a major leaving for Paul, because Demas followed Paul in his missions to Iconium and Antioch and pretended to love him while conspiring against him with Hermogenes. This likely means that Demas is included in the group of those who were teaching on the resurrection of the body having already happened. This negative figure is followed by Crescens, who is only mentioned here in the entire New Testament. Crescens had gone to Galatia, and the status of him either being a positive or negative figure in Paul’s life remains unknown. The final figure that is listed is Titus, who accompanied Paul in a mission to Jerusalem and was an important evangelist in the ministry to Corinth. Titus was an important individual in Paul’s life, and to be included in the same list as someone like Demas is concerning. Though it is likely that while Titus has left Paul that he is not similar to Demas in spiritual health; otherwise, Titus and Crescens would have been listed before Demas to be included in his love for the world. Regardless of the faith of these men, Paul was left alone and needed his community in his final moments. This gives greater emphasis to the urgency of his command to Timothy to come to him, especially considering he gives this command three times.

v.4:11: Paul would follow his list of those who had left him with the sole figure that remained with him in this time. This figure was Luke, who was with Paul in imprisonment and was traditionally understood to having written the book of Acts. The sections of Acts that used wording like “we” likely means that Luke was with Paul through at least some of the missionary journeys, giving greater weight to his importance in Paul’s life. Paul would then command Timothy to bring Mark with him, which is a significant change from when Paul argued with Barnabas about Mark’s loyalty and eventually resorted to splitting with Barnabas in Acts 15:36-41. This is a significant transition between having no trust for Mark at all to trusting him and asserting that he is useful. This likely means that Mark proved himself to Paul in some capacity, which could demonstrate that he worked with Paul heavily after the split between Barnabas and Paul. Tradition also affirms that this Mark wrote the gospel of Mark, which could have been a significant factor in Paul changing his vision and considering him “useful.”

v.4:12: Having sent Tychicus to Ephesus, Paul was continuing to limit himself on those he was surrounded by. Tychicus was a figure responsible for accompanying Paul on his final missionary journey to Jerusalem and was also tasked with relieving Titus in Crete of his duties so that he could be sent to see Paul in Nicropolis. He was also a messenger to the Ephesians and Colossians, likely meaning that Tychicus was the deliverer of these letters. What this all demonstrates is that Tychicus was highly trusted for his loyalty to the gospel and was considered close enough to Paul to deliver his epistles to those that needed to read his words. This is likely why Paul “sent” him to Ephesus. This does prove to be concerning for the previous list of individuals, because while Tychicus was “sent,” Demas, Crescens and Titus “left.” While leaving Paul’s physical presence is not necessarily synonymous with leaving him spiritually. While this is concerning, it can be assumed that because Titus is considered trustworthy by Paul in his letter to him; that Titus left not out of hatred or apathy to the gospel message, but out of other motivations. It can be seen in the parting of Paul and Barnabas that Paul’s presence can be left, and disagreements can occur without there being a loss of faith. Paul may contain the gospel message, but leaving him certainly is not equivalent with leaving God.

v.4:13: In Paul’s next request of Timothy, he asks to have the cloak, books, and parchments left with Carpus at Troas. While the details of such objects are unclear, it is important to survey what they could possibly be in order to gage Paul’s desires in his final moments. He asks Timothy to bring a cloak that was left in Troas; this likely meant a cloak that travelers used for covering themselves or it could also merely be an important article of clothing to Paul. But this remains slightly confusing; if Paul was on the verge of death, then why would he be so worried about an article of clothing that meant more to him in his travels than in his imprisonment. The other possibility is that this cloak could be referring to a piece of sheepskin that is used in covering parchment or books/scrolls. This would make more sense for Paul’s predicament, but it is close to impossible to come to any stable conclusion without questioning. The next on Paul’s list are the books; while what kind of book or what books they are remains anonymous, it is important to note that the books of the days of the early church came in the form of scrolls. However, it is not known whether or not these “books” were also found in Troas based off of the grammatical structure. It is possible that the cloak was found in Troas and the books and parchments were found with Timothy. This grammatical format is quite ambiguous, so it could also be that the last two objects on Paul’s list were also found in Troas. The contents of the books likely were the Jewish Scriptures, considering their great importance to both Paul and the communities that accompany him in writing out his epistles and the contemplation of theology that aided in the communication of the Word. The final listing that Paul gives Timothy is the parchments, of which also fall into the ambiguous category on their contents. It is likely that the “books” and parchments were of similar physical substance, so it is possible that there is differentiation between the two because the parchments were formatted as a codex. It is likely that these are needed “above all” because they were of personal importance to Paul; it likely served the same purpose that a journal would, but it remained personally important to Paul because it could have contained his theological thoughts or personal anecdotes. While the nature of these objects remains speculative, it is still quite wondrous to think through what purpose these objects served to Paul.

v.4:14: There is then mention of another evil figure in the life of Paul; the mention of Alexander calls back to v. 1:20 when there was mention of Alexander along with Hymenaeus having suffered a “shipwreck in the faith.” If this is the same Alexander, then it is likely that he was a fellow conspirator against Paul. Although, above many of the other evil figures mentioned in this book, Paul mentions that he was hurt by him. This evil figure has personally affected Paul and he calls Timothy to look out for him in v. 4:15. The nature of this hurt could be found in his command to Timothy to watch for him, which likely means that Alexander was present near Timothy in Ephesus. Why this is important is rooted in the riot that occurred in Ephesus due to Paul’s ministry there; if Alexander was involved in this riot or a major leader in it, then this could be the nature of Paul’s hurt in reference to Alexander. However strong the pain was for Paul; he affirms that the Lord will “repay him according to his deeds.” This emphatic remark shows increasingly how deeply hurt Paul was, because he rarely asserts the apocalyptic outcome of the evil without feeling affected by it himself. This gives way for the hurt to then encourage Timothy in the next verse.

v.4:15: If Alexander was a heavy influence in the riots at Ephesus, then he poses nothing more than an intense threat to the ministry of the gospel through Timothy. Paul has spent an extended amount of time pouring into Timothy and preparing him for the persecution and suffering that comes with Christianity and evangelism, and this is one figure that he encourages Timothy to avoid for this very reason. Of course, the spreading of the gospel cannot be halted or stopped by one man; Paul even reminds Timothy of the result of a life like Alexander’s in v. 4:14. This is not simply for the purpose of speculating about what will happen to Alexander, but it is a reminder to Timothy what happens to those who perpetrate evil against the message of the gospel. This not only serves as a warning to Timothy to abstain from coming in contact with Alexander, but also as an important encouragement to Timothy that the suffering he endures through the persecution of people like Alexander will not result in the same end that Alexander will receive. Paul affirms that Alexander strongly opposes their message, but he never does affirm that Alexander can stop it; he recognizes the threat but also Alexander’s powerlessness.

v.4:16: With the exacerbation that results from speaking about someone who is so strongly opposed to the message of the gospel, Paul uses this next verse in hyperbolic language not only for the purpose of showing his longing for community, but also to display a characteristic of Christ. He begins this verse by relaying that no one came to his defense in his first hearing and that they had deserted him. This “first hearing” is likely the legal battle that he went through that eventually resulted in his imprisonment; this reference is likely stated as the “first” because he is approaching his second hearing, which will result in his death. The language here is also quite hyperbolic because he mentions that all have deserted him, and while it is not true that he is alone through his company with Luke, it demonstrates the deep and fundamental need for others in great times of need. It is likely that Alexander was not the only figure mentioned that coerced Paul into such hyperbolic language; it is possible that the mention of Demas began Paul’s recognition of his need for community. And while Paul seems quite saddened and his longing for community is increasing, there is a drastic switch in his speech right in the middle of this verse. He goes from negative emotional outburst into a prayer that they may not suffer the consequences for their deserting of Paul. This action shows the overwhelming will of the Spirit that guides Paul out of his exacerbation and into a deep recognition of his evangelistic purpose. While these men had left him, he still prays for their salvation, fulfilling the command of Christ in Mark 5 to pray for our enemies. Paul longs for his community and is saddened by his lack thereof, but he recognizes his first commitment in this verse, and that is to the truth of the gospel.

v.4:17: Paul’s transition into his recognition of the work of God progresses into the details of how God impressed His strength upon him. He would state that the Lord stood by, and strengthened him, which is interesting language to use in this context. Anyone who reads this verse without the wisdom of the Lord would see these acts as two abstracted details in the work of God. But with the lenses of the Holy Spirit, it is possible to see these two acts as the same; the presence of God is His strength. His strength cannot be taken from Him and given to us without the indwelling of the Spirit. So, Paul means to list these acts not as two separate particulars, but as actualized characteristics of God that appeal to his troubles in that moment. When Paul felt abandoned and deserted, the Lord stood by him; and when Paul felt powerless before his sentence to imprisonment, the Lord gave him strength to continue his teaching to the Gentiles through his epistles. In fact, Paul recognizes that the strength he received in his imprisonment humbled him in writing his epistles to ultimately fulfill his calling to evangelize to the Gentiles. It was through this strengthening that Paul was “rescued from the lion’s mouth,” which traditionally is taken to be figurative for Paul being rescued from his enemies in order that he may be strengthened to fulfill his calling to preach the word of God to the Gentiles. The image of the lion’s mouth is rooted in ancient Babylonian tradition, and it typically represents conflict with enemies. This image is applied in this verse for the purpose of demonstrating the results of the strengthening and presence of the Lord in Paul’s life, and would make way for greater explanation in the following verse.

v.4:18: Coming off of the theological affirmation of the previous verse, Paul would remind Timothy of the hope and confidence that he must have in the Lord in times of adversity through asserting that the Lord will preserve him from evil deeds. This assertation is then followed with more apocalyptic language from Paul when states that he will be brought safely into the heavenly kingdom. With this verse following the theology of the previous, it is likely that the symbol of the lion’s mouth is used for the purpose of demonstrating the preservation that he receives from the Lord. But he does not say this merely as a demonstration of what will only happen to him; he stated in a previous verse that the gifts of the last day will be imparted to all those who believe in Christ. So, this assertation is given not only for Paul’s benefit, but also for those who are to be saved in Christ. The word “safely” is not meant to describe the lack of suffering or the danger of being a Christian, but it rather demonstrates the spiritual safety of the Lord’s preservation and the security of our salvation once it is given to us. We will not ever have to speculate about the nature of our faith or others’ faith because we know that we are secure as long as our faith remains sincere. This theological affirmation is then followed with a prayer of glorification, dedicating all of the words that he stated before in this epistle to Timothy to the Lord. This reminds Timothy of Paul’s continued commitment to his calling and to the truth of the gospel; an example that he must follow in lieu of the commands that Paul has given him.

v.4:19: The continuation of this section’s theme of community comes to is steady conclusion with Paul’s final greeting to Timothy. He mentions many names of individuals that he values to ground his appreciation for his community rather than continuing to recognize those who have left him. We see Paul greet some familiar figures that he has mentioned in previous epistles, Prisca and Aquila, who were figures that housed Paul in Corinth during his ministry there. They also left with him to go and minister in Ephesus, where they became hosts of a church there. The ordering of names is interesting here, because the mentioning of Prisca first before her husband, Aquila, suggests some leadership here. It is important to take Paul’s words seriously, as they are ordered for a very specific purpose and there is intentionality behind every word. So, to suggest some ordering in this married relationship on Paul’s part would suggest some leadership on the part of Prisca. While mere speculation, it is important to think through how Paul views the leadership of specific persons. This listing is then followed by Paul request for Timothy to greet the “house of Onesiphorus.” The details of this family are unknown, but Onesiphorus is referenced earlier in this letter as having visited Paul in Rome, which likely means that the whole family visited him if he means to greet the entire house. The theme of community would continue as Paul transitions into his next listing.

v.4:20: “Erastus” was yet another individual found in Paul’s circle that was close to him. He was a public official and city treasurer in Corinth as identified in Romans; Erastus being one of the individuals in Paul’s circle shows that Paul had some well-known individuals in his circle. He was likely left in Corinth not because Paul had no use for him similarly to Mark, but that his position in Corinth was really important and Paul recognized the benefit of having a public official in Corinth who supported the message of the Gospel. Especially considering Paul preached on submission to governing authorities in Romans 13, it is a missiological benefit to have Erastus in the position of public official along with him having faith in the Lord. “Trophimus,” was another Gentile Christian who travelled with Paul to Macedonia, Troas, and later to Jerusalem where Paul was incarcerated for bringing him into the section of the temple that was dedicated to the Jews only. Trophimus travelled with Paul along with Tychicus, and likely was left at Miletus in illness because he was no longer fit to travel with Paul on his journeys.

4:21: The third and final request for Timothy to come to Paul lands here in this verse. However, the stipulation on this request is that it is to be done before winter; this likely means that either Paul was to be executed in a time of the year before the coming of winter, or his execution would happen in the winter. But the either likelihood is that the winter would delay travel to Rome from Ephesus, and such a delay would guarantee that Timothy would not see Paul before his death. This longing for community comes with many stipulations that Paul has continued to highlight in this section. It is through this longing for community and for Timothy that Paul gives greetings from specific individuals to Timothy. The four individuals that greet Timothy are not mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament, but it is likely that they were of great importance to Timothy and Paul if they were mentioned specifically rather than in a group as the “brothers” are mentioned in the end of the verse. The details of this group of “brothers” remains unknown, but it is likely that Timothy knew of whom Paul was referring to; Paul likely saw the importance of such a greeting and uses this final stanza as a chance to show that not only will Paul be visited in his time of need, but that the greetings of such important people to them signify the community that surrounds Timothy and his need for them.

v.4:22: This final benediction parallels the many others that Paul has given in his other epistles. Paul uses the language “you” specifically for the purpose of addressing the letter to Timothy, but it is also used ambiguously for the purpose of leaving the audience open, which likely means that it could have been read by Timothy to the Ephesian church for their edification as well. Paul has now driven home the theme of community in this section, by grounding it in the glorious grace gifted to Timothy, who is one important figure in his circle. This benediction not only serves the purpose of ending the letter and relaying the gift of grace to Timothy, but also as a remembrance of the work of the Lord in preserving those He loves, which is the grounding for all community and personal relationships.

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