



2 TIMOTHY

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To Timothy, a beloved son:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 2 Timothy 1:2

After having identified himself and his commission, Paul now identifies the main recipient of the letter, Timothy. As noted, based on the apostolic identification of himself, something Timothy was perfectly aware of, the letter was certainly intended to be for more than just Timothy. He was to have it available for any and all to see and read. It is an epistle of church doctrine as much as it is a personal letter.

However, it is still a personal letter, written "To Timothy, a beloved son." These words are similar to his opening words to Timothy in his first epistle to him. The only change is that "a beloved son" here was "a true son in the faith" there. The word translated here as "beloved" is the Greek work *agapétos*. It signifies "divinely loved." Paul truly love Timothy as a "son," and the bonds were as strong as if Timothy was Paul's own legitimate offspring. As he personally took Timothy under his wings, and as Timothy stayed with him while so many others departed, the bond was all the stronger.

In Acts 16:3, Paul even circumcised Timothy in order to ensure that the Jews would be more responsive to the message of Christ. It was not a means of making Timothy acceptable for salvation, but a means of ensuring that Timothy would be properly accepted by those Jews who needed to hear the gospel message of Christ. In circumcising him, it would eliminate pre-judgments about Timothy's status. In other words, it was a helpful tool for evangelism.

Next, after having identified himself and his recipient, he adds in his greeting which is a close match to 1 Timothy, "Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

Unlike his other epistles, in his three pastoral epistles, he adds in the word “mercy.” As the letter is written to Timothy, the words apply to him, not to Paul.

Paul petitions for “mercy” in his pastorals because he knew it is a job which requires a great deal of mercy from God. It is a delicate, complicated, often frustrating, always tiring, and very sensitive job. Where those under a pastor often feel it necessary to heap trouble on him, mercy is all-the-more necessary from the other direction. Without this endowment from God, the job will quickly lay low the pastor of strongest faith and resolve. Therefore, Paul petitions for these things – grace, mercy, and peace to be bestowed upon his beloved son in the faith. And the petition is “from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Paul speaks of God as “the Father.” This then is in line with the petition for grace, mercy, and peace. As a father would grant such things to his own son, so Paul knows that God will grant such things to His sons in the faith, a faith which is grounded in Christ Jesus. And as God is the Father of Jesus, the petition for grace, mercy, and peace will naturally flow from Jesus to His other true children as well. Paul’s salutation is a full example of a complete understanding of the workings of God towards His ministers who are also His sons by adoption.

Life application: The job of a pastor is a tough one, but Paul knew Timothy could handle it. And yet, he still asked for grace, mercy, and peace to be bestowed upon him. The stress of such a job requires these things. And though he is petitioning them from God, it is certain the pastor needs these things from the congregants as well. The more difficulty they lay on the pastor, the more stress he is going to be under. Therefore, as a member of a congregation, remember that your pastor’s life is full enough. Give him a bit of grace, mercy, and peace as well.

I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, 2 Timothy 1:3

After his salutation, Paul begins his main thoughts with, “I thank God.” The words are most probably connected to “the genuine faith” mentioned in verse 5. Thus, it would make everything between these parenthetical. In other words, “I thank God ... when I call to remembrance the genuine faith.” Paul rejoices over the faith of his young protegee, and where it has led him in his life.

From his thanks to God, he then explains his relationship to Him by saying, “whom I serve.” Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ at this time in his life, but throughout his life he had dedicated his time and energy to a pursuit of God. The fact that he missed Jesus in the process for a time doesn’t mean he wasn’t serving God, but that he was simply doing it incorrectly. His service was and is, “with a pure conscience.” Rather, the Greek here reads, “in a pure conscience.”

It isn't that he merely had a pure conscience, and he served God with it, but that he had a pure conscience, and it was in that sphere of spiritual recognition that he served God. One could say, "I served my nation with the USAF." This would mean that he served his nation, and it is by the USAF that he did so. Or he could say, I served my nation in the USAF. The USAF became the sphere of his life. Everything that comprised who he was as a person serving his nation was dedicated to the sphere in which he had united. In Paul's case, he served "in a pure conscience." From there, he explains that this was "as *my* forefathers *did*."

Two possibilities exist of what he means here. The first is speaking of his forefathers in the faith, such as Abraham, Jacob, David, etc. The second is his line of ancestry through his parents. He was raised a Pharisee and schooled from a young age in this capacity. His parents would have sent him to school for this, and they would have been schooled before him, holding fast to the traditions of this sect. It is hard to be dogmatic on which option he is referring to, but in Galatians 1, we seem to have a clue –

"For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it. ¹⁴ And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers." Galatians 1:13, 14

The hope of his fathers, either of the faith, or of his ancestry, was in the coming of Messiah. He had missed that coming, and a special call by the Lord Himself was needed to correct this, but it was his hope, nonetheless. During his time before coming to the Lord, his life was directed in a pure conscience. That continued on, but with a new direction in which to live it out.

To finish this verse, he then says that his thanks to God were heartfelt and ongoing. This is seen in the words, "as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day." Timothy must have come to his mind a great deal. As he received reports of him, he would stop and pray for him. As he remembered their travels, he would stop and pray for him. As he worked or walked, he would mentally connect with the Lord and pray for him. The two thoughts, "as without ceasing" and "night and day" are intended to be taken in this way. Whenever Timothy came to mind, and in whatever Paul was doing, he would also be in prayer to God for him.

Life application: Our minds are always being filled with something. Even when it seems we are not really thinking of anything, something is going on up there. If we train ourselves to be thankful, then thanks will become a part of who we are. If we train ourselves to remember others as we live out our lives, then those type of prayers will become as common as inhaling. Let us mentally redirect our daily thoughts to that which is honoring of God, and productive as Christians.

...greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy,
2 Timothy 1:4

This continues Paul's thought concerning his relationship with Timothy of the previous verse. Here he next says to him that he is, "greatly desiring to see you." The Greek word he uses indicates a longing for, or a yearning. We can greatly desire something we see at the store without having yearned for it. But those things we long for are the things we set our mind on continuously. Paul's mind was brought back, time and again, to his fellowship with Timothy, and his heart was stirred for more of it. And there are two reasons for this. First he says, "being mindful of your tears."

It can be inferred that upon their last parting, Timothy openly broke down and wept. His heart was broken that Paul, his teacher and friend, was being separated from him. This exact same thought is conveyed to us concerning the very church that Timothy was now given the charge of overseeing. In Acts 20:36-38, we read –

“And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, ³⁸ sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.”

The care Paul had for the churches he ministered to, for the people that he fellowshipped with, and in particular for Timothy whom he traveled with and mentored, would overwhelm the hearts of those people when they realized their parting may be permanent. It stands as a testimony to the beauty of Christ being reflected through this great apostle. Timothy's tears of parting rent Paul's heart, and he longed to see him again, and to instead see and experience tears of rejoicing, and in turn that he may rejoice. That is his second reason for wanting to see Timothy. As he says, "that I may be filled with joy."

In seeing Timothy again, there would be joy in abundance. There would be talks of missionary travels, of conversions, of baptisms, of love feasts, and of doctrine. The world would seem right as they talked about everything that had been missed or experienced during their time of separation. There would be rejoicing in the fellowship of the Spirit, and in the blessed hope of being united once again with the Lord upon His return. These things would fill Paul with joy, and this is why he yearned to be with his protege once again.

Life application: Ecclesiastes says that there is a time for everything. This includes times of permanent parting. If we knew when that time would be, would we act as we do towards those around us? Even if we plan to see someone in the morning, the morning may never

come for one of us. Let us be careful to hold those we love with a special note of care as they depart our presence.