

## *Second Baptist Church of Doylestown*

### *Book of 2 Timothy Overview*

*6/10/15*

"FAMOUS last words" is more than a cliché. When notable men and women of influence are about to die, the world waits to hear their final words of insight and wisdom. Then those quotes are repeated worldwide. This is also true with a dying loved one. Gathered at his or her side, the family strains to hear every whispered syllable of blessing, encouragement, and advice, knowing that this will be the final message.

One of the most knowledgeable, influential, and beloved men of history is the apostle Paul. And we have his famous last words. Paul was facing death. He was not dying of a disease in a sterile hospital with loved ones gathered nearby. He was very much alive, but his condition was terminal.

Convicted as a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, Paul sat in a cold Roman prison, cut off from the world, with just a visitor or two and his writing materials. Paul knew that soon he would be executed (4:6), so he wrote his final thoughts to his "son" Timothy, passing to him the torch of leadership, reminding him of what was truly important, and encouraging him in the faith. Imagine how Timothy must have read and reread every word; this was the last message from his beloved mentor, Paul. Because of the situation and the recipient, this is the most intimate and moving of all Paul's letters and his last.

Paul's introduction is tender, and every phrase exudes the love he has for Timothy (1:1-5). He then reminds Timothy of the qualities necessary for a faithful minister of Jesus Christ (1:6-2:13). Timothy should remember his call and use his gifts with boldness (1:6-12), keep to the truth (1:13-18), prepare others to follow him in the ministry (2:1-2), be disciplined and ready to endure suffering (2:3-7), and keep his eyes and mind focused on Christ (2:8-13). Paul challenges Timothy to hold to sound doctrine, reject error and avoid godless chatter, correctly handle the word of truth (2:14-19), and keep his life pure (2:20-26).

Next, Paul warns Timothy of the opposition that he and other believers would face in the last days from self-centered people who use the church for their own gain and teach false doctrines (3:1-9). Paul tells Timothy to be prepared for these unfaithful people by remembering his example (3:10-11), understanding the real source of the opposition (3:12-13), and finding strength and power in the Word of God (3:14-17). Then Paul gives Timothy a stirring charge: to preach the Word (4:1-4) and to fulfill his ministry until the end (4:5-8).

Paul concludes with personal requests and items of information. In these final words, he reveals his loneliness and his strong love for his brothers and sisters in Christ (4:9-22).

There has never been another person like Paul, the missionary apostle. He was a man of deep faith, undying love, constant hope, tenacious conviction, and profound insight. And he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to give us God's message.

As you read 2 Timothy, know that you are reading the last words of this great man of God—his last words to Timothy and to all who would claim to follow Christ. Recommit yourself to stand courageously for the truth, knowing the Word and being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

## **VITAL STATISTICS**

**PURPOSE:** To give final instructions and encouragement to Timothy, pastor of the church at Ephesus

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**ORIGINAL AUDIENCE:** Timothy

**DATE WRITTEN:** Approximately A.D. 66 or 67, from prison in Rome. After a year or two of freedom, Paul was arrested again and executed under Emperor Nero.

**SETTING:** Paul was virtually alone in prison; only Luke was with him. Paul wrote this letter to pass the torch to the new generation of church leaders. He also asked for visits from his friends and for his books, especially the parchments—possibly parts of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and other biblical manuscripts.

**KEY VERSE:** "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2:15).

**KEY PEOPLE:** Paul, Timothy, Luke, Mark, and others

**KEY PLACES:** Rome, Ephesus

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Because this is Paul's last letter, it reveals his heart and his priorities—sound doctrine, steadfast faith, confident endurance, and lasting love.

## **THE BLUEPRINT**

1. Foundations of Christian service (1:1—2:26)
2. Difficult times for Christian service (3:1—4:22) Paul gives helpful advice to Timothy to remain solidly grounded in Christian service and to endure suffering during the difficult days to come. It is easy for us to serve Christ for the wrong reasons: because it is exciting, rewarding, or personally enriching. Without a proper foundation, however, we will find it easy to quit during difficult times. All believers need a strong foundation for their service, because Christian service does not get easier as we grow older, and it will become no easier as the time of Christ's return grows closer.

## **MEGATHEMES**

### **Boldness**

**EXPLANATION:** In the face of opposition and persecution, Timothy was to carry out his ministry without fear or shame. Paul urged him to utilize boldly the gifts of preaching and teaching that the Holy Spirit had given him.

**IMPORTANCE:** The Holy Spirit helps us to be wise and strong. God honors our confident testimony even when we suffer. To get over our fear of what people might say or do, we must take our eyes off of people and look only to God.

### **Faithfulness**

**EXPLANATION:** Christ was faithful to all of us in dying for our sin. Paul was a faithful minister even when he was in prison. Paul urged Timothy to maintain not only sound doctrine but also loyalty, diligence, and endurance.

**IMPORTANCE:** We can count on opposition, suffering, and hardship as we serve Christ. But this shows that our faithfulness is having an effect on others. As we trust Christ, he counts us worthy to suffer, and he will give us the strength we need to be steadfast.

### **Preaching and Teaching**

**EXPLANATION:** Paul and Timothy were active in preaching and teaching the Good News about Jesus Christ. Paul encouraged Timothy not only to carry the torch of truth but also to train others, passing on to them sound doctrine and enthusiasm for Christ's mission.

**IMPORTANCE:** We must prepare people to transmit God's Word to others so that they in turn might pass it on. Does your church carefully train others to teach?

### **Error**

**EXPLANATION:** In the final days before Christ returns, there will be false teachers, spiritual dropouts, and heretics. The remedy for error is to have a solid program for teaching Christians.

**IMPORTANCE:** Because of deception and false teaching, we must be disciplined and ready to reject error. Know the Word of God as your sure defense against error and confusion.