



2 Timothy - Chapter One

Summary of Chapter One

Paul wrote this final letter to Timothy from his prison cell in Rome as he awaited death. Once again, the greeting is genuinely warm and affectionate, demonstrating the sincere love and friendship that clearly existed between the two men, a true spiritual father and son relationship.

The personal note continues as Paul indicates his sincere thanks to God for the provision of Timothy in his life, acknowledging the role of Timothy's mother and grandmother in their faithful service of guiding Timothy to faith too.

Paul moves on to exhorting Timothy to remain strong and bold in his faith that is based on the true Gospel of Christ. Paul acknowledged that it was this Gospel that had brought him to the place he was now in but that he was not ashamed of that and nor should Timothy be, for it was an honour to suffer for God.

Paul concluded the chapter by giving examples of those that had deserted him in his hour of need and those that had remained faithful, one of them who even made a determined effort to seek Paul out in Rome, in order to be of assistance. This indicates the right way to live a Gospel life as opposed to those who had cut and run when persecution came upon their leader.

I. 2 Timothy 1:1-2 - Salutation

Paul opens this letter in a manner accepted as the norm for a NT epistle. But as he awaits death, he reminds Timothy that the purpose of his apostleship has been to proclaim the Gospel, the promise of the life that is only in Christ Jesus.

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

2 Timothy 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Christ. Although Paul is writing this personal letter to Timothy, he does so with apostolic authority. This was not for the benefit of Timothy as such, but to pass on his authority to Timothy should he choose to show this letter

to other church leaders that he encountered in his ministry, especially the false teachers, with whom he was still battling in Ephesus.

By the will of God. As a Pharisee opposed to the Christian faith, Paul went around arresting men and women who were believers, thinking he was doing **the will of God**. The Lord showed him the error of his ways and set him off on the remarkable life that he led from that point on. The journey started after the Lord appeared to Paul and then instructed a disciple named Ananias to go to Paul in Damascus: <<*But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name'*>> (Acts 9:15-16). God did indeed show him all things by direct revelation as Paul acknowledges: <<*For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ*>> (Galatians 1:11-12).

For the sake of the promise of life refers to eternal life that was promised to all who would come to **Christ Jesus**, which is the essence of Paul's earthly ministry and at the heart of the Gospel he was sent to proclaim. This is now the remaining hope of Paul as he awaits his imminent death, although not by crucifixion as so many other Christians faced, but by beheading, the lawful method of execution for a Roman citizen: <<*The tribune came and asked Paul, 'Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?' And he said, 'Yes.' The tribune answered, 'It cost me a large sum of money to get my citizenship.' Paul said, 'But I was born a citizen'*>> (Acts 22:27-28).

In Christ, are all the promises of God: <<*For in him every one of God's promises is a 'Yes.'* For this reason it is through him that we say the 'Amen', to the glory of God>> (2 Corinthians 1:20), which was made clear when Jesus answered a question posed by Thomas, for: <<*Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'*>> (John 14:6), and there is hope in God's promises because they are the truth: <<*in the hope of eternal life that God, who never lies, promised before the ages began*>> (Titus 1:2). It is a promise of God and privilege of the elect to discover the freeness and certainty of it. This, as well as all other promises, is in and through Jesus Christ; they all take their rise from the mercy of God in Christ, and they are sure, so that they may be depended upon.

² To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Timothy 1:2

To Timothy, my beloved child identifies the intended recipient of the letter. Other translations have son for **child**, which is used to denote that **Timothy** was Paul's protégé and for whom Paul had great personal affection as his spiritual father. Paul openly acknowledged his trust in Timothy: <<*But Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of*

the gospel>> (Philippians 2:22).

Paul's normal greeting in his letters was simply grace and peace. Some commentators and scholars wonder at the addition of mercy here and in: <<*To Timothy, my loyal child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord*>> (1 Timothy 1:2); here it clearly denotes God's special care of an individual in need.

It is so often a danger when reading Paul's letters to overlook some of the key phrases in salutation or final greeting, which are actually of fundamental importance to the life of service to Christ. Grace, mercy, and peace are more than just gifts from God; they are key qualities in the Godhead and should be evident in the hearts, minds and lives of all disciples of Christ. If faithful ministers such as Paul and Timothy were in need of grace and mercy, then the rest of the world are in need of a renewed and continual outpouring of both!

The grace, mercy, and peace, which even Paul's dearly beloved son Timothy wanted, comes from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord; and therefore the one as well as the other is the giver of these blessings, and ought to be applied to for them. Even the best of men want these blessings, and therefore they are the best gifts that anyone can ask for their friends, their church and those in authority, that they may have grace to help them in the time of need, and mercy to pardon their shortcomings, that they may have peace with God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

The expression peace comes from the Hebrew word *shalom*, which has a much richer connotation than the English word does, since it conveys, not merely the absence of conflict and turmoil, but also the notion of positive blessing, especially in terms of a right relationship with God, and, as a result, the idea that 'all is well' in one's life. This may be manifested most clearly amid persecution and tribulation.

II. 2 Timothy 1:3-2:13 - Exhortation to Endurance for the Gospel

Paul's thanksgiving (vv.3-5), leads directly to strong exhortations to Timothy (vv.6-14 and 2 Timothy 2:1-13), with an intervening paragraph that provides positive and negative examples of his exhortation (vv.15-18).

In light of his imminent death, Paul urges Timothy to continue in faithfulness for the sake of the Gospel in spite of hardship.

II.a 2 Timothy 1:3-18 - Thanksgiving and Encouragement

Despite the fact that Paul is awaiting death, his focus is on thanking God for the provision of Timothy in his life and especially the Gospel message of Christ, the Lord they both serve who gives them hope in a life that is beyond death. Paul reiterated his own faith and hope in God, setting himself as a template for Timothy to model his own life on.

II.a.i. 2 Timothy 1:3-5 - Thanksgiving for Timothy's sincere faith

In typical Pauline fashion, this letter opens with thanksgiving to God for the recipient. Paul notes that both he, 'my ancestors' (v.3), and Timothy, 'your grandmother', 'your mother' (v.5), have a heritage of faith.

³ I am grateful to God – whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did – when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

2 Timothy 1:3

I am grateful to God. Paul shows that it is not just for the basics of life or their material possessions that a person should be grateful, but for those people they encounter on life's journey that have been such a blessing in their lives.

A clear conscience. Although Paul would acknowledge that he was still a sinner, he knew that within his own human capability he had done most of what he could to serve God faithfully. God is not looking for perfect people, just those who have a heart to serve him and a determination to grow to be more like him: <<**While Paul was looking intently at the council he said, 'Brothers, up to this day I have lived my life with a clear conscience before God'>>** (Acts 23:1), <<**Therefore I do my best always to have a clear conscience towards God and all people>>** (Acts 24:16), <<**Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience>>** (1 Timothy 3:8-9), and: <<**Pray for us; we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honourably in all things>>** (Hebrews 13:18). As the latter passage states it is about having that genuine desire rather than the reality of a person's actions.

As my ancestors did. Paul's heritage was that of a Pharisaic Jew: <<**When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, 'Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead'>>** (Acts 23:6). Therefore, the family tradition was one of devotion to God through the doctrine that was available to them. This was a good thing, the best there was until Paul's encounter with the Risen Lord on the Damascus Road that would lead him into a life of different understanding but the same dedication and love for serving the only God.

Constantly in my prayers night and day. Timothy is on Paul's mind and in his prayers throughout the day, every day, an instruction Paul had given to the Macedonians: <<**pray without ceasing>>** (1 Thessalonians 5:17), which suggests a mental attitude of prayerfulness, continual personal fellowship with God, and consciousness of being in his presence throughout each day.

⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.

⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.

2 Timothy 1:4-5

This passage is very personal and deeply moving, showing that these men genuinely cared for each other, enjoyed each other's company and were deeply grieved when time for parting came. There is nothing wrong with men showing their emotions in this way for: <<*Jesus began to weep*>> (John 11:35).

Your mother Eunice. This lady was a Diaspora Jew who had married a Gentile: <<*Paul went on also to Derbe and to Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek*>> (Acts 16:1). Although the Law of Moses spoke against such marriages: <<*For if you turn back, and join the survivors of these nations left here among you, and intermarry with them, so that you marry their women and they yours, know assuredly that the Lord your God will not continue to drive out these nations before you; but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a scourge on your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land that the Lord your God has given you*>> (Joshua 23:12-13), and: <<*Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?*>> (Nehemiah 13:27), it had become commonplace for those living outside of Judæa, for there were not always sufficient Jewish men for all the women and marriages were arranged by the father out of necessity. Anyway, apart from those who were priests or where inheritance of the land was at stake, the law did not seem to apply to those living away from the Promised Land.

Despite having a Greek father and not being circumcised according to the law, Timothy would still have been raised as a Jew and recognised as such. Paul had him circumcised so that his uncircumcision would not be a barrier to his ministry in the presence of Jews who wished to come to faith: <<*Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and had him circumcised because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek*>> (Acts 16:3).

It is assumed that Lois was the maternal grandmother and that both women had continued in their Jewish faith, perhaps becoming Christians during Paul's first missionary journey that had taken him to Lystra, where he was involved in the healing of a man crippled from birth: <<*In Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet and had never walked, for he had been crippled from birth. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. And Paul, looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said in a loud voice, 'Stand upright on your feet.'* And the man sprang up and began to walk>> (Acts 14:8-10). It may be that Timothy and his family were present at this or other teaching that Paul gave while in the region.

It must also have been a source of great Godly pride in Timothy that his mother and grandmother were dedicated believers, for he had been raised on their teaching about God, with Timothy rising up to be a faithful servant too. Although the apostle was speaking of his spiritual rather than biological children, the following passages come to mind: <<*I was overjoyed to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we have been commanded by the Father*>> (2 John 4), and: <<*I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my*

children are walking in the truth>> (3 John 4). Of course, it should not be forgotten that there were many more good people who answered the call of God in that and all ages since, just like those that Barnabas encountered when he first went to Syrian Antioch: <<*When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were brought to the Lord*>> (Acts 11:23-24).

II.a.ii. 2 Timothy 1:6-14 - A call to bold endurance in ministry

Verse 6 marks a shift from the opening thanksgiving to Paul's first exhortation to Timothy, a passionate challenge to continue following in Paul's footsteps, something he will express again later in the letter: <<*Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, and my suffering the things that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. What persecutions I endured! Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them*>> (2 Timothy 3:10-11).

There is a clear connection between the call for Timothy to: <<*not be ashamed ... but join with me in suffering for the gospel*>> (v.8), and Paul's statement that for the Gospel: <<*I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed*>> (v.12). The call for Timothy to follow Paul's example is central in this letter, as recently noted.

⁶ For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands;

2 Timothy 1:6

For this reason links the following exhortation to Timothy's faith heritage and the command to rekindle the gift of God he had received, and for it to burn in such a way so that: <<*All flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it; it shall not be quenched*>> (Ezekiel 20:48).

I remind you is an example of best practice in teaching, for it is easy to forget even the basics at times: <<*I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me*>> (Romans 15:15), and: <<*Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard*>> (Philippians 3:1), as did Peter: <<*This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you; in them I am trying to arouse your sincere intention by reminding you that you should remember the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour spoken through your apostles*>> (2 Peter 3:1-2). Jesus had given the Holy Spirit, in part, for this reason: <<*But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you*>> (John 14:26).

Rekindle the gift of God. Paul does not explain what this gift of Timothy's is, just as he did not clarify it in: <<*Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders*>> (1 Timothy 4:14). There is no doubt that it was a spiritual gift given to him for his specific ministry, which allows the principle here to be seen as

applicable to all kinds of spiritual gifts. Such gifts tend to fade in strength, or even disappear, when they are not used and encouraged. This is what Jesus was alluding to in part when he said: *<<For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away>>* (Matthew 25:29).

The laying on of my hands may refer to Timothy's ordination. This passage focuses on Paul's part in that event, whereas 1 Timothy 4:14 mentions the involvement of 'the council of elders', indicating that either Paul was part of that ordination or that the gift was reaffirmed to Timothy on at least two occasions. Another possibility is that this was Timothy's baptism in the Holy Spirit, something that seemed to come only through the apostles in those days: *<<Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit>>* (Acts 8:14-17), and: *<<While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the inland regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?' They replied, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' Then he said, 'Into what then were you baptised?' They answered, 'Into John's baptism.' Paul said, 'John baptised with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.' On hearing this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied – altogether there were about twelve of them>>* (Acts 19:1-7).

⁷ for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1:7

Spirit of power almost certainly refers to the Holy Spirit, rather than the human spirit that would be in reference to one of cowardice or timidity, exemplified by the man who was given one talent to invest on behalf of his master: *<<Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours">>* (Matthew 25:24-25).

Cowardice. The Greek *deilia* in extra-biblical literature refers to one who flees from battle, and has a strong pejorative sense referring to cowardice. Boldness, even in the face of fear, and not cowardice, is the mark of the Holy Spirit: *<<And the spirit of God came upon Saul in power when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled>>* (1 Samuel 11:16), *<<The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion>>* (Proverbs 28:1), *<<But as for me, I am filled with power, with the spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin>>* (Micah 3:8), and: *<<When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together*

was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness>> (Acts 4:31). Disciples are called on to show the same levels of courage that was on display in David's Mighty Men, who served their God and King faithfully in order for the promise of God to be fulfilled in establishing the nation of Israel to its full glory. Refer to 2 Samuel Chapter 23 and 1 Chronicles Chapter 11. Of some of them it was said: <<*These Gadites were officers of the army, the least equal to a hundred and the greatest to a thousand*>> (1 Chronicles 12:14), that is how the Holy Spirit makes ordinary people into true disciples for Christ.

A spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline was given to Timothy specifically for his role as a church leader that is deemed to be a position of service to the church to be undertaken with the authority of God but delivered in all humility and faith to the God who had equipped him for that role.

⁸ Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

2 Timothy 1:8-10

Do not be ashamed either of the testimony about our Lord or of those of faithfully serve him, for to do so will reap adverse rewards: <<*Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels*>> (Mark 8:38).

Me his prisoner. Paul did not consider himself to be a prisoner of the Romans but that he had been imprisoned for his faithful proclamation of the Gospel. He was always the Lord's prisoner, called to be a captive to the Gospel truth he so clearly loved: <<*I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called*>> (Ephesians 4:1). Paul knew that he was only a prisoner of the Romans because God permitted it to be so, as was revealed by Jesus before Pilate: <<*Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin'*>> (John 19:11).

Before the ages began. God was not taken by surprise at the fall of mankind in Eden. It did not surprise him that his chosen race turned away from him time and time again, and it is no surprise that people still reject the Gospel of Christ. Jesus was no plan B for salvation; Jesus is the fulfilment of the original plan, the only plan, put in place by the counsel of God long before creation came into being. God knew then who would respond and who would not!

These verses summarise the Gospel for which God's servants suffer. They are a

reminder of the power of God on whom Christians rely. Paul's exalted language suggests he is also arguing that such a glorious message is worthy of their suffering. Paul contrasts works, which do not save, with God's purpose and grace, which do bring true life. Throughout the ages it has often been those that have suffered and died for the Gospel that have had the biggest impact on others, bringing many to faith through their own sacrifice, although none of them comes anywhere near to the sacrifice of God's lamb, as revealed by John the Baptist: <<*The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'*>> (John 1:29).

God, who saved us, our Saviour Christ Jesus. In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul often describes both God the Father and God the Son as Saviours of their people. Since both are equally God there is no contradiction in terms here; they are in complete agreement with the OT Scriptures, for example: <<*They forgot God, their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt*>> (Psalm 106:21), and: <<*It will be a sign and a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; when they cry to the Lord because of oppressors, he will send them a saviour, and will defend and deliver them*>> (Isaiah 19:20).

Who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Jesus did of course conquer death by rising from the dead to live now forever. He has tasted death once for all and will not taste it again. However, for mere mortals, physical death remains a reality except for the generation that will be alive when Christ returns. Paul also wrote: <<*'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law*>> (1 Corinthians 15:55-56), indicating that death in this life is actually a release from the power and devastating effects of sin, and all the evil that abounds in the world, allowing believers to pass through to a life of peace in perfect tranquillity in whatever form that may look like in the life to come. In this life, it is the freedom from the heavy burden of sin that dying to self and living for Christ brings to people, even though mortal people do continue to sin, for no one is perfect. Yet all have the hope in Paul's words: <<*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*>> (Romans 8:1). Such freedom is not merited or earned, God chooses to show grace and mercy just because he chooses to do so. It is as simple and yet as mystifying as that!

A day is coming when all will have to give an account of their stewardship, the fruit of their labours or to acknowledge whether they gave their soul to God or to Satan. For far too many the response of God will not be what they wanted to hear: <<*Then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers"*>> (Matthew 7:23), or: <<*So he summoned him and said to him, "What is this that I hear about you? Give me an account of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer"*>> (Luke 16:2), where management alludes to the stewardship of one's resources and spiritual gifts.

¹¹ For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, ¹² and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.

2 Timothy 1:11-12

I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher sent specifically to the Gentiles: <<*Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ*>> (Ephesians 3:8), although Paul always ensured the Jewish population got to hear it too, for this Gospel was the sound words of true faith offering the only hope to humanity of something beyond this life. For Paul, the Gospel was based on solid rock that could not be refuted by anyone: <<*Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured; then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us*>> (Titus 2:7-8). David held on to God's Word in his heart: <<*I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you*>> (Psalm 119:11).

Paul suffers 'as I do' because of his current imprisonment and impending death. As much as Paul was called to suffer, he knew that it was never going to be beyond his ability to endure it: <<*No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it*>> (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The one in whom I have put my trust is of course Christ who opened the way to God for Paul and for all others. Christ is faithful and therefore worthy of trust.

I am sure demonstrates the certainty that was in Paul's heart and mind that his God and Christ were his Saviour. The prophet too speaks with equal certainty: <<*Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation*>> (Isaiah 12:2), as did Israel's psalmist, King David: <<*The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold*>> (Psalm 18:2).

Guard, what I have entrusted to him, or literally what has been entrusted to me, Greek *tēn parathēkēn mou*, which could also be translated as 'my deposit', and means either that God will guard this Gospel, which has been entrusted to Paul, or that God will guard Paul's life, for he had been faithful to the Gospel. Either way, it is this confidence in God that prevents Paul from being ashamed.

His boldness arises not from self-confidence but from his unfailing confidence in God, for he can only achieve what God has ordained him to do: <<*Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God*>> (2 Corinthians 3:5).

Until that day almost certainly refers to the Lord's return rather than Paul's impending death: <<*Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw — the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done*>> (1 Corinthians 3:12-13), <<*From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing*>> (2 Timothy 4:8), <<*And let us*

consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching>> (Hebrews 10:25).

Many OT prophets refer to the Day of the Lord and clarify what it would mean for the Lord to visit his people: it means swift and dreadful judgment upon them if they are unfaithful. One prophet, speaking specifically about Judah, said: *<<Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is at hand; the Lord has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests>> (Zephaniah 1:7)*, which could also indicate the sacrifice of his Son and the consecration of those that subsequently accept the Gospel message. Many of the prophets showed that it was not a day to be welcomed by many, something that Paul confirms for the NT era as well: *<<For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape!>> (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). Even so: <<The one who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!>> (Revelation 22:20).*

¹³ Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

2 Timothy 1:13-14

The standard of sound teaching. Paul had written previously to Timothy: *<<Whoever teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness, is conceited, understanding nothing, and has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words. From these come envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, and wrangling among those who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain>> (1 Timothy 6:3-5)*, indicating that sound teaching or the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ does not refer to specific statements of Jesus, but affirms that Paul's Gospel and its ethical implications flow out of the teaching and work of Jesus. It is this teaching that will lead to genuinely changed lives, something that the false teachers could not claim. It is not the words of men that people should be listening to as Paul records: *<<And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual>> (1 Corinthians 2:13).*

Faith and love must go together; for it is not enough to believe the sound teaching, and to give an assent to them, but they must be accepted in love, believed on in their truth and loved for their goodness, and they must be propagated in the form of sound teaching in faith and love; speaking the truth in love: *<<But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ>> (Ephesians 4:15).*

Guard the good treasure entrusted to you again is a reference to the knowledge of the Gospel that Timothy has been taught by Paul and the Spiritual gift he had received, that had equipped him to undertake his ministry effectively.

With the help of the Holy Spirit living in us. Paul was one of the greatest ever evangelists and saw fruit just about everywhere he went. He toiled night and day to share the Gospel and yet he never forgot that it was not by his own gifting or power that he saw the fruit but by the presence of God living in us. Paul had attested to this fact: <<***But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them – though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me***>> (1 Corinthians 15:10).

II.a.iii. 2 Timothy 1:15-18 - Examples, positive and negative

Paul supports his exhortation of vv.6-14 with concrete examples of some who have endured well and others who have not; a common technique in both ancient and modern exhortation.

¹⁵ You are aware that all who are in Asia have turned away from me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.

2 Timothy 1:15

Asia was the Roman province in which Ephesus, Timothy's probable current place of service, was located, being its primary city.

All, turned away from me. Key people who could have supported Paul, perhaps in his arrest and imprisonment, failed to do so, and so it appeared as if all had deserted him: <<***At my first defence no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them!***>> (2 Timothy 4:16), which was a reference to a more specific event. Paul did not literally mean that all in Asia had deserted him but that some of the key men from that region, whom he had hoped would remain faithful, had. Paul will later acknowledge that the ever faithful Luke had remained at his side throughout, as he had done on many previous occasions.

That they turned away from Paul may simply mean they had feared for their own safety and fled Rome, or it could indicate that they had actually renounced the faith. Both options are in view and there is insufficient information to gauge which Paul meant. Both forms were witnessed with Jesus' disciples, for some deserted him because of his difficult teaching: <<***When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?'***>> (John 6:60), and: <<***Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him***>> (John 6:66), while others left him at the time of his arrest: <<***All of them deserted him and fled***>> (Mark 14:50).

There is no further information about Phygelus and Hermogenes. These details highlight the low situation in which Paul found himself and probably help explain why Timothy, the faithful one, was such a source of joy for Paul as already noted.

¹⁶ May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain; ¹⁷ when he arrived in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me ¹⁸ – may the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! And

you know very well how much service he rendered in Ephesus.

2 Timothy 1:16-18

Onesiphorus is an example of faithfulness, in contrast to those who had abandoned Paul. Paul prays, therefore, that the Lord will grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, and that Onesiphorus himself will find mercy on that day, which was discussed in comments made on v.12, and is deemed to be a day of deep distress for many: <<*Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me, which the Lord inflicted on the day of his fierce anger*>> (Lamentations 1:12), but not so for the faithful servant here, according to Paul's hope.

He eagerly searched for me. Onesiphorus not only offered Paul hospitality and good service in his home town, i.e. how much service he rendered in Ephesus, but came to Rome, whether specifically to see Paul or not, does not really matter, for it was his actions there that highlight his faithful service, refreshing Paul no doubt spiritually as well as materially, bring writing materials and food to the prisoner, but most of all, providing much needed fellowship.

The man Onesiphorus, which means 'bringing profit', has the same root as Onesimus, the slave who is the subject of Paul's letter for Philemon, and this would have been a suitable name for Philemon to have given him to mark his freedom from slavery, something Paul hinted at in his letter! What Paul writes about his actions in Rome so closely matches that of Onesimus tending to him in the city during his first period of imprisonment, and then it is subsequently noted he has his own household in Ephesus. Could it be that Philemon not only welcomed him back and gave him his freedom, but also set him up with a new life as a free man in Ephesus? Perhaps not, as most interpreters hold that he is a separate person who was willing to assist Paul during this time of second persecution in Rome.

The structure of the language concerning Onesiphorus is in the past tense which may indicate that he too had been martyred by the time Paul wrote to Timothy, in which case Paul was not praying for him per se but hoping for God's mercy on the Day of Judgement. It would also indicate that it was just his family that were then in Ephesus. Overall, there is no real evidence to link the two men other than similarities in name and faithful discipleship in the Lord Jesus.