

Discussion Notes

Introduction to 2 Timothy (1.1-2)

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Mentorship

- Occasionally someone will enter our lives and make a significant contribution that helps to form and shape us.
- Often in those situations we remember life is about relationships.
- Paul and Timothy modeled this, and in a way their relationship points to the one we have with Jesus.

Rational for 2 Timothy

- The genre of 2 Timothy teaches us more about these relationships.
- 2 Timothy is a letter and the fact that letters are included in our authoritative scriptures points to how deeply relational our faith is (see 2 Tim. 3.14—Timothy knows *whom* he has learned from).
- Even by the profoundly intimate New Testament's standard, 2 Timothy is a uniquely personal letter. An ageing missionary writes to an active apprentice, whom he refers to as "beloved son".
- The relationship orientation of the Bible shows us that God is interested in showing us what life is all about first and then how to live it.
- In Genesis, we learned that it all start with a *who*—God—and his relationship to the whole world, including us.
- Christmas taught us God isn't far off, he made his home among us and showed us how to live.

Who is Paul?

- At the center of Paul's life was a transformative encounter with Jesus Christ.
- Paul was once a persecutor of the church, but Jesus appeared to him and turned him into his greatest spokesman.
- Grace, the free-gift of Jesus' forgiveness, is so central to Paul it is how he says hello and goodbye.
- Paul wasn't a lone wolf. His letters and the account of Acts show us he cared deeply for people, often asking after them by name, and that he worked shoulder to shoulder with other believers in his mission to spread the gospel.
- Paul knew and modeled that ours is a faith that is learned, lived, and led in relationship.

Who is Timothy?

- From Lystra (Modern Turkey), converted when Paul first visited the city and when Paul returned two(ish) years later Timothy was commended to Paul. Paul then took Timothy under his wing.
- Timothy wasn't useless. He co-authored 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians and Philemon. Unsure exactly what that means as it wasn't a common practice in those days.
- Timothy was also sent to place Paul knew had problems and couldn't go himself—he went to Thessalonica, Philippi, Corinth and Ephesus alone.
- In Phil. 2.19-20 Paul gushes over Timothy not because he is brave, smart, or charismatic, but because he has genuine care for people.

Where is Timothy?

- After close to two decades of working with Paul (50ish-67ish AD) under dire circumstances, Timothy and Paul were family.
- Timothy was in Ephesus—a once great church that descended into cheap religious talk by shady leaders—a very hard place.
- Things in Rome were bad, Emperor Nero was in the midst persecuting Christians.
- Timothy would have been afraid for Paul with the affection of a son to a father. Every word of this letter would have mattered to him.

Where is Paul?

- Paul is imprisoned in Rome, and he is certain execution awaits him.
- Paul has been abandoned by even his closest friends and doesn't even have a coat.
- However, strengthened by the grace of Jesus Christ, Paul continues to work out his mission by speaking over and through Timothy to help the people at Ephesus.
- In the midst of the fear and pain Paul is convinced of the prize of life with Jesus that awaits him and any who believe.

What to expect

- Themes: words from the older to the younger, centrality of life in Jesus, suffering for Jesus, endurance and persistence in the faith, ending life well.
- It is warm yet decidedly full of conviction. The writing encourages, exhorts and sharply articulates the essential truths and mission of a fledgling movement, as well as displays how the Gospel shapes and motivates relationships. 2 Timothy directs older believers toward a purposed, resolute conclusion, and younger believers toward a distinct, hopeful future.
- How to prepare: Read the book out loud, pray that God would reveal things to you, contact and thank someone who impacted you, or contact someone you can help.

Discussion Questions

- Who has made a significant impact on your life in a time you needed it? How did they do it?
- How can knowing Paul and Timothy's situations help you understand and engage with 2 Timothy?
- Does Paul's resolute faith and purpose in the face of adversity challenge you? If so, how?
- How does embracing relationality as central to our faith benefit us? What do we lose if we try to be lone wolves?