

2 Timothy as a Letter

- These final verses are meandering and full of many different details and names.
- This reminds us that 2 Timothy is a letter, an artifact of conversation between people.
- Christianity is not a textbook religion. Christianity, most notably in its early development, was primarily concerned with relationship.
- These are some of the last considerations of one of the greatest thinkers in Christian history, it's really personal stuff and a great place to learn how to think theologically through some common life issues.

Some final considerations (v10-13)

- A man named Demas deserted Paul in favor of the "things of this life." Misalignment with God's ways leads to hurting other people.
- Tychicus is going to take over in Ephesus for Timothy. This shows that the early church didn't believe in leadership being a one-man show.
- In v13, Paul asks for Timothy to bring his study tools.
- Right till the end, Paul was working to better himself and help the people around him.
- For those of us "farther along," this is a good reminder the end doesn't need to be bitter. There's always more to contribute!

Alexander and dealing with enemies (v14-15)

- Alexander is a common name, hard to pin down who he is.
- He hurt Paul, was still considered dangerous, and opposed the gospel.
- Paul says Jesus will "repay him for his deeds."
- This isn't Paul being cold or vindictive, he is being honest about his feelings.
- He is also *surrendering* justice to the God of justice, not taking it into his own hands.

Friends who betray (v16)

- Paul mentions his "first defense." Which was the Roman public trial used to gather evidence and determine whether an official trial was needed.
- Paul needed his friends to testify at this, and, like Jesus' disciples when he stood before the priests, Paul's friends abandoned him.
- Paul forgives them, and prays for their forgiveness.
- Also, Paul probably said this to make sure Timothy doesn't hold a grudge.

The Lord is with us (v17a)

- Where friends abandon, the Lord stood with Paul by his Holy Spirit.
- Spirit in the original biblical languages means "Breath." God is closer than breath.
- Breathing in the Spirit is also for empowerment to join in Jesus' mission.
- Paul knew his calling was to Christ first, then the Church, then to mission.

- But his comfort is not in success, because things look bad. His comfort is that God is at work *through* him.

A Kingdom Perspective (17b-18)

- In v17b, Paul says he was delivered from the Lion's mouth—the beast is a common metaphor for enemies, death, and imperial power.
- Paul's in a struggle against the empire of Rome and its oppressive ideologies. And as he faces death, he remembers there is only one King and only one Kingdom that lasts.
- Like all other empires, Rome will fall but God's kingdom will stand.
- Paul also knows that the way to victory for this kingdom is self-sacrificial love.
- So, while he sees the kingdom here he looks forward to the kingdom coming.
- Don't be afraid! We know how this story ends.

God knows many names (v19-22)

- The names at the end of this letter are Greek and Latin, not Jewish. Already in the first century since Christ, divisions and boundaries are breaking down.
- Promise to Abraham, that he would father many nations (Gen. 17), fulfilled in this list.
- God knows every name, people, and culture.
- Women are listed here as church leaders, with husbands and in their own right. Paul was not a sexist, and women have always had a place as leaders in the church.

Grace (v22)

- As a summary to Paul's message, and his life, he concludes with grace.
- It's at the beginning, middle, and end of this letter.
- It shows that being strong is not about being independent, it's about being needy and dependent on God.
- Paul and Timothy were tough cookies, and did some big stuff. But their strength wasn't their own.
- Strength doesn't come from within, it comes from without.
- Grace just means the help of Jesus, in a general sense here.
- Whatever your season of life, whatever your feelings of dependence, it is always a good time to be reminded: be strong in the grace of Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions

- How have you traditionally dealt with injustices you've suffered?
- Why do you think it is important to forgive or surrender justice to God?
- What gets in the way of remembering God is with you?
- What ways can you remember God is with you?
- What are the benefits of remembering you are reliant on God?