

New Morning Magical

Guard what you've learned

We begin exploring the Apostle Paul's second letter to Timothy. Paul was again a Roman prisoner, probably between 64-69 A.D., and he knows that his time is short, so the tone of this letter is different from all of Paul's other writings. As it turned out, this was Paul's final letter before he was executed.

Let's start at the beginning:

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, through the will of God, in accord with the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 to Timothy, a child beloved: Grace, mercy, peace, from God, the Father, and Christ Jesus, our Lord.

3 Grateful am I to God, to Whom I am offering divine service from my ancestors with a clear conscience, as I have an unintermittent remembrance concerning you in my petitions, night and day,

4 longing to see you, remembering your tears, that I may be filled full of joy,

5 getting a reminder of the unfeigned faith which is in you, which first makes its home in your grandmother Lois, and in your mother Eunice. Now, I am persuaded that it is in you also.

6 For which cause I am reminding you to be rekindling the gracious gift of God which is in you through the imposition of my hands,

7 for God gives us, not a spirit of timidity, but of power and of love and of sanity.

Paul knew something of Timothy's history that we hadn't heard until now, regarding Timothy's grandmother and mother. Then Paul reminds Timothy, *"to be rekindling the gracious gift of God which is in you through the imposition of my hands."* In other words, Timothy, *"Stir up again what you received when I laid hands on you."* We could add here, addressing you in this present time: Whatever gift that the Father may have given you, keep it alive; don't let it go dormant, because the body of Christ needs you and your gifts.

Verse 7 is really important: *"For God gives us, not a spirit of timidity, but of power and of love and of sanity."* You and I enjoy living with the Spirit of God in us that imbues us with power, love, and sanity; so if you find yourself feeling timid, you can break free of that anytime you like, because the power of God's spirit lives in you.

8 You may not be ashamed, then, of the testimony of our Lord, nor yet of me, His prisoner, but suffer evil with the evangel in accord with the power of God,
9 Who saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian,
10 yet now is being manifested through the advent of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, Who, indeed, abolishes death, yet illuminates life and incorruption through the evangel
11 of which I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher of the nations.

Verses 9-10 tell quite a unique story: First, the Father saves us and calls us not because of anything we do or have done, but because we occupy positions within His purpose. Not only that – and this is a startling revelation – but He gave us His grace through Christ BEFORE the eons! This means that you and I were already accorded the Father’s grace in Christ before anything was made! We’ve never heard this before. We recall that the Father chose us, or “*designated us beforehand,*” but this is the first time we hear that our whole salvation story – whatever yours or mine might be – was preplanned ahead of the eons themselves.

12 For which cause I am suffering these things also, but I am not ashamed, for I am aware Whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard what is committed to me, for that day.

No matter what happened to Paul, he never wavered in his faith, and how could he; how could any of us if we had had anything like Paul’s experience with the Lord? Here, he is “*persuaded,*” or convinced that Christ Himself is guarding Paul’s evangel “*for that day,*” which is always a euphemism in Paul’s writings for the day of the Lord, or the day of the Lord’s return.

13 Have a pattern of sound words, which you hear from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

“*Make sure that what you speak to others is right and good; the same words that you have heard from me,*” Paul is saying here. He was entirely confident in what he taught Timothy and others, no doubt, so he could boldly and fearlessly give this kind of instruction. To me, the big take away from this verse is the knowledge that you and I can likewise have a pattern of sound words, which we have also heard from the Apostle.

14 The ideal thing committed to you, guard through the holy spirit which is making its home in us.

You can take this as a direct instruction from Paul: Everything we've explored contains revelations – secrets – that, just as they were committed to the people to whom Paul wrote his letters, his epistles, these ideal things are now committed to you. Guard them through the Holy Spirit that is making its home in you too.

At the end of this 1st chapter, we learn that, *"all those in the province of Asia were turned from"* Paul. Everyone he taught and ministered to turned away from him. Hard to imagine, isn't it, although you and I will never face the kind of horrific persecution that followers of Yeshua did in the first century.

Paul begins chapter 2 with instructions to Timothy about his own ministry, so we'll pick it up in verse 8:

8 Remember Jesus Christ, Who has been roused from among the dead, is of the seed of David, according to my evangel,
9 in which I am suffering evil unto bonds as a malefactor -- but the word of God is not bound.

In other words, you can bind me in prison, but the word of God is still operating far beyond my chains.

10 Therefore I am enduring all because of those who are chosen, that they also may be happening upon the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with glory eonian.

The Apostle Paul couldn't have known how far his writings would reach, both in geography and in time. I don't think it's farfetched to read his words and recognize that you and I who are exploring them today are chosen to hear them, receiving the complete impartation of salvation in Christ until the day that eonian glory overtakes and transforms us.

11 Faithful is the saying: "For if we died together, we shall be living together also;
12 if we are enduring, we shall be reigning together also; if we are disowning, He also will be disowning us;
13 if we are disbelieving, He is remaining faithful -- He cannot disown Himself."

Whether you and I believe or not, the Father remains faithful. He does not – He cannot – as Paul says, disown Himself. For us to be disowning the Father or Christ is unthinkable. To reign with Him, according to Paul in verse 12 here, we simply endure until we die or until He returns. Meanwhile, in the enduring we are dying to this world and everything that distracts from our

dying to all that this world contains. Our success in this is found when we meet Him in the air, as Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4. That's when life really begins for us, if I may say so, for then, death has no power, pain does not exist, we will know as we are known, and we will see as we are seen. Whatever sacrifices we make now, I believe, will have been well worth it when we meet Him face to face.

14 Of these things be reminding them, conjuring them in the Lord's sight not to engage in controversy for nothing useful, to the upsetting of those who are hearing.

And here comes the entire premise for these explorations into Paul's writings:

15 Endeavor to present yourself to God qualified, an unashamed worker, correctly cutting the word of [the] truth.

Your Bible probably says the word of truth, but it's THE truth in the Greek manuscripts. It's a small but important distinction. A truth can be relative – you know, what's true for you and me may be different, but THE truth is absolute and unwavering, and in THE truth we stand.

16 Yet from profane prattlings stand aloof, for they will be progressing to more irreverence,

17 and their word will spread as gangrene, of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus,
18 who swerve as to [the] truth, saying that the resurrection has already occurred, and are subverting the faith of some.

“Profane prattlings” aren't the same as *“vain prattling”* that we read about before today. Vain simply means empty and useless, but profane is much worse, because these prattlings spread, as Paul says, like gangrene. Then, he calls out two people by name, *“who swerve as to [the] truth,”* Paul says, because they taught people that the resurrection had already happened. How in the world they convinced some people that they were right is a complete mystery. Whomever it was who believed these two who swerved could not have been very firm in their own faith.

Well, let's rejoice that you and I have not swerved, nor, Lord willing will we.

So, until next time,

May Yahweh bless you and keep you;

May Yahweh light up His face toward you and be gracious to you;

May Yahweh lift His face to you and appoint peace for you.

AMEN