

## **2 Timothy: Conclusion**

Call to Worship: Psalm 16

Hymn #70- *Praise My Soul the King of Heaven*

1st Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-20

Hymn Insert- *O Church Arise*

2nd Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:19-22

Hymn Insert- *Benediction*

### **Introduction**

We come now to the conclusion of Paul's second letter to Timothy, and I trust and hope that the Lord has given us a better glimpse into the heart of the Apostle Paul, and the urgency of those things that most gripped his heart, as he was preparing to face his martyrdom. As we've seen in the introduction to this Epistle, these are the last inspired, God-breathed Words, written by Paul, which have been included in the Canon of Scripture.

For this morning then, after considering a few summary comments about the final greetings and farewell section of this letter, we will simply review a few of the key themes of this letter, with the hope that we will consciously and prayerfully apply these things, at the street level of our every day lives [Knowledge -> Understanding -> Wisdom (applied knowledge)]

[Read the Word -> Prayerfully meditate upon it -> Prayerfully apply]

### **I. Final Greetings and Farewell**

“Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick” (vs. 19-20). For a few moments, let's just consider a few things about each of those who are mentioned here:

1) Prisca (short for Priscilla) and Aquila. Priscilla and Aquila were long time friends and co-laborers with Paul, whom he had first met at Corinth. In fact, the providence of God, in bringing them together, was profoundly obvious, especially as they shared the same trade in tent making.

We first hear of this beloved duo in Acts 18:1-4, where we are told, “After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the

same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.”

And so, here we find that, in the providence of God, when Claudius Caesar had, for a time, banished all Jews from Rome, Priscilla and Aquila, being forced to leave, made their way to Corinth, where they used their tent making skills to sustain themselves and the ministry, which they now sought to fulfill at Corinth. And not long after that, Paul arrives at Corinth, meets them in the same trade, dwells with them and they form a relationship in Christ, which begins in their planting of the Church at Corinth and takes them beyond into other nations. And just by way of small application for a moment, brethren, consider that the antagonistic decree of Claudius which drove Priscilla and Aquila out of Rome, was the very means that God used to join them together with the Apostle Paul for further and tremendous ministry opportunities. Indeed, we ought to be slow to complain about God’s providence, though we be greatly inconvenienced by it, rather, looking for the new opportunities that He is bringing to us, by means of that very providence. This kind of pattern happens all throughout the Book of Acts, and the same, “All things work together for good,” which served the hope of the Apostles and people of old, is still at work in us, brethren. Sadly, we can get too caught up in groveling over our past losses, while missing the very hand of God, which is leading us into new territories of Kingdom work!

Consider as well, how this providence led Priscilla and Aquila to meet that great and bold Spurgeon of the New Testament, Apollos, and how God used them to significantly tweak his doctrine, so that he would be more effective in his ground breaking, evangelistic and apologetic efforts. After meeting Paul, Priscilla and Aquila later travel with Paul to Ephesus (where they will conduct a large portion of their future ministry), and as Paul heads to Antioch, he leaves them at Ephesus to cater to the golden opportunity for church planting that takes place there. And that is where they meet Apollos. [Read Acts 18:18-28]

And so, here we find Priscilla and Aquila being used in a great way, both to aid the ministry of the bold Apollos and to help set the foundation for the church at Ephesus.

At some point later on, before coming back to Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila, being allowed to return, do go back to Rome for a time, to plant a church in their own house, before Paul had even made it to Rome. And notice how Paul speaks of them in his letter to the Roman

Church. In chapter 16:3-4, he states, “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house.”

Clearly, this precious couple was a great asset, not only to Paul, but to all the gentile churches, indicating that they did a lot of traveling and were very influential in helping to plant and set up churches throughout the Roman Empire. They were well respected by Paul. And Churches were begun in their homes on other occasions as well. In 1 Corinthians 16:19, Paul mentions them again as having a church in their home, this time in Asia (and presumably Ephesus, where they spend a good portion of their ministerial days). Paul states there, “The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.”

And so, back to our main text in 2 Timothy, when Paul sends greetings to Prisca and Aquila (through Timothy, who is presumably at Ephesus), this is who he has in mind. And what an encouragement it is, to see this faithful couple, still heartily serving the Lord, at the end of Paul’s life. What a testimony of faithfulness, hospitality and commitment to Christ and His church! [Note: Prisca mentioned first, presents an interesting implication...etc]

2) The household of Onesiphorus. We came across Onesiphorus back in chapter one [Read verses 15-18]. Here, we are reminded that Onesiphorus, who was from Ephesus, unlike the apostates, Phygellus and Hermogenes (who turned their backs on Paul), had actually sought out Paul in Rome, fearlessly ministering to Paul, while he was in chains. We are not told of his present whereabouts, but needless to say, Paul sends greetings to his household, which is at Ephesus with Timothy, Priscilla and Aquila. And so, clearly Paul had been ministered to, at the household of Onesiphorus, when he was at Ephesus (1:18).

3) Erastus. Here, Paul mentions Erastus and Trophimus (who we will consider in a moment), not as a greeting connection through Timothy, but rather, as a means of informing Timothy of their whereabouts. Again, all of these, whom Paul has mentioned so far (including the individuals mentioned in verses 9-13) were Paul’s co-laborers in the gospel, some of which, were presently with Timothy, and most of whom were not. This will be relevant when we come to the names mentioned in verse 21b.

That said, we do know a little bit about Erastus. For one, we know that he did accompany Paul for a time, during his earlier missionary journeys. In Acts 19:21-22, Paul sends Erastus, along with Timothy, across the Aegean Sea, from Asia, to Macedonia. We are told there, “When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.” So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.”

Finally, we know that Erastus did ultimately return to Corinth, his home country, and where he presently was, when Paul had written this Second Epistle to Timothy. In Romans 16:23, Paul (writing from Corinth) states, “Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother.” Perhaps, worthy of note is that Erastus was the treasurer of Corinth, enabling him to sustain a position of high influence. No doubt, this provided him with some gospel advantages, along with political protections for the gospel cause. Needless to say, there is certainly warrant here, for welcoming Christians, as individuals, to secure political positions, as a means of widening their spiritual influence and possibly securing protection for the peaceful proclamation of the gospel.

4) Trophimus. Another traveling co-laborer of the Apostle Paul, Trophimus, was a fellow minister of the Lord from Ephesus, where Timothy was now ministering. In Acts 20:4-5, we are told, “And Sopater of Berea accompanied (*Paul*) to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas.” And again, in Acts 21:27-29, “Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing (*Paul*) in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

And so, Trophimus was from Ephesus, and he was actually the unintentional cause of Paul’s arrest at the temple in Jerusalem. One final noteworthy fact surrounding Trophimus,

which is found in our main text here in 2 Timothy, is that he fell sick at Miletus (which is only about 36 miles away from Ephesus), which led to Paul having to leave him there, prior to Paul's arrest. But, the reason that this is noteworthy is because Paul was incapable of healing Trophimus, showing that Paul could not always heal at will, and that, more than likely, the healing miracles, which served revelatory purposes, were probably beginning to wane, toward the end of Paul's ministry.

Following, providing Timothy with an explanation as to where these co-laborers were, Paul then orders Timothy to take pains to come to Paul before the winter season arrived. "Do your utmost to come before winter" (vs. 21). The reason for the fervency of this command is, at least, twofold. First, Paul desires to have his cloak from Troas, which would carry him through the Winter months. Second, once Winter arrived, it would be nearly impossible for Timothy to travel to get to Paul, as the seas would be dangerous and contrary, not allowing boats and ships to travel freely. Paul was already on borrowed time, and he wanted to see Timothy before his death.

Moving on then, Paul adds, "Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren." Here, Paul mentions these brethren, as distinguished from those whom he has already mentioned, because these are actual members of the Church at Rome. The others mentioned were Paul's missionary co-laborers, who were involved with planting and serving churches all over the world. This group specifically consists of actual members of the church at Rome. And so, Paul sends a greeting from representatives of the church at Rome, as well as, the church at Rome, as a whole. [Not included among those who forsook Paul, which were his co-laborers (deepening the offense), or those who were presently ministering in other parts of the world].

Finally then, Paul adds his customary, but very relevant, farewell benediction, "The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen." More than just kind words of "well wishing," Paul, knowing the frailty and weakness of our human nature, desires that the Lord Jesus Christ would be with Timothy's spirit. Paul knew that, ultimately, if Timothy was to withstand the attacks of the enemy and to persevere in his obedience to Christ, the same Christ, who strengthened Paul when all else forsook him at his first trial, needed to be with Timothy.

When Christ is for and with you, no one can prevail against you. And God's strengthening, pardoning, edifying, persevering grace in Christ, alone, would be sufficient to grant Timothy all that he needed to give heed to Paul's warnings and exhortations in this letter, leading him to persevere, both, in his walk with Christ, and in his ministry unto Christ's Church!

## **II. Concluding Review of the Themes of 2 Timothy**

1) If we've learned anything from 2 Timothy (and 1 Timothy for that matter), brethren, it's that doctrine (biblical teaching) matters. And at a time when many will attempt to minimize the importance of doctrine and to seek to put unity above doctrine, it is important that we stand out as those who cherish, value and stand upon sound doctrine. Now, does that mean that we ought to divide over every minutia of biblical teaching? No. There is certainly room for unity, when there are different convictions about more peripheral areas of biblical truth. And that doesn't minimize the importance of those areas of dispute even, but there is room for unity in disagreement on non-salvific matters. But, especially when it comes to the gospel, and when dealing with matters of blatant immorality, there ought to be no room for compromise. Justification by faith alone in Christ alone, salvation by grace alone, the acknowledgement of the two "full and complete" natures of Christ (in His Deity and humanity), the doctrine of the Trinity, the necessity of genuine repentance unto salvation...etc, are all non-negotiables.

And so, brethren, let us be humbly zealous to protect the doctrines which are the very basis and foundation of our faith, and let us ever be seeking to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Doctrine matters! We live out of our doctrine! And falsehood/false teaching corrupts, defiles, destroys and divides Christ's Church.

2) Let us be determined to persevere, at all costs, and to finish the race of faith, which God has set before us! There will be all manner of stumbling blocks placed in front of us, all manner of trials set before us, and all manner of sorrows and hardships which we must bear before finishing our trek to glory, and so, we must be determined to avail ourselves to every means of grace that God provides, and to fight the good fight of faith to the end. We must hold onto this life (and everything in it) with loose hands, so that nothing draws us away from clinging to Christ, the Author and Perfector of our faith! Brethren, let your loyalty to Christ and

your commitment to His Kingdom, be your utmost priority, and the very worldview, by which, you view life. There will always be idols competing for your heart, on a daily basis, seeking to drive you away from your first love. Fight the good fight, and cling to Christ, your hope of glory!

3) Some of you have have long been sitting through the sermons that have been preached at this pulpit, and yet, you are still uncommitted, living in your sin, and outside of Jesus Christ. God, by His Holy Word, and by the convicting prods of His Holy Spirit, has unveiled His will to you, week after week, and yet, you continue to resist His Spirit, drowning out His voice by entrenching yourself in the affairs of this short life. And though life is short, unpredictable and fragile, you are not ready to die. You are not ready to stand before God. And that Day draws near! Is it worth taking such an eternal risk for unfulfilling lusts and temporal things that don't matter in the long run? Consider your never dying soul! The Gospel!...

Amen!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25