

Nyanza Pastors Bible conference

(Sponsored by the international Community Church, apex, North Carolina, USA)

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Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth"- 2 Timothy 2: 15.

A devotional study on the Apostle Paul's final episode: 2 Timothy.

Background:	This episode is Paul's "last words" to his spiritual son and protege Timothy.
Location:	Prison dungeon in Rome. Awaiting judgment on him by the demonic emperor Nero right after this last Epistle the mighty apostle Paul would be beheaded.

We need to treat and teach with utmost devotion. It is like you want to read and meditate on this episode on your knees.

The apostle Paul forever diligently stayed on all the missions the risen Lord Jesus Christ had assigned to him.

He was never disobedient to the heavenly call of God. The apostle Paul had:

1. Foremost and supreme love for Christ Jesus.
2. Had amazing zeal, loyalty and allegiance for God - like Caleb.
3. He was courageous and bold in Christ.
4. He was dedicated, consecrated and devoted to the cause of the Gospel of Christ.
5. He was truthful and faithful to the call of God till his death.
6. He suffered tremendously - more than you and I could explain - he boasts about the sufferings (2 Corinthians 11: 16- 33) especially verses 24- 31
7. He was filled with gratitude and always offered Thanksgiving to God for everything.
8. He always kept pressing on for Christ - Philippians 3: 12.
9. He called himself "the chief first and foremost" of all sinners 1 Timothy 1: 15- 16
10. He was a matured Christian with matured thinking (1 Corinthians 14: 20; 2 Timothy 2: 7)
11. He was a gentle shepherd (1 Thessalonians 2: 7-8)
12. Paul lived only for the glory of God in Christ (Romans 11: 36)
13. Paul's passion and commitment to Christ Jesus was exemplary (Philippians 1: 21).
14. Nothing in life could separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8: 31).

The second episode of Paul the Apostle to Timothy

Chapter 1

My son, hear the instruction (Proverbs 1: 8) - An appeal to Pastors

1:1- 2	Call, conviction and greetings
1:3- 6	Timothy's spiritual heritage and faith (background)
1:7	God's specific gifts: power, love, sound mind.
1: 8-12	Proclaim the recent Christ and Gospel without shame.
1: 13	Stay loyal to faith and abide in Christ's love.

Chapter 2

My son, let your light shine (Matthew 5: 16 a) - An appeal to practical Christian living.

2: 1- 2	Pastor as a trusted steward.
2: 3- 4,8-13	Pastor as a courageous and victorious soldier.
2: 5	Pastor as a well-trained and focused athlete.
2: 6-7	Pastor as a hardworking farmer.
2: 14-18	Pastor as a dependable Workman.
2: 19-22	Pastor as a useful vessel of God.
2: 23- 26	Pastor as a humble servant of the Lord.

Chapter 3

My son, beware and hold firmly to God's word (Matthew 5: 18) - An appeal for spiritual diligence.

3: 1	Know and turn away from the false.
3: 10- 12	Be diligent to follow the truth - the Lord Jesus
3: 13-17	Abide in God's word.

Chapter 4

My son, preach and practice the Word of God and finish well (Matthew 24: 13) - An appeal for personal preparedness.

4: 1- 4	Proclaim the Word of God.
4: 5-8	Fulfill (complete) the ministerial tasks- finish well.
4: 9-22	Face diverse disappointments and know the Lord will be with you always!

Chapter 1

At the time of writing this Epistle the situation surrounding the apostle Paul had drastically changed - he was a prisoner in Rome and facing certain death. He was alone with Luke who came to assist him.

Paul had concern for young Timothy who was his spiritual son and kept encouraging and commanding him to be faithful and loyal to Christ and the Gospel.

Timothy was timid, suffered from physical ailments and needed to be assertive in his role as a pastor.

Paul sent Tychius to replace Timothy at Ephesus so that Timothy could spend time with him at Rome. Timothy could succeed in his ministry with the Lord's help.

Paul gave Timothy three ministerial essentials to serve the LORD.

1. Enthusiasm with courage (1: 1- 7)
2. Suffering without shame (1: 8- 12)
3. Christian loyalty (1: 13-18)

1. Enthusiasm with courage (1: 1- 7)

The ministry of the Gospel of Christ requires Christ given enthusiasm and it's not for a "timid soul."

Paul compared enthusiastic courage to stirring up a fire into full flame (1 Timothy 1: 6). Remember Timothy did not backslide or lack spiritual fire. Paul wanted this fire of the Gospel to generate spiritual fire in his life. Paul imparted several encouragements.

Paul's love for Timothy (Verses 1-2)

"To Timothy, a beloved son" (2 Timothy 1: 2)

"To Timothy, a true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1: 2)

Thus, Paul expressed his deep love for Timothy.

Paul faced extremely difficult situation, but he was always encouraged by the Lord who called him as Christ's sent one – Christ' ambassador ("apostle").

So, Paul didn't fear about what would happen to him. Paul had fully believed, lived and embraced the promise of life after death. Just like Timothy, all Pastors need "grace, mercy and peace" from God the father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul's prayers for Timothy (Verses 3- 4)

Paul prayed for Timothy knowing his difficulties, problems and weaknesses. Paul prayed with compassion, wholeheartedly and with deep concern. Paul was aware of his last days on earth and was eager to spend more fellowship time with Timothy at the prison in Rome. Paul was granted now a pure conscience after the full forgiveness granted by God. His earlier actions against Christians were done in spiritual ignorance (1 Timothy 1: 13). Paul was a born Hebrew and practiced Orthodox Jewish faith and he heard about the true God from his forefathers. But his life had completely changed after he met Christ. Paul was enabled to pray with the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Paul had confidence in Timothy (Verse 5)

Timothy had good spiritual heritage from his grandmother (Lois) and mother (Eunice). At Lystra Timothy was converted during Paul's first missionary journey and at his second journey, Paul enlisted Timothy into Christian ministry. Paul was convinced of Timothy's genuine Christian faith. Timothy was raised in a godly home, trained by the apostle Paul and was given opportunities to serve the Lord and proclaim the Gospel.

God had gifted Timothy (Verses 6-7)

Paul had laid hands on Timothy (1 Timothy 4: 14) and God had imparted to Timothy spiritual gifts he needed to serve him.

It is God who calls, and it is His Holy Spirit that enables us to serve God and with His unfailing help we can overcome all kinds of fear and weaknesses.

“fear” here means “timidity, cowardice”.

The Holy Spirit imparts power (Acts 1: 8) for your ministry. The Holy Spirit imparts God's love for lost souls and all others, including those who oppose the Gospel of Christ (Acts 7: 60)

True love lacks any form of selfishness. The opposite of love is selfishness and selfishness will manifest through hunger for prestige, power, and money (1 Corinthians 13). True Christian love is energized by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5: 5) and enables us to sacrifice for others and the fruit of the spirit is love (Galatians 5: 22).

God imparts “a sound mind” which means self-control, self-discipline. The word sober, sobriety and clear thinking are often quoted (1 Timothy 2: 9, 15; Titus 1: 8; 2: 2, 4, 6, 12). Describes a pastor who is sensibly minded and balanced and to has his life under control. Amplified version reads, “calm, well balanced mind, discipline and self-control.”

Timothy needed a “stirring up” of what he already had. (1 Timothy 4: 14). The Holy Spirit does not leave when we fail (John 14: 16). It is possible to grieve the spirit (Ephesians 4: 30) and quench the spirit (1 Thessalonians 5: 19). If our spiritual life and growth is neglected, then He cannot fill us, empower us and use us.

Timothy had all reasons to be encouraged, to have spiritual enthusiasm in his ministry; He was loved and prayed for by Paul; He had spiritual experience and preparation for ministry; Paul was confident of his genuine faith and the Holy Spirit would continue to give him all the power, love and sound mind needed for the ministry.

Suffer for Christ without feeling shame (1: 8- 12)

Paul was never ashamed of Christ and the Gospel (verse 12 and Romans 1: 16- 17) and he admonished Timothy not to be ashamed (Verse 8) and reported that Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul's chains (Verse 16).

The natural (carnal) mind tries to avoid circumstances that demanded witness and the consequence suffering. By nature, none of us want or enjoy suffering.

Paul prayed thrice to have his thorn removed (2 Corinthians 12:7-8)

Suffering is part of a faithful life lived for Christ, when we do wrong then we suffer (1 Peter 2: 20; 3: 17). Sufferings come as a result of serving God and doing the right. In that case we are sharing Christ's sufferings (Philippians 3: 10). God always gives grace and power to endure at that right time when we need to face suffering.

God knows the end from the beginning. God has purposes for all His people to perform for His glory. Our suffering is used by God to mature, draw us closer and for His glory. Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered on earth although He was sinless and all those who love and follow Him will also suffer.

God saved us on the basis of His grace (Ephesians 2: 8; Titus 3: 5) and never asked the basis of our good deeds (Isaiah 64: 6). And God's grace is all sufficient for all our sufferings. All of God's grace is imparted to us in and through Jesus Christ.

Christ had already defeated death and grave and so Paul is unafraid to face death. 1 Corinthians 15: 55 - makes this very clear to us all. Paul was writing this letter while facing definite death.

Christ Jesus is the destroyer of death and revealer of life and immortality. Through His life, death, burial and resurrection our Lord has given us guarantees of eternal life, resurrection and hope of heaven. We should all on the clear light of the New Testament to shine on the Old Testament, so that this issue of life death resurrection is clear to us. Immortality (verse 10) means "incorruptibility" and refers to the resurrection of the body. Our present body is subject to corruption, death and decay but our resurrected body will not be subject to death and decay (1 Corinthians 15: 49-58; Philippians 3: 21). 1 Peter 1: 4 says our heavenly inheritance will be "incorruptible and undefiled and that fades not away."

Be not ashamed of the Lord's prisoner (Verses 11-12)

Paul was still bearing witness for the Gospel of Christ although he was a prisoner. The people of Ephesus failed to come to Rome to witness for Christ and had deserted Paul in his time of need (verse 15). They were ashamed to be identified with Paul.

Timothy did not join them, and Paul commanded him to remain true. Paul gave four reasons why Timothy should not be ashamed of his relationship with the prisoner of Christ, Paul.

1. Paul was called by God (Verse 11)

Jesus Christ personally called him into the ministry (Acts 9). He was the official messenger of the King of Kings first. His rejection by professed believers in Asia did not change his calling or his message.

2. Paul was an apostle called by God (Verse 11)

Apostle “one who is sent with a Commission” (1 Corinthians 9: 1; 2 Corinthians 12: 12). An Apostle represented Jesus Christ and to reject an apostle was to reject the Lord Jesus who had sent him.

3. Paul was called teacher to the Gentiles

Paul shepherded local churches. It was this ministry to the gentiles that landed him in prison in Rome the first time (Acts 2: 21 onwards).

The gentile believers, instead of being grateful to Paul for bringing the Gospel to them, were ashamed of Paul and did not get involved.

4. Paul's confidence was in Christ (Verse 12)

Paul was unashamed regardless because Christ would watch over him. His faith is on the person of Jesus Christ: “I know whom I have believed”

Salvation is in the person of Jesus Christ and not in doctrines. He is the Lamb of God who made in His body sacrifice for our sins; He shed His blood for our sins. Paul was very confident of the safe deposit of his soul to the person of Christ.

What really mattered is what will happen on “that day” when our Lord Jesus rewards His faithful servants (Verse 18 & 4: 8)

It's of utmost importance to stand true to Christ regardless of sufferings and stand by God's servants who are suffering for righteousness' sake.

Importance of spiritual loyalty (Verses 13- 18)

God's work gets done down the centuries by God's loyal servants who stood steadfast in their hours of trial and tribulation and persecution. They refused to compromise but stood still and firm on the Lord's side. Paul was a great example of this loyalty to Christ and encouraged Timothy to follow his example in that Christ inspired loyalty that has two faces.

Stay loyal to God's Word (Verses 13-14)

God had given the deposit of spiritual truth to Paul (1 Timothy 1: 11) and He had given it to Timothy (1 Timothy 6: 20). It was now Timothy's solemn responsibility to "holdfast" (verse 13) and guard (Verse 14) the precious deposit of Christian truth, and to pass it along to others (1 Timothy 2: 2).

"Hold fast the pattern of sound words" - "pattern" is like an architect sketch; There was a definite outline of doctrine in the early church, a standard by which teaching was tested. Timothy should not change or alter this pattern and only then he can teach other preachers and teachers of the Gospel of Christ. We Pastors need to hold fast to the Word of God without becoming a militant or a legalistic or dogmatic in our desire to defend the faith. That's why in Ephesians 4:15 Paul admonished Timothy to temper the Word of God with "faith and love" "speaking the truth and love."

The Holy Spirit who committed the truth to Timothy will also help him to guard it. Only the Holy Spirit can enlighten the Word of God (John 16: 13) and enable us to guard the truth and in love share it with others. Satan, from the beginning opposes God's powerful Word of truth (Genesis 3: 1). For ages the Word of God has been had been questioned, attacked, mocked, rejected - sadly often by people within the church. And yet the Word of God abides forever (1 Peter 1: 25; Isaiah 40: 8; 2 Timothy 3: 16- 17; Psalm 119: 89)

Dedicated Pastors faithfully hand over the Word of God to a new generation of Christians. When lack of conviction on the part of Pastors are displayed, the churches tend to go liberal and compromise.

Remain loyal to God's servant (Verses 15-18)

Paul on his third missionary journey he stayed three years in Ephesus, the then capital of Asia and evangelized the entire area (Acts 19; 20: 31). The seven churches in of Asia were all in this area (Revelation 1: 4, 11).

It's likely that Phygelus and Hermogenes were leaders in these churches who opposed Paul and would not come to his defense in Rome. The Asian believers were ashamed of Paul and refused to stand in solidarity with Paul and as a result were ashamed of Christ (1 Timothy 4: 16).

It was a very trying time of testing for Paul. His other associates had been dispatched to distant places of ministry. Demas had forsaken him (2 Timothy 4: 10). False doctrines were spreading in the church (2 Timothy 2: 17- 18). Since Paul was in a Roman prison, he was unable to proclaim the Word of God and defend the faith and so it was now up to Timothy to get the job done.

Onesiphorus was daring enough to leave Ephesus and come to Rome to assist Paul. His name means "profit bearing" and he certainly was a profitable friend of consolation to Paul.

During Paul's ministry at Ephesus, Onesiphorus was a faithful minister along with his household. Paul was the pastor of the Ephesian church, and he would have known this dedicated Saint.

Onesiphorus traveled from Ephesus to meet the needs of Paul but faced difficulties in locating the prison. Yet he diligently kept looking for Paul. Perhaps some of the Roman Christians who were opposed to Paul were not helpful and also the Roman officials were also not also cooperative and did not want their important prisoner who was under maximum security to receive any help at all. But Onesiphorus persisted and located Paul and risked his own life to stand with him to be a comfort to him.

“When he was in Rome” (2 Timothy 1: 17) suggests that the time of writing Onesiphorus was traveling somewhere between Rome and Ephesus. So, Paul prayed for his household and sent greetings to his household.

Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul’s imprisonment. Paul was chained to a Roman soldier 24 hours a day. Onesiphorus could have easily found excuses to stay back in Ephesus but chose the dangerous journey to Rome and minister to Paul.

“Onesiphorus often refreshed Paul”

He was like a breath of fresh air to Paul in his hours of trial

Are you a breath of fresh air to someone who is going through trials and hardships?

Onesiphorus’ love and devoted service to Paul made him known to us all. The Lord new and will reward him “on that day.”

Pastors, your successful ministry depends on: enthusiastic courage and boldness, unashamed amidst suffering and spiritual loyalty and allegiance.

Chapter 2

My son come on let your light shine (Matthew 5: 16) - An appeal to practical Christian living.

God equips His chosen Pastors for several different roles.

Pastor as the Steward 2: 1-2

Your precious and God given ministry entirely belongs to Christ Jesus. We are mere stewards taking care of that which is entrusted to us - this spiritual treasure God has entrusted in our hands. We need to guard the deposit as responsible stewards and then invest in the lives of others who are seeking the living God.

Where do you get the treasure?

From the Word of God and not mere opinions, ideas, philosophies of men. Pastors are not tested by their popularity, education or skill or not even talents. We test Pastors by the Word of God and by the doctrine of grace. The Word of God tests every pastor.

Teaching of the Word of God needs rich mines of scripture. The “gold, silver, precious stones” that are hidden there (proverbs 2: 1; 3: 13- 15; 8: 10- 21; 1: 3: 10-23). The strength and secret off Paul’s blessed ministry came from the love and grace of God (1 Corinthians 15: 10).

Remember, the ability to study, perceive discern and teach the Word of God is a gift of God's grace. 1 Timothy 3: 2; 2 Timothy 2: 24 mentions “apt to teach” is one of God's requirements for the Pastor. “apt to teach” implies apt to learn; so a Steward must also be a diligent student of the Word of God.

Pastor as the Soldier (2: 3-4, 8-13)

Paul lived in a military state and was in prison guarded by praetorian (special forces) guards. Paul described in these verses the characteristics of a “good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

The Soldier endured hardships (Verse 3)

Ministry is not a soft job. The dedicated Christian minister is in a battle that requires spiritual endurance. (Ephesians 6: 10 onwards).

The Soldier avoids worldly entanglements (Verse 4)

He submits himself to his commanding officer, (that is Christ) the one who enlisted him. A fully supported pastor should not get involved in sidelines that divide his interest and weaken his ministry. It is sometimes necessary for a pastor to be employed because his church is not able to support them. This is a sacrifice on his part but an investment in ministry.

Our purpose is to please the Lord not ourselves.

The Soldier of Christ magnifies Jesus Christ (Verses 8- 9)

Jesus Christ is the captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2: 10). Remember Jesus Christ and never forget to honor, glorify, magnify and exalt Him alone. Jesus our Lord was mocked and mistreated and falsely accused, crucified died and rose again proving that suffering leads to glory, and that seeming defeat leads to victory. If our sinless Christ was treated thus, His soldiers will be treated the same way. The best way to magnify our Lord is through the ministry of the Word.

Paul was bound but God's word can never be bound (Psalm 147: 15; Acts 12: 24; Hebrews 4: 12)

The Soldier always thinks of the whole army (Verse 10)

A soldier who thinks only of himself is undependable and lacking in loyalty. A true soldier thinks of the welfare of the whole army. Paul not only suffered for the Lord's sake, but he also suffered for the sake of "the elect" in the church. There were yet many people and still are many who need to be reached with the Gospel and longed to reach them all.

The Soldier trusts his commanding officer (Verses 11-13)

This "faithful saying" is found in 1 Timothy 1: 15; 4: 9; and Titus 3: 8 - it is faith in Jesus Christ that gives us victory (1 John 5: 4). Jesus Christ has already conquered the enemies. And so we do not fear them. Through our identification with Christ in death burial and resurrection, we too have won the victory (Roman 6)

In 2 Timothy 2: 13 Paul says that even our own doubt and unbelief cannot ever change Him: "He abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

Our faith in feelings will change and fail. We place our faith in Christ. So, we don't need to try to be faithful but by placing all our faith in Christ and looking only to Him, that we win the victory.

Pastor as the Athlete (2:5)

Paul uses athletic illustrations in his Epistles - like running, exercising, wrestling, boxing. Paul had already encouraged Timothy to exercise like an athlete (1 Timothy 4: 7- 8) and admonished him here in 2 Timothy to observe the rules.

Just like an athlete who must observe the rules of the game to win the crown. The judges were careful to enforce the rules

Must be a citizen of his nation, well prepared based on specific standards and with a good reputation. If found defective, he was disqualified from competing even after winning if he was found to have broken some rule, he then lost his own crown. Paul kept the rules laid down in the Word of God, and one day he would get his reward from Jesus Christ.

Paul is saying to Timothy to obey the Word of God, no matter what people may say. Pastors are not running the race to please people or to get fame. Pastors do run the race to please Jesus Christ.

Pastor as the Farmer (2: 6- 7)

Paul compared the local church to a cultivated field in which all the believers worked in unity together (1 Corinthians 3: 5).

Each believer in a church has particular tasks to perform such as plowing, sowing, watering and harvesting - but it is God alone who gives increase.

A farmer has to have purpose and must work otherwise the field will be full of weeds. Farmer needs to be diligent. A farmer needs patience (James 5: 7).

Real pastoral ministry is very hard work and a Pastor along with church members ought to work the heavenly purpose with diligence and patience and above all love.

The farmer is entitled to his fair share of the harvest. "The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops" (2 Timothy 2:6). Faithful Pastors ought to be supported by his church. The same point is found in 1 Corinthians 9: 7 and in 1 Timothy 5: 18 "The laborer is worthy of his reward."

As God blesses a local church it then grows and progresses, but also the congregation ought to faithfully increase their support of their Pastors. "If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?" 1 Corinthians 9: 11. God will honor a church that honors His faithful servants.

The spiritual pastor who shares the word with the people are the first ones to benefit its blessings because the preacher and teacher pastor always get more out of the sermon or lesson than to the hearers because they put much more into it. They also get great joy out of seeing planted seeds bring forth fruit in the lives of others. Farming is very hard work, and it also has many disappointments, but the rewards are definitely worth it.

The Pastor as the Workman (2: 14- 18)

The word "study" (2 Timothy 2: 15) has nothing to do with more books and teachers. Pastor is God's Workman! It means "to be diligent, to be zealous". It is translated in similar manner in 2 Timothy 4: 9, 21 and also in Titus 3: 12. The emphasis is that the Workman needs to be very diligent in his laborers so that he would not be ashamed when his work is inspected and examined.

"Rightly dividing" means "cutting straight" - and can be applied to many different tasks: Plowing a straight furrow, cutting a straight board, sewing a straight seam.

The pastor is a God chosen Workman. The Word of God is a treasure that the steward must guard and invest. The Word of God is portrayed as the soldier's sword and the farmer's seed. But it's also the workman's tool for building, measuring, and repairing God's people. The pastor-teacher who uses the Word of God correctly and diligently and without any fear of man and without any motive to please the crowd or man, will have his church built in the way God

wants it to be built but there are cunning Pastors (Workman) who will handle God's word deceitfully in order to make it say what he wants it to say (2 Corinthians 4: 2) and when God tests our pastoral work in his local churches, and sad to say some of it will become ashes (1 Corinthians 10 onwards)!? It's because the pastor worked for selfish reasons. God is the judge of our work!

An approved Workman studies the Word of God with diligence (with the sole help of the Holy Spirit) and seeks (sincerely) to apply it to his own life.

An approved Workman will not waste his God given time with all kinds of "distractions" or even religious duties and will have little or no time for his sheep.

An approved Workman does not waste his precious time arguing about "words to no profit" (2 Timothy 2:14) because he knows that arguing only undermines God's work (1 Timothy 6: 4 and Titus 3: 9).

An approved Workman will reject/shun "godless chatter" (2 Timothy 2: 16 & 1 Timothy 6: 20), because it only leads to more ungodliness.

Remember, the word "approved" means "One who has been tested and found acceptable." It is God who tests you! Be careful. Each pastor is God's Workman and will be either approved or ashamed.

An approved Workman discerns that false doctrine is dangerous and he will oppose and reject it. Paul compares false doctrine to gangrene (1 Timothy 2: 17).

As gangrene spreads, infects and kills other tissues so also false doctrines spreads and infects the body of believers, the church. This infection must be exposed and removed. God's sound and healthy word alone can keep a church healthy and growing.

Paul named two false teachers and also expose their error. Hymenaeus (2 Timothy 2: 17 and 1 Timothy 1: 20) and Philetus, his associate. Both wander from the truth teaching that resurrection had already occurred for a believer and they denied bodily resurrection. They taught that salvation is resurrection in the spiritual sense and so believer must not expect a physical resurrection, and this is a very serious and dangerous error (1 Corinthians 15: 12 onwards). The physical/body resurrection is a foundational truth of the Gospel. The Word of God proves the bodily resurrection of Christ and then the body resurrection of all his blood bought children. These false teachers were able to "over through the faith of some" (2 Timothy 2: 18).

Each trial, hardship, testing will force us to diligently study the Word of God to find God's will. And as a pastor rightfully uses the word, he will overcome his trials and will be approved by God. Martin Luther said that prayer, study and suffering make a pastor.

God will not approve you unless you're tested. "Ashamed" means that such a Workman's work is below standard and cannot be accepted by God and will face loss of reward. In Paul's days, a builder was fined if he failed to follow specifications.

When the Lord judges his Workman's works, it will be revealed if the workmen had handled the Word of God honestly and carefully. Some who are now first will end up last!

The Pastor is the Vessel (2: 19-22)

Paul described a "great house" which is the church planted by God and is professing and the proclaiming church. God lays the foundation and God's seal is on it. Paul quoted Moses: "the Lord knows them who are His" (Numbers 16: 5). God chose us who trust him as His elect (2 Timothy 2: 10) and this refers to the Godward dimension of the Christian life

2 Timothy 2: 19 "let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity" and this refers to the manward dimension of the Christian life. This refers to Numbers 16: 26 where the Lord warned the people to go away from the tents of Korah and the rebels. Similarly, those who are the elect of God prove it by living godly lives. We are chosen in Christ "that we should be holy and without blame" (Ephesians 1: 4)

This great house has a solid foundation that is sealed but, it also has vessels for the use of household functions. Paul divides the vessels into two categories: those of honor (gold and silver) and those of dishonor (wood and clay).

Paul here is clearly distinguishing between true and false teachers of the word (2 Timothy 2: 16). A faithful pastor is like a gold and silver vessel that brings honor to Jesus Christ. God gives glorious beauty to his servants who faithfully handle the Word of God. False teachers are not valuable like wood and clay that will not withstand fire. They are vessels to dishonor, no matter how popular they may be today.

"Timothy" comes from two Greek words

Timotheus - Greek Time ("honor") + Theos "God"

"God's Honor" or "honoring God". Paul was encouraging Timothy to live up to his name.

The important point is that the honorable vessels should not be contaminated by the dishonorable ones.

The word "these" (1 Timothy 2: 21) refers to the vessels of dishonor (2 Timothy 2: 20). Paul was admonishing Timothy to separate himself from false teachers. If he did, then God would honor him, set him apart, and equip him for his service.

2 Timothy 2: 21 "useful to the master" what a great honor!

A useful vessel must remain holy, and this means he must be separated from all that would defile him, including the popular things of the world and even the so called "religious world".

This includes sins of the flesh as well (2 Timothy 2: 22). True Christian separation is well-balanced - we follow righteousness but flee sin. We fellowship "with them who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2: 22). This is the purpose of ministry of the word (1 Timothy 1: 5). It's sad when true believers are isolated because of a false view of separation.

God will only use vessels that are empty, clean and available. Then He will equip us, fill us and use us all for His glory. Pastors could be defiled by disobedience and pride and love of money and God cannot use those Pastors but if they repent of their sins then God will purge through discipline and then will use them.

In the "great house" of a professing church, there are true and false believers. All Pastors must use spiritual discernment and become vessels sanctified to God's honor and be always available.

The Pastor as the Servant (2: 23- 26)

"Servant" is the Greek word "doulos" which means a slave (2 Timothy 2: 24).

Paul gladly called himself "as slave of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1: 1; Philippians 1:1)

The will of the slave was completely committed and submitted to the will of the master that he stayed under the command of his master. We were all the slaves of sin but now Jesus came and set us free by paying the ransom with His own precious blood and made us His own children - so we are slaves of a loving God (Roman 6: 16 onwards). Exodus 21: 5 the servant said "I love my master... I will not go out free."

It's not easy for a God's slave in teaching the Word. Satan opposes him and wages war on him and sets up trap to his listeners (2 Timothy 2: 26). Some church members are difficult to teach and happy to listen and participate in "foolish and stupid arguments." (Timothy 2: 23) and display no desire to feed on the Word of God. Once the pastor ignores them, then Satan would get them. Paul admonished Timothy those arguments create strife, but not to ignore these people. He must not argue or fight. He must be patient and gentle, teaching the Word of God in meekness. Pastors must not only expose the errors but also teach truth from God's word and help them to get established in faith.

Satan is a liar (John 8: 44) and he captures people by his lying promises as he did Eve (Genesis 3; 2 Corinthians 11: 3).

Pastors are to win souls and not arguments. Pastors must help the deceived persons brought to repentance ("I was wrong, I have repented, and I have decided to follow Jesus") and help them with truth.

The word "recover" (2 Timothy 2: 26) pictures a man coming out of a drunken stupor. Satan causes that spiritual stupor, and the pastor must sober them up with God's word, literally rescuing them from Satan. They are delivered by God's Word of truth, love and light and hope, out of the snare of the devil, who took them captive, to do now God's will.

These seven aspects of the ministry of a pastor are important and demanding. It demands discipline and hard work and never for a loafer who leaves his sheep and goes away every now and then, seeking his own selfish agendas. The ministry is no place for a shirker because there are enemies to fight and tasks to be completed. The sheep need to be guarded and only diligent Pastors can do this. Are you a absent pastor leaving the vulnerable sheep for the attacks of the enemy? It's a privilege and blessing for church members to pray for their Pastors and especially encourage them in the work of the Lord. The church deacons should faithfully carry out their spiritual and other church related responsibilities, so that Pastors can devote themselves to their ministry (Acts 6). Churches should provide adequate financial support for Pastors so that we can fully devote ourselves to God's work. Pastors and members must labor together in the work of the Lord.

Chapter 3

"My son, beware and hold firmly to God's word" - An appeal for spiritual diligence. (Matthew 5:18)

Paul wanted Timothy to respond in the perilous last days with godly knowledge and mature spiritual responsibility. "These last days" began with the ministry of our Lord Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-2) and will continue till He returns.

They're called "last days" because in them God is completing His purposes for His people. He will come as He promised in His time. Within this period of "last days" there will be "times" (seasons) of diverse kinds but as the "times" draw to a close, they will become perilous.

Perilous means "dangerous, hard to deal with, savage." This suggests that the violence of the last times will be energized by demons (1 Timothy 4: 1)

Paul felt the characteristics getting started during his time and they've increased in intensity. It appears that evil has gone deeper and has gained greater intensity, and that is being accepted and promoted by society in bolder and shameless ways. Societies all over the world seem to be in rebellion against God. We are indeed in "terrible times" (2 Timothy 3: 1).

Paul gave Timothy 3 clear instructions to obey and follow in order for his ministry to be effective during perilous times.

1. Turn away from the false (3: 1)
2. To follow those who are true (3: 10- 12)
3. Continue (stay) in God's word (3: 13-17)

1. Turn away from the false (3:1)

A faithful believer should have nothing to do with the false people. "from such turn away" (3:5b). They operate "under the guise of religion" "having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof" (2 Timothy 3: 5). They are religious (pious) but deep down they are rebellious. Paul gave three facts about them.

i. Their character traits (Verses 2- 5)

Paul lists at least 18 different traits of these people. On the top of the list is: "lovers of their own selves", "lovers of money" (covetous), "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God". The heart is deceitful (Jeremiah 17: 9) above all things and beyond cure..."

God commands us to love Him supremely, and our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22: 34-40). Money lovers are "mammon worshippers". Jesus said "you cannot serve God and mammon."

You should choose to worship only the living God, love and serve the people and use material things. Be aware of loving and worshipping things and using people and this happens when we choose to worship God and begin to worship ourselves. This is the formula for a miserable life, yet it's adopted by many people, sad to say, many Pastors. The cravings for money and things are clear evidence that people's hearts have turned away from God.

If someone loves and worships himself, the result will be pride. (Genesis 3: 5) "You shall be as gods." man became his own God! The creature is now the creator. "Boasters , proud (arrogant), blasphemous (given to contemptuous and bitter words)" 2 Timothy 3: 2.

"Disobedient to parents" comes down from family. Children are "unthankful" and do not stay grateful to what their parents have done for them. They are "unholy" in their attitude towards their parents. "Without natural affection" means lack of "family love" as the family goes, so goes the nation. In place of the natural love that God has put into men and women and families, today we have a lot of unnatural love that God condemned (Romans 1: 18-27; 1 Corinthians 6: 9- 10). It is chaos and confusion, and God will judge it (Romans 1: 28- 32).

The traits of these perilous times may be seen in society, business, educational institutions and sad to say in several churches will compromise their conscience and join the world in one form or other. "Truth Breakers" (2 Timothy 3: 3) are people who will not try to agree and who are unyielding and irreconcilable and must have their own way. In order to defend their prejudiced position, they become "slandorous" (false accusers) and tear down/ruin the reputation of others. Unfortunately, Christian leaders accuse one another from the pulpit, in the media and even in their books.

"Incontinent means "without self-control". They do whatever they please. Some of their children are hooked on drugs, alcohol or other sexually transmitted diseases. This lack of self-control manifests itself in several ways. "fears" means "untamed, brutal" when they cannot have their way, they become much like savage beasts. They despise what's good and honor what's bad. In society today the standards of right and wrong have been twisted and mangled and if not destroyed.

Isaiah 5: 20 "Woe to them that call evil good and good evil."

"Traitors" (2 Timothy 3: 4) are people who betray others and cannot be trusted. They lie and break their promises whenever it's all to serve their selfish life.

"Heady" means "reckless, rash, acting without careful thought." The Word of God encourages honest adventure but opposes foolish ventures.

"High minded" describes a person who is "puffed up" with his own importance- "conceited."

"Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." the choices between being loving pleasure and loving God. Remember, if we live for God, we enjoy the greatest pleasures (Psalm 16: 11). If we love God, we will also enjoy fullness of life here and forever, but pleasures of sin can only last

for a brief time (Hebrews 11: 25) but it brings sorrow afterwards. We live in a pleasure-loving crazy world and these pleasures are shallow entertainments and ways of escape. They do not enrich one's life.

Paul stated clearly that these people would consider themselves “religious!” “Having a form of godliness (2 Timothy 3: 5) but deny the power of God”. All outward religious appearances have nothing to do with true Christian faith since they've experienced the power of God in their lives but shallowness and emptiness inside.

Their converts (Verses 6- 7)

in Paul's days, women had low status in society and were susceptible to this kind of experience that Paul described “silly (weak willed women)”. All women are not like this and that men are equally vulnerable to the wiles of false teachers.

So, they are burdened with guilt and are looking for some escape from bondage & fear, unable to control their various desires (“diverse lusts”); Always different approaches in search of truth and stay dissatisfied. They fall prey to cultists and religious racketeers. They fall into the hands of false teachers who give them false promises and quick solutions to their problems. They get these as their converts and grab their loyalty, money and service. And their “converts” are worse off than they were before and will have their problems but live in a stupor of thinking that all is well. They will do all these mischiefs in the name of religion. Paul told Timothy, “From such turn away”

Their religious leaders (Verses 8- 9)

Exodus 7-9 covers the contest between Moses and the Egyptian magicians. Tradition says that these magicians were Jannes and Jambres, two men mentioned by Paul (2 Timothy 3: 8). These magicians opposed Moses by imitating what he did. E.g., Rods turned into serpents, but Moses' serpents ate their serpents. They imitated several more but could not go on duplicating beyond the miracle of the lice (Exodus 8: 16- 19). Satan is a powerful and deceptive imitator; Satan is a counterfeit. In the last days, some religious leaders will have counterfeit faith. Who will promote a lie and resist the truth of God's Word. They deny the authenticity of the Bible and substitute human wisdom and philosophy. They will deny the reality of sin and people's need for salvation.

“Reprobate” is the word Paul used to describe them. This means “tested and found counterfeit.”

God exposed Jannes and Jambres and judged them. This will also happen to the leaders of false religions in last days when God will expose and judge them.

2. Follow those who are true (3: 10- 12).

Paul reminded Timothy that Paul had been a faithful servant of God. It's very important in these perilous days that we follow the right spiritual leaders.

And what are the marks of these true leaders.

Their lives are open for all to see (Verse 10a)

Paul had nothing to hide John 18: 20 - "in secret have I said nothing"

They teach true doctrine (Verse 10 b)

"My doctrine" means Paul's faith, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have a great deal of false Christianity on TV and radio and Internet. This "pseudo-Christianity" has a mixture of success motivation, personality and psychology with a little bit of Bible thrown into make it look like look religious. Be aware of such deceitful practitioners.

They practice what they preach (Verse 10c)

Paul's manner of life reflected his messages. He gave to others far more than he received from them. He stood up for the truth even when it meant losing friends and in the end, losing his life. Paul was a servant, like his Master Jesus.

Their purpose is to glorify God (Verse 10d)

Paul's singular purpose in ministry was to glorify God. He longed to do God's will and finished the work God gave him to do (Acts 20: 24; Philippians 1: 21). He was a man of "faith", of "longsuffering" and of "love" who willingly gave himself to serve others.

"Patience" means "endurance, ability to stick with it when the going gets tough".

They are willing to suffer (Verses 11-12)

Paul suffered for others. He was persecuted at several places - stands as proof that he was living a godly life. He had a prison record; He had a physical affliction; He stirred up problems in just about every place he visited. He did not cater to the rich and stayed poor. God used him mightily and we are all blessed because Paul remained steadfastly faithful.

3. Continue in God's Word (3: 13- 17)

The surest way to defeat Satan's lies is with God's truth. Deceivers, liars and evil men are energized by Satan and in these last days there will be more deception and imitation, and the best way to discern between truth and falsehood is to know the Word of God.

Timothy had been taught the Word of God from the time he was a child. Adults make more decisions and face more temptations than children, so they need the Word of God.

Timothy's mother and grandmother had faithfully taught him the scriptures. Timothy was to continue in what he had been taught. We never ever outgrow the Word of God. It's important to teach children the scriptures when they are still infants. It's very important for parents to teach their children the Bible. Here Paul makes some statements about the Bible.

They are the holy scriptures (verse 15a)

The word for “holy” means “consecrated for sacred use.” We must treat the Bible as the special book with respect. Paul gives the right attitude towards the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2: 13)

The scriptures lead us to salvation (Verse 15b)

We are saved by trusting and believing in the Lord Jesus who is revealed in the Bible. Satan knows the Bible and he is not saved. Timothy was raised on the holy scriptures in a godly home and yet he was not saved until Paul led him to Christ for salvation. The Bible reveals our need for salvation; It reveals who we are in God's sight; It says that all sinners stand condemned now (John 3: 18- 21) and needs a savior now. It makes clear that sinners cannot save themselves. The Bible reveals God's loving plan of salvation. Christ died for us since while we were sinners. By trusting in Jesus, we are saved (John 3: 16- 18) and the Bible gives us the assurance of our salvation (1 John 5: 9- 13). The Bible becomes our living water and living bread - our spiritual milk and meat to nourish us so that we might grow in grace and serve Christ. It's our sword for fighting Satan and our shield of protection from temptations.

The scriptures are true and dependable (Verse 16a)

“All scripture is God breathed”. Holy Spirit inspired and Holy Spirit author God has given us a trustworthy and dependable book (Deuteronomy 32: 4); Jesus our Lord is “the truth” (John 14: 6); And “Holy Spirit is truth” (1 John 5:6). Our Lord said of the scriptures, “Your word is truth” (John 17: 17). The Holy Spirit used men of God to write the Word of God (2 Peter 1: 20-21). God in His providence prepared the writers for the task of writing the scriptures. God prepared men, guided history, He worked through the Spirit - all these brought about the miracle of the scriptures. Biblical inspiration is the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the writers of the Bible, that guaranteed that what they wrote was accurate and trustworthy through “revelation”. God communicated the truth to man and through “inspiration” man could record God's communication that's entirely dependable.

Whatever the Bible says on any subject is absolutely true. The record of the Bible is true.

The scriptures are profitable (Verse 16b)

They are profitable for doctrine (that which is right), for reproof (that which is not right) for correction (how to get right), for instruction in righteousness (how to stay right). When a believer studies the Bible and applies what he learns will grow and mature and be fruitful.

The scriptures equip us for service (Verse 17)

Any Christian believer can become a person “of God” by studying the Word of God, obeying it and letting it control his life.

All men and women of God stated in the Bible devoted themselves through the Word of God.

“Perfect” and “Furnished”.

“Perfect” means complete, in fit shape, in fit condition - does not suggest sinless perfection but implies being fitted for use.

“Furnished” has a similar meaning: “equipped for service.” The Word of God furnishes and equips a believer to serve God and a life that pleases God to do the work that God wants him to do. The ultimate purpose of the Word of God is the equipping of the believers to do the work of God. We may separate ourselves from that which is false and devote ourselves to that which is true and then God can equip us for ministry in these perilous days and we will have the joy of leading others to God's Word of truth.

Chapter 4

My son, preach, practice and finish well (Matthew 24: 13) - An appeal for personal preparedness (4:1-22)

In this 4th chapter, we have the apostle Paul's precious and very touching last word to Timothy and to the church. God helped Paul not to have regrets at the end of his life. God constantly demonstrated His loving presence and encouragement to Paul. Paul forgives those who made his work for the Lord difficult (2 Timothy 4: 16). Paul mentions at least 17 people with love and gratitude. And thereby proving that he was a mighty soul winner and friend maker. Paul thought of others even though he was in a prison dungeon and days numbered. Paul was a mighty prayer warrior and a man filled with the Holy Spirit. What a life of total commitment to Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul gave three final admonitions with a reason to Timothy.

1. Preach the Word of God (4:1-4)
2. Fulfill your God given ministry (4: 5- 8)
3. Be diligent and stay faithful (4: 9-22)

1. Preach the Word of God (Verses 4:1- 4)

"I charge you" means "I solemnly witness". Paul wanted Timothy to sense the seriousness of the moment and understand the importance of the moment. Paul was facing death but more importantly Paul and Timothy would be judged by Jesus Christ on that day!

Never forget that you will one day face God and your work will be judged.

This should encourage us all to do our work for the Lord diligently and faithfully. Our final Judge is God and so we do not need to fear man. Thus, we can face hardships and difficulties. We are serving not ourselves, but we serve God!

"Preach the Word" is the main responsibility for Timothy and to us all. Preach like a herald as the ambassador of Christ. Preach in the power of the Holy Spirit. Preach with clarity and with discernment, wisdom and perception granted by the Holy Spirit. Preach like the proclaimer of the Gospel of Christ who sent you. Preach with love and strong conviction.

Timothy was to herald God's word with the authority of heaven behind him. The Word of God is needed for the saints and sinners. Do not substitute anything for God's Word and remember nothing can substitute for God's Word. It transforms lives of hearers and delivers. Timothy must be alert and diligent to use every opportunity to preach the Word, even if the situation is favorable or unfavorable. Never give excuses for not preaching the Word. Paul made use of every opportunity to preach and teach boldly the Word of God.

"He who observes the windmill will not sow; And he who regards the clouds will not reap" (Ecclesiastes 11: 4). Never use the Word of God for selfish money-making schemes.

Preaching means: conviction, warning and appeal- “reprove, rebuke, exhort”- comfort and console the afflicted ones and afflict the comfortable ones who have forgotten Christ! Biblical preaching is balanced and always calls for a clear verdict at the end: turn to Christ whole heartedly. Preaching has nothing to do with entertainment and popularity seeking. God's messenger must be patient as he preaches the Word, he will not always see immediate results. He must preach the doctrines of the Bible with explanations and application of the biblical doctrines.

Paul gave Timothy the responsibility - “preach the word” (2 Timothy 4: 2) and Paul also gave the reason for it (2 Timothy 4: 3). The time would come when most people would not want the “healthy doctrine” found only in the Word of God.

“Itching ears” means to have carnal desires for religious novelties that has no relevance to God's Word. People would want preachers to satisfy their cravings for things that disagree with God's Word of truth. Congregation size is not always a sign that the preacher is preaching the truth. In fact, it may be evidence that he's tickling peoples “itching ears” and giving them what they want to hear instead of what they need to hear.

Rejection of truth leads to listening to fables and myths that are incapable of conviction of sin and repentance. The people with “itching ears” become comfortable and professing Christians and will move far away from the biblical doctrines. They become prey to humanism and to all kinds of cults since they do not have solid biblical foundation found only in the Word of God. It is sad to say that a host of cultists were formerly members of churches.

“Preach the word ... they will not endure sound doctrine ... they shall turn away their ears from the truth” (2 Timothy 4: 2). Paul emphasized preaching and teaching sound doctrine.

2. Fulfill your God given ministry (4:5-8)

Fulfill all that God has appointed you to do. Timothy's ministry will not be exactly like Paul's but it will be very important to the spreading of the Gospel and the cause of Christ. All God called and God directed ministries are important be it small, medium or big in congregational sizes. Paul named some co-laborers who did ministry that was important to God.

Faithfulness is of utmost importance than the sizes of the congregations. God sees the heart. That's why Paul wanted Timothy to be “sober in all things” (2 Timothy 4: 5) which means to conduct his ministry with joy and seriousness of purpose.

Timothy should know he was both a preacher and a soldier of Christ, who would need to “endure afflictions” (2 Timothy 4: 5). Timothy had seen Paul go through tremendous sufferings on several occasions (2 Corinthians 6: 10; 2 Timothy 3: 12). Most of Paul's sufferings and persecutions came from the religious leaders and crowd of his day who did not want to hear the truth of God's Word. These are the same kind of people who crucified Christ.

“Do the work of an evangelist” (2 Timothy 4: 5)

An evangelist is a soul winner at heart. He should keep in his preaching the lost souls in mind and also feed the saints who are growing in the grace of Christ. This burden for the lost souls should be always at his heart (Acts 20: 17- 21). Proclaim the saving message.

Paul gave the reason for Timothy’s responsibility (2 Timothy 4: 6- 8). Paul was about to be called home by God and Timothy needs to take his place.

Paul looked around (verse 6) - Paul knew his time was very short on earth and his end was near.

Paul was not nervous about his death. The two words: “offered” and “departure” (2 Timothy 4:6) remind us of strong faith and deep confidence.

“Offered” means “poured out on the altar as a drink offering” (Philippians 2:7- 8) Paul was offering his life as a sacrifice to Jesus Christ. Paul was a living sacrifice and served Jesus sincerely and wholeheartedly. He is completing his sacrifice by laying down his life for the Lord.

“Departure” means “to hoist anchor and set sail”; “to set sail”; “to takedown a tent” (2 Corinthians 5: 1- 8); “to loose a prisoner”; “the unyoking of an ox”. Paul had been in hard service for many many years and now his beloved Master would unyoke him and have him in God's glorious presence in heaven - “well done my faithful servant enter into my rest.”

Paul looked back (verse 7) here Paul summed up his entire life and ministry.

Like a determined wrestler or boxer, he had fought a good fight, and like a good runner, he had finished his lifelong race of service triumphantly. Paul had kept the rules and looked for his reward (prize) (Acts 20: 24; Philippians 3: 13- 14). And like a faithful Steward he had guarded his master’s entrusted deposit called faith: (“I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4: 7).

Paul looked back and had no regrets. Paul was not always popular but he remained faithful and that's what really counts matters in God's sight.

Paul looked ahead (Verse 8) The word “crown” in Greek is “stephanos”- the victor’s crown.

A Greek or Roman athlete who was a winner was rewarded by a laurel wreath of olive leaves or a Garland of oak leaves. Paul was very confident that the Lord would give him a crown of righteousness that would never fade away like leaves.

Our Lord Jesus is the “righteous judge” who judges in His righteousness. Since Paul was ready to face the final and eternal judge of all he was unafraid of Roman judges and judgment who were not righteous.

The crown of righteousness is God's reward for all his faithful and righteous servants who lived that life. Since Paul loved Christ’s appearing and eagerly looked for it, he lived righteously and served faithfully.

We are not called to be apostles, yet we can win the same crown that Paul won. We will be crowned if we live in love, faith and obedience to His will and purpose and do the work He has called us to do.

3. Be diligent and stay faithful till the end (4:9-22)

Verse 9 “hurry and get/come soon here”. Tychicus would take Timothy's place in Ephesus (2 Timothy 4: 12). On his way Timothy could stop in Troas and get the cloak, books, and parchments (2 Timothy 4: 13). Paul probably left them there. It's very heart touching to see Paul wanting to see his dear “son in the faith” at his side in his last days. Paul was a great scholar and kept his mind well informed and he felt cold and needed his cloak. Just imagine his condition in the prison.

Paul wanted Timothy to “come before winter” (2 Timothy 4: 21) because ships don't sail during winter as it would be dangerous. Paul did not want to miss the opportunity to meet him.

Paul wanted Timothy to remain faithful because some in Paul's circle were not faithful and he could not depend on them. Demas was listed by Paul along with Mark and Luke as one of his “fellow laborers” (Philemon 24); Then we see Paul calling Demas (Colossians 4: 14) with no commendation and then finally in 2 Timothy 4: 10 Paul mentions that Demas has forsaken him. Paul said Demas: “loved this present world” although he had tasted the powers of the world to come but he preferred “this present evil world”. Demas loved the lucre of this world. Perhaps it was “the love of money” that entices Demas back into the world.

Paul's heart must have been broken to see Demas fail so shamefully, yet it can happen to any Christian believer and pastor beware of doing ministry in the love of money. Mammon will drag you out from God's presence to worship money and you may not even know it, but others will notice it.

Paul had his next hearing and only Luke was with him. The believers in Rome & Ephesus who could have stood and supported and encouraged Paul had failed (2 Timothy 4: 16) but Paul knew that Timothy would not fail him. And he knew his Lord had never ever failed him. (2 Timothy 4: 17). The Lord had stayed with Paul all along and kept His promises with Paul and He is and will do so with you and all His faithful servants.

When Paul was discouraged at: Corinth, the Lord came & encouraged him (Acts 18: 9- 11) Jerusalem where Paul was arrested, the Lord visited Paul and encouraged him (Acts 23: 11)

During the horrible storm on the sea Paul was on board the ship, the Lord again gave him strength and courage (Acts 27: 22 onwards). Now in the horrible Roman prison, Paul again experienced the encouraging and strengthening presence of the Lord. Remember His promise: “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13: 5).

Paul was concerned for preaching and sharing the Word of God with the gentiles and was not concerned for his safety.

What a blessed man of God was the apostle, Paul. He prays for his friends who had forsaken him, so that God will forgive them. His enemies beat and scourge and lock him up in a prison and even there he proclaims the Gospel of Christ. He's beaten and pushed out from city to city, but he keeps on sharing the love of God in Christ Jesus and the forgiveness He offers in Christ. Yes, there's a great difference you make when the Holy Spirit controls your life.

2 Timothy 4: 17- “I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” The lion is a symbol of Satan (1 Peter 5: 8) as serpent in a symbol of Satan. Perhaps Paul was referring to some deceitful and treacherous schemes of the devil to defeat, discourage and stop the work of the Gospel (Psalm 22: 21.)

For a Christian, there are things even more dangerous than physical sufferings, mental and emotional agonies and death- sin does devastation. In 2 Timothy 4:18 Paul makes this point. He was confident that the Lord would deliver him from “every evil work” and take him to the heavenly Kingdom of God's own presence. Paul feared that he might deny His Lord or do something else that would disgrace God's name, than he feared death. He did not at all fear death. Paul realized that the time had come for his permanent departure (2 Timothy 4: 6). He just wanted to end his race at the feet of Jesus the risen savior.

Paul remembers a large number of friends who were fellow laborers in God's vineyard. He names at least 100 different men and women named in the book of acts and Paul's Epistles. Paul was talented in enlisting others to help get the job done, because he knew the greatness of God.

Luke (1 Timothy 4: 11) was the “beloved physician” who traveled with Paul (Colossians 4: 14). Is the author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

Paul probably dictated this letter (to Timothy) to Luke.

Crescens (2 Timothy 4: 10) was sent by Paul to Galatia. Another faithful laborer who assisted Paul in an hour of great need.

Titus (1 Timothy 4: 10) was Paul's close associate along with Timothy, a trusted “troubleshooter.” Paul had left Titus in Crete to straighten out the problems in the church there (Titus 1: 5). This choice servant of God had met Paul at Nicopolis during that period between Paul's arrests (Titus 3: 12). Paul had summoned him to Rome and sent him to Dalmatia.

Mark (2 Timothy 4: 11)

Was a cousin of Barnabas, Paul's first partner in missionary service (Acts 13: 3). He failed on the first missionary journey (Acts 13: 13). Paul refused to take him on his second missionary trip and lead to a difference between Paul and Barnabas. (Acts 15: 36-41). Now Paul accepted Mark as a valuable worker; Paul wanted Mark with him in Rome.

Tychius (2 Timothy 4: 12)

Was a believer from the province of Asia (Acts 20: 4) who willingly accompanied Paul and probably ministered as a personal servant to the apostle. He was with Paul during his first imprisonment (Ephesians 6: 21- 22; Colossians 4: 7- 8). Paul send Tychius to Crete to relieve Titus (Titus 3: 12). Now he was sending him to Ephesus to relieve Timothy. What a real blessing it is to have people who can replace others.

Carpus (2 Timothy 4: 13)

Lived in Troas and gave Paul hospitality. Carpus was a faithful brother who guarded Paul's cloak and books when Paul left him in a hurry. Any little help given to a servant of God is ministry done to the Lord.

Alexander the Coppersmith (2 Timothy 4: 14) It is possible that this heretic went to Rome to make things difficult for Paul. Satan has workers in plenty. "The Lord reward him according to his works" (1 Timothy 1: 14) are not to be concluded as revengeful prayer. It just means, the Lord will reward him according to his works.

Prisca (or Priscilla) and Aquila (2 Timothy 4: 19)

Were husband and wife team that assisted Paul in many ways (Acts 18: 1- 3; 24-28; Romans 16: 3- 4; 1 Corinthians 16: 19). Now they were in Ephesus helping Timothy with his ministry.

Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 4: 19) and his household are mentioned in 2 Timothy 1

Erastus (2 Timothy 4: 20) might be the treasurer of Corinth (Romans 16: 23); And he might be the same man who ministered with Timothy in Macedonia (Acts 19: 22).

Trophimus (2 Timothy 4: 20) was from Ephesus and a friend of Tychius (Acts 20: 4) and the man whose presence with Paul helped to incite that riot in Jerusalem (Acts 21: 28-29). He had been serving at Miletus and now he was ill. God knows all these people mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:21.

"Grace be with you" (2 Timothy 4: 22) was Paul's personal farewell, used at the end of his epistles as proof of authenticity so that the letter was not a forgery.

The Word of God does not record the final days of Paul. Tradition tells us that he was found guilty and sentenced to die and probably taken outside the city and beheaded.

Timothy and the other devoted believers carried on the work of the Lord. Let us be faithful to the end like the apostle Paul. So that the future generations may hear the Gospel and have the opportunity to be saved and redeemed and restored! Amen.