

Series Theme: Remaining Faithful to Christ in a very unaccepting world.

Sermon Title: Overview of 2 Timothy

When the pressure is on the temptation is to “chuck” the plan and “do what makes sense.” Take a football team as an example. The most successful teams are the teams that stay faithful to the game plan even when it seems to not be working. They may lose a game here and there, but that does not mean the scheme and plan is failed.

To all outward appearances things are not going well for Paul and the Church in the Roman Empire, and things are not going well for Timothy and the Church in Ephesus.

I) **History around the time of the writing of 2 Timothy.**

- A) AD 67. Nero’s lunacy (in AD 64) has stirred up heavy persecution against Christians throughout Roman Empire. Nero started “the fire” in Rome and blamed Christians. The hatred spread like wildfire!
- B) Paul is imprisoned for the second time in Rome, this time in chains. The church is suffering greatly.
 - 1) Timothy is still pastoring the Church in Ephesus. Apparently, he and the elders are in danger of losing ground to the multiple pressures eroding their faithfulness to sound teaching and to one another.
- C) The Challenges causing issues in the Church: Timothy must remain steadfast even in the tumult!
 - 1) False teaching: we saw this in 1 Timothy, but it is intensifying, corrupting the faith and doctrine of church members.
 - 2) Cultural pressures: Ephesus is a growing city heavily influenced by many religions and their practices that are completely at odds with the sound teachings of Christ Jesus and threatening doctrinal purity.
 - (a) Religious diversity and inclusion created a harsh and hostile environment for Christians who could not yield to diversity nor inclusion and remain **exclusively faithful** to Christ alone!
 - (b) The idol making industry was big. Many idol makers lost business. **See Acts 19:18-19, 23-27**
 - (c) Socially Christians could no longer participate in the immoral practices of the day. Isolated.
 - (d) Doctrinally the false teachers were trying to homogenize pagan and Christian beliefs. This was an attractive compromise for many Christians in the church. But the Church must resist!
- D) The need for Paul’s encouragement of Timothy. (Timothy may feel overwhelmed by the resistance...)
 - 1) Paul encourages Timothy to stand firm in the faith and sound doctrine...even if he has to “go it alone.”
 - (a) Paul shares with Timothy his own personal commitment to faithfulness despite painful suffering.
 - 2) This encouragement for Timothy should encourage us that **God knows** our circumstances and the current pressures and stresses that tempt us to compromise, etc. We can learn how to better stand firm, remaining faithful to Christ in a very unaccepting world.

II) **Main Theme of 2 Timothy:**

- A) Remaining faithful, strong and courageous through hardship, persecution and challenges from a very unaccepting world.
 - 1) Condensed version: Remaining faithful to Christ in a very unaccepting world.
- B) The Challenges facing Timothy and the church in Ephesus
 - 1) The challenge to persevere in *The Faith*.
 - (a) Paul calls Timothy to endure hardships without being timid or fearful.
 - 2) The challenge to remain faithful to sound doctrine.
 - (a) Timothy must guard the doctrine of the exclusivity of the gospel w/o compromise. **(1:13)**
 - 3) The challenge to remain faithful under the pain of suffering. Paul used his own example. **(2:3)**
 - 4) The challenge to remain faithful to Scripture. It is tempting to add to or take away. **(3:15-17)**
 - 5) The challenge to remain faithful to sound doctrine, and a refusal to integrate false teaching. **(4:3)**

III) **The Imperatives of 2 Timothy:** A biblical imperative is a command intended to arouse a desire to act faithfully.

- A) A list: **1)** stir up/ fan into flame... (1:6); **2)** do not be ashamed...(1:8); **3)** hold fast/ keep...(1:13); **4)** share/ join in the suffering...(2:3); **5)** Be diligent/ do your best/ put in effort...(2:15); **6)** Flee...(2:22); **7)** Avoid/ turn from...(2:23); **8)** Preach the word...(4:2); **9)** endure hardship (4:5a); **10)** work... (4:5b); **11)** carry out...(4:15c)

IV) **Summary:** Remain faithful to Christ in a very unaccepting world. Find your strength and courage in the Lord!