

2 Timothy: A vital word for 21st-century ministries

Paul's encouragement to Timothy (and us)

2 Timothy 1:12b-14 But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³ Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

The purpose of 2 Timothy: An encouragement to persevere in gospel ministry in the midst of opposition

A probable timeline:

- c. 46-48 Paul visits Lystra, Paul persecuted severely, Timothy and his Jewish mother Eunice believe in Christ (Acts 14:8-20). Timothy emerges as notable among disciples in Lystra (cf. Acts 16:1-3).
- c. 48-51 Paul visits Lystra; chooses Timothy as mission companion (Acts 16:1-3)
- c. 53-56 Paul's sustained ministry in Ephesus influencing whole province of Asia (Acts 19:1-20). Timothy was probably with him at this point (cf. Acts 19:22)
- c. 57 Paul's meeting with the Ephesian Elders at Miletus (Acts 20:17-38). Speaking of holding on to the Lord's words in the midst of suffering
- c. 57-59 Paul's Caesarean imprisonment
- c. 60-62 Paul's Roman imprisonment (Acts 27:16ff.). Including writing letter to Ephesians (cf. Eph 3:1, 13; 4:1; 6:20).



Early church testimony that he was released from Rome

c. 62-64 Paul's further ministry

c. 64-65 Paul's further imprisonment and death in Rome

Writing 2 Timothy shortly before his death

A very personal letter yet written for the whole church.

2 Timothy 4:8

Occasion

2 Timothy 4:6

Purpose of the letter

Our purpose for our own hearers?

2 Timothy 3:12

Key themes in 2 Timothy

Christology: Emphasis on the work of Christ = death and resurrection (together)

2 Timothy 1:10

Soteriology and Christian life: emphasis on hope and perseverance; looking to the future

2 Timothy 2:11-13

2 Timothy 3:1

2 Timothy 2:16-19

Preaching of the gospel

2 Timothy 2:8-10

The cost of discipleship



2026 Preaching
Conference

The value of gospel heritage

2 Timothy 1:5

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Suggestions for preaching each section of 2 Timothy

Two broad sections:

Core truths to remember in the midst of opposition (1:1–2:13);

Practical ways to deal with opposition (2:14–4:22);

1:1–7

Be thankful for all that God has given us: Including the people he has provided in our lives

1:8–18

When we face hardship and opposition, come back to Jesus Christ's death and resurrection and God's trustworthiness as a reason not to be ashamed of living and speaking God's words even when they seem weak and shameful

2:1–13

When we hear about or face hardship and opposition, the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ and its certainty gives us reasons and strength to be devoted to him



2:14–26

When we hear clever words and controversies, especially those that promise us our best life now, beware the danger of being torn away from living for God. Keep hoping for the future.

3:1–9

Know it means to live in “the last days”. We are not expecting glory yet, but opposition. Don’t get caught up in simply looking for signs of the last days.

3:10–17

When we face hardship, opposition and struggle, we have one core resource to live for the Lord, in two parts: The Scriptures (OT writings and NT apostolic witness). Use the Scriptures for this purpose!

4:1–8

An exhortation to preach the true word even in opposition. Join in ministry partnership together.

4:9–22

When people let us down—and they will—remember that Lord is our true hope in life and gospel ministry



Some key principles

Constantly connect the doctrinal truths to the situations of hardship and suffering

2 Timothy 1:8-12

Draw your hearers in to value, love, support and share in gospel ministry even in opposition

2 Timothy 1:8

2 Timothy 2:3-4

Some particular challenges

Not quarrelling but contending for the truth

2 Timothy 2:14-15

2 Timothy 2:23-26

2 Timothy 3:16

Church discipline versus patience

2 Timothy 3:1-5

2 Timothy 3:6-9

Titus 3:9-11

Contextual preaching versus compromising truth

2 Timothy 4:1-4

Recommended readings: See talk on 1 Timothy