

A LETTER FROM DEATH ROW

A pastor went to the intensive care unit at the local hospital to visit a church member who was on life support. The pastor stood by the man's bed, and spoke to him for several minutes. But after just a few seconds the patient grew disturbed and agitated. He reached for his pad, and wrote the pastor a note...

Not wanting to further upset the man - the pastor smiled, and slipped the note in his jacket pocket. He prayed for the fellow, and then left the hospital. Sadly, a few hours later the pastor was called with news that the man had passed away.

In the middle of the funeral the pastor remembered the note the man had written. Still having never looked at it, he took it from his pocket, and held it up to read. He told the congregation, "I have in my hand a piece of paper that contains the last words of our friend and brother." The pastor unfolded the note... *but he never read it.* For the man's note read, "You are standing on my oxygen tube."

2 Timothy contains the final thoughts of a dying man. Paul pens his last words. He's in Nero's prison - awaiting certain execution - when he writes down his final, heartfelt instructions to his sidekick, Timothy. And as Timothy unfolds Paul's note the young man discovers what the apostle is thinking as he approaches eternity.

In 62 AD prisoner Paul was shipped from Caesarea to Rome to be tried before Caesar Nero. Though we have no record of the encounter between Paul and Nero you can be certain Paul presented a bold and compelling witness for Jesus.

Shortly after his conversion, while in Damascus, the Lord said to Paul, "(you will) bear My name before Gentiles, (and) kings". In his trial before Nero, Paul was able to bear the name of Jesus before *the King of the Gentiles*.

Secular historians note a marked change in Nero around the time of his encounter with

Paul... 62-63 AD. The guy went insane.

It's possible that Nero's rejection of the Gospel caused his demise. What's certain is that *Nero went nuts*. He may've been demon possessed. He ended up one of the cruelest rulers of all time. He even murdered his own wife and mother.

Nero was an egomaniac who showed off by building stadiums and temples, but a crowded Rome was running out of space. Nero needed more room to build...

Then on July 19, 64 AD a fire broke out in the woodsheds near the Circus Maximus. The inferno raged for ten days and torched two-thirds of the city. Later it was reported that Nero's servants were seen running from the woodsheds just before the blaze broke out. Rumors started flying that Nero had started the fire.

You've heard, "Nero fiddled while Rome burned." Apparently he did very little to douse the fire. He wanted the city to burn so he could rebuild it in his honor.

After the fire things got hot for Nero. Fingers were pointed in his direction, and the Emperor needed a scapegoat. He blamed the disaster on the Christians, and launched a crusade to persecute the followers of Jesus. He burned believers at the stake to light his parties. He clothed them with animal skins and threw them to the wild dogs. Believers were executed by gladiators, and tossed to lions.

Finally in 65 AD Caesar Nero arrested the two leaders of Christianity - Peter and Paul. He ordered their execution. Peter was crucified on an upside down cross. Paul was beheaded. Both were martyred for their faith in Jesus.

And it was while on death row that Paul wrote an emotional farewell to Timothy. We call it, *2 Timothy*. I'm sure the original scrolls were stained with Paul's tears.

Devotion Box - Single Moms

In 1:5 Paul remembers Timothy's "genuine faith" - and it was passed down to him by his "mother Eunice" - and his "grandmother Lois". Here's encouragement for single moms. Acts 16:1 tells us that Timothy's dad was not a believer. All his spiritual influence came from his mom and grandma... *but thank the Lord that was enough!*

Devotion Box - From Fear To Faith

2 Timothy 1:6 tells us that the church had *laid hands* on Timothy - but Timothy had been reluctant to *lay hold* of the gifts God had given him. Timothy was timid. He was a victim of fear. Perhaps he was afraid of *failure* - many people are. Maybe it was the fear of *people*. It could've been that Timothy had a fear of the *unknown*. Paul reminds his young protégé it wasn't God who fathered his fears. Verse 7 says, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

God gave Timothy *power* to succeed, not fail - *love* that overwhelms our fears (*How can I be afraid of a person when I really love that person?*). And God gave Timothy *a godly perspective* that speaks the truth and silences the "what ifs".

Bible Scan - 2 Timothy 1-4

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A PARENT'S PRIORITY

Notice what kind of faith is passed to Timothy... it was "genuine faith". This is the only type of faith that's conveyable. Kids have a sixth sense. They can sniff out hypocrisy a mile away. If your faith is a Sunday-only faith, or a half-hearted faith, it'll never pass on to your children. It has to be a "genuine faith".

And understand—passing on faith to your kids is not like passing down curly hair or big feet. Spiritual values are not transmitted through genetics... Neither is it like passing on the flu. Faith isn't a germ that gets carried through the air.

Passing on faith is like passing a football. It requires voluntary action on both ends of the reception. The passer fixes his sights on the target - then delivers the ball at the right time, and with the right touch. This also makes an effective parent - *targeting, timing, and touch*. Think through *what* it is that you really want to convey... *when* is

a good time to convey it...then *how* I need to go about its conveyance. Then it's up to the child to reach out, grab the truth, and pull it in.

But let me say, there is nothing a parent does that's more vital than passing on his faith to his kids. So what if you clothe, feed, and educate them, teach them to throw a baseball, send them to college, and then watch them grow up and marry, and become good citizens... only to have them die and go to hell?

Child advocate, James Dobson, comments, "I urge you as parents of young children to provide for them an unshakable faith in Jesus Christ. This is your most important function as mothers and fathers. How can anything else compare in significance to the goal of keeping the family circle unbroken in the life to come?" There's nothing more important than passing on "genuine faith" to our kids.

MAKING DISCIPLES

2:2 is the golden principle for discipleship... Paul tells Timothy, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

I could win people to Jesus - and hopefully, in my lifetime, I'd affect the eternal destiny of several hundred people. Or, I could win a few people - help them grow and mature in their relationship with God - and then teach them to do the same for someone else... who in turn would teach others to do the same... and so forth. Before long, the exponential effect would kick in. And rather than hundreds, now thousands of people would be affected for the kingdom.

It's the difference between $2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 = 10$, and $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 32$. As DL Moody once put it, "I'd rather set ten men to work, than do the work of ten men."

GOD THE PROMISE KEEPER

God promised to keep what Paul had committed to Him until the day of Christ. Regardless of what happens today - or any day - in that Day - we'll be standing next to Jesus. We belong to Him. I love what Paul says in 1:12, "I know whom I have believed..." Notice, he doesn't say "I know *what* I have believed..." but "I know *whom* I have believed..." Christians trust in a person - not a principle or philosophy, or doctrine. You and I have been persuaded by a Savior who keeps His promises.

THREE PICTURES OF A LONG-HAUL CHRISTIAN

Paul is at the end of his road. He's reflecting back on his experiences serving Jesus - and he realizes that endurance is the key to finishing well. A lot of people are just a flash in the pan. They run for a day or two - or a few months - or a few years - but cultivating endurance is the key to living a whole lifetime for Jesus... Paul explains the ingredients of a persevering faith with three pictures... In verses 3-4 he mentions a *soldier* - in verse 5, an *athlete* - and verse 6, a *farmer*.

A soldier maintains a wartime mentality... In the heat of combat your normal pursuits are put on hold until the war is won. The battle comes first. Likewise, the believer is embroiled in a battle - and our energies and attention have to be focused. Distractions defeat us. Robert Moffat said, "We have eternity to celebrate our victories, but only one short hour before sunset to win them." The soldier knows how to *put off* the unnecessary, and fight the battle at hand.

But there's also the athlete. He competes, but in doing so, he must play within the rules. To win at all costs will ulti-

mately cost you the win. You've got to abide by the rules, or you'll become disqualified - any success you achieve will be nullified. For the Christian this means the ends never justifies the means. God not only wants to be served, He wants us to serve Him according to His ways and means. The athlete plays to win, but he knows how to *stay within* God's parameters.

There's also the farmer. His strength fizzles if he never eats. And his example teaches us a vital lesson. The saint who's too busy *servicing God* to strengthen Himself in God will collapse, rather than conquer. *Doing for God* and *drawing from God* go hand-in-hand. The former is impossible without the latter. The successful farmer *takes in* some of his surplus in order to feed himself.

If you want to be a long-haul Christian be *like a soldier*, and put off distractions; *like an athlete*, and stay within God's will; *like a farmer*... and take in spiritual nourishment.

A FAITHFUL SAYING

2:11 begins, "This is a faithful saying..." Here's a phrase that appears elsewhere in Paul's letters - 1 Timothy 1:15, 1 Timothy 4:9, and Titus 3:8. These "faithful sayings" were liturgies used in the early church.

Verses 11-13, "This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself." The theme of this creed is the faithfulness of God to His word. People misinterpret the last line of Paul's poem as a license to be faithless... "See, even if I stop believing in Jesus He'll remain faithful to me. He'll never deny me." But that's not what it says... It doesn't say Jesus *cannot deny you*, it says, "He cannot deny Himself." Verse 13 has already told us, "If we deny Him, He also will deny us." *He can deny you!* Paul is saying if you don't continue in your faith - you give Jesus no choice but to deny you. He has to be faithful to His word.

Devotion Box - A Diligent Workman

Let's learn to handle the Scriptures accurately. 2:15, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." What good is a workman who isn't skilled in the tools of his trade? He's a shame to his craft. And as Bible believers... we need to learn to interpret the Scriptures accurately.

In grade school I rode the bus home - and to make sure you didn't board the wrong bus they had the number printed right next to the door. I'll never forget our bus was number 215... It always reminded me of this verse... and what an appropriate association! Guys, if you want to make sure you get home to heaven - if you want to be certain you're on the right bus - pay heed to 2 Timothy 2:15. Be a diligent student. Learn to rightly divide the word of truth.

Devotion Box - A Life With No Regrets

Paul says in 4:6, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand."

A drink offering was the wine that seasoned the sacrifice. It was spiritual steak sauce... and Paul was an A-1 servant of God. He lived his life to season saints, and tenderize hearts.

Warren Wiersbe points out that the word translated "departure" can be defined in four ways. The word can mean "to hoist anchor and set sail." Paul was about to sail for heaven's shore. Or, "to take down a tent". Paul's body had been a temporary dwelling. Or, "to free a prisoner" - death was Paul's escape from the earthly prison he occupied. And lastly, "to unyoke an ox". Paul had spent a lifetime of plowing hearts and serving God. He is now entering his rest.

PERILOUS TIMES AND PRESENT TIMES

Chapter 3 begins with a prediction about the end times... "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come..." Paul is telling us that the world we live in is not going to get better - it's going to get worse. The closer we get to the return of Jesus, the more corrupt society will become. Reading Paul's commentary on "perilous times" sounds like *present times*. It's a perfect description of our day... Verse 2, "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents..."

After the Duke of Windsor visited America he was asked what impressed him most about our country. He answered, "It was the way American parents obeyed their children."

Paul continues his list of end time attitudes, "unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal..." David Walsh, president of the National Institute on Media and the Family made this observation, "It is tragically ironic that at the very time we are wringing our hands about violent behavior among young people, we are simultaneously entertaining them with it." Not only have we thrown out all moral compasses—we've lost all logic.

Paul continues, "...despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God..." In 1994, USA Today polled Americans, ages 18-64, to discover what they did with their leisure time. At the top of the list was watching television, 15.1 hours a week. Whereas the average American spent less than one hour - just 50 minutes a week - on religious and spiritual activity. It's been said, "In America we worship our work, we work at our play, and we play at our worship." When men value pleasure more than God it's more than a travesty - it's a sign the end of the age is near.

Last on the list, "...having a form of godliness but denying its power." Paul predicts the day when folks will say they believe in God, they'll quote the proper creeds, and engage in comforting rituals. They'll embrace an outward godliness, but one that's void of any power to change their heart. It's a form without force - a religion without reality - a liturgy without life application.

It reminds me of a verse, "I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk, or a snooze in the sunshine. I don't want enough of God to make me love a person of a different color, or to help a poor man. I want ecstasy, not transformation. I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please."

One day, people will learn that God doesn't come in \$3 portions.

Verse 7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Like a boxer who'd gone the distance, or a runner who crossed the finish line, Paul had *fought* and *finished*... and had been *faithful* Paul fought a good fight - no short-cuts or illegal punches. He did God's work, God's way. He has no regrets!

Verse 8, "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." Paul is anticipating a heavenly reward. He'll receive the "the crown of righteousness" - a reward given to those saints who love the Lord's appearing. If you're a rapture watcher you'll get this crown. It goes to the person who's watching and ready when Jesus returns.

Bible Scan - 2 Timothy 1-4

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - sandyadams@calvarychapel.org
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm

Calvary Chapel Announcements - Wednesday, October 16 @ 7:00 PM—Praying Parents of Teens...Friday, October 18th: JR High Putt-Putt and Pizza @ 6:00 PM...Mature Singles Fellowship, Dinner and a Movie @ 6:30 PM...October 25/26 Women's Conference—*Hats Off to The Virtuous Woman* - registration deadline October 20. Next Bible Scan - October 27, 2002 - Titus 1-3, Philemon 1

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” - 2 Timothy 1:7

Bible Scan
Memory Verse

ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD

Paul states in 3:16-17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

In 3:16 the Greek word translated “inspiration” is “*Theopneustos*”. It’s two words, “*Theos*” or “God”, and “*pneustos*” or “breathed”. Literally it means, “*God breathed*”. The book you hold in your hand is unlike any other. It contains the very words of God.

Understand, “inspiration” doesn't mean that the authors of Scripture were given words in a mechanical fashion. Inspiration is not spiritual robotics or dictation.

The Holy Spirit superintended the composition of the Scriptures using the writer's style, vocabulary, culture - even retaining traces of the author's individual personality. Yet the Holy Spirit prompted and directed all that was penned to insure that *what was written* was exactly *what God desired to be written*.

As an illustration of inspiration, think of the Living Word, Jesus. He was born of a virgin. The Spirit supernaturally moved over Mary's womb and planted in her the Divine seed. Jesus was the perfect Son of God. He was 100-proof God, yet He possessed human traits. I'm sure He had dark hair and a Jewish nose. As a baby people looked at Him and remarked how much He looked like His mother. The *divine* worked through the *human* to produce exactly what God desired.

Likewise with the Written Word - the Holy Spirit moved on the author's mind - his writing style and vocabulary - to birth the Bible. The Scriptures are 100-proof divine - yet they also

bear a resemblance to the men who mothered them.

Notice too, verse 16 says that “All Scripture” - not just certain passages - were inspired by the Holy Spirit. All 66 books, 1189 chapters, 31,173 verses, 773,692 words, 3,566,480 letters - in fact, every single stroke in the original writings were given to us by inspiration of God. The Jewish rabbis use to say that even the spaces between the letters were inspired by God. *How's that for detail!*

And this is what Jesus told us in Matthew 5:18, “till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.” A *jot* was the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet - a *tittle* the smallest stroke. Jesus said the Scriptures were verbally inspired down to the original strokes.

And this is why we at Calvary Chapel teach the whole of Scripture. AW Tozer once said, “Nothing less than a whole Bible will make a whole Christian.” Here's a poem: “I thought I knew the Bible, reading piecemeal hit or miss - now a bit of 'John' or 'Matthew', now a snatch of 'Genesis'. Certain chapters of 'Isaiah', certain Psalms, the 23rd - 12th of 'Romans', 1st of 'Proverbs'. Yes! I thought I knew the Word. But I found a thorough reading was a different thing to do, and the way was unfamiliar when I read the Bible through. You who treat the crown of writings as you treat no other book - just a paragraph disjointed, just a crude, impatient look. Try a worthier procedure. Try a broad and steadier view. You will kneel in very rapture when you read the Bible through.”

Preach The Word

in 4:2, Paul charges a timid Timothy, “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season.” At all times and in every situation be ready to speak God's truth.

Don't Be A Demas

In 4:10, Paul rebukes a former friend, “Demas”, who had abandoned him. And he tells us why, “having loved this present world...” The desire for ease and comfort caused Demas to forsake Paul and betray the cause of Christ. Don't let the cares of this world choke out God's Word in your heart.

Friends Who Reconciled

In 4:11 Paul asks Timothy to bring Mark with him. At the end of Acts 15, Mark was the reason Paul and Barnabas parted ways. At the time Paul didn't want to travel with Mark. Apparently, he didn't think he'd be useful to the ministry. By the end of his life he had changed his mind.

Mark changed. Paul forgave. The two men were reconciled.

Paul's Parchments

In 4:13 Paul wants Timothy to bring “the books, especially the parchments.” Paul, perhaps Christianity's greatest teacher, was ever the student. Even at the end of his life - with just days left to live - his pressing desire was to immerse himself in the study of the Scriptures.