

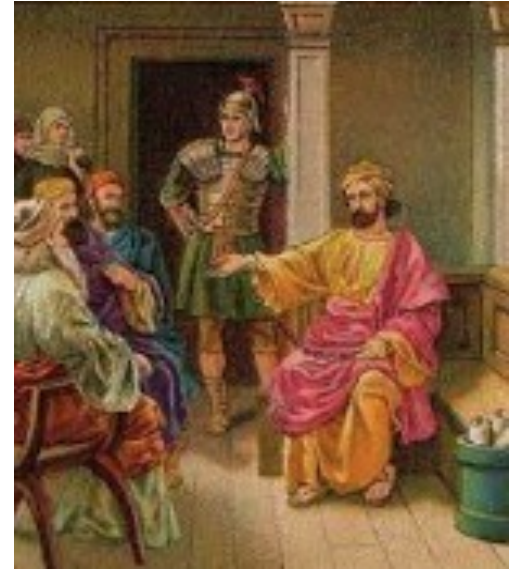
2 Timothy 1:1-7

Instructions to Timothy
Guiding, Growing, Guarding!

Intro to 2 Timothy/ *“I Constantly Remember You in My Prayers”*



Paul is in prison again during the writing of this his last letter. Indications are that Paul was imprisoned while he penned 1 Timothy, but did not seem overly concerned. His prison was a more gentle house arrest. He could not leave the house. Then it is believed that he was acquitted, got out of prison, and was able to minister for another couple of years. In the book of Acts, the account of what was likely Paul's purposeful incarceration, is told in detail. Paul was convinced that the Holy Spirit was telling him to go to Jerusalem to preach to the Jews there one last time. He had a strong premonition from the Holy Spirit that this would be his curtain call. He somehow knew he would not survive this venture, but he was resolute that he should and would go. There were tearful goodbyes at all the cities that his last missionary journey intersected with, and then he was in Jerusalem. He barely got started there before he was arrested. His captors were about to treat him brutally when he announced to them his special rights as a bonafide Roman citizen. They immediately backed off in alarm! He had the right to be treated respectfully, and his case to be heard in Rome. The Roman governor, Felix, kept him under arrest without charges being filed for two years! Finally he was transferred to the court of King Agrippa. The King heard his case but couldn't make a decision because of the political pressure being forced on him by the Jewish leadership, who wanted Paul killed (like Jesus was) and especially because Paul had claimed his right to be tried in Rome. But before the King sent him on to Rome to be tried there, Paul had testified of Jesus to both Festus and Agrippa and his wife! The book of Acts records that while in Rome he was only under house arrest and he was able to freely testify of Jesus to hundreds of important people – Jewish leaders in Rome, government officials who came to see him. It was God's primary intent that Paul testify to the highest position in the world – that of Caesar **[Acts 27:24]**! To ALL appearances, even though there was no hope of converting that sadistic, hedonistic Nero to repentance and saving faith in Jesus Christ, it was God's intention that one of His best spokesman speak on behalf of Jesus before Caesar, so that when Caesar came before the Throne of God he would have absolutely NO excuse!



There are a lot of people out there through the ages, and especially today, in a terribly affluent society, the vast majority of people have heard the gospel from skilled communicators, and have turned away, not wanting Jesus! They too will come before God as Judge, and they will be dry-mouthed in terror and speechless, knowing that they passed up their chances! ²

It is believed that Paul was released for a year or two because his accusers failed to show up in time for the trial. Case dismissed! Paul moved about and ministered freely for another year or two more, before being re-arrested in Nero's great crackdown on Christianity. So now, at the writing of this 2nd letter, Paul was in Rome awaiting what he knew would be his last trial. His language in this letter betrays his pessimism. He would not have one of his crazy deliverances this time! The insane emperor Nero was in charge now, and, because of his own insanity and beastly characteristics, was trying to transfer all the negative attention from himself to the Christians! After the great fire that burned down most of Rome in July of 64 AD, Nero had blamed the Christians to deflect attention from his own culpability, and so had declared the Christians to be "public enemy no. 1"! His brutality seemed to know no bounds! This was when



Christians were being dipped in tar, tied to, or impaled on poles, and lit on fire for nighttime stadium lighting, so the crowd could see **more** Christians in the arena being savaged by dogs, ripped apart by horses, and killed by any number of diabolical means – all for the entertainment of a fiend and his sadistic Roman populace! Regard for human life or for justice seemed to be unknown. So this was the atmosphere in Rome when Paul was thought to have been incarcerated for a second time – and this time it was in the infamous Roman dungeons - according to church tradition. It was there, under this kind of threat that Paul penned his second letter to Timothy. God used even Paul imprisonments for His most important endeavor – the writing of New Testament scripture! In this, his last letter, Paul is lonely, feeling abandoned by other Christians who did not even come and speak for him at his hearing. Of course, to speak for him would have meant arrest, imprisonment, and certain death to any one who would have spoken up, because Christian leaders were being hunted and killed in the arena in horrible ways! Maybe **that** is why no one showed up at his hearing! When Paul asks Timothy to come and visit him later in this letter, he must have known that Timothy would be caught and killed if he came! He had to have been very desperate! But I don't get that request. Maybe Paul thought God would protect Timothy as he has protected him for so long. There is no indication that Timothy came or didn't come. Paul would have been executed not too long after the writing of this, so even if Timothy **had** come, he would probably have arrived too late to say goodbye. ~Degenerate and hedonistic societies throughout history have always shown a disregard for human life. Usually they favor one form of it over another. But it still equates to a callous, selfish disregard of life!

*We see it happening right here in America before our very eyes. Liberal black lives matter, but it is open season on conservative black lives. Women's rights and gender equality matters, unless you are a woman with conservative views. Then you are the enemy – a sell-out, evil! If they had unlimited power, they would kill all opposition on the basis of ridding the world of evil! Ironic, right! Women's rights matter, but the baby within her has no right to be born, to breath air, and to live it's life if she decides that her baby's life is inconvenient at the time. Police lives do not matter at all. In progressive circles, Marxists and anarchists one and all (although many deny it), police deaths are secretly and not-so-secretly celebrated! The people pushing this are Marxist university professors and their university-indoctrinated TV "journalists" whose job description has changed from being reporters of the news to being responsible for **opinion-shaping**. In opinion-shaping they have become the **driving force behind all the crazy radical movements** sweeping our country today! It is crazed, glassy-eyed, human derangement syndrome at work – a societal rot that threatens the best way of life that has **ever** been experienced on the face of this planet – by far!

I know - I've digressed. I digress because as I compare societies – the corrupt, morally bankrupt, cruel Roman regime - I am concerned by its similarities with what is happening today in our society! The dehumanizing of certain segments of our society, unborn babies, white males, Trump supporters, conservatives. These radicals are ruining everything we have worked so hard for for almost 250 years! The stupidity of it all is breathtaking! But, really, what's new?! If **we** are disappointed, think of our Creator's disappointment!

Lets get to the letter itself. *When I was a kid in grade school, we spent a lot of time on learning the correct form for writing a letter. Few people write letters any more. We communicate with each other through texts and emails now. Why wait days, even weeks, for the mail to arrive when these new forms of communication over long distances is instant! Anyway, back in the day, when long distance telephone calls were too expensive except for emergencies, we wrote letters. So we had to learn formal letter writing. There was a set greeting. If it was someone we knew, it was "*Dear So and so*". If it was an official or formal letter to someone in charge, it was "Dear Sirs" or "To Whom it May Concern" – all capitalized words. In the ancient classical world, letters also had a proscribed form and greetings were fairly similar from letter to letter. Let's get to the greeting on this letter. Paul starts the letter classically, adhering to the customs of the time, and identifying himself and his recipient. "**Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God**". How did he **know** that he was an apostle? How did he know it was the will of God that he be an apostle? [Acts 28:3-9] He knew because he knew, and the other apostles knew, and they knew because he was able to do powerfully apostolic things! No one could do things like that without the power of God -and that power required God's approval.

May 8, 2012

Dear Grandma,

How are you? I was really happy to see you and Grandpa at my graduation ceremony, and I hope you're recovering from your cold.

Do you think it would be okay if I stopped by to visit you on Saturday? I'd really like to show you my new puppy. I think you'll adore her. Her name is Sassy, and I got her last week. And she's my favorite breed: a golden lab, just like Satchmo!

I'm excited to come see you soon. Let me know if Saturday will work for you.

Love,
Olivia

He was a man known by those who possessed the Holy Spirit as a man who possessed the Holy Spirit! **“...according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus”**. - Paul is referring to the fact that Christ had changed his life completely, and given Him a **“life that was really life”** [1 Tim. 6:19]! We covered that last week! **“The life that is really life”** is a life that is *re*-aligned so that it is *a*ligned with the purposes of God! It is the life where a person has switched allegiances from the self with its inherently broken compass, to God who will never steer us wrong! From Him we learn to live a life of self-less love, fashioned after the life of Jesus! He steers us into a place where we care about people, starting with their place in eternity. Our lives consist primarily of finding ways to bring people into the Kingdom of God! That is the obsession of Paul! His whole life was about bringing people to a saving faith in Jesus! Why should we be any different from Him?! He told the Corinthian church **“Imitate me as I imitate Christ”** [1 Cor. 11:1]. Paul certainly was a man possessed of the Holy Spirit in a way that only a few people in salvation history have ever been possessed by God!. But He is simply a pattern for us. If we are going to follow Jesus, it is going to look somewhat like the pattern of Paul! BUT, you say, that is too much/overwhelming! No, it is not! That might be true of attempting to be like Jesus! That’s actually impossible! But being like Paul who was being like Jesus? That might seem more do-able. We are committed to **“becoming more like Jesus”**. I have said it often from this pulpit. If copying Paul makes becoming more like Jesus more real to you, then by all means, we need to copy Paul. Timothy needed to copy Paul. Imitating Paul would be imitating Christ!



Paul says next that he is remembering Timothy constantly in his prayers – and we'll conclude with this. We should all be praying for each other. Prayer for each other connects us like nothing else can. It says that we care for how the people in our church are following Christ and the pattern of the apostles. I have never been able to comprehend how someone can just up and leave their church and go to another, without explanation, as if their time at that church was just a passing shadow. But when we pray for someone, it connects our heart to theirs. They will not even be aware of it, but you will be!



*One time, a few years ago, I was at the apartment of a friend from church here, the late Bill Rhodes. I was visiting with him, and somewhere in our conversation, he told me that he prayed for me, for Karen, and especially for our boys, EVERYDAY! I couldn't believe it, and never would have expected it! What happened is that my heart overflowed with gratitude! What a gift he had given me! He and I were bonded in the love of Christ from that time on! I remember I told my boys that Bill was praying for them daily! Their response was, "Who's that?". They didn't even know him, yet he held them up in prayer every day!

Are you praying for each other? Do you really want to be a part of this church? Then pray for us, one person at a time. Care for your brother and sister in Christ, enough to pray for each other on a regular basis. We have church phone books. Use it! Go through it one person at a time a couple or a few a day. See if God will not bless you and draw you in to a dept of fellowship and love that you have never known before! When we are thus connected, we will be a force to be reckoned with in this community and beyond! Unified, strengthened, fortified, confident in our mutual mission! THAT, my friends is church as God intended it!