

July 14, 2019
2 Timothy 2:1-13
Focused

Introduction Paul has spent the last two chapters of this letter addressing issues in the church. He has written about prayer (1 Tim. 2) and characteristics for proper leadership (1 Tim. 3). Beginning in 1 Timothy 4, Paul turns to speak to Timothy himself. Paul encouraged Timothy to be vigilant in certain areas. What were they?

Future Focus (2 Tim. 2:1-2). An influential theologian stated that it only takes one generation to lose the gospel. If this is remotely true in our day how much more in these earlier years of the church at Ephesus with its contending false doctrines? Timothy needs to lead, despite the difficulties confronting him. He will need to have a strength that transcends the natural (2 Timothy 2:1). If the gospel is to continue untainted and to transform lives in Ephesus Timothy needed to prepare others to preach and defend the gospel in the way Paul had done for him (2 Timothy 2:2). This was no general call to disciple others, as essential as discipleship is. Future leaders must be men who have proven themselves to be reliable as well as trustworthy, with regard to the gospel, in life and doctrine. Here is the question we must ask when choosing leaders: Are they already leading without the title of leader? Charisma and charm are bonuses. Character and fidelity to the truth are essential traits to look for in future leaders.

Mission Focused (2 Tim. 2:3-7). The Christian life is difficult and Paul does not mince words when encouraging Timothy. To underscore the challenges that await Timothy and all faithful Christians, Paul provides three images of the Christian life. First, Timothy is to be *a good soldier* (2 Timothy 2:3). Good soldiers are characterized as believers who willingly share in suffering for the cause of victory (2 Timothy 2:3) and whose singular desire is to please the Lord and not themselves (2 Timothy 2:4). Second, Paul gives the metaphor of an athlete, encouraging Timothy to discipline himself in such a way that he can carry out his calling with endurance and have spiritual success (2 Timothy 2:5). This is not done at the expense of the gospel, through moralism, syncretism, or worldly leadership techniques. Rather, Timothy is to train himself for godliness in and through the power of the gospel (1 Timothy 4:7-16). Finally, Paul provides the picture of a *hardworking farmer* (2 Timothy 2:6). When a farmer plants his seed nothing happens overnight. In fact, after he plants the seed he must nurture what he has planted if he will receive a harvest. Paul is teaching Timothy and all believers that fruitfulness in ministry is long and arduous, demanding a sacrificial commitment of constant nurture.

Christ Focused (2 Tim. 2:8-13). From the metaphors of soldier, athlete and farmer, Paul now turns Timothy's focus to Christ and the gospel. In the face of difficulties Timothy is to remember the Person and work of Jesus, especially His resurrection (2 Timothy 2:8). Paul challenges Timothy to never lose sight of the resurrection in order to encourage him in two ways. First, Timothy needs to see his suffering in light of Christ's suffering so that he will always view his suffering from an eternal perspective. Second, Timothy needs to always remember that the power that raised Jesus from the dead now resides in him. How wonderful is this truth that we are enabled to minister the gospel in the power of the resurrection? The resurrection proves that Christ has won the victory over sin and Satan and, despite what sufferings may abound, we minister in victory. Paul includes his own experience of the power of the resurrection reminding

Timothy that even though he is imprisoned and bound by chains, the word of God is not bound (2 Timothy 2:9). Therefore, despite his difficulties and sufferings, Timothy should look to Christ as His example and endure all things for the salvation of the elect (2 Timothy 2:10).