

# CHAPTER 2

In this chapter our apostle gives Timothy many exhortations and directions, which may be of great use to other, both ministers and Christians, for whom they were designed as well as for him.

**I.** He encourages him in his work, showing him whence he must fetch help (v. 1).

**II.** He must take care of a succession in the ministry, that the office might not die with him (v. 2).

**III.** He exhorts him to constancy and perseverance in this work, as a soldier and as a husbandman, considering what would be the end of all his sufferings, etc. (v. 3-15).

**IV.** He must shun profane and vain babblings (v. 16-18), for they will be pernicious and mischievous.

**V.** He speaks of the foundation of God, which standeth sure (v. 19-21).

**VI.** What he is to avoid — youthful lusts, and foolish and unlearned questions; and what to do (v. 22 to the end).

## 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

### MINISTERIAL FORTITUDE

Here Paul encourages Timothy to constancy and perseverance in his work: *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, v. 1. Observe, Those who have work to do for God must stir up themselves to do it, and strengthen themselves for it. Being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus may be understood in opposition to the weakness of grace. Where there is the truth of grace there must be a labouring after the strength of grace. As our trials increase, we have need to grow stronger and stronger in that which is good; our faith stronger, our resolution stronger, our love to God and Christ stronger. Or it may be understood in opposition to our being strong in our own strength: “Be strong, not confiding in thy own sufficiency, but in the grace that is in Jesus Christ.” Compare ~~4th~~ Ephesians 6:10, *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. When Peter promised rather to

die for Christ than to deny him he was strong in his own strength; had he been strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, he would have kept his standing better. Observe,

**1.** There is grace in Christ Jesus; for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, <sup>417</sup>John 1:17. There is grace enough in him for all of us.

**2.** We must be strong in this grace; not in ourselves, in our own strength, or in the grace we have already received, but in the grace that is in him, and that is the way to be strong in grace.

**3.** As a father exhorts his son, so does Paul exhort Timothy, with great tenderness and affection: *Thou, therefore, my son, be strong*, etc. Observe,

**I.** Timothy must count upon sufferings, even unto blood, and therefore he must train up others to succeed him in the ministry of the gospel, v. 2. He must instruct others, and train them up for the ministry, and so commit to them the things which he had heard; and he must also ordain them to the ministry, lodge the gospel as a trust in their hands, and so commit to them the things which he had heard. Two things he must have an eye to in ordaining ministers: — Their fidelity or integrity (“Commit them to *faithful men*, who will sincerely aim at the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the welfare of souls, and the advancement of the kingdom of the Redeemer among men”), and also their ministerial ability. They must not only be knowing themselves, but be able to teach others also, and be apt to teach. Here we have,

**1.** The things Timothy was to commit to others — what he had heard of the apostle among many witnesses; he must not deliver any thing besides, and what Paul delivered to him and others he had received of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2.** He was to commit them as a trust, as a sacred deposit, which they were to keep, and to transmit pure and uncorrupt unto others.

**3.** Those to whom he was to commit these things must be faithful, that is, trusty men, and who were skilful to teach others.

**4.** Though men were both faithful and able to teach others, yet these things must be committed to them by Timothy, a minister, a man in office; for

none must intrude themselves into the ministry, but must have these things committed to them by those already in that office.

## II. He must *endure hardness* (v. 3): *Thou therefore*, etc.

1. All Christians, but especially ministers, *are soldiers of Jesus Christ*; they fight under his banner, in his cause, and against his enemies, for he is the captain of our salvation, ~~800~~ Hebrews 2:10.

2. The soldiers of Jesus Christ must approve themselves good soldiers, faithful to their captain, resolute in his cause, and must not give over fighting till *they are made more than conquerors, through him that loved them*, ~~800~~ Romans 8:37.

3. Those who would approve themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ must endure hardness; that is, we must expect it and count upon it in this world, must endure and accustom ourselves to it, and bear it patiently when it comes, and not be moved by it from our integrity.

## III. He must not entangle himself in the affairs of this world, v. 4. A soldier, when he has enlisted, leaves his calling, and all the business of it, that he may attend his captain's orders. If we have given up ourselves to be Christ's soldiers, we must sit loose to this world; and though there is no remedy, but we must employ ourselves in the affairs of this life while we are here (we have something to do here), we must not entangle ourselves with those affairs, so as by them to be diverted and drawn aside from our duty to God and the great concerns of our Christianity. Those who will war the good warfare must sit loose to this world. *That we may please him who hath chosen us to be soldiers*. Observe,

1. The great care of a soldier should be to please his general; so the great care of a Christian should be to please Christ, to approve ourselves to him. The way to please him who hath chosen us to be soldiers is not to entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life, but to be free from such entanglements as would hinder us in our holy warfare.

## IV. He must see to it that in carrying on the spiritual warfare he went by rule, that he observed the laws of war (v. 5): *If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully*. We are striving for mastery, to get the mastery of our lusts and corruptions, to excel in that which is good, but we cannot expect the prize unless we observe the laws.

In doing that which is good we must take care that we do it in a right manner, that our good may not be evil spoken of. Observe here,

- 1.** A Christian is to strive for masteries; he must aim at mastering his own lusts and corruptions.
- 2.** Yet he must strive according to the laws given to him; he must strive lawfully.
- 3.** Those who do so shall be crowned at last, after a complete victory is obtained.

**V.** He must be willing to wait for a recompence (v. 6): *The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.* Or, as it should be read, *The husbandman labouring first must partake of the fruits*, as appears by comparing it with <sup><sup>S&UMLT;</sup>James 5:7. If we would be partakers of the fruits, we must labour; if we would gain the prize, we must run the race. And, further, we must first labour as the husbandman does, with diligence and patience, before we are partakers of the fruit; we must do the will of God, before we receive the promises, for which reason we have need of patience, <sup><sup>S&UMLT;</sup>Hebrews 10:36.

The apostle further commends what he had said to the attention of Timothy, and expresses his desire and hope respecting him: *Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things*, v. 7. Here,

- 1.** Paul exhorts Timothy to consider those thing about which he admonished him. Timothy must be reminded to use his considering faculties about the things of God. Consideration is as necessary to a good conversation as to a sound conversion.
- 2.** He prays for him: *The Lord give thee understanding in all things.* Observe, It is God who gives understanding. The most intelligent man needs more and more of this gift. If he who gave the revelation in the word does not give the understanding in the heart, we are nothing. Together with our prayers for others, that the Lord would give them understanding in all things, we must exhort and stir them up to consider what we say, for consideration is the way to understand, remember, and practise, what we hear or read.

## 2 TIMOTHY 2:8-13

### MINISTERIAL ENCOURAGEMENTS

**I.** To encourage Timothy in suffering, the apostle puts him in mind of the resurrection of Christ (v. 8): *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel.* This is the great proof of his divine mission, and therefore a great confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion; and the consideration of it should make us faithful to our Christian profession, and should particularly encourage us in suffering for it. Let suffering saints remember this. Observe,

**1.** We are to look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and has now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, <sup><818></sup>Hebrews 12:2.

**2.** The incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ, heartily believed and rightly considered, will support a Christian under all sufferings in the present life.

**II.** Another thing to encourage him in suffering was that he had Paul for an example. Observe,

**1.** How the apostle suffered (v. 9): *Wherein I suffer as an evil-doer;* and let not Timothy the son expect any better treatment than Paul the father. Paul was a man who did good, and yet suffered as an evil-doer: we must not think it strange if those who do well fare ill in this world, and if the best of men meet with the worst of treatment; but this was his comfort *that the word of God was not bound.* Persecuting powers may silence ministers and restrain them, but they cannot hinder the operation of the word of God upon men's hearts and consciences; that cannot be bound by any human force. This might encourage Timothy not to be afraid of bonds for the testimony of Jesus; for the word of Christ, which ought to be dearer to him than liberty, or life itself, should in the issue suffer nothing by those bonds. Here we see,

**(1.)** The good apostle's treatment in the world: *I suffer trouble;* to this he was called and appointed.

(2.) The pretence and colour under which he suffered: *I suffer as an evil-doer*; so the Jews said to Pilate concerning Christ, *If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee*, <sup><BR></sup>John 18:30.

(3.) The real and true cause of his suffering trouble as an evil-doer: *Wherein*; that is, in or for the sake of the gospel. The apostle suffered trouble unto bonds, and afterwards he resisted unto blood, striving against sin, <sup><BR></sup>Hebrews 12:4. Though the preachers of the word are often bound, yet the word is never bound.

2. Why he suffered cheerfully: *I endure all things for the elects' sake*, v. 10. Observe,

(1.) Good ministers may and should encourage themselves in the hardest services and the hardest sufferings, with this, that God will certainly bring good to his church, and benefit to his elect, out of them. — *That they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus*. Next to the salvation of our own souls we should be willing to do and suffer any thing to promote the salvation of the souls of others.

(2.) The elect are designed to obtain salvation: *God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation*, <sup><BR></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:9.

(3.) This salvation is in Christ Jesus, in him as the fountain, the purchaser, and the giver of it; and it is accompanied with eternal glory: there is no salvation in Christ Jesus without it.

(4.) The sufferings of our apostle were for the elects' sake, for their confirmation and encouragement.

**III.** Another thing with which he encourages Timothy is the prospect of a future state.

1. Those who faithfully adhere to Christ and to his truths and ways, whatever it cost them, will certainly have the advantage of it in another world: *If we be dead with him, we shall live with him*, v. 11. *If we be dead with him, we shall live with him*, v. 11. If, in conformity to Christ, we be dead to this world, its pleasures, profits, and honours, we shall go to live with him in a better world, to be for ever with him. Nay, though we be called out to suffer for him, we shall not lose by that. *Those who suffer for Christ on earth shall reign with Christ in heaven*, v. 12. Those who

suffered with David in his humiliation were preferred with him in his exaltation: so it will be with those who suffer with the Son of David.

**2.** It is at our peril if we prove unfaithful to him: *If we deny him, he also will deny us.* If we deny him before man, he will deny us before his Father, ~~403~~ Matthew 10:33. And that man must needs be for ever miserable whom Christ disowns at last. This will certainly be the issue, whether we believe it or no (v. 13): *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.* He is faithful to his threatenings, faithful to his promises; neither one nor the other shall fall to the ground, no, not the least, jot nor tittle of them. If we be faithful to Christ, he will certainly be faithful to us. If we be false to him, he will be faithful to his threatenings: *he cannot deny himself,* cannot recede from any word that he hath spoken, for he is yea, and amen, the faithful witness. Observe,

**(1.)** Our being dead with Christ precedes our living with him, and is connected with it: the one is in order to the other; so our suffering for him is the way to reign with him. *You that have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel* ~~403~~ Matthew 19:28.

**(2.)** This is a faithful saying, and may be depended on and ought to be believed. But,


**(3.)** If we deny him, out of fear, or shame, or for the sake of some temporal advantage, he will deny and disown us, and will not deny himself, but will continue faithful to his word when he threatens as well as when he promises.

## ~~404~~ 2 TIMOTHY 2:14-18

### CAUTIONS AGAINST ERROR

Having thus encouraged Timothy to suffer, he comes in the next place to direct him in his work.

**I.** He must make it his business to edify those who were under his charge, *to put them in remembrance* of those things which they did already know; for this is the work of ministers; not to tell people that which they never

knew before, but to put them in mind of that which they do know, *charging them that they strive not about words*. Observe, Those that are disposed to strive commonly strive about matters of very small moment. Strifes of words are very destructive to the things of God. That they strive not about words *to no profit*. If people did but consider of what little use most of the controversies in religion are, they would not be so zealous in their strifes of words, *to the subverting of the hearers*, to the drawing of them away from the great things of God, and occasioning unchristian heats and animosities, by which truth is often in danger of being lost. Observe, People are very prone to strive about words, and such strifes never answer any other ends than to shake some and subvert others; they are not only useless, but they are very hurtful, and therefore ministers are to charge the people that they do not strive about words, and they are most likely to be regarded when they charge them before the Lord, that is, in his name and from his word; when they produce their warrant for what they say. — *Study to show thyself approved unto God*, v. 15. Observe, The care of ministers must be to approve themselves unto God, to be accepted of him, and to show that they are so approved unto God. In order thereunto, there must be constant care and industry: *Study to show thyself* such a one, *a workman that needs not be ashamed*. Ministers must be workmen; they have work to do, and they must take pains in it. Workmen that are unskilful, or unfaithful, or lazy, have need to be ashamed; but those who mind their business, and keep to their work, are workmen that need not be ashamed. And what is their work? It is *rightly to divide the word of truth*. Not to invent a new gospel, but rightly to divide the gospel that is committed to their trust. To speak terror to those to whom terror belongs, comfort to whom comfort; to give every one *his portion in due season*,  Matthew 24:45. Observe here,

**1.** The word which ministers preach is the word of truth, for the author of it is the God of truth.

**2.** It requires great wisdom, study, and care, to divide this word of truth rightly; Timothy must study in order to do this well.

**II.** He must take heed of that which would be a hindrance to him in his work, v. 16. He must take heed of error: *Shun profane and vain babblings*. The heretics, who boasted of their notions and their arguments, thought their performances such as might recommend them; but the apostle calls them *profane and vain babblings*: when once men become fond of those



*they will increase unto more ungodliness.* The way of error is down-hill; one absurdity being granted or contended for, a thousand follow: *Their word will eat as doth a canker, or gangrene;* when errors or heresies come into the church, the infecting of one often proves the infecting of many, or the infecting of the same person with one error often proves the infecting of him with many errors. Upon this occasion the apostle mentions some who had lately advanced erroneous doctrines: *Hymeneus and Philetus.* He names these corrupt teachers, by which he sets a brand upon them, to their perpetual infamy, and warns all people against hearkening to them. They have *erred concerning the truth,* or concerning one of the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, which is truth. The resurrection of the dead is one of the great doctrines of Christ. Now see the subtlety of the serpent and the serpent's seed. They did not deny the resurrection (for that had been boldly and avowedly to confront the word of Christ), but they put a corrupt interpretation upon that true doctrine, saying that the resurrection was past already, that what Christ spoke concerning the resurrection was *to be understood mystically* and by way of allegory, that it must be meant of a spiritual resurrection only. It is true, there is a spiritual resurrection, but to infer thence that there will not be a true and real resurrection of the body at the last day is to dash one truth of Christ in pieces against another. By this they *overthrew the faith of some,* took them off from the belief of the resurrection of the dead; and if there be no resurrection of the dead, nor future state, no recompence of our services and sufferings in another world, we are of men the most miserable, ~~469~~ 1 Corinthians 15:19. Whatever takes away the doctrine of a future state overthrows the faith of Christians. The apostle had largely disproved this error (1 Corinthians 15), and therefore does not here enter into the arguments against it. Observe,

- 1.** The babblings Timothy was to shun were profane and vain; they were empty shadows, and led to profaneness: *For they will increase unto more ungodliness.*
- 2.** Error is very productive, and on that account the more dangerous: *it will eat like a gangrene.*
- 3.** When men err concerning the truth, they always endeavour to have some plausible pretence for it. Hymeneus and Philetus did not deny a resurrection, but pretended it was already past.
- 4.** Error, especially that which affects the foundation, will overthrow the faith of some.

## ~~3129~~ 2 TIMOTHY 2:19-21

### CAUTIONS AGAINST ERROR

Here we see what we may comfort ourselves with, in reference to this, and the little errors and heresies that both infect and infest the church, and do mischief.

**I.** It may be a great comfort to us that the unbelief of men cannot make the promise of God of no effect. Though the faith of some particular persons be overthrown, yet *the foundation of God standeth sure* (v. 19); it is not possible that they should deceive the elect. Or it may be meant of the truth itself, which they impugn. All the attacks which the powers of darkness have made upon the doctrine of Christ cannot shake it; it stands firm, and weathers all the storms which have been raised against it. The prophets and apostles, that is, the doctrines of the Old and New Testament, are still firm; and they have a seal with two mottoes upon it, one on the one side, and the other on the other, as is usual in a broad seal.

**1.** One expresses our comfort — that *the Lord knows those that are his*, and those that are not; knows them, that is, he owns them, so knows them that he will never lose them. Though the faith of some be overthrown, yet the Lord is said to know the ways of the righteous, ~~3106~~ Psalm 1:6. None can overthrow the faith of any whom God hath chosen.

**2.** Another declares our duty — that every one who names the name of Christ must depart from iniquity. Those who would have the comfort of the privilege must make conscience of the duty. If the name of Christ be called upon us, we must depart from iniquity, else he will not own us; he will say in the great day (~~3123~~ Matthew 7:23), *Depart from me, I never knew you, you workers of iniquity*. Observe,

**(1.)** Whatever errors are introduced into the church, the foundation of God standeth sure, his purpose can never be defeated.

**(2.)** God hath some in the church who are his and whom he knows to be his.

**(3.)** Professing Christians name the name of Christ, are called by his name, and therefore are bound to depart from iniquity; for Christ *gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, ~~3124~~ Titus 2:14.

**II.** Another thing that may comfort us is that though there are some whose faith is overthrown, yet there are others who keep their integrity, and hold it fast (v. 20): *In a great house there are not only vessels of gold*, etc. The church of Christ is a great house, a well-furnished house: now some of the furniture of this house is of great value, as the plate in a house; some of small value, and put to mean uses, as the vessels of wood and earth; so it is in the church of God. There are some professors of religion that are like the vessels of wood and earth, they are vessels of dishonour. But at the same time all are not vessels of dishonour; there are *vessels of gold and silver*, vessels of honour, *that are sanctified and meet for the Master's use*. When we are discouraged by the badness of some, we must encourage ourselves by the consideration of the goodness of others. Now we should see to it that we be vessels of honour: we must *purge ourselves from these corrupt opinions*, that we may be sanctified for our Master's use. Observe,

- 1.** In the church there are some vessels of honour and some of dishonour; there are some vessels of mercy and other vessels of wrath, ~~4102~~Romans 9:22, 23. Some dishonour the church by their corrupt opinions and wicked lives; and others honour and credit it by their exemplary conversation.
- 2.** A man must purge himself from these before he can be a vessel of honour, or meet for his Master's use.
- 3.** Every vessel must be fit for its Master's use; every one in the church whom God approves must be devoted to his Master's service and meet for his use.
- 4.** Sanctification in the heart is our preparation for every good work. The tree must be made good, and then the fruit will be good.

## ~~4102~~ 2 TIMOTHY 2:22-26

### CAUTIONS AGAINST CONTENTION

**I.** Paul here exhorts Timothy to beware of *youthful lusts*, v. 22. Though he was a holy good man, very much mortified to the world, yet Paul thought it necessary to caution him against youthful lusts: “*Flee them, take all possible care and pains to keep thyself pure from them.*” The lusts of the flesh are youthful lusts, which young people must carefully watch against,

and the best must not be secure. He prescribes an excellent remedy against youthful lusts: *Follow righteousness, faith, charity peace, etc.* Observe,

**1.** Youthful lusts are very dangerous, for which reason even hopeful young people should be warned of them, for they war against the soul, <sup>(412)</sup>1 Peter 2:11.

**2.** The exciting of our graces will be the extinguishing of our corruptions; the more we follow that which is good the faster and the further we shall flee from that which is evil. Righteousness, and faith, and love, will be excellent antidotes against youthful lusts. Holy love will cure impure lust. — *Follow peace with those that call on the Lord.* The keeping up of the communion of saints will take us off from all fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness. See the character of Christians: they are such as *call on the Lord Jesus Christ, out of a pure heart.* Observe, Christ is to be prayed to. It is the character of all Christians that they call upon him; but our prayers to God and Christ are not acceptable nor successful except they come out of a pure heart.

**II.** He cautions him against contention, and, to prevent this (v. 23), cautions him against *foolish and unlearned questions*, that tend to no benefit, strifes of words. Those who advanced them, and doted upon them, thought themselves wise and learned; but Paul calls them foolish and unlearned. The mischief of these is that they *gender strifes*, that they breed debates and quarrels among Christians and ministers. It is very remarkable how often, and with what seriousness, the apostle cautions Timothy against disputes in religion, which surely was not without some such design as this, to show that religion consists more in believing and practising what God requires than in subtle disputes. — *The servant of the Lord must not strive*, v. 24. Nothing worse becomes the servant of the Lord Jesus, who himself did not strive nor cry (<sup>(412)</sup>Matthew 12:19), but was a pattern of meekness, and mildness, and gentleness to all, than strife and contention. The servant of the Lord must be *gentle to all men*, and thereby show that he is himself subject to the commanding power of that holy religion which he is employed in preaching and propagating. — *Apt to teach.* Those are unapt to teach who are apt to strive, and are fierce and froward. Ministers must be patient, bearing with evil, and *in meekness instructing* (v. 25) not only those who subject themselves, but those who oppose themselves. Observe,

**1.** Those who oppose themselves to the truth are to be instructed; for instruction is the scripture-method of dealing with the erroneous, which is more likely to convince them of their errors than fire and faggot: he does not bid us kill their bodies, under pretence of saving their souls.

**2.** Such as oppose themselves are to be instructed in meekness, for our Lord is meek and lowly (<sup><412></sup>Matthew 11:29), and this agrees well with the character of the servant of the Lord (v. 24): *He must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient.* This is the way to convey truth in its light and power, and to overcome evil with good, (<sup><521></sup>Romans 12:21).

**3.** That which ministers must have in their eyes, in instructing those who oppose themselves, must be their recovery: *If God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.* Observe,

**(1.)** Repentance is God's gift.

**(2.)** It is a gift with a *peradventure* in the case of those who oppose themselves; and therefore, though we are not to despair of the grace of God, yet we must take heed of presuming upon it. *To the acknowledging of the truth.*

**(3.)** The same God who gives us the discovery of the truth does by his grace bring us to the acknowledging of it, otherwise our hearts would continue in rebellion against it, for we are to confess with our mouths as well as to believe with our hearts, (<sup><510></sup>Romans 10:9, 10). And thus sinners recover themselves out of the snare of the devil; see here,

**[1.]** The misery of sinners: they are in the *snare of the devil, and are led captive by him at his will*, v. 26. They are slaves to the worst of task-masters; he is the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, (<sup><412></sup>Ephesians 2:2). They are taken in a snare, and in the worst snare, because it is the devil's; they are as fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare. Further, They are under Ham's curse (*a servant of servants shall he be*, <sup><1025></sup>Genesis 9:25), they are slaves to him who is but a slave and vassal.

**[2.]** The happiness of those who repent: they recover themselves out of this snare, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken and they have escaped; and the greater the danger the greater the deliverance. When sinners repent, those who before were led captive by the devil at his will come to be led into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and

have their wills melted into the will of the Lord Jesus. The good Lord  
recover us all out of the snare.