

Introduction to 2 Timothy

2 Timothy 1:1-2

What are some famous deathbed scenes you remember from movies or literature?

Why are the final words people say before they die so important to us?

How is the way we experience the death of family and friends today different from how it was experienced in the past?

Today we begin the study of a deathbed scene. This is Paul's last will and testament.

Author: Paul

He is in prison in Rome. This is not the imprisonment spoken of in Acts 28, from which he was eventually released and continued to work for another 4-5 years. This is his second and final imprisonment which will result in his beheading. He is in an out of the way location because Onesiphorus had trouble finding him (1:16-17). He knows he is going to die (4:6). He is lonely (4:9, 21); only Luke is with him (4:11).

Date: 64-67 AD

Difficult to pin down the exact date. We know it occurred during the persecution under Emperor Nero whose reign ended in 68 AD.

Recipient: Timothy—currently serving in Ephesus

Acts 16:1-3—"Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. ² He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek." (ESV)

Philippians 2:20-22—"For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. ²¹ They all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel." (ESV)

Characteristics of Timothy

Weak physically (1 Timothy 5:23)

Young, probably in his mid-30's (1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:22)

Naturally timid (2 Timothy 1:7-8)

Theme: Persevere in the gospel despite opposition and suffering (1:8, 14)

This is not a good time for Christianity. Despite the spread of the message, the church faced both internal and external attacks. Heretics, those who taught a false Christianity, were on the increase. There had recently been an almost total Asian apostasy (1:15). Emperor Nero seemed bent on destroying the church. The whole book, beginning in 1:6 is instruction to Timothy on how to carry on the work of the gospel when Paul is gone.

Relevancy: We live in a culture that is turning more spiritually dark. Resistance to the gospel is growing and even those who profess to be evangelicals are drifting from the foundations of the faith. It is essential that we guard the truth of the gospel and pass it accurately on to those coming behind us.