

Chapter 2 – Pass along the Word

After commanding Timothy to *protect* the Word in 2 Timothy 1:13-14, Paul transitions to Timothy’s duty to *pass along* what he heard from Paul to faithful men who could teach others. Explain 2 Timothy 2:2, comparing it to Matthew 28:18-20 and Titus 1:5-9.

To provide Timothy with a better understanding of what Gospel ministry requires, Paul provides 3 illustrations. Using the passages below, explain how the principle behind each illustration corresponds to our service to Christ in fulfilling the Great Commission.

2 Timothy 2:3-4

Illustration: Before a first-century soldier enlisted, he had to swear an oath (called a *sacramentum*) that could be annulled only by death or demobilization. During his service, he was obligated to fully and swiftly carry out the commands of his general (a “kill-upon-order” duty without question). After 20 years of service, a soldier was typically rewarded with a plot of land.

Principle for
ministry:

2 Timothy 2:5

Illustration: In order to compete, a first-century athlete had to be a natural-born Greek, swear an oath to a statue of Zeus that he had prepared for at least 10 months prior to the competition, and abide by all event rules. Cheating would result in as little as fines or as much as flogging, but winning an event would cause the athlete to become a hometown hero.

Principle for
ministry:

2 Timothy 2:6

Illustration: A first-century practice called “sharecropping” allowed a non-landowner to cultivate the land owned by someone else in exchange for a portion of the harvest. The temptation, however, would be simply to cultivate enough of the owner’s land to provide for your own basic necessities (rather than cultivating it to its fullest for the benefit of the owner). But if the sharecropper was willing to maximize the land, he was often given the privilege of a kind of “pay day advance.”

Principle for
ministry:

After using these 3 illustrations, Paul turns Timothy’s attention to the greatest example to follow: Jesus Christ (2 Tim 2:8). Explain how Jesus leads by example in the area of faithful suffering, using either Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Peter 2:21-25, or Hebrews 12:1-3 as a basis for your answer.

Chapter 2 – Pass along the Word (cont’d)

In 2 Timothy 2:11-13, Paul reminds Timothy of the security of the elect using what was likely a common creed (or perhaps a hymn) in the early church. The first half of the creed speaks of the believer’s relationship to Christ, while the second half speaks of the unbeliever’s relationship to Christ. Fill in the blanks below:

<i>If...</i>	<i>Then...</i>
a man has died with Christ (united by faith)	he will also _____ with Christ (have eternal life)
a man endures with Christ (continues in faith, giving evidence that he is a true believer)	he will also _____ with Christ (be a joint-heir of God’s kingdom).
a man denies Christ (rejects the Gospel)	Christ will _____ him (He will disown such a person in the final judgment).
a man is faithless (continues in unbelief)	Christ will remain _____ (He will uphold His own justice and punish such a person).

The Greek word *logomachein* is a compound word consisting of *logos* (word) and *machomai* (to fight, or battle), translated in 2 Timothy 2:14 as “wrangle about words.” This phrase, literally meaning “to word battle,” is not about contending for the faith according to sound hermeneutics and precise exegesis, but instead describes a battle between two words – the Word of God (divine revelation) and the word of man (human philosophy). Thus, Paul’s instruction to Timothy is that he is to charge other faithful men to avoid subjecting the Word of God to speculation and debate. What does Paul say will happen if Timothy wrangles about words and subjects God’s Word to human theories?

The Greek word *orthotoméō* is a compound word consisting of *ortho* (straight) and *temnō* (cut), translated in 2 Timothy 2:15 as “accurately handling.” This word, meaning “to cut straight,” was used in the first century to describe any task that needed a straight line (i.e. cutting cloth or making a trail through the woods). Paul, as a leather-worker (cf. Acts 18:3), undoubtedly knew the importance of cutting animal skins with straight lines in order to fit them together to make things such as tents, because any deviation from a straight cut would potentially render the piece useless. Thus, Paul’s instruction to Timothy is that he is to properly and carefully understand and explain the Word of God (today we would call this *historical-grammatical hermeneutics*). What does Paul say will happen if Timothy is careless in handling God’s Word?

The Greek word *gangraina* is derived from the verb *grainó* (to gnaw), translated in 2 Timothy 2:17 as “gangrene.” This word was used to describe various types of cancerous or flesh-eating diseases in which the infected area spread to other parts of the body, causing disease in areas that were otherwise healthy. Paul compared false doctrine and false teachers to this type of disease, which spreads and infects others to the. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 Paul compares sin to leaven or yeast which works its way through the “whole lump of dough” (a metaphor for the church). Thus, Paul’s instruction to Timothy is that he is to avoid worldly and empty chatter (meaning human philosophy and speculation). What does Paul say will happen if Timothy does not avoid false doctrine and false teachers?

Chapter 2 – Pass along the Word (cont’d)

In 2 Timothy 2:17-18, Paul names two false teachers who were causing problems within the church. Which of these two men had already been excommunicated by Paul for his unwillingness to repent, as mentioned in the book of 1 Timothy? _____

How many years had elapsed between 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy? _____

What does this tell you about the seriousness of Paul’s perspective towards false teachers?

Because of the seriousness of false doctrine, Paul had no problem naming the names of false teachers who were peddling it. In fact, since false doctrine doesn’t spread itself, it is critical that false teachers are called out by name so that genuine believers can avoid them and their teaching (cf. Romans 16:17-18, 2 Peter 3:17, Galatians 1:8). Name a present-day false teacher and a destructive heresy he or she promotes.

Apparently Hymenaeus and Philetus were teaching that “the resurrection has already taken place” – likely referring to the false doctrine that believers experience only a spiritual resurrection rather than also a bodily resurrection in the future, as mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. One of the earliest heresies in the time of the Apostles was called Gnosticism which taught, among other things, that the physical body of man is evil and only the spiritual aspect of man is good. Therefore, those who believed in this teaching often allowed themselves to indulge in physical immorality, thinking that any acts committed with the body didn’t matter (since the body was already evil) and that their spirit was left unaffected (since it alone was pure and good). As a result, these two men were likely carrying others not only into doctrinal error but also ethical evil. To see people who were supposedly strong Christians depart from the faith often makes those in the church nervous, fearful, and perhaps insecure about their own faith. What does Paul say about true believers in 2 Timothy 2:19 to counteract this temptation to be fearful?

Next, Paul uses an analogy in 2 Timothy 2:20-21 to remind Timothy about the reality of false teachers.

- What does the “large house” represent? _____
- What do the “gold and silver vessels” (vessels of honor) represent? _____
- What do the “wood and earthenware vessels” (vessels of dishonor) represent? _____
- How should vessels of honor respond to vessels of dishonor? _____

