

**SERENDIPITY #7**  
**THE END IS THE BEGINNING**  
II Timothy

**I. Paul's circumstances.**

In about 67 A.D. Emperor Nero had begun a period of violent persecution against the followers of Jesus Christ. Among his targets was the apostle Paul. In all probability this was Paul's second imprisonment in Rome. Apparently, his first trial resulted in his release and continued ministry.

*<sup>16</sup> At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. <sup>17</sup> But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth... (4:16-17).*

But now he is in prison again. Though optimistic about ultimate deliverance, this last of Paul's letters makes it clear that Paul anticipated that this was the end of his earthly journey.

*<sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have **finished the race**, I have kept the faith... (4:6-7).*

A. The letter reveals some of what Paul must have been feeling.

**1. Physical discomfort**

A prison cell is never pleasant. We can imagine that Paul (near 60 years of age) was experiencing cold, dampness, filth, rats, darkness, stench, chains, stocks, hunger, perhaps wounds from a beating, chafing from the shackles, etc.

*<sup>13</sup> When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas (4:13).*

*<sup>21</sup> Do your best to get here before winter (4:21).*

**2. Loneliness**

Perhaps at no other time in his life did Paul feel more alone. In the hour of greatest crisis he was most alone.

*<sup>9</sup> Do your best to come to me quickly, <sup>10</sup> for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. <sup>11</sup> Only Luke is with me... (4:9-11).*

3. Humiliation.

In prison, Paul must have struggled with feelings of shame. He was an educated and cultured rabbi. He was a Roman citizen. Not only the humiliation of being treated as a common prisoner, but the total lack of privacy would have tested the character of any man. He knew that his circumstances would cause others to feel shame too.

*<sup>8</sup> So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel... (1:8).*

4. Feeling useless and bored.

Paul was cut off from any productive activity. He couldn't preach, read, write, or counsel. All he could do was wait and pray. He longed to use the time in something productive.

*<sup>13</sup> When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. (4:13).*

5. Feeling reflective about the meaning of life.

Sitting on death row gave Paul time to think and reflect about the past... about the future... about his enemies... about his friends. Notice what is absent from his letter as he reflects on his life.

- Self-pity.
- Bitterness.
- Regrets.
- Depression, despair.
- Doubts about God and His goodness.

As he contemplated the meaning of suffering and death, there were surely many things he did not understand. But there was one thing of which he was absolutely certain: the best is yet to be!

- *...**I know** whom I have believed, and am **convinced** that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day. (1:12).*
- *<sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me **the crown** of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (4:7-8).*

When everything seemed uncertain and unstable, one **fixed point** enabled Paul to navigate safely through the seas of chaos. His certainty preserved his sanity.

*Those who lead disorderly lives tell those who are normal that it is they who deviate from nature.... Just as those who are on board ship think that the people on shore are moving away.... We need a fixed point.... (Pascal. Pensees. #697).*

### TABLE TALK

1. Imagine your own funeral. Family and friends are gathered to pay their respects. The pastor opens the microphone for those who would like to share memories of who you were and what your life meant to them. What would you like for people to say?
2. Have you ever been in circumstances where you were hurting, alone, humiliated, useless, bored, and reflective? How did you respond?
3. What was the secret of Paul's confidence in the midst of very difficult circumstances? What was his "fixed point"? Have you found a "fixed point" for your life?

## II. II Timothy.

In his final days, Paul writes his last words to Timothy. The letter is not addressed to a church, but to an individual... a friend, a disciple, a pastor. Paul's race is over. Now, he must pass the baton to someone who can continue the mission. Timothy is the man. Listen to how Paul describes Timothy in his letter to the Philippians.

<sup>20</sup> *I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.*

<sup>21</sup> *For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.* <sup>22</sup>  
*But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. (Phil. 2:20-22).*

In his final message, Paul entrusts the mission of God into the hands of this young disciple, Timothy. He bequeaths to him the "**good deposit**" (1:14) (=the treasure).

## Outline of II Timothy.

GUARD THE TREASURE ENTRUSTED TO YOU (1:14)			
BY MAINTAINING GODLY CHARACTER	BY ACCOMPLISHING GODLY TASKS	BY OVERCOMING UNGODLY OBSTACLES	BY ACHIEVING THE DIVINE OBJECTIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember your heritage</li> <li>Fan the flame</li> <li>Don't be ashamed</li> <li>Guard the good deposit (with help of the Holy Spirit!)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pass on the truth that was passed on to you</li> <li>Live like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a soldier</li> <li>an athlete</li> <li>a farmer</li> <li>a workman</li> <li>a vessel</li> <li>a servant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare for difficult times, difficult people &amp; false doctrines.</li> <li>Follow a godly model</li> <li>Base all your teaching on the Scriptures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Run the race marked out for you!</li> <li>Paul has finished his race.</li> <li>Remember your friends and your enemies</li> </ul>
Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4

A. Guard the treasure by... maintaining **godly character**. (Chapter 1)

Paul wants Timothy to know that two things are indispensable if the treasure is to be guarded so that it can be passed on intact to others: **sound doctrine** and **godly character**.

<sup>16</sup> *Watch your **life** and **doctrine** closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. (I Tim. 4:16).*

1. Remember your **heritage**.

<sup>5</sup> *I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. (1:5).*

The treasure about which Paul is speaking cannot be created, earned, or discovered by hard work. It can only be **received as a gift** – passed down from one generation to another. If you are proud of your treasure, it only proves that you are not yet in possession of the “good deposit.” The first mark of godly character is always **humility**.

2. **Fan** the flame.

*<sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup> For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. (1:6-7).*

Fire tends to go out! To keep the flame burning requires both **fuel** and **oxygen**. This treasure Paul gives to Timothy must be guarded, nurtured, protected, and cared for... or it may be lost.

3. Don't be **ashamed**.

Paul knows well how offensive the Gospel is to this world. He knows the temptation to be embarrassed by the name of **Jesus** and living a life of **self-denial**. So he urges Timothy to be bold and public with his faith. Secret discipleship is no discipleship at all!

*<sup>8</sup> So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who has saved us and called us to a holy life (1:8-9).*

4. Guard the **good deposit**... with the help of the Holy Spirit.

*<sup>14</sup> Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. (1:14).*

Constant vigilance is the price of victory. Guard the treasure entrusted to you! The adversaries of the Gospel are many: temptations, worldliness, false doctrines, laziness, demonic influences, moral compromise, etc.

B. Guard the treasure by... accomplishing **godly tasks**. (Chapter 2)1. **Pass on** the truth that was **passed on** to you.

You stand in a long chain of witnesses. As in a relay race, a previous runner passed the baton to you. Now it is your turn to pass the baton to someone else. Your failure in this task will **break the chain** that has been going on through the centuries!

*<sup>2</sup> And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. (2:2).*

Four generations are mentioned in this verse:

- a. Paul – *the things you heard **me** say...*
- b. Timothy – *the things **you** heard me say...*
- c. Those who Timothy will disciple – *entrust to reliable men...*
- d. Those who will be discipled by Timothy's disciples – *who will be qualified to teach others.*

2. Live like this! Six pictures of the Christian life.

Paul uses six metaphors (word pictures) to help Timothy understand some of the tasks he is expected to accomplish as a witness for Christ.

a. A soldier.

<sup>3</sup> *Endure hardship with us like a good **soldier** of Christ Jesus.*

<sup>4</sup> *No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer. (2:3-4).*

Don't think of life as an **amusement park**. Rather, think of it as a **battlefield**. In combat situations, priorities and expectations rapidly become crystal clear:

- \* **obedience.**
- \* **hardship.**
- \* **the enemy.**

b. An athlete.

<sup>5</sup> *Similarly, if anyone competes as an **athlete**, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. (2:5).*

Athletes also have a perspective that helps disciples of Jesus understand what is expected of them:

- \* **discipline and training.**
- \* **playing by "the rules."**
- \* **focus on winning.**

c. A farmer.

<sup>6</sup> *The hardworking **farmer** should be the first to receive a share of the crops. (2:6).*

Paul urges Timothy to also consider farming as an apt metaphor of understanding what is expected of him as a follower of Jesus Christ.

- \* Hard work.
- \* Trust in God for growth and harvest.
- \* Enjoy the fruits of your labor.

d. A workman.

<sup>15</sup> *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a **workman** who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2:15).*

The context of this verse (2:14-18) reveals that Paul is urging Timothy to know God's Word so that he will be able to confront false doctrines and heresies that are competing for the hearts and minds of men and women in his generation. Notice the terms Paul uses to encourage us to know God's Word:

- \* Do your best.
- \* Work (a workman).
- \* Not ashamed when we stand before God.
- \* Correctly handles (sound hermeneutics).

e. A vessel.

<sup>20</sup> *In a large house there are **articles (vessels)** not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. <sup>21</sup> If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work (2:20-21).*

Paul is reminding Timothy that as he "guards the treasure" of the Gospel to remember both divine sovereignty (God's part) and human responsibility (my part).

God's part:

He decides what kind of "vessel" I will be: gold, silver, wood or clay... some for noble purposes, some for ignoble.

My part:

Keep myself clean from impurities and available for any purpose (good work) God may choose.

## f. A servant.

*<sup>22</sup> Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. <sup>23</sup> Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. <sup>24</sup> And the Lord's **servant** must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. <sup>25</sup> Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, <sup>26</sup> and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (2:22-26).*

A final metaphor to help Timothy understand his role (task) in life is that of a servant. The context emphasizes a servant's responsibility to please his master and behave in a manner worthy of the house in which he serves.

- \* Flee evil desires of youth.
- \* Pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace.
- \* Hanging out with those who have pure hearts.
- \* Avoiding stupid arguments and foolish quarrels.
- \* Be kind, gentle and not resentful.

C. Guard the treasure by... overcoming ungodly obstacles. (Chapter 3)

## 1. Prepare for difficult times, difficult people, and false doctrines.

*But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. <sup>2</sup> People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— <sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. <sup>6</sup> They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, <sup>7</sup> always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. (3:1-7).*

Paul's warning seems to be aimed more toward problems **in the church** ... than without. The difficulties are found among those who have "a form of godliness." Avoid these errors at all costs!

- Those whose "love" is misplaced:
  - \* Lovers of themselves.
  - \* Lovers of money.

- \* Love-less.
  - \* Not lovers of the good.
  - \* Lovers of pleasure.
- Those whose religion permits them:
    - \* to live in godlessness and immorality.
    - \* to take advantage of and hurt other people.
    - \* to be proud, boastful.
    - \* to live for selfish desires and ambitions.
  - Those whose religion looks good on the outside but has no power to make one holy (like Christ).
2. Follow a godly model.

*<sup>10</sup> You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, <sup>11</sup> persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. <sup>12</sup> In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, <sup>13</sup> while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. <sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it... (3:10-14).*

For Timothy to successfully guard the treasure and live a life characterized by sound doctrine and godly character, he needs more than a written set of instructions. He needs a **model**.

Few of us (none of us?) will ever become holy in thought and deed until we find someone who **incarnates** godliness and inspires us to say: "I want to be like him when I grow up."

3. Base all your teaching on the inspired Scriptures.

*<sup>15</sup> and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (3:15-17).*

- a. The **nature** of Scripture.

All Scripture is God-breathed... inspired... the self-expression of God.

b. The **purpose** of Scripture.

All Scripture is useful for:

- Teaching.
- Rebuking.
- Correcting.
- Training in righteousness.
- Equipping.

D. Guard the treasure by... achieving the **divine objective**. (Chapter 4)

## 1. Run the race marked out for you.

*In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: <sup>2</sup> Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. <sup>4</sup> They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. <sup>5</sup> But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. (4:1-15).*

As a pastor, Timothy's God-given mission was clear:

- a. Preach the Word.
- b. Be prepared in season and out of season.
- c. Correct.
- d. Rebuke.
- e. Encourage.
- f. Keep your head in all situations.
- g. Endure hardship.
- h. Do the work of an evangelist.
- i. Discharge all the duties of your ministry.

## 2. Paul has finished his race.

*<sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (4:6-8).*

Paul faces death with grace, peace and assurance. His work is done. He has deep confidence that he has accomplished what God placed him here to do!

### 3. Remember your friends and your enemies.

There is a sense in which our lives are **defined** by both the friends and the enemies that we accumulate across the years. This takes on poignant significance as we approach the end of the race.

Paul's friends:

- a. Luke (4:11).
- b. Mark (4:11).
- c. Priscilla and Aquila (4:19).
- d. Etc.

Paul's enemies and ex-friends:

- a. Demas (because he loved this world) (4:9).
- b. Alexander, the metalworker (4:14-15).
- c. Phygelus and Hermogenes (they deserted me) (1:15).
- d. Hymenaeus and Philetus (have wandered away from the truth) (2:17-18).
- e. Hymenaeus and Alexander (have shipwrecked their faith) (I Tim. 1:19-20).
- f. Etc.

### TABLE TALK

1. Timothy knew his divine objective, his God-given purpose in life. Do you know yours? Can you state it?
2. Who has been (or is) a "Paul" in your life? Who invested in you? Who passed on to you the Gospel treasure? A grandparent (Lois)? A parent (Eunice)? A mentor? A mature believer? Describe the things he did to pass the treasure along to you.
3. Who has been (or is) a "Timothy" in your life? In whom are you investing? To whom are you seeking to pass on the Gospel treasure? A biological child? A grandchild? A younger believer? Describe the things you are doing to pass the treasure along to him.
4. If you have no "Timothy," what do you plan to do to find one? Pray about this.