

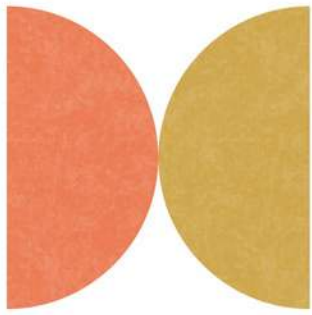


VISION SERIES

A VISION FOR GOD'S HEART

SMALL GROUP STUDIES

small
groups
LIFE TOGETHER



A VISION FOR GODS HEART

WELCOME TO THE ST PAUL'S CASTLE HILL 2026 VISION SERIES

Each year, the heart behind our vision series is to encourage us together as a church, to look forward to where God is leading us and consider how he is leading us there. It is not a time to push human agendas, but rather to prayerfully consider together the opportunities and challenges ahead of us as a church, seeking God's strength, wisdom and guidance as we move forward with confidence, growing as his people and seeing the gospel advance.

We want to hold the gospel tightly, and our own plans loosely.

As we look towards 2027, let's think about how we bring the Gospel of light to:

Every Generation,

Every Household,

and Every Community.

As we prayerfully seek God's direction for his church and discern together how each of us can play our part in the body of Christ, we will spend three weeks in the book of 2 Timothy.



WHAT'S COMING UP

GRACE IN COMMUNITY – ST PAUL'S CONFERENCE **Saturday 12th September, 9:00am – 2:30pm**

We're so excited to be doing something new this year as our whole church family gathers across all generations!

The St Paul's Conference "Grace in Community" is an opportunity to sit under God's word, be encouraged together, and set our hearts on the direction God is leading us as his people.

THANKS AND GIVING SUNDAY **Sunday 13th September – All Services**

Each year as a church we put aside a Sunday service to reflect on all that God has been doing in and through our church over the last year and give Him praise and thanking Him for His faithfulness.

Thanks and Giving Sunday is also an opportunity to consider how God is calling us to joyfully and generously join in with the plans we believe God has in store for the year ahead.

Prime Time – September 15th

Commons Sunday – September 20th

Final Crossfire Term 3 – September 25th

Help at Home – September 26th

Songs of Praise Hosted by St James – September 27th

UNDERSTANDING 2 TIMOTHY

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

AUTHOR AND OCCASION. 2 Timothy presents itself as a letter from Paul and has traditionally been understood as his final letter before his execution, composed from a Roman prison around AD 66–67, during the reign of Nero. While Pauline authorship is disputed by some modern scholars, this study follows the letter's own presentation and the traditional understanding that Paul wrote it. This was likely Paul's second Roman imprisonment, and it was far harsher than the first. During his earlier imprisonment (reflected in Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon), Paul had relative freedom under house arrest and reasonable hope of release. Here, he describes himself as "suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal" (2:9) and speaks of his life already "being poured out like a drink offering" with his "departure" at hand (4:6). Commentators treat 2 Timothy as Paul's final testament — his last charge to the man he trusted to carry the gospel forward.

THE NERONIAN PERSECUTION. In AD 64, a great fire devastated Rome, and Nero blamed Christians, leading to persecution of Christians in Rome. What had been a marginalized sect was now facing severe hostility. Paul writes in a world where "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (3:12) was not abstract theology but Paul's own lived, present reality, and a warning of what Timothy might face.

TIMOTHY AND EPHESUS. Timothy was pastoring in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3), a congregation Paul had established and among whom he ministered for roughly three years (Acts 19–20). Ephesus was a wealthy, strategically located, religiously pluralist city and home to the temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world.

By the time Paul writes 2 Timothy, false teachers had infiltrated the Ephesian church, including two named individuals, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who taught that the resurrection of believers had already taken place (2:17–18). Paul also invokes "Jannes and Jambres" (3:8), the traditional Jewish names for Pharaoh's court magicians, whose opposition to Moses provides a parallel to these teachers who oppose the truth.

TIMOTHY'S BACKGROUND. Timothy had a mixed heritage: a believing Jewish mother, Eunice, and a Greek father. He had been raised in the Scriptures from infancy by his mother and grandmother, Lois (1:5; 3:15). He had travelled with Paul for years, beginning in Acts 16, and had personally witnessed Paul's sufferings in his own home region. Lystra was Timothy's hometown, where Paul had been stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19–20).

THE LETTER'S MOVEMENT. 2 Timothy as a whole is structured as a dying man's charge to persevere and to guard and pass on the gospel ("guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you," 1:14).

The letter moves from Paul's personal circumstances to Timothy's responsibility to carry the gospel forward. In chapters 1–2, Paul calls Timothy to courage and faithfulness, urges him to guard the gospel and entrust it to others, and warns him against false teaching. These themes set the stage for Paul's further instructions in chapters 3–4, where he calls Timothy to remain faithful in the face of increasing opposition.

Chapter 3 moves from a warning about the moral and spiritual decline of "the last days" (3:1–9) into Paul's personal appeal to Timothy based on their shared history (3:10–13), then into the great statement on Scripture's origin and sufficiency (3:14–17), which grounds the solemn charge to preach the word (4:1–5). It is, in effect, Paul's final instructions before death, a final passing of the baton.

THROUGHOUT 2 TIMOTHY

KEY THEMES AND EMPHASIS

SUFFERING FOR THE GOSPEL. A constant refrain, Paul urges Timothy not to be ashamed of the gospel or of Paul's chains (1:8, 12), to "join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2:3) and reminds him that if we died with him, we also live with him (2:11–12).

GUARDING AND TRANSMITTING THE GOSPEL DEPOSIT.

Paul repeatedly charges Timothy to guard sound doctrine (1:13–14) and to entrust it to "reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2:2), a vision of multi-generational faithfulness.

THE SPIRIT'S POWER. Paul reminds Timothy "The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline" (1:7), urging him to "fan into flame the gift of God" within him (1:6).

ENDURANCE AS THE MARK OF GENUINE FAITH. The soldier, athlete, and farmer images of 2:3–7, and the "trustworthy saying" of 2:11–13, present perseverance — not sinless perfection, as the hallmark of authentic discipleship.

SOUND DOCTRINE VERSUS FALSE TEACHING. Paul repeatedly contrasts sound teaching with "godless chatter" (2:16) and "foolish and stupid arguments" (2:23), culminating in the description of teachers who tell people what their "itching ears" want to hear (4:3–4).

THROUGHOUT 2 TIMOTHY

KEY THEMES AND EMPHASIS

THE DIVINE ORIGIN AND SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE.

3:16–17 stands as one of the clearest biblical statements on inspiration. Scripture is "God breathed" and fully adequate to equip the believer for every good work.

A LIFE THAT MATCHES THE MESSAGE. Paul does not appeal only to doctrine but to a life Timothy has personally observed (3:10–11), teaching validated by conduct.

THE SOLEMN CHARGE TO PREACH. 4:1–2 is the letter's climactic imperative, delivered "in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus."

FINISHING WELL. Paul's own testimony, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (4:7), models what faithful endurance to the end looks like, with a crown of righteousness awaiting.

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AMID HUMAN WEAKNESS. "If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself" (2:13), a sober but hope-filled anchor for a letter otherwise full of warnings.

STUDY #1

REACHING EVERY GENERATION

2 TIMOTHY 1:3 – 14

WELCOME

1. What is the most important life skill or mindset you have had passed onto you?

BRIEF CONTEXT

Paul is writing to Timothy, a close friend and fellow worker in the gospel. Timothy has been serving in Ephesus, and Paul is writing to encourage him to remain faithful to the gospel and the ministry God has entrusted to him. Paul writes from imprisonment, knowing that his death is near, giving the letter a particular sense of urgency as he prepares Timothy to continue the work.

READ: 2 TIMOTHY 1:3 – 14

UNPACK

2. What is Paul doing as he begins this letter? What does his “clear conscience” tell us about his relationship with God and the way he approaches his ministry?

3. Paul begins with prayer, affection and Timothy's family. What does this tell us about Paul and Timothy's relationship and the way faith has been passed on to Timothy?

4. What does Paul mean by "fan into flame the gift of God"? How does the Spirit God has given Timothy enable him to do this?

5. What in Paul's description of "the Spirit God gave us" stands out as an encouragement or challenge to you?

6. What does Paul call Timothy to do in verse 8? What reasons does he give Timothy to be courageous?

7. Read verses 9–11 again. Paul describes the Gospel he was appointed to herald. What stands out to you in his summary of the Gospel? How does it differ from how we might summarise it?

8. What does Paul mean by “I know whom I have believed” and “he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him”? How do these words give him confidence despite his suffering?

REACHING EVERY GENERATION

9. Having described what he believes his charge from God is, what instructions does Paul then give Timothy in verses 13–14? What does each instruction mean?

10. As Paul calls Timothy into gospel action, he repeatedly points to the help of the Spirit. Looking at the work of the Spirit throughout this passage, what might it look like for that same work of the Spirit to be evident in you?

11. We don't all have the exact same calling as Paul and Timothy. Which aspects of their calling in this passage are universal to all Christians? What would it look like to live these out?

READ: PSALM 78:4-7 + PETER 1:12-15

These passages show the importance of deliberately passing on what we have received. Timothy's faith was shaped by Lois and Eunice, and Paul is now investing in Timothy. Timothy is then instructed to pass on what he has received to others. Gospel ministry looks beyond our own lifetime as we faithfully pass the gospel from one generation to the next.

12. Who has God put in your life, or who could you seek out, to make a generational investment in the gospel?

VISION IN ACTION

Each week in this series, we want to take time for purposeful and practical response, considering how we can be encouraged in our **prayer, giving,** and what we can **go** and do. Below are some prompts to get the conversation started.

PRAY: For the next generation and those who have gone before you.

GIVE: Resources for the Kingdom: our time, energy, wealth, and all that God has given us for generational Gospel ministry.

GO: Invest in the next generation and fan into flame what God has given them.



COMING UP

St Paul's Conference: Grace in Community – September 12th

Thanks and Giving Sunday – September 13th

STUDY #2

REACHING EVERY HOUSEHOLD

2 TIMOTHY 1:15 – 2:13

WELCOME

If you were to write a letter to anyone thanking them for their investment in your faith, who would it be and why?

BRIEF CONTEXT

Paul is writing to Timothy during a difficult period of his ministry. Paul is imprisoned and facing the end of his life, while Timothy is continuing the gospel ministry Paul has entrusted to him. Throughout the letter, Paul speaks about the people who have remained faithful and those who have turned away, before encouraging Timothy as a younger gospel worker facing the challenges of ministry

READ: 2 TIMOTHY 1:15 – 2:13

UNPACK

1. Why do you think Paul includes both the people who abandoned him and the hospitality he received as he writes to Timothy?

2. Practically, what do you think Paul means when he tells Timothy to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”?

3. Why is 2:2 particularly important for us as we think about reaching every household?

4. As Paul instructs Timothy, ask God to give you insight into the meaning of these three illustrations. Discuss together and share what you discover.

-Soldier

-Athlete

-Farmer

5. Paul's one-verse summary of the Gospel in 2:8 is even more succinct than in the previous chapter. What is significant about what he chooses to highlight?

6. What comparison does Paul make in verses 9–10, and how does it encourage him to endure?

7. The "trustworthy saying" in verses 11–13 has four statements. Break into 4 groups and have each group summarise what their statement teaches about following Christ.

REACHING EVERY HOUSEHOLD

8. Paul describes a chain of gospel investment: Paul invests in Timothy, Timothy entrusts the gospel to reliable people, and they invest in others. If you put yourself in Timothy's place, who is your "Paul"? Who are you investing in?

9. If we are not investing in others, what is holding us back? Are we treating this as something every Christian should continue growing in, or something we can leave to others?

10. What costs might we genuinely face if we step forward boldly to reach every household? Could fear of these costs be holding us back from living out God's vision? How might being "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" shape the way we face those costs? are not investing in others, what is holding us back? Are we treating this as something every Christian should continue growing in, or something we can leave to others?

11. In response to our Thanks and Giving Sunday service, use the “Vision in Action” section below to pray together with boldness and reflect on where God might be calling you to Give and Go, both collectively and individually.

VISION IN ACTION

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PRAY: For people to come to know Jesus.

GIVE: For new churches, buildings and ministries.

GO: As evangelists and church planters.



COMING UP

Prime Time – September 15th

Young Adults, The Commons – September 20th

STUDY #3

REACHING EVERY COMMUNITY

2 TIMOTHY 3:10 – 4:5

WELCOME

1. As a group share your biggest encouragements, questions and convictions from the Grace in Community – St Paul's Conference and the Vision Series so far.

BRIEF CONTEXT

Paul continues writing to Timothy as he faces the challenges of ministry and an increasingly difficult world. Timothy has known Paul, his teaching and his life for many years, and Paul writes with the urgency of a final charge to his trusted fellow worker.

READ: 2 TIMOTHY 3:10 – 4:5

UNPACK

2. Read 3:10–11. Make a list of every quality or experience Paul says Timothy has "followed" about him. Why do you think Paul begins his final charge to Timothy this way?

3. In verses 12–13, what contrast is Paul drawing between the trajectory of the godly and the trajectory of deceivers?

4. Read 3:14–15. What two things does Paul urge Timothy to do? Why might the source of Timothy's instruction matter as much as its content?

5. What Scriptures is Paul referring to in verse 15, and how do they point us towards salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?

6. Looking at verses 16–17, unpack each function Paul attributes to Scripture (v16). How do each of these together help achieve their collective purpose described in verse 17?

7. Why do you think Paul frames his charge to Timothy in 4:1 this way?

8. What stands out to you about each instruction in 4:2?

9. Read 4:3–4. What picture does Paul paint of what people will reject and seek?

REACHING EVERY COMMUNITY

10. What barriers do you face when sharing the Gospel with people who are different from you? How does Paul's ministry, which involved suffering (3:10–11), set an example for us and what does it suggest about where we should seek our confidence?

11. In 4:3–4, people are described as accumulating teachers "to suit their own passions" rather than enduring sound teaching. As we share the gospel to different communities and groups, how can we guard against reshaping the gospel to conform to the preferences of the people we are trying to reach? (See also 3:16–17)

12. The charge to "preach the word... in season and out of season" (4:2) assumes some settings will welcome the message and others won't. What would it practically look like for a church or an individual believer to stay faithful to Paul's charge "in season and out of season"?

REFLECTION

13. Paul could point Timothy to a life he (Paul) had personally lived, not merely words he had spoken (3:10–11). Whose life has been modelled for you which demonstrates Christian faithfulness? What might others see in your life that points them towards faithful Christian living?

14. Sit with the four commands of 4:5: be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. Which of these four is hardest for you right now, and why? Take a few minutes to pray specifically about that one area before moving on.

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