

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

HERALD – APOSTLE – TEACHER: *Doing the work of an evangelist.*

This is a new translation of 2 Timothy was produced at the request of Canon Edward Carter as part of his resource exploring Evelyn Underhill's guidance on prayer, which is available at: www.chelmsford.anglican.org/evelyn-underhill.

2 Timothy is a uniquely personal letter written by Paul at the very end of his life. Indeed he is very clearly aware of his own near departure and part of the purpose of the letter is to encourage Timothy in his work based on what Paul has handed on. It is quite different in feel from the other pastoral letters (1 Timothy and Titus) which are largely concerned with organisational issues.

My approach in producing this translation has been to render the Greek into English as closely as possible while also making the English readable. Certain features may feel unfamiliar because I have often partly reproduced the Greek syntax and have almost always both translated all the words present in the text and worked hard not to put in words that are not present in the text. The edition of the Greek New Testament I have used is Nestle Aland 28.

I have tried where possible to incorporate the fact that – in a way very different from English – most Greek words have complementary over lapping meanings simultaneously. This inevitably makes the task of translation complex.

An illustration may help – from John 1: one of the most famous lines in the Gospels reads: “the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not” The next word is *katalambano* but this word can mean “lay hold of”, “seize”, “preoccupy”, “possess”, “overtake”, “understand”, “comprehend” (in various senses), “catch”, “hold”, “constrain”, “convict”. Many modern translations narrow it down to “and the darkness did not overcome it”. But you can see immediately from the variety that in fact the AV “*comprehendeth* it not” is actually closer to the mark.

More complex still with a word like *logos*, frequently translated “word” or “Word.” It is found throughout the New Testament, often simply to mean “word”, or in the plural “words”. But it can also mean “conversation”, “argument”, “dispute”, “philosophical principle” and so on. And of course at the beginning of John's Gospel it refers to the second person of the Trinity.

And a very brief word about punctuation, paragraphs and sentences. Ancient Greek was written in continuous script without spacing or punctuation. That means that – within very broad parameters – the punctuation, paragraphs and sentences that appear both in modern editions of the Greek text and in all translations are editorial decisions.

Which brings me to my final point: all translations are acts of interpretation. If you compare a series of translations of the same text you will see that people have interpreted what is in front of them in the light of many different factors – personal, historical, doctrinal – and these have been both conscious and unconscious. Those I am aware of I have of course sought to ignore, but if you pick up something of which I am unaware, please let me know.

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1 I Paul apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus 2 to Timothy beloved, child: grace, mercy, peace from God our father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 I give thanks to God whom I worship with a clear conscience, from my forebears, as I make unceasing remembrance of you in my prayers by night and day, 4 desiring to see you, remembering your tears, that I may be filled with joy, 5 being reminded of the sincere faith in you which lived first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and I am persuaded is also in you. 6 For which reason I remind you to set on fire again the grace of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

7 For God did not give you a spirit of cowardice but of power and love and self-control. 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the witness of our Lord nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering with the Gospel according to the power of God, 9 who saves us and calls us by a holy calling not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace, given to us in Christ Jesus before the eternal ages, 10 and made visible now through the appearance of our Saviour Christ Jesus – abolishing death and bringing to light life and immortality through the Good News 11 for which I was made herald and apostle and teacher 12 which is the reason I also suffer these things. But I am not ashamed for I know in what I have put my trust and I am confident that what has been entrusted to me he is able to keep safe for that day.

13 Hold to the pattern of healthy teaching which you heard from me in the faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; 14 guard the good tradition handed on to you through the Holy Spirit which is living in you.

15 You know this – that all those in Asia turned away from me, among them Phygelos and Hermogenes. 16 May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphoros, because many times he gave me relief from toil and was not ashamed of my chains, 17 but when he was in Rome he eagerly searched for me and found me; 18 may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And the ministry he exercised in Ephesus you know better.

2.1 So you, my child, be strengthened in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you heard from me through many witnesses, entrust these things to faithful people who will be capable also of teaching others. 3 Share in sufferings as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one joining up as a soldier gets entangled in the ordinary business of life in order to make a good impression on the person enlisting the soldiers. 5 And if someone is competing, they are not crowned unless they compete according to the rules. 6 It is the working farmer who must first have a share in the fruits. 7 Think about what I am saying – for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

8 Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, from the seed of David, according to my Good News, 9 for which I am suffering evil even as far as chains as an evil doer, but the word of God is not chained; 10 because of this I endure everything for the sake of the chosen ones, so that they also may find salvation in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

11 Faithful the word:

- for if we have died with him, we also will live with him;
- 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him;
- if we deny, he will also deny us;
- 13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he is not able to deny himself.

14 Remind them of these things, begging them earnestly before God not to fight over words for no useful purpose, but only for the ruin of those who are listening. 15 Be eager to present yourself acceptable to God, a worker with no cause for shame, cutting straight the word of truth. 16 Avoid unholy empty talking, for it advances irreverence all the more 17 and their argument like gangrene will spread. Among them are Hymenaios and Philetos who have missed the target about the truth saying resurrection has already happened – and they are overturning some people's faith.

19 However the strong foundation of God stands having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his" and "Let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord keep out of the way of injustice."

20 In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable purposes and some for dishonorable;

21 therefore if someone purifies themselves from these things, that person will be a vessel for honour, hallowed, useful to the master ready for every good work.

22 Flee the desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 Reject the foolish and uninstructed speculations, knowing that they give birth to arguments; 24 a servant of the Lord must not fight but must be kind towards everyone, apt at teaching, long-suffering, 25 in gentleness teaching opponents, so that God may grant them a change of understanding to knowledge of the truth 26 and they may sober up from the deceiver's snare, having been caught alive by him to do his will.

3.1 And know this - that in the last days difficult times will threaten; 2 for people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, blasphemers, faithless to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 without natural affection, implacable (FOOTNOTE: literally: without drink offerings, therefore not allowing a truce), backbiting, impotent, savage, not loving the good,

4 traitors, out of control, deluded, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the outward appearance of piety but denying its power; avoid these people. 6 For from these are those who go into houses and take prisoner silly women heaped up with sins and led by all sorts of desires,

7 always studying and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. 8 In the way Ianniss and Lambres stood up against Moses, so these people – who have destroyed their understanding and fail to pass the test about faith – stand up against the truth.

9 But they will not make much more headway, for their lack of understanding will be very clear to everyone, as also was theirs (i.e. Ianniss and Lambres).

10 You have followed closely my teaching, my conduct, my purpose, my faith, my patience, my love, my endurance, 11 my persecutions, my suffering, everything that happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra – such persecutions I endured and the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12 And indeed all those who wish to live righteously in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

13 Bad people and imposters make headway for the worse leading astray and being led astray. 14 But you abide in the things you learnt and are established in, knowing from which people you learned, 15 and that from childhood you know the sacred writings, which have power to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, for argument, for putting straight, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the person who belongs to God may be ready, prepared for every good work.

4. I bear witness before God and Christ Jesus who comes to judge the living and the dead, and his appearance and his kingdom: 2 announce the message, press it in good times and bad, refute, warn, encourage, in all patience and teaching. 3 For there will be a time when people will reject healthy teaching and they will accumulate teaching according to their own desires, tickling their ears, 4 and they will turn away from hearing the truth and they will turn off course towards myths.

5 And you be sober in all things, put up with suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry. 6 For I am being poured out like a drink offering and the time of my departure stands near. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have completed the race, I have kept the faith; 8 now there lies in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all those who have longed for his appearing.

9 Be eager to come to me swiftly; 10 for Demas has left me, loving the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica, Kreskes to Galatia, Titos to Dalmatia; 11 Lukas alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you for he is useful to me in ministry. 12 I sent Tychikos to Ephesus. 13 The coat which I left in Troas with Karpos bring when you come, also the books particularly the parchments.

14 Alexander the coppersmith informed against me badly; the Lord will pay him back according to his works; 15 you also guard against him, for he stands very much opposed to our teachings.

16 At my first defence hearing no one was with me, but everyone deserted me; may it not be reckoned against them. 17 The Lord stood by me and filled me with power, so that through me the proclamation might be fulfilled and all nations might hear. And I was rescued from the mouth of the lion. 18 The Lord will protect me from every evil act and will save me for his heavenly kingdom: to him be glory for ever and ever, amen.

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila and the household of Onesiphoros. 20 Erastos stayed in Corinth and I left behind Trophimos sick in Miletus.

21 Hurry to come before winter. Euboulos greets you, and Poudes and Linos and Klaudia and all the brothers.

22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.