

Introduction to 2 Timothy

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[0:00] Welcome back. Some of you got in a little late. We think this is our 19th year. We're going to treat it like that.

! We'll celebrate our 20th anniversary here or at the Eastern Gate in the New Jerusalem. We'll figure out what's going to happen there, but it's good to see you all.

This is the Fat Boys. I don't think we have anyone new, but if we may, I don't know, but it's faithful, available, and teachable. I didn't want you to get the wrong idea.

Yeah. Faithful, available, and teachable. Fat Boys. Trainable, yeah. My wife has been pushing for that, or untrainable.

We made a commitment some time back to work through Paul's pastoral epistles, sometimes referred to as his personal letters.

[1:19] Many theologians identify the pastoral epistles. By the way, this is introductory. We're not going to get to verse 1. Jonathan and Pastor Don will be well in China when we get to verse 1, and we probably won't get to verse 2, the way I go.

Amen. But many theologians identify the pastoral epistles as 1 and 2 Timothy, as well as Titus. Well, then, some begin to include Philemon, and you may recall about a year and a half ago, we studied Philemon. Then we did 1 Timothy, and my goal this year is to do 1 Timothy and Titus in just one year. We'll see.

I'm not sure where we'll go from there, but I've got some ideas that I'm mulling over. And we'll see how that works out.

I want to make some preliminary comments today, and we will get into the book with vigor next week.

[2:42] And most of you will be here, I hope, some more. Every time I teach, every time the pastor preaches and Jonathan teaches, and there's many teachers in here, Mike, others, we want it to be received as part of the sanctification process.

Sanctification, I'll remind you, and I think most of you know this already, is basically a three-part process, which includes justification and glorification.

Most of us, I think, are familiar with the phrase, I have been justified, I am being sanctified, I will be glorified. I tried to work in, in addition to justification, sanctification, application.

I think that's important. But interestingly, justification and glorification both occur, as far as we can tell from Scripture, in an instant in time.

Certainly justification, and I think glorification as well. Sanctification is a lifelong process. And you never arrive.

[4:10] You never arrive in this life. Charles Spurgeon once said he got down on his knees and prayed and said, I thank you, God, that I've arrived and that I'm not like other men.

And all of a sudden, it just struck him what he was saying. And he said, I never felt so distant from the Lord as I felt in that very moment.

And he said, I had to repent with my tears did swim in their orbs. You know, bitter tears. So I want us to put these all in context.

At the moment of salvation, when God redeems a soul, he declares that person to be just or justified.

There is a phrase that has become very popular to describe this instant process. It goes like this. At the moment of salvation or justification, God treats us just as if we had never sinned.

[5:27] And that's true. That's very true. But I want to suggest that it's even more. Because when God declares his child just or justified, God the Father treats us just like we're his own son.

He treats us like we're Jesus. Boy, that is staggering. Now, in this regard, justification is a legal term.

It's a judicial declaration from the judge of the universe who says not guilty.

And without the stain of sin, does anybody feel not guilty? I haven't arrived there just yet.

But let's don't get the idea that God is like a doting father or grandfather, Mike. And he just winks at our sins and says, that's okay.

[6:44] Doesn't do that, does he? He takes our accumulated sins and places them on his dear son and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is the sin bearer. He bore the sins of his people. There is a great passage in Scripture that describes this process.

For me, I could argue in my own life, this is like the centerpiece of the Bible. He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

That will preach. You can mull that over for a long, long time. That is a great statement of faith.

Christ has never and will never sin.

He did not become a sinner. He became a sin bearer. But our sins were imputed to him and his righteousness was imputed to us.

[8:02] So there's imputation, a two-way imputation. Once we have been truly justified, we have access to the throne room of God because we are cloaked in the Son's perfect righteousness.

We enter the throne room and he sees us cloaked in the blood of the Lamb of God. We had a dear saint. He's with the Lord now. Wonderful man.

Lloyd Schnitzer loved him dearly. He could never get past that. He said, I understand Christ dying for my past sins, but I have a problem with all the sins I've committed since salvation.

And I said, Lloyd, when Christ died, all your sins were in the future. Every one of them. Past, present, and future. And he struggled with that.

And I'm sure the Lord sat him down and said, Lloyd, let me explain this. How long does the justification process last?

[9:08] Well, let me quote to you out of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which I think we would certainly believe. The justified may fall into grave sin and fall under God's fatherly displeasure.

I think I would have added in discipline. And they do it elsewhere. But they can never fall from the state of justification.

And at that point, we can say, whew, thank you, Lord. But the Heidelberg Catechism reminds us that the divine verdict of not guilty is not based on what we've done.

It is based solely upon the righteousness of Christ. Aren't you glad it was not based on our own righteousness because we don't have any?

I just love the quote, Pastor, you gave a few Wednesday nights ago of Spurgeon when he said, I thank God that he saved me before the foundation of the world. Because if he was going to do it after I was born, he would have never done it.

[10:12] He would have looked at me and said, there's no way. There's no way. Back to Heidelberg. Not even the gift of faith can be considered the ground of justification, but simply the empty hand that receives it.

This teaching cannot be used to justify moral carelessness, for it is impossible for those grafted into Christ by the true faith not to produce fruits of gratitude.

We're fruit producers, guys. People ask me sometimes, do you think every Christian produces good fruit? And my answer to that is yes.

Sometimes we have to look at a magnifying glass to find some. We do produce a lot of plastic fruit. That's part of the wood, hay, and stubble. It will burn up.

But I believe every true believer does produce fruit. Now, these comments I've made touch on the belief or the doctrine of antinomianism.

[11:26] That's my long word for the night. That means without the moral law. The Gnostics, among others, they thought they were the ascended learners of their day. They believe that since you were saved by grace, you could sin in the flesh all you wanted.

Show me a man who says now, well, I am justified so I can sin any time I want, and I'll show you a man that is deceived and has never been justified, ever.

He has no concept of justification. And I think now I'll inject a quote from Dr. Rogers, who had lots of quotes. The unbeliever leaps into sin and loves it.

The believer lapses into sin and loathes it. We love it. This will come as a shock to most of you, but I sin.

I sin more than I want to. But it makes me miserable. I'm miserable. And eventually it catches up. And I have to, my eyes have to swim in their orbs.

[12:42] Salvation is never a license to sin. It is the liberty not to. Sin for the believer, now that the Holy Spirit has taken up residences, it's a choice.

It becomes a choice. We pass out of that the sin nature. Now, we still have a sin nature in us, but sin nature doesn't have to control us if we yield to the Spirit.

And we have this war in our unredeemed flesh that goes back and forth. Now, when it comes to, that's justification. When it comes to glorification, there is much that can be said, and we'll save it for another time.

We could, for instance, mention the Reformed view of glorification, the Eastern Orthodox view of glorification, the Roman Catholic view of glorification. But tonight, we're not going to go deep.

Let me instead give you a verse of Scripture, which I believe is the definitive passage on glorification. It is found in John's first epistle.

[13:52] We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him just as He is. 1 John 3, 2.

Every now and then, I see these guys on TV, and I've actually met people that say, well, Jesus came to visit me. And there was one guy in this town who says Jesus came and hung out in his apartment for three days.

And at the end of day three, he led Him to himself. And, of course, my comment there was, well, are you like Him? You've now seen Him. And the Bible says that when He appears, you will be like Him because you will see Him as He is.

And I've never had one of them tell me, no, I'm not sinless. I've not been glorified. That is describing the time when every believer will be conformed to the image of Christ.

As John MacArthur says, the glorious nature of that conformity defies description. But as much as glorified humanity can be like incarnate deity, believers will be without becoming deity.

[15:03] Don't buy into the Kenneth Copeland doctrine of we're all gods or Paul Crouch, who's now stood before him. We're not gods, and we're not going to become gods.

But between justification and glorification, we find the doctrine of sanctification.

And we could spend months on this great doctrine, but we're not going to, so let me offer to you my own definition. That's scary. My own definition of sanctification.

Sanctification. And the pastor, I'm sure, so as not to embarrass me, will correct this after I leave.

Sanctification is the process that follows justification and precedes glorification, whereby the Spirit of God works in and through us to recreate us into the image of Christ.

Christ, it is a lifelong process that does not end until we see the glorified Christ and are made like him. Now, there were some that believe you could achieve that in this lifetime.

[16:16] John Wesley was one of them. And I'm told that late in his life he had to admit I didn't achieve it. And it is a lifelong process.

I've been doing a lot of thinking this summer concerning sanctification. Sanctification follows justification as naturally as a ship needing to set sail must exit the harbor.

If the ship's going to sail the high seas, it's got to leave the harbor. I like to think of sanctification as a highway.

We could even call it a superhighway if you want to. At the moment of justification, when a person is truly saved, born again, redeemed, born from above, when that actually happens at that moment, God justifies that person and places them on a path, a road, a highway called sanctification.

Everyone is placed on that highway. And the process of sanctification begins. Now, we need to realize some things.

[17:48] All true believers are on the road of sanctification. All believers travel at different speeds.

Just like in town. I've seen some of you go real fast. Some of you, like Mike, go real slow. And he never waves. He always just looks straight ahead. I know, I know.

You did wave the other day. It shocked me. Some go fast. Some go slow. Don't be critical of those who lag behind or envious of those who speed ahead.

Focus on your drive down the sanctification highway. Concentrate on yours. Now, all of this leads to an observation, these things I've been thinking about.

If you ask most people about their relationship with Christ, they will take you straight to justification. [19:02] That's going to be their focus. I could repeat so many scenarios concerning that that I've heard over the year.

I've heard it in my own family. I've heard it in my wife's family. And I made up one. And this is make-believe.

But it's true. Well, in 1939, when I was just a kid, my mom took me to a tent revival.

She drug me forward. And the evangelist asked me if I wanted to go to heaven. I said, yeah, but not right now. And he said, well, repeat these words.

And I repeated them. I don't know what I said, but I repeated them word for word. He looked at me and said, you're saved now. You don't have to worry about that part of your life anymore.

[20:06] And I haven't. That's been repeated. One guy that I like has said, that's probably put more men in hell than all the bars and whiskey and alcoholism and drugs combined.

I have a brother-in-law who will tell you. He would come here tonight and tell you. When I was 12 years old, I went to a Christian concert. My buddy and I went forward. I got saved. Don't bother me with this Jesus stuff.

That's his attitude. And he ain't going to be around much longer. He's not in good health. So why am I spending all this time on sanctification?

It's not even the focus of our study. Why am I doing that? Because I want you all to remember that as we go through our study of 2 Timothy, realize God will use that as part of our sanctification process.

Being recreated in the image of Christ. Taking in the word, applying it in our lives, telling it to our families, living it out.

[21:29] Pray that God will use our study as part of being sanctified. If we're not going to do that, then we're just up here chatting. We could bring more barbecue and just eat.

Now, what do we have to say specifically about 2 Timothy? Well, just a few things tonight, and we'll get out early. Who's playing tonight, anyway? I don't know.

First of all, the author's Paul. I have to say that because there are some liberal apostates that say, well, Paul didn't write that.

That was written in the mid-17th century by a Roman monk. You know, you get all kinds. Like the Jesus Seminar guy. You all familiar with him at all? Did Jesus really do this?

So far, 34 verses have said 34 verses of the Bible are inspired. Thousands are not.

[22:58] Interestingly, when we moved from here in 1959, we moved to New Jersey. My dad worked in New York for Phillips. A guy came by, a real nice guy, and he wanted to start a church. And we didn't have a church home.

Had a problem finding one. They didn't have Jesus on the cross up in that part of the world. And we started a church.

And it went downhill from there. Robert Funk attended that church. He was a professor at Fairleigh Dickinson University, and he was just really doing it as part of his professor of religion there.

And he was observing. But he gave my dad some literature. I've got it somewhere, and it's horrible. I mean, I ought to just burn it. It was bad. He stood before the Lord now.

So what do we say here? Well, Paul wrote it. And another thing, and I didn't really know this. You know, last words are important words. We studied the last words of Christ.

[24:01] You know, when I had my open heart surgery in 2005, I got my family there. I'm thinking, you know, I need to come up with some last words. I didn't know what to say.

You know, if I don't make it, what are they going to hang on, you know? Doctors and nurses came in and said, it's time to go into surgery. And I didn't know if I was going to come out of that or not. And so Diane's standing there with all these doctors and everything, and I don't know why I did that. I just said, fellas, if I don't make it, do an autopsy. I think she's been giving me slow poison. That was my last words. When I came out two days later, she was ready to kill me. She was standing there with all these doctors she didn't know.

I don't know why I do things like that. This book of 2 Timothy is Paul's last words to us.

[24:56] I didn't know that. Now, if you look at the chronology as it was put in the canon of scriptures, it's not.

I mean, you go 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and then some go to Hebrews and some don't. But 1 Timothy was actually the last book that he wrote.

I didn't realize. He prepared it after his fourth missionary journey, probably between 64, 68 A.D. He wrote it while under arrest and serving his second Roman imprisonment. Why or where he was arrested is unknown to us.

That's been lost to history. Paul was certain that he would soon be executed for his faith. And he tells Timothy that.

[25:58] We'll get to that. There seems to be two reasons why Paul wrote to Timothy. First, he directs Timothy to come to Rome and bring certain things and people with him.

So he's asking Timothy to join him. Secondly, he wants to provide Timothy with a final letter of personal encouragement for his ministry.

For his ministry. And if you're in here on Sunday mornings, you know we've been talking a lot about Paul and Timothy. Because we did the whole book of Acts. Now we're doing the first Thessalonians.

We've been talking about Paul and Timothy. In this second letter, we're going to meet some really neat people. And two of them we're going to meet pretty early on is Timothy's mother and grandmother.

And Lois and Eunice. I'll have some things to say about them. They played important roles in the early training of Timothy in Scripture.

[27:18] And I'll tell you guys, there have been many a person influenced by a godly mother and grandmother. Thank God for mothers and grandmothers.

I don't agree with the Jewish little saying. They do it. It's not true. But it says, when God saw he couldn't be everywhere, at one time he created mothers. I mean, you know.

But thank God for mothers and grandmothers. Jim Merritt preached at this church many years ago. Later became president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Catch him on TV from now on, time to time.

He told us he was a product of a godly grandmother praying on her knees that God would raise up in her family, among her sons or grandsons, a minister of the gospel.

She prayed that prayer every day fervently on her knees. And Jim Merritt told us that I am here because my grandmother prayed me into this pulpit.

[28:23] And then he said, and she died five years before I was born. It was quite a moving thing. Quite a moving thing. Paul is going to speak to us concerning sound doctrine.

He was very concerned about sound doctrine. He's going to talk about the grace of God. He's going to talk about the faithfulness of Christ. He's going to talk to us about the nature and function of Scripture.

There's a lot packed in. These four chapters. Now, there appears to be maybe a reason to believe that Paul was concerned or had a fear that Timothy was in danger of weakening spiritually.

We're not going to put that in granite, but we're going to put it out there as we go through this. This would have been a grave concern for Paul since it's Timothy who's going to carry on his work.

He's the chosen vessel to carry on Paul's work after Paul's gone. And Paul's already, no, he's going. Rome's going to kill him. While there are no historical indications elsewhere in the New Testament as to why Paul was so concerned, there is evidence in the epistle itself that he wrote.

[30:00] This concern is evident. Let me give you some examples. Paul exhorts Timothy to stir up his gift. He tells Timothy, replace fear with power, love, and a sound mind.

He tells Timothy, don't be ashamed of me, not Tom, Paul, and the Lord, but willingly suffer for the gospel.

He tells Timothy, hold on to the truth. Summing up the potential problem, Timothy, who maybe was weakening a little under the pressure of the church and the persecution of the world, Paul calls him to be strong and to continue to preach the word, continue to preach the word.

Now, the other major emphasis on this book, we'll be coming back to it, and even in Titus. It's the major theme that runs through all of Paul's teachings, and as I've been reflecting this summer, all of the New Testament.

It's everywhere. And that is Paul's great concern for the infiltration of false teachers into the churches that he had established.

[31 : 25] Huge concern. The presence of false teachers, I think, explains why Paul wanted to strengthen Timothy.

Now, let me say this. The Holy Spirit wrote this. All of Paul's books that are in the Bible. Peter's, John's, Jude, James, whoever wrote Hebrews.

I threw that in just to be... I'm being spiteful now. I shouldn't have done that. I shouldn't have done that. He was Paul. The dangerous thing is I'm starting to lean that way. Amen.

I'll let Paul correct me or something. Anyway, the Holy Spirit, the writings of the sayings of Christ, not the writings, the sayings of Christ, the warnings of Christ on the wolves and sheep's clothing and false prophets and false teachers.

This is, I think, I think it's the major theme in the New Testament. It's tremendous. And Paul had this great concern.

[32 : 39] And certainly, Dr. Luke, Acts is filled with this. Paul had a great concern that the church was being infiltrated by false teachers into the very churches he had established.

Ephesus being one. Thessalonian church. The presence may explain why he had to strengthen Timothy.

Paul was aware that the churches he established were subject to attack by false teachers. He knew that Satan was behind those attacks.

He also knew that Satan uses men to carry them out. He used men. I feel absolutely certain, I'm confident, that if Paul would come visit us tonight, he would be very alarmed at the infiltration of false teachers by Satan.

And into the church. I think especially the church in the West. America, Canada. I think Paul would say we are way down the road.

[34 : 06] Paul went so far as to tell us that the church was destined for such attacks. Paul reminds us that all believers should expect tribulations.

He will tell us that all believers should expect persecution. Particularly those who want to live godly lives. The more godly you live, the more intense the pressure from the world, the flesh, and the devil will be.

He gives that to us as a promise. All of this entirely consistent with the words of Christ who told us that the world would hate us.

He said the world is going to hate you. It hated me first. The student is not above the master. If it hates the master, why should it hate the students? And he said you're going to be persecuted when you stand with me.

And then he adds, and count it all joy. You know, we're right here in the heart of the Beatitudes. Chapter 5 of Matthew. And the Lord went so far as to say, be glad for such attacks because it puts us in the same class with the Old Testament prophets who were attacked.

[35 : 28] Interesting language. But I was wondering, what would Paul say about our day? You know, the day in which we live. There are false teachers everywhere.

I mean, I don't know if you guys are watching that, but they're everywhere. They're all over television. They're all over television. They sell books by the millions.

They're in this town. Being a police chief, I interact with some of them. They're in this town. False teachers. Jesus and John warned us that in the last days, many false teachers and false prophets would arise and deceive many.

In fact, Jesus said even the elect, if that were possible. John also told us we're in the last days. He said that 2,000 years ago.

[36 : 36] These are the last days. Well, he was writing the words of the Holy Spirit, so I'd have to say that now we're in the last days of the last days. I don't know that Jesus is coming back tonight.

But I don't know that he's not. Now, for those who are interested, I'm going to be bringing the message Wednesday night, this Wednesday night in here, and I plan on speaking about how we can identify a false teacher.

What's the scriptural route route to identify a false teacher? What do you look for? And it's something we need to be able to do for ourselves, for our wives, for our children, for our grandchildren.

And every one of us in here has children in this church. And some of you said, huh? These little kids running around here, if you're not their physical father, you're their spiritual father.

Even the two boys back there, young boys, but there's, you know, little brothers and other little children that sit all around you guys.

[37:46] We're the spiritual dance. And never have we been in a time more critical to protect them from false teachers, false prophets.

It's something we need to be able to do. Now, I'm not going to name any names, but probably the biggest false teacher on the day is Joel Osteen. It would be, or maybe his wife.

Have you all seen that video of her? I may get you to make me a copy and show it Wednesday night. It's just, it's about three minutes. I hate to use the word dingbat.

I really do. It's not really a Bible word, but, you know, the bad thing on that deal is Joel was standing behind her going, and his hair was.

Diane and I had dinner about three weeks ago with some dear friends of ours, former members of Highland Park. Eight years under Dr. McBride's teaching.

[38:52] They moved to Houston many years ago, but they came back through and called us and said, can we have dinner? I said, absolutely. We'd love to see you. So we were together a couple hours and had a great dinner and just caught up, you know, with our kids and grandchildren.

They were showing pictures. And I asked this guy, I said, well, man, where are you going to church down there in Houston? He said, we're longtime members of Joel Osteen's church. And I just, oh, I said, I need to go to the bathroom.

I thought I was going to throw up. I mean, the bottom line is it can happen to anybody. When you get away from the foundational, fundamental teachings of Christ, anything can happen.

Thank you.