

The
New
Testament
in a Year

Week 37

2nd Timothy 1-4; Titus 1

*This week's reflector is
Marion Loree.*

*She serves as minister
with Alma United Church.*

General Questions for Reflection

You might pick one part of each chapter and think about these questions.

- What does this tell me about God (including Jesus and the Holy Spirit)?
- What does this tell me about our world?
- What does it tell me about me?
- What does it say about following Jesus?
- Is there something here I'd like to learn more about?

Why not use these thoughts to shape your prayer today.

Monday

2nd Timothy 1

Paul is writing to Timothy from prison as he is facing active opposition. Despite this, he writes to encourage Timothy in his own struggles. Paul continually holds Timothy up against the foibles of others as one whose faith is founded in Paul's strong teaching. Paul reminds him to continue be strong in his faith and avoid listening to false teachers and those who would tear down Paul's reputation and undermine his teaching.

The reference to the faithful service of Onesiphorus serves to provide another example to Timothy and to ensure him that he is not alone in his "sharing the suffering" for the good news. Paul reminds him that God gives a spirit of power, love and self-discipline which can be relied upon to carry him through.

Think of a time when you were facing opposition and reflect on what it was that helped to carry you through.

Pray for those in today's world who are persecuted for their beliefs and are having difficulty remaining faithful to their God because of it.

Tuesday

2nd Timothy 2

Paul's letter continues to encourage Timothy by offering the image of Christ as the model par excellence for imitation. Paul contrasts the attitudes and actions of Timothy to those of the false teachers – they are given to disputatiousness, godless chatter, revolutionary impulses, and they engage in senseless and useless quarrels. Timothy is invited to remain firm in his faith and Paul offers a list of attributes that "the Lord's servant" should adopt.

Timothy is advised to stand firm and not let himself be swayed or distracted by those who are too easily caught up in controversy and quarrels.

Can you remember a time when you began to doubt yourself and your convictions because many others around you were saying something else or arguing against you? How did it feel? Were you able to remain firm in your opinions? And if so, what helped you?

Wednesday

2nd Timothy 3

Timothy is Paul's delegate while he himself (Paul) is in prison so it is imperative that Timothy remains strong in his faith. His shift from warnings about present adversaries to predictions of the last days appears to be a strategy. It helps to point to and warn about present circumstances and how badly things have turned out in the past for those who were corrupt.

Paul can't emphasize enough how important it is for Timothy to keep in mind Paul's example and he lists some of the ways he overcame previous opposition. This chapter ends with the familiar "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

Do you agree with this last statement? If so, how would you respond to someone who quotes scripture as an argument to uphold opinions that discriminate against or exclude some groups of people (e.g., women, gays)? If not, what do you believe is the purpose of scripture?

Thursday

2nd Timothy 4

This sums up what Paul has been trying to get across to Timothy throughout the letter. That is, to be strong in his faith, teach the message, be patient with others, and continue in his ministry regardless of what others say. His strength has come for the Lord, says Paul, and he is sure that he will continue to be supported in spirit. In other words, he has done what he is charging them to do – he has persevered in faith. Paul also wants Timothy to join him as soon as he can as the others have deserted him in his hour of need.

Paul ends the letter in typical Pauline style - with greetings to others in the group and a final benediction.

Paul sounds like the lonely apostle throughout this letter. He is in prison, many of his friends have deserted him, he knows 'false' teachers are giving his faithful followers a hard time and yet he keeps on keeping on. His faithfulness is truly a trait we have to admire in Paul whether we tend to agree with all of his teachings or not.

Think about someone you may know who has exhibited some of these same faithful traits in the face of hardship and/or persecution. Pray for them and for all who need strength to carry on.

Friday

Titus 1

After a standard opening greeting this letter jumps right into its purpose. Paul had left Titus with specific instructions about the appointing of elders in the various congregations but instead of a list of duties, he focuses on the qualifications they should have. The qualifications he talks about promote the ideals of the Greco-Roman world and stand in contrast to the behaviour of the "rebellious people" whose teachings threatened the social order of both the church and the households within it.

Paul sounds very angry in this first part of the letter and resorts to what appears a generalized and stereotypical view of Cretans which seems to contradict the good characteristics he wants the leaders of the church to exhibit. We are often warned against thinking in stereotypes today because of the harm it does to whole groups of people.

Do you think there is ever a time when using a stereotypical view can be a good thing? What stereotypes do you need to work on overcoming?

Pray for individuals who suffer needlessly because of the views that society holds about the group which they belong to.