

# **Read the Bible in a Year**

Week 40 –March 6-12

**Read on Your Own this Week:**

*Psalm 118*

*Mark 9-12*

**Readings in Class:**

Isaiah 60-66

2 Timothy 1-4

Jeremiah 1-7

## **Introduction to 2 Timothy**

2 Timothy is Paul's farewell letter, his "last will and testament." He's in prison again and this time the circumstances are more dire. He expects to die. Many scholars believe that this was written in the mid to late 60's AD, during the time Nero was persecuting Christians. Nero blamed the Christians for a devastating fire in Rome. According to tradition, Paul was executed during Nero's reign by decapitation just outside Rome.

The letter takes on a very personal tone as Paul writes to his dear friend and brother in the faith, Timothy. He's offering encouragement amidst increasing persecution and false teachings. As Paul is soon going to die, he also reminds Timothy that Jesus has destroyed death and that "If we died with him, we will also live with him."

## **A brief summary of 2 Timothy**

- Introduction (1:1-4)
- Paul's concern for Timothy (1:5-14)
- Paul's situation (1:15-18)
- Special Instructions (2)
- Warning about the Last Days (3)
- Paul's Departing Remarks and final greetings (4)

## **I Have Finished the Race**

A theme that pops up in a few of Paul's letters is the idea of 'running the race.' Here in 2 Timothy he says that he has 'finished the race and kept the faith.' He has reached the finish line and will get the reward of eternal life. This is a great encouragement to Christians facing persecution. Christians will suffer, but we can trust in our Lord and Savior Jesus to save us. We, too, will reach the finish line if we do not give up and we hold fast to the faith we have been given. We can look to Paul's example of Christian martyrdom and how to keep the faith amidst persecution and suffering.

## **Guard the Deposit**

A big theme in this letter is holding fast to the true faith. Paul actually names a few false teachers, telling Timothy to avoid these people. He warns that in the last days there will be people who love themselves and money, who will be boastful and disobedient, lacking love and forgiveness. Timothy is to avoid such people and to stay away from foolish and stupid arguments that only cause division.

Paul also warns that people will not want to hear sound doctrine but will seek after teachers who tell them what their itching ears want to hear. He encourages Timothy that, even though he'll face hardship, to stick to the faith, preach the Word, to be patient, to teach and rebuke and encourage. For "all Scripture is God breathed."