



This Sunday we started our new series at Magdalen Road, looking at 2 Timothy. We began by focusing on the urgency of the heart of the message of 2 Timothy, seeing parallels between Paul's reason for writing and wanting to hand the baton onto Timothy, along with the dire state of much of the church in the Western World.

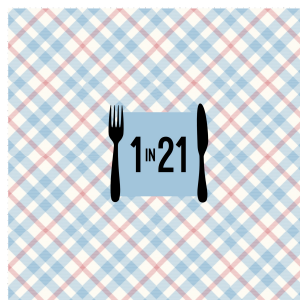
We began with Lord Carey's call to the church last year that it needs to reform or die as the church is one generation away from extinction. Paul was writing an urgent letter to Timothy; urgent due to the situation of the church in Ephesus (facing pressure from the outside eg Alexander in chapter 4, as well as issues from within eg Hymenaeus and Philetus in chapter 2) but also urgent due to Paul's predicament in prison – feeling that he is getting ready to finish (see language in chapter 4 of being poured out like a drink offering in chapter 4). We noted though that this is more than simply leaving a legacy, or stopping the church from declining or keeping the message alive – this is a message that brings life:

### 1) Gospel work is about bringing life (v1)

Paul starts his letter to Timothy with a reminder that the gospel brings life. Paul can write this (with a sense of some optimism and positivity) from prison because he is defining life not as the world does, but as God does in the bible. Jesus is not an added extra to make the journey a bit nicer – but the only way, through his resurrection and defeat of death, that life is possible in this broken world.

### 2) Gospel work happens through people v2-5

2 Timothy is a letter all about people. Packed full of people. People who are doing well but also people who have wandered off. We saw in v2-5 the '*generational nature of the Christian faith*': the way in which Paul invests in Timothy warmly and prayerfully, but also the way in which Timothy has been invested in by his mother and grandmother. We launched an initiative here that challenges folk in MRC to invest in one another: 1 in 21. A challenge to eat a meal with one other person each week, seeking to 'do them good' – perhaps to read the bible or discuss a chapter from a book or simply pray with one another.



### 3) Gospel work is enabled by God v2, v6-7

And when we think we can't manage this kind of life of investing in others, of seeking to be vulnerable and genuinely care for them – we're reminded in these verses that God uses weak people like Timothy and us. He first mentions the grace, mercy and peace (both a promise and a prayer) from God, but also then that God has given us power, love and self-discipline. Timothy will need these in abundance as he seeks to deal with those who oppose him and his gospel message. Just like Timothy, God calls each of us to minister beyond our natural make-up. He calls out of our comfort zone so we will trust him.

Here are just a few questions that might get things going, please feel very free to ignore / adapt for your group:

What's the context of the letter?  
Why is there such an urgency as Paul writes to Timothy?  
Why might there be a similar urgency for us in our context and situation.

How can Paul speak of life in the way that he does?  
What sort of life does he mean? How does that vary from 'life' as the world sees it?  
Is that how we define life?  
How do our lives show what we believe about 'life'?

Why is it so important to invest in people?  
Magdalen Road wants to be a church that  
*"Cares for and disciple people of all backgrounds through Christ-like relationships"*  
Do you think we do that? What's stopping us from doing that?  
Are you a part of that vision?  
How could you be? Is there room in your week for a 1 in 21?  
How could you make room if not?

Do you believe that gospel work is enabled by God?  
Why do we keep trying to do things in our own strength?  
How might we rely more on God?  
Why do you think Timothy needed to be reminded of power, love and self-discipline?  
What would each of these bring to his role as pastor in Ephesus?

What 1 thing can you take away from these verses?