

"Encouragement to Faithfulness"
2 Timothy 1
Lesson for April 13-14, 2013
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Scripture

Passage: 2 Timothy 1:1-18, NASB
Lesson Passage: 2 Timothy 1:1-18, NASB

Exegetical Idea

Paul was encouraged Timothy to keep going, to press on, to continue in faith, to continue to move forward in his ministry.

Teaching/Lesson Idea

Loyalty in suffering

Lesson Aim

To help my audience remain faithful to God and His Word

Lesson

Encouragement to Faithfulness

- I. Salutation : 2 Tim 1:1-2**
 - a. From Paul, An Apostle Of Jesus Christ : vs. 1**
 - b. To Timothy, His Beloved Son : vs. 2**
- II. Call to Faithfulness : 2 Tim 1:3-18**
 - a. Thanksgiving for Timothy : vss. 3-7**
 - b. Call To Courage : vss. 8-12**
 - c. Call To Guard The Truth : vss. 13-14**
 - d. Examples Of Unfaithfulness And Faithfulness : vss. 15-18**

Introduction

Paul was a prisoner in Rome when he wrote this letter, the last of his epistles, to Timothy (cf. 2 Tim. 1:8, 16; 4:6-13). It was written about 66 or 67 A.D. Timothy was in Ephesus, helping to establish a church there. Not long after this writing, according to tradition, the apostle was beheaded.

The purpose of 2 Timothy was to encourage Timothy in his ministry at Ephesus. The primary theme of the letter is the need for faithfulness in the face of hardship.

I. Salutation : 2 Tim 1:1-2

a. From Paul, An Apostle Of Jesus Christ : vs. 1

Paul's introduction is like his other letters, with an up-front recognition that he is an **apostle** according to **the will of God**, not according to the desires of man.

The word "will" in Greek is THEL-ay-mah. It speaks of God's will, His emotional desire, His pleasure for our lives. Paul knew that he was an apostle by the will of God.

Many Christians today are seeking God's will for their lives. I can't tell you how many say, "I just want to do God's will." It seems complicated to know what

God's will is for our lives. Where shall I go to college? Should I accept this job or that one? Whom shall I marry or should I stay single? Where shall I live?

How can you know what God's will is for your life?

First of all, living as the world lives will prevent us from knowing God's will for us. Paul said in **Rom. 12:2**, "*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is...*" If you are walking in the ways of the world, looking at things the way the world does, seeking after worldly things, you will never know what the will of God is for your life. The book of Ephesians repeats this, that sin will keep you from understanding what the will of God is (Eph. 5:15-20).

Now, here's the secret: 99 percent of what God wants you to do in your life is spelled out in His Word. If you live in such a way that you can know the will of God, you are living in the will of God! Over and over, the Bible tells us what His will is:

1Ths. 4:3 *For this is the will of God, your sanctification; {that is,} that you abstain from sexual immorality;*

1Ths. 5:18 *in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1Pet. 2:15 *For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.*

If you are living this way, you are in the will of God! And when times of decision come, your heart is in line with God's heart, therefore you can know the will of God. **Psalm 37:4** says, *Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.*

To put it more simply, if you've been living in rebellion or indifference, being distant from God, it won't matter what decisions you make, because you're out of the will of God already.

On the other hand, if you've been living close to the Lord, delighting in Him, not being conformed to this world, but abstaining from sexual immorality, doing good, giving thanks, your desires are aligned with God's desires. You're living in the will of God - walk close to the Lord, and do what you want!

b. To Timothy, His Beloved Son : vs. 2

Paul addressed Timothy as "my beloved son". Timothy was more than a coworker to Paul. Paul loved him and he spoke to him like a father encouraging a son. Paul prays for "grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

II. Call to Faithfulness : 2 Tim 1:3-18

a. Thanksgiving for Timothy : vss. 3-7

First century letters often included a brief expression of thanksgiving. Paul had directed his thanks to **God, whom** he served **with a clear conscience**.

Your *conscience* is that internal feeling or voice that acts as a guide to what is right or wrong according to God's standards.

The Roman government had imprisoned Paul, insisting that he had done something wrong. It's probable that they arrested him for simply carrying out his Christian ministry. Paul's claim that he served God with a clear conscience implied that he had no reason to change his behavior or to be ashamed of his actions. He served God with a clear conscience.

God's forgiveness cleanses the conscience. A *clear conscience* is something else. It doesn't mean that you are sinless. It means that you are responding rightly to your sense of right and wrong. You have chosen and have done what is right. Paul wrote in **Acts 24:16**, "*I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.*" (NIV)

We certainly want to keep our conscience clear, but we also need to remember that God, not the conscience, is our Judge. Paul wrote, "*My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.*" (1Cor 4:4-5 NIV)

If you listen to and act on the Word of God, if you conduct yourself honorably, you will have a clear conscience (cf. Hebr. 13:18). If your actions are not in accordance with the truths unveiled in God's Word, your conscience gets tainted. It's time that we all maintain a good conscience before God.

Paul was thankful for Timothy, praying for him continually. He **longed to see** Timothy, so they might experience the **joy** of their reunion. It appears that both shared a genuine affection toward each other. Since, Timothy shed **tears** for his mentor(1:4). We don't know why Timothy wept; possibly be when Paul was arrested by the Roman officials and falsely accused with serious crimes.

Lois and Eunice were godly Jewish women, placing their faith in God even before they heard the gospel. They taught Timothy the Scriptures when he was a child (2 Timothy 3:15). His **genuine faith** was due to his godly upbringing and the influence of his grandmother and mother.

Paul had laid hands on Timothy, and through Paul, God had imparted a spiritual gift to Timothy. The laying on of hands was a common practice in Paul's day, but believers today do not have the same authority, or privileges as the apostles. Today, when we lay hands, it is a symbolic act and does not impart spiritual gifts.

Timothy was reminded to **kindle afresh this gift of God**. That means literally, "keep blazing, keep the fire burning." Paul didn't want Timothy to neglect his spiritual gift. He did not want Timothy to go back to his own ways; to serve God in his own power.

It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to serve God, and through Him we can overcome fear and weakness. It is so important that we continue to do things in the power of God's Spirit, rather than in the power of our flesh. It is important for us to keep the fire burning, to stir up the gift of God. So, we don't fall back into our own strengths. Our gifts will grow cold if we do not continue to use them in the Spirit.

Verse seven is not talking about a demonic spirit of fear, but of Timothy's timid, cowardly spirit. Paul is saying, "Look, Timothy, if you do this in your own power,

you'll have a **spirit of timidity** - your natural tendency. But if you do it in God's power, you'll have a spirit of power and love and discipline." Believers have all the power needed for ministry through the Holy Spirit. What more could we want?

b. Call To Courage : vss. 8-12

Paul told Timothy not to **be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord**, or be ashamed of himself (Paul) His prisoner. The *testimony* was the gospel that Paul called "a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1:23). Believers must not be intimidated by social rejection, but must confidently continue to proclaim the truth of the gospel.

Paul pressed Timothy to join courageously with him in **suffering for the gospel**. It is in exactly this kind of circumstance that the power of God is revealed. Christians should not suffer because they've done wrong (1 Peter 2:20, 3:17); sometimes they suffer because they have done right and served God. When we suffer for doing good, we are sharing in Christ's suffering (Phil 3:10).

God calls each of us to become his children. So far, we have talked about knowing and doing the will of God, having a clear conscience, and keeping the fire burning. But living a good life is not how we get to heaven. God's call for each one of us to be saved is not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace. There's no way we can ever live a good enough life to get to heaven.

The Bible says...

Rom. 3:23 ...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God - Our sin, *any* sin, has separated us from God.

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Jesus paid the price for your sin when He died on the Cross. He offers to you a free gift - eternal life with Him. That's grace - getting what you don't deserve. It only comes through Jesus Christ.

He said, **John 14:6** ..."I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

Acts 4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

Today, right now, Jesus Christ is calling you to be saved from the death penalty of your sin. Will you accept His free gift by surrendering your life to Him, and asking Him into your heart?

Timothy was not to be ashamed of God's plan of salvation. In the OT there are glimpses of the eternal life and immortality of the believer. With the coming of Christ and the gospel, **life and immortality** have been revealed in detail.

God appointed Paul a **preacher, an apostle, and a teacher** of the gospel. It is for this reason that Paul suffered, but he was not ashamed. Paul knew who he had believed and was convinced that God would guard what Paul had committed to Him until the day Paul would see Jesus.

How precious is that Day to you? It probably depends on how much you have committed to Him!

c. Call To Guard The Truth : vss. 13-14

Paul says, "Timothy, hold on to the pattern of **sound words**."

The word "pattern" and "form" in the King James is referring to a repeatable pattern, something that can be imitated over and over. **1Timothy 6:3** says sound words are *those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of godliness*.

Paul was saying that Timothy's teaching, or any teacher, should be presented exactly as it was originally given. Sound teaching refers to teaching that is God's truth. It should be the same gospel, the same message, the same thing that was taught originally.

We definitely have different ways of presenting God's truth, and different ways that it will be received. But it should always be the same blueprint, the same pattern, as originally presented in the Scripture.

The greatest teachers of each generation don't come up with new truths; they simply explain the old ones. They make God's word understandable. They direct us along the ancient paths, showing and reminding us of God's truth, and encouraging us to walk in it.

Timothy was to hold the truth in **faith and love** which are in Christ Jesus. In ministry, it's very important to have faith in what you are teaching and love for the people you're teaching. It's necessary that you believe in God's Word, and that you love people, desiring them to be saved and grow in the knowledge of God.

Jonah was an example of preacher who believed in what he was saying, but he didn't love the people he was saying it to (Jonah 1:2, 3:3-5, 3:9-4:1, 4:2). God choose Jonah to bring His message to the people of Nineveh. Jonah wanted Nineveh to be judged, so he did as little as possible to deliver God's message. This man had great faith but no love. Paul said, **1Cor 13:2** *...if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing*. The word of God still had an effect, but Jonah received no blessing.

Timothy was to guard **that good thing** that was committed to him. He was to keep it by the **Holy Spirit who dwells in us**, not by his own power.

When a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, the spirit of God dwells within them. **What does the Holy Spirit do there?** Well, He helps us, teaches us, and brings to our remembrance what Jesus said (John 14:26), He empowers us to be witnesses of Jesus (Acts 1:8), He comforts us (Acts 9:31), He speaks to us (Acts 20:23) and through us (2Pet. 1:21; Acts 13:2).

Paul challenged Timothy to guard the gospel, the sound doctrine of the Christian faith, (that good thing) through the power of the Holy Spirit. Guarding the gospel means maintaining its accuracy and its purity, not changing it to fit our needs or circumstances. Personally, guarding the gospel means living in a way consistent with the values, character, and behaviors expected in a believer.

This letter is not just a first century letter from Paul to Timothy, but it is God's word to us today. We, too, are urged to hold fast and guard the sound doctrine of the faith.

d. Examples Of Unfaithfulness And Faithfulness : Vss. 15-18

Paul was chained in a dungeon in a Roman prison. This was during his second imprisonment in Rome. (During his first imprisonment in Rome he was under house arrest, chained to a Roman guard). All those in Asia, including **Phygellus and Hermogenes**, had turned away from Paul. The Christians probably turned away from fear of Roman persecutions. To identify with Paul was to do so at the risk of death. But, Paul did not let these disappointments ruin his faith in Jesus.

When each of us stand before the Lord on Judgment Day, we will not be able to blame anyone but ourselves. It's all going to boil down to one issue: **Rev. 20.15**, *"And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."*

The Lord will say, "I'm sorry, but your name is not written here." And, you will have our defense all prepared. But God's response may be something like this, "I asked you to believe in Me, not anyone else. And your name is not written in the book of life. You're name's not here."

There will always be a FOOG-el-los and Her-mog-EN-ace, disappointment and hardships, but you won't be able to blame anyone but yourself for rejecting the free gift, the gospel, and the treasure, of salvation.

Paul said of Onesiphorus; that he was often refreshed by him; he was not ashamed of Paul's chains; when he arrived in Rome, Onesiphorus eagerly searched for Paul; and that, he ministered to Paul in Ephesus in many ways.

Onesiphorus was a real Christian who loved with action. But again, it's not about people it's about the gospel. It's not about others' behavior – it's about being forgiven for our sins.

Are you ready to receive the treasure that's being offered to you for FREE? Heb 2:3, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?