

CHURCH OF GOD PUBLICATIONS

#DiscipleshipTuesday



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Remain Faithful

2 Timothy 1:1 through 2:13

Unit Theme:

Pastoral Epistles

Central Truth:

The gospel is worthy of our lifelong allegiance.

Focus:

Affirm and wholeheartedly follow the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Context:

Paul's second letter to Timothy was written from Rome around AD 67.

Golden Text:

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13).

Study Outline:

- I. Be Unashamed of the Gospel (2 Tim. 1:5-12)
- II. Be Loyal to the Faith (2 Tim. 1:13-18)
- III. Be Strong in the Lord (2 Tim. 2:1-13)

INTRODUCTION

Sociologists tell us that the second, third, and fourth generations of a movement will often abandon the original passion and commitments of the movement's founders. The Pentecostal Movement is now facing that challenge. We are being tempted to pursue social status rather than sanctification, financial security rather than sacrifice, prestige rather than the presence of God, and respectability rather than the radical moving of the Holy Spirit. The future of the Pentecostal Movement is at stake! The Pentecostal church is standing at a crossroads. Which road will we follow?

God raised up the Pentecostal Movement to restore the full gospel to Christianity—Jesus is Savior, Sanctifier, Spirit-baptizer, Healer, and coming King. God is pouring out His Spirit all over the world. He is raising up a new generation of dedicated young people. We must not allow the Enemy to lull us to sleep.

Are we continuing to be faithful to the Pentecostal vision? Are we, like our spiritual fathers and mothers, taking up our cross and following Jesus? Are we preaching the gospel "with signs following" (Mark 16:20)? Are we hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Are we praying without ceasing? Are we worshiping God in Spirit and in truth? Are we willing to go to the lion's den with Daniel? Are we willing to stand in the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Are we ready to surrender our lives like John the Baptist?

In this lesson, we will hear the words of the apostle Paul as he asks these same questions of Timothy, who was serving as overseer of the churches in Asia Minor. Paul was imprisoned in Rome when he wrote this second letter to Timothy. Not knowing if these would be his final words to Timothy, his beloved son in the faith, Paul writes with urgency and seriousness. In a manner that is reminiscent of Elijah's last conversation with Elisha, Paul produces a compelling letter of encouragement that calls on Timothy to be faithful to the gospel.

I. BE UNASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL (2 Tim. 1:5-12)

Paul begins his second letter to Timothy with very personal references. Timothy is Paul's "beloved son" (v. 2), and Paul is praying for Timothy "night and day" (v. 3) and is "longing" (v. 4 NASB) to see him. Their reunion would cause Paul to be "filled with joy" (v. 4). Paul obviously loves Timothy deeply and writes with the purpose of strengthening and blessing him.

The theme of the letter is introduced in verse 3, where Paul establishes himself as a model for faithful ministry. He claims that he has served God with a "pure conscience" just as his ancestors did. In other words, Paul has been faithful to the gospel and to his calling as a minister. Paul desires this kind of faithfulness for Timothy's own life and ministry.

When we were unbelievers, our conscience was dirty and defiled. But, as believers, we must make the decision to serve God wholeheartedly. Jesus promised, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). Like David, we should pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me" (Ps. 139:23-24). We cannot be effective Christians without a clear conscience. We need a clear conscience to pray effectively, witness powerfully, and worship sincerely.

A. Unashamed of Our Heritage (vv. 5-6)

5. When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

In verse 3, Paul mentioned his own heritage when he wrote, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers." Then he reminded Timothy that he also had a valuable heritage of "unfeigned faith" (v. 5), beginning with his grandmother Lois and continuing with his mother, Eunice. Both his mother and grandmother were faithful Christians who handed down the gospel to Timothy. Like the psalmist David, Timothy could say, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Ps. 16:6).

Paul was convinced that Timothy was a man of "unfeigned faith" like his grandmother and mother. The word *unfeigned* signifies a faith that is genuine. Timothy's faith was not hypocritical or fake—he was not acting the part of a religious person. Paul affirmed Timothy's faith so Timothy might know that Paul had full confidence in his character and qualifications.

Talk About It:

1. Describe Timothy's godly heritage (v. 5).
2. What did Paul urge Timothy to remember (v. 6)?

Although Paul knew that Timothy's faith was real, he knew also that, like everyone, Timothy had weaknesses. Therefore Paul moved on from his words of affirmation to words of challenge and encouragement. He reminded Timothy to "stir up the gift of God" (2 Tim. 1:6). Timothy possessed a gift that was manifested at the time when Paul had laid hands upon him—probably the time of his ordination. It is possible that the gift referred to here is a particular gift of the Spirit. If so, the gift is unnamed. It is also possible that the word *gift* here is the Holy Spirit himself. Peter, preaching on the Day of Pentecost, promised his hearers, "You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38 NKJV). We read in the Book of Acts that the gift of the Holy Spirit was often received through the laying on of hands (8:17; 9:17; 19:6).

Whether the gift was the baptism in the Holy Spirit or one of the gifts of the Spirit, Paul perceived that Timothy's gift had been neglected. The gift must be stirred up, reclaimed, and allowed to function. The Greek word translated "stir up" (2 Tim. 1:6) means literally "to fan the flame" or "rekindle the fire." God had given the gift, but it was Timothy's responsibility to ensure the gift's continual operation. God's gifts are stirred up through prayer, worship, and the study of His Word.

B. Unashamed of Our Lord (vv. 7-8)

7. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

8. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.

Timothy's neglect of his spiritual gift might have been due to his timidity; therefore, Paul declared to him, "God has not given us a spirit of timidity" (v. 7 NASB). Apparently, Timothy was not as courageous as he should have been, so Paul encouraged him to be bold for God. The Greek word translated "fear" has negative connotations, and could be translated "cowardice." The early Christians faced severe persecution, and many of them gave their lives on behalf of the gospel. Paul himself was suffering imprisonment at the hands of the Romans. Timothy, seeing Paul's suffering, might have been tempted to shrink back and protect himself.

If Timothy was to regain his courage, he must be fully convinced that the Holy Spirit is the spirit "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (v. 7). The word *power* means "ability," and it is the same word used in Acts 1:8—"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (NKJV). No matter what challenges might be facing Timothy, the Holy Spirit would give him the ability to stand up to those

"If Christ lives in us, controlling our personalities, we will leave glorious marks on the lives we touch. Not because of our lovely character, but because of His."
—Eugenia Price

Talk About It:

1. How can we overcome a "spirit of fear" (v. 7)?
2. What are "the afflictions of the gospel," and how should we respond to them (v. 8)?

challenges and accomplish what God had called him to do. The Holy Spirit gives the power necessary to encounter foes and dangers, to bear up under trials, and to triumph in persecutions.

The power of the Holy Spirit counteracts fear, and so does *love*. As John puts it, “Perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18 NKJV). Our love for God and for the lost inspires us to act courageously, to be fearless in the face of danger, to endure hardship and persecution, and to rise to the occasion whenever fear threatens to take over.

The Holy Spirit also defeats fear with a *sound mind*, which means the ability to control our thoughts. Fear is an attack upon the mind, and the Holy Spirit will enable us to resist the harmful mental attacks of the Enemy.

Armed with the power of the Holy Spirit, Timothy would not be “ashamed” (v. 8) of the Lord or of Paul, who was imprisoned for the Lord’s witness. Furthermore, Timothy would be able without fear to “partake in the afflictions of the gospel.” This phrase means to share in the sufferings of Paul and Jesus for the sake of the gospel. Only through the power of God could Timothy accept these sufferings.

“Courage is fear that has said its prayers.”

—Dorothy Bernard

C. Unashamed of Our Mission (vv. 9-11)

9. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

10. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

11. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

Paul declares that his sufferings are not without purpose. He suffers for the One who “saved” and “called” him (v. 9). God has saved us from the guilt of sin, the penalty of sin, and the power of sin. He has saved us from the spirit of bondage and from all tormenting fear. He saved us from the burden of the Law and from the condemnation that comes from our failure to keep the Law.

Paul insists that when God saved us, he also “called us with an holy calling” (v. 9). It is a holy calling because we are called by a holy God to be His holy people—to be separated and dedicated to God’s service. For Paul, it was a calling to be an apostle and a preacher to the Gentiles. For Timothy, it was a calling to be a preacher and an evangelist. Every Christian is called to be holy and called to entire dedication,

Talk About It:

1. How does verse 9 describe salvation?
2. What did Jesus Christ accomplish (v. 10)?
3. Describe Paul’s calling (v. 11).

but each of us has our own special calling for service in God's kingdom.

Our salvation and our calling were "not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace" (v. 9). God did not save us because we deserved to be saved or because we were better than other people. God saved us and called us because He had a purpose for us. In His grace, He saw what we should become as Christians.

God's purpose and grace did not originate as a last-minute solution to the sin problem. They originated in God's mind "before the world began" (v. 9). That is why John could say that Jesus is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).

God's purpose and plan for salvation was a mystery until Jesus came and made it known to the world. Furthermore, until the resurrection of Jesus, death was the great enemy of the human race. But through His resurrection, Jesus "abolished death" (2 Tim. 1:10; see also Heb. 2:14). Through the gospel, death has been conquered, and those who are saved do not experience death in the same way as the unbeliever. That is why Jesus could say, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:26).

In Jesus, "life and immortality" (2 Tim. 2:10) have been brought to light. That is, they are fully disclosed to us through the gospel. All ambiguity and doubt are removed. Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead, thus illustrating the meaning of eternal life. With the same human body, He ascended into heaven, in the sight of His disciples, thus illustrating immortality.

D. Unashamed of Our Future (v. 12)

12. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

It is for this gospel message that Paul suffers, because he proclaims life and immortality in Jesus Christ. The world resists the gospel and opposes the preaching of the gospel. The world much prefers salvation by works in which each person can earn their salvation.

In spite of his suffering, Paul is "not ashamed," because he has full assurance that God cares for him and is able to "keep" him. He declares, "I know whom I have believed." Paul can put his full trust in the Lord because he knows the character of his Redeemer to whom he has entrusted his life and his future. Paul has no reason to be ashamed of his suffering or to be fearful of the future because God is able to

"Christ did not appoint professors, but followers. If Christianity . . . is not reduplicated in the life of the person expounding it, then he does not expound Christianity, for Christianity is a message about living and can only be expounded by being realized in men's lives."

—Soren Kierkegaard

Talk About It:

Why was Paul not ashamed of his sufferings?

keep all that he has entrusted to His care. Paul is assured of God's goodness, mercy, and power.

"That day" refers to the Day of the Lord—when God will judge the hearts of all men and women and will reward those who serve Him faithfully. Even if Paul loses his life on account of the gospel, he knows that he will be rewarded in the end. As Jesus said, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25).

II. BE LOYAL TO THE FAITH (2 Tim. 1:13-18)

A. Loyalty to the Gospel (vv. 13-14)

13. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

14. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

Paul's faithfulness stands as an example to Timothy, who is now encouraged to be faithful as well. Again Paul insists that Timothy must be careful to maintain healthy doctrine. He is to "hold fast" to "sound words" which he had "heard" from Paul; that is, he is to keep a strong grip on the healthy words that Paul had taught him. The word *form* means "pattern"; therefore, Timothy is not allowed to invent his own pattern for the faith—he must teach the pattern that had been handed down to him. Furthermore, he is not to hold on to these truths in a formalistic or legalistic way, but within the context of faith and love in Christ Jesus.

This form of sound gospel teaching had been committed unto Timothy by Paul and the other apostles. The gospel message is a sacred trust that is handed down from one generation to the next. When we are tempted to compromise the message, it is the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us that will enable us to remain faithful.

B. Loyalty to Persecuted Christians (vv. 15-18)

(2 Timothy 1:17-18 is not included in the printed text.)

15. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.

Not only should Timothy remain faithful to the gospel, he should also be faithful to Paul and to others who were suffering persecution. Paul here informed Timothy that practically everyone in Asia had forsaken him, apparently out of fear for their own lives. Later in this letter, Paul will ask Timothy

"Faith is the confidence, the assurance, the enforcing truth, the knowing."
—Robert Collier

Talk About It:

1. What was Timothy to "hold fast" (v. 13)?
2. How would the Holy Spirit help Timothy (v. 14)?

Talk About It:

How did Onesiphorus minister to Paul (vv. 16-18)?

“If you are a Christian looking for an easy ministry in a post-Christian culture where Christians are a minority, you are unrealistic in your outlook.”

—Francis Schaeffer

Talk About It:

1. How do verses 1 and 2 explain the discipleship process?
2. How should a Christian be like a soldier (vv. 3-4)?
3. Like an athlete, how must a Christian live (v. 5)?
4. How does Paul connect Christianity with farming (v. 6)?

Tempted to Sell Out

In 1 Kings 21, we read about Ahab, a wicked king of Israel, offering to purchase Naboth's vineyard. Even though Ahab offered a generous price for the land, Naboth refused, saying, “The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers” (v. 3 NIV). Because he refused to sell

to come and visit him. Even the apostle Paul has a need for the body of Christ and its support and fellowship.

The one Asiatic Christian who continued reaching out to Paul in his imprisonment was Onesiphorus, about whom we know nothing else. Rather than being ashamed of Paul's chains, when in Rome, he “sought [Paul] out very zealously” (v. 17 NKJV).

III. BE STRONG IN THE LORD (2 Tim. 2:1-13)

A. Soldier, Athlete, Farmer (vv. 1-7)

(2 Timothy 2:5-7 is not included in the printed text.)

1. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

3. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

In light of the fact that many have turned away from the faith, Paul encourages Timothy to be “strong” (v. 1) in the Lord. Also, knowing that his life was near its end, Paul stresses the importance of teaching others. Timothy must pass along the truth of the gospel to other faithful ministers, who will then pass it along to still another generation.

Paul's appeal to Timothy to be strong is stated in terms of three analogies. First, Timothy must “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (v. 3). In the same way that soldiers expect to suffer hardship, so must the Christian, as a soldier of Christ, expect to endure afflictions in this world. Soldiers leave their homes and friends, and they are exposed to cold, heat, and fatigue. They are sustained on meager rations, and are sometimes destitute. They are often compelled to endure more than humans should be expected to bear.

Furthermore, the soldier lives a life of single devotion, separated from normal human society (v. 4). The farmer leaves his plow, the mechanic his shop, the merchant his store, the student his books—and none of them expect to pursue these things while engaged in the service of their country. So it is with the servant of the gospel. Our one purpose in life is to please Christ. We must pursue no separate plans and have no separate desire. As believers, we lay down our lives to follow Jesus.

In a second analogy, Paul says, “If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules” (v. 5 NASB). We cannot win our crown

of victory unless we faithfully follow the guidelines God has laid down for us.

Paul's third analogy is that of the farmer (v. 6). The farmer must first plow the ground before he can expect a crop. That is, much labor is necessary to produce a harvest. Like the farmer, ministers must continue to labor in the gospel before they can expect a reward. God will bestow a crown of victory on His faithful ministers at the end of their race, and they will reap a bountiful harvest.

B. The Apostle Paul (vv. 8-10)

8. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

9. Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

10. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

In still another comparison, Paul lifts up himself as an example to Timothy. It is because of the gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul suffers hardship and even imprisonment as a criminal. He endures suffering for the sake of his Lord and for the sake of God's people, whom he loves as his own children. If Paul is able to remain faithful in the face of all that he suffered, so also Timothy can be faithful.

Moreover, Paul's faithfulness encourages us to be faithful and to suffer cheerfully in this life. Our hardships and persecutions are endured for the sake of Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us. He will not forsake us, but instead He is even now preparing for us a place with Him to enjoy "eternal glory" (v. 10).

C. The Lord's Strength (vv. 11-13)

11. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

12. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

We conclude this lesson with four powerful summary statements from the apostle Paul:

1. If we die with Christ, we will also live with Him.
2. If we suffer for Christ, we will reign with Him.
3. If we deny Christ, He also will deny us.
4. If we are unfaithful, God will remain faithful.

The first two statements consist of oppositions or paradoxes. It is our tendency to avoid death and suffering, but if we suffer and die for Christ, He will reward us with eternal life and authority. The third statement is a strong warning—if

his inheritance, Naboth was murdered by Ahab.

We too are tempted to sell out to the world. God forbid that we should forsake the faith that our forefathers handed down to us.

Talk About It:

1. Why was Paul suffering (vv. 8-9)?
2. Contrast Paul's condition with the Word of God (v. 9).
3. What motivated Paul to "endure all things" (v. 10)?

Talk About It:

1. What does it mean to be "dead with [Christ]" (v. 11)?
2. What is God's promise regarding suffering (v. 12)?
3. What can God not do (v. 13)?

“The important thing is this: to be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are, for what we could become.”

—Charles Dubois

we deny Christ, He will deny us. The fourth statement is a powerful declaration about the nature of God—His character is not dependent on our behavior. Despite our actions, God will continue to be God because He cannot “deny himself.” He will keep His word, He will abide by His covenant, and His integrity will never be violated.

CONCLUSION

“Every man for himself” seems to be the philosophy of our time, but the Lord challenges us to think differently. Our model is Jesus Christ, who laid down His life for sinners, who gave Himself for us. He came into the world not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for us.

Paul surrendered his life to Christ and faithfully followed Him all the days of his life. His life was an example to Timothy, who also held fast to the gospel and who passed it on to other generations. As we look back at Paul and Timothy, let us rededicate ourselves to our Lord and to His kingdom. In doing so, we must be faithful to the teachings of the gospel and in our lives and character.

GOLDEN TEXT CHALLENGE

“HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS, WHICH THOU HAST HEARD OF ME, IN FAITH AND LOVE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS” (2 Tim. 1:13).

If there is one thing this world needs, it is sound doctrine. To be *sound* indicates a truth that one can trust. God’s eternal Word is the only source that will elevate us to our highest potential. These words have proven true, and God’s Word will never fail. There are many other teachings and religions, but they can never bring us to our highest calling—a personal relationship with God.

The Word of God is relevant to all generations. It is comforting to know there is no new plan of salvation. Once God established the plan of redemption, His plan has never changed. The same faith and commitment that established the apostles in Christ is available to us today. Such faith and commitment will bring redemption, peace, hope, and eternal life to us. That is sound doctrine!

Saving faith produces life-changing results. Our friends and family should see the change and hear from us the words of faith and redemption that now dwell in us. “Which thou hast heard of me” is a testimony to the fact that we should be eager to tell others of the saving love of Christ. This truth is a mighty force, capable of tearing down the strongholds of the Enemy. It is the only hope for this world.

Daily Devotions:

- M. Noah’s Faithfulness
Genesis 6:13-22
- T. Faithfulness Encouraged
Psalm 78:1-8
- W. Faithful Through Fire
Daniel 3:13-18
- T. Faithful to the Father’s Will
Matthew 26:36-42
- F. A Command to Be Faithful
1 Corinthians 4:1-5
- S. Reward for Faithfulness
Revelation 2:8-11