



2 TIMOTHY

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...when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. 2 Timothy 1:5

The words here now take us back to verse 3. Paul had said, "I thank God." Now he continues that thought with, "when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you." Paul's gratitude to God is found in Timothy's sincere faith. He calls it to remembrance as if the most cherished of memories.

For a true and sound believer, the faith – steadfast and deep-rooted – is truly a source of rejoicing. This is because when we think of our beloved brother or sister, we know that when they face a time of great trial, sadness, or disappointment, it will not be a reason for that person to be in utter despair. Genuine faith does not mean that they will not feel the pains of life, but that they will be able to endure them without losing all heart. Faith in Christ will ultimately be their rock of stability. In this, we can truly give thanks to God.

Paul next notes that Timothy's faith "dwelt first in your grandmother Lois." Here is a word used only once in all of the Bible, *mammé*, or "grandmother. It is comparable to us saying "mamma" to a grandmother as a term of endearment. The word "dwelt" is in the past tense, implying that Lois is now dead, but that while alive, faith resided in her as if in an abode. She was the first in the line of Timothy to possess saving faith, and it resided in her in a way obvious to those around her. Hence, Paul's note of it now.

Likewise, he adds in, "and your mother Eunice." The same thoughts apply to her as to Lois. They were both now dead, but while alive, they were women of great faith. Eunice was a Jewess. This is learned from Acts 16:1 –

“Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek.”

It is implied that the father was not a believer, but the mother had received her Messiah at some point during her life. As only Eunice is mentioned, but not by name in Acts, and as both are mentioned now, it is a note which truly displays the authenticity of this epistle. The two accounts beautifully align to comprise a united picture of this family of faith.

Finally Paul, speaking of these women’s faith, says, “and I am persuaded is in you also.” Paul knew this was true, but by saying it in this way, it is given as an encouragement to Timothy that his faith is one of a noble tradition which looked to Christ Jesus. In this, Paul was stirring up Timothy to continue in that tradition and build upon it.

Life application: There are times when reminding someone about their family’s faith is an appropriate thing to do. If Franklin Graham were to seem overwhelmed with the challenges of his ministry, patting him on the back and saying, “You are from a great line of faithful people” would be a great encouragement to him. It would remind him of the things his father had done and it would then spur him on to even greater things. We should remember this, be aware of the line of faith in others, and use that in an appropriate manner when needed.

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 2 Timothy 1:6

The word “Therefore” is given to confirm what he has just said, concerning “the genuine faith that is in” Timothy. Paul knew it to be so, and he is giving strong encouragement based on this. He knew Timothy as a father knows a son. And Timothy surely looked to Paul as a father. In this, there is the heartbreaking thought that Paul was in prison, possibly on his way to execution. Along with that were troubles within the church itself which Paul has already noted, and which he will continue to refer to (such as in 1 Timothy 1:18-20 & and in 2 Timothy 2:17, 18).

Instead of being downcast because of such things, Paul gives him positive exhortation by reminding him “to stir up the gift of God.” The word which translates into “stir up” is found only here in the Bible. It refers to fire being fanned into flames. Paul is then encouraging Timothy to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in him, as he then says, “through the laying on of my hands.” This is probably referring to the same thing as was stated in 1 Timothy 4:14 –

“Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.”

Though the laying on of hands was done by a group of men, Paul is using the singular here to make his participation in it personal to Timothy now. There may have been others present, but as a father to a son, Paul laid his hands on Timothy. In this act, Paul and the others made an acknowledgment that the Spirit resided in Timothy, and he was now being set apart for service to the Lord based on the gift he possessed as a leader. It is this gift that Paul is imploring him to fan into flames. This is reminiscent of his words of 1 Thessalonians 5:19, "Do not quench the Spirit." Instead of stating it in the negative, he is stating it as a positive. Rather than quenching, he is admonished to fan.

Life application: Despite the many trials of our lives, we can and should stir up the flame of the Spirit in us. In doing so, we will be able to overcome the trials and difficulties we face. But the only way to do this is to act in accord with the Spirit – reading the word, praying to the Lord, praising God, joining with other believers in fellowship, and the like. In doing these things, we will stir up the flame, and we will then be able to press on with far less difficulty as we continue down life's path.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

2 Timothy 1:7

Paul now explains the previous statement he made to Timothy which said, "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you." The word translated here as "fear" is a noun found only this once in the Bible. It signifies timidity or cowardice. Its corresponding adjective signifies someone who would be fainthearted, and thus falling short in following Jesus as the Lord. Paul is encouraging Timothy, not rebuking him. He is saying in essence, "God hasn't given us a spirit of cowardice. You will face many great challenges in your duties, but He has given you a spirit of the ability to handle them."

This same thought must transfer to all Christians. When we have a fear of displeasing others, we are not demonstrating that which is of God. If there is, for example, a moral issue which is presented for the Christian to stand on, they are to stand on that without wavering.

Next, Paul contrasts the "spirit of fear" with one "of power." The word is closely connected to having a sense of boldness. It reflects the ability to overcome difficulties and obstacles which one is bound to face, such as persecution and confrontation.

Paul further defines the spirit we have been given as "of love." In 1 John 4, it says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear." Rather than fearing, we have the love of God, and that for the lost. This should be such a love that fear is cast out. We should be willing to say, as so many faithful witnesses of the past have, that our love for the gospel is so strong that we will fearlessly proclaim it. Jesus, speaking to the disciples, showed them this when he said, "Let

not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” There should be a calming peace in us as we face the unknown, because in reality, our end is known. Whatever we face is simply leading us to the glory which is promised to the saints.

Finally, Paul says that the spirit we have received is “of a sound mind.” It is another word unique to Scripture which carries the idea of “self-control.” HELPS Word Studies says that it is “safe-minded, issuing in prudent (‘sensible’) behavior that ‘fits’ a situation.” Instead of being fearful and unable to meet the challenges we will face, if we rightly apply God’s instructions to our lives, we will be able to meet whatever comes our way in a wise and sensible manner.

Life application: As we look at Christians around us, many who do not demonstrate (even nearly) the qualities that are mentioned in this verse, we might question whether the words here are true or not. We may not even fit the words of the verse very well. And so, where is the disconnect? It is not in the word, but in us. It is we who have to follow through with our salvation by applying God’s word to our lives. In reading it, remembering it, and heeding it, we will then have the spirit which Paul now describes. If we don’t, we cannot blame God. He has given what is necessary for it to occur. Further, this verse is often cited by people, almost as a talisman, claiming that they have a supernatural spirit which will allow them to do anything. This is wholly unrealistic. The same people may not know their Bible at all. In carrying this verse around as a catch-all for possessing power, they set themselves up for a fall. Let us be grounded in our doctrine, and rely on what we are given in Scripture as our source of boldness, power, love, and sound thinking.

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, 2 Timothy 1:8

“Therefore” is based on what was just stated in verse 7. Paul reassured Timothy that “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” With this understanding, the exhortation now for him is, “do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.” As there is a guarantee of eternal life, no matter what happens in this life, there should be no true fear. In having no fear, one should then be animated about the testimony of Christ Jesus. Why should a minister of the gospel ever be ashamed of the one message of peace and reconciliation with God? It would be contradictory.

The testimony of Jesus is laid out carefully for us in His words. Though there may have only been a few books written down and kept at that time, the message was well-transmitted by mouth, and it was well-studied by those who had copies of the Old Testament. With these sure teachings, and with any books which were written and available, the words of Jesus, and the life He lived, were already a sound and reliable testimony. It seems that maybe Timothy’s character may have led Paul to assume he might shrink back at times of difficulty or

persecution, and so his words are given as an encouragement that this should not be the case. This is then bolstered by his words, “nor of me His prisoner.”

It is of note that Paul is in a Roman prison, and yet he is a prisoner of Jesus (His prisoner). This means that Paul fully understood that he was in prison because that is where the Lord allowed him the honor of being. It is where the glory of Christ would shine through him the most radiantly at this point in his life. As Paul has understood this and acknowledged it to Timothy, then it is intended that Timothy would understand this and be willing to follow in the same avenue if so called. There was no shame in Paul’s status as a prisoner, because he is the Lord’s prisoner. Because of this, instead of fearing, he encourages Timothy to, “share with me in the sufferings for the gospel.”

“Fear, Timothy? Not at all. Instead of fearing, I desire that you share with me in these sufferings!” The idea here is that, “Should you be persecuted, it will be because the Lord has allowed that persecution. Should you be beaten, it is because the Lord saw that such a beating would ultimately bring Him glory. Should you follow Him in crucifixion, then that is the Lord’s ultimate sign of approval of your life.” Suffering for the gospel is not a source of shame, but it is a point of honor. Though it may be hard to process it as such, this is what Paul is telling Timothy (and thus us) concerning this matter.

Finally he says that such suffering for the gospel is “according to the power of God.” The power of God is that which will enable Timothy, as it has for Paul, to endure the trials and difficulties which suffering for the gospel entails. One is to remember that Christ also was persecuted, and He was crucified. However, He was also resurrected. In following Him, this too is guaranteed for those who likewise suffer. No matter what we are to face, even in death itself, the power of God is evident, and it will be evident. This is what Paul is conveying to Timothy, and likewise to all who follow Christ.

Life application: Without Jesus, there is a complete lack of purpose in one’s life. We live, we experience, and we die. In the end, it is a futile thing. But in Christ, everything takes on purpose and meaning, even our sufferings. God has allowed us to suffer, for reasons known to Him. In giving Him the glory in our sufferings, there will be great reward indeed. Let us be faithful to remember this, and to glorify God through good times and bad.