

February 12, 2023

“Reminder of the Call”
Lesson 2

2 Timothy 1:3-14

Intro

There are many ways that pressure and persecution can present itself to Christians today. In some places in the world, they may be arrested, imprisoned, or even put to death. But for most of us, that isn’t a form of persecution we are likely to face. What we are more likely to face is less dramatic. We may face social exclusion, some kind of financial loss, or other similar types of things. These types of pressure bring a loss of social status, which could lead to feelings of shame or embarrassment.

Paul, a prominent Jewish leader at the time, has converted to Christianity and is in prison for his belief as he writes today’s passage. Instead of being shamed or embarrassed by this imprisonment, Paul uses the time to write to Timothy about how best to lead the believers in Ephesus. The internal problems in the church there and Timothy’s leadership of that church are far more important to Paul than being in prison.

Read 2 Timothy 1:3-14

1. vs. 3: After a typical greeting, Paul addresses three concepts: thankfulness, conscience, and prayer
 - Thankfulness: Paul connects his thankfulness to his prayers
 - “I thank God...as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers”
 - Paul prays prayers of thanksgiving daily for what God has done and is doing
 - He also is praying for the believers in Ephesus—these are prayers of intercession
 - He says he prays for them “night and day”
 - This is Paul’s daily practice, what our text calls “relentlessness” in prayer
 - Question:** What words would you use to describe your prayer life now?
 - What words would you like your prayer life to be described as?
 - What might need to change for your prayer life to be described as “relentless”?
 - Conscience: Paul uses this term at least 20 times in his letters
 - The word deals with moral sensitivity, an inner awareness of one’s actions
 - Paul says he serves God “with a clear conscience”
 - He is walking daily in step with God’s desires for his life

2. vs. 4: There is apparently a very close bond between Paul and Timothy
 - Paul notes that Timothy wept when they parted
 - Paul says that he also longs “to see you, so that I may be filled with joy”
 - The tears on Timothy’s part were likely that he has to stay in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3)
 - No doubt he would rather have gone with Paul
 - On both sides, there is hope of a future reunion, which will bring joy to them both

3. vs. 5: Some of Timothy’s background is shown here
 - He was not a newcomer to godliness when he met Paul some 12 years earlier
 - Both his mother and grandmother had instructed him in the “sincere faith”

Timothy's father was a Greek (see Acts 16:1)
The names of both women, Lois and Eunice, are both Greek as well
But their faith was sincere, no doubt deeply knowledgeable about Judaism
Paul concludes by noting that the same sincere faith lives now in Timothy

4. vs. 6: Two things are noteworthy in this verse

First, Paul encourages Timothy to develop his spiritual gift

Paul specifies later in this letter some of Timothy's likely challenges to doing this
Foremost is that Paul is in prison, an embarrassing situation for his protégé.

Second, Paul reminds him of this gift he has been given to use

The gift is likely one of two, or both of them

In 4:14, Paul the gift was given "through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you"

This sounds like the gift of commissioning Timothy to be an evangelist

But Paul says here that the gift is "in you"

That sounds like the Holy Spirit, rather than a commissioning

The best reading is that both are meant here

Timothy received some spiritual gift at the time of his commissioning

5. vs. 7: Paul now focuses of what the gift given to Timothy is, and what it isn't

He gets the negative out of the way first

The spirit given to Timothy isn't timid or fearful

Fear cripples and focuses of the inadequacy of the individual

God's Spirit gives us power, love, and a sound mind (some versions say self-discipline)

Recognizing where our gifts come from changes our perspective

If they come from God, then we focus on His strength, not our weakness

As partakers of God's Spirit, we too have power and love and a sound mind

6. vs. 8: Paul here advises/encourages Timothy, based on the power of the gifts in vs. 7

Why would Timothy be ashamed?

His mentor is imprisoned for preaching the message about Christ

Timothy has pledged loyalty to this message; the one he got it from is in jail!

Doesn't that invalidate the credibility of that message?

Paul says not to be ashamed of him or of the message that put him in jail

Instead, he encourages Timothy to "join with me in suffering for the gospel"

Paul sees his imprisonment not as shameful, but as the cost for preaching the gospel

In last week's lesson, Paul told the Corinthians that God's ways seem foolish to the world

Here, being imprisoned for preaching Jesus looks foolish and shameful

But Paul knows that God's truth is worth the suffering that may come with it

7. vs. 9: The first half of the verse shows the basics of the Christian experience

First we are saved from our sins (justification, or being justified)

Next we are to live a holy life (sanctification, or growing in our spiritual maturity)

The second half deals with the reality of how our justification occurs

"not because of anything we have done"

We have done nothing worthy of being redeemed from our sins

Is. 64:6 says all our good deeds are like "filthy rags"—not very impressive

This grace was given us “because of His own purpose and will”

This grace was given “before the beginning of time”

God has always done for us what we needed, even before we were born

8. vs. 10: Our salvation was known from the beginning, but it came into being with Christ’s appearing
Jesus was seen and touched by people while on earth

He talked to them, he got tired and slept

He was flesh and blood, and appeared to us to give us hope

He came to “destroy death” and to bring “life and immortality to light”

Knowing this, and knowing Jesus Himself, gives us hope and confidence in the gospel

9. vs. 11: Paul gladly acknowledges his role in Christ’s kingdom

He is “a herald and an apostle and a teacher”

All three of these terms have similar functions when carried out

All refer to telling others about the gospel message

A herald is generally one who publicly proclaims the coming of a royal official

An apostle is a church leader is called to teach and preach

A teacher is one who instructs others about a topic, here about Christ

Paul is not ashamed of these roles that he fulfills

10. vs. 12: This is a well-known verse, but reading it in its context adds layers to our understanding of it

Paul begins by saying, “This is why I am suffering”—because he has fulfilled his task

But he continues to say, “Yet this is no cause for shame” – referring back to vs. 8

Paul knows the God who he serves; he believes without reservation in His promises

God will guard and keep Paul’s eternal life and reward, even if his earthly life is taken

11. vs. 13: Paul begins his summary of these thoughts here

Paul has confidence in the gospel message he received and preaches

He tells Timothy to “keep...with faith and love in Christ Jesus”

Paul says he taught Timothy “the pattern of sound teaching”

Timothy is to keep that pattern of faith and love in Christ

12. vs. 14: Because Timothy has been given a solid foundation, he is to keep and guard it

The “good deposit” Paul refers to is the gospel message Timothy is to teach/preach

Timothy is to guard this—to keep it safe and protected

This seems to refer to at least two related things

He is to preach the gospel accurately

He is to correct any teachings that go against the true gospel message

Paul notes that the Holy Spirit will help Timothy is doing this

Application: Today’s text reminds us to keep focused on the basics, the foundational aspects of our faith.

Christ came to the world to live and die as a perfect man, so that our sins could be paid for and forgiven. That gospel message is to be our main focus in life. What Paul charges Timothy to do is his charge to us as well.

Prayer: Father God, guard our hearts and minds from despair and from shame. Help us to live courageously to proclaim the gospel without fear, with the help and power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.