

Sermon Notes

PART 20 - FAN INTO FLAME THE GIFT OF GOD

I. INTRODUCTION

2 Timothy 1:1-7

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

II. BACKGROUND AND GREETING

DATE

- This letter was written approximately a year and half after 1 Timothy, and also after Titus.
- Written during Paul's second imprisonment at the Mamertine prison in Rome.
- We know he was imprisoned because he mentions that in his letter (1:8).
- He was imprisoned awaiting his execution.
- It was written between AD 64-67, shortly before Paul was martyred during Nero's reign.

PURPOSE AND OCCASION

- Paul knows his time is short. He does not expect to escape his execution, "the time of my departure has come." (4:6)
- This letter serves as a last will and testament.
- As you read the letter you get the sense of what Paul was feeling and experiencing in those moments.
- He was lonely. Many had abandoned him. What would happen to the churches weighed heavily upon him.
- Things in Ephesus, where Timothy was, had deteriorated.
- He knew that after his death, a heavier burden would fall upon Timothy.
- Paul wanted by way of this letter, to exhort Timothy to continue to persevere, and continue in faithfulness. He wanted to provide needed

instruction for him, and to encourage and comfort him with the promises of the gospel.

- It is an intensely personal letter but it is relevant for each and every believer today.

AUTHOR

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

- The greeting of the letter follows Paul's customary format.
- He identifies himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus, a sent one.
- That is not for Timothy's benefit but for the church to whom this letter would be read.
- Because it is an apostolic letter, it is authoritative and binding on the church.

- Paul writes of the origin of his apostleship, it is "by the will of God."
- In nine of his thirteen letters he refers to the 'will,' or 'call,' or 'command' of God as the means by which he was made an apostle of the Lord.
- His apostleship originated in the eternal will of God.
- The chief object and aim of his apostleship—"the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus."
- It is the gospel message. That is his commission.
- Only the gospel offers true life, eternal life.
- The promise of life is only found in Christ Jesus.
- He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).
- Paul is gospel-centered and Timothy, and the church and every believer must be as well.
- That's how Paul introduces himself to those who would hear this letter read in the church.
- Therefore, we receive it as Scripture that is universally authoritative and instructive for every Christians's life and practice.

RECIPIENT

2 To Timothy, my beloved child:

- This letter is to Timothy, Paul refers to him as "my beloved child."
- In the previous letter he called him, "my true child in the faith: (1 Tim. 1:2).
- Paul is writing this personal letter to his spiritual son in the faith.
- Timothy is receiving this from his spiritual father in the faith.
- This is the level of relationship expressed in this letter, a father to a son, a mentor to a protégé, a spiritual leader and apostle to a disciple.
- Timothy held a special place in the life of the apostle.
- Timothy is mentioned in many of Paul's letters. And wherever he is mentioned, he is commended as a faithful brother.
- Acts 16:1-2 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium.
- Philippians 2:19-22 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. 20 For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. 21 For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.
- Can that be said of you?
- Can others see your service to the Lord and be encouraged and inspired by it?

- Paul concludes his greeting with a three-fold blessing: grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
- These are the very three things every single one of us needs to be found in Christ Jesus.
- Grace, the underserved kindness of God extended to wretched sinful men.
- The mercy of God shown to those who are completely helpless to rescue themselves from their wretched sinful state.
- And Peace, the result of the reconciling work of Christ to end the hostility between us and God so that we can live at peace and in harmony with him.
- John Stott summarizes this as “*grace to the worthless, mercy to the helpless, and peace to the restless.*”
- How do this come to us? The only way it can, through God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
- The Triune God is the fountainhead from which this threefold blessing springs forth.

III. WHAT PAUL REMEMBERS

- Paul’s first expression in this letter is thanksgiving to the God he serves, as did his ancestors.
- He stands in the long line of those who were justified by faith in the promises of God.
- He serves God with a “clear conscience.”
- His conscience is clear, there is no guilt over his former sins, those have been covered by Christ.
- He has no regrets in life and ministry, he has been faithful to the Lord and faithful to proclaim the gospel.
- He would later write, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (4:6).
- Don’t you want to finish the course of your life this way?
- The apostle brings to the forefront three recollections.
- He is looking back at certain things and events which he will use to encourage Timothy.

1. He recalls his continual prayer for Timothy.

- “I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.”
- Timothy is on his mind. He is the subject of Paul’s prayers he was continually interceding for him.
- There is a deep expression of gratitude and thanksgiving to God as Paul remembers Timothy.
- This was Paul’s pattern.
- Romans 1:8-10a First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you 10 always in my prayers...
- Ephesians 1:15-16 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,
- Colossians 1:9-10 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;
- I encourage you to read and pray those for yourself and for our church family.

- Paul's pattern of unceasing prayer and thanksgiving should be ours as well.

2. He recalls the warmth and depth of their friendship.

- "As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy."
- Paul is remembering a recent tearful goodbye.
- He expresses how he longs to see him again.
- At the end of the letter he implores Timothy to make every attempt to come to him soon.
- "*That I may be filled with joy.*" Seeing Timothy would warm Paul's heart.
- There are certain people that just seeing them brings us joy! And it's because they are joyful people.
- Are you someone like that? Do others say you are a joy to be around?
- Are there any relationships in your life like Paul and Timothy's?
- We all need a Paul and a Timothy in our life.
- Someone like Paul, a mentor, a spiritual father or mother figure, a mature believer that will disciple us in the faith.
- Someone like Timothy, someone we are discipling, someone we are encouraging and helping nurture in the faith.
- If you don't have those kinds of relationships, pray and seek them out.

3. Lastly, he recalls Timothy's sincere faith.

- "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well."
- Timothy had a Gentile father, who was most likely an unbeliever. But his grandmother and mother were Jews who had come to faith in Christ.
- They possessed a sincere faith, a genuine faith.
- That same sincere faith, that had come to characterize Timothy as well.
- 2 Timothy 3:15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.
- There is nothing like a godly grandmother and mother who teach their children God's Word and continually pray for their children.
- Grandmothers and mothers, you play such an important role in the spiritual formation of your children.
- Now their sincere faith wasn't inherited by Timothy. You can't pass along genuine, sincere, saving faith.
- Sincere faith is a work of Christ through the indwelling Spirit of grace.
- Though his grandmother and mother were a godly influence in his life and instrumental in his spiritual formation, Timothy's sincere faith was only possible through the new birth produced by the Holy Spirit.
- Paul is assured that Timothy's faith is genuine.
- What a confidence booster that would be to Timothy.
- The great apostle of the Lord believes in him.
- He believes in the sincerity of his faith, he believes in his calling.
- We need people in our life who can encourage this way, who believe in us, who believe that God is at work in us.
- We need to encourage others this way as well.

IV. WHAT TIMOTHY MUST REMEMBER

6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,

- What is it that Paul wants him to be reminded of?
- First, Paul wants to remind him of his special endowment.
- Paul is encouraging Timothy, first by reminding him of the indirect means God used to shape his character as a believer, first through his godly grandmother and mother, then through his relationship with Paul.
- But now, he is reminding him of the direct means by which God is shaping him, through the gift God had given him.
- What is this gift of God? We can't know for certain.
- 1 Tim. 4:14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.
- At his ordination, Timothy received a special endowment, some gift related to his ministry call.
- The gift was what he needed to be equipped for the work to which he was called, everything he needed to be a minister of Christ Jesus.
- God equips those whom he has called.

- But he reminds him that whatever that gift is, he must "fan into flame" that gift of God.
- The verbal phrase "fan into flame" means to 'rekindle,' 'to make active again.'
- The gift Timothy has is likened to a fire. He was first told not to neglect it.
- Here he is exhorted to continually exercise it, to keep it burning.
- The gifts God has given need to be developed and need to be put into use and practice.
- What God has given you, must be kept burning.

- Every single believer has been given a gift that needs to be cultivated and used.
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.
- If you have the Holy Spirit, he has given you a gift. And it is your responsibility to exercise that gift.
- Romans 12:6-8 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.
- We are to rekindle through active use what God has given us by his Spirit.
- What gift has God given you?
- Are you exercising it?

- Secondly, and most importantly, Paul wants to remind him of the Spirit's empowerment.
- It's not just the special endowment he must be reminded of but Timothy is to fan that gift into full blaze by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
- What Paul is speaking of is the Holy Spirit of God.
- 2 Timothy 1:7 NIV For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.
- Timothy does not need to lack any confidence in exercising the gift God has given him because the one who gave him the gift is also

empowering him.

- All who are in Christ Jesus receive the gift of the Spirit himself.
- Paul a few verses down will charge Timothy to “guard the good deposit” entrusted to him. How? By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us! (1:14)
- The Spirit of God will give him the power he needs to exercise his gift.
- He need not worry that he will exercise his gift in a manipulative, self-asserting or self-glorifying way because the Spirit will have him exercise that gift in love for the benefit of others.
- And the Spirit of God will empower him to exercise his gift with reverence and restraint, he will have the corresponding self-control and the self-discipline necessary.

CONCLUSION

- The Spirit does not give us fear that would cause us to shrink back from Christian service and the exercise of our gifts.
 - We need to be reminded to fan into flame the gift God has given you.
 - You have the Holy Spirit of God!
 - Every one of us has been given gifts for ministry, and in Christ, we have all been given the Spirit.
 - And even if we are naturally timid, the Spirit imbues us with power, love and self-control.
 - We must live in constant dependence upon him and his power.
 - When we exercise our gift, trusting in the Spirit, we can expect the Spirit of God to grace us in every way.
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- God is calling you to step out in service to him and others.
 - Maybe you're fearful. Maybe you feel insecure. Maybe you feel inadequate to the task.
 - Just like Paul needed to remind Timothy, be encouraged that God equips his servants to fulfill their ministry by granting them spiritual power along with the gifting.
 - God has invested in every believer the indwelling Spirit who has gifted us.
 - Use those gifts for the glory of God.
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- A prayer from Jim Elliot written in his journal, *“God, I pray Thee, light these idle sticks of my life and may I burn for Thee. Consume my life, my God, for it is Thine. I seek not a long life, but a full one, like you, Lord Jesus.”*

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?