

2 Timothy 1.1-12 for COB 08.04.13

Introduction

- † **[Slide 1: Title]** I need help from the children today, so if all the children up through the seventh grade would come up here to help, that would be great. Let's pray...
- † How many of you were at VBS this past week?
- Did you have fun?
 - What was VBS about this year? Did anyone learn anything else?
 - Who memorized our key verse? Will you recite it for us? 2 Timothy 1.7 CSB: For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.
 - Was it hard to memorize that verse? Do you think God could bring that verse to your mind when you are frightened to help you face your fears? Do you think grownups should memorize scripture too?
 - Thank you children! Those of you who are ten and under may now go to children's church. The rest of you can sit down with your families.
- † Before this past week, I had never been to VBS in my life, not as a child, nor as an adult. I have to say, I am very impressed with the effort of this church to make this a time of both fun and spiritual awakening. If you were involved directly with this ministry, thank you for ministering so that the next generation can know Christ! If you were not involved directly, I am sure you were praying for us, which was just as important.
- † We have been going through the letter of 1 Peter, but we are going to divert ourselves today and look at the beginning of 2 Timothy, and especially that key verse, 2 Timothy 1.7, which we just heard the children recite. So if you want to grab a Bible, you can check the table of contents if you need to; 2 Timothy is toward the end of the New Testament. I will be reading from the NET today, but you can follow along in whatever translation you have with you.
- Someone mentioned to me this week that it was not as nice when I read a different translation than the one you have in your hand. I understand if you feel that way, and that's why I put the verses up on the screen. Today, you will see that I have highlighted different sections of the text to help you follow along. But I think it is valuable to have more than one translation available to you: this way you can see how often they are consistent and ponder why when they are different.
- † Two weeks ago, in 1 Peter 2.9, we learned that one reason God formed believers into his own people was so that we would proclaim his praises to others. The VBS format was to face a different fear each day, so we might entitle today's sermon, "Dare to Share," because God wants us to participate in his gospel mission.
- † LeeAnn's grandfather, Ralph was not a Christian. He wasn't very open to talking about it either. Now in his eighties, he was suffering from emphysema and other health issues. He and his wife, Phyllis, lived with LeeAnn's parents. LeeAnn's father, Tom, was concerned about his parents getting old and frail, and still not accepting the gospel. He was praying for them consistently and modeling the Christian life before them best he could. One day, after talking with LeeAnn and me about it, Tom decided he had to sit down and explain the gospel to his father. He felt intimidated and inadequate, but he prayed about it, knew what he had to do, and trusted the outcome to God. When Tom explained the gospel, it turned out Ralph had one objection: he just didn't see why Jesus would

die for him. But then Tom had an inspiration from God: he admitted he didn't know why Jesus would die for us, but he showed Ralph where in the Bible it said Jesus did die for us. Ralph was shocked: he did believe in the Bible, he just never had known what it said! He accepted Christ right then, and began to read a large print NLT Bible for himself. That's a happy ending, for dare to share. Let's follow Ralph's example, and look into the Bible ourselves...

† **[Slide 2: from Paul] V.1: From Paul...** As we learned in 1 Peter, in the first century, people stated who was writing at the beginning of the letter, instead of signing their names at the end like we do today. This letter was from Paul.

- **[Slide 3: an apostle] From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God...** Paul is an apostle of Christ. We learned a few weeks ago that the Greek word for apostle, *ἀπόστολος*, means messenger: the apostles of Jesus were his messengers to the world, the people he chose to guide the early church after he ascended to Heaven and to oversee the writing of what would become the New Testament of the Bible.
- **[Slide 4: for the gospel] From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to further the promise of life in Christ Jesus...** Paul said he was called by God to be an apostle, to minister as part of the gospel mission. The gospel is the promise of life in Christ Jesus, the good news about how to get eternal life with God, starting with true spiritual life now. We will talk more about the gospel a little later.

† **[Slide 5: to Timothy] V.2: to Timothy, my dear child...** Paul was writing to Timothy. From Acts 16.1, it appears that Timothy already believed in Christ by the time Paul met him, but Paul mentored Timothy and Timothy was part of Paul's ministry all over Turkey and Greece, and Paul also would send Timothy out on his own assignments.

- These assignments included sending Timothy back into the dangerous city of Thessalonica to check on and strengthen the new church there, and sending Timothy to Ephesus to confront the false teachers who had arisen in that church.
- So Paul thought of Timothy as his child in faith, and he dearly loved him.
- **[Slide 6: benediction] Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord!** With this, Paul expressed his confidence that Timothy would have grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and from Christ, which is true for any of us who do have the promise of life in Christ. If we have accepted the gospel as true and thus put our faith in who Jesus is and what he has done for us, then we have God's grace, mercy, and peace right now and forever. A comforting thought!

† **[Slide 7: conscience] V.3: I am thankful to God, whom I have served with a clear conscience...** Paul at this time was languishing in a Roman prison, and he says later in the letter that he expects to be executed. Yet he says he is thankful to God and he says he has a clear conscience. By saying he has a clear conscience, he is saying that he does not see his suffering as a sign of God's disfavor.

- **[Slide 8: ancestors] I am thankful to God, whom I have served with a clear conscience as my ancestors did...** Paul also expresses his confidence that the gospel is an extension of the Judaism which his ancestors knew, not a new religion: that the true people of God then were the believing Jews awaiting the Messiah [which is the Jewish term for Christ, the promised deliverer from God], and the true people of God now are the Jews who recognize Jesus as the Messiah and the Gentiles [or non-Jews] who have come to faith in God the Father through the Messiah, Jesus, Christ the Son of God.

- † **[Slide 9: prayer] I am thankful to God, whom I have served with a clear conscience as my ancestors did, when I remember you in my prayers as I do constantly night and day.**
- Paul encourages Timothy by letting him know that he prays for Timothy “constantly night and day.” The commentaries I have read suggest this means Paul prays for Timothy at all his regular prayer times, which were in the morning and evening, not that Paul was superhuman in praying every minute of the day, but he was faithful to pray for Timothy in the morning and in the evening. This should be a pattern for us: to pray for each other, and often.
 - If you want to begin praying for the public needs of your fellow church members, you can begin by praying over those listed in the back of the bulletin. You also may come for prayer on Wednesday nights at 7pm. I would love to see a greater emphasis on prayer in our church.
- † **[Slide 10: tears of love] V.4: As I remember your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.** We probably are looking at Paul remembering their most previous parting, which left Timothy in tears, perhaps for Paul’s condition as a prisoner. Paul here is recognizing Timothy’s love for him. Paul’s love for Timothy is such that even in his suffering, he can say he would be filled with joy if he could just see Timothy.
- † **[Slide 11: sincere faith] V.5: I recall your sincere faith...** Paul likes complicated sentence structures – in fact, vv.3-5 are all one complex sentence in the Greek text – so here in v.5, we finally see why Paul said he was thankful back in v.3: Paul is thankful because he knows of Timothy’s genuine faith in Christ.
- It encourages Paul to think of Timothy as being steadfast in his faith in Christ, because Paul serves Christ and the gospel mission unconditionally, even at great cost to himself, including imprisonment, celibacy, beatings and stonings, and loss of social status and wealth.
 - We see later in the letter that many of Paul’s helpers have fallen away. They might still believe, but they were not willing to sacrifice for the gospel mission of Christ, they were not willing to serve Christ when it became dangerous or difficult. Some probably viewed Paul’s suffering as a sign of Paul having lost God’s blessing. Remember we learned in 1 Peter that this was a common mistake to make, to think that a believer’s suffering was a judgment from God in the New Covenant era. Both Peter and Paul argue that suffering is a part of the Christian life, and that if you are really serving Christ, then you will suffer for it at times.
 - **[Slide 12: heritage] I recall your sincere faith that was alive first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am sure is in you...** Paul reminds Timothy that the faith they share is the faith also of Timothy’s mother and grandmother, who no doubt influenced Timothy to come to faith in Christ. Like Paul, these women also were Jewish, as we learn in Acts 16.1. So faith in Christ is not only consistent with their Jewish heritage, but even of Timothy’s own personal heritage.
 - So Paul has reminded Timothy of several things: Paul loves Timothy; Timothy loves Paul; both share a genuine faith in Christ, a faith that is consistent with their heritage; Paul is one of Christ’s chosen apostles; and Paul’s suffering and imprisonment are the direct result of doing the right thing, having pursued the gospel mission just as Timothy is doing. Now we will see what all this buildup is about...
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- † **[Slide 13: rekindle] V.6: Because of this [your genuine faith] I remind you to rekindle God's gift that you possess through the laying on of my hands...** Paul reminds Timothy that his response to genuinely believing in Christ is to serve Christ with his spiritual gift. We learn in the letter of 1 Timothy [4.14], that God had granted a spiritual gift to Timothy at the time of his call to ministry, when Paul and the other elders of the church had prayed for Timothy and ordained him for ministry.

- † **[Slide 14: self control]** Why should Timothy try to use his spiritual gift to pursue the gospel mission? He knows that pursuing the gospel mission has left Paul – his beloved friend and mentor – suffering and facing execution, so why should Timothy follow in his footsteps? The answer is in v.7: **For God did not give us a Spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control.**
- There is no question about God giving us a spirit of power and love, but the third attribute seems to vary from translation to translation. The way the Greek word σωφρονισμός was used back in Paul’s day, it meant that you would govern yourself with prudence. This can be taken as you exercise self discipline and self control, or that you exercise sound judgment with a sound mind.
 - It is unclear in the Greek whether Paul is talking about the Holy Spirit or the human spirit or just some general thing like we say, “get into the Christmas spirit!” Translations and commentators do not agree. The NET asserts it is the Holy Spirit in view.
 - In any case, as a believer, Timothy has empowerment by the Holy Spirit for obedient life and for ministry through his spiritual gift. A spiritual gift is a way that God consistently works through a person in a supernatural way, to help draw people into deeper faith in Christ.
 - For example, I used to know a pastor with the gift of evangelism. Every week, in a restaurant or coffee shop, he would lead an almost total stranger to Christ. I also knew another pastor with this gift, who would run small groups for non-believers to come ask questions about Christianity. Within three months, 14 out of the 16-18 people in the group would come to faith, every time. He taught me his human techniques, but unfortunately, I do not have that gift and cannot reap these outstanding results.
- † I have different spiritual gifts, and every believer has at least one: one way in which God wants to supernaturally bless people through you. Regardless of what your gift is, the Holy Spirit is prepared to empower you in your ministry as part of the gospel mission.
- Part of that empowerment is to believe you are empowered. That’s why we asked the children to memorize this verse: **2 Timothy 1.7: For God did not give us a Spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control.** This is biblical truth. If we believe it, and allow it to change the way we think, then we will change the way we live. God wants you to face down your fears about sharing the gospel, and trust in his ability to infuse into you the power, love, and self-control necessary to do your part in spreading the gospel message.
- † **[Slide 15: ashamed]** V.8: **So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me, a prisoner for his sake...** Because we have a Spirit of power, love, and self control, so then we are not to walk in fear, but to recognize our empowerment from the Holy Spirit and live a lifestyle that is characterized by love for others and the discipline to obey, or the sound mind to discern, what is right and true. And what is right and true is Christ, his gospel, and the gospel mission he has given us.
- If Paul has been faithfully serving Christ by carrying out the gospel mission, then loyalty to Paul and his teaching is the same as loyalty to Jesus and his gospel, so Paul tells Timothy that he should not be ashamed of Paul’s suffering for the gospel nor of the gospel itself. Remember, Paul said his conscience is clear: he knows he is suffering because he did the right thing and shared the gospel, not because God is angry with him. Even more importantly, Paul knows that the gospel is God’s truth, and we have to share it with others, even if it brings us suffering.
 - Like Timothy, we should not be ashamed of Jesus or his gospel, nor of people like Paul who are willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel mission. Many people in that day and today would say that Paul’s suffering was a sign of his failure, but really it was a sign of his

success: by preaching the truth he had attracted the anger of his sinful culture and the antagonism of all that is demonic; by being willing to suffer for Christ and the gospel mission of reaching others with the truth, he exemplified Christian sacrificial love and lived out the lifestyle modeled by Christ, as we have been learning in our study of 1 Peter. After all, Jesus himself was beaten, imprisoned, and crucified for the gospel mission!

- **[Slide 16: suffering]** Paul is trying to convince Timothy to continue living out this gospel and believing in Paul as a minister of the gospel, to go and live the same way, boldly sharing the truth despite the likely harsh consequences. In fact, Paul even writes to Timothy here in v.8, **by God's power accept your share of suffering for the gospel!** Timothy is to accept his share of suffering for the gospel. We too must continue to believe in the gospel and be willing to share it and live it out, even though this sometimes results in suffering for us.
 - We need to decide today: are we going to live in fear and not witness for Christ? or are we going to tap into the power, love, and discipline God promises us, and live boldly for Christ? Do we believe that God is empowering us? Do we believe that God is transforming us? Do we believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ? Do we believe enough to testify to it? Do we dare to share?
- † I told you about LeeAnn's grandfather, Ralph, coming to faith. After Ralph died, LeeAnn and I developed a closer relationship with his wife, Phyllis, LeeAnn's grandmother, and so LeeAnn and I started sharing the gospel on a regular basis with Phyllis.
- Phyllis was very skeptical. She not only would laugh at what we said to her, she would get her friends to laugh too! If we sent her a letter with a gospel message in it, she would write sarcastic comments on it and then pass it along to her friends in other states. Then she would tell us how they all got on the phone and laughed at us together. But we kept sharing. Being scorned is a very mild form of suffering, and we could endure it.
 - When Phyllis was dying, we went to visit her in Indiana. Our third to last day there, we asked if we could pray for her, and she said yes, which was a surprise. In the prayer, we shared the gospel, thanking God for the salvation and deliverance he offered us through Christ. Our second to last day, we asked again, Phyllis said yes again, so we prayed in the same way, sharing the gospel in our prayer. Our last day there, we asked again, Phyllis said yes again, so we prayed in the same way, sharing the gospel in our prayer one last time, and when we were done, Phyllis said she thought we were right!... about what? about that Jesus thing!... So we asked clarifying questions, and she really did express faith in the gospel! Two days later, she had a stroke and never regained consciousness. I have to tell you, this was one of the very best days of my life, to see Phyllis come to faith! Dare to share!

† **[Slide 17: free gift]** Vv.9-10: **He [God the Father] is the one who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not based on our works but on his own purpose and grace, granted to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made visible through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus. He has broken the power of death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel!**

† Paul shares several important points upon which we should reflect. First, we cannot earn our salvation; it is a free gift from God. Some supposedly Christian sects will try to sell you on a grace plus works program: don't fall for it. We cannot earn any part of our salvation: we could never be worthy of it! Grace is unmerited favor: salvation is a free gift from God.

† **[Slide 18: God chose]** Second, God chose us for salvation before time began. Before he created the universe, he knew what would happen throughout history and which of us would receive salvation.

There are books out these days which say that God is not fully omniscient [all knowing]; and others will say that we choose God, not that God chooses us: don't believe it; Paul didn't.

- † **[Slide 19: Christ]** Third, God the Father offers this salvation through Christ, the divine Son of God who came to earth as a man so as to die on the cross and in the process take the punishment for our sins, and who was miraculously resurrected from the dead on the third day.
 - As we discussed in 1 Peter, Jesus was a worthy sacrifice for us because he was a pure and sinless human being, and he was able to take the punishment for all our sins because he was also the divine Son of God.

 - † **[Slide 20: immortality]** Fourth, part of the good news is that Christ has broken the power of death and brought life.
 - This means that those who put their faith in Christ for deliverance will emerge from physical death to find themselves in Heaven with Christ.
 - It also means that those who put their faith in Christ for deliverance will be made alive spiritually right now, to be reconciled into a relationship with God, be declared righteous in God's sight, and be indwelt by the Holy Spirit himself.

 - † All of this illustrates the power of God! And this all powerful God is investing in us, his chosen people, empowering us to do what is right, no matter what the consequences. If God can create us, and know even before time began that he would save us, and then actually bring us to spiritual awareness and new spiritual life, then how can we doubt his empowerment in daily life?

 - † **[Slide 21: purpose]** That brings us to the last point, that God calls us to salvation for a purpose. We have learned in 1 Peter that God desires for us to grow to be like him: that he created us in his image, to reflect his character and represent him to others, that that image in us is flawed because of our internal corruption, but that those who believe in Christ are undergoing a purification process – anyone remember what it is called? – it is called progressive sanctification, the Holy Spirit is cleansing us and purifying us, so that we can be more like Christ, since Christ is the true image of God in human form.
 - So we are saved to be God's people. Peter has taught us that this means we are to sing God's praises in public; we are to become like Christ, so that we reflect God's character in all that we do, say, and even think; and we are to represent God to those outside the church. If we are proclaiming God's praises, acting like Christ, and representing God to others, that means we will be carrying out the gospel mission that Christ gave us.
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- † **[Slide 22: why suffer]** **Vv.11-12: For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher. ¹² Because of this, in fact, I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, because I know the one in whom my faith is set and I am convinced that he is able to protect what has been entrusted to me until that day.**

 - † Paul wasn't suffering for anything wrong he had done; he was suffering because he was following Christ by pursuing the gospel mission. Paul was called as an apostle, and he preached and taught all over the Roman empire. Not all of us have that specific calling; but we all have a calling, a purpose, that is part of God's plan for furthering the gospel.

 - † Paul could say he was not ashamed of his suffering, because he knew why he was suffering, and he knew that by putting his faith in Christ, he had been declared righteous in God's sight, no matter how the world judged him. Paul found his value in knowing Christ, not in any worldly measures. We

should do the same. If Paul did not lower his self image despite being beaten, imprisoned, and facing execution, then we should be able to maintain our sense of value in Christ even if we are divorced, sick, unpopular, or unemployed. These things matter to us, but they are not important in the greater scheme of things: we get our value from Christ, and that does not change with our circumstances.

- † **[Slide 23: faith in Christ]** Paul's faith in Christ was not shaken by his suffering for Christ. He trusted that Christ would protect his salvation until the day of resurrection.
- We talked about this a month ago, when discussing the beginning of 1 Peter. If we put our faith in Christ, we are declared righteous in God's sight – what we call “justified” – right now, and we receive the Holy Spirit within us as our guarantee of our inheritance in Heaven. The Holy Spirit begins to transform us, purify us, to be more like Christ, righteous in life, not just by declaration. The Holy Spirit also protects and preserves our faith all the way through the time of the resurrection of our bodies when Christ returns, and then our salvation will be complete.
 - Paul is saying the same thing: he trusts in Christ enough to know that his salvation is assured forever, no matter what he is suffering right now. We too should take comfort in that thought.

Conclusion

- † **[Slide 24: title]** We are about to have a time of communion. This is a time of remembering what Christ has done for us in his death and resurrection. As you remember today, ask yourself whether you appreciate this gift enough to respond by sharing it with others.

Prayer

Communion

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