

Title: “2 Timothy: A Spirit of Power and Love and Self-Control”

Text: 2 Timothy 1:3-7

Proposition: As individuals who have entered into a relationship with Jesus Christ, we need to keep God’s gift alive and vibrant, living confidently in the power, love, and discipline of the Holy Spirit.

Introduction

- Read 2 Timothy 1:3-7
- A. Last week, we introduced our series on Paul’s second letter to Timothy.
 - 1. Paul was writing from prison in Rome, awaiting his imminent execution.
 - 2. He was writing to a young minister by the name of Timothy with whom he had a very special relationship.
 - a. Paul considered Timothy a ‘*beloved and faithful child in the Lord*’ (1 Cor. 4:17).
 - b. Early on, Paul had taken Timothy under his wing and mentored him for a number of years.
 - c. During those years, Timothy had been a faithful and trusted traveling companion and co-worker in the ministry.
 - d. Now, Timothy was the leading overseer in the church at Ephesus.
 - e. Paul was writing to encourage and challenge Timothy in his personal walk, as well as the pastoral role in which he functioned.
 - f. In this second letter to Timothy, Paul also shares some personal reflection that was not as evident in his first letter.
- B. In the passage we just read, we see some of Paul’s heart.
 - 1. He tells Timothy that he *constantly* remembers him in his prayers (v. 3b).
 - a. The relationship Paul had built with Timothy was a strong and personal one.
 - b. They had spent much time traveling and ministering together.
 - c. Paul thought of Timothy as a spiritual son, and no doubt, Timothy looked up to Paul as a spiritual father and mentor.
 - d. When Paul was apart from Timothy, he thought of him often, and when he did, he prayed for him.
 - 2. Paul goes on to disclose a poignant scene.
 - 2 Tim. 1:4a “I remember your tears . . .”
 - a. To what would Paul be referring?
 - b. Certainly, Paul had in mind the last time they parted company.
 - (1) No real details are given about the occasion.
 - (2) Paul *may* have been in Ephesus when he was arrested this last time, and if so, Timothy would have been present when he was taken (Kelly, *Past. Ep.*, 156)
 - (3) In any event, Timothy was overcome with emotion at their parting.
 - 3. Paul goes on to declare his desire to see him, once again.
 - 2 Tim. 1:4b “. . . I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.”
- C. This morning, I want to focus on three things drawn from the larger passage.

I. The Value of a Spiritual Heritage.

- A. Paul acknowledges a *continuity* with his Jewish heritage.
- 2 Tim. 1:3a “I thank God whom I serve, *as did my ancestors*, with a clear conscience . . .”
 - 1. Paul’s faith in Christ was not some *new* religion, or *different* God.
 - 2. He served the same God as his *ancestors*.
 - Acts 24:14 “But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets”
 - a. The God of his Jewish heritage – the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – is the one *true* God who had revealed Himself in Jesus Christ.
 - b. This God, Paul has served and continues to serve with a *clear conscience*.
 - * His worship is *authentic* and *sincere*.
 - 3. Paul’s Jewish background and training laid the groundwork for his encounter with Christ and his subsequent understanding that Jesus was the fulfillment of the OT.
 - a. To be sure, this was not a connection he initially made on his own.
 - b. He had been immersed in the Jewish scriptures, trained as a Pharisee (Acts 22:3; Gal. 1:14; Phlp. 3:4-6).
 - c. He had been *zealous* for the things of God to the point that he persecuted those whom he thought were misrepresenting Him.
 - d. Paul’s understanding of God and His redemptive plan became radically expanded when he encountered the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:6-16).
 - 4. Paul’s Jewish training in the scriptures laid the groundwork for His faith in Christ, but Paul did not recognize any *merit* to be found in it alone.
 - Phlp. 3:8-9 “Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith”
- B. Paul recognized the significance of Timothy’s spiritual heritage.
- 2 Tim. 1:5 “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.” (Acts 16:1)
 - Read 2 Tim. 3:14-15
 - 1. Timothy did not have a believing father (Acts 16:1).
 - 2. He *did*, however, have a mother and grandmother who both had a sincere faith in God and responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ when they heard it.
 - a. They taught Timothy the scriptures.
 - b. They exposed him to a faith in Christ from an early age.
 - 3. Paul, himself, became part of Timothy’s spiritual heritage.
- C. We who are blessed with a spiritual heritage should be thankful.
- # Illustration: Personal heritage
- 1. A spiritual heritage provides a foundation for a young person to follow after Jesus.

2. That foundation may not be perfect or complete, but it gives a God-consciousness and an appreciation of His ways.
 - a. It provides some kind of understanding of Jesus and what He offers.
 - b. Obviously, the more complete our understanding of the truth the more we are positioned to see God accurately and choose His way for ourselves.
 3. Regardless of the spiritual background we have, however, it does not guarantee that someone will surrender to God for themselves.
 - * Salvation is a matter of *personal* faith (Eph. 2:8-9).
- D. Scripture places an emphasis on establishing a spiritual heritage and passing on a legacy of faith to the next generation (Deu. 4:9; 6:7; 11:19; Pro. 22:6).
- Psa. 78:5-7 “He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, *that the next generation might know them*, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments”
 - Eph. 6:4b “...bring [your children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
1. As parents, we need to have a vision to establish a godly spiritual heritage for our children.
 2. If you are not a parent, have a vision for the next generation.
 - a. Look for those whose life you can speak into.
 - b. There is no indication that Paul had children of his own, but he became part of Timothy’s spiritual heritage.
- E. ‘What if I cannot claim a spiritual heritage?’
1. Our heritage does not control our destiny.
 2. You can be the beginning of a *new* heritage of faith.
 3. We *choose* the legacy we pass on.
- # “Our hope in Christ not only provides the way out of an ungodly heritage, but also empowers us to establish a godly heritage. By walking with Christ, we can do what is against all odds, humanly speaking. As believers, we have the presence of God’s Spirit to guide us to change, so the legacy we write in others’ lives can be godly” (Center for Christian Leadership).

II. The Importance of Keeping God’s Gift Alive and Vibrant.

- 2 Tim. 1:6 “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”
- # Illustration: Fanning the embers of a fire
- A. Paul is challenging Timothy to keep his gift and calling vibrant and alive.
1. The ‘*laying on of my hands*’ likely refers to Paul’s commissioning Timothy for ministry (see 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22).
 2. Paul recognized God’s gift and calling upon Timothy and ordained him for service.
 3. Now, Paul was telling Timothy to keep the fire of that calling burning bright.
- B. God’s gifts and callings can grow dim in our lives when we neglect them.
1. We start to lose the vitality and passion we once had.
 2. Perhaps, we *never* really allowed the fire to grow larger than a lazy flame.
- # Illustration: Monica’s insistence of a big fire

- C. There are three areas of our spiritual lives that can suffer from a smoldering fire.
 - 1. Our personal relationship with Christ (Ephesus lost its first love; Rev. 2:4-5).
 - 2. His gifting.
 - * The abilities God has given us.
 - 3. His calling.
 - a. The direction and purpose God has given us.
 - b. God has a purpose for each of us for *His* glory and Kingdom.
- D. How do we '*fan into flame the gift of God*' in these areas?
 - 1. *Abide* in the vine.
 - Joh. 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."
 - a. Press in to God.
 - b. Keep our relationship with Christ current.
 - c. Spend time with Him in prayer.
 - d. Get into the Word.
 - (1) Know it.
 - (2) Memorize it.
 - (3) Let it saturate our consciousness.
 - e. If there is sin in our lives, repent.
 - 2. *Utilize* one's gifting (i.e. *inherent functional gifts*; Rom. 12:7-8).
 - 1 Pet. 4:10 "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace"
 - 3. *Seek* to know where *God* wants us to be.
 - a. What *He* wants us to do.
 - b. Once we know, be obedient.
 - * There is no way to burn brightly if we are living in disobedience.
 - c. We need to *remind* ourselves of that calling and keep it fresh in our minds.

III. The Enabling Influence of the Holy Spirit.

- 2 Tim. 1:7 "for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."
- A. God has sent His Holy Spirit to dwell within each one of us who belong to Christ (Joh. 16:7; Acts 2:1-4; Rom. 8:9, 15-16; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16).
 - Gal 4:6 "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"
- B. Paul first reveals what God's Spirit within us is not: it is not a spirit of *fear*.
 - 1. The idea Paul is conveying is *cowardice* or *timidity*.
 - 2. God has not given us a spirit that makes us *cower* or shrink back in the face of adversity.
 - 3. We are called to *boldness*.
 - 2 Cor. 3:12 "Since we have such a hope, we are very bold"

- C. Paul goes on to provide three characteristics of God's Spirit within us.
1. He is a Spirit of *power* (δύναμις).
 - Acts 1:8 “But *you will receive power* when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
 - 1 Cor. 2:3-5 “And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in *demonstration of the Spirit and of power*, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”
 - a. God's Spirit of power is at work in us to *transform* us.
 - Tit. 3:5-6 “he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior”
 - Read 1 Cor. 6:9-11
 - b. God's Spirit of power is at work in us to *enable* us to be bold *witnesses*.
 - Acts 4:29 “And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness”
 - * God's Spirit is a Spirit of *boldness*.
 - c. God's Spirit of power is at *work through us to minister* in Jesus' name (Joh. 14:12).
 2. He is a Spirit of *love* (ἀγάπη).
 - a. Part of the *fruit of the Spirit* is *love* (Gal. 5:22).
 - b. If we are *walking by the Spirit*, we will be walking in *love*.
 - c. Love is a defining characteristic of authentic Christ-followers (Joh. 13:34-35).
 - 1 Joh. 4:8 “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”
 3. He is a Spirit of *self-control* (σωφρονισμός; NT *hapax*).
 - a. *Self-control* (ἐγκράτεια) is another fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23).
 - b. The term carries a broad range of meanings.
 - (1) Disciplined (in terms of maintaining a *consistent* God-honoring lifestyle).
 - (2) To have sound judgment (Rom. 12:3; σωφρονέω).
 - (3) Controlled (in terms of excessive reactions or outbursts of rage).
- D. It seems that Paul, in some ways, has in mind a general idea of the fruit of the Spirit which he lays out in Galatians 5.
- Gal. 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Conclusion

- A. **As individuals who have entered into a relationship with Jesus Christ, we need to keep God's gift alive and vibrant, living confidently in the power, love, and discipline of the Holy Spirit.**