

## II TIMOTHY 1

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Timothy chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God and we begin Paul's second letter to his son in the faith, Timothy.

Keep in mind that First and Second Timothy and Titus make up what are known as the "*Pastoral Epistles.*"

And these three epistles were written to two young pastor/preachers who worked with Paul. In fact, Paul had led both of them to Christ and they eventually joined his missionary team.

Remember that the focus of I Timothy was Paul dealing with what the church is all about or as he put it in I Timothy 3:15, "**but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**"

What is the supporting structure of the church? ***THE WORD OF GOD!***

What is the foundation of the church or what is the church built upon? ***THE WORD OF GOD!***

How important that is for every pastor in America and around the world, that the Word of God must be taught, and it must be taught verse by verse through the whole Bible. We are not to pick and choose what we want to teach on and what we don't, it is the whole counsel of God, from Genesis through Revelation!

And make no mistake about it, this is what the church needs to understand.

Why is this so important?

Look at how people conduct themselves in church, look at what they believe, worldly wisdom instead of Godly wisdom. Their behavior is based on what they are taught and if they are not taught the Word of God, then their actions will reflect that!

Keep in mind that prior to Paul's writing of I Timothy, he was in prison. We saw that in our study of the book of Acts. As the book of Acts closes, we are told, "**Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.**" Acts 28:30-31.

Paul was under house arrest and he was chained to a solidier twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. But that is not the end of the story for Paul.

Paul was released from prison for a time since there were no real charges against him. Nero let him go after, I am sure, Paul gave him the Gospel message!

After Paul was released, Paul revisited some of the churches he ministered to, including Ephesus and maybe traveling as far as Spain.

While in Ephesus though he saw some of the problems. He saw false teachers with their false doctrine. He saw leadership that was in trouble, some even leading the people away from the truths of God found in the Word of God.

So we see that Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to handle some of these problems and he continued on to Macedonia where he wrote this first letter to Timothy and Titus, these young pastors, in around 63-64 A. D. Titus being written shortly after this first letter.

Now, in July of 64 A. D. Nero ordered the torching of his own city, Rome.

And once this fire was started, it burned for six days and nights destroying not only the wooden shacks of the poor, but also mansions of the rich, some of the public buildings, some of the pagan temples.

It affected the rich and the poor, the political people to the religious people and they were not happy.

Of this the Roman historian Tacitus wrote: “But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor and the propitiations of the gods did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration [fire] was the result of an order by Nero. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most tortures on a class hated for the abominations, called Christians by the populace.”

So the people knew that Nero burned Rome, but he placed the blame on Christians, they were the ones who started this fire that burned their homes, and thus, the start of the Roman persecution against Christians, and it grew and grew!

So even though Nero released Paul from this Roman imprisonment, now this was going on and by the time of this epistle Paul had been rearrested, put in chains, and was now languishing in a Roman prison, treated as a common criminal with little light to read or write by, no sanitation, and no prospect of relief except by death.

This increasing persecution occurred around 66 A. D. and this time Paul was not placed under house arrest but he was placed in a dungeon called the Mamertine prison that was nothing more than a dungeon with a hole on the top to let light in.

It was dark, it was cold, it was damp, it was filthy, it stunk as you can imagine and that is where Paul was.

You can go to Rome today and visit the Mamertine prison, which was nothing more than a holding cell until the prisoners could be executed, as was going to happen to Paul.

And it was in this setting that he writes for the last time to his beloved son in the faith a final word of exhortation.

And what we see here in II Timothy is that Paul deals with the coming apostasy, the apostasy I believe we are seeing in our day, and how Timothy was to combat this apostasy that began in his day and has increased to where we are at today.

J. Vernon McGee, in regard to the apostasy that Paul speaks of in this letter, wrote, “In this little book of 2 Timothy an ominous dark cloud is seen on the horizon. It is the coming apostasy. Today apostasy has broken like a storm, like a Texas tornado, on the world and in the church. What do we mean by apostasy? Webster defines apostasy as ‘total desertion of the principles of faith.’ So apostasy is not due to ignorance; it is a heresy. Apostasy is deliberate error. It is intentional departure from the faith. An apostate is one who knows the truth of the gospel and the doctrines of the faith, but he has repudiated [or renounced] them.”

And as we will see, Paul told Timothy what to do and he warned him and us as well, to **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”** II Timothy 4:2-5.

Back in II Timothy chapter 3 Paul warned Timothy of this coming apostasy and to combat that you ***PREACH THE WORD!*** And it doesn't matter what people want, you don't give them what they want, you give them what they need, ***THE WORD OF GOD!***

In Paul's First letter to Timothy, Paul expected to get out. But now, here in II Timothy, Paul is not that optimistic, he knows that Nero is going to put him to death for his faith!

Now what happened to Nero who only a few years earlier released Paul from prison and now is planning to execute him?

We don't know for sure, but Paul did witness to Nero during his first imprisonment, before he was released.

He presented Jesus Christ to Nero, he heard the truth, and it must have been very convicting and yet, he hardened his heart to it, he rejected Jesus Christ as His Lord and Savior and shortly after this, he set Rome ablaze, he went insane!

He would gather Christians, tie them to poles naked, start them on fire and ride past them in his chariot naked!

That is not normal, and it is possible that in rejecting the truth that was before him, the heavy conviction, he went completely in the other direction, maybe even being demon possessed!

That is a possibility, we don't know for sure, but obviously something drastic happened to this man in his life to cause him to act like this.

A short time after Paul wrote this letter he was martyred for his faith, according to tradition he was beheaded for his faith on the Ostian Way, west of Rome by orders from Nero.

So Paul knew his earthly life was coming to an end and he is passing the mantle of his ministry to his son in the faith, Timothy.

In a sense, this is Paul's last will and testament and so what he has to say, his final words are very important, he is not going to waste them.

The last words we say can be and should be important. What are we leaving behind for others to see? That is important.

During a battle in the Civil War, a Union General stood watching over the wall. His officers urged him to duck, but he refused. He said, "They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance." Famous last words!

"Pistol Pete" Maravich died as he lived, playing basketball. He collapsed during a friendly game in a church gym. Shortly before his death he wrote: "I have finally realized after 40 years that Jesus Christ is in me." Now those are famous last words! It was not a focus on himself, Pete Maravich, but on Jesus Christ and what the Lord had done in his life.

Jim Elliot, a missionary who was martyred in 1956, at the age of 29, wrote: "***Only life will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last.***" Famous last words! We still quote those words, not words about Jim Elliot, but words about the Lord and what we do for Him!

For Paul, sitting in this filthy hole in the ground waiting for his execution, you wouldn't expect a letter of encouragement and yet, that is what Paul leaves with Timothy.

You see, he lived what he believed and thus, no matter what came down the pike, even death, it was not going to change him, it was not going to move him from the joy he had in the Lord.

If you were to give a theme to this letter, I think it would be "***Faithfulness in the face of hardship.***"

Paul did not want Timothy to give up the fight even if more hardship was to come his way and he used his life as an example for Timothy to follow.

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in II Timothy chapter 1, starting in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us this evening as Paul writes from the Mamertine Prison in Rome to Timothy who is in Ephesus.

## **II TIMOTHY 1**

### **VERSES 1-2**

Now here is a question I have for you. Obviously, Paul knew Timothy, so why did he list his credentials, expound on his calling to Timothy?

Keep in mind that various leaders probably read this letter in the various churches, and thus, Paul wants them to know that his calling was from God and not the will of man.

Thus, Paul has the authority to speak for God and these words were not born out of the heart of Paul, but out of the mouth of God to Paul.

And for all of us, in all we do for the Lord, it should be from a calling that God has placed upon our lives. If it isn't. If it is just something we want to do, then when things don't go the way you want, you will drop out, you will stop the work. And I have seen that over the years, and it is never good, it hurts people, people who were counting on them to serve and because some need was not met, they stopped! If your calling is from God, none of these things should move you from the course that God has for you!

Paul also speaks of "**the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,**" why?

Because he is facing death very soon and he realizes that there is eternal life with Jesus even though these bodies of flesh will go back to the dust of the earth. Having a proper perspective keeps the door closed to the enemy who wants to bring doubt, discouragement into your life.

Paul, during his first imprisonment in Rome, said in Philippians 1:21-26, **“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.”**

Paul was ready to go home, to be with the Lord, but he felt at that time God would spare him so that he could minister to, build up the people in the faith.

That time has now passed, and Paul will be taken home to glory very soon!

Also, as we have seen in I Timothy and we will see in Titus, in these Pastoral Epistles we see **“mercy”** added to **“grace”** and **“peace.”**

Why is that?

Possibly the reason is that a pastor, a leader in the church needs more mercy and as we receive the mercy of God into our lives, not getting what we deserve, we can minister the mercy of God to others.



Spurgeon used this verse, along with I Timothy 1:2 and Titus 1:4 to show that ministers need more mercy than others. Listen to what he wrote,

Did you ever notice this one thing about Christian ministers, that they need even more mercy than other people? Although everybody needs mercy, ministers need it more than anybody else; and so we do, for if we are not faithful, we shall be greater sinners even than our hearers, and it needs much grace for us always to be faithful, and much mercy will be required to cover our shortcomings. So I shall take those three things to myself: 'Grace, mercy, and peace.' You may have the two, "Grace and peace," but I need mercy more than any of you; so I take it from my Lord's loving hand, and I will trust, and not be afraid, despite all my shortcomings, and feebleness, and blunders, and mistakes, in the course of my whole ministry.

- Spurgeon

Let me sum this up like this. Remember that the peace of God is found in the Grace of God, it is found in Jesus and it is because of God's rich Grace, getting what we don't deserve; His mercy, not getting what we do deserve; that we can experience the peace of God in our lives because we have made peace with God through Jesus Christ.

As we read on you will see that Paul is giving to Timothy, his son in the faith, his last words and thus, like I have said, they are very important. It is like a father passing on to his son all that he needs to know as the father is passing away. This is from the heart of Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

VERSES 3-5

When Paul speaks of his “**forefathers**” he is speaking of those who loved the Lord, were awaiting His coming, not the hypocrites who put on a show of righteousness but inwardly they were wicked.

And I believe Paul was thinking of the faith of Abraham on, when he spoke of his “**forefathers.**”

Make no mistake about it, Paul loved to see genuine faith, not people who came to church to put on a show and Timothy, his son in the faith, brought him great joy and he prayed for Timothy all day long, whenever he came into Paul’s mind.

Now the tears from Timothy could be when Paul left him there in Ephesus or they could be related to Paul’s arrest in Ephesus and being taken to Rome.

It is a possibility, and Paul, knowing he is going to be put to death soon, wants to see Timothy one last time.

You can just imagine the heart of Paul at this point.

Keep in mind that God did make us emotional people, he was not some stoic person just ignoring what was going on, and yet, he knew the ultimate outcome of it all, he would be with the Lord, and yet he missed Timothy and wanted to see him one last time!

Paul also expounds a little bit of Timothy’s family.

The Scriptures tell us that Timothy and his family came from the city of Lystra, where Paul visited on his first missionary journey, (Acts 14).

And Timothy had an unbelieving Greek father, a believing Jewish grandmother named Lois and a believing Jewish mother names Eunice.

First his grandmother was saved, then his mother and then Timothy was saved, maybe on Paul's first journey there, we are not sure.

It would seem from the Scriptures that Paul lead Timothy to Christ.

What I want you to see is that their faith, it was "**genuine faith.**" It comes from a Greek word that means "*unhypocritical.*"

And this unhyprocritical faith "**dwelt**" in his grandmother, in his mother and also in Timothy. And the idea with this word, "**dwelt**" is that it is not a faith that was just a visitor, but it is a faith that has made its home in the heart! I like that.

As we continue on with the story of Timothy, we see that on Paul's second missionary journey he came to Lystra again and Timothy is a believer with a good reputation and as Paul leaves Lystra he takes Timothy with him and he mentored this young man who now was overseeing the church in Ephesus.

Please understand that Timothy's home life was not ideal since his father was an unbeliever, and the husband, the father had authority over the family.

But that did not stop his mother and grandmother from teaching Timothy the things of God and look how God used this young man.

You may be in a house situation that is not ideal, but don't let that distract you from God who takes the impossible and makes it very possible. Don't make excuses for your behavior or what you are not doing for the Lord, learn the lessons of faith and continue to grow in the Lord and see what God will do in you and through you for His glory!

VERSES 6-7

Back in I Timothy 4:14 Paul told Timothy, **“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.”**

Why would Timothy neglect this gift? Why would he have to be reminded to stir up the gift, to fan the flame, not to let the fire go out?

It is possible that fear caused him to step back, to lay low. Timothy was not the Terminator or the Rock. He was timid, shy, he was not bold like Paul.

And now that the Roman persecution against Christians was growing, over 6 million martyred for their faith in around 300 years, he was not burning brightly with the gift that God had given him and Paul wants Timothy to stir things back up! Use it or lose it, was what he was saying.

And that is what **“stir up”** speaks of. Stirring up a fire to keep it burning bright and strong.

What happens to a fire when you don't tend it?

The fire will burn out.

That means we are to take care the gifts that God has given us, stir them up, keep that fire burning brightly for Him.

Of this Guthrie remarks, “The Greek anazopureo (stir up) means either ‘to kindle afresh’ or ‘to keep in full flame.’ There is no necessary suggestion, therefore, that Timothy had lost his early fire, although undoubtedly, like every Christian, he needed an incentive to keep the fire burning at full flame.”

Let me share this with you to show you how difficult things can get, and you will understand what Paul said in II Timothy 1:7 more clearly. We are told,

During the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1900), extreme nationalist Chinese fomented [incited] a campaign of terror against officials of foreign governments, Christian missionaries, and even Chinese Christians.

After they surrounded a certain mission station, they sealed all exits except one.

They placed a cross in the dirt in front of the opened gate and told the missionaries and students that anyone who walked out and trampled the cross would be spared.

According to reports, the first seven students who departed trampled the cross and were sent on their way.

The eighth student, a young girl, approached the cross, knelt down, prayed for strength, carefully walked around the cross, and was immediately shot to death.

The remaining 92 students, strengthened by that girl's courageous example, also walked around the cross to their deaths."

- John MacArthur

Paul was trying to do the same with Timothy, encourage him in what was ahead, not to give up, to steady the course and fan those flames.

And it is out of this that Paul says, **"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."** II Timothy 1:7.

How can we fight against this fear that the enemy throws at us? Paul gives us three things we can do.

First of all, God has given to us "**power**" or DUNAMIS in the Greek and from this word we get our English words "*dynamic*" and "*dynamite*" from.

God, by His Spirit has given to us the power we need to accomplish the work He wants us to do!

Secondly, God has given to us unconditional “**love**”, AGAPE love and thus, the power God has given to us is manifested in the Love we have towards others.

Lastly, God has given us a “**sound mind**” or one that is calm, self-controlled. That is the idea with this Greek word for “**sound mind.**”

There is no confusion or panic in us.

Look at the fear that this Coronavirus has brought to people, even Christians. We are not to be fearful but use this to show people our hope, our peace is in Jesus. That no matter what, we rest in Him!

Also, and let’s face it, when we are involved in a ministry and we have to deal with a problem, it is not easy. And we can allow fear to cause us not to use the gifts that God has given to us, while faith believes and uses those gifts that God has given to us, the power to exercise them in love and with a calm spirit in the midst of turmoil!

As one writer put it, “What this verse is teaching is that God has given us a spirit of self-control or self-mastery. We are to use discretion and not to act rashly, hastily, or foolishly. No matter how adverse our circumstances, we should maintain balanced judgment and act soberly.”

I like that. **POWER, LOVE** and a **SOUND MIND!** Now use the gifts that God has given you!

## VERSE 8

Paul opens up with the word “**Therefore**” and it links us to what he was just speaking of.

Paul just told Timothy to stir up the gift that God has given to him, not to be afraid to use it because God has *EMPOWERED* him for the work, he has given to him *AGAPE* love to exercise it, and a *SOUND MIND* to keep him on course.

Thus, don't be ashamed of the Gospel, of Paul, even though he is locked in prison awaiting his execution.

Keep moving forward even though he was facing suffering for his faith.

For Paul, he saw many drop out, distance themselves from the Lord and from Paul because of the sufferings, the persecutions, some getting into false doctrine.

Tragically, today, we have sanitized Jesus and disinfected the cross, making it all safe. But in the day Paul wrote this, it would seem strange indeed to follow a crucified man and call him savior.

Listen to what Paul endured for the faith.

In II Timothy 1:15 we are told, "**This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.**"

In II Timothy 2:16-17 we are told, "**But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort.**"

In II Timothy chapter 3 we are told, **“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was . . . But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”** II Timothy 3:1-9, 13.

And in II Timothy chapter 4 we are told, **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables . . . for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica - Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia . . . Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.”** II Timothy 4:3-4, 10, 14-16

Paul poured his heart into people and when he needed them most, many were not there for him.



Folks, it can be tough, but remember the Lord is with you, press on!

And think of it like this. Rome and all the power it had, all the persecution it perpetrated against Christians, is gone and the Gospel message, the message of Jesus Christ continues on.

Therefore – ***DON'T BE AFRAID!***

#### VERSES 9-10

We see here Paul speaking of the Gospel message, what Jesus has done for us.

You see, God not only saved us, but He uses us for His glory not because we are so special, so talented, but because of His Grace!

We don't deserve any of it and yet He freely gives it to us. God has a plan for each of us, may we walk accordingly!

And I want to drive this point home, as Paul said, "**. . . not according to our works . . .**" Paul is saying that we are not saved by good works, the things that we do, we are saved by His grace and you can't add anything to grace because then it would no longer be grace.

That is what Paul said in Romans 11:6, "**And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.**"

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, "**But if it is by grace (His unmerited favor and graciousness), it is no longer conditioned on works or anything men have done. Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace [it would be meaningless].**"

If grace is a free gift, not based on anything we have done but it is based upon what God has done and what He wants to do, if I add my good works to grace it is no longer a free gift, I paid for a part of that gift by my good works, that is the point that Paul is making. It can't be grace and works, it is all grace, or it is all works!

And thus, as Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

And then God has a plan, a purpose for our lives, as I have said. And we need to walk in them, do those things that God has called us to do, not for salvation, but because we love Him, we serve Him! I hope that makes sense.

Also, keep in mind that Paul knows he is going to be put to death shortly, and thus, he speaks of Jesus abolishing death, which does seem strange.

Now we still have physical death, we all know that, we are very aware of that. If that is true, and it is, then what is Paul talking about?

He is talking about the sting of death is gone, Jesus removed it and to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

Not only is the sting of death removed, but the power of the second death has also been abolished, our separation from God!

You see, for the Christian we don't speak of death but of sleep and in reality, it is moving day as our spirit and soul moves out of this tent and into a mansion that the Lord has created, an eternal body.

Thus, Christ removes the sting of death!

In knowing that, why would you be fearful to give people the Good News of Jesus Christ?

Your fate is sealed in Him, theirs, outside of Christ is not!

Thus, they need to hear and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives and no matter what may happen to us, God has a plan and He is in control, and even in death, Satan loses!

### VERSES 11-12

Paul says that he is “**not ashamed**” and the idea here is that he is not ashamed of the hope he has in the Lord; he is not ashamed of his decision to follow Jesus.

Now some may wonder what the big deal is, and the big deal was the sufferings, the persecution that he faced as a believer. He said prior to his statement of not being ashamed, “**For this reason I also suffer these things . . .**”

What reason?

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is offensive to people and they try to put out those who are bringing that Good News into the world. And we see it even today!

Listen to what Paul said in II Corinthians 4:8-12, “**We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed - always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.**”

You read that and you wonder how Paul could endure all those sufferings, and in his other letters and in the book of Acts we see what he went through. So how could he endure those things?

Because he had a correct perspective of the situation and thus, he could rest in the Lord. He goes on to say in II Corinthians 4:16-18, **“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”**

Do you see the eternal perspective he had? He knew that these bodies of flesh will pass away, but he also knew he would spend eternity with the Lord.

And Paul tried to encourage Timothy regarding this perspective. Remember what we read this evening in II Timothy 1:8, **“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.”**

And I believe the Lord is encouraging us to do the same. Don't focus on the temporary, keep your eyes on the eternal and as you focus on the Lord He will direct your life, the things He wants you to do, and then go forth in the power of God and do them!

Now think about this for a minute. Paul is not ashamed and the reason he can be so confident, the reason he could suffer so much for his faith, is that, as he said, **“... for I know whom I have believed . . .”**

First of all, you better know what you believe, because if you don't, people are going to trip you up. It is as Paul said in II Timothy 2:15, "**Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**"

You better know what you believe and cut it straight, don't make it say what you want, but speak forth what God is saying!

Now, as important as it is to know what you believe, Paul tells us here that it is also important to know **WHO** you believe!

Think about it like this. Christianity, unlike the other religions of the world, is not only built on the teachings of Christ but also on the Person of Christ. Look at all the other religions, like Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam and the founders of those movements are all dead. But Jesus is alive, and He is not only alive, but He lives in us through the Holy Spirit!

And isn't that our hearts desire, to know Him more and more that we might be made more like Him?

Of course it is, or it should be!

Paul put it like this in II Corinthians 3:18, "**But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**"

Now, in saying all that, look at II Timothy 1:11 once again and see how this all plays out. Paul wrote, "**To which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.**"

That Good News, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our salvation is based upon His finished work on the cross of Calvary and Paul was commissioned by God to preach, to be an apostle and to be a teacher to the Gentiles.

To preach speaks of ministering to the lost, the unsaved and once they are saved, they are then taught the things of God, built up in the faith.

We truly need more teaching in churches today and less preaching, the sheep need to be built up in the faith!

And Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles, he had the authority of God in what he said, what he taught.

Make no mistake about it, Paul believed upon Jesus as His Lord and Savior and thus, he knew that He would be able to keep him safe, to protect him, sustain his faith until he went to be with the Lord or the Lord returned for him and all believers living at that time in the Rapture – ***THAT DAY!***

Once again, if you have that perspective, as you look to that day, if it is precious to you as it was to Paul, you will not be shaken, moved from the course that God has set for you!

It is as Spurgeon said, “‘Know thyself,’ said the heathen philosopher; that is well, but that knowledge may only lead a man to hell. ‘Know Christ,’ says the Christian philosopher, ‘know him, and then you shall know yourself,’ and this shall certainly lead you to heaven, for the knowledge of Christ Jesus is saving knowledge.” Amen to that!

#### VERSES 13-14

I need to repeat this, it is so important. Paul told Timothy, “**Hold fast the pattern of sound doctrine . . .**”

Why would he have to hold fast to sound doctrine?

Because if he doesn’t, someone will try to snatch it away from him.

And Paul will deal with those who are trying to snatch away healthy or sound doctrine, the false teachers with their false doctrine or doctrines of demons. In fact, it will cause some to depart from the faith because of these unhealthy teachings, demonic doctrines!

Paul wants Timothy to hold tight the pattern of ministry that he had sketched out for him when he was with him. Keep feeding the flock healthy words or sound doctrine, not the words of man or the worlds philosophies!

And what we see today is that many have not held tight to sound doctrine and it has been snatched away and replaced with garbage, entertainment!

In fact, many churches across America have become atheological or they are without any solid theological convictions, the Word of God is not important to them.

What tends to be important is the latest fad, the newest technique to grow a church, this new band, and the list goes on.

I can't tell you the last time someone called looking for a church to attend and they asked me "What do you teach?" or "Do you teach from the Bible?"

They tend to ask me, "Do you have any single women or men at your church?" Or "Do you have a kid's ministry?" Or "How big is your church?" And that list goes on!

Paul wants Timothy to hold onto sound doctrine or healthy doctrine, not to let go of it, but to teach it to others!

How important that is for us today to hold fast to healthy doctrine and not be tossed to and fro by the winds of doctrine that come blowing through the church.

Today, we want to experience God and that is fine, as long as it is in accordance with the Word of God. We all experience God every day, but now experience has replaced the Word of God and anything and everything goes. We have Christian witches, Christian mysticism, Christian yoga, we see that all roads lead to God, it doesn't matter what you believe and so on!

Listen to what Eugene Peterson, the author of the Message, had to say with regard to this idea of spending time in the Word of God. He wrote, "Why do people spend so much time studying the Bible? How much do you need to know? We invest all this time in understanding the text which has a separate life of its own and we think we're being more pious and spiritual when we're doing it. . . . [Christians] should be studying it less, not more. You just need enough to pay attention to God. . . . I'm just not at all pleased with all the emphasis on Bible study as if it's some kind of special thing that Christians do, and the more they do the better."

Maybe Eugene Peterson is so offended by those who read the Bible because it exposes the fact that he is teaching doctrines of demons and thus, he wants to keep people in the dark.

Now don't be upset with what I just said, it is true. The Bible says, "**This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.**" Joshua 1:8-9.

So who are you going to listen to? Will it be Eugene Peterson and the many, many others who are steering you away from the Word of God, or will it be the Lord who wants us to meditate and read His Word so He can guide us? It is up to you, but I don't want junk food, I want healthy food, healthy doctrine, sound doctrine that is in the Word of God!



And we see here that Paul is reminding Timothy that God had committed to him the Good News, the Gospel Message and by the power of the Holy Spirit, he will fulfill the work he was called to do if he would only exercise his faith.

We too need to hold onto, keep guard, what God has given to us – ***HIS WORD!***

God is faithful in what we commit to Him, are we faithful in what He has committed to us?

We need to be!

The key of course is the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, that we don't hinder what He is trying to do; we don't grieve Him by our actions or inactions but submit our lives to His control!

And now the warning of why we need to hold fast, don't let anyone snatch the Word of God from our lives. Before we get to that verse, let me share this with you, it will lead us into what Paul says next. We are told,

The ancient fable of "the Two Travelers and the Bear" describes a fearsome encounter with a huge bear. One traveler, in great fear, shimmied high into a tree, giving no thought to his friend.

The other, with no chance to go anywhere, remembered that bears often lose interest in the dead and so fell to the ground feigning [pretending] death.

The bear came alongside and nuzzled and sniffed at his face and ears. Thinking the man to be dead, the beast ambled away.

When the bear was long gone, the man up in the tree climbed down and asked his friend what the bear whispered to him, "Because," he said, "I noticed that his mouth was long at your ear."

The other said, as he stood dusting himself off, “it is no secret what he told me. What he said was that I should be careful about keeping company with those who, when danger arises, leave their friends in the lurch!”

- R. Kent Hughes & Bryan Chapell, I-2 Timothy and Titus, Guard the Deposit, p. 199

Paul is going to share an example of those who left him and of the one who stood by his side no matter what. Look at what Paul says next.

### VERSE 15

When Paul speaks of Asia, he is not speaking of the far eastern continent but the Roman Province of Asia or mostly modern-day Turkey.

Ephesus was located in the Roman Province of Asia and thus, Timothy was aware of the situation.

Paul spent a good part of his life ministering to people the love of Christ, the Good News and now, when things got tough for him, they turned from him, those who were supposed to be his friends.

They abandoned Paul, in a sense.

Now, if Paul was around today and this happened, the book deals would be off, the interviews would be over, the magazine stories would be silent, no movie deals for sure, and his friends and probably his own family would avoid him like he had the plague!

But, as unpopular as Paul was with people, supposedly Christians, because of his faith and the persecution he was suffering, Heaven was rejoicing over this man.

Folks, again, perspective is everything.

Do you want to be a man pleaser or a God pleaser? I want to hear *“Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your King!”*

I would rather serve the Lord and have fellow Christians against me than to have people exalt me and hear groans from Heaven!

Paul even names the names of two men who were unfaithful, Phygellus and Hermogenes.

These men were well known and thus, may have been leaders in the church there in Ephesus.

But now they were ashamed of the Gospel, ashamed of Paul and they tried to distance themselves!

We don't know anything more about these two men except what we are told here and how sad to have their lives known by these words because they were not willing to count the cost and go the distance.

Now, in our own lives, if someone had to describe our faith as Paul did with these two men, would they speak of us as a coward, traitor, deserter, or faithful even in the face of danger?

#### VERSES 16-18

In stark contrast to the unfaithfulness of Phygellus and Hermogenes is Onesiphorus.

We don't know a lot about this man except that he lived in Ephesus, (II Timothy 4:19), and he traveled to Rome, some say on business.

I tend to think he went there for the business of finding Paul and when he got there, he hunted Paul down and once he found him, he was a comfort to Paul, he ministered to Paul's needs!

Keep in mind he had to track Paul down in prison, it was not an easy thing to do, and yet, he didn't let difficulty stop him and he found Paul.

Make no mistake about it, Onesiphorus was a servant and what he did for Paul we should do unto others.

First of all, he refreshed Paul.

When was the last time, by your presence, you refreshed someone?

Not only that, but he was not ashamed of Paul's situation, the chains that he was in.

True friends will stick by you no matter what while "*fair-weather friends*" are only around when things are going well, when they get what they want.

What kind of friend are you to others?

And like I said, he also sought Paul out very zealously. There were many prisons in Rome, and he could not just pick up the phone and call to find out where Paul was. He had to search them out one at a time until he found Paul.

If you are only faithful when it is easy, then you are not a friend, you are not faithful!

The love that this man had for Paul did not end when tough times came but only grew stronger.

Here is a man who lived up to his name; it means "*help-bringer.*"

As Christians, may we, as "*Christ-followers*" manifest the nature of Jesus in all we do!

What a great example for us to follow!

One author and pastor had this to say about this man. “Onesiphorus stands as a tremendous example; when all others had forsaken Paul, he loved Paul and ministered to him. Whom would God have you be an Onesiphorus to? Whom would God have you diligently seek out, not be ashamed of, and refresh? Is there not one ‘fringe’ person you know that others have forgotten about, who has no status or reward to give you back, that you can reach out and love in the name of Jesus? Is there not one person on the outside whom you can draw into your circle of friends, and refresh them in the name of the Lord?”

Something to think about.

As I close this evening, let me leave you with this to think about.

To whom would God have you be an Onesiphorus to?

Then step forward and do it – refresh them, don’t be ashamed of them, and seek them out diligently!

We have seen some great lessons this evening to apply to our lives!