

July 7, 2019
2 Timothy 1:1-14
Confidence

Introduction. Paul is in a dark, probably damp and cold prison. He knows his death is inevitable (2 Timothy 4:6-8) yet his mind is not on himself, but Timothy. Timothy was struggling as a young pastor at Ephesus and Paul writes, what is his last letter, to encourage the beleaguered pastor. There were many personal struggles: fear (2 Timothy 1:7), passions (2 Timothy 2:22). There were church struggles: doctrinal opponents (2 Timothy 2:16-17, 23-26), moral decay (2 Timothy 3:1-13) and doctrinal confusion (2 Timothy 4:3-4). This is enough to challenge seasoned pastors! Paul writes this tender and instructive letter to ensure that Timothy could faithfully continue the work that he, himself, was called to initiate.

Heritage (2 Tim. 1:3-5). In the face of the challenges and difficulties of ministry it is easy to lose sight of the fact that we are not the first to experience hardship for our faith. To encourage Timothy to remain faithful Paul reminds him of his spiritual and physical heritage. Paul mentions his spiritual heritage and how he served the Lord with a clear conscience (2 Timothy 1:3). He then mentions Timothy's physical heritage in his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5). In essence Paul is teaching Timothy that faith in Christ will be tested but the hope of extending the godly heritage will demand that he remain faithful like those before him.

Gifted (2 Tim. 1:6-7). If Timothy will remain faithful to his charge he must *rekindle* the gift of God within him (2 Timothy 1:6). To rekindle means to stir up, to agitate and or to keep alive. Timothy, out of fear and our youth (1 Timothy 4:12) has allowed the struggles of leadership to cause him to shy away from executing his gift and calling. Paul reminds Timothy to be about the work of stirring up his gift in faithfulness to the Lord. It is not that the Spirit is weak or impotent. It is, however, that Timothy must desire to work in cooperation with the Spirit to keep the gift enflamed. This cooperation is not some new technique or motivational talk, but the ongoing discipline of deliberate communion with the Spirit of the Lord that is courageous, selfless and stable, lived out in the context of ministry. Rekindling the gift by way of the Spirit is imperative because fear is a spirit. Since God has not given us this spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7), whenever it arises within our souls, we must counter it and kill it by stirring up the gift of the Spirit within us.

Unashamed (2 Tim. 1:8-12). Next, Paul commands Timothy to live a life that is unashamed of the testimony of the Lord and his gospel. To be ashamed conveys the idea of being silent more than it does anything else. Shame silences us even we *feel* we want or need to stand for truth because we are afraid of the implications of identifying with the Lord. Paul challenges Timothy's temptation to shame by calling him to be unashamed of the gospel (2 Timothy 1:8). The gospel has not only delivered Timothy from death to life, but it has been given to him for the purposes of proclaiming and teaching the grace of God to those of whom do not know or obey it (2 Timothy 1:11). Paul also calls Timothy to be unashamed to identify with those whose lives stand as a contrast to the values of this world (2 Timothy 1:8). This is not a call to merely admire such people but to stand with them in gospel solidarity, despite the consequences. This ability to stand unashamed is not willpower, but faith. Faith encouraged (2 Timothy 1:3-5) and faith stirred up (2

Timothy 1:6-7). We can stand unashamed in the face of trials and temptations because God will keep what we surrender to him: our work for Him and our souls.

Loyal (2 Timothy 1:13-14). Finally, having called Timothy to be unashamed of the gospel in the face of difficulties Paul now exhorts him to his ultimate charge: teaching sound doctrine and contending against error (1 Timothy 1:3-7). He had traveled with Paul and had a front row seat to his many defenses of the gospel and now Paul calls Timothy to imitate his example and teaching in Ephesus. Paul uses the word *sound* which conveys the picture of a broken bone being set right. Thus, Paul is telling Timothy that he must preach the gospel – the sound doctrine of the gospel – in order set right what has been fractured through false teaching. This doctrine must be guarded by Timothy, in the power of the Spirit, so that it is not tainted or mixed with false teaching that existed. All believers must give great care to guard what the orthodoxy of the gospel so that the brokenness of humanity can be *set right* with the Lord, healed and made whole.