

Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 Scripture: 2 Timothy 1

Some of you might know this. By now at this point, but just over a week ago, there was a pastor named James Coats, who's a pastor up in Alberta, Canada. Who was jailed for continuing to hold church services and preaching the gospel. This is a man who, he graduated from the Master's seminary. I did not -- I don't know him. He was before my time there, but this is a man who didn't bow the knee to the government.

They were only allowing 15% capacity in their churches there in Alberta, but he said we're going to continue to hold church services and we're going to allow everyone to come in. Whoever wants to come in and worship with us, and so he continued to hold church services and preached the gospel just as God commands him to do in His Word. And right now, today, he is still sitting in prison. Jailed, shackled in prison for preaching the gospel to his church congregation.

But what we can say about this man, about James Coates, is that he is a man who is not ashamed of Christ. He's not ashamed of the gospel. The Sunday before he was arrested, he actually preached a sermon out of Romans 13 on the role of the government. And he stood upon the Word of God with boldness, and that's what Paul is telling Timothy, that he must do in 2 Timothy chapter 1, that he must be a man who is not ashamed of the gospel.

Now Paul is writing his letter here to Timothy, from prison in Rome. Paul at this point is about to die for preaching the gospel. He's been arrested. He's being persecuted for his faith in Christ, and for preaching the gospel, and he is locked up in Rome. Now, as we understand the life of Paul up to this point, this is not the first time that Paul has been arrested. In fact he was arrested previously, and he was put on house arrest for preaching the gospel. But then he was let out for a short period of time, and when Paul was let out of prison -- off of that house arrest during that time -- that's when he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus -- the two letters that we have. 1 Timothy and Titus.

But now Paul -- it's about five or six years later after that -- Paul finds himself back in prison under Nero's persecution of Christians. He's in chains, and he's locked up for preaching the gospel, but this time Paul realizes and he understands I'm not going free. This is it for me. I'm locked up in in Rome. I'm locked up in chains and this is where I'm going to die. I'm now going to die as a martyr for Christ.

And it's this letter here that he writes to Timothy where he appeals to Timothy to stand firm for the gospel. "Don't back down Timothy. You continue to preach and proclaim the gospel...", and so let's pick up our study here in chapter 1 -- 2 Timothy chapter 1. We're going to break this down into three sections.

1. The first one we're going to call **The Introduction to Timothy**, and we're going to look at that in verses 1-7. Paul's Introduction to Timothy – in verses 1-7
2. Secondly, we'll look at **The Instruction to Timothy** in verses 8-14, and then
3. Number three, we'll look at **The Illustration for Timothy** found in verses 15-18

The introduction, the instruction, and the illustration for Timothy. And so let's pick up on point number 1.

## 1. The Introduction To Timothy

We look at verse 1 there and we see a typical introduction of Paul in his letters, where he says:

*“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Now, what does Paul say here in his opening letter to Timothy? Paul tells Timothy, he says “I am an apostle of Christ Jesus.” That is, he is called directly by Christ. And we remember when Paul was called... when was he called? On the road to Damascus, right? On the road to Damascus. But notice what Paul says here. After he says he's an apostle of Christ, he says he's an apostle of Christ by the will of God.

Notice it wasn't Paul's will. It wasn't his will to be an apostle, but it was the will of God for his life. It was God's will. God was the one who had chosen Paul and called Paul to this office of apostleship. Which tells you what about Paul's imprisonment? That was God's will, right? That was God's will.

Not only was it God's will for him to be an apostle, but even so, Paul being in prison at this point is God's will for his life. Paul submitted his will to God, and he said I am an ambassador for Christ. I am completely submitted to God. Whatever comes in my life, that must be God's will for me.

And what would this do then for Timothy? It would give him encouragement, right? It would encourage him, as I'm sure Timothy is worried about Paul at this point. Paul is his “father in the faith” as we're going to see here. And Timothy must be worried about Paul at this point. He's worried about what Paul is facing while he's there in prison. But what is Paul writing? Paul writes to Timothy. What does he tell him? This is God's will for my life. Don't worry Timothy, I'm exactly where God wants me, right here in prison. Just as James Coats is exactly where God wants him. That is God's will for his life, and God is going to use him in the place that He has him, for His purposes. That's God's will for his life.

And then he says, *“according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,”* that is...according to this gospel. This is the gospel that he's talking about. And this is what Paul was sent to proclaim. I have been chosen as an apostle by the will of God, in order to go out and to proclaim the gospel. And it was this promise that Paul clung to as he's there, facing death in prison. He knew what awaited him was what the gospel offered him... eternal life with Christ, right? He knew “that's my future. That's where I'm headed. I'm going to be with Christ.”

That's exactly what he's been preaching, and he's been telling everyone, put their faith in Christ and they will have eternal life. And he knows that that's his next step is eternal life with Christ. And then he says:

*“To Timothy, my beloved son:”*

Now in 1 Timothy, Paul addressed Timothy as “my true child in the faith” but now he addresses him as his beloved son. This goes to show the relationship between these two men. That it was a “father and son” relationship, and at this point now they have grown very close to one another, and Paul then gives his common introduction of *“Grace, mercy and peace”*.

But then he moves onto his common expression of thanksgiving as he does in most of his letters, right after he comes off of this first part of his introduction, he breaks into this thanksgiving for Timothy in verse 3, where he says

*“I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day,”*

Notice who Paul thanks here. Who does he thank? God. He gives thanks to God. Paul gives thanks directed to God. But what is he thankful for? Well, we actually don't even find out what Paul is thankful for as Paul kind of breaks out in this parenthetical phrase here as he continues on and on and on and his writing until you get to verse 5. He's thankful for Timothy. In verse five, he says:

*“For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you,”*

That's what he's thankful for. He's thankful for this faith that Timothy has, and therefore he remembers Timothy in his prayers night and day. He's thankful for him and he longs to see Timothy because of this close relationship that they've had with each other. His desire is to go and see his son in the faith. He wants to see him. But notice how Paul remembers Timothy at the end of verse four, what does he say there? he says,

*“I recall your tears,”*

I recall your tears. Now we don't know exactly when this was that Timothy was shedding tears for Paul. But it's most likely the last time that they saw each other, back in Ephesus. Remember, that's where Timothy is. Timothy is a pastor at Ephesus and Paul left him there at Ephesus back in 1 Timothy 1:3 it says,

*“As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,”*

Remember, that's what he was called to do. “You stay at Ephesus, I'm heading out. I'm going off to Macedonia. You stay here Timothy.” And what is Timothy do at that point when he sees his father leaving? Cries, he weeps at the fact that his father is leaving. Maybe even knowing this might be the last time that I see him. And so he sheds tears for him.

And Paul remembers that, he recalls his tears there in verse 4. And even though they've been separated for a long time, Paul still longs to see Timothy, and he says, so that I may be filled with joy. He desires to see Timothy because he knows if I can just see Timothy one last time I will be filled with joy. Which is what happens with all of us, right? We long to see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, because when we gather together as the body of Christ to be with one another, it brings joy to our hearts.

It's a different type of gathering when we come with one another, brothers and sisters, than it is even with family members who are not believers. There's a joy that we have when we gather with one another, knowing that we are children of God that we're all in this together. We're following the same King and we worship Him.

And Paul knew that, and he understood that and he said, if I can just see Timothy one last time, oh, it'll bring me such great joy. He's my son in the faith. And I know the faith that he has. He says there in verse 5

*“For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.”*

This faith that Timothy has was also seen in his grandmother and his mother. They were women who taught him the scriptures. And Paul knows that Timothy has faith in Christ now as well. Not only did his grandmother and his mother have faith in Christ, but he knows that even Timothy has faith.

And think about after all of the ministry that Paul and Timothy have done together. Paul knows that Timothy has a genuine faith in Christ. And it is in response to that genuine faith, that Timothy is able then to continue as a minister of Christ.

You see as a pastor, any pastor, any pastor without genuine faith won't be believable. Any pastor who doesn't have a genuine faith in Christ, the people will not believe him and he won't be effective in ministry. But Paul knows Timothy, you have faith and you will be effective in ministry. You just gotta keep going. And that's what he's encouraging him to do.

The pressures of life will come and the pastor will be challenged and the genuineness of his faith will be found out. Is it genuine or not?

And the same is true with everyone of us in this room, with every believer, or everyone who professes Christ. When you encounter difficulties in life where your faith is tested, it will show whether your faith is genuine or not. One commentator says, “Oh, that our faith might be so authentic and personal that it might be utterly convincing to all who encounter us.”

Do we convince others of the faith that we have in Christ? Do they look at us as someone different? Do they look at us, going “They serve another King. Why are they so different? What is it about them?” Do we convince people that Christ is our King?

Well, in light of this faith that Timothy has, Paul then encourages him not to back away from the hardships that may come from his faith. He says in verse 6:

*“For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”*

Now, this thanksgiving in verses 3-5, that Paul has just given for Timothy is not to just give Timothy a pat on the back. That's not what he's doing. He's not thanking God for the faith that Timothy has “Just, good job, Timothy - way to go, buddy.” But it's to stimulate him to action. That's why he does it, and that's why he reminds Timothy now to “*kindle afresh the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of the hands of my hands.*” Kindle afresh the gift of God.

Now this doesn't mean that Timothy was backsliding somehow, or that he's lost faith, or that his faith has diminished. That's not what Paul is telling us here. This is an encouragement to put to use what God has given him for the church. God has gifted him. God, through the Holy Spirit, has gifted Timothy with preaching and teaching and Timothy was to cultivate that gift.

One commentator says about the about gifts. “It is purely a gift, but a gift to which we must respond, and a relationship which we must cultivate.” We have something to do with that gift. We must cultivate the gift. It's like a kindling fire -- if you just leave the fire alone, what's going to happen to it? It'll go out, right? All of a sudden you don't have fire anymore, but if you kindle it, it will be useful. Now

you've got a useful fire there, and Paul is encouraging Timothy to work hard and to use the gift that he has been given for God's glory.

Look, we can't just sit around on the couch as believers and think that God is going to use us from the couch. That's not how it works. God has given us a spiritual gift and we are to use that. We are to cultivate that spiritual gift that He's given us for His glory. We've got to get off the couch. And go do something with that gift that God has given us, as God gives us opportunity.

Now, how did Timothy receive this gift that he has? How did he receive it? Notice what Paul says there, *"which is in you through the laying on of my hands."* But he didn't receive it from Paul, right? We understand that, we know that his spiritual gift was given by, who? By the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives gifts.

So why does Paul then say through the laying on of my hands? Well, this is simply Paul saying, that along with the rest of the church, Paul recognized Timothy's gift and he had laid hands on him in recognition of the gift that God had given to him, in order to go and send him out, to go and be useful in the kingdom. That's what he does.

And that's what you'll see oftentimes with churches who send people out who send pastors out, they will gather around them, and they will lay hands on them, saying, we affirm that this is a man who has the gift of preaching and teaching, and he is to go and use it for the gospel. Use it for the church. Go establish a church. Go build up the church and use that gift that God has given you.

Now, this may have happened at the moment of salvation, of Timothy's salvation. We don't know exactly when this laying on of hands was. But Paul is not here saying that he's the one who gave Timothy the gift, but that the gift was confirmed by Paul and the rest of the believers. And it's this gift that Paul then, or that Timothy is called then, to kindle a fresh.

Why? Look at verse 7:

*"For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."*

Now this word, timidity here. This word has the idea of being a coward. A coward. Being fearful or weak, especially in the face of persecution. Now think about this. Paul is in prison for the gospel. Nero has been persecuting Christians because of the gospel. And if Timothy became fearful in light of this reality...Paul is saying "That fear isn't from God. If you become fearful, Timothy, not of God, it's of your own doing. You have become fearful, but God has not given us a spirit of fear, but God has given us a spirit of power. He's given us power."

Now, this isn't some kind of power that we must muster up within ourselves, but it's divine power that gets us through the persecution or the trial that we're facing. That we have the power and the strength within us to get through the persecution. To get through the trial.

James Coates has been given everything that he needs to endure prison as he sits there and awaits his trial. God has given it all to him. God has also given us love. This is the first fruit of the spirit. It's that which does not seek its own, but it seeks the best of others. God has given us a spirit of love that we are to be people who represent Christ, in love. And He's also given us discipline -- or some of your translations say -- a sound mind. A sound mind. Another way we could say this is self-control...that is, it is the total opposite of fear. It's the total opposite of fear.

Someone who has fear is out of control. Think about that. Someone who has fear, and is living in fear, is completely out of control. They act out in foolish and unreasonable ways because they are controlled by their fear. They are not practicing self-control.

And we see a lot of that today, right? How many people are living in fear, a fear of a virus? And what do they do? Are they acting in self-control? No, they are out of control and they're making foolish decisions, because they're being controlled by the emotion of fear. But God hasn't given us fear. God has given us discipline a sound mind. We are to act in self-control.

As Timothy is going to face persecution in the hardships of ministry, Paul is encouraging Timothy to live in a way that pleases Christ. You are to live in a way that pleases Christ, and how is he to live? Well, it leads to point #2, #2 the instruction to Timothy.

## 2. Point #2 is The Instruction to Timothy.

Paul here gives three main instructions for Timothy.

1. The first one is there in verse 8. **Do not be ashamed.** Look what it says in verse 8.

*“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me, His prisoner,”*

Don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. What is he saying there? He's saying that persecution is going to come. And listen church, persecution is going to come. I was talking with a pastor friend of mine in Washington today and we were talking about this very thing. Persecution is going to come. We used to think it's going to be our children, or our grandchildren. It's gonna come in our lifetime. Persecution is here. Pastors are being arrested for preaching the gospel. Persecution is here, but he says, *“do not be ashamed.”*

Remember what happened to Peter back in Acts chapter 5, verse 27. Let me read it for you. Acts Chapter 5 verse 27

*“When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, 28 saying, “We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us. But Peter and the apostles answered, we must obey...”*

who?

*“...God rather than men.”*

We will obey God rather than men. They were told not to teach in, what? In the name of Christ. And the name of Jesus... do not teach in His name. And then what happens after that? Chapter 5, verse 40 it says this.

*“They took his (that is Gamaliel's) “advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them.”*

they beat them and then released them. Verse 41, I love this...

*“so they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.”*

They didn't, they didn't leave there crying and weeping. They left rejoicing because they had been beaten for the name of Christ. And in verse 42

*“And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”*

They didn't stop. They continued to preach in the name of Christ because these were men who were not ashamed of the name of Christ. And that's what Paul is telling Timothy as well, do not be ashamed of Christ. But he also tells Timothy do not be ashamed of him either. Look what he says there, *“or of me, his prisoner.”*

But notice how Paul identifies himself here, not “of me a prisoner,” but he says of me (whose prisoner) Christ's prisoner. I am the prisoner of Christ. I'm not a prisoner of Rome. I am a prisoner of Jesus Christ. He was bound to Christ first and foremost. That's how he saw his life. As one who was shackled and chained to Christ. I'm a prisoner of Christ, I am His.

And then Paul encourages Timothy to join him in this.

*“...join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.”*

Listen, are you willing to go to jail for Christ? Are you? Are you willing to be persecuted for the name of Christ? Is your allegiance to Christ and Him alone. That's what Paul is calling Timothy to. Do not be ashamed. And that's why he is to do this. Why? He was to suffer with Paul for the gospel. And why is he to do it? Because of verse 9... because Christ

*...“has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.”*

Because God has saved us. God has called us and since we haven't earned our salvation, but we have been given the free gift of eternal life, then we ought to go and live for Christ, even if it means we go to jail or we die for Him. We are to be persecuted for Him. He did the work, He was the one who saved us and therefore we must give all back to Him. Everything that we have, we give it all to Him and we must live for the sake of the gospel. It's all for Christ.

And that's Paul's whole ministry, right? He was a minister of the gospel, which is what he says in verse 11:

*“...for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.”*

And then Paul tells us in verse 12 that he's not ashamed of it because his faith is in Christ alone. So Paul's first instruction to Timothy is to not be ashamed.

2. Second instruction is **to hold to sound teaching** in verse 13

*“Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me.”*

Retain means to hold fast, to keep, to follow. It's an ongoing thing in Timothy's life -- you must continue to do this to retain the standard of sound words. Paul has taught Timothy the truth of God's Word up to this point, and he was to continue to hold onto it, but there's a way in which he was to do it. And he tells us -- in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

One commentator says “it is possible to protect a doctrine but lose the debate. It's possible to protect the doctrine, but lose the debate.” We are to hold to the truth and not waiver, but at the same time we are to protect it with faith and love in Christ. That is, that our faith is rooted and grounded and we rely upon Christ. We're not just trying to win an argument to put ourselves up. But we entrust ourselves to God, and we hold to His truth, and then we do it out of an attitude of love, both for Christ and for other people. As we teach them the Word of God as well. And so Timothy is instructed not to be ashamed of the gospel, and to hold the sound teaching, and then the

3. third instruction is found in verse 14, there -- **to guard the truth**. Verse 14

*“Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.”*

This parallels with Paul's previous instruction of retaining sound teaching, but now he is to guard the truth, hold onto it and guard it Timothy. That's what you're called to do. This means that he's not, he's not to allow the gospel to become contaminated with heresy. Don't allow it to become contaminated, but he's to guard the truth. And how does he do it? Does he do it all alone? Does he just muster up enough, enough strength inside of himself, to try and guard it?

No. How does he do it? He relies upon... who? The Holy Spirit. Exactly. *“The Holy Spirit, who dwells in us.”* Every true believer has been given the Holy Spirit, and it is The Spirit's work in us that enables us to guard the truth. And that's what we must be. People who guard the truth.

And then finally point #3 in all of this point, #3. We not only see **The Introduction to Timothy, the Instruction to Timothy**, but point #3

### 3. The Illustration for Timothy.

While there are men who continue to hold fast to the gospel and suffer for the gospel, such as James Coats, we have also seen in our time, men who have shown themselves to be unfaithful and have turned away from God and from God's people. And Paul now gives Timothy a negative example or a negative illustration of those who abandoned Him in times of persecution. Look what he says in verse 15 there:



*“You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.”*

Somehow Timothy was aware of this. We don't know how, but he was aware of this, probably because Ephesus was there in Asia, and Timothy knew what was going on with Paul and other believers, that Paul had most likely asked for help from, as he's there in prison, he asked for help from other people and nobody comes to his aid.

He's there alone in prison, all of these people that he went to minister to, all throughout Asia, and he was there preaching the gospel and they were there with him in the churches as he's there ministering to them. And then persecution comes in, where do they go? They run. They flee. “Paul's too radical. Paul's too bold. Paul is too committed to Christ...mmm...we, if we go and help Paul, we might endure persecution too, so we'll just stay away.”

That's what they did. They abandon him. Think about Paul at this point. He must have been torn apart. After all the years that he spent with the churches in Asia, pouring out his life for them, and now they turn on him. They don't want to come to his aid. They don't want to be there with him. Now, this doesn't mean that every Christian in Asia fell away. That's not what he's saying here, because he's going to give us an example of someone who didn't turn away from him in verse 16 there. But he's saying in a general sense, there are all of these people that administered to, and none of them are coming to my aid. None of them are coming to help me as I'm here in prison. And he names two of them -- Phygelus and Hermogenes. Now we don't know anything else about these two men other than that they abandoned Paul.

But think about that. If your name was to be written down in Scripture, and that's what you were known by. Probably not. Definitely not a good thing, right? That's what they're known for -- turning their back on Paul, but there's a positive illustration of one who didn't abandon him. It was Onesiphorus, verse 16

*“The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains;”*

And Paul here prays for him. Paul prays for Onesiphorus because he was a faithful servant of Christ who is not ashamed of Paul's bold claim for Christ. He says “I'll stand with you, Paul. What are we going to preach? The gospel? Let's do it. If it means we get chained up. Let's do it. Means you're going to take our life? OK, we're going to preach the gospel. Let's do that.”

In fact he makes a trip to Rome and he found Paul there. And he ministers to Paul, as Paul is there in chains. But notice where Onesiphorus is from at the end of verse 18. Where does it say he's from? From Ephesus. Hmmm...from Ephesus. Most likely that's where his home is, and therefore who would have known him. Timothy...Timothy would have known him well. Onesiphorus was a faithful example for Timothy as to what it looks like to stand firm for the gospel and not be ashamed. “Listen, Timothy, don't be ashamed of the gospel. Oh, and by the way, there's someone in your own town who's not ashamed of the gospel. Get strength from him. He's a faithful servant of God. Stay close to that guy. He's come and ministered to me in prison.”

He's a faithful man who is not ashamed of the gospel, and we must be a people who are not ashamed of the gospel, even if it means, as it did for Paul (and as it's meant for James Coats) that you go to prison

for it, and suffer for it. We should be a people who are not ashamed of Jesus Christ. We must stand for Him in this world that we live in.

Let's pray. Father, thank You so much for this encouraging Word, and the encouragement that Paul gives to Timothy... to stand firm for the gospel for the name of Christ. I pray that we would be a people, Lord, who, in the midst of persecution, would stand firm. Lord, we do lift up James Coats to you right now, and his wife and his kids, and the suffering that they're going through right now. We weep with them. We know it's not easy. God, I pray that You would guard them and strengthen them as you have so faithfully done. We thank You for brothers and sisters who are with them and ministering to that family. We pray that You would be with James. We pray that he would be set free from prison so that he might get back into his pulpit and proclaim the gospel, because that is what people need. That's their greatest need. Father be with them, guard them, protect them, and may we learn from a faithful man like that -- that we would stand firm for the gospel. That we would be bold and proclaim the name of Christ to those around us in our community. May we do it all for Your glory, and Your glory alone, we pray in Christ name. Amen.