

2 Timothy 1A

- When the Apostle Paul was commissioned by Jesus to become an apostle to the Gentiles, Jesus spoke these words

[Acts 9:15](#) But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

[Acts 9:16](#) for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.”

- Paul's time serving Christ as an apostle included the burden of knowing his life would end in martyrdom
 - As Paul's death approached, he faced his end with the same resolute faith he displayed in his life
 - He testified without fear, he traveled without regard for his personal safety and he taught as boldly as ever
- Shortly before he died at the hands of Nero in Rome, Paul penned his final letter to enter the canon of scripture
 - It was his second letter to a young man ministering in Ephesus
 - We recently finished Paul's first letter to Timothy, so it's natural to pick up with the next letter
- But in many ways, the two letters are very different
 - Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy following Paul's trial and acquittal by Caesar in AD 62
 - Paul resumed his travels in Asia Minor, having left Timothy behind in Ephesus
- So as Paul penned 1 Timothy, he was concerned for the church's continued steadfastness in the face of influence from the pagan city and false teachers
 - As we noted in that study, Paul's first letter to Timothy is similar to his letter to Titus, another pastor dealing with similar issues in Crete
 - His letter provided doctrinal instruction combined with exhortation on proper leadership

- They were pastoral letters intended to shore up faltering groups of immature Christians led by inexperienced pastors
- But 2 Timothy comes under very different circumstances for Paul and Timothy
 - The year is AD 67 and Emperor Nero has gone crazy
 - The burning of Rome in AD 64 prompted Nero to blame the Christians leading to persecution
 - Ever since, it had been dangerous to be identified as a Christian or have contact with the leaders of the movement...like Paul
 - As a result, Paul had been re-imprisoned in Rome and after his preliminary hearing, Paul knew his death was imminent
 - So under a deadline and with concerns for the church's response to the coming persecution, Paul writes his last letter to Timothy
 - It tell us how special this young man and the church in Ephesus was to Paul that his final act of writing was to them
 - Paul's final words are evocative of Moses' or Joshua's final instructions to the people of Israel
 - All three call upon God's people to hold firmly to the Lord by faith
 - And to look forward to the Lord's fulfillment of His promises despite the earthly difficulties that lie ahead
- In the few years since Paul wrote 1 Timothy, conditions in Ephesus had worsened considerably
 - Worldliness continued to invade the life of the body, and false teachers were growing
 - Now the church was under persecution from the Roman Empire
 - And the apostles were fast disappearing
 - So leadership over the church was quickly transitioning to a second generation
 - This trend, combined with Paul's impending death, leads him to adopt an urgent tone and offer a very personal appeal
 - No letter in the New Testament is more personal than 2 Timothy

- Paul draws upon his personal example and makes multiple appeals
- The four chapters of Paul's letter move between two central ideas
 - First, encouraging Timothy to follow Paul's example of courage in the face of persecution
 - Courage means facing persecution without changing the message, which pleases Christ
 - And it may mean chains or martyrdom, but God gives grace to face such things
 - And ultimately, these things bring reward
 - Even in the best of circumstances, ministry is difficult and hard
 - But the temptation to walk away is especially strong when the penalty includes your life or freedom
 - So Paul gives strong argument to Timothy to stick with the plan
 - Secondly, Paul puts their circumstances and times in perspective with a lesson on the end times
 - Paul will compare the situation the church will face in the last days, to the situation he faced in his day
 - And then Paul explains how the church must face both times in similar ways
 - We may not live in Paul's day, but we are living in the last days he described
 - So obviously, it's important we give attention to his instructions

2Tim. 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,

2Tim. 1:2 To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

2Tim. 1:3 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,

2Tim. 1:4 longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy.

2Tim. 1:5 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.

- Paul's salutation is similar to the one he wrote in his first letter to Timothy, though Paul reverses the lens
 - As usual, Paul identifies himself as an apostle by the will of God, a man called into leadership by a personal appearing of Christ
 - He was called according to the promise of life in Jesus
 - He means his calling was part of a plan to bring salvation to men
 - Paul wasn't suggesting he was personally essential to God's plan
 - Rather, he's reminding Timothy that God appoints men in ministry to accomplish something
 - God needs no one, but by His grace He calls many to serve Him, which is our honor and blessing
 - But when a man is called to serve, especially in evangelistic or pastoral ministry, that man becomes a part of the plan of God for the salvation of men
 - As such, each minister must approach his role with a sober and faithful dedication to the task at hand
 - This was Paul's attitude and he calls Timothy to adopt a similar mindset
 - Paul says in v.3 that he served with a clear conscience as did the forefathers
 - What a powerful statement and one bound to prompt jealousy in any minister
 - Having a clear conscience doesn't mean we didn't sin
 - It means our motivation, approach and effort in serving Christ was never compromised
 - Still, who won't have regrets over the way we served Christ?
 - Hopefully, our regrets will not be our strongest memories of serving Christ, but to have none would be truly remarkable
 - Obviously, Paul was a man of exceptional faithfulness
 - He was in a line of special men God called to serve Him in key moments of history

- Men like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David
- And now Paul
- Paul extends a customary greeting of grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus
 - Then Paul thanks the Lord for Timothy's salvation and ministry
 - In 1 Timothy Paul thanked the Lord for his own salvation and ministry
 - This switch is a not-so-subtle acknowledgement that Paul's time leading the church was ending and Timothy's was taking hold
 - Paul prayed for Timothy constantly, he says, night and day
 - He longed to see Timothy
 - And when they separated, they came to tears
 - It's easy to imagine that Timothy was like a son to Paul who had no natural-born children
 - And I'm sure the feeling was mutual
 - Notice that Paul adds his seeing Timothy allowed him to be filled him with joy
 - Elsewhere Paul wrote that he rejoiced in all circumstances
 - But clearly, Paul wasn't always "joyful" and there is no contradiction here
 - To rejoice in all situations doesn't mean to feel joy
 - It means understanding that God is working to produce something good through suffering
 - Therefore, we seek to feel joy even as we rejoice in whatever God brings our way
- Timothy's enduring faith in the midst of difficult circumstances was a continuation of his family's testimony, Paul says in v.5
 - Timothy's mother was a Jewish woman named Eunice
 - Her name means good victory

- She was a woman of faith raising Timothy to know Christ, though married to a pagan, Greek father
- Her mother was Lois, also a believer
- Paul isn't necessarily crediting the mother or grandmother for Timothy's faith, since faith is a gift from God
 - Parenting isn't the determinant factor in a person's life
 - But God commonly works through good parenting to raise up godly men and women
 - It's no surprise that believing children are far more likely to come out of believing families who live their faith out in genuine ways
- After this brief greeting, Paul moves directly into his exhortation to Timothy

2Tim. 1:6 For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

2Tim. 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

- Because Timothy was a man of sincere faith, from a family of faithful servants, Paul calls Timothy to kindle afresh the gift of pastoral ministry the Lord deposited in him
 - The Greek verb translated kindle afresh is made from two words
 - One word means a living creature
 - The second means a fire
 - Together, they describe something living in danger of dying, of being extinguished
 - In this case, that thing is the spiritual gift given to Timothy
 - In 1 Timothy we learned that the gift Timothy received by the laying on of hands was a gift of pastoral care
 - Timothy was a young man with a nervous stomach of some kind
 - But he was called by God's Spirit into a place of leadership and authority
 - That gift was from the Lord, so it anticipated Timothy assuming the role even if he didn't look the part

- But Paul's choice of words suggests a worrisome development in Timothy's walk as a minister
 - Only a few years after Paul's first letter, the apostle is fearing that the spiritual fire driving Timothy in pastoral ministry was in danger of dying
 - We can't know how far Timothy had moved away from his calling but we do get an indication of what was responsible for Timothy's slipping
- Paul tells Timothy in v.7 that God didn't give him a spirit of timidity
 - Paul's observation seems specifically directed at Timothy's chief failing – that of a timid, fearful nature
 - Timothy was leading a pagan church in a major city within the Roman Empire, one closely associated with Paul
 - Now that Nero was actively pressing for the persecution of Christians, serving as a leader of the church in Ephesus was a dangerous role
 - It would be no surprise to hear that a pastor like Timothy might shrink back from serving publicly out of fear for Nero's persecution
 - Nero was especially hard on those in leadership, so the temptation would have been great for Timothy to lower his profile
 - He might have declined to preach or lead the church
 - He may have denied his association with Paul
 - Or even renounced Paul's teaching
 - We have no indication Timothy took any of these steps
 - But Paul's exhortation suggests Timothy was in jeopardy of such things
 - The enemy, who is behind all such persecution, never lowers his profile, never takes a day off
 - So when a man of God like Timothy takes a day off, the enemy gains ground
 - Both in his life and in the life of those he guards

- Paul says that the Spirit Timothy received was not one that experienced timidity
 - The Greek word is literally the word for cowardice
 - God did not put a coward inside us
 - So when we act cowardly in our faith, we are operating in the flesh
 - The flesh's desire to preserve itself is driving our thinking, rather than the fearless spirit God gave us at our rebirth
 - So indirectly Paul is telling Timothy that should he be feeling like hiding or repudiating his ministry, he can know he's acting in his flesh
 - Because such a response would never come by a prompting of the spirit
 - Timothy would be guilty of making the very mistake Jesus described when He said

[Matt. 16:24](#) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

[Matt. 16:25](#) "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

- When Jesus says "save a life", He's referring to our fleshly instinct to save our physical lives
 - To avoid the threats, persecution, and even martyrdom that come against those who follow Jesus
 - If the thought of these possibilities scares us out of following or serving Christ, we will lose far more than we gain
 - At most, we gain a few more years living on earth, only to die in the end anyway
 - But an unbeliever loses his or her soul
- And even a believer has the potential to lose if he shrinks back from serving God
 - Salvation isn't in question, but eternal blessings lie in the balance perhaps

- So the better trade is to be willing to lose one's earthly life should God require it
- For in doing so, we gain eternal things
- So the Lord gives believers a spirit of power, love and discipline
 - Once again, we're talking about the nature of the spirit given to every new believer at the moment of faith
 - As we believe in Christ as Messiah, our spirit is born again in the likeness of Christ
 - That new spirit possesses power and ability that we never had before
 - Specifically, Paul says our spirit possesses power
 - Spiritual power refers to a bold character that recognizes the authority we have when serving in a calling from God
 - A spirit of power is not a promise of supernatural power nor does it imply we can exercise power over demons or even other people
 - It's describing a strength to serve God without concern for the consequences, operating boldly in confidence that we serve the Living God
 - The power of our spirit won't allow us to be frightened away from our duties merely because men threaten our earthly life
 - A spirit of power understands Jesus' orders:

[Matt. 10:27](#) "What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops.

[Matt. 10:28](#) "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

- A good example of a man operating in the power of his spirit was the prophet Amos
 - He was a goat herder in Judah when the Lord sent him to prophesy judgment against the king of the Northern Kingdom

- That calling put him in great jeopardy, but nevertheless he served in the power of the spirit

[Amos 7:10](#) Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent word to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is unable to endure all his words.

[Amos 7:11](#) "For thus Amos says, 'Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'"

[Amos 7:12](#) Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Go, you seer, flee away to the land of Judah and there eat bread and there do your prophesying!

[Amos 7:13](#) "But no longer prophesy at Bethel, for it is a sanctuary of the king and a royal residence."

[Amos 7:14](#) Then Amos replied to Amaziah, "I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet; for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs.

[Amos 7:15](#) "But the Lord took me from following the flock and the Lord said to me, 'Go prophesy to My people Israel.'

- That's a man walking the spirit and seeing the power of the spirit at work
- That's the power Paul was reminding Timothy had within him
- Secondly, Paul says we received a spirit of love
 - The love we receive by the spirit is very different than the love we show in the flesh
 - Basically, the flesh knows how to love only one thing: itself
 - Though we show emotional love or sexual love to others in the flesh, that love is entirely self-centered
 - And when the flesh feels threatened, as in the case of persecution, it will take steps to preserve itself
 - This kind of love is not God's kind of love
 - His love is agape love
 - That's the Greek word for love Paul uses in v.7
 - It's selfless, sacrificial love
 - It's the kind of love we show to God and to others when we are living in the spirit

- We sacrifice ourself to serve God
- And we sacrifice our own needs for the sake of someone else
- When we walk in the love of our spirit we will think nothing of self but only of God, and those God wants to reach through our hands and feet
- That's the love Paul wanted Timothy to feel, rather than a selfish love of self-preservation
- Finally, the spirit gives us discipline
 - The Greek word for discipline is better translated self-control (or we would say self-discipline)
 - Once more, this is very different to what we find in our flesh
 - Our flesh has no self-control
 - Instead, the flesh feeds itself constantly and insatiably
 - The Bible calls the flesh's appetite a "lust"
 - Our flesh lusts after many things and at all times
 - In the face of persecution and deprivation, our flesh will seek ease and comfort and the approval of men
 - We may retreat from our testimony or from assembling with other believers
 - In Timothy's case, he may have neglected to act as an evangelist, which Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy was part of his job
 - Better to remain on good terms with the Roman authorities than to risk losing friends, home and freedom
 - Instead, Paul says the spirit in us will exert the necessary self-discipline so we can say no to the flesh
 - We can ignore the world's threats, forgo the comforts of concession if necessary and press on with the mission we've been given
 - Timothy may have been meek, timid and fearful, but those were qualities of his flesh, not his spirit

- So if he was living that way, it meant he was walking by the flesh and not in the spirit
- From that reminder, Paul moves to a call to action

[2Tim. 1:8](#) Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, [2Tim. 1:9](#) who 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, [2Tim. 1:10](#) but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, [2Tim. 1:11](#) for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

- Obviously, Paul says “therefore” because this is the natural response to the truth of v.7
 - Since we have a spirit capable of moving in strength, love and self control, let’s take steps in keeping with that spirit nature
 - Specifically, Paul asks Timothy not to be ashamed of the Gospel or of Paul himself
 - Paul’s request certainly lends weight to our assumptions concerning Timothy
 - He seems to have struggled with maintaining a public testimony before those who might persecute the church
 - And he distanced himself from Paul’s ministry
 - Paul calls himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ
 - It’s an intentionally ironic statement given that as Paul wrote these words he sat in chains in a Roman prison
 - As Timothy receives this letter, he would have also heard from the courier of Paul’s predicament, which would have only added to Timothy’s worries
 - So Paul describes himself not as a prisoner of Rome but of Jesus, because long before Rome imprisoned Paul, he had been enlisted to serve Jesus
 - Jesus has taken hold of us, will use our lives to glorify Himself, and then He brings us home for a glory in eternity

- If we see ourselves in that way, then nothing this world does to us can trouble us in the end
- In fact, Paul says he was made to suffer for the sake of the Gospel by the power of God
 - In other words, the Lord by His power brought suffering upon Paul, as we read in the book of Acts
 - That suffering was purposeful
 - It furthered the cause of the church, by giving a strong testimony to the truth of his message
- It's often been said that man doesn't generally suffer the way the early church martyrs suffered, merely to defend a lie or conspiracy
 - Especially not when they stand to gain nothing for it
 - Paul's suffering validated his confidence in his message
 - And as a result of his sacrifices, many more were brought into the church and strengthened through his example
- So once more Paul tells Timothy not to be ashamed of him and of Timothy's own testimony
 - When Paul tells Timothy not to be ashamed of him, Paul isn't concerned with his own reputation in Ephesus
 - Nor is Paul concerned for Timothy's personal testimony, per se
 - Paul is concerned for the strength and persistence of the church in that city
 - Should the church's shepherd in that city back down from a public, courageous stand for Christ, what would become of the sheep?
 - And if the pastor repudiates Paul's ministry before the authorities, then how would they defend the truth against the false teachers who sought to undermine Paul's teaching?
 - There was a lot on the line in Ephesus, and it hinged on the leader of the church standing firm despite growing resistance
 - To help Timothy face this challenge, Paul reminds Timothy of his own example at the end of v.8

- And in the process, Paul launches into one of the clearest summations of the true Gospel in all the Bible in vs.8-11
- In v.9 Paul says that the Lord called each of us into a saving faith by His grace
 - It was a holy calling, that is a calling to live out the faith we've been given
 - And that calling had no relationship to our works
 - Our place in Heaven is neither obtained, nor secured, by our good works
 - We bring nothing to our salvation, and contribute nothing to our glory
 - We are servants, slaves enlisted to glorify the Lord according to His power and by His grace
 - And that saving grace was granted us from all eternity
 - As Paul says in another letter written to this same city, the letter of Ephesians

[Eph. 1:3](#) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

[Eph. 1:4](#) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

[Eph. 1:5](#) He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

[Eph. 1:6](#) to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

- The supreme evidence of God's unmerited favor for His children is His predetermined plan to adopt us, a plan He initiated before the world began
- How can we fail to serve a God who singled us out from all eternity to receive His grace for that purpose?
- And the church has an especially privileged place in God's plan, having been the ones to whom the revelation of the Messiah came
 - God's grace for His children was granted from before time, but that plan centered on the arrival of His Son to redeem the world
 - And of all people in all times of history, we are especially blessed to have the revelation of Christ's appearing

- The saints of old longed to see the things we know in detail through the word of God, and with the benefit of the hindsight of history
- Here again, to whom much is given, much is expected
- By His appearing, Christ abolished death for His people
 - It's hard for us to appreciate this truth this side of the grave, because our physical body still must return to dust
 - But the death Paul is speaking about is not the physical death of our body
 - For that is a death we welcome, knowing it leads to a new incorruptible body
- Paul's talking about the Second Death, the eternal death, the separation from God that comes upon every soul that perishes without God's grace
 - The word death is ironic because the Second Death is separation from God is an eternal state of suffering, a state worse than death
 - That death is so severe that it weighs on the subconscious of every unbeliever
 - To see an unbeliever as they face the final moments of their life, is to witness true fear of death
- But Christ's appearing brought Him to His own unjustified death, which abolished the Second Death for any who are covered by His sacrifice
 - And with the abolishing of the Second Death comes entry into immortality
 - Rather than darkness and fear and separation, we enter into eternal light in an age of glory with God
- This is the future promised for all believers, and nothing can invalidate the promises of God
 - So if that is our future, one that is only a heartbeat away, how can we act in fear or trepidation in the face of earthly threats?
 - What is the real cost of faithful discipleship?

- Merely a willingness to sacrifice something we want to lose and can't keep anyway
- Paul reminds Timothy that they serve a God Who saved them before they knew Him
 - Paul ends saying he was appointed a preacher, apostle and teacher
 - God called Paul to this life as a part of God's predestined plan
 - And this call was to further the administration of the Gospel of glory by which Paul and all men are saved
- A preacher is a herald, someone who brings news that needs to be heard
 - Paul was one of God's heralds and the principle preacher to Gentiles, of which Timothy was a beneficiary
 - The implication of Paul being a preacher was clearly that Timothy owed his own salvation to Paul's obedience
 - So that raises the question of who would not hear should Timothy be disobedient to his call to preach?
- Paul was also an apostle, which is one sent with a message
 - Apostles were called to begin a work of the church in new places
 - Heralds speak and move on, but apostles put down roots to ensure the planting of something permanent
 - Paul was an important part of planting most Gentile churches of the first century, including the church of Ephesus
 - Here again, the implication is that Timothy would have no church in Ephesus had Paul not been obedient to his call
 - And Paul obeyed even in the face of threats and persecution from the Jews in the city
 - So how could Timothy put that city at risk by shrinking back from shepherding what Paul helped start?
- Finally, Paul was a teacher, one who perpetuated the spiritual growth and maturity of what was established

- Even after Paul helped establish the church in Ephesus, he returned on multiple occasions during his journeys
- Each time he returned, he took a chance with his freedom
- Nevertheless, he returned to continue the work begun there, because that was his call as a teacher
- Likewise, Timothy was called to continue growing that church, not to decimate it by running in fear or denying Paul's teaching in the face of opposition
- As opposition grew in Ephesus, these pressures only grew
 - No amount of hype or earthly logic could withstand the temptation to shrink back in the face of torture and death
 - Only the confidence in the spirit that this life is fleeting, regardless of what it brings
 - And the call on our lives is to live well for Christ
 - Not necessarily live long
 - As I said earlier, our days are moving in the direction Paul warns Timothy, into the later days of persecution
 - We may not see it yet in our own backyard, but it's coming the Bible says
 - And when it comes, we need to remember these words to Timothy
 - We will need to rest in the power, love and self-control available to us in our spirit so we may give a good testimony no matter what comes