

No Fear...In Jesus!

2 Timothy 1:1-7

Turn to the back of the book to get the feel and the context for 2 Timothy. Paul concludes his letter by writing these words: “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments. 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. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen! Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick. Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.”

With that then as the backdrop turn to 1:1-7. Paul writes: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

Second Timothy fits both into the category of a Pastoral Epistle and a Prison Letter. If you have studied the New Testament you know that the scholars of the NT will classify it along with 1 Timothy and Titus as a pastoral letter because it deals with issues related to the pastorate. It deals with issues related to the church, but it is also the case that Paul was in prison when he wrote 2 Timothy. Now, it is not the same as when he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, or Philemon, because those are letters that were written when Paul was under house arrest. If you go to the end of the book of Acts 28:30-31 you discover that Paul is under house arrest. He is actually in a rented home. He does have a Roman soldier by his side 24/7, but he has fairly decent accommodations. People come and go and visit him. He, at that point, will write those four wonderful letters of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

I believe that he was later released from this imprisonment. I also believe that he engaged in at least a fourth missionary journey that is not recorded in the book of Acts, and then he is rearrested. He is charged with sedition, and he is charged with opposing Rome. This time when he is returned to Rome, Paul does not find himself under house arrest. Rather, Paul finds himself

placed in what was known as the Mammertine dungeon, a horrible place, a terrible place. Some have even speculated that he was put in the lowest region of that dungeon where human refuse would flow and come down and that is what he lived in and that is what he experienced during that particular time of imprisonment. Further, as we read a moment ago, he is there alone. Here is the great Apostle Paul, a superstar for the faith by any estimation and at the very end of his life: three or four missionary journeys, thirteen letters, hundreds and hundreds of people having come to the faith because of his ministry if not thousands, and here at the end of his life he is alone. He is all by himself. Only Luke is still standing by his side. And so that is the context in which you find Paul writing his final words to what he calls in verse 2 “a beloved son,” someone he called earlier “a faithful son” in the ministry. In spite of all that he has recently gone through, in spite of the fact that the prospects are not very promising, Paul can still say to young Timothy, “Have no fear when you stand in Jesus.” How is it that you and I as servants of God, saved by his grace, saved for service can indeed serve him with no fear no matter where it is that He places us, no matter where it is that he may send us?

From chapter one to chapter four, you are going to see that along with 2 Corinthians, this is the most personal letter that Paul wrote. In fact, he is very intimate, and even in the first chapter you will see he is very, very reflective. He is probably in his sixties maybe pushing seventy. He has been serving the Lord Jesus now for almost forty years. So he is looking back over a lifetime of ministry thinking about what really matters, thinking about what is really important. What is it that, as I look over my life, I can say, “I was glad I did that. I was pursuing the right things. Look at how God in his wonderful grace and mercy worked in my life.”?

I. Thank God for calling you to serve Him

1:1-2

Paul begins in the first two verses: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, a beloved son:”

a. We have His calling.

1:1

Paul begins by noting the calling that he has: “Paul, an apostle,” a sent one. Sent by whom? Or sent on behalf of whom? He says, I am sent by or of Jesus Christ. This is his office. He is an apostle. He is a sent one, and he has been sent by Jesus Christ. Secondly, he notes also that this was done “by the will of God.” Paul makes it very clear that what he does, he does not do taking his own initiative, but rather, he does what he does because Christ called him to serve him in this kind of way. You say, “But Danny, I’m not an apostle.” Yes you are. If you are saved, then you are an apostle; not in a technical sense of having been an eyewitness from the time of his earthly life to his resurrection and ascension, but you are still a sent one. I am a sent one, because basically for us the word apostle means a missionary. God calls us all to be missionaries! This is one of things we must do again in our churches and one of the things we desperately must do in the Southern Baptist Convention: regain the truth that every single child of God is called to be a missionary. You may not be called to go to Russia. You may not be called to go to Thailand. You may not be called to go to the Philippines or to China or to Kenya or wherever, but you are called to be a missionary wherever it is that God places you in this world and in this life. And so Paul says, we are apostles. We are sent ones of Jesus Christ. We represent him anywhere and everywhere we go, and this is indeed “the will of God.” We have his calling, but he also says in verse one...

b. We have His promise.

1:1

Paul writes, “it is by the will of God according to [what?] the promise of life [and the implication is the promise of eternal life] which is in Christ Jesus.” Why did Paul include that? He doesn’t do that in his other letters. I think I know why. He’s in prison. He has seen what the future is probably going to be. He’s going to die. He’s going to be executed. In fact, church tradition says that after this letter was written, Paul was very quickly convicted of sedition, which was a capital crime, and because he was a Roman citizen, unlike Peter who was crucified upside down, he was taken outside the Mammertine dungeon and was beheaded. That was the end of the Apostle Paul. In fact, it is almost certain that both Paul and Peter died somewhere between 65-70 A.D. So in a matter of a few years the two great leaders of the early church are gone. And yet, Paul can say, “Even though my future is bleak, even though my future does not look promising, I have a promise of eternal life, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. In other words, Paul would simply say once more as he does in Philippians 1:21, “I’m in a win-win scenario. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I live, I win; if I die, I win. All this old world can do to me is kill me, and if they do, immediately I am absent from the body and present with the Lord.” I have the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. So, we have his calling. We are called as sent ones of Jesus Christ by the will of God. We have his promise, the promise of life, eternal life, which is in Christ Jesus, and then also...

c. We have His blessings.

1:2

He says I am writing, “To Timothy, a beloved [it is the root word *agape*, a dearly beloved son, and here are the blessings] grace [God’s unmerited favor], mercy [God’s compassion and kindness to those of us who do not deserve it], peace [the Hebrew concept of *shalom*. That is, God’s wholeness, God’s goodness, the tranquility of life that comes from being rightly related to

Jesus Christ]. Grace, mercy, peace from God our Father and from Christ Jesus who is our Lord.” Paul says, “Thank God because he has called you to serve him, and he has called you with promises, and he has called you with blessings.” Now secondly, Paul also says in verses 3-5, that you should...

II. Thank God for preparing you to serve Him 1:3-5

Several scholars have noted that what you find in these verses is similar to what you also find in Romans 1:8-11. The text: “I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.”

a. Thank Him for authenticity and prayer. 1:3

Paul begins by giving a prayer of thanksgiving, thanking God first of all for authenticity in ministry, but also for the prayers that accompany us in ministry as well. “I thank God, whom I [what?] serve with a pure conscience.” That word “pure” can be translated a “clear” conscience. The word “serve” is a word that means to render in the temple, to render service as an act of worship. Paul saw his calling in life as an act of worship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Worship for Paul was not something that you just did on the Lord’s Day. It was not something you just did on Sunday, but rather worship is something you do every single day. You worship God by the way you study at school. You worship God by the way you participate in athletics. You worship God by the way you conduct yourself in the workplace. You worship God by the way you treat people out in public, whether it be at the cleaners, the supermarket, the Seven-Eleven, or the restaurant.

Paul understood that he was to worship God 24/7. He uses the present tense. I am continually serving God, and I do so with a clean, with a clear, with a pure conscience.

You ought to note that phrase, because Paul was vitally concerned that what we do, we do with a clear conscience. Listen to what he says in chapter 1:5, “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience.” Chapter 1:19 of 1 Timothy, “having faith and a good conscience.” He talks about those engaged in leadership in the church, and speaking of deacons in 3:9, “Deacons are to hold the mystery of the faith [how?] with a pure [with a clean, with an uncluttered] conscience.” So Paul understood how very important it is for you and me to be clear in our head and at peace in our souls when we render our service to the Lord. I suspect that many people today do not serve as they could, because they are guilt ridden. They have not understood the gospel rightly, and it may even be that in some instances, they are in sin, and therefore, because of sin, there is guilt. Because of guilt, they shut down. Because they shut down, they are not able to serve him with authenticity. And so Paul says, “I thank God whom I serve as an act of worship with a pure conscience.” He then adds a phrase that he does not do anywhere else in all of his writings. He says, “as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day.” In other words, there is a continuity here between the gospel I teach. The gospel I preach is not something that was my creation, but rather, there is continuity. There are those, who went before me, and there will be those who come after me. I am in a line of faithful believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is continuity in the faith.

Paul then says in verse 3, “I pray for you without ceasing.” He says in verse 3, “I pray for you night and day.” He is simply saying to Timothy, “You are never far from my mind. You are never off my radar screen. I am always thinking about you. I am always concerned about you. I always have you on my heart, in my mind and in my prayers.” I don’t know about you, but I

have people that I care for like that. I have people that I think about every single day, and I'll just utter a prayer to the Lord on their behalf. Of course, having two of our sons on the international field, I regularly think of Tim and Anna and Levi. I regularly think of Paul and Kari and Micah. I also think of those young men and women that are serving the Lord so faithfully in countries like Thailand and Nepal and Myanmar and India, and when I think of them, and it is amazing how often the Lord brings them back to my mind again and again and again, I remember when they were at the seminary. I remember when their children were born, and then I remember them when they were packing up and going away to these hard and difficult places, and so I cannot help but pray for them without ceasing. And so the Bible says that Paul thanks God for authenticity and prayer, but secondly, he thanks him for passion and tears.

b. Thank Him for passion and tears. 1:4

Verse 4, "greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy."

What's Paul saying? Paul says perhaps, "I remember the last time we were together, and I remember that the tears began to roll down your face." You say, "That's not very masculine." I've come to believe that the most masculine males are those who can shed a tear. They're real. They're authentic. They have come to understand that life is short, and some things really, really, really do matter. I'll be honest with you, as I think back on my life, I only remember crying when I was twelve and we lost a baseball game and when I was fourteen and we lost another baseball game, and that's about it until I moved into my thirties and forties. You say, "Why?" Well, I think because I was stupid for one reason. I think, on the other hand, I was like many males, and I was prideful and arrogant. You know, "Big boys don't cry." Well, I've become convinced that is not correct. You say, "Why?" Well, because the greatest man who ever lived, was Jesus, and John 11:35 says when he was at Lazarus' tomb, he wept. Elsewhere when he looked over

Jerusalem, he wept. The Bible says here that Timothy wept when he and Paul were separated, or perhaps he wept when he heard that Paul had been incarcerated, and that Paul was once more being charged as a criminal by the empire of Rome. All I'm saying is this: it did Paul great good to know that his young son in the ministry had a great heart, great passion and shed tears on his behalf. There's nothing wrong with big boys crying.

c. Thank Him for parents and teachers. 1:5

Verse 5, "I am filled with joy [verse 4] when I call to remembrance the genuine faith." That word means "unhypocritical." It means sincere. It means a faith that does not wear a mask. That's a great word picture, a faith that does not wear a mask. In other words, you are what you are on Sunday the other six days as well. You don't come to church smiling, grinning, and acting like everything is grand, glorious and wonderful in your spiritual life, and then the rest of the week you live like a hypocrite. You put on a mask on Sunday, and then the real you is on display the rest of the week. I can remember when we lived in Dallas, and I knew a man who on Sunday was a model believer, but Monday through Saturday he was anything but a devoted follower of Christ. I actually confronted him one time because I loved him and cared for him, and he said, "You know Danny, what works on Sunday doesn't work the other six days of the week." Well, brothers and sisters, if that's true, then the Christian faith is not real and not true, and we ought to pack up and go home right now. I'm convinced that what works on Sunday does work every other day, and I'm convinced that God is honored and God blesses those with a genuine, with a sincere, with an unhypocritical faith, a faith that does not wear a mask.

And he says, "I believe that is in you." And why was it in Timothy? I love this! "Because it was first in your grandmother Lois" [and by the way, in the Greek text there's a very tender word here for "grandmother." It is the Greek word *mamme*, with a long e. It's almost like mama,

mommy. That was a tender way of saying it. It was not like saying grandmother, but grandmamma.] So he says, “This faith was first in your grandmamma Lois and your mother Eunice, and now I am even convinced that is in you as well.” Don’t miss the three generations that are noted there by Paul in this verse: grandmother, mother and son. And he says, “I thank God for parents and teachers because I am also persuaded it is in you as well.” “Thank God for preparing you to serve him. In particular, he used your grandmother and your mother.” But then he also says finally, in verses 6-7...

III. Thank God for equipping you for service 1:6-7

He says first of all in verse six...

- a. We have the Spirit. 1:6

“Therefore I remind you to stir up [it could be translated to fan the flame] the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” Evidently he is looking back to the commissioning or the ordination of young Timothy when the church recognized that God’s hand was upon him and the church recognized that God had set him apart and so they laid hands upon him. And Paul says, “Look, go back, be renewed, think again and be reminded of the fact that you have been gifted by God, and the church itself recognized that this was indeed what God was doing in your life. I know you may be discouraged. I know you may be timid. I know you may be having a difficult time. I know you may be having doubts, but just remember once more, there is a body of believers that are convinced that God indeed has this purpose for your life, and you have the gift of God through the laying on of hands. But then he also says, “Timothy, operate out of a sense of security.”

b. We are secure.

1:7

Verse seven, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 1 John 4:18 reminds us that “perfect love casts out fear,” one of my wife’s favorite verses. Now as I was working on this and finishing up this morning, I sat down and in my notes I jotted it this way. I drew a contrast: what does God give us? And what does Satan give us? What does God give you? And what does the devil give you? Well, here’s what God gives you according to Paul. God gives you confidence. He hasn’t given us a spirit of fear, so God gives you confidence. He gives you power or strength. He gives you love, and he gives you a sound mind, which means he gives you wisdom. One translation says, he gives you “self-control.” Following that out, God brings balance into your life, and so God is a source of confidence, strength, love and wisdom. In contrast, the evil one gives you fear. He gives you weakness. He gives you hate, and he gives you confusion, which leads to instability. And so we could all do a little check up tonight, “What is going on in my life right now?” If I were to take a quick inventory of my life, is my life more characterized by confidence, strength, love, and balance, or is my life characterized more by fear, weakness, hatred, and confusion? You’ll be very quick to discern the source of one or the other.

I can identify with this text really well. You say, “Why?” Because of my legacy. You see, I do what I do tonight, and I pursue the calling I pursue tonight because of the influence of a granddaddy and grandmamma, and also the influence of a mother. Now, my dad was also a believer, but my mother had a tremendous impact on my life. My granddaddy as I have shared with some of you was a dirt farmer. Somebody asked me the other day, “What’s a dirt farmer?” Well, it’s a person who farms in the... dirt! It’s sort of like distinguishing between a dairy farmer who works with what? Cows! So there are dirt farmers, and there are dairy farmers, and I’m sure

there are other kinds of farmers. Well, my granddaddy was a dirt farmer, which meant he worked in the dirt. He had a garden, and he plowed fields, and my granddaddy was a man who only had a fifth grade education. My granddaddy was also, in his latter years, in addition to being a farmer was the church janitor. That's what my granddaddy did, but my granddaddy was also one of the godliest men I've ever known. In fact, listen to me, my granddaddy died when I was about fourteen. He had a massive heart attack and was dead in a matter of a day. Years later I was invited to go back to his church (it was a little church in Douglasville, GA called Victory Baptist Church). I guess I was probably twenty-five or twenty-six, so my granddaddy had been dead for more than a decade, but when I was introduced that morning to preach, I was introduced as Mr. Galloway's grandson. In other words, even though my granddaddy had been dead for a decade people still knew who he was. His reputation was still alive and well in that little country community. When anybody spoke of Mr. Galloway, they always spoke glowingly. They always spoke with great respect. Why? Because he was the kind of man you could call at two in the morning and no matter where you were or what was going on he would get in his pick-up truck. By the way, my granddaddy suffered from rheumatoid arthritis, so for him just to get up out of a chair was difficult. For him to walk was always painful, but I never saw my granddaddy turn down a request from anyone in terms of their needing help.

Well, what was in my granddaddy was beautifully transferred to my mother. Charlotte can tell you that there was not and never has been a more servant oriented woman on this planet than my mother, Emma Lou Akin. In fact, when my mother died, my brother-in-law, along with me, preached her funeral. When Kevin was talking about my mother he made this statement, and I had never thought about it until he said it and then it hit me, you lived with her for twenty years and everything he just said is absolutely true. What he said was this: "I have no memory, no

memory at all, of Emma Lou Akin saying, ‘I want.’” In other words, if you said, “Mama, what would you like to do?” Her response was always, “Whatever you want to do is fine.” And the thing is, she meant it. She wasn’t pretending. She meant it, because she was happy when she was serving others. And the impact of a godly mother has, at least in the best parts of me, shaped and molded me as well.

So when Paul says to Timothy, “I know that you are who are because of a wonderful grandmommy named Lois and a wonderful mama named Eunice.” You could also say, “Whatever is good in Danny Akin is the result of a wonderful granddaddy named Charlie and a wonderful mother named Emma Lou.” The point is simply this: what you invest in your children, don’t get discouraged, God has a way of bringing and bearing fruit down the road. Stay faithful. Be faithful. Have no fear in Jesus, and you might be amazed at what God will do in the life of your children just like he did for Lois and Eunice in the life of a young man named Timothy.