

Called to testify (2 Tim 1:6-2:8)

2 Timothy was a letter written by Paul to a young evangelist named Timothy, who was left in Ephesus to carry out the work of preaching the gospel and pastoring the people there. This letter becomes quite significant in that Paul is about to die and knows he only has days left. He says to Timothy in 2 Tim 4:6, ***“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.”*** “Drink offerings” were offerings of wine that accompanied the sacrifice on the altar. By this Paul indicates that his death, as was his life, had been devoted to God for the work of Jesus Christ. He knows that he is about to take the fatal blow. And in this mental state he writes this letter.

So the words of 2 Timothy has a special significance and reflect Paul’s thinking and what truly mattered concerning Timothy’s walk with Christ. It is what he desires for Timothy to do as a follower of Christ. So we will take a small series through 2 Timothy to find out what Paul regarded as priorities for Timothy and what really is important as a Christian who wishes to follow Christ.

It is not the intention here to focus on every verse of this letter, but to hit certain highlights of what is important in our walk with Christ.

Now I title this “Called to Testify” because, the first matter that Paul brings up to Timothy is this matter of God’s calling of Timothy to give testimony of Jesus Christ to others. This becomes Paul’s first concern for Timothy in this letter. For us, I give several implications that we may apply:

I. **Commit yourself to the ministry God has given to you**

At the outset, the encouragement given to Timothy, the chief principle of Paul’s encouragement, is that Timothy is not to let anything keep him from serving Christ in the ministry that God had called him to do.

1:6 For this reason [because of the faith that dwells in Timothy] **I remind you to kindle afresh** [“fan into a flame”] **the gift** [*charisma*] **of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.**

To ***“fan into a flame”*** indicates the need to turn up the burner, to get the fire really going! Timothy was facing serious opposition at Ephesus, but that does not mean that he should hold back the *charisma* [the ministry given to him through grace] that he had received when Paul laid hands on him; so to speak, at his ordination.

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Although I have defined this word *charisma* before in our study of 1 Corinthians 12, let me explain the meaning once again.

Charisma is a hybrid word from *charis* (“grace”) and *pneuma* (“spirit”), thus the etymology means, “a grace of the Spirit.” Paul seemed to have coined this word himself, since we do not find it anywhere until Paul’s writings. One often wants to define it only according to the background of 1 Corinthians 12, where Paul confronts the Corinthians on the abuse of “spiritual gifts” which concerned the “gifts” given to the body of Christ. But the word, which is found 17 times in the NT, may have a more general sense of a God-given act or of receiving a God-given ministry. For example, Paul uses the term, *charisma* in the following examples.

Romans 1:11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;

Here, as the context seems to reveal, it pertains to a gracious work of the Spirit through preaching as the context reveals. Paul says in verse 9, “***God, whom I serve with my spirit in preaching the gospel of His Son...***,” continues by saying he hopes to come to Rome in order to “**have a harvest**” among them (verse 13) for reaching both Jews and Gentiles (v. 14); that is to reach souls for Christ. He then states in verse 15, “***That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.***” In his introduction to the Romans, it seems that the *charisma* that Paul wishes to impart is that of preaching the gospel.

Now in Rom 5:15, 16 and 6:23 the word, *charisma*, is used to characterize the act of salvation through Christ’s death. ***Romans 5:15, “But the free gift is not like a transgression”*** and continues to speak of Christ’s act as a *charisma*. So also it is used the same way in Romans 6:23.

Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift [the gift of salvation through grace] of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

In these cases, the word has nothing to do with spiritual gifts as we normally think of them, but the “Grace in the Spirit” that speaks of Christ’s gift of salvation.

In Rom 11:29 the word is used for the favor and benefits to which Israel was called to when it reads, “***for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.***” Israel had received promises from God and these promises are *charisma*, “spiritual graces” or

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“favours of the Spirit” that are irrevocable.

In Rom 12:6, the word may be regarded as a “spiritual gift,” but these gifts may also be seen as “works of ministry.” One receives such a work of the Spirit in order to perform spiritual services in the body of Christ. These are *charisma* because God has graciously given such services for believers to carry out. I’ve come to the conclusion that the idea behind the use of *charisma* is that it points to being endowed by God for spiritual service, whatever that service may be. *Charisma* is an unearned spiritual work of the Spirit that God has endowed the believer with for a service in the body of Christ.

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

Here Timothy is called to “*fan into a flame*” the *charisma*, that is, the spiritual service that God had given to him to do. Paul is, no doubt, referring to Timothy’s preaching and teaching ministry as an evangelist. Such work for Timothy is alluded to throughout the letter and is the essence of Paul’s final charge to Timothy:

1 Tim 4:1 “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ...(2) Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”

Be “inflamed” with preaching the word. Don’t let off the gas pedal.

1 Tim 4:5 “But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

The word “*evangelist*” is from *euaggelistés*, and simply means, “one who brings good news” or “the gospel.” Timothy is called to be loyal to the task of preaching the gospel and its accompanying effects as to its doctrines and how the gospel applies. God did not empower Timothy for a ministry so that he would shrink back from doing it.

So first, commit yourself to the ministry that God has given you.

II. Know that you are empowered for service

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

Here the human spirit is likely referred to, and Paul often uses it to refer to one's disposition; although it is true that no one would have this kind of spirit except through the work of the Holy Spirit. The idea is that God did not give us a disposition of cowardice. The gospel is to be preached and Timothy is not to shrink back from doing it. But, having received the Holy Spirit, we are equipped in three ways:

1. **Power** (*dunamis*)—in this context, Timothy has been given power to suffer for the sake of the gospel. The church is to share the gospel through peaceable means, yet may even suffer violently for it. Certainly, to accept reviling is par for the course for believers. But God has empowered the church with a message that must be proclaimed regardless of intimidation or regardless of whether it seems unpopular or out of style or outdated. People must hear it! We will see the problem that Timothy was facing in chapter 3. Even though people did not want to hear it, Timothy was told to preach it all the more!
2. **Love**—*Agape* speaks of the sacrificial type of love that preaching the gospel requires. It is this type of love that was expressed in John 3:16. Christ so love the world so much that He was willing to bear the reproaches to win it. Similarly, the preacher of the gospel must love in such a way that he is willing to bear the insults in order to win it. So, regardless of how the culture may respond, we are to love as Christ loved the world.
3. **Discipline**—This word has the idea of “restraint,” “self-control,” or “chastity.” It concerns controlling one's personal behavior. Rather than reacting to offences when sharing Christ through “blind passion” or out of impulse, one is to exhibit self-control in the situation or toward the audience in which he finds himself. The sharing of the gospel calls for self-restraint or maintaining composure, especially when confronted with antagonists.

Verse 1:8, “**Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner...**” It seems to me that in Paul's view, if we are unwilling to let people know that we are Christians, we must be ashamed of what we believe in. What we often blame to “peer pressure,” is nothing less than “shamefulness” in the gospel. Timothy is not be ashamed. And we too are not to be ashamed of standing

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with those, as Timothy is not to be ashamed of Paul who is about to be martyred, who experience humiliation for the cause of Christ.

2 Tim 1:8 “...but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God ... (11) for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

God has empowered the believer to be willing to accept suffering in order to tell them about Christ. Mockery, persecution, insults, people’s beliefs in alternative religions, or even people that act disinterested; none of kinds of responses should have an impact on whether share Christ or not.

III. **Recognize that your work is an investment for eternity.**

2 Tim 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted [“deposited”] to Him until that day.

Perhaps no apostle had experienced more persecution than Paul (imprisonment, chains, beatings, ridicule, harassment). But he accepted these because he knew that Christ was the Son of God and the Savior of the world, and that his ministry came from Christ.

Paul recognizes here that the persecutors do not have the final say over his life; Christ has the final say. He also knows that his persecutors do not have the final say over the value of his ministry, for Christ has the final say over that too! In fact, Paul knows that he is doing the will of God. Therefore, he is convinced that God is “**able to guard**” what he has “**deposited**” in God’s bank “**until that day.**” The work of Christ that he had committed himself to is preserved and he will be able to cash in on that day when God calls His church home.

When I was at the University of Nebraska, where I had become a Christian, I afterward came across a poem that stuck with me and I never forgot it: “***Only one life, ‘twill soon be past. Only what’s done for Christ will last!***” Even though Paul had enemies that wanted to destroy his work, he knew that his work was protected by the living God.