

Stay True to the Gospel (2 Timothy 1:1-14)

Opening:

One of my favorite hymns is *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*. Listen to something I recently read about that hymn writer.

377 Hymn Writer Loses Joy Of Salvation:

Robert Robinson, author of the hymn “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” lost the happy communion with the Savior he had once enjoyed, and in his declining years he wandered into the by-ways of sin. As a result, he became deeply troubled in spirit. Hoping to relieve his mind, he decided to travel.

In the course of his journeys, he became acquainted with a young woman on spiritual matters, and so she asked him what he thought of a hymn she had just been reading. To his astonishment he found it to be none other than his own composition. He tried to evade her question, but she continued to press him for a response.

Suddenly he began to weep. With tears streaming down his cheeks, he said, “I am the man who wrote that hymn many years ago. I’d give anything to experience again the joy I knew then.” Although greatly surprised, she reassured him that the “streams of mercy” mentioned in his song still flowed. Mr. Robinson was deeply touched. Turning his “wandering heart” to the Lord, he was restored to full fellowship.

—H. G. Bosch¹

In the passage which we are going to talk about today, Paul is encourage Timothy to stay strong in the faith. In fact, that is a theme of Paul throughout his letter which we know of as 2 Timothy. In 2 Timothy Paul is encouraging Timothy and us as well, that we should stay strong in the faith. Perseverance is a theme of 2 Timothy.

Now, I want to read 2 Timothy 1:1-14, please turn in your Bibles to read this passage along with me.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

²*To Timothy, my beloved child:*

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Guard the Deposit Entrusted to You

³*I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶For this*

¹ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹ for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, ¹² which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³ Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

You may notice that in verses 1-2 Paul gives a greeting. Paul states that this is written by him, that he is an apostle; his apostleship is by God's will and the promises of Christ Jesus. Paul states that this letter is to Timothy. In verses 3-5 Paul talks about Timothy's background. We've talked about those verses before, so I want to pick up on verse 6.

- I. Starting at verse 6 Paul encourages Timothy to persevere in the faith.
 - a. Paul tells Timothy to fan the flame. Paul reminds Timothy of his ordination and encourages Timothy to remember that. I think the point here is that Paul is trying to encourage Timothy.
 - b. By writing to "Fan the flame," Paul is not indicating that Timothy had backslidden or fallen away. No, Paul is simply encouraging Timothy to persevere.
 - c. Paul is writing metaphorically about fire and the Christian life. The Gospel and living for Christ is like a fire within us. Paul is encouraging Timothy to not let that fire die. Paul is encouraging Timothy to fan that flame. We must not let it go out. Most all of us have heard about the Salvation Army. "General Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, once sent this message to those under him: 'The tendency of fire is to go out; watch the fire on the altar of your heart.' Anyone who has tended a fireplace fire knows that it needs to be stirred up occasionally."² Sometimes the fire within us will be stirred up by a devotional reading, a sermon, a Scripture passage, a worship service, or another way. In this case Paul was encouraging Timothy to fan that flame and stay alive in Christ.
 - d. In Verse 7 Paul encourages Timothy that as Christ-followers we have the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not a spirit of weakness. The Holy Spirit is not a spirit of fear, no we have a spirit of love, of power, of self control.
 - i. All throughout the New Testament we see the power of the Gospel. Paul had written about this elsewhere.
 - ii. Paul again is encouraging Timothy to not be fearful. If you recall, in 1 Timothy Paul had Timothy confront some serious issues. Some suggest that Timothy was an introvert and being an introvert, it may have been natural for him to get fearful when in reality Timothy had the Holy Spirit with him. Timothy had the Holy Spirit to help him to have boldness, power and self-control while he deals with church issues.

² <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/2timothy.pdf>

- e. Having said that, now in verses 8-10 Paul encourages Timothy not to be ashamed.
 - i. Paul says not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Gospel.
 - ii. I wonder if I am ever ashamed.
 - iii. I wonder if ever withhold sharing my testimony or proclaiming the Gospel because of some form of shame.
 - iv. I wonder if I am ever ashamed of God's witnesses.
 - v. Paul tells Timothy to not be ashamed of him as a prisoner.
 - 1. Paul was a prisoner for the Lord. Paul had been persecuted for the Gospel and there certainly could have been some shame there on Timothy's part.
 - 2. To these early Christians having a leader in prison was not something to boast about.
 - vi. Paul then writes about why we shouldn't be ashamed. This is because we are saved by the power of God. Christ has called us to a holy calling. Jesus has abolished death; we have no fear in death because of Christ. Christ has called us to the position we are now in.
- f. In verses 11-12 Paul writes about his own calling and trust in the Gospel.
 - i. Paul says that he is called. Paul is called to preach. This means that he is called to proclaim the Gospel. He is called to proclaim the Gospel like a town crier or a herald.
 - ii. Paul says that he is called as an apostle. This means that he is sent for a purpose.
 - iii. Paul says that he is called to teach.
 - iv. This is why he suffers. He suffers for the Gospel because the Gospel means that much to him.
 - v. Paul says that he is not ashamed, why? Paul says that he knows who he believes in. He believes in Christ and He knows Christ in a close way. He knows that Christ is good and faithful.
- g. In verses 13-14 Paul is encouraging Timothy to follow his example. Follow the pattern which Paul has set. Paul encourages Timothy to do this in faith and in love.
 - i. Paul had apparently set a standard with his teaching and life which Timothy can emulate.
 - ii. In verse 14 Paul encourages Timothy to trust in the Holy Spirit in order to guard the deposit within him. That deposit is the Gospel. The Gospel is a treasure within us.
 - 1. We must also emulate this faith. We must guard the Gospel within us.
 - 2. Do we understand the knowledge and the belief in the gospel is such a treasure within us?
 - 3. Do we know Jesus? Jesus is whom we believe in for salvation. Do we know Him and trust Him?

I believe these verses are Paul's theme sentence for 2 Timothy. Paul will be challenging Timothy to be strong and not give up. The hymn writer fell away from the faith and I am sure that was with great regret. We cannot experience the full Gospel if we are not strong in the faith.

Some children have these punching bag type toys and no matter how much you hit them they just pop right back up. They might have sand in the bottom or something, but they can be hit and they come right back up. Sometimes we will take some strong hits in our Christian life, it is important that we come right back up and follow Christ.

So, what is it going to take to light the fire within you? What is it going to take to fan the flame within you?

Prayer