

The Persuasion of Faith

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 January 2022

Preacher: Rev Kenneth M Ferguson

[0 : 0 0] Let us now turn to the scriptures of the New Testament and reading from the second epistle of Paul to Timothy and chapter 1. Second epistle of Paul to Timothy and the first chapter.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son, grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy. When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that is in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, who hath saved us and called us with unholy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things.

Nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us.

[3 : 1 5] This thou knowest, that all they who are in Asia be turned away from me, of whom are Phygelus and Herogenes. The Lord give grace, the Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.

But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.

And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well. Amen. May the Lord bless to us that reading from his holy word.

To his name be all the praise. Let us now sing to his praise from Psalm number 40. The 40th Psalm at verse 8.

To do thy will I take delight, O thou my God that art. Yea, that most holy law of thine I have within my heart. Within the congregation great I righteousness did preach.

[4 : 3 0] Though thou dost know, O Lord, that I refrain it not my speech. I never did within my heart conceal thy righteousness. I thy salvation have declared, and shown thy faithfulness.

Thy kindness, which most loving is, conceal it have not I, not from the congregation great have hid thy verity. These stanzas, verses 8 to 10 of Psalm 40, To do thy will I take delight.

To do thy will I take delight.

O thou my God that art. O thou my God that art.

Oh Oh Oh

[7 : 18] Now as the Lord enables us, let us turn back to this portion of Scripture we've read together. The second epistle of Paul to Timothy and chapter 1.

And I would like particularly to highlight verse 12 as our text. Verse 12 This second epistle of Paul to Timothy is the last of Paul's letters that we have.

And as we go through the letter we realise that he is a man who is in prison in Rome and that he is awaiting death.

He knows from the words we have in chapter 4 and verse 6 For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing.

[9 : 20] He is a man who knows that his time on earth is very short. And he thinks of this young pastor, this young minister, Timothy.

And he sends a letter mentioning him particularly as somebody who may very well be scared and nervous of the greatness of the task of ministering at that particular time.

And the apostle, he sends these words to him in chapter 1 at verse 2 to Timothy, my dearly beloved son.

He wasn't his natural son, but we believe he was his spiritual son.

That through the blessing of God upon the gospel preached by the apostle that Timothy was converted.

[10 : 31] And so he calls him his dearly beloved son. Another way of looking at that is that Paul is the aged saint and Timothy as a son, as it were, in comparison to his father.

However, he is much younger. But nevertheless, he calls him his dearly beloved son and asks for the grace of God and mercy and peace to be given to him.

And also he thanks God in verse 3, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.

What an amazing privilege Timothy had to have a saint of God remembering him in his prayers night and day.

And that should be something that we ought to crave for ourselves. That we be also the object and the subject of the saints' prayers.

[11 : 41] And that we ourselves also would pray fervently on behalf of others. That there might be a unity of prayer among us as a people.

Bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the love of Christ in that particular way as in other ways also. And then in verse 4, he says, So this man came from a godly home.

His father was a Gentile, a Greek, but his mother and grandmother had embraced the gospel. And this young man also, he was as it were, in that circle of spiritual fellowship.

And what an amazing thing it is to have people under the same roof, belonging to the same family of God. Living proof of the gospel.

And the power of the grace of God. And then he says in verse 6, Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

[13 : 22] He gives us a kind of a picture here of this young man. And he has been set aside to preach the gospel.

If you see in 1 Timothy chapter 4 and at verse 14, an account we have there, Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

He was a young man equipped by the grace of God to preach the gospel. That was the gift of God to him.

And the apostle here now is saying to him, I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

It's as if his fire has gone low as a preacher of the gospel. You know, when you want to get the fire going in your own hearth, you have to clear away the ashes and let the embers be seen and let the air, the draft, catch up the fire again.

[14 : 42] Well, that's the picture we have here. It's as if Timothy, whether it is because of fear or nervousness for whatever the problems may have been surrounding him, he just felt he wasn't able to come up to fulfilling the task of ministry.

in the face of all these difficulties. And the apostle says, you stir up the gift that God has given you. And there's a sense in which that can apply to ourselves also.

That we are exhorted to stir up our souls. One of the commentators commenting on this, John Gale says, there are three ways in which you are to stir up the gift of God that is in you.

By reading the word of God, by meditating on the word of God, and by prayer. These three things, reading, meditation, on the word of God, and prayer.

and do that on a regular basis so that, as it were, the draft or the fire of the spirit can strengthen in your heart and in your witness from day to day.

[16 : 02] And this is what the apostle is saying to young Timothy. And then he goes on to say, God has not given us, verse 7, not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

The Lord has given to his people the spirit of power. When you read in the gospel according to Luke, the apostles or the disciples are told to stay in Jerusalem until they are endured with power from on high.

The Lord is saying to them, the Holy Spirit is coming upon you at the day of Pentecost. And he is going to be a spirit of empowerment. And see the difference between Peter before the day of Pentecost and on the day of Pentecost when he stood up and he so boldly declared the glorious gospel because the Holy Spirit had come upon him with that new measure of power.

And this is what Paul is reminding Timothy. He who blessed you has blessed you with power and also of love and of a sound mind.

May the love of God constrain you as if he is saying to give yourself unreservedly to the preaching of the gospel and the ministry of the word because we are loved with an everlasting love and love gives of itself in service.

[17 : 59] Isn't that true for every Christian whose hearts and lives the Lord by his love has touched. They love him in return and they want to serve him to do thy will I take delight O thou my God that art.

Isn't that what the psalmist was saying to do thy will I take delight O thou my God that art. Spirit of power and love and of a sound mind.

And then he goes on Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of me as prisoner but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.

And there are afflictions associated with living for Christ. Whoever we are and whatever age we live in didn't Jesus say take up your cross and follow me.

Deny yourself take up your cross and follow me. And taking up your cross involves so many things that are alien to the world.

[19 : 22] They don't care about being counted Christians and standing for the truth in the face of opposition and all of these different things.

But he says you must take your own part of the afflictions that are associated with living a godly and Christ like life in the world.

I'm not quite sure what elements of difficulties are in your life. But if you're a Christian and if I'm a Christian standing for what the truth says you'll find there'll be opposition here and there.

Maybe at work maybe even at home maybe with people that you've known for years and because you bring a Christian perspective on the conversation you know immediately that you're not received.

Well this is now something that Timothy was being alerted to and he is encouraged to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God because God by his power is able to give you strength in the face of the affliction strength in days of adversity my grace is sufficient for you my strength is made perfect in weakness and then he goes on on verse 9 who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world was and so on that's a section I'm not going to touch at the moment and then he goes on in verse 11 I am appointed he says a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles for which cause I also suffer these things he is suffering he is suffering physically he is suffering because he is in prison with all the discomforts and the afflictions associated with being imprisoned in a

[21 : 46] Roman jail but then he says verse 12 nevertheless I am not ashamed I am not ashamed the same word that is used when he writes to the Romans in Romans chapter 1 verse 16 I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ but it's the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek the same word used here I am not ashamed to be a prisoner in Rome I am not ashamed for the stand I have been making for Christ I am not ashamed I am not made to feel shame for the gospel I know it's the greatest message the world has ever heard and the greatest power that people need to know in their own experience and

I have been privileged to be able to make Christ known to people Jews and Gentiles and although I've landed in prison for it I don't feel shame and then he goes on to give reasons why he's not ashamed verse 12 in the middle of the verse for I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he's able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day he's not ashamed because of someone he knows that's the first thing and secondly he's not ashamed or embarrassed because of someone whom he trusts this is what it says

I know whom I have believed and again he's not ashamed because he knows he depends on somebody who's dependable I am persuaded he says that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day so I just like to say one or two words first of all I know whom I have believed this is why he's not ashamed because there's somebody that he knows that makes it all worthwhile whom does he know how did he get to know him well if you read in the Acts of the Apostles chapter nine you find there that

Saul of Tarsus this man before he was converted this Paul he was on the way to Damascus seeking to arrest Christians but while he was on his way to arrest Christians Christ arrested him Christ made himself known to him who are you Lord he asks I am Jesus whom you are persecuting Jesus revealed himself to him and Jesus showed him himself you are persecuting me I am Jesus the savior of sinners and there's a sense in which this is something that every child of God is able to say I know him because he has revealed himself to me in the gospel

Christ has revealed himself God has revealed himself in Christ and one could say much about this I know what kind of knowledge is it well it's a knowledge that is by the Holy Spirit ministry we cannot understand ourselves as spiritual people apart from the Holy Spirit's revelation unto us the Holy Spirit shines into our hearts and into our lives with his light to show us who we are to show us what we are like the extent of our sinfulness the extent of our inability of our misery as we are by nature and the apostle

[26 : 58] Paul was able to say I find he said within my heart another law warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members and he said oh righteous man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death and then he goes on to say praise God through Jesus Christ our Lord he is suffering in a Roman prison but he is not feeling any shame because he has a friend who has shown himself to him what a friend we have in Jesus all our sins and griefs to bear what a privilege to carry everything to

God in prayer and this is part and partial of the knowledge that he has of Jesus Christ he knows him as a traveling companion if I can use that phrase it's not just that he knew him on the Damascus road but he knows him every day and that's easily seen from the way the Greek is written here it's a perfect tense in other words it happened and the effects of it continue and those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious they talk to him every day don't they and they want to hear his voice addressing them every day let me hear thy voice let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth for thy lips are sweeter than wine and the apostle

Paul knew such a saviour and he wasn't in any sense feeling shame for his condition so that's the first thing and you could think about that yourselves much more than I have just said I know and then also he says I have believed Jesus Christ has come into this man's life and he has revealed himself to him as the saviour of sinners Jesus in the gospel says to us come unto me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn of me I am meek and lowly in heart you shall find rest unto your souls my yoke is easy and my burden is light and when the Holy Spirit works savingly in our souls we're able to respond to that kind of invitation and come with all that we are and all the needs that we have and to one who is able to do exceeding abundantly above what we're able to ask or even think

I know whom I have believed believing the essence of saving faith is not just believing about Jesus the historical things concerning Jesus even the demons believe that but the essential element in saving faith is that we trust our souls for eternity to the Jesus of the scriptures and that's what this man is doing I know whom I have believed and then thirdly he says this I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day he has believed and now he knows that he can trust everything in his life to this mighty and gracious savior doesn't matter what it is it says here

I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day what have you committed to him well to deposit something very precious to you you would need to be pretty certain that there were things in place to prevent that precious commodity from being stolen or damaged and that's what the apostle here is saying he says I am persuaded on the basis of scriptural evidence and historical demonstration of God's dealings with his people down through the centuries

[32 : 48] I am persuaded that Jesus Christ has all the qualifications in order to keep what I have committed unto him against that day what has he committed unto him well first and foremost I suppose that we commit our souls to him for salvation he is the one alone about whom the scripture says there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved and every believer in Christ takes that to heart and knows for him or herself the truth of that statement there is no other savior maybe you say well I tried this that and the other thing and it's been proved to me that nothing else stands but

I found that Christ is a sure pair of hands for me to put my soul into for time and for eternity that's the kind of thing the apostle here is saying I am persuaded all he has to do is begin if that were his mind to demonstrate from the history of Israel from the time that God gave promises to Abraham regarding the land of Canaan into which he's going to bring his people at last they did go to Egypt yes but the Lord took them out from there provided for all of their needs through the 40 year journey through the wilderness brought them into the land of Canaan to fulfill his promise and God who did that for them he does that on an individual level with every individual soul that commits themselves to him

I am persuaded that he is able so we commit our souls to him we commit our lives to him don't we every aspect of your day to day living don't you pray in the morning at the beginning of the day that the Lord would be your leader your guide your protector your sustainer you're going into a world that is full of sin the world and the flesh and the devil we cannot keep ourselves but he keeps us and we commit ourselves to him didn't he give that example himself on the cross at the very point of his death he said into your hands I commit my spirit and that's the example we by

God's grace need to follow every day of our lives committing every activity every conversation every meeting with people committing it to him I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day we find this phrase coming up again and again that day we read it also in chapter four when the apostle there is talking about that he is going to lay down his life as it were verse eight the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day not to me only but unto all them also that love is appearing at a particular day a focus in the apostle's mind when he hears talking

I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day I'm going to suggest three ways of looking at that first of all the day of his death the day of his death the day when soul and body are separated it's a better day than the day of our birth scripture says that it is nevertheless a day when we have to face up to the last enemy the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death it is a day that we have to face and as we face death whether it's near us or further away from us whose hands are the best hands into which you and

[38 : 13] I are exhorted to place our affairs better than the hands of Jesus earth he is the one who was dead but is alive and he's got the power to destroy death he is the keys of hell and of death when he opens no one can shut and when he shuts no one can open into your hands I commit my spirit the day of my death but then also against that day what about the day of the resurrection if you were to read in Daniel's prophecy at chapter 12 the beginning of that chapter it says there many that are asleep in the dust of the earth shall rise some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt the apostle thinking as it were towards the day of the resurrection he has committed his soul and his affairs into

Christ's hand knowing that he is able to reconstitute the dust of his body from the earth and presented faultless in the presence of his glory with exceeding joy he's able to join his soul and body in perfect holiness and bliss on the morning of the resurrection what a day but then also the day of judgment when the crown of righteousness will be given to all who have embraced Christ by faith this is what he also says in chapter four and he says hence forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will give me at that day not to me only but also to all them that love is appearing the day of judgment when

Christ will sit upon the throne of judgment and before him all who have ever inhabited this earth his sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left and those who are his will hear the marvellous words come you blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world all to hear these words others will hear depart from me he cursed into the everlasting fire I am persuaded the apostle here says that he is able to keep that which I have committed against that day I with my poor record I with my shortcomings I with so many failures in times of temptation and trial

I with my misunderstandings and unspiritual vein of thought nevertheless I have committed myself with all my sin and all my failings unto him whose blood is able to cleanse me from all sin against that day what a day when the trumpet sounds where will we be when it sounds so loudly it will awaken the dead where will we be will those who are in Christ need not feel because they will be in the embrace of the almighty saviour who gave himself for them and who promises never to leave them nor forsake them remember the words that he speaks my sheep hear my voice

I know them and they follow me and I give them eternal life and no one shall pluck them out of my hand the father has given them to me and no one is able to pluck them out of my father's hand or to be in that hand that is so loving and almighty at the same time may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray help us Lord to have that knowledge of ourselves and of our saviour that will give us to be trusting you and that we might commit ourselves to you against every circumstance and against the day as we have read in your scripture oh give us

[43 : 51] Lord to walk in the fear of the Lord all the days of our life lead us and guide us and bless this congregation as we heard during these days when they have no settled ministry we ask that you would give them to know your love your peace and the blessing of the Holy Spirit upon them remember those who are laid aside in sickness we ask that you would heal them and if that is not your purpose for them we pray oh Lord that you would bring the healing of salvation into their experience go before us now Lord and lead us and guide us and forgive our sins in Jesus name Amen