

1 Timothy 1:13-14

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[0:00] Good morning, everyone. It's an honor to be up here. I'm excited to preach today. So I'm going to start off with a little bit of an experiment. I want everyone to think about their Christian age.

So if we celebrated birthdays based on when we were saved by the Lord, what would your Christian age be? So I'm going to ask everyone who's able to please stand up. Actually, stand up.

So if you do not consider yourself a Christian or have been saved for five years or less, I'm going to ask those people to sit down. How about 10 years or less?

Please sit down. 20 years or less. 30 years or less.

40 years or less. 50 years or less. All right.

[1:03] Thank you for that. This will be useful in a little bit. So the scripture for today is from 2 Timothy 1, verses 13 through 14. 2 Timothy 1, verses 13 through 14.

This passage has been on my mind for the last two months as Shoreline goes through this season we're in right now. The encouragement for the elders has been to remain or come back to or for the first time focus on the basics of the faith.

Be in the scriptures. Be in prayer. Be in community. Love the ordinances. And don't reinvent the wheel. So my thought behind choosing the scripture is that Shoreline does not have many older saints here like we just saw.

But what would an older saint at the end of his or her life want to tell us? What have they gleaned from all their years of faithfulness and more so God's faithfulness to them? What would this person want to communicate to us so that we would be sent in a trajectory towards fruitfulness with the glory of God?

2 Timothy 1, verses 13 through 14 is just that. So I'm going to pray, and then I'll read through the passage and begin to dig into the goodness, the beauty, and the truth that's here before us. Let me pray.

[2:13] Oh Lord, when we are blind, be our light. When we are ignorant, be our wisdom. When we are self-willed, be our mind.

Lord, we ask this morning that you would open our ear to grasp quickly your spirit's voice, that we might delightfully run after your beckoning hand.

Lord, melt our conscience so that no hardness remains. Make us alive to evil's slightest touch, so that when Satan approaches, we may flee to your wounds, and that there we would cease trembling to all right.

Lord, be our good shepherd and lead us into the green pastures of your word. Cause us to lie down beside the river of its comfort. Fill us with peace, Lord, that no unsettling worldly wind may ruffle the calm surface of our soul.

Your cross was assembled for our refuge. Your blood streamed forth to wash us clean. Your death occurred to give us surety.

[3:20] Your name is ours to save us. God, by you, all of heaven is poured into our heart, and yet it is too narrow to comprehend all of your love.

Lord, we were strangers and outcasts, slaves and rebels, but your cross has brought us near. It has softened our heart. It has made us your father's child.

You have admitted us into your family. It has made us joint heirs with you, Lord. Oh, that we may love you as you love us. That we may walk worthy of you, our Lord.

That we may reflect the image of heaven's firstborn. May we always see your beauty with the clear eye of faith and feel the power of your spirit in our heart.

For unless your spirit moves mightily in us, no fire will be fanned. God, move today. Pray this in your name. Amen. All right.

[4:20] 2 Timothy 1, 13-14 says this. Follow the pattern of sound words that you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. We're going to start with some context. We have two short verses, but I want to land us as to where it is. So what's happened just before this? Paul has opened up his letter of 2 Timothy with a brief introduction of himself for the churches who would be reading this as this letter that he wrote circulated among them.

He moves from the introduction of himself to a brief overview of God's providence that has led Paul and Timothy to be such dear friends and brothers in the gospel of peace.

Paul briefly explains that he is suffering for the gospel in Rome and then begins a beautiful encouragement to Timothy of which verses 13 and 14 are just the conclusion.

[5:18] And then the rest of the letter progresses to exhortations to Timothy to be a good minister, warnings against heresy that's circulating, Paul's faith and hope in his last days, and then the concluding greetings. And then zooming out even further, Paul and Timothy have been through a lot.

We first get introduced to Timothy in Acts 16, 1-3, as Paul's disciple, whose mother was a believer and his father was a Greek. So Timothy was a third-generation Christian with his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois before him.

And then we find out later that Timothy was circumcised as a ministry partner of Paul to serve the Jews. He traveled with Paul into Europe after the Macedonian vision, and then Timothy leaves Paul to establish a church in Berea.

And then Timothy comes back and meets up with Paul in Corinth in Ephesus, as well as being listed in the ambassadors who were to accompany Paul in Jerusalem with the offering for the Christian Jews.

Timothy is often mentioned in Paul's letters. His name is included in the introduction of 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

[6:25] Timothy was in Corinth on the second journey when Paul wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians. He was in Ephesus on the third journey when Paul wrote 2 Corinthians. And he was in Rome during Paul's first imprisonment when he wrote Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

In the salutations of Romans 16-21, Timothy is listed, along with others who send their good wishes to the believers in Rome. In 1 Corinthians 4, 17 and 16-10, Paul speaks words of praise for Timothy as he sends him with a message to Corinth.

In 2 Corinthians 1, 19, Timothy is named, along with Paul and Silas, as men who are proclaiming Jesus Christ. And then finally, Paul put Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus and wrote him two pastoral letters addressed with his name to help him perform that task.

A whole bunch of stuff they did together. So we can conclude from these numerous references that these two are close brothers in the faith. They have dear and warm affections for each other. Paul was Timothy's spiritual father. And Timothy was Paul's spiritual son. They shared travel, ministry, and life together through ups and downs. They suffered great trials and experienced the blessings of God.

[7:39] And they did it all side by side. So now their relationship is established. We zoom into now what's happening just after the letter of 2 Timothy. Scripture doesn't record the death of Paul, but Paul was certain that it was coming one way or another.

Debate on the death of when Paul died. There is debate on the death of when Paul died, but there's no debate on the fact that he was martyred under Roman Emperor Nero.

The book Voice of the Martyrs says this about Paul's earthly end. Paul spent time in Rome twice, on both occasions at the expense of the Roman Empire. Neither his travel arrangements nor his accommodations were first class, but they suited the apostle well.

Throughout Acts and his letters, Paul conveys an unmistakable scene that his time was short, and he was grateful for every moment he was given. Paul understood God's grace, not simply as a theological concept, but as also his reason for living.

He appreciated God's grace because he knew he needed so much of it. His final thoughts had little to do with regret and so much to do with the satisfaction that flows from grace-drenched living.

[8:59] He wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4, 6-8. He says, Paul's life may make us shudder at the cost paid by God's servant.

It also serves as an indicator of the common experience of those who follow Jesus. They risked everything for the good news. The salvation we have, Jesus bought for us on the cross, a price beyond measure.

And the faith that we claim has been delivered to us by many willing to pay the price of faithfulness. The Apostle Paul's final destination on this side of eternity was a spot on the Ostian Way outside the walls of Rome.

Tradition has it that the former Pharisee was beheaded beyond the gate. He fought the good fight. He finished the race and he kept the faith. He is a significant reason why we can do the same today.

So I hope by this point we're feeling the connection between Paul and Timothy. They're brothers who have experienced so much together and they desire for each other's good. But so much more for the kingdom of God to be advanced.

[10:30] So with all that laid out, let's dig into the two verses for today. Starting with verse 13. It says, Follow the pattern of sound words that you have heard from me, comma, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Let's start with the word follow. This is the Greek word echo, which means to keep, possess, or to have. So Paul is telling Timothy to possess the pattern. The word pattern here is from the root word type or an example of something.

Similar to the way old sailors would carve a trinket of like a whale out of ivory to show the people on land what they had seen while they were out in the ocean. This pattern or type that Paul is talking about to Timothy is not an inanimate object, but sound words.

sound words or orthodoxy or true things which he has heard from the Apostle Paul who was uniquely appointed by God to teach authoritatively.

One of the key sections of this passage is that you have heard from me. This person-to-person communication is key to the Christian life. It was key to Timothy's growth that Paul communicated orthodoxy to him in an individual way within small groups and also large settings.

[11:49] These are the memories that Paul is now digging up and putting this on display here for Timothy. Think about this for a second. What would your life look like if you had only learned something alongside?

If you had only learned everything from reading books? A life where you never cooked alongside someone who had prepared Thanksgiving for 40 years? A life where you parent without the help of an experienced person next to you?

A life where you never had a sermon preached with conviction and been fed? That life is a reality for some, but it is not ideal. The pattern of sound words heard by Timothy from the mouth of Paul is what Paul wants to leave as a legacy after he's gone.

And then the next part of verse 13 had me confused for a while. It says, in the faith and love of Christ Jesus. So what does this have to do with the sentence just before about following the pattern of sound words which Timothy had heard from Paul?

And then with some help from a commentary from Peter Lang, I read this. He says, not in an outward, mechanical way, but in a way that faith and love might be like a vase in which the pattern of sound teaching referred to would be preserved or kept.

[13:02] So that it was the personal and spiritual characteristic of Timothy. If this characteristic existed, then Timothy would reproduce independently, but without slightest injury to the truth.

The sound words of Paul, Paul, and he would repeat them, but not as an echo in a lifeless way. And then with the addition of love, which is in Christ Jesus, it is implied that this love must be kept up and preserved in a personal, life-fellowship way with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's it. The sailor who creates a type of whale to show others, he creates something lifeless, even though the carving might be intricate and beautiful. But what Paul is telling Timothy is that this pattern you're to follow, it's alive and it's active unlike a carving.

The faith and love that Jesus had for his father and the love Jesus had for the church, it was the furthest away from being an unmoving, boring copy job of his father's will.

This word picture of the vase I just read is this organic example of what we're seeing outside right now. There are seeds that are planted sometimes years before and they're independently just taking off while at the same time there's no injury to the purity of the species from which it came.

[14:23] They're copies but they're not lifeless. It was impossible for Paul to replicate Jesus' life in an unconscious way and Paul is telling Timothy to do the same thing.

And now onto verse 14. It says, By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, comma, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. Now verse 14 is a concluding exhortation in which all that is said in 6 through 13 is yet once briefly summed up.

Paul's next charge to Timothy is to guard the good deposit entrusted to him. This word guard is only used twice in scripture. Here and in 1 Timothy 6, 20.

And both of these are in reference to guarding the good deposit entrusted to Timothy. So we're going to get into what the deposit is but first we want to understand what guarding is.

It's a command to Timothy and possibly to us. We want to be super clear on this. The action is to keep watch or to preserve. Paul knows that this deposit will be I lost my spot.

[15:34] Paul knows this deposit will be threatened and he's giving Timothy a warning here that defense is needed. The preservation of what he has is another essential part of what Paul wants Timothy to do as part of Paul's last will and testament.

So what is this good deposit? It seems obvious from the text that something general and of high value is meant. It might be the sound doctrine that Paul is talking about.

It might be the office that Timothy has been entrusted with and it might be a combination of the both. We look at the first view of sound doctrine it seems preferable since guard is better referred to the treasure of the word than the office that Timothy holds.

And what follows later in the book of 2 Timothy is a longer section that focuses on warnings about dangerous false teachers and the importance of sound doctrine. My conclusion is that either way we understand this Paul is encouraging Timothy to guard an important thing in his life.

Guard the treasure of the gospel that has been given to you as a gift. Or guard the office of elder that you've been given as a gift. So Paul is saying don't squander this thing.

[16:43] It's important Timothy. This is the thing you need to steward or take care of. There will be opposition against this good deposit and you need to be on guard to ensure its purity like we talked about.

He's saying guard the real important things. The things that advance the kingdom of God and the things that will have eternal ramifications. So now we have a bit of background on what Paul is referencing here as a good deposit.

Let's understand what this word means. It's explained as something or what someone is responsible for to care for or property entrusted to someone.

So it's something external from Timothy who is external from the person who is guarding it but they are responsible for it. Meaning at some point they'll have to give an account for it from the person who gave it to them and it's been entrusted to them for just a certain time period.

And just like the verse before when Paul gave Timothy the command to follow sound words in the faith and love of Christ Paul now buoys this command of guarding the good deposit with the words by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

[17:58] So what is Paul getting at by adding this to the command? Paul is helping Timothy understand the method he is to do this. This deposit to Timothy is called good but in the same sense in which the apostle earlier in 1 Timothy 6.12 had spoken of fight the good fight of faith.

So Timothy ought to keep this deposit free from all harm not through his own strength but through the strength of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. Timothy's believing without distinction and along along with the Spirit's power to enable him to remain true and steadfast.

Timothy should not apply any human instrument to keeping of the good deposit. The only plan to do this must be the Holy Spirit. So Timothy must permit the Spirit to rule and to work without hindrances and freely in him and to do only that which he directs him.

So this advice to Paul from Paul to Timothy is also not new. This is ancient advice and Paul is just repeating it.

If we go back to the Old Testament and look at Proverbs 4 1-5 it says this hear O son of father's instructions and be attentive that you might gain insight for I give you good precepts do not forsake my teaching.

[19:30] When I was a son with my father tender the only one in the sight of my mother he taught me and said to me let your heart hold fast to my words keep my commandments and live get wisdom get insight do not forget and do not turn away from the words of my mouth did you hear verse 4 in there he says hold fast keep my commandments and then do what live the father here wants his son to live to flourish and prosper and it comes from holding fast to the truth Paul and Solomon here in Proverbs 4 knows this and they're passing this key information on to the next generation so they want to see them thrive in the only place where they know true thriving comes from the word of the Lord and then later in Proverbs 4 not following this command has great implications just as following it does

Proverbs 4 continues on in verse 14 where it says do not enter the path of the wicked and don't walk in the way of evil avoid it do not go on it turn away from it and pass on for they eat the bread of wickedness and they drink the wine of violence but the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn which shines brighter and brighter until full day the way of the wicked is like deep darkness they do not know over what they stumble what a contrast from a flourishing life we just talked about the ones who do not hold fast to the word of the Lord are described as wicked evil violent dark and blind now with that we come back to 2nd Timothy and we see the reality in this context of what not holding fast to the word of the Lord means practically later in 2nd Timothy chapter 2 verses 16 through 18 it says this is

Paul to Timothy avoid irreverent babble for it will lead the people into more and more ungodliness their talk will spread like gangrene among them are hymenaeus and philetus who have swerved from the truth saying the resurrection already happened they are upsetting the faith of some the reality starts to hit home now hymenaeus and philetus are not following the pattern of sound words they have heard from Paul they're not guarding the good deposit given to them and it's not only affecting those two but it's causing people's faith to be upset the sheep for whom Christ died are being deceived and thrown off of their faith so all of a sudden this command to remain steadfast to orthodoxy it starts to get real practical in the lives of these saints and devastating to the redeemed people of God who had not followed so

Shoreline please take this seriously one reminder I've needed this week is that this call for us to hold fast to the Lord and his word it's not just a human effort it's not just a work of the Lord either the guard rails on either side are so important the ability for us to guard the good deposit that has been entrusted to us is part of what's called sanctification this is the work we do alongside the Lord in which we mature and it's different than our salvation salvation is an independent work of the Lord which he turns a dead person into a living person the growth of the Christian passes point is the beautiful mystery in which the sovereign Lord uses our weak efforts coupled with the work of the spirit in order to bring about growth in the individual which serves the kingdom of God every individual that the Christian comes in contact with and the person themselves so let's pause and appreciate the Lord here for a second we start with a spiritually dead person with no hope of life a rebel hellbent on choosing death over life and then through the

Holy Spirit we see the application of the good news of the death of Christ on the cross it covers over all the rebellion and completely pays the debt owed it cancels the death sentence and delivers eternal life and if that's not enough after that after we've been given we get further care from God he partners up with us for the rest of our lives and he says I don't just want you adopted into my family which should blow our mind he says I want you to flourish the Lord is gracious and kind let us acknowledge that in our appreciation towards him not only through our salvation which is key but also through our sanctification sanctification is a gift from God but often times it's slow and tedious and hard work and it's work that the

[24:52] Christian exerts every day in reliance on the spirit sometimes we have these mountaintop experiences but sometimes following the word of the Lord looks like saying no to the exciting things we're offered and choosing to come to the fountain we drank from every day for the last one five ten twenty however many years it's been to dwell there again gleaning the truth that like a small stream cutting through stone over many years they create something beautiful sometimes guarding the good deposit you've been entrusted with looks like putting up a fence around the first Saturday morning of the month and choosing to come to men's prayer breakfast even though I missed it yesterday putting the women's retreat on the schedule early and ensuring that no matter the circumstances you're able to attend trusting that the Lord will work in and through all of these things for your sake for this sake of the church the church whom the

Lord gave his life for and we like Paul and Timothy can do this side by side whether feast or famine for the younger kids who are in service today your parents have a very specific and important role in your life Paul was Timothy's spiritual father in the faith but you have in your parents someone who from an early age should be encouraging you to follow Paul's sound words as well as their words of parenting your parents are in authority over you and they desire for good the same way that Paul desired for Timothy's good kids remain steadfast in their teaching guard the good deposit which they have given you knowing that there will be things that come into your life and try to compete be on defense against those things and for the parents do you feel the weight of this responsibility do you feel the nurturing here of Paul for Timothy and the sacrifice

Paul has made to establish him in the faith to ensure that everything has been done so that Timothy would mature in the faith the things that Paul has endured to give up weighs heavy on my heart as a parent so be sure that we like Paul are giving our children sound words to follow and a good deposit to guard as they do that with all reliance on the Lord and the Spirit a little bit older but the younger saints here is there someone like Paul reaching out to you ensuring that you're not only adopted into his family but also that you're maturing is there someone who might not be at the end of their life the way Paul is but who is more mature and they is there someone who desires to see you grow and they want to do that alongside you older saints same question are you using the gift of the many years in the faith and the maturity he's given you to ensure the next generations have sound words to follow and a good deposit to guard and as a reminder this isn't necessarily an older person with a younger person but it's about maturity in the faith did the

Lord pull us from death to life for an inward focus or for outward sacrificial love I think about Major Groves if anyone knows him from Officer Christian Fellowship at the Coast Guard Academy and Shepherd's Fold Major Groves is pouring into the lives of many young saints and we'll just say at an age where many people are enjoying shuffleboard and collecting seashells Major Groves is continuing to do this Kevin Marr I don't think he's here today he's come to small groups so often encouraged by the discipling that Major Groves has given to him at either Friday Night Fellowship or some other time during the week is this the flavor of our goal as we get older outward looking to the kingdom to the growing of the kingdom through one on one discipleship or does this need to be changed Christ is honored through this Christ church is grown through this and just like the organic example earlier sound words followed and good deposits guarded lead to new independent Christians who are not lifeless but are full of life like Christ full of faith and love and they're replicating over and over and then finally with a number of people here I'm almost certain that not everyone enjoys this fellowship with the Lord and this encouragement to dive deeper into this relationship it's not landing so for those of you in this place I encourage you to think about the truth claims of the gospel and what we've heard here today there's so much fruit in digging into the evidence that Jesus was an actual person in space and time and history but also you can be in awe that he desires a people for himself and be in awe that any sort of desire for fellowship that you've had in your life it can only be met in Jesus it can only be satisfied in Christ if you've ever enjoyed friendship with someone and then it's been broken or taken away by whatever circumstances know that fellowship with God will be more satisfying than any friendship you've ever had and that it will be never broken if you go to him in faith if you turn away from your sin and embrace the joy that he offers me

[30:55] Brad or Jim who are up here the elders Mike or Andrew or anyone here would love to talk about more of the implications of this if it's hitting home let me finish let me close again with the paraphrased words of 2nd Timothy 1 13 through 14 one more time follow follow the sound words and guard the good deposit with all reliance on the Lord and all reliance on the spirit for the glory of God for the good of your own soul and for the building of his church let me pray dear heavenly father lord you are faithful and good we are in awe that you bring a people to yourself through the substitutionary sacrificial atonement of your son and that is not the end of the good news for us god you desire people for yourself but also to have them grow and to know more about you so that we might reflect that out into the world god give us hearts that desire to do this the way paul and timothy did this if we're an older saint lord would you make us have strong strong desires to disciple one on one and give someone a good deposit to guard give them someone sound words to follow and god we pray that for shoreline and as we go out of here out into our worlds that this light that we have to offer to others might just be on our hearts daily not just here on sunday but daily during our work during our parenting and that you through your word and your spirit might get glory from this i thank you for today we pray this in your name amen thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you