

Baptism Sermon - Teach Your Children Well

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Date: 15 March 2020

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] Let's turn for a little again to the chapters we read in 2 Timothy, 2 Timothy and chapter 2. And we find a text, two texts really, or two sections, 2 Timothy 1 verse 5.

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelled first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and now I am sure dwells in you as well.

And then in chapter 3, verses 14 and 15. But as for you, continue in what you have learned, and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

A last letter from somebody is always very important, because it's a very, I suppose, quite an emotional letter.

It's a letter that you would treasure, because this is the last letter that somebody has written before they die. And that's what this letter is, the letter from Paul, the second letter of Paul, to this young man Timothy, was Paul's last letter.

[1 : 34] Paul had written many inspirational letters. But the great apostle is coming to the end of his days. He is soon going to be martyred. And as he's lying in prison, or he's housed in prison, he writes this letter.

Of course, when we go through the Bible, we find that Titus follows Timothy, but Paul wrote, it's believed, wrote the letter to Titus, at the same time, either that he wrote 1 Timothy, or in between writing 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy.

But this is the last letter that he wrote. And as we know, Paul is a prisoner in Rome, and he knows that his days will soon be over.

And so he's writing to this young man, Timothy. And the interesting thing is that Paul recognized in Timothy gifts and qualities that he believed that the Lord was going to use in this young man as a great leader and preacher in the world.

And, in fact, Paul kind of looked on Timothy as his successor. And I think that's quite an amazing thing in many ways, because it just shows us how far removed the world's assessment of leadership is, and God's assessment of leadership is.

[2 : 56] Because Timothy was young. He didn't keep well. He was timid of nature. He was liable to allow people to get an advantage over him.

That's the kind of man he was. And yet, Paul recognized, and God recognized, God was seeing, this is the kind of passion that is going to be used by me.

And as I say, how far removed from the world's standards, because the world will look to somebody. They will look for leaderships in assertiveness, and possibly even aggressiveness, and these sort of things, whereas God looks to the heart.

And God is looking for people who are prepared to be nobodies in order that they will make God somebody in the eyes of others. And that's what the Lord is looking for. And obviously, this is what was in this young man, in this man, Timothy.

And so Paul is encouraging Timothy from the very beginning. And Paul, as is often the case, he underlines his own apostolic calling.

[4 : 05] Now, in order to be an apostle, there had to be various things. You had to have certain qualifications. And one of these qualifications was that you had to have seen the risen Jesus.

Now, Paul, who was Saul of Tarsus, saw the risen Jesus. Not in the way that Peter and John and the other disciples saw.

Because the other disciples saw Jesus after the resurrection. He met with them several, many times. And they saw him here on this earth as he revealed himself over and over again.

But we believe it was only to his own people that the risen Jesus revealed himself. However, regarding Saul, remember Saul was on his way. He was a hatred of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was a persecutor. He hated Christ. He hated every follower of Christ. And his main aim in life was to destroy the Christian faith and imprison and put to death every follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[5 : 15] And it's amazing how often the Lord turns people, and sometimes those who are so opposed to himself. The church is full of people who are once. Either careless, utterly disinterested in the gospel of Jesus Christ, or had no time for it.

And it's amazing how the Lord displays his own power, his own sovereign power, and he changes people's hearts. To make them become what they never were.

And that's what he did with Saul. But what he did was, he revealed himself from heaven.

Remember when he called out to Saul, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

And Saul was given a vision, as it were, a sight of the risen Jesus. In all his power, in all his majesty, in all his glory.

Remember how he fell down, fell down on the ground, blinded by the light and by what he saw. Of the presence of this risen, glorious Christ.

[6 : 15] So Paul, that's why he said he was given, he saw Jesus, as it were, out of time. He saw him at a different stage. But he still saw, which was part of what it meant, in order to be an apostle.

And it's very interesting that at the same time as the Lord called, as it were, Saul of Tarsus to himself, where he was, as it were, drawn to Jesus through that meeting, that he was also commissioned by Jesus at the same time.

Because Paul, giving his testimony in Acts chapter 26, he tells us about this particular time. And he says, of what Jesus is saying, I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things which you have seen, and in those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles to whom I send you.

And that word, I send you, really is almost, you could say, I appoint you. And so the Lord was calling Saul to himself, but also appointing him at the same time as a great missionary, as it were, to the Gentiles.

And Paul was very clear on highlighting this, because one of the things that Paul was highlighting was this, I'm not an apostle because I decided myself to become an apostle, or that a group of people decided I would become an apostle, or that the church, it is something that the Lord appointed me to, and that it began with the will of God.

[7 : 53] And that's something that he was always emphasizing. He says here, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God. And you know, that is at the heart of everything.

That is why, in a sense, you and I are here today, by the will of God. It is every believer here today, is a believer, every believer, every person who is following the Lord Jesus Christ, is here today, as a follower of Jesus Christ, because of the will of God.

This is what God has willed. And it is the same in whatever field, for instance, if a person is called into the ministry, that call begins as an inward call.

It is where the Lord begins to impress upon that person's heart, upon that person's mind, and bringing the word to bear upon it, and providence to bear upon it.

And of course, there has to be a recognition of the church as well. But it is also at a personal level. It begins with God. It wasn't one day that you said to yourself, you know something, see this Christian faith business, looks quite appealing.

[9 : 01] I think I will become a Christian, and just decide, I say, right, I better study God's word. How do I live according to this? I will do my best. Now that is admirable. But that is not becoming a Christian.

Becoming a Christian is a personal encounter. It is where, by faith, where the Lord Jesus, through his Holy Spirit, comes into our lives, into our heart, to dwell.

Beautiful word in Scripture. Dwell. Living forever. Coming to stay. To abide. That's what the Lord does. He comes to live, take up residence within our lives.

And it's a powerful thing. It's an amazing thing, to think that the residing presence of the Lord, the third person of the Godhead, is abiding within ourselves.

Of course, the problem with ourselves is that our old person is still here. We don't, yes, there is a radical transformation, but we're still who we are.

[10 : 03] With all the tendencies that were initially in rebellion to God, all the tendencies that are towards sin and going against God, so that's why, within the Christian, there comes this, there's this collision course begins.

That's why there's this ongoing struggle within the life of the believer. And that's why the apostle said, the good that I, the good that I want to do, I don't do. And the evil that I don't want to do, that's what I do.

And that's why, why it hurts the Christian when they go wrong. Anyway, Paul is highlighting here his apostleship and all these things and recognizing that God, that our salvation is grounded in God's eternal purposes.

And then Paul is reminding Timothy that he says to him in verse 3, I thank God whom I serve, no, sorry, in verse 2, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ.

And Paul is often using these words, the grace, mercy, and peace. And we've said before, and it's a lovely thought, that grace is for the worthless, mercy is for the helpless, and peace for the restless.

[11 : 22] And when you think about it, you couldn't have, because so often, our own self-esteem, our own lack of self-worth is often a feature in our lives, isn't it?

And to know that here is God's grace coming to us as we are. And again, his mercy extends to us in our helplessness, when we can't do for ourselves.

And we're so aware, Lord, I can't be who you want me to be. But God's mercy never ends. He delights in mercy. And the great thing that he has given his church, that's before he went to the cross.

The legacy that he left to the church was his peace. He said, my peace I give you. Not as the world gives, give I unto you. And you know, that's something that this world craves above everything, is peace.

People want peace. They want that settled peace within their heart, within their life. Well, Jesus gives that. That's one of the things that happens when you become a Christian.

[12 : 25] People might say to you, if you were converted, and people would say, what do you have that you didn't have before? You'd be able to tell them one thing that you have. I have a peace that I never had before.

Now, of course, there are different things that can mar and spoil that peace, but there's a settled peace in Jesus. That is wonderful. Well, that's what the apostle is praying for.

And then he tells Paul, he reminds Paul, reminds, sorry, Timothy of something wonderful. And he said to, I remember, in verse 3, I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

Isn't that lovely? I would imagine when Timothy would get that letter and he would say, whoa, that's brilliant. Paul is praying for me every night and every day.

Do you know something? It's a wonderful thing to be at the heart of any person's prayer. I remember as a student when I had just started out and preaching in a congregation in this island and I was very, still nervous all these years later, but I was doubly nervous and so unsure of myself then of just, of everything just seemed so mountainous ahead of me.

[13 : 45] And this, I was sitting in the vestry before going in and this old elder came in. I'd never met him before in my life and he was speaking to me and he says, ah, well, he says, I've never met you. But he said, I'll tell you something.

You know what? He said, I will pray for you every day and every night as long as I live. And you know, I can't think of anything greater that that man could have said to me than that.

It meant everything. To know that this person has said he was going to commit for as long as he lived to have me in his prayers day and night.

And that really was something I've never, ever forgotten. Well, here, Timothy would never forget what Paul was saying. And it's a wonderful thing to have somebody in your prayers or to have a lot of people.

Make sure that you're praying for people because God is a prayer hearing and a prayer answering God. And then in verse 5 we find that Paul says, I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice.

[14 : 56] Now, of course, it wasn't his granny and it wasn't his mother that passed on saving faith to Timothy.

much and all that they would love to do. And you and I, if we love the Lord Jesus Christ, it's the one thing that we would love that we would be able to do is to pass on the salvation that we have in

Jesus.

We would love to pass it on to our family. We would love to pass it on to our friends. We would love above all else that today that I would be able to make anybody and everybody that I know and love a Christian.

I would love that. But I can't. What Paul is meaning here is that when he talks about this, yes, his granny had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

His mother had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And they instructed young Timothy in this faith, in the Christian faith. And of course, in time, the Lord blessed that instruction, that teaching, and Timothy also came to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ in the same way as his granny and his mother had done.

[16:10] And that's what he's talking about here. And how thankful we are for faithful grannies and faithful mothers. because as you look back over the years and you remember, you remember a Christian influence.

You remember a granny or a grandfather or somebody that spoke to you about the Lord and that prayed for you and you knew that they were praying for you. You know, it's a wonderful thing. And maybe your grannies and maybe your mothers have passed on.

But you'll never forget the legacy. You'll never forget their words. You'll never forget how they taught you, what they said to you. And even although you may have wandered away, you know, it still lingers.

It's still there. Something you can't get rid of. It's still there. And thank the Lord that you can't get rid of. Train up a child in the way that he will go or she will go and when old will not depart from it.

Now, as we say, Timothy would have been brought up as an Orthodox Jew but again he came to embrace God's Word. And we've always got to remember that God's Word is powerful because it tells us here that it is able to make us wise to salvation.

[17:27] And that's the most wonderful thing. And we've always got to remember this that whenever we handle God's Word we're handling something that is living and active. It is powerful.

Now, that doesn't mean that every single time we come under it that God's Word is going to do something radical in our lives but often and the Lord's people will say this very often as they read God's Word in the morning or at night and they'll say, you know, that really went into my heart.

God gave something that you were able to lay hold upon. You had the faith to lay hold upon it. And so God nourishes us, challenges us, rebukes us, directs us, exhorts us, pushes us on and encouraging us in the way through His Word.

It's the most wonderful thing but it's able to change people's lives and it does change people's lives and at the end of the day it's the only thing that will change people's lives.

It is the living Word. And so that's what Paul is saying. This Word is able to make you wise and to salvation. And we've got to remember that this Bible is Spirit-breathed.

[18:42] It's God-breathed. It's not like any other book in the world. Every part of it. It's not, you know, some people will say and it's a fearful thing that they say that the Bible contains the Word of God.

No, the Bible is the Word of God. There's a huge difference between saying it contains it because when you say it contains it it simply means that some of it is the Word of God but not all of it.

But every part of God's Word, every part of the Bible is God's Word. Whether it's the history or the poetry or the letters or the gospels or the prophecies, whatever, it's God's Word.

It's Spirit-breathed. And it's a complete book. You know, we talk sometimes about crimes against humanity and it's one of the blights of this world where people have committed crimes against humanity, fearful people.

But you know, and I would put into the category of a crime against humanity is where leaders of countries ban the Bible. That is a crime against humanity.

[19:47] They are depriving them of the most important book for their life. The book that is able to make them wise unto salvation, to make them right with God.

That is a crime against humanity. And let us pray that in these nations, these countries that are seeking to ban the Holy Word, that the Lord will overturn or bring that ban to an end so that people will always have the freedom and the liberty to know and to enjoy God's Word.

Everything we need to know for salvation is here. And the wonderful thing is that nothing need be added to it. Indeed, go further than to say nothing must be added to it.

This is a complete revelation. And if you meet somebody who says, you know, I've got a new revelation, something else, I've got something extra that God has given that should be in the Bible. No. God has given us everything. This is a complete book. Everything we need to know about himself and everything we need to know about our duties in life towards him and towards our neighbors and towards the communities that we live in and regarding ourselves.

[21 : 06] And so, Paul is here and he's saying how wonderful it was to have been taught by Lois, his granny and his mother Eunice and that he had been taught from the time that he was young and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings.

So his granny and his mother would have taught him from the word. What would they have taught him? Well, they would have taught him the very same things as we would want to try and teach our children. First of all, they would want to teach about knowing God's word.

That's the start. And that means that we have a duty to our children to teach them the Bible so that they will come to know. There are wonderful Bible stories.

The stories in the Bible are so many wonderful stories. Tell them these stories when they're young, when they're too young to read. You read to them. Read the stories to them. And so that they will come to know.

Read the great stories. Read the story, the life of Jesus. Tell them these things. Because in order, before we can believe, we have to know. That's what the Bible says. How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?

[22 : 22] So before we come to believing, we have to know. We have to know the person in whom we believe. believe. So it's important that we teach them the knowledge. And then we teach them the importance of believing.

Now, of course, I know that that saving faith ultimately is the gift of God. And it's to him that we look and we put, ask the Lord, Lord, come into my heart. But before we can surrender our will to the Lord, as we said, we need to know the Lord who we are going to surrender our will to.

And so you have to teach them to believe, to trust the importance of trusting your life, your all upon Jesus. Because, you know, in life we have to trust somebody.

Sometimes we don't analyze it or think it. But today, everybody's trusting somebody. Might be yourself. You might be the only person. Your life is lived in such a way that you don't trust anybody but yourself.

And you make all the decisions in life based upon what you know. Your whole life is governed and directed about who you are. And that's it. But we have to go further than that.

[23 : 35] And we have to see that our life must be given over. Where we say, Lord, I surrender my will, my way, my life to you. I want you to be king, to be Lord of my life.

So that you will direct me and lead me through your word. So we have to teach our children that this is what we have to do. This is important. This is what, again, it's personal, but this is the direction that they have to come to.

And then, on top of that, we have to teach the children to love God's word. That this word is, that this Bible is precious. It's not like any other book. And when I say that, it's important that the children will love God's word.

They have to see that you love it first. No point in telling children, this is what you do when you do something else. And if they see that God's word doesn't really mean anything to you, but you're telling them, oh, you've got to love God's word.

They'll say, I don't get this. But when they see that God's word means something to you, then that will have an impression. Because, you know, children, children have a kind of a natural trust in them when they're young anyway.

[24 : 44] And so it's important that that whole area is developed in their lives. And then teach them to obey God's word. Because God connects all believing and all knowing and all loving into doing.

Because that's what, this is where the blessing comes. It's where we are obedient to what the Lord says. And you know, it's the most amazing privilege to have children.

It's one of the great blessings of life. But it's an awesome responsibility. And you know, you only have one chance at bringing them up. And then, and it passes so quickly.

And that's why we need God's help in it. Because sometimes, there's a question the Bible says, who is sufficient for these things? And many a parent feels that. They feel that this is parenting is something that's, oh, this is beyond me.

But with God's help, because God wants the best for your children, you seek that the Lord will grant you the grace so to do. Now, I know that today can be a difficult day for some people.

[25 : 54] And many a person is nursing a heartache over this whole very area of maybe not having a family, want to have a family, or have lost someone of a family, which is the ultimate heartache for any parent.

And I know that a day like this can be difficult. And we pray God's grace for any of you today who are hurting in this way. But God gives us the great blessing of children and the great responsibility of teaching them well, of bringing them up in the way of the Lord.

Remember that your soul, your precious soul, it's the most precious thing you have, and that your soul will either live forever in the joyful presence of the Lord and all that that involves, or else be removed or banished from the presence of the Lord and all that that involves.

So you ask today, Lord, Lord, be Lord of my life. Help me to follow you and to walk with you. Amen. Lord, we pray to bless this word to our souls.

Do us good, we pray, and help us to look to you and to trust in you at every step, at every turn that we take. Continue with us, we pray, in forgiving our sins in Jesus' name.

[27 : 19] Amen. We're going to sing now from Psalm 78. Psalm number 78, verses 1 to 6.

This is from the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 78, verses 1 to 6.

And the tune is Belmont. Attend my people to my law, thereto give thou an ear. The words that from my mouth proceed, attentively do hear.

My mouth shall speak a parable, and sayings dark of old, the same which we have heard and known, and thus our fathers told. We also will them not conceal from their posterity.

Them to the generation to come declare will we the praises of the Lord our God and his almighty strength, the wondrous works that he hath done, we will show forth at length.

[28 : 23] We'll sing to verse 6, six stanzas to the tune Belmont, Attend my people to my law. Attend my people Kern my Deuspozy work that he hath done, know him to do.

Never has at the rest of her what pulled until he hath done, Hallelujah.

The thing which we have e'er can know, and us our father's soul.

We also will have not gone still from their austerity, Then to the generation to come declare will be The praises of the Lord our God, and His almighty strength, The wondrous works that He hath done, we will show forth a claim.

His testimony and His law, Israel needed place, And charged our father's head to show To their succeeding race, And so the race which was to come Might well then there can go, And sons unborn who should arise Might to their sons

[31 : 54] And sins unborn who He hath done point them short.