

2 Timothy 1.3-7 Paul's Gratitude and Timothy's Fortitude

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[0:01] During the time of Paul's second Roman imprisonment, Christians at that time were being persecuted. It was state-sanctioned persecution. They were suffering under it, and Paul knew that the time of his departure was at hand.

And while awaiting execution, he wrote his last letter, which is 2 Timothy. And after the introductory greeting of verses 1 and 2, there follows a preamble to his final epistle.

And that preamble focuses on Paul's gratitude and Timothy's fortitude. So we will read in 2 Timothy chapter 1, verses 1 to 7.

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

To Timothy, a beloved son. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice.

[1:42] And I am persuaded is in you also. Therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Our great God, we thank you again for this Lord's Day and for this morning.

We thank you for the church. We thank you for the means of grace. We thank you for your word and that we can sit under the ministry of the word. And we just ask for your blessing, that you would bless both the preaching of the word as well as the hearing of the word.

I pray that you would be with me, both with the articulation of truth of your word, as well as the faculty of speech. And that you would also be with the hearers in the illumination of your word to our understanding.

And that you might free us from the distractions which compete for our mind and for our thoughts. And the things of the week, which we tend to focus on, but that we might truly set this time aside and to desire to hear from you from your word.

[2:57] I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, what I want to draw to your attention in verses three to seven is that the church is to be thankful in prayer and courageously persevere in passing down the content of the faith without corruption.

So I'll say that again. The church is to be thankful in prayer and courageously persevere in passing down the content of the faith without corruption. So we will look at, first of all, the affectionate prayer of thanksgiving in the Apostle Paul.

And secondly, the stirring appeal to persevere, the appeal to Timothy. So first of all, the affectionate prayer of thanksgiving.

We see a constant remembrance, brotherly affection, and genuine faith in Timothy. So first of all, the constant remembering in Paul's affectionate prayer of thanksgiving.

Notice what it says in verse three. It says, I thank God whom I serve. I want to pause there before I move on. And that word serve, it's so the grammar, the Greek grammar to it is it's present active indicative.

[4:13] And you might be thinking you just started the sermon and you're already bogging it down with Greek grammar. But bear with me. It's just a brief comment. But what that means being present active indicative is that it's unbound.

And being unbound is that it's an ongoing thing. It's a continuous thing. So he says, I thank God whom I serve. And his serving is in an ongoing way.

It's a continuous thing. There's not an end, a past event that's ended. So it could be said, whom I am serving. So I thank God whom I am serving.

Now this word serve that our English word is taken of, the Greek word, it has the meaning of priestly service. So he has this ongoing or continuous serving of God in a manner that brings to mind priestly service.

So it indicates the execution of religious duties which is offered to God. That is his manner of serving. And believers whom are called out of this world, called out of sin, called out of darkness, and they are set apart, they are set apart to continuously serve.

[5:27] It's not, I did my service. I did enough that God would be, you know, he'd be pretty impressed with what I did. It's an ongoing, continuous serving of Christ as Lord and King.

And serving Christ as Lord means prayer. It includes prayer, which is an unbroken, it's not a, you know, not this morning I squeezed in a quick prayer, so I've done my service for the day.

But it's an unbroken habit that permeates your life. So we see the manner of this serving God in prayer.

The manner is with a clear conscience. Now, to not misunderstand it, he says, I serve God with a pure conscience. I'm sorry, I thank God whom I serve with a pure conscience.

You might be thinking, well, what if I don't have a pure conscience? Does that mean that I can't thank God because I don't have a clear conscience? And sometimes we may carnally think that.

[6:28] Maybe we lost our temper and we think, I did it again. How could I come before God after I've done such a thing? And these thoughts keep us from coming before God and thanking God.

But that's not the point. That's not what it's getting to. In those times, we most certainly need to come before God and to seek God's forgiveness, to repent.

And apprehend the mercy of God and the forgiveness of God. But the manner with a clear conscience, what it's getting at is seeking to live to God and not according to our own wills.

It's not will worship, but worshiping God in prayer. That is not being self-seeking or self-serving in our prayers, but in seeking to serve God in our prayers. It's with a clear conscience, living by God's commands and not of will worship.

And then we see also the frequency. The frequency of his praying says, without ceasing, and it says night and day. As without ceasing, I remember you in my prayers night and day.

[7:30] So what does this mean? Does this mean that every single second, 60 seconds a minute, every minute of every hour, every hour of every day, both day and night, we have to be praying without ceasing.

What's it getting at here? What this means, without ceasing, night and day, it's hyperbole for fervent faithfulness and prayer.

And it says, as my forefathers did, which may seem a bit strange. It makes you at least stop and think, what's he getting at there by saying, as my forefathers did?

And what he's getting at is continuity of the faith. Paul is not turning from Yahweh of forefathers to a different God or a new God or a new religion.

But it's continuity of the faith in the one true living God. He has not turned to something new or to something different or a false God. But rather, the covenant Lord of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[8:30] That is, the God of Israel. So his constant remembrance. And then we see also the brotherly affection in his praying for Timothy. It says, I greatly desired to see you.

And then, that I may be filled with joy. So, that I may be. What is the cause?

What is the cause of his being filled with joy? Well, the cause of his being filled with joy is if he could see Timothy in person. If he could see him in person, it would fill him.

He would be filled with joy. But, remember the context. He is in his second Roman imprisonment. And he knows that the time of his departure is at hand.

And he's not going to be seeing Timothy again. So, while seeing him would bring him with joy. He knows that this imprisonment is final.

[9:27] And that his death is imminent. Now, the broader statement of what it says there is, it says, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy.

So, again, the being filled with joy, what would cause that joy is if he would see him. But then he puts there in the middle, being mindful of your tears. Now, perhaps because of the fact that Timothy

wouldn't see Paul again, perhaps that's the reason for the tears.

Or perhaps on account of his timidity, which we see in Scripture, and the hostility that he would be faced with, with the opposition against the gospel, with the task, as we see all throughout 1 Timothy, and confronting false teachers and the hostility that would be within that, and the difficulty of the task and the turmoil of it all.

Perhaps that has to do with his tears, or perhaps both. Just the distress of the work that he's undergoing, and knowing that he will not see Paul again, as he's awaiting his execution.

But either way, Paul, we see here, he labors continuously in prayer for him with thanksgiving. That is, he has an orientation of gratitude towards God, even in the face of grief.

[10 : 52] Both with Paul, his death is imminent, he's going to be executed. Christians are suffering under persecution, state-sanctioned persecution. There's great grief on Paul's side.

There's grief for Timothy with the hostility he's experienced of having to confront false teachers, and of knowing he's not going to see Paul again, and Paul, who ordained him, and has encouraged him, and helped him along the way.

There would be much grief. And in the face of all of this grief, and stress, and sorrows, Paul's orientation is gratitude towards God in the face of grief.

And then we see Timothy's genuine faith. It says, So what is the reason for Paul's gratitude in his prayer?

When I call to remembrance your genuine faith. Timothy's genuine faith is the reason for Paul's gratitude in this prayer, in his praying, in his affectionate praying.

[12 : 10] So genuine faith, genuine is that it's genuine, it's sincere, it's without hypocrisy, it's not double-minded, but he genuinely trusts with confidence in God.

Genuine faith. Remember, what's faith? It's knowledge, assent, and trust. Knowledge of God's word, knowledge of the gospel, knowledge of the promises of the gospel, assent that it is true, and trusting in it personally for himself, for myself.

So, Timothy's genuine faith is the reason for Paul's gratitude. And we see that this genuine faith also dwelt in his grandmother, whose name was Lois, and his mother, whose name was Eunice.

Now, we know from other parts of Scripture about Timothy's mother, is that Timothy's mother was a Christian. In Acts 16, 1, it tells us that she was a believer.

So his mother was a Christian, but his father was an unbeliever. He was a Greek. He was a Gentile. It compares the two, that his mother was a believer, but his father was a Greek.

[13 : 25] So notice in the context of Timothy, Timothy has genuine faith, which is the reason for Paul's gratitude in his prayer. And Timothy, Timothy's faith dwelt also in his mother and his mother's mother, or his grandmother, who were Christians.

Now, in the family, the father is called to be head of the home and to bring up their children in the training and admonition of the Lord.

But where the father, like in Timothy's situation, is not a believer, then it's certainly a difficult challenge to have to navigate. But in all circumstances, even in these circumstances, God is still sovereign.

God is sovereign in these situations. And in 2 Timothy 3.15, if we look ahead, it says that from childhood, Timothy has known the Scriptures. Timothy, Timothy, who now has genuine faith, from childhood, has known the Scriptures.

And in the absence of a believing father, fathers being called to bring up the children in the training and admonition of the Lord, in the absence of a believing father, Timothy was still exposed to and learned the Scriptures from childhood, from his mother, Eunice, and from his believing grandmother, Lois, and the means of grace.

[14 : 52] And the means of grace is the means through which both the hearing and the seeing of the sacraments in which the Word of God is made effectual to the hearers. And nothing, when we think of young Timothy being exposed, having known Scriptures from as being a child, nothing is more important to a child's soul than to hearing the Word of God.

Nothing is more important to a child's soul than the means of grace. And even though week in and week out, it might not seem like there's much happening, look at how Timothy, his faith is genuine and Paul is filled with gratitude for it.

And he, from childhood, has known the Scriptures. The means of grace is the means through, the ordinary means through which God communicates truth from His Word to us, through the hearing of

the Word, through the seeing of the Word, through the praying of the Word, through the preaching, the sacraments, and in prayer in which God's Word is made effectual to us, effectual to our salvation.

So if we care about our child's salvation or anyone's salvation, then nothing is more important to that person or that child's soul than the means of grace. And it's in the Word of God in which we hear the truth of the Gospel that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

That is, the Son of God, mankind being sinful and fallen and having offended and being at enmity with the holy and righteous and just God and God's condemnation and wrath on sin and our misery of our sin.

[16 : 37] The Son of God came into the world to save sinners. He took to Himself a body and in our nature, in a human body, He perfected obedience.

He lived a righteous life and He suffered and died as a substitute to satisfy divine justice for the people of God so that our penalty of our sins might be paid in full and there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

And Christ's obedience, His righteousness, righteousness, is accredited to us. So when we receive Christ, when we lay hold of Christ, lay hold of Christ's righteousness, we lay hold of forgiveness in Christ, we lay hold of the mercy of God in Christ, we lay hold of all the gospel promises, when we lay hold of receive Christ and embrace Jesus Christ as freely offered to us in the gospel, we are justified.

We are declared as right before a holy and just God and being justified, glorified, we will be glorified as we read in Romans 8. And those whom God saves, it's, we're not left in a state of enmity with God, we're not left being condemned under the law, but we die to sin, we die to self, we die to the law as a covenant of works and we are made anew, a new creation, no longer under the law, but in Christ, united to Christ, in grace, and that's why there is no condemnation is because there can't be because we're no longer under the law, but we're under grace in Christ and Christ's righteousness, we are seen according to Christ's righteousness, not according to our sins.

So the church is to courageously persevere in passing down the content of the faith without corruption. So secondly, we see the stirring appeal to persevere.

[18 : 36] And verses 6 and 7 start by saying, therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Now it mentions the gift of God. What is this gift that he's speaking about? He's speaking about Christ's victory gifts. You remember in Ephesians, in Ephesians chapter 4, we see of Christ's victory gifts to the church and he lists the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

Now there's the extraordinary gifts and there's the continuing or ordinary gifts that we see today such as pastors and teachers. So continuing, ordinary gifting today that we see in the church is that of pastors and teachers.

But, it says, to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. So this gifting of God which involved Paul's laying on of his hands, through the laying on of my hands, it refers to his ordination, to Timothy's ordination.

Paul himself was involved in Timothy's ordination. So when Paul mentions the laying on of his hands to Timothy, it directly speaks to Paul's place over the ministry of Timothy having ordained him.

[20 : 02] So just as the church who affirms a person's profession in baptism is responsible to pray for that person, to exhort them and to keep them accountable of those whom they affirm in baptism, and membership, so also those who lay hands on a man in his ordination are responsible to pray for them or to pray for him, to exhort him and to keep him accountable those whom they have affirmed for the ministry.

So in Timothy's case, that's Paul. Paul was in that position for Timothy. And Paul, exhorting him, he appeals to him to stir up or to fan the flame, that is to increase it.

If you fan a flame, it's so that the flame will increase. To stir up the fire, to stir up the flame is to cause it to increase. In other words, in this case, it's that your progress may be evident to all.

So in other words, don't just coast. Paul's no longer going to be around to exhort Timothy. And he's telling him, don't just coast, but fan the flame so that it would burn even hotter and burn even brighter.

So we see the gift of God and then we also see the supplies of God in verse 7. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

[21:27] So when God calls a man to ministry, he supplies the grace to persevere in the ministry. And it's stated, first of all, negatively, not fear, not given a spirit of fear.

The fear of man is antithetical to reverence of God and confidence in God. Now notice the supplies, God supplies the supplies of God.

It says in verse 7, God has not given us so that the subject is God, the verb is given and the indirect object is us. So that carries through to what's next.

So God has given us a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. So positively speaking, power, what does this mean?

Power means courage and fortitude and Christian duty, not shrinking back on account of dangers and difficulty. Love means love for God, love for the souls of his people, and love for the church of the living God.

[22:34] And this is a love that endures hardship even in the cost of one's own life. And then the third one is a sound mind, which is a calm and quiet mind, sober-minded with moderation and government of our passions, composure of spirit, and judgment that is sound in the faith.

So what are some concluding uses that we can take from this text for us today? what we see by way of precedence of the apostles' prayer, the apostles' affectionate prayer of thanksgiving, the precedence that it sets for us of brotherly, affectionate prayers of thanksgiving and remembering constantly and being mindful of tears.

Now, when we consider tears, being mindful of tears, when we were young, we might have had tears because of pain that we had in our body.

We had a sliver, we had a skinned knee, and at the time, in the moment of that pain, it would have been consuming. It's all we could focus on. It's all that matters. And it was all that seemed to matter in the moment.

It was all that we could focus on. And as we get older, we have pains in our soul. We experience tears from the pain in our soul on account of many different things, different times or different people.

[24:01] It might be on account of a spouse, it might be on account of a child, it might be on account of a friend, or perhaps on an enemy, or of a significant loss. But the pain and the grief may be very consuming.

John Flavel, he wrote that tears are of a mind oppressed and squeezed with grief. Grief compresses the heart. The heart so compressed and squeezed vents itself sometimes into tears, sighs, and groans.

And by the precedence of the Apostle Paul, his brotherly, affectionate prayer of thanksgiving, we, the church, are to affectionately pray for one another, being mindful of each other's tears and grief. And furthermore, there are Christians who do suffer deeply on account of contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. They suffer greatly for preserving the gospel without corruption of a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.

I remember, I think it was probably three weeks ago now, but I mentioned Polycarp and about how Polycarp was murdered in AD 155. He was taught by the Apostle John and his martyrdom being faithful to the gospel even to death and how he was threatened and brought into, for public execution by burning.

[25:34] Anyways, so a little bit more details surrounding that situation is that Polycarp, when the soldiers came to arrest Polycarp to take him, to take him for public execution, when the soldiers came to arrest him, do you know how he responded?

He fed the soldiers. He showed them hospitality, knowing why they were there, knowing that Christians were being publicly executed and that the crowds were chanting for Polycarp to be executed next, and then these soldiers show up at his door.

He knew what was going on, and his response is that he showed them hospitality. He fed the soldiers, and then he prayed for two hours for all Christians.

He prayed for the Christians he knew, and he prayed for the Universal Church for two hours. He prayed for Christians, and then he's taken for his public execution, and at his public execution, he gave a final prayer, and that final prayer is this.

O Lord God Almighty, Father of your beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we have received knowledge of you, God of angels and powers of all creation, and of the whole race of the righteous who live before you, I bless you that you considered me worthy of this day and hour to

receive a part in the number of the martyrs in the cup of your Christ for the resurrection to eternal life both of soul and of body and the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit.

[27 : 09] Among them, may I be welcomed before you today by a fat and acceptable sacrifice, just as you previously prepared and made known and you fulfilled the deceitless and true God.

because of this and for all things I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you through the eternal and heavenly high priest, Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, through whom be glory to you with him and the Holy Spirit both now and for ages to come.

Amen. Following which prayer he was publicly executed. So praise God for his gift of faith, his gift of genuine faith which is proven to be genuine, it is proven to be sincere in a world that is hostile against Christ.

In the face of hostility where God has given gifts for the ministry of the word, he supplies power, he supplies love and he supplies a sound mind to persevere in passing down the content of the faith without corruption.

He does so in AD 64, he does so in AD 155, the martyrdom of Polycarp and he does so in AD 2026 today.

[28 : 31] Let's pray. Our great God we thank you for your word. We thank you for the ways in which you still speak to us through your word, through the means of grace. We pray Lord that as we now move on and continue to consider the things that we've heard from your word, I pray that you would help us to meditate on it, to understand it and that you would cause us to love the things of your word that we would desire to live according to your word.

I pray that you would bless our prayers and that in our prayers that we would without ceasing, that we would constantly, night and day, remember one another in the face of grief, whether it be our grief or their griefs being mindful of one another's tears, that we would be very grateful not only for one another but also for the genuine faith, the gift of God which is proven to be genuine even in the face of hostility in a world which hates Christ.

We pray also for the preservation of the gospel in our day, in our community, in this church and that you would supply the grace necessary to continue to preserve the content of the faith without corruption and to hand down as we contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.