

Be an encouragement to others

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[0 : 00] This morning is from the New Testament, from Timothy, 2 Timothy, chapter 1. 2 Timothy, chapter 1, verses 1 to 14.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God, according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my beloved child, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother, Lois, and your mother, Eunice, and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

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

Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do.

But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the 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. Amen.

[2 : 24] I'm glad that someone came alongside me shortly after I became a Christian and encouraged, prayed, guided, and as required, and as required, corrected me. I needed that, and I still need it.

The apostle Paul, reading the Acts of the Apostles, had Gamaliel as someone who influenced him. And we read in Acts chapter 22 and verse 3, under Gamaliel, I was thoroughly trained.

And Paul himself was influential to, among others, Timothy and Barnabas.

And that man, Gamaliel, spoke up for the Christians who were threatened by death.

[3 : 37] In Acts chapter 5 and verse 34, in this present case, I advise you, leave these men alone. Let them go.

Had a special place in the heart of the apostle Paul. So much so, that he received a charge from Paul.

No less than ten times in these two letters. And that charge that Paul gave to Timothy was to have a sound doctrine.

That there may be order in the fellowship to which he belonged. That there may be proper relationships amongst the Christian people.

And there may be spiritual discernment with them too. Paul gives him a charge.

[5 : 03] And he develops that charge into a challenge in the second Timothy. And that challenge was to fortitude and faithfulness.

In other words, it was to be brave. To be resilient. To be courageous. And to endure all that he had to endure. For the sake of the gospel.

That challenge is made in the face of the present testing. And the further testing yet to come.

In Luke chapter 9 and verse 62. We read. Putting your hand to the plough. And then looking back.

And those to whom Jesus spoke that day.

And those words. You that the eye of the ploughman. If he is to do his work. Well. Must look straight before him.

[6:09] In the line of the furrow. He is making. There are no use having your eyes somewhere else. If you're ploughing a straight furrow.

There are no use being diverted. And Timothy. Paul writes to him.

Something similar. In 2 Timothy 1 and verse 4. Guard the good deposit. That was entrusted to you. Guard it.

With the help of the Holy Spirit. Who lives in you. You see. Paul realized. The importance. Of what he was saying. To young Timothy.

He realized. The necessity. Of dependence. Upon the Holy Spirit. He was.

[7:10] Certain. That without the Holy Spirit. He would. Lose. What God. Had entrusted to him. This.

This glorious gospel. Of the blessed God. Which he entrusted. To you. That faith.

That faith. Into which. Timothy. Had come. And that faith. Into which. You have come. When you trusted. And believed.

In the Lord Jesus Christ. As it is. And still is. In Jesus Christ.

Matthew records. For us. Those words of Jesus. At the end of his gospel. Matthew 28. Verse 20.

Teach them. To obey everything.

[8:13] I have taught you. Don't deviate. Don't leave any doctrine. Aside. Don't think it less.

Than anything else. Teach them to obey everything. I have taught you.

And Paul. Seeks to instill that. In the life. And the mind. Of young Timothy. Don't forget. What you've been taught.

By your parents. And your grandparents. And what I have said to you. Also. The apostle Paul.

Believed that he was soon. To be called home. And as he looks. Over the years. He can say.

[9:10] To Timothy. I have fought. The good fight. I have finished. The race. I have kept.

The faith. And may that be words. That we can say. Also. Of ourselves. And to each other. In our Christian life. We know.

It's a fight. We know. We're in a battle. The enemy. Is on the prowl. Like a running lion. And he will do. Everything in his power.

To try and prevent you. From doing. What God wants you to do. But may we also. Finish that race. That marathon race.

Not a sprint. Not a sprint. But may we also be. Seen. To be men and women. Who've kept the faith.

[10:14] So Paul gives Timothy. This charge. First Timothy five. And verse twenty one. Keep. These instructions. Without.

Without partiality. And do nothing. Out of favoritism. In first Timothy four and fifteen. Do not neglect.

The spiritual gift. Within you. Take pain. With these things. Be absorbed. In them. Pay.

Pay close attention. To them. You see. Timothy. Had been entrusted. To guard. This priceless. Vital.

Deposit. Deposit. Of Christian faith. As you have. And as I have. And he's asked. By Paul. To. To preserve it. To keep at it.

[11:09] Keep it in your mind. Keep it in the forefront. Of your thoughts. To protect it. Don't be misled. Or don't mislead anyone. And to proclaim it.

Daily. Telling. By your life's example. Who you believe. Why is he saying that?

I think. There are certain things. That causes him. To say those words. To young Timothy.

Because. There are other doctrines. Coming about. At that time. People. Were wanting. To lead. Other folks.

In the wrong direction. People. People. Who were trying to. Stop. The Christians. Keeping their faith.

[12:15] I recently. Had a conversation. With a friend. She was. Baptized. In Portavilla. Baptist Church. By me. And after.

I left. She then. Became. A spiritualist. Not my doing. By the way. But as I met.

With her. And talked to her. She said. You know. When you die. You go to heaven. And you're put through. This scanner.

And it shows you. What you've done. In your life. And you can then. Sort it out. So I asked her. To read some scriptures. There we were.

Sitting in Jenner's. Coffee shop. Reading the scripture. And everybody else. Was looking. Listening to what. She was reading. And.

[13:14] I said. What does that say to you? She said. Well it says. That Jesus forgives. Our sins. That's right. Tell me this then. Why.

If Jesus. Have forgiven. Your sin. Do you need. To go. Put through. A scanner. I don't know. She said. I need to find that out. Well you do it.

And come back. And tell me. And so. Paul is urgent. There's an urgency. About the gospel. One commentator says this.

To the two letters. First Timothy. Second Timothy. As a whole. Give. A prophetic photograph. Of modern Christendom.

And he argues. He said. If that is the case. They have an intrinsic value. Making them precious.

[14:13] At any time. Yet their peculiar reference. To this century. Gives them an urgent interest. And significance.

As you can scarcely have had. Before. Before. And so. As we think about that. Paul's letter. Paul's words to Timothy.

Paul's instruction. We want to consider. In the particular. Verses six and seven. Of chapter one. For this reason.

I remind you. To fan into flame. The gift of God. Which is in you. Through laying on of my hands. For the spirit of God. Gave us. Does not make us timid. But gives us power. Love.

[15:14] And self-discipline. That's a gift. That God has given. To each and every one of us. That is what is instilled. In our lives. That is what we have to live for.

And portray. Moment by moment. You see embers. Need constant. Stirring.

In order that they may be kindled. Afresh. And brought to full flame. I believe that the time is right.

To stir up the gift of God. With us. The gift God has given you. The gift God has given me. It needs to be stirred up.

Rekindled. We need to be made on fire. For God. Do you want to be on fire? Oh dear me.

[16:21] Do you want to be on fire for God? Yes of course you do. Our faith. Our faith. Rekindled. The precious truth. That God has brought to us.

And others. Through their witness to our lives. Has enabled us to see. What that is. This. Is a trustworthy saying.

Worthy of full acceptance. Christ Jesus. Jesus. Came into the world. To save sinners. Of whom. I am chief. Says Paul. And later on.

In Acts of the Apostles. In 22. We have. Paul's testimony. About his conversion. On the road to Damascus.

What a transformational experience. He had. Saul. Saul. Why do you persecute me? Who are you Lord?

[17:28] And in that conversation. With the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's life. Was changed. And transformed. I remember the time.

When I became a Christian. Can you? You're saying yes. Remember the time. When I became a Christian. Yes. Coop Brace Baptist Church.

Christian endeavor. Jim Murdoch. Was speaking. And he asked those. Who. Who felt.

They needed to get. Their lives right. With God. To pray a prayer. God. And I remember. Going home. That night. Along West Canal Street.

As I got to the end. Of West Canal Street. It was as if. I was walking. On air. I don't know. How it happened. But that was.

[18:30] The feeling I got. God. Had changed. My life. And when I got home. I went straight to bed. Didn't tell anybody.

Then I remembered. I had to share that. With others. So in the morning. My mother came. To wake me up. She did in those days. You know. I told her.

What happened. And she was delighted. But oh. I have to confess. That I have not been as faithful. As God wanted me to be. And I need. To be reminded. From time to time. To fan into flame. The gift God has given to me. I can't remember.

Sharing my testimony. My story. With some of my classmates. Going to school. On days. And then it seemingly. Went away. I didn't do it as often.

[19 : 33] And God comes back to your life. In certain moments. And reminds you. Who you are. And who you belong to.

And what you've got to do. And share. With other people. Timothy. Was urged to. To preserve. To protect.

And to proclaim. What he had heard. And that's the same. In your life. And in mine. There's no. Get out. Gloss. For what God. Asks us to do. We are to be constant. Constantly sharing. Our faith. The gospel.

Needs to be retold. God. And. God. And. A question. Is often asked. How do you do church? The question.

[20 : 31] Has been asked. In here. By people. How should we do church? the church is not the center of God's plan Jesus is but is he the focus of our mission when people reject the church they soon reject the gospel I often ask myself and I've asked others how should we communicate our faith today how would Jesus if this were the time when God said you are to go to the world and reveal me to it how would he communicate his parables his stories today and we have to take the word of God and make it fit into our society not change the message but the way in which we communicate it and biblical marks of the church are simply these that it has spiritual authority biblical leadership preaching and teaching

Jim Graham once called the church a school for sinners where we learn and we go out and we tell other people what we've learned and how God has changed and transformed us the remembrance of the ordinances communion and baptism we are a covenant community and we have been made for mission God is a missionary God and we are reminded in the gospel in the word of God that the church is to be a missionary church because God has a mission the church doesn't need to search for a mission because God's mission has a church and so the church doesn't just have a function of mission but the church exists for mission if the early church were to visit this church today what would they find what would they see us being alive and overflowing in love telling people what God has done for us seeing people day by day being added to the kingdom because of our witness is that what they would see

I don't think so but it can happen God is still a God of transformation he is still a God who changes lives he's still a God who can change your life and my life into being what he wants it to be let's do that let's allow him to do it and he also wants our talents reused very often the skills and the abilities God has given to us lie dormant very often we don't recognize what those skills people have or encourage them to be used we need to give each other encouragement to make use of the gifts God has given us

Nicky Gumbel said if everyone received enough encouragement the world would be blessed beyond our wildest dreams think about that if we all encouraged each other the world would be blessed beyond our wildest dreams but oh no what we seem to focus on is a tortoise mentality like a mighty tortoise moves the church of God brothers we are treading where we've always trod that is not the position

God wants us to be in he wants us to be a forward thinking church with God's mission on our minds and doing what God wants us to do but sometimes we're afraid we have a fear what others will think of us or say about us so we tend to hold back let's take that spirit of the new testament those early christians and be prepared to be on fire for God yeah let us be filled with the spirit be being filled let there be an ever continuing replenishment in our lives doesn't leave us half filled he wants to fill us completely is the glass half filled or half empty is your life half filled or half empty with God it's time for the church to stir salt and light into a sick society remember what Jesus said recording in Matthew you're the salt of the earth but if the salt loses its saltiness how can it be made salty again it is no longer good for anything you're the light of the world a city on a hill cannot be hidden and when you think of the qualities of both salt and light especially housewives here how you've used it in the past

[28 : 25] I don't know how many people remember in the last decade various governments talking about broken Britain a term used to describe the widespread state of society in the UK broken Europe there's brokenness all around us and we have a broken world and the brokenness of the world is on show for all to see broken families broken dreams broken promises broken institutions the Bible gives it a plumb line on how to engage with a broken society and God showed the way since the initial breakdown in relationships between

God and mankind when God created the world and those initial people went against God's will by a constant decline and only God intervening by sending us the Lord Jesus Christ written and read is he able to bring and restore a broken world back to what he wants it to be you see everything about Jesus his life his birth his ministry his death his resurrection shout redemption and restoration to a lost and broken world people say if it ain't broke don't fix it but alas we cannot see past the brokenness of the world and

God's remedy for sin we live in a sick society where many different addictions are prevalent where human trafficking is rife where we see the insidiousness of certain celebrities where MPs and MSPs and MEPs are milking the system where expenses have soared 40% in four years and that is who we're told to look up to there's no better person to look up to than the Lord Jesus Christ who doesn't have a pay rise whose expenses were seen at

Calvary how God gave Jesus up for our salvation Peter reminds us in his first letter be self controlled and alert your enemy the devil pulls around like a roaring lion but does anyone listen again to Timothy and 2nd Timothy 3 and 14 men will be lovers of pleasure rather than lover of God the breakdown in society a report from the children's society inquiry said for too many years our society has lived with a view that children should be seen and not heard without listening to children and understanding children's own views about their quality of life how can we ever expect to improve the lives of children and young people the million children with mental health problems who have disorders ranging from depression anxiety anorexia violent delinquency which causes binge drinking an increase in the availability of drugs family breakdown pressure to look fashionable and attractive we live in a society which appears no longer interested in the welfare of the nation and if it does it's important to know what to do that is why it is so important to ensure the children and young people in our trust have a proper grounding where we support encourage and pray for them it's so important not just to see them coming to be a

Christian the father of Christ but to day by day encourage them and help them to develop in that way people today have said the world is no longer interested in the church but behind the scenes they are interested in Jesus however there will be interest in the church once the church becomes like Jesus and that is a challenge of the church for you and for me in today's society it's time [36 : 00] I believe for the church the church in general to stir a mighty army into action by the infilling and empowering of the Holy Spirit remember those words in Luke's gospel about Jesus and Jesus increased in wisdom in stature in favor with God and man and when we use that for ourselves we see that God is saying to us that you have to develop in a holistic way intellectually physically spiritually and with your fellow man the early church was mobilized by the power and results were phenomenal as seen in the

Acts of the Apostles and every great revival since revival is coming and I want to be part of it but I need to get my life right with God totally and completely given over to him Paul reminds Timothy for the spirit of God does not make us timid but gives us power love and self discipline again to the church at Rome he writes you did not receive a spirit that makes you again a slave to fear but he gives you a spirit of dynamism an explosive spirit a powerful spirit my message says Paul as he wrote to Corinthians and my preaching for not with wise and persuasive words but with a demonstration of the spirit's power and God wants to use in each and every one of our lives the spirit's power no timidity go out and be

God in your community may we therefore by his spirit stir up the gift of God with it is be salt and light to our neighbours and community become a mighty army prepared and ready for action into this church come people and the cafes that we have people come in here who are hurting who have problems Jesus is the solution to those problems and he wants to use your life and my life and our witness to help them see that they can be changed and restored it's not a quick fix come to Jesus and all your problems will be solved that's not true come to Jesus and he will help you he will empower you he will fill you he will make you strong to be able to stand against everything that the enemy throws at you I want to encourage you this morning to be in fire for God but are you willing to do it let me ask those who can to stand up and we'll pray for you just now before we sing this last time if you can stand up Father God thank you for each and every person here this morning their gifts their skills their abilities their talents we ask you to to fill their lives with your Holy Spirit's power that we may become like the early church unafraid to share your gospel Father we pray for a revival in this this land we pray for a revival in this city and we ask that we may be part of that as you desire to bring it upon us hear our prayer and bless us in abundance for we ask it in

Jesus name Amen now we're going to sing together