

## **BE LOYAL**

### 2 Timothy 1:1-18

Loyalty is a quality that we don't hear a lot about in today's world. The very idea is that we maintain our allegiance to a friend, employer, organization, or family regardless of the circumstances. We may express our loyalty with such phrases as "my country, right or wrong, is still my country." We also may express it in terms of our children and their behavior. My son is still my son regardless of how he behaves and what he does. Loyalty does not mean that we should enable those to whom we are loyal to harm themselves and others, but does require that we not abandon them but work to show love and care which may involve discipline and correction.

Our sense of loyalty can emerge from past relationships, kinships, nationalities, help that we have received, and any other sense of belonging. Loyalty could almost be thought of in terms of a positive prejudice. It certainly has a great similarity with the idea of faithfulness. We will see such relational influences in this part of Paul's second letter to Timothy.

#### Remember Your Spiritual Heritage – 1:1-8

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup>To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. <sup>3</sup>I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, <sup>4</sup>longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. <sup>5</sup>For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that *it is* in you as well. <sup>6</sup>For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup>For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. <sup>8</sup>Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, 2 Timothy 1:1-8 (NASB95)

Paul was aware of the ministry of his calling and the calling of his ministry. He was faithful to both. This awareness was so strong in his life that it shaped his identity and defined who he was. The things he did were influenced by the position to which he had been called. We need to be cognizant of our calling and operate accordingly. This idea raises an important question regarding how we would answer a question such as "who are you?" Such a question would be seeking to determine more than your name. That might be an interesting exercise to go through in time of contemplation or a devotional time.

A discipleship arrangement existed between Paul and Timothy. Paul provided guidance to this young pastor and all that he shared was based on what God had given to him. Paul realized that God had been involved in forming a strong bond between him and Timothy. Paul could see Timothy being God's instrument in carrying on the work Paul had begun in Ephesus. Because of the importance of the work and the affection he had for Timothy, Paul remembered Timothy in all his prayers. Obviously, prayer was important to Paul, especially at this point in his life and ministry. He was in prison in Rome and he realized that the battle for the souls of men was still underway and that praying was a way to fight the good fight. It still is the most effective thing we can do as Christians and it is perhaps the most neglected thing we (don't) do.

Paul had not abandoned the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob but served with a pure conscience in the same kind of faith. Some had accused Paul of abandoning the faith of his forefathers. The God Paul served was the same as had called Abraham. It is important to see that Christianity is not different from the faith of Abraham but is the fulfillment of it in the person of Jesus Christ.

Because Paul could see the fruit of his labor in the ongoing ministry of Timothy, he was

thankful to God for Timothy's faithfulness and sincerity. Just as Paul could identify with the faithful examples of the "forefathers," he noted that Timothy was similarly influence by the faithful examples of his mother and grandmother. Paul could see in Timothy the value of godly influence in the home. All of us need to keep in mind that what we do and how we live has influence not only on our own individual lives but can also impact others in future generations. That is a heavy responsibility when you consider that your actions today can impact the lives of your grandchildren.

Paul encouraged Timothy to use all the resources he had especially the spiritual gifts for ministry. Many time people in Christian work get so involved in the daily grind of things to do, people to see and places to go that they forget to tap into the spiritual power that God has placed in them. Sometimes people with whom we must deal require us to love them when they are not lovable and we need the love that God put into our hearts by the Holy Spirit to be loving toward them.

To really accomplish all that our ministry jobs entail requires that we lived orderly lives and concentrate on the priorities even when we would rather be doing something else which brings us to the word "discipline." Self-discipline (NIV) is rendered "sound mind" in the KJV and according to Gill's commentary means "prudent conduct and behavior; in sobriety, moderation, temperance, purity, and honesty."

One of the lessons that Paul was passing on to Timothy was the importance and the potential impact of being bold in the ministry of the gospel. We have the ability to be bold because we have the Holy Spirit in us and working in us and exhibiting the life of Christ in us. What would cause us to be less than bold (timid) in our Christian walk and testimony? Two things that Paul cautioned Timothy was being embarrassed about the testimony of Jesus and/or the testimony of well-known leaders in the church.

The testimony of Jesus is the life He lived which would include His birth and the circumstances of it, His experience of growing up in an impoverished environment, His ministry including the miracles, His arrest, trial and crucifixion, resurrection and ascension and His sending of the Holy Spirit. Why would that be an embarrassment? Consider how non-conventional and improbable all of this testimony really is. Whoever heard of someone being born of a virgin? Why would He be arrested, put on trial and executed if He was who we claim Him to be? How improbable is a spontaneous resurrection? Do you really think anyone is going to believe that someone just rose up from the ground and disappeared into the sky? You get the idea! This is what Christian young people get exposed to when they go away from home to a university. It is difficult to be bold in the face of such caustic criticism that would suggest that Christians are deluded and believe in fairy tales. The same kind of questions could be raised about Paul who was in a Roman prison. Why would you put any confidence in the teaching of a criminal? Few of us have close friends who have been arrested for their Christian faith. How would we react to such a situation? Would we be embarrassed because they were arrested? Are we sometimes apologetic for those who are labeled as fanatics by the world? If the world is not opposing what we are doing for Jesus, then we must not be encroaching on their territory.

### Remember the Greatness of Salvation – 1:9-10

<sup>9</sup> who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, <sup>10</sup> but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 2 Timothy 1:9-10 (NASB95)

We are to be about the business of rescuing and redeeming and restoring that which is

under the control of the devil and bringing those people and things under the control of the kingdom of God. Our lives are to make a difference in the world. We were not called to just blend in and not be changers of the world. Our life is to be useful for God's purposes because that is why we were saved. The plan is totally improbable and against any scheme that would be developed by fallen mankind. Any plan that is developed in the mind of man has a strong element of people having to do something to earn salvation or approval or whatever and however the ideal condition might be described. God's plan excludes our contribution and it depends entirely on His grace. It is freely given or granted to all who trust in His means of salvation. The plan was in place before creation, it was the foundation upon which the call of Abraham and the establishing of the nation of Israel was based as God put into place the physical events and religious rituals that pointed to the eventual revelation of that plan in Jesus Christ.

This brings us back to what the world considers to be an incredible story that Paul called the testimony of Jesus. Place this testimony on the backdrop of four thousand years of events and activities that pointed to and predicted exactly what happened in the "testimony of Jesus" and the conclusion is that only God could have caused all these things to come together. To dismiss the overall panorama of history is to ignore the evidence which is essentially intellectually dishonest.

#### Follow Those Who Are Unashamed – 1:11-15

<sup>11</sup> for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. <sup>12</sup> For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. <sup>13</sup> Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup> Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to *you*. <sup>15</sup> You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. 2 Timothy 1:11-15 (NASB95)

Paul was not a self-appointed person but had been called of God for his ministry. Each of us has jobs to do in the kingdom of God. Paul had three jobs. He was a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher.

Many times we think that if we will just do what is right and be in God's will that we will have it great. But Paul found that he was suffering because he did what God called him to do. We don't see much suffering in our country by Christians but in other parts of the world, many are paying a high price for their faith – even death. However, if we know Jesus and have our trust in Him, then He will vindicate us and it will be worth it all in the day of judgment.

We should be learning from faithful Christian leaders who have gone before us. Look at the action words Paul used in his testimony regarding why he was not ashamed. The first verb he used was "know." How do we "know" anything? So much of what we say that we know is related to information that we have read or heard or observed. How much of what you read or hear or see can you really **know** that it is absolute truth? In the *Spiritual Man* (the three volume work of Watchman Nee), the author claims that the only thing we can really know is that which is revealed to us in our spirit. What or Whom did Paul say he knew? He said he knew God. You can't prove God is; but, you can know it in your innermost being.

Paul described God as "whom I have believed." This brings us to the second action word: believed. This word in the Greek is from the same root that is translated as "faith" or "trust." This implies an active reliance upon the object of trust or faith. Because Paul did rely upon God and His provision and power, he was a witness to that not being a misplaced trust because God kept His promises to Paul. Paul then had confidence or was persuaded (the third verb) that God was able. When the evidence backs up what you know to be true and that in

which you put your trust then we can say that we are persuaded.

The thing that Paul was persuaded about was that all he had entrusted to God (his very life for all eternity) was in good hands and that his knowledge and trust would be vindicated before the judgment seat of God.

Paul encouraged Timothy to follow his example in the ministry that had been entrusted to him at Ephesus. We can use the teachings of those who have gone before us as examples and when we apply the truth of sound teaching in faith and love, then the kingdom of God will continue to be advanced. God has provided resources (spiritual gifts) and responsibilities (offices in the church) to each of us to help build up the Body of Christ. We also have the Holy Spirit to work in and through us to be effective in whatever our ministry is. At the same time, Paul pointed out examples of those who were not to be followed such as those who had turned away from supporting Paul when trouble came. It is not clear from the text if these people had abandoned the faith or simply had forgotten about Paul and dismissed him because he was in prison hundreds of miles away. At best, these would be classified as fair-weather friends.

### Support Those Who Are Unashamed – 1:16-18

<sup>16</sup>The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; <sup>17</sup>but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me— <sup>18</sup>the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus. 2 Timothy 1:16-18 (NASB95)

We tend to have an idealized picture of how great everything was in the first-century church. It was not perfect because it was made up of people. Some could be counted on and others (most) could not. It is sad to read that “everyone” in the province of Asia had deserted Paul. The kindness of one person was remembered by Paul. Onesiphorus did not let the fact that Paul was in prison stop him from being helpful. When he was in Rome, he made sure he visited Paul. These seem like such little things but the little things mean so much to those who are suffering for the cause of Christ.

If we are looking for an example to follow, then Onesiphorus showed us and Paul’s testimony confirmed how important it is to be there for those who are hurting when they are hurting. It is easy to be a faithful friend and supportive when everything is going well. It is a different situation when people are hurting and are really in need of help. These are the times when friends show their true colors.