

## 2 Timothy 1 Vs 8-18

### "Don't Deviate"

"Don't be afraid" & "Don't be ashamed". That's the essence of 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy Ch 1. Paul tells Timothy, "Don't be afraid to *serve* God & don't be ashamed of the *message* &/or the *men of* God." "The work of Christ in you is genuine. You are *grounded* in the *word*, you are *gifted* by the *Spirit*." "Therefore stir up the gift of God which is *in* you & Christ will be *magnified through* you." "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." It's the "birthright" of every believer in J.C.

### Vs 8

You see, since God has not given us a spirit of fear or timidity (let's not forget that what's not being said is that as a believer you'll never be afraid or if you are afraid you're in sin. Fear can keep you out of a lot of trouble. We're talking here about a fear that keeps you from following through on God's plan/purpose for your life). The Spirit of God will enable you to overcome that fear & follow through on what He's leading you to do, ... affecting you in very tangible, very practical ways.

One of which will be your concern for what *God* thinks over your concern of what *man* thinks. The bible declares that the fear of man brings a snare (Prov 29:25), our desire to be accepted by man will drive us to do some shameful things. So often we value what man thinks *too much* & what God thinks *too little*. Because of that we might hang our heads in silence when we ought to be standing up & speaking out.

But Paul says, "Don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." Today we might be embarrassed a little when people start talking about Jesus or something, but we're 2,000+ years & a continent removed from what Paul is talking about. We've somehow "sanitized" or "disinfected" the cross, we've made it all "safe", made it jewelry, perhaps a decorative item or an emblem on a shirt or back glass sticker on our car... But in Paul's day to follow a crucified Master (& especially to call him "Savior") carried entirely different connotations.

It seemed crazy to say the least... As Paul put it to the Corinthians, "**For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,**"<sup>1</sup> (the natural man can't does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned) but to us who are being *saved* it's the power of God. **The message of the gospel is the power of God to save souls & transform lives; therefore (Paul says to you & me) do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord...**

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [1 Co 1:18] Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Don't be ashamed to declare the fact that J.C. is the foundation of your life & nor is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we *must* be saved... **That in order for us to be saved we must believe in the Lord J.C., that if we want to be where He is we must deny ourselves, take up *our* cross & follow Him. Paul says, "Don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord."**

"Nor of me His prisoner," - "Wait Paul, you're a prisoner of *Rome*..." Paul says, "No way, God is in control of my life & if I'm here its because it will somehow serve the providential plan of God for my life."

You say, "Wait a minute, wait a minute... are you saying that sometimes God's will can allow for discomfort, tough times & perhaps even *suffering* in my life?" That's exactly what I'm saying; it's both the *declaration* of the word of God & the *invitation* of Paul the apostle. He says, "But share with me in the sufferings for the gospel." Jesus was very clear when He said, "**In the world you will have tribulation;**" Jn 16:33 Later on in this very letter Paul writes, "**Yes, and *all* who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**"<sup>2</sup> (Probably the least liked promise in all the word of God).

But there seems to be a sense of entitlement today in the average American Christian that believes that the Christian life is one that should be all sweet, easy, bright & breezy. (Or as my children say, "Easy, peasy, lemon squeezy". To which I promptly add, "Throw it in the fridge & freezy", which gets *instantly/audibly* rejected as a viable addition to their catch phrase...) Be that as it may, many believers think we have an indulgent heavenly Father who exists to remove every rock in the road, never let anything serious happen to us & put us to sleep every night on a bed of roses! - It's like the will that read: "To my son I leave the pleasure of earning a living. For twenty-five years he thought the pleasure was mine. He was mistaken." We expect God to just make things easy for us.

Yet the Word of God says, "Share w/me in the *sufferings* for the gospel." It's not enough to be unashamed of the imprisoned apostle, the invitation; the exhortation is to share in the sufferings. Leave 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy & turn quickly back to **Philippians** Ch **3** (Vs 8-11).

You see we're all about the power of the resurrection, but "the fellowship of His *sufferings*"? Not so much... But how can we know the power of the resurrection apart from the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death? **Death always precedes resurrection... & If we're to know the power of the resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, conformity to His death is a must...**

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (2 Ti 3:12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

To the Galatians Paul said that like this, *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*<sup>3</sup>

"Share w/me in the sufferings for the gospel (notice) *according to the power of God.*" Herein lies the acknowledgement that none of us enjoy suffering... Jesus prayed that if it be possible that the Father would remove this cup from Him, Paul prayed 3x's that God would remove the thorn in his flesh (2 Cor 12:7-8). *However there are simply times that suffering will be apart of the Christian life. But here's the deal, we're to make sure that we're not suffering for our own wrong... If you do something wrong & the ramifications are upon you than that's what we call sowing & reaping... However if you're doing right & you suffer for it, then you partake of Christ's sufferings who Himself did no wrong yet suffered as well.*

*There is also a sense in which we share in the sufferings when we weep w/those who weep, when our heart is intertwined w/those who are in that place of suffering or hardship... But we're to suffer "according to the power of God".* What does that mean? It means that God's power isn't always there to *remove* the suffering, but sometimes it's there to *see us through* the suffering.

Often times we envision God's power as the attribute that will make us some kind of Superman, abolishing all evil (of course God *can* do that). *However sometimes God's power is there to simply see us through times of pain, not to alter the situation, but to enable us to endure the situation... according to the power of God...*

#### **Vs 9-10**

Do yourself a favor & underline these Vs in your bible! They're the heart of the gospel message, that God has saved you & He has called you, *not* because you *are* holy, but that you might *be* holy. *Not* according to your works, but according to *His own* purpose, by *His* grace which was given to you in Christ Jesus (notice) before time began.

*This is one of those Vs that if you think about it too much your head explodes yet I encourage you to think about it & meditate on it, let it sink deep into your heart. God's redemptive purposes toward you were established before the world was ever created, before time ever began...*

Notice here the Divine initiative, why did you surrender your life to Christ? It wasn't because you initiated the search...

<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ga 2:20]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It was because *God called* you & you responded to His call upon your life. You didn't choose Him, He chose you... That's why it's so critical that you respond when you sense Him tugging on your heart, there's no guarantee that He will call out to you again, you have that moment. *Oh God is gracious, many times He pleads & pleads w/us that we be reconciled to Christ. But in the end we have no guarantee, when God calls you, you do well to respond right then & there, don't put it off.*

& Notice that He didn't call us because we were such a great find, "not according to our works", we all like sheep had gone astray, were pursuing our own way, but God had a plan & He called out to us according to His own purpose, not because we were holy (by any stretch) but that we might be holy.

He called us by His grace... In the book of Ephesians Paul said it like this, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."*<sup>4</sup>

You see, His *purpose* was prepared *beforehand*...translation? His grace was given to you in Christ Jesus before time began. You are apart of the eternal plan of God (who knows the end from the beginning) & He has ordained that Your life would glorify Him through His *redemption & good works* in your life, through His *grace* in your life, through His *strength* in your life seeing you through times of suffering.

You see, God's plan of redemption, of grace toward man through faith in Christ, of bringing Jew & Gentile together as one in Christ, all of it has always been in the heart/mind of God. But it's now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior J.C. ...

What does that mean? It means that God's plan of salvation, of grace through faith, of eternal life, the abolishment of death was cloudy in the OT. There were shadows and allusions of them but they were cloudy, however they're made clear in Christ. It means that God's power, God's complexity, His creativity, His diversity, the very fact that He's a reality are crystal clear in nature. David declared, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world."*<sup>5</sup> Roman's 1 tells us that the invisible attributes of God are *clearly* seen through the creation of the world so that man is w/out excuse as to His existence.

<sup>4</sup> The New King James Version, (1982), (Eph 2:8-10), Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> The New King James Version, (1982), (Ps 19:1-4), Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

So creation reveals God's existence, God's power, God's diversity, His complexity, the sun the moon, the stars, the galaxies, the complexities of the human body, the diversity of the animal kingdom, the aquatic life, the insects, plant life... it all screams the existence of a Divine Creator.

But what it doesn't tell me is that God's loves me, that God is for me & not against me, that He longs to forgive me & have a relationship with me... That purpose of God has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior J.C. ...

"Who has abolished death" that word *abolished* means, "to render idle, unemployed, inoperative or to make of none effect." It doesn't mean that you'll never "taste" death, but that we're saved out of death, death has lost it's sting, you will never be separated from God by death as a believer. Death becomes the chauffeur that delivers you into His presence... It graduates you into glory...

"& has brought life & immortality to light through the gospel," "Immortality" is "incorruptibility" (I would refer you to 1 Cor 15:50-58). Again the understanding of life after life was murky at best in the OT, but Jesus brought these things to light, made them clear through the gospel (the good news), His own death & resurrection... The word "gospel" simply means good news. It's good news that God has thought of you, loved you & called you before time began, it's good news that Christ died for you, that He has a holy calling for you & that He's shown to you & given to you eternal life... Christ has abolished death, & brought life & immortality to light through the gospel.

#### Vs 11-12

Paul was an apostle, a preacher & a teacher of the gospel... What's the difference between preaching & teaching? Preaching is for the lost, it's a declaration that you are a sinner & as a sinner you've offended a holy God who must punish sin, but this same holy God has loved you, given His Son to the pay the penalty of your sin for you & if you will believe on the Lord J.C. God will forgive you of your sins, & reconcile you to Himself through the blood of the cross of Jesus.

Teaching (on the other hand) is for the saved. It's where we breakdown & explain the great truths & doctrines contained in the scripture, it's exhortation & application in the moral demands of the word of God that we might grow in our faith & be transformed by the renewing of our minds being made more & more like Christ. That we might live this "holy calling" to which we've been called.

Paul says that because of his faithfulness to lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold of him he's suffering in prison, yet he's not ashamed... why?

Because (he says) “I *know whom* I have believed.” 2 words. #1 “Know”, it’s not a “know” as in a experiential knowledge, it’s a stronger word meaning an “absolute, beyond even a chance of doubt knowledge”, the knowledge of what God is in Himself which makes Him absolutely dependable in any circumstance.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> word is “Whom” it’s not “what” I believe, it’s not legalism, ritualism & religion, it’s “Whom” I believe, it’s a relationship w/a Person, the Person of J.C. that is critical. The phrase “I have believed” is in the perfect tense meaning “I have believed w/the present result that my faith is firmly settled one.” It’s like hammering a nail through a board & then bending it over on the backside making it impossible to pull out. It’s there to stay. Paul’s faith was placed *permanently/immovably* in the God whom he knew.

He says, “& I am *persuaded*” (again in the perfect tense). He had come to a settled persuasion regarding the matter and was fixed in an immovable position, knowing that Jesus is able to keep that which has been committed to Him until the day that we see Him face to face... What’s the application? Commit *everything* to Him, your life, your soul, your body, your character, your reputation, your resources, your children, if it’s of value to you, commit it to J.C.

Question, how precious is “that Day” to you? It probably depends on how much you have committed to Him...

#### Vs 13-14

“Hold fast” suggests that someone (or something) will try to snatch away from you the truth of the Word of God. If you don’t hold fast, hold on & don’t let go, the enemy will snatch it from you, he came to steal, to kill & to destroy & he won’t miss his opportunity believe you me.

But this is the measure of any pastor... Does he holdfast the pattern of sound words. The primary measure isn’t “he’s hilarious”, or “he’s entertaining, or never boring” or even “he has a real heart for the lost”. Some (in seeking to be acceptable to the unbeliever) abandon the truth of the gospel. The true test is to as, “Does he holdfast the pattern of sound words?”

The word “pattern” means “an architect’s sketch”. That pattern was the teaching of the apostles, we don’t need “new revelation”, we need to be obedient to the *exhortation* of the Word of God! In the early church there was a standard by which teaching was tested, we’re to remain true to the apostles doctrines in *faith & love*. We’re to speak the truth in love...

Here's the idea, "Don't deviate from the solid teaching of the Word of God/the gospel of J.C. ." It was given you *through* the Holy Spirit, it will be guarded in you by the Holy Spirit; not academically or intellectually, but in faith & love.

God is faithful w/what we commit to His trust, the question is, are we faithful w/what He's committed to *our* trust? (His word, maybe a family, time, gifts, talents...)

It's one thing to be faithful when it serves our own interests, but what about when it stops being to your advantage to be faithful??? That's when many people toss in the towel, but how does that honor the Lord?

Write it down, look it up later Ps 15. Talking about one who swears to his own hurt & does not change... when's the last time it cost you something to remain faithful? You gave your word & didn't change even when it cost you, it didn't serve you in any way?

God requires that we be faithful, but He didn't leave us powerless to be so. We're faithful through the Person & power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

#### Vs 15

Here's all we want to say about these guys; they stand as examples of guys who did not holdfast & who were not faithful. They may've been prominent leaders in the area & that's why Paul makes it clear to Timothy that they are no longer w/him but have turned away from him. However here's my point, how would you like to have your name forever recorded in the word of God only as an example of unfaithfulness? That's what they got...

Now I doubt that they woke up one day & decided to abandon Paul, more than likely it was a gradual erosion, no longer holding fast. It was more convenient to do their own thing than the right thing...

#### Vs 16-18

However in contrast to the previous 2, Onesiphorus stands out as a shining example of faithfulness regardless of the cost. One who didn't deviate but stayed true & served the Lord no matter what. He sought Paul out, he refreshed him, wasn't ashamed of him. When times are tough you find out who your friends are.

This man lived up to his name, which means "bringing profit" or "useful". This guy had a servant's heart, he was helpful to have around, what an example for you & me.

Avoid the example of Phygellus & Hermogenes (getting going when the going gets tough), imitate Onesiphorus; courageous enthusiasm, shameless suffering, & spiritual loyalty; these are the essentials of fruitful ministry. Don't deviate; holdfast to the *word* of God & stay faithful by the power of the *Spirit* of God in your life... Amen? Amen.

**Prayer Points:**

God we thank You for Your Word. For the exhortations found therein, that we might be more concerned for Your thoughts toward us than the thoughts of man toward us. & God we give You praise for thinking of us, calling us, saving us, causing Your grace to abound toward us before time ever began. May we lay hold of that for which You laid hold of us & may our lives give You much glory. We thank You that You are faithful, may we commit all that we are to You & may *we* be faithful to *You*. Help us to hold on to Your word & to be good & faithful servants...

The encouragement today is to be unashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Jesus said that whoever was ashamed of Him & His words, of him He would be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father w/the holy angels. God calls us & He saves us, God wants you to know Him, to walk w/Him; is He calling you today, don't put it off another day, He's initiating a relationship w/you. Respond by repenting of your sin & surrendering your life to J.C. who has loved you & given Himself for you.