

“Overcoming Fear”
2 Timothy 1:7
(Preached at Trinity, December 26, 2021)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After giving an introduction designed to encourage Timothy, Paul puts Timothy in remembrance of the genuine faith that God had given him. Genuine faith is demonstrated by certain characteristics. Among them are:
Steadfast Obedience – Humble Service – Sound Doctrine – Courageous Conviction
All of these motivated by his intense love for Christ which also is a fruit of faith.
2. Paul is reminding Timothy that genuine faith results in faithful service fueled by a holy zeal. Paul says, “kindle afresh the gift of God.” Literally, Paul is telling Timothy to kindle a living fire within himself. Or, “Let the gift within you be a living burning fire.”
3. Because of the extreme difficulties engulfing Timothy he was being tempted to draw back. Paul is telling him to press on laboring in the work God had placed before him.
4. There have always been circumstances in the life of the Christian that make our service difficult and sometimes dangerous. We will often face hostile people who hate the truth. Throughout the world there are Christians who are dying for nothing more than their living faith in Christ. We must understand that our life of relative ease is a wonderful blessing of God’s grace, but it is not the norm for Christianity. The norm has always been severe hardship for the Christian.
Introductory remarks on the cover of the Moody edition of *Fox’s Book of Martyrs* include these words:
“Snug in our corner of the earth; wealthy, comparatively speaking; equipped on every hand with electrical gadgets, time-savers and other comforts; complimented for our high attainments and inventions; how are Christians in the United States and Canada going to realize to any degree what the Lord meant when He said, “In Me ye have peace. In the world ye have tribulation?” Tribulation and persecution for us? No, surely not; they are for other lands and for other times. But the history of our Christian faith does not give us much hope for a long period of Christian peace of mind based on compatible, popular living. The stake, the noose and the firing squad are the concomitants of Christian faith in many lands today. Shall we be exempt forever?”¹
5. How do we as believers face the trials of our calling? How are we to face the difficulties of the Christian life? Paul gives the answer in **Verse 7**
2 Timothy 1:7 NAU - "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."
2 Timothy 1:7 KJV – “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”
A. Most translations translate “spirit” with a small “s” denoting the human spirit or attitude. We use this form to describe a team spirit or a spirit of patriotism.

¹ John Foxe, *Foxe’s Christian Martyrs of the World*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1907), dust jacket.

- B. As I stated last time, I agree with those who hold to this referring to the Holy Spirit – it should be a capital “S.”
We find a similar situation in Romans 15 where again I believe it is referring to the Holy Spirit.
Romans 8:15 NAU - "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
6. The Holy Spirit is the presence and power of God within every believer.
Ephesians 1:13-14 NAU - "having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory."
7. The Holy Spirit works mightily within us. He is the source of our sanctification. He is the source of our gifts of grace whereby we are equipped for service. Paul is saying the Holy Spirit also equips us with courage as we face the many adversities of the Christian life – trials that would strike fear in the hearts of many.
- I. "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity"
- A. The first thing Paul wants us to know is fear does not find its source in God
1. Paul is saying that the gift of God given to Timothy (V.6) was bestowed by the Holy Spirit. This does not result in fear but power and love and self-control.
 2. The word for fear or timidity in this verse is a hapax legomina. It is not as strong as the usual word for fear (φόβος). This word is δειλία - timidity, fearfulness, cowardice
 - a. While Paul is not excluding the fear that sometimes grips us when we face the many dangers of life, more particularly in view here is a fearful attitude, a fearful disposition, a fearful heart.
 - b. This is the fear that is caused by a lack of courage.
This timidity does not come from God. The Holy Spirit doesn't make us afraid.
 3. It is a form of the word used in Rev. 21 to describe the nature of the unredeemed.
Revelation 21:8 NAU - "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."
- B. Fear is consistent with unbelief. It questions the trustworthiness of God.
1. After the fall Adam became fearful. –
Genesis 3:10 NAU - "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."
 2. In the parable of the talents the wicked servant was afraid of his master -
Matthew 25:24-25 NAU - "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. ²⁵ 'And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours."

3. True faith brings us rest in His presence
Isaiah 43:5 NAU - "Do not fear, for I am with you"
 This was God's words to Paul in Corinth:
Acts 18:9-10 NAU - "Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you"
4. Instead of fear, God has given us Christian graces that enable us to serve Him in confidence. Paul will declare:
2 Timothy 1:12 NAU - "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."
5. In a world where we face constant opposition and the temptation to fear, being reminded of God's gifts of grace will encourage us to press on.
6. The Holy Spirit blesses us with three graces that give us courage.
 Power, Love, and Self-control

II. God imparts to us His power

- A. This power is an oxymoron – before we can partake of this power we must become weak
2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NAU - "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."
1. The man who marches forth in his own strength doesn't realize his own helplessness – he will be smitten with failure and then fear
James 4:6-7 NAU - "But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."
2. The people God has used powerfully are those who have come to the end of themselves. Timothy had a timid disposition, yet in Christ he found the power to press on.
3. Oswald Chambers wrote: "All through history God has chosen and used nobodies, because their unusual dependence on him made possible the unique display of his power and grace. He chose and used somebodies only when they renounced dependence on their natural abilities and resources."²
- B. What is this power?
 1. It is the power of the Most High. It is omnipotence demonstrated in us. It is the outward working of the Holy Spirit.
 Paul prayed for this Ephesian church
Ephesians 3:16 NAU - "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man"

² R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 174.

2. It is the power to live the Christian life.
William Barclay – “The gospel was, and is, power, power to conquer self, power to master circumstances, power to go on living when life is unlivable, power to be a Christian when being a Christian looks impossible.”³
 3. We tend to place limits on God’s power. We doubt that He works in every circumstance. God’s power is limitless.
 - a. Sarah laughed at God when she heard that she was to bear a son
 - b. Mary doubted when told she would bear a son. Luke 1:30-37
Luke 1:30 NAU - "The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God."
Luke 1:34-35 NAU - "Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you"
 - c. The Apostles pondering the Rich Young Ruler
Luke 18:26-27 NAU - "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷ But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."
Ephesians 3:20-4:1 NAU - "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹ to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. "
- C. God’s power comes to those who are actively serving Him, resting upon Him. In **Verse 6** Paul told Timothy to “kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you” We often wonder how one could go boldly to martyrdom – God doesn’t give you that strength until it is needed. God doesn’t grant dying grace until one is dying.
1. Paul tells Timothy:
2 Timothy 1:8 NAU - "join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,"
 2. This is the principle Jesus is teaching His disciples when he warns them of the trials which were to come
Mark 13:11 NAU - "When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Holy Spirit."
 3. Our responsibility is to diligently labor while trusting our great God
The Christian who never labors shall never know the power of God.
 4. We must labor with all our might knowing that God must give us the power. We must not sit back and assume God will do it for us
Ephesians 6:10 NAU - "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might."

³ Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956) page 166.

- III. God permeates us with His Love. Love is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in us – Gal 5:20
Romans 5:5 NAU - "and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."
- A. Love brings us confidence in God
1 John 4:18 NAU - "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love."
1. If we believe He loves us then we know He will not suffer anything to separate us from Him.
Romans 8:35 NAU - "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"
 2. No enemy shall be able to defeat us
Romans 8:37-39 NAS - "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- B. Love is something we have been given, yet something we work out
1. Love is not only an emotional feeling but a volitional act.
 2. It is the true measure of our life in Christ
 This love is a self-denying grace
 3. Fear is always caused by attention upon self
 If our first love is ourselves then our first concern is our own welfare
 4. Love allows us to place our attention upon Christ and His people
 When Jesus Christ is our chief focus everything else falls into a proper prospective.
Romans 14:8 NAU - "for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."
 This gives us great confidence in any and every situation
 5. Love will lead us to take risks for Christ's sake – to sacrifice ourselves
 - a. Only love for Christ which is greater than self would bring a man to be burned at the stake rather than forsake Him.
 - b. Only a love for Christ that is greater than self would cause a man to pack up his family and move to a foreign land.

- IV. God implants within us a sound mind – discipline or self-control
 σωφρονισμός – an admonishing to soundness of mind, to moderation and self-control
- A. Our minds are being continually transformed
Romans 12:2 NAU - "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."
 1. "transformed" - μεταμορφόω – present passive imperative
 Passive - Something done to us
 Present - Something *continually* done to us
 Imperative - Something we are commanded to have continually done to us
 2. God has changed and is continually changing our way of thinking
 And we are to labor to be conformed to God's revealed will
 "that which is good and acceptable and perfect."
- B. The sound mind is a mind that is well governed with self-control, right thinking.
 1. Self-control is a sound mind in action. The condition of our minds in control of our actions. It is the mind that keeps attention upon the greatness of God and God's love for His people. We continually remind ourselves, "Why are you afraid? If God loves me what can possibility harm me. If God has not ordained it why do I fear it?"
 William Hendriksen: "If a person *fears* Satan's persecuting power more than he *trusts* God's ability and ever-readiness to help, he has lost his *mental balance*."⁴
 2. The Christian life should be characterized by self-control, sobriety, temperance—another fruit of the Spirit.
 3. Christianity is never seen as simply a religion, an emotional feeling, or belonging to a church. It is a disciplined life.
1 Thessalonians 5:6 NAU - "so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober."
1 Peter 1:13 NAU - "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."
 4. Since God has given us a transformed, sound mind it is demanded of us that we gird up the loins of our mind – we must not allow anything to interfere with our God appointed duty.

Conclusion:

1. It is the duty of every Christian to press on in confidence. Fear is not of God but of confidence in this world and our ability to control it.
2. Instead of fear and timidity let us be confident, sober, vigilant trusting in the power of God.
3. God has given us the power of the omnipotent Father, the love of the Savior, and the sound mind imparted by the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit. Let us press on in one accord to the duty set before us.

⁴ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 4, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 230.