

Title: Fan the Flame
Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:4-6
Series: The Pastoral Epistles

1. Introduction:

- a. The OT prophets often tell the story of an enslaved people chosen and blessed by God. These people are given privileges and promises and with them the obligation to serve the Lord in every facet of life.
 - i. But one of the repeating themes of the Old Testament is how the people squander their privileges and failed to carry out the obligations.
- b. In preparing Timothy for the renewal of his calling, Paul draws heavily on Timothy's sense of loyalty and responsibility to the faith. Timothy cannot repeat the same mistake we see repeated so often in the Old Testament. He is to view God's calling and the privilege of being a child of God with a heart devoted to God's sovereign rule.
 - i. Timothy is obligated to exercise the faith seriously.
 1. His has a holy calling!
 - ii. What is true of Timothy here is true of every Christian. We are obligated, by the incredible grace bestowed on us, to walk worthy of our calling.
- c. Timothy's pastorate is difficult. The church is plagued with false teachers from within and without. There is a spirit of disobedience and Timothy is being challenged.
 - i. The question then is:

1. Will Timothy quit?
 2. Will he abandon God's call on His life?
- d. Paul the Apostle wants to shore up the young minister. He wants to remind him that his responsibility to minister is first to God! Timothy, in being faithful to God, must stay the course. God has placed him in Ephesus and Timothy must do the work that God has called him to do. No matter how difficult, the man of God moves forward and does not surrender.
- i. We call this perseverance. It is a spiritual quality desperately needed in the church of God.
 1. To many Christians quit when the faced by difficult trials. Beloved, we cannot repay God's good with evil!

2. Verse 4: Longing for the Brethren: As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.
- a. Christian love dictates that, as the saints of God, there would be a pure and holy love for one another. We have studied this before.
 - i. This love becomes increasingly intense for the particular group of saints that God has graciously allowed to be part of our lives. As we live together, suffer together, and fight the spiritual war together, we increasingly value our spiritual family more and more. We come to understand that we are marching hand-in-hand towards the great celestial city whose builder and architect is God. I pray that this is so with you as well!
 - ii. Our lives become intertwined with these dear brothers and sisters. However, because of

circumstances, sometimes we are separated from the people we love. This separation should produce an intense longing for these dear brothers and sisters as it did with Paul. This is how verse 4 begins. Paul states, “**I long to see you.**” Paul has a deep yearning for his son in the faith.

1. Remember, it was a time of religious persecution; in fact, Paul was about to be executed for the faith. Paul longs to see Timothy and strengthened the young Pastor for the work that lay ahead.

b. What moved Paul’s heart even more was that fact that **he remembered Timothy’s tears.**

- i. Many tears were shed when last they separated from each other. Perhaps, because they both understood that this could be one of the last times that they would see each other alive on this side of eternity. We know that the Holy Spirit was witnessing that Paul’s departure was at hand. We see a similar scene like the one mentioned here when Paul met with the Ephesian elders for the last time.

1. **Acts 20:36-38** And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. (37) And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, (38) being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

2. We see the same scene unfold at Caesarea. We read in **Acts 21:10-14** While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. (11) And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" (12) When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. (13) Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (14) And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."

- a. The tears of Timothy were indicative of true love for Paul. Beloved, when we love one another, we are grieved at being separated from the holy brethren.
- b. It is a ripping away of an integral portion of our wellbeing. The church in the western world needs to love in this manner.
- c. Because of this mutual love, Paul understood that seeing Timothy again **would fill him with joy**. Joy unsurpassed at being with his loved son in the faith.
 - i. Again, please note the intensity of affection of heart. When we love one another, it is visible in

our weeping for one another and our joy in fellowship.

- ii. A small microcosm of this joy should grip our very souls each Lord's Day. It is an opportunity to be together with the beloved of God.

3. Verse 5: Loves Encouragement: 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.

a. **I am reminded of your sincere faith:** With this phrase, the Apostle asserts that:

- i. Timothy was a genuine believer. Timothy's faith was not mixed with unbelief. His faith had been openly displayed in a variety of ways and especially in his obedience to our Lord's teaching (the second great command). This love is demonstrated by Timothy for Paul in his tears:

1. We come again to this great understanding.

In order for our Christianity to be authentic is must carry with it love for the saints of God. **John 13:34-35** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (35) By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

b. Timothy had a godly heritage evidence by Paul's assurance that his was ...**a faith that dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.**

i. We know that Timothy's grandmother and mother apparently came to faith prior to Timothy and provided an environment crucial for his development and salvation.

1. **Side note:** Parents and Grandparents, we have a crucial role to play in the evangelization of our kids and grandkids.

4. Verse 6: Fan the Flames of Love: 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,

a. **For this reason:** for the reason mentioned in our preceding verse. Timothy had genuinely come to faith in Christ. He had received from Christ the incredible gift of life through Christ's gospel. Having received such an awesome gift, Timothy now is indebted to God. Our gratitude to God constrains us to love God with a passionate and holy love due to His holy name.

i. **1 John 4:19** We love because he first loved us.

b. **I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God:**

i. To **fan into flame** gives us a picture of a fire that is dying out. The keeper of the fire comes and stokes the fire, fanning it and feeding it material so that he can revive the fire into a roaring consuming flame. Timothy's fire; his commitment needed to be stoked!

1. Timothy is in a difficult situation with the temptation to quit.

a. However, he must stay the course.

2. Like Timothy, we are also called to keep a watchful eye on the fire of our devotion. To

nurture our love for God and feed it so that it may never weakened but always burn hot with intensity.

a. The question for consideration is this: What are you doing to fan the flame of your love for God? How is your fire burning today?

i. May the Holy Spirit search our hearts and reveal to us the intensity of our love for God. It may be that for some of us, our fires have weakened and they are in need of being stoked!

1. Loved ones, it is easy, if left unattended, for our fire to weaken.

ii. Remember the Ephesian church in revelation: **Revelation 2:1-5** “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. (2) “‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. (3) I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up

for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. (4) But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. (5) Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

- ii. Faithful service to God is seen in faithfully ministering **the gifting of God** that has been received.
 1. Our sole purpose as Christians is to obey and serve the Lord through the gifts with which He has uniquely blessed us. As we faithfully employ God's gifts, the body of Christ is built up to be effective in evangelism.
 - a. For Timothy, that meant fanning into flame the gifts of teaching, preaching and shepherding. He was called to the pastorate. We are called to use God's gifting in order to advance His Kingdom. Our goal is to bring glory to God, strengthened the church, and seek the lost.
 2. Here, I believe it is important to remind each of you that we have all been gifted by God.
 - a. **1 Corinthians 12:4-7** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same

Spirit; (5) and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; (6) and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. (7) To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

b. Church of God, use the gifts that God has given you to love God, love the brethren, and evangelize the lost.

iii. Beloved, let us remind ourselves of our Lord's teaching in regards to intentionally disregarding the usage of His gifts:

1. **Matthew 25:24-27** He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, (25) so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' (26) But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? (27) Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.

2. This portion of scripture ends with a somber warning:

- a. **Matthew 25:30** And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
 - i. What does this mean to you and I today?
 - ii. What warning can we take from such a passage?
- iv. We conclude that we are to use the **gifting of God**. When this is done, we bring great glory to God.
 - 1. **Romans 12:6(A)** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:
 - 2. **1 Peter 4:10** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:
 - 3. Paul, in this epistle, will say the very same thing to Timothy.
 - a. **2 Timothy 4:5** As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.
 - 4. As the saints of God, we are exhorted and commanded to use our gifts.
- c. Timothy had received his gifts **through the laying on of my (Paul’s) hands**: The gifts that Timothy had received were pastoral hence the ordination by the elders. He had been ordained by the eldership to preach the Gospel.

- i. **Side Note:** No man can ordain himself, as some are prone to do. There must be a calling of God and a recognition by the eldership that God has called a man. The laying of hands does this.
 1. Paul's own calling witnesses this truth. In **Acts 13:1-3** Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. (2) While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (3) Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.
 2. Timothy had been called to highest calling that any man could have. He was to a preacher of our Lord's Gospel.
 - a. There is no higher and nobler calling than to be entrusted with the care of God's people.
 - i. This is why Timothy must stay.
 - ii. To turn his back on ministry was to turn his back on God.

5. Application:

- a. Brother and Sisters let us fan the flame of love for God.
 - i. In times of difficulty, we must press forward.
We cannot be found guilty of spiritual dereliction

of duty. We cannot abandon our post as so many have done and are doing.

- ii. Let us ask God to examine our hearts for weakened devotion. If this is the case of our heart, let us cast ourselves on the mercy of God. Let us remember, repent and redo those things that promote the intensity of divine fire.
- b. Let us demonstrate this love by the use of the gifts that he has blessed us with.
 - i. That it would be the aim of our hearts to bring glory to God, edify His church, and seek the lost.
- c. Brothers and sisters, fulfill your ministry.
- d. May of all this be done with a genuine, spirit-filled love for one another.

6. Benediction:

- a. **1 Corinthians 9:16-17** For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! (17) For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship.

Public Reading of Scripture 1 Corinthians 12:1-11