

**Message #3****II Timothy 1:3-7**

Back in the mid 1900's there was a Scottish minister and professor of Divinity at the University of Glasgow whose name was William Barclay. William Barclay died in 1978. He had some strange, quirky, theological views that made him somewhat heretical. But he did have a desire to try to make the Bible understandable to the average reader. I actually enjoy reading his books, but I would not recommend them for accurate exegetical scholarship.

William Barclay once wrote this: "One of the highest human duties is the duty of encouragement. It is easy to laugh at men's ideals; it is easy to pour cold water on their enthusiasm; it is easy to discourage others. The world is full of discouragers. We have a Christian duty to encourage one another. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet. Blessed is the man who speaks such a word."

Someone once said if 3 billion people go to bed hungry every night, four billion people go to bed hungering for a simple word of encouragement.

Timothy was losing his fire for ministry. He had at least six good reasons why he was losing his fire:

- 1) His teachings were opposed - I Tim. 1:3-4; 4:6-7.
- 2) He was a young minister - I Tim. 4:12; II Tim. 2:22.
- 3) He had physical problems - I Tim. 5:23
- 4) He had a timid personality - I Cor. 16:10-11.
- 5) His co-ministers were being persecuted - II Tim. 1:11-12.
- 6) His father in the faith, Paul, was about to die - II Tim. 4:6.

There is no question that those kinds of pressures could cause any minister to back away and lose some of the fire for the ministry. But Paul did not want that to happen to Timothy. He needed to motivate him and encourage him to keep going. So as he begins this letter what Paul does is this:

**PAUL GIVES THANKS TO GOD FOR THE PAST FAITHFULNESS OF TIMOTHY AND HIS FAMILY IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE HIM AND MOTIVATE HIM TO A PRESENT AND FUTURE FAITHFULNESS.**

Sometimes it is good to sit down and reflect and remember and think about where we have been and what God has done. It is good for us to think about those who loved God's Word and have influenced us for God. It is good for us to remember their steadfast faith and commitment. Those memories can help us keep the flame for God and His Word burning hot.

II Timothy is a very personal letter. There were people involved and there were memories involved and four times in these verses, he mentions the subject of remembering:

- 1) Remember (**1:3**); 2) Recall (**1:4**); 3) Mindful (**1:5**); 4) Remind (**1:6**).

There are three remembrances that Paul had, which he brings out in these verses:

**REMEMBRANCE #1** – Paul remembered his own life and ministry. **1:3a-c**

Paul is in a Roman dungeon sentenced to die. So when we look at what he writes here, we get to look at his own memories, his own thoughts and his own heart. There are three main thoughts that were going through his mind:

**Thought #1** - Paul was thankful that he had the privilege of serving God. **1:3a**

This is amazing when you think through his circumstances. Paul is actually thanking God. That word “thank” means he found great pleasure and gratitude in the context of thinking about God and the fact that he had the privilege in his life of knowing God and “serving” God.

That is an interesting word for “serve.” It is a word that speaks of hired ministerial service (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 265). **It seems to me that what Paul is thanking God for is that in his life he had the privilege of serving God and being supported as a minister.** He literally made his living preaching and teaching the Word of God.

As he sat in that dungeon, he was thankful that he had the privilege of serving God, ministering for God and worshipping God. He had spent years of his life being supported by God’s people so he could teach them and minister to them and he was reflecting on that point. When you are a minister about to be executed for your faith, this kind of memory would certainly be a good memory to have.

When we are going through low moments in life, it is very uplifting to think about how fortunate we are that God has saved us and one day will let us come to live with Him. When we are about to die, if we have our mental faculties about us, one of the most comforting thoughts we will have will be thinking about what we did for the Lord. We won’t find much comfort in thinking about anything else.

**Thought #2** - Paul was thankful that he had a clear conscience. **1:3b**

When you are nearing the end of your life, having a clear conscience is something that is priceless. Knowing you have confessed any sin and are not living life in a dirty or corrupt way is a wonderful thought to have. That word “clear” is one that means to have a conscience that is pure and clean ceremonially, ethically, positionally and practically (*Ibid*, p. 223).

There was absolutely nothing in Paul’s life that plagued his conscience. He was not a perfect man, but he was clear and clean in his relationship with God. He was clear and clean in his teaching and in his own personal life. There were no dirty closets in his life. Keep in mind at one point in his life he said he had been a blasphemer and persecutor and violent aggressor against Christians (I Tim. 1:13). He struggled with, as he said, “every kind” of covetousness (Rom. 7:8). He did not see himself as a sinless saint, but what he could honestly say is that he had a clear and clean conscience. There were no dirty, filthy, pocket areas of sin in his life. Having this kind of conscience is important when you know you are going to die.

The best way to leave this world is with a conscience that is clean and pure before God. If your conscience is clean before God, it is worth remembering when you are facing death. If you can honestly say I am not under conviction about anything that I haven't dealt with, death loses some of its intimidation. If there is no hidden dirt or filth in one's life, then no matter what comes your way, you too may say I thank God my conscience is clean.

May I say a word to all of us? If your conscience prompts you to face something or resolve something, do it before you die. In II Tim. 4:11, it appears to me that one final thing Paul wanted to resolve was that matter with Mark. Don't be too proud to make things right to keep your conscience clean.

**Thought #3** - He was thankful for his forefathers. **1:3c**

Paul did not come from a nice Christian home like Timothy (**1:5**). Paul's Christianity was linked to Jewish forefathers, who foresaw the coming of the Messiah and Savior, Jesus Christ.

There can be no doubt from the "Christ Jesus" noun order in **verses 1-2** that he was thinking about his Jewish heritage and the program of God that was aimed at the Jews. He was thankful for His Jewish forefathers. He was thankful that the program of God included him.

He saw his life and his ministry connected to a legacy of others. Even though Paul had been the champion of grace, he still saw the connection to the Jewish forefathers. It is certainly possible that he was reflecting on some of those names in Hebrews 11. There is a list in that chapter of people who accomplished remarkable things by faith. He saw the connection to that.

Here is something for which we may all be thankful. God's sovereign program that runs everything seen and unseen throughout all of time included us. Paul was thinking about that.

It was true that the Romans could conquer Paul's body, but they could not ever conquer his mind and his God. His forefathers and his conscience brought him great joy.

**REMEMBRANCE #2** – Paul remembered Timothy. **1:3d-5**

Think of what this must have meant to Timothy. The Apostle Paul is facing his own death and he is thinking about Timothy. There were three ways he remembered Timothy:

**Memory Way #1** - Paul remembered Timothy in prayer. **1:3**

Paul was in a dungeon. He had no Bible. He had no books. He had very little light. What could he do in a context like that? He could pray. Paul could have a ministry of prayer and it is very clear that he was a man of prayer. Day and night he prayed. Paul was in a prayer mode all day and, at times, all night.

The language here suggests that when he would pray, God would bring Timothy to his mind. Whenever he would start to pray, Timothy was laid on his heart. His memories of Timothy continually moved him to pray. One of the most powerful things we can do when we think of someone is to pray for them. When God lays them on our heart and in our mind, we need to pray for them.

Charles Spurgeon said he went to a particular place and preached and the results were amazing. What he learned is that for years an invalid who had been bedridden had been praying that he would come there and preach. Spurgeon said he realized that this woman's prayers was the thing responsible for the amazing revival.

**Memory Way #2** - Paul remembered Timothy's loyalty and tears. **1:4**

Paul "longed" to see Timothy. That word means Paul had a great and deep desire to see Timothy and one reason why was because he was so loyal to Paul. One of the things that he kept thinking about was the fact that Timothy was tender-hearted toward Paul and toward the ministry. Obviously Timothy so loved Paul and his ministry that at times he shed tears over what he was going through. He loved the Word of God and the grace of God and Paul's teaching and his heart was with Paul all the way. Notice the end of **verse 4**, Paul says seeing Timothy again would fill Paul with joy.

Now think about that. Paul was a very tough soldier for God and yet he had a sensitive heart to Timothy and he wanted to see him. **What this shows us is that even the most spiritual man on earth and the most disciplined soldier for Jesus Christ needed a human friend who cared about him and the work of God.**

When all is said and done, the people who will have brought you the greatest joy will have been those who loved God and His Word and cared about you.

**Memory Way #3** - Paul remembered Timothy's faith. **1:5**

There are three faith facts that Paul brings out:

**(Faith Fact #1)** - Timothy had a sincere faith. **1:5a**

The word "sincere" means that Timothy had a faith that was real. Timothy's faith was not an act or play and it was not some pretend game.

Timothy was no play actor when it came to his faith. He was the real thing. He was a true man of faith and Paul knew it.

**(Faith Fact #2) - Timothy had an inherited faith. 1:5b**

This real faith was first in Timothy's grandmother, Lois, and Timothy's mother, Eunice. Lois and Eunice were Jewish ladies who had come to faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:1). These two women had taught Timothy the Scriptures as a child (II Tim. 3:15) and apparently when Paul went to Lystra, God moved first in Lois and Eunice and then Timothy. Timothy's father was a Gentile (Acts 16:1) and there is no hint that he was ever saved.

Now Paul's point was that Timothy needed to remember the faithfulness of the two women who greatly impacted his life for God. Those two women were his grandmother and his mother. They were instrumental in his salvation and, as Timothy would remember these two women, it would motivate him to stay faithful.

You women who have children or grandchildren can make a tremendous difference in their lives. Your love for the Lord and love for the Word of God can make a profound impact on them. H. A. Ironside said, "O young men and young women never undervalue the piety of your dear father and mother. If they know Christ thank God for it. Thank Him that you have Christian parents. Do not imagine you belong to a generation better instructed than they. You may know little more about the sciences today, but I fear few of us know nearly as much as many of our Christian parents knew of the things of God and eternity."

Paul wanted Timothy to think about the great legacy connected to his faith.

**(Faith Fact #3) - Timothy had a trusted faith. 1:5c**

Dr. Warren Wiersbe often said a trusted faith is a tested faith. Timothy's faith had been put to the test and he passed with flying colors. When Paul says, "I am sure," he is dogmatically saying that he trusted Timothy's faith. He had confidence in it. This is not so much referring to saving faith although that is there, but also serving faith. There were some whose faith Paul doubted (I Thess. 3:5), but Timothy was not one of them.

Paul believed in Timothy. He had confidence in him. When you are serving God, things can be hard and people can be cruel. It is a warfare. Sometimes all that is needed to help keep you going is the knowledge that a powerful person of God believes in you.

**REMEMBRANCE #3 – Timothy needs to remember his gift. 1:6-7**

Now Timothy's gift, which we believe to be Pastor/Teacher, was fully recognized by Paul who laid his hands on Timothy. Paul's hands were not the source of the gift, but his hands on Timothy acknowledged God had given him the gift.

The conjunction "for this reason" gives us Paul's reason for taking Timothy down memory lane. Paul wanted Timothy to "kindle afresh" his gift. That word means Paul wanted Timothy to keep his gift burning at a "full flame" level.

The flame was not gone; but it did need to be intensified and rekindled. Anyone who has a fire-place can relate to this. At times we need to stir up the flame in order to get the fire burning at the hottest level.

**Verse 7** gives us the reason for stirring up the gift and the reason is God is the one who gave us the gift and the attitude that He gives for use of the gift is not one of timidity.

Now if we keep in mind that a gift is the work of the Spirit of God, then we see that there are four attitudes that are operative in a gift truly given by God:

**Attitude #1** - God does not give ministers an attitude of cowardice. **1:7a**

The word “timid” is not used in a good sense. It is one that means God does not give ministers a gift along with the spirit of being a coward. One who has a true gift of God can never blame God if one is a coward or timid because God did not give them that attitude with the gift. No matter what gift God gives to the person, He does not want them to be a coward in using it.

**Attitude #2** - God does give ministers an attitude of power. **1:7b**

God gives gifts and expects them to be powerfully used. Doesn't matter what the gift, when God gives someone a gift He expects them to powerfully use it. The word “power” is one that speaks of dynamic, authorized power and capability. Whatever gift God has given you, He expects you to powerfully use it at a high level.

**Attitude #3** - God does give ministers an attitude of love. **1:7c**

There are different types of love in the Greek language: 1) Friendship love; 2) Family love; 3) Erotic love; 4) God's love. The one used here is number 4, God's love. Now God's love is the kind of love that loves God and others and seeks the best for them. People who have been given a gift of God love to use it.

In Timothy's case, his gift of Pastor/Teacher would demand that he preach and teach God's precious Word.

**Attitude #4** - God does give ministers an attitude of self-discipline. **1:7d**

The word “discipline” means that when God gives someone a gift, he gives them the self-discipline needed to exercise the gift. It takes discipline to do a work for God no matter what the gift.

Timothy needed to remember these things. He was living in a world that was coming “unglued.” What he needed to do was to think about all God had done for him and with him. This kind of thinking can cause us all to keep going forward to the end.