

**Subject: A Call to Faithfulness**

**Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:13-18**

The first chapter of 2 Timothy is a call to faithfulness or perseverance. Paul began this letter reminding young Timothy of the genuine faith that was in his grandmother Lois, his mother Eunice, and in him also (1:5). One mark of genuine faith is perseverance. Real faith does not fizzle. The faith that fizzles before the finish had a flaw from the first.

The mark of real faith is faithfulness. Too many people are fickle and not faithful. Paul was concerned about Timothy's lack of boldness and he wanted to encourage him to stay faithful. He must not be ashamed of Paul or the Gospel. He comes back to this theme again in verses 13-18, with two main thoughts: the need to be faithful to the Gospel and the need to be faithful to other believers.

**AN EXHORTATION TO FAITHFULNESS (vs. 13-14)**

- Hold fast the form of sound words

These were the words Paul taught Timothy. They were sound words (healthy, wholesome, from which we get English "hygiene"). These words produce spiritual life and growth. Sound words and sound teaching is a theme of the Pastoral Epistles:

- **1 Timothy 1:10** *For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.*
- **2 Timothy 1:13** *Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*
- **2 Timothy 4:3** *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.*
- **Titus 1:9** *Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*
- **Titus 1:13** *This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.*
- **Titus 2:1** *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.*
- **Titus 2:2** *That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.*
- **Titus 2:8** *Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.*

Paul exhorts (urges) Timothy to hold fast the form (pattern) of sound words. A form was an example or pattern on which children learned to trace their letters. The idea is for Timothy to base his life on the truth of God. Years ago, Kenny Rogers sang a famous song called "The Gambler." The words said, "You've got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, know when to run." Some people think the Christian faith is a gamble, but it's not. It's a sure thing. Christian hope is not a hope so. It's a fact, a certainty. We have this hope as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast.

- Keep the truth that was entrusted to you

Keep means to guard, defend, or protect. **1 Timothy 6:20** *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.* Paul closed out the first letter and began the second letter with a serious call to guard the treasure, the Gospel truth. **2 Corinthians 4:7** *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

Timothy was to keep this treasure by the Holy Spirit living in him. This wasn't something he could do in his own power. The Holy Spirit seals the truth to our heart, just like a vault in a bank. Timothy had something valuable inside him. So do you if you are a Christian. You have the truth of God's Word and you have the Spirit of God. The presence of the Holy Spirit living inside every believer is a fundamental teaching of the New Testament. **John 14:16-17** <sup>16</sup> *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;* <sup>17</sup> *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* **1 Corinthians 6:19** *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?* **Romans 8:9** *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

### **AN EXAMPLE OF FAITHFULNESS (vs. 15-18)**

As Timothy knew, many people turned away from Paul. They were ashamed of Paul because they were ashamed of the Gospel he preached. They didn't want to be associated with him for fear they would be arrested and suffer too. Their main concern was their own security and comfort. Two men are mentioned by name, Phygellus and Hermogenes. These men were apparently known by Timothy and most likely were well known in the church. Others had deserted Paul and he was discouraged. See 2 Tim. 4:9-11, 16. To be rejected by the world is hard enough, but to be rejected and deserted by fellow workers really hurts. We are our brother's keeper.

In contrast to all the defectors, a man named Onesiphorus remained faithful to Paul, and Paul never forgot him.

- **He was consistent** – “he often refreshed me”
- **He was courageous** – “was not ashamed of my chain”
- **He was concerned** – “he sought me out very diligently and found me”
- **He was compassionate** – “in how many things he ministered unto me”

Paul prayed for the Lord to show him mercy because he had been so merciful to Paul. It could be that Paul had the Lord's statement in mind as he wrote, **Matthew 5:7** *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*