

## 2 Timothy 1:1-14 - Encouragement Reboot

October 2019

### 2 Timothy 1:1-14 ESV

#### Greeting

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

<sup>2</sup> To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

<sup>3</sup> I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. <sup>4</sup> As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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, <sup>7</sup> for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, <sup>10</sup> and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, <sup>11</sup> for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, <sup>12</sup> which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. <sup>13</sup> Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup> By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

### Introduction

Life has seasons much the same as the four seasons of the year.

*Q Do you know what season you might be in?*

Winter is not an unusual experience.

The sun does not always shine.

We can get tired and forgetful of God in our life to the point where we find it difficult to fulfill our calling and remain faithful.

That calls for 'encouragement' - having the heart strengthened as the French loan-word says.

In the beginning of Paul's second letter to Timothy we have a wonderful example of encouragement at work.

Paul was in prison and this would end with his beheading. He was in the last leg of his race.

Timothy was a younger man leading a church in the young Jesus movement of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

From his prison cell Paul writes to Timothy to encourage him. This is a very personal letter and we have it today because privacy did not seem such a big concern in the first century! Paul cites Timothy's personal history and writes from his heart.

The letter suggests Timothy needed encouragement. Perhaps Paul had heard of Timothy running out of steam and showing signs of fading in his calling?

I would like to read Paul's letter here with two points of interest:

1. How does Paul bring encouragement?
  - a. If we hear how Paul does this we may be able to learn and do likewise.
  - b. Encouragement is what the Holy Spirit does as *Parakletos* – one who accompanies on the journey- and it is listed as one of the spiritual gifts poured out on the church – which includes us here.<sup>1</sup> I believe that some of us are especially gifted to do this.

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<sup>1</sup> See Romans 12.8 and 1 Thessalonians 5.11

2. What is Timothy to hear and implement?  
 a. This may be encouragement for us?

*Pray for ears to receive God's inspiration and hear God's guidance on encouragement.*

### **Text**

The letter starts in the usual format of the time: "From me to you in grace and peace."

**1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, **2** To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul is being clear about who he is and who Timothy is to him.

After this greeting Paul begins his message of encouragement by celebrating the relationship.

### **Encouragement Step 1**

2 Timothy 1:3-7 ESV

<sup>3</sup> I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. <sup>4</sup> As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.

<sup>3</sup>I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. <sup>4</sup>As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.

Basic message: Timothy I value knowing you. You are a precious part of my life and I long to see you.

I hope everyone gets to hear that message from someone.

- "You matter to me." or "to us".
- You feature in my prayer.
- I long to spend time with you.

Friends where that is true it should be spoken out, or expressed in some way, perhaps in a card.

Even then I wonder how well we do in hearing when is communicated?

Encouragement can be so rare that its not recognized when it comes.

So encouragement tip #1: if you value someone, tell them, pray for them, make time for them.

### **Encouragement Step 2**

Paul now tells Timothy that he knows him, he knows his journey of faith and he knows his family and their faith.

2 Timothy 1:5 ESV

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

Being known in this way is a powerful encouragement.

We cannot know everyone to this level but if we count someone as a friend we should have heard their story and met their family.

In some cell groups people take time to share their stories of life and faith. This is powerful for all concerned. One consequence is that it opens up the possibility to encourage someone with reference to their life's journey and their family heritage. That is what Paul goes on to do for Timothy.

But first, there is something to note in what Paul says about Timothy, or rather what he does not say.

**Q:** What do you notice about Timothy's family as Paul refers to it?

**A:** There is no mention of a father.

Paul may well have been filling in here with the encouragement needed from an older man.

So encouragement tip #2: if you know a friend's story and heritage, take opportunity to celebrate it with them.

### **Encouragement Step 3**

So having said that he valued Timothy and that he knew him, his heritage and the path of his faith journey, Paul looks at some spiritual issues.

Whatever is happening, the core issue is bound to be spiritual. It may involve the Human, the Holy or the Evil at the spiritual level of our being.

Paul is writing to Timothy as an Apostle by the grace and calling of God to Timothy who is a leader in the church and minister of the Gospel - by the grace and calling of God.

Whatever we do in ministry is only authentic Godly ministry if it is by the calling and grace of God.

Our Gospel today had a brutal reminder of that in the way Jesus reminded people that servants don't get a big reward for doing what they are meant to do.<sup>2</sup> If people want a big reward in having their work recognized then they are not thinking like servants but people who work for a reward and expect benefits for doing what they are called to do.

Here is the point: Mature servants of God get this. We serve by the grace and calling of God and that is enough. Reward is one thing but encouragement is another and it is up to the servants to encourage each other. That is what I see Paul modeling here.

So as we serve in the house of God by the grace and calling of God that grace and calling of God upon us needs to be clear for us. When they are not clear we get confused and discouraged. Paul understands this so what he now does is seek to reconnect Timothy with the grace and calling of God that came to him for what he is doing now. In doing this Paul refers to his own role in Timothy's development.

2 Timothy 1:3-7 ESV

<sup>6</sup> 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, <sup>7</sup> for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

<sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the grace-gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, <sup>7</sup> for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

At some point Timothy was prayed for to receive the grace necessary for his ministry.

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 17.11-19

In today's language this might be described as an 'ordination' or a 'presbytery session'. It involved the laying on of hands to impart to Timothy the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

From experience in my life it is quite possible that this involved prophetic speaking about God's call on Timothy's life.

We don't know what happened for Timothy here but I know this can be a powerful, electrifying experience. This is like when Jesus was baptized by John and God was heard to speak as the Holy Spirit fell on him.

Whatever happened at that moment years earlier, Timothy was now in need of encouragement. He was less than clear about his calling and the grace of God in his gifting.

Paul tells Timothy to "fan into flame the grace-gift of God, which is in you through the laying-on of my hands."

Lighting a fire is not something everyone knows about these days! Managing a bbq is not always understood! Paul lived in a world where light and heat came from fire. Lighting fires and keeping them hot was what everyone needed to know about so unlike today he could assume Timothy would get this.

When a fire fades you can revive it. One way is to blow air onto glowing embers and coals so that their reignite. To avoid burning your lips it's good to use something as a fan and this works well. On large industrial scale this is the principle of a blast furnace.

Paul is saying: "Timothy, the grace of God is still with you. The gifting of God does not fall away. You need to fan that into flame. What came when I prayed for you is still alive but needs a fresh air supply.

Dust off your ministry and pray into those things God has given you that lie in your heart like glowing embers when they could be dancing flames."

- Sometimes people let their Bible gather dust on their shelves and taking it down to read does it - old passages marked and noted speak afresh.
- Sometimes people go back to music that was once a joy and remember what that stirred in their hearts.
- Sometimes people re-read a classic spiritual work such as from C.S. Lewis or a new writer such as N.T. Wright to awaken the joy of being known and called by God.

These are ways of fanning into flame what is glowing dimly.  
The grace of God needs rebooting.

For me personally remembering has been really important. I have survived dark times and revived the flame by carefully remembering who I heard God's call and what he empowered me with.

I see this modeled in Psalm 22 and other Lamenting Psalms where the suffering person remembers the grace of God that they and their ancestors enjoyed. This revives their faith and leads them to consider praising God anew. The point is remembering God's call and grace fans the gifts back to flame.

Then Paul touches a place that might have been the heart of Timothy's difficulty.

<sup>7</sup> for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Anyone one in ministry, offers service because we know we are called. This is not just ordained people like pastors.

- Who knows they were called to motherhood?
- Who knows they serve in some way because God put it on their hearts?

There is something that speaks to the calling

- There is a place inside us where we are orientated and governed in how we live and what we do.
- There is a dimension of our being that is the determining quality of life, or our animating principle:

We are spiritual beings so when God calls and gifts us he also gives us his Spirit.

Think about it, You can only do God's work by God's grace in God's Spirit.

Trying to serve God in our own spirit or means is impossible and typically leads to disasters.



So here it is: “God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

If you fan the embers of God's grace you will encourage the Spirit of God which can be recognized by three characteristics, three features or fingerprints:

1. Power. To do God's work we need God's power and he gives it when we need it.
2. Love. No one have the love sufficient for what comes at us when we step out in faith. God puts a love in our hearts by his spirit that is superhuman.
3. Self-control or a 'Sound-mind' or 'Clear-head'. One is then able to make clear decisions without panic or anxiety because the mind works calmly.

This what Jesus received at his baptism when the Holy Spirit came upon him.

With Power, Love and a Sound mind you are free and able to serve as called.

Paul is encouraging Timothy to trust that as Jesus said to his disciples, God does not give bad things to his children.

If you are experiencing fear, it is not because of the Holy Spirit.



Fear is generated by the human spirit lacking power, love or clarity, or it is something the evil spirit brings to us.

So Timothy, don't be afraid, fan into flame the grace of God and receive anew his Spirit of Power, Love and Calm, sound mind.

If Paul were with him I am sure he would pray with Timothy.

The best he could do is send this letter and pray from his prison cell.

**Conclusion:**

Encouragement is necessary.

God gives good things but they sometimes go cold within us. They need to be picked up again and revived.

Fear may seep in whereas God's spiritual gift is Power, Love and a sound mind.

Paul gives us a model for how to encourage others  
and

He points to what we need to do when we feel discouraged and out of the God's blessing.