Own Your Faith — Delivery Transcript

2 Timothy 1:1–7 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, April 3, 2016 · *Entrusted*

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Morning. How's everybody doing? Staying alive, feeling good? All right. This morning we're starting a new series in the book of 2 Timothy. I wish you all could have been at the early service. We unexpectedly had a last minute baptism. It's kind of my fault. I should have followed up with someone this past week and I didn't, but Sunday comes around, and a little girl had made a decision in the 8:25 service. I say little, about 13 years old, her name's Sydney. And she had walked the aisle. Easter Sunday gave her life to Jesus Christ and wanted to get baptized and I failed to follow up with her.

Well, I see her on Sunday. She goes, I brought my clothes, I'm ready to get baptized. I said, well, okay, let's do it. So we did her baptism this morning and it was juxtaposed. It was Sydney's baptism, who's about 13 years old, and then an older lady, I won't give you her age, she's just older than thirteen, okay, but we'll just say it was a discrepancy between Sydney's young age and her older age and it was such a reminder to me of one of the unique strengths that Broadview Baptist Church has, that not every church has, and it's a unique strength that positions us really as a church to reach people that otherwise probably wouldn't be reached in the city of Abilene and other places around the world.

And that's that Broadview has continued to be a multigenerational church and people throw the term around, you know, multigenerational, what does that actually mean? I think what we understand it to mean is that as a church and as a leadership team and as a staff, we have decided to create environments in our church that are not just conducive to reaching unchurched young people or, you know, millennials or people who like contemporary worship, stuff like that, but to intentionally try to create environments, both on Sunday morning and throughout the week, that attempt to reach unchurched older people.

And so instead of just, you know, instead of like, for example, changing our 8:25 service and making it feel and look just like the 9:40 and the 11 o'clock, We decided there are lots of

unchurched older people in the city of Abilene who need to be reached with the gospel, and we want to be a church that tries to reach them. And in God's grace we've been able to do that. The people who we reach, the people who we baptize, the people who end up joining our church are not just young people, not just middle-aged people, but we continue to reach many senior adults.

And this morning's baptism was just a picture of that. And it happened under Pastor David's leadership and by God's grace when I took the reins in 2013, our older congregation didn't just flee, you know, take off running for the hills. Thank you for that. They stuck around. You've been patient and gracious with a young leader, a young pastor, and a young staff. And I'm hopeful that we can continue in that way as a church because I think it's a unique gift and I think that God will use it in a powerful way in the future if we'll let him use it in that way.

And so it was in light of that conviction, that core value that we have as a church, that I thought it was wise for us to go through a series in 2 Timothy. 2 Timothy is a book written by the apostle Paul to a young pastor named Timothy. Just to help you understand, you might consider the apostle Paul as a baby boomer, okay, someone in his late sixties, early seventies. And Timothy is what you would call a millennial, okay, someone between 18 and 30 years old. And Paul tells Timothy how to endure, how to finish strong, how to live the Christian life in an increasingly godless society, how to minister well, how to take care of the church and stuff like that.

And so it's a gift. It's a book that's a gift to a young pastor like me. And if it's a gift to me and helps our young staff pastor well, then it will obviously be a gift to you. But it's also a gift to an older generation, a previous generation, in that it shows the apostle Paul finishing well, how to finish the race, how for some of us our greatest investment into the kingdom of God isn't something that we did in our past. It isn't something we did when we were twenty or thirty or forty.

It's something we're going to do tomorrow. It's something we're going to do next year. Some of us need to be reminded that our best days are ahead of us, that there is no real retirement age in the kingdom of God. And I just felt led by the Lord to study this book for those reasons that Broadview is a multigenerational church and there is a word from the Lord that we need to hear both the Timothys in our midst, the younger people, and the Pauls, the older people. And as I got to studying this book, you know, a lot of times what I'll do if I'm going to preach through a book or do a series, I'll get on the internet.

Now be careful here, I'm not stealing sermons, but I'll go look at what other pastors have done with the series. How do they break it up? What direction do they go? And as I got to looking at some of the people that I like to listen to, the good preachers out there, none of them had series on 2 Timothy. And I got to thinking, well, I've already created the artwork,

I've already submitted the timeline. Did I make a mistake here? Why doesn't anyone preach on 2 Timothy? And of course it was too late, so, you know, now you're just stuck with this.

But I really believe that some of the reason that they didn't preach it is because it wasn't a word that was unique to their congregation, whereas it is a word that's unique to ours. I think this is going to be a pivotal series in our church. I think there's something unique that the Lord has to say to us. And I'm hopeful that for you younger folks in our church, especially those of you who are just getting started in the Christian life, this will be a great encouragement to you. And for moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas, I'm hopeful that it'll re-engage you, reignite in you a passion for the gospel and for the kingdom so that your best days are ahead.

And so I've entitled the series Entrusted. It's kind of an old school term, but the book of 2 Timothy is displaying how the gospel gets entrusted from one generation to the next generation successfully. And if you study sociology, you know you read about millennials, everyone agrees that there is this epidemic amongst young people, ages 13—I'm sorry, ages 18 to 29 or 30, in which they are leaving the church in droves. They graduate, they leave high school, they leave mom and dad's house, they check out a church, and what makes it unique about this generation is that they don't come back.

Most 18 to 25 year olds leave the church. It's just common. They did it in the 70s. They went and smoked pot and then they had kids and then they came back to church. Okay. With some cool stories. But this generation—I don't know if they're smoking pot, but they're leaving the church and they're not coming back because they don't see that the church has anything to say to them. They have the big questions of life, of course. How do we get here? What went wrong? How do we fix it? When's it going to get fixed?

But they see the church, Christians in general, as having nothing to say to them about those big questions. And so they're staying out. And how did that happen? And then how do we keep that from happening to kids like Blaze, kids running around in our preschool wing right now, kids in our children's environments, first through fifth grade. How do we keep them from checking out of church and never returning? So I think 2 Timothy has some things to say about that, about how to stop raising hypocrites. I think nobody likes a hypocrite, right?

You yourself don't want to be a hypocrite. You want to say what you believe. You want to live out of your convictions, not in spite of your convictions. Most of us if we're Christians we want to say that we're Christians and believe it with all of our heart. We don't want to just say it and kind of inside wonder, I don't want to check out of church and all that. I just don't know if I believe all that. You certainly don't want that for your kids. And so how do you pass on real faith, genuine faith?

How do you keep yourself as a generation of people from raising a bunch of hypocrites? And the text that we're going to look at this morning in 2 Timothy, Paul tells Timothy, I am convinced Timothy, you've got a sincere faith, a genuine faith. And the word literally means without hypocrisy. It's a Greek word that I don't want to pronounce because I'll sound dumber than—well, I'll sound as dumb as I am, so I'm not going to say what it is, but it literally means without hypocrisy. And so how did that happen?

How did Paul entrust the faith to a young boy? He didn't even have a dad. His dad wasn't in the home. It was a single mom, single-parent family, single grandma, single mom. And yet this guy, Timothy, embraced a faith that was real to him. Maybe he got it passed down from mom and grandma, but there was a point in time in his life in which he owned it for himself. And it became real to him, and he never left after that. And how do we pass that kind of faith along?

So if you have a Bible, turn to 2 Timothy. We're going to be in the first seven verses this morning. 2 Timothy chapter 1. Just to give you a little context and to set the stage, the apostle Paul is writing this letter from a prison in Rome. You could call it a prison, it was more like a dungeon, a big hole in the ground. He was chained to the ground in this big hole. There was one little window at the very top for letting food down. You know, the Roman soldiers would drop down lotion and say, it puts the lotion on the skin.

No, I'm just kidding. It's a Joe Dirt reference for you young people in there, but they would drop down food, not lotion. Sorry about that. You got to watch those ad-libs. They would drop down food. It was a miserable existence. Okay, it wasn't like the apostle Paul was having a happy retirement. He had labored for the gospel. This was his third missionary journey. He had planted churches all over the known world. And here he was at the end of his days. Nero was in charge, Nero hated Christians, Nero knew Paul was in prison, Nero had given the execution orders, and so Paul was just waiting to die.

And it's because he knows he's about to die, he's writing some last letters, some words of exhortation to people he's invested in, people whom he has discipled, and Timothy's one of those folks. Timothy right now, he's in Ephesus. He's a young pastor kind of like me probably in his late twenties, early thirties. He was a pastor at Ephesus. Ephesus was a big city. It was probably a pretty big church, a very influential church. And Timothy was a young guy, didn't know what he was doing. He was introverted. He was constitutionally weak, and by that I don't mean politically.

I just mean his physical constitution was not very strong. He had a weak stomach. He was afraid of what people thought about him. He was pretty timid, insecure, and like a lot of us, that affected his leadership, and yet God had put him in this very prestigious leadership position. And Paul is writing to Timothy to tell him, here's how you finish strong, here's how you pastor well. Let me give you a little bit of encouragement and boldness. And Paul is

basically showing us how to finish the faith with valor. So 2 Timothy chapter 1, let's start in verse 1.

We'll just read along and kind of comment along the way. It opens with the words Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus. So Paul's just saying I'm the one writing here. I'm an apostle of Christ Jesus. The word apostle just means a sent one. So I didn't get myself into this. This isn't just what I decided to do with my life. God called me into this according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus. And so I'm in this for the gospel. And he was probably thinking about the promise of eternal life quite a bit because he knew he was about to die.

The reason he calls himself an apostle to Timothy isn't because he's showing off to Timothy. He just knows that Timothy's going to read this letter to the church. And so this was a letter not just to Timothy, but for Timothy to read to the rest of the church for them to hear what the apostle, the apostle Paul, wanted to say to the whole church, not just Timothy. Which also, by the way, is why Paul will say oftentimes grace, mercy, and peace. You see that in verse 2. Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason that Paul would say things like grace and mercy and peace is because he really believed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as he was penning these letters of the New Testament that God was going to use these New Testament letters to give grace to the Christians in the church. And so Paul knew he was writing scripture. He knew God was going to use this in the life of the church and in Timothy's life. So he writes it verse 2 to Timothy. My beloved child. Okay, he wasn't biologically his dad, but spiritually he had led Timothy to the Lord on Paul's first missionary journey to Lystra.

We looked at that a couple of weeks ago. Paul led grandma to the Lord, mom to the Lord, and Timothy to the Lord when he was there in Lystra. The second time when Paul came back, Timothy joined the apostle Paul. Timothy went all around the world with the apostle Paul. The apostle Paul taught him everything about church planting and being a disciple of Jesus and considered Timothy a true spiritual son in the faith. And he says to Timothy, Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

It continues in verse 3. 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. As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded. That's the third time he's used the word remind. I'm reminded of your sincere faith, in other words, that unhypocritical faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and now I am sure—I'm convinced of this— it dwells in you as well.

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, for God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control. So I want us to think of the term remember. The word remember is in the text four

different times, so it's the most important word in the text. And how is it that we pass on the faith to the next generation, a sincere faith? How do we stop raising hypocrites? And I think the way to do that is to remember certain truths, not that they're in the back webs of our minds, but these are front and foremost that we are thinking about these things on a regular basis.

And so the things that I'm about to mention, if you don't think about them on a regular basis, I'm hopeful that after this morning they come to the forefront that you begin to become passionate about these things and the things I want to mention: remember who needs the faith from you. You have a faith. You're passing it along. Remember who needs the faith from you. Who needs to be reminded of your faith in them. You need to believe, you need to have faith in someone else. Who is that? Do you communicate it?

And then lastly, what Christian, what biblical saving faith does for you, what it does inside of you. So we'll start with the first one: who needs the faith from you? You saw in verse 5 he said that you've got this sincere faith, Timothy. It's a non-hypocritical faith. You say what you mean, you mean what you say. You live out of your convictions, not in spite of your convictions. And the reason that you have that is because it was first in your grandma, then it was in your mom, and now it's in you.

And so you get this idea that not only did the faith get passed down from the apostle Paul to Timothy, but in Timothy's own family legacy that it was passed down from grandma to mom to Timothy. And the truth is, whether you like it or not, whether you want to admit this or not, your faith is getting passed down to the next generation. And you may be here today and you say, well, I don't have any faith. I don't believe in God. I don't believe in Christianity and you're deceiving yourself if you think that.

I'm not saying you're a Christian and you don't know it. I'm saying you have a faith and you don't know it. All of us have faith in something. There's the big questions of life, how did we get here? What went wrong, how do we fix it? When will it happen? I call those worldview questions. All of us have some kind of religion because all of us have some kind of answer to those questions. How do we get here? What went wrong? How do we fix it? And when will it happen?

If you're a Christian, you believe we got here because God created us. We blew it, that's what went wrong. We sinned and made a mess of the world. Christ came to redeem us from the curse of sin and the curse of the law, so that's how we fix it. And when will it happen? It's happened in part through the resurrection of Jesus and will happen in totality when he comes again. Okay, that's a Christian worldview, that's a Christian faith, but you have a faith, and you're communicating to your kids what you believe about how we got here, what's wrong with the world, how we fix it, and when it's going to happen or what role you play in it.

And your faith, however misinformed it may be, however strong or weak it may be, that faith is getting passed down to your kids, to your grandkids, to people you care about, people who God has put into your life. And the question that will kill hypocrisy in your life, and the question that will keep hypocrisy from the life of the next generation, is when you answer for yourself whether or not the faith that I'm passing down is a faith that I want passed down. Is the faith that I own worth owning?

Is it worth giving to someone else? And any parent who's asked themselves that question usually comes to the conclusion, whatever I believe about reality isn't sufficient to answer all these questions, and so many times that's why they come back to church. Many of the millennials that I talked about are checking out of church and not coming back. For the most part that wasn't a problem in the past, because when people would have kids and they would look at their kids and wonder, how am I going to teach this kid to cope with the problems of the world?

They realize how insufficient they are and so they end up back in church to get answers to their question. Well the truth is you need to answer for yourself whether or not the faith that you possess is something worth giving to the next generation. Is it something worth possessing or is it full of hypocrisy? If you wonder how to do that, I was, you know, I was blessed. I had parents who did this well for me and they modeled it well and I learned a lot from them. I've seen other parents do this well.

There's parents in this church who do this so good that I take them out to dinner or for Blizzards, and I say, enjoy your Blizzard. How do you parent? I don't know what I'm doing. Teach me. And they share with me some tips and some tricks. One of the best ways to pass your faith down to the next generation, I believe, a true, a genuine faith, a non-hypocritical faith, is to just bring up the Christian faith in everyday conversation. For a lot of us, we only talk about Christianity on Sunday morning and really you don't talk about it.

You just listen to somebody else talk about it. Whereas if you really want to show the faith as relevant and meaningful to everyday life, then you bring it up in everyday life. How does Christianity relate to the things that your kids are interested in? That's assuming that you're interested in the things that your kids are interested in, but showing them how God's will and God's world and God's wisdom relates to the various different things that they're facing is a very powerful way to convince other people that the faith that you possess is a faith that works.

It's a faith that makes sense of reality. So bring it up in everyday conversation. You say, well I don't have time for that. Well, you probably do have time for it, you probably just don't think you have time. My mom used to do it in car time, sick time. I remember getting sick, and that meant we were going to talk theology. I was like, of course, you can't do nothing because

you're sick and so you're stuck, but they would do it then. Car time was a good one. One-on-one time, bedtime.

I remember my parents would come and do devotionals. I didn't always, you know, love it, but over a long period of time, those meaningful moments were cumulative and had an incredible impact on me so that when I began to embrace faith for myself, not my mom and dad's faith, when I had to embrace my own, there was a foundation that was built for me that was meaningful and so make time for it. Bring it up in everyday conversation. You got to model it with your own life. You got to show your kids how you yourself are growing spiritually.

Let them see you in the word. Paul says I serve God with a clear conscience. I'm serving him continually. So the apostle Paul wasn't just saying something and living a life that was opposed to what he said. His actions and his speech matched. He lived a life of integrity, doing what he said and living out of his convictions, not in spite of them. And when you can display that to your kids or your students in school or the people that you have influence over, it communicates powerfully to them. I myself am growing spiritually.

You can see me praying when times are tough. So model it with your life. Bring it up in everyday conversation, celebrate positively, not just punish negatively. It wasn't just a matter of seeing something that was wrong in my life and punishing it, but it was instead more often seeing something that was praiseworthy, that was right, and promoting it and celebrating it. That's a powerful way to pass down faith in a powerful way to the next generation. And again, not just for your kids, but for everyone in your life. Involve your kids in the life of the church.

Let them see you around other believers. Put them in our kids' environments, which are awesome. Pray with them, do devotionals with them. If you don't know where to start, get the Jesus Storybook Bible. It's a very good Bible for young kids and you can just read a devotional talk about it. Just make these habits part of your daily experience so that you don't wake up someday, your kids are thirteen. They're asking big questions you don't know the answers to and you've missed an opportunity to pass the faith on to the next generation.

And you'll wake up and you'll feel like you missed an opportunity and the truth is that we did. And so one of the ways that we keep ourselves from having a generation rise up and check out without coming back is by doing the daily disciplines of passing on our faith to the next generation. Speak blessings over your children is another example. I remember my dad used to speak a blessing over me. At first I thought it was like weird. I was like, this is weird, get your hand off of me, but over time, I wanted it.

I wanted the blessing. Don't leave without blessing me. These are just ways to pass the faith on to the next generation. I think the most important thing you can do as an individual as a

parent, as a grandparent, is to create a culture of grace in your home. You're not just punishing sin, but you are modeling grace. Just because someone messed up in your family whether that was mom or dad or the kids, you show that sometimes we don't receive punishment for our sins because Jesus paid the price for our sins, and communicating grace.

That's what makes Christianity so unique. That's what makes it such a compelling worldview for reality is because of the grace of God displayed for us at the cross of Jesus Christ. Model a culture of grace for your kids. And in all of those ways, combined over a long period of time, again it doesn't happen overnight, but over a long period of time is cumulative and it gives faith to the next generation. And you have that responsibility, so pass it along. The other thing you can do is remember not just that you have a responsibility to pass faith along, but that you have a responsibility to remind other people that you have faith in them.

You remember in the text when Paul was reminding Timothy, he says things like, Timothy, I pray for you on a regular basis, night and day, continually. In other words, I'm not just checking out on you. I remember what's going on in your life. I'm convinced that there is a sincere faith in you. Paul evidently had some kind of external reminder that Timothy was doing a good work. And so Paul sees that and then he affirms it in the life of Timothy. I've caught wind, I've heard of this, or maybe it was something just internal in Paul's spirit.

Either way, what Paul was doing was he was reminding Timothy, I believe in you. Millennials, every time they do studies on millennials and they ask the question, who's the most influential person in your life? Without fail, on the top 10 list almost always is their high school coaches. And if you're a young person, you probably get this, because your coach was the first person maybe who really convinced you outside of mom and dad that they believed in you. They believed that you could achieve something. I remember being a little wiry, little skinny boy with a patch and glasses.

And I had a coach believe in me, and I became like the Hulk over one semester. Just because someone said I could bench press, you know, so many pounds, I said, okay, if you believe it, then I believe it. And it happened. When you communicate to someone I have faith in you, it changes their life, and it can keep them from being a hypocrite because all they need, it doesn't matter what they heard when they were growing up, it doesn't matter what they believe about themselves. Oftentimes what matters is what somebody else believes about them and that being communicated to them in a powerful way and it changes their life.

And you have that kind of influence over people, whether you believe it or not. Many people leave the Christian faith not because of intellectual reasons. It's usually because of emotional and relational reasons. And you may right now have the power to influence someone to persevere and press in deeper to their Christian faith. And all that it's necessary for you to do is to send an email or just give an encouraging word and remind them, I believe in you. And

when Paul says I believe in you, he's not just saying I believe in you because you're a great guy.

He's saying I believe what God is doing in you. This gift of God that is alive in you that was given to you when we laid our hands on you, talking about their commissioning service. They called Timothy into the ministry. They laid hands on him. We believe that what happened when God called you into ministry was for real, that this wasn't fake, that this wasn't just wishful thinking, that something happened in your heart, and we are convinced that God is going to finish it out. We believe in you. I remember when I had my commissioning service.

It was right here in this church. I sat right here at the front of the stage in a chair. And I remember sitting there and people lined up and they would walk by and they would lay their hands on me and they would pray for me. I remember a couple things about that night. The first thing was that when someone drinks Folgers coffee and it incubates in the mouth unadulterated that it causes someone's breath to smell like Alpo, like dog food, you know what I'm talking about? And I remember people this is kind of a separate from the story, but it is the story.

I remember them coming up and laying their hands on me and praying and I was like, Alpo, it smells like Alpo, and I was trying to take it seriously, but I was just like, so if you're ever part of a commissioning service, chewing gum is a friend. So that's the first thing. The second thing I remember though was people who I knew, I respected them, I loved them, and I listened to them say things like, we believe God has put a gift on your life. We believe God has called you into this kind of ministry.

We know that you will experience suffering and trials. But we believe that God is faithful to finish in you what he started. And I remember how powerful that was for me. It was a humbling experience, but something about another Christian communicating, I believe in you. I believe what God's doing in you, not because you're so gifted and so great, but because of the gift that God has put in you—that keeps people from hypocrisy. It really keeps yourself from hypocrisy. So remember who needs the faith from you. Remember who needs to remember that you have faith in them.

And then lastly, remember what faith can do for you. What faith can do for you. Last week we looked at the resurrection and we looked at the apostle Peter and we saw what happened to Peter's life when he really embraced the reality of the resurrection, when he really came to a point where he decided it's for real. Jesus is who he said he is. He did what he said he would do. And he is my living hope. He is the way that I'm going to have eternal life. He's the way I'm forgiven of my sins.

He's my living hope. When Peter put that kind of saving faith in Jesus, you remember it transformed his life. He went from being a coward full of doubts and questions, to one of the

most courageous, best leaders in the Christian movement. You remember this? And what Paul is telling Timothy, he says to him in verses 6 and 7, Timothy, I want you to fan into flame the gift of God that is in you. Because God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and self-control. In other words, Paul is reminding Timothy, you have genuine saving faith.

And that genuine saving faith means that the Holy Spirit of God is alive in you. And when you do your part, when you stir it up, when you fan into flame what's in you, it's going to transform your life, Timothy. The spirit of fear that you may have, you're timid, you're a coward, you care too much about what people think about you, that's going to begin to wane and flee, and power and love and self-control are going to manifest themselves. And so remember what faith is doing for you. And it changed Timothy's life.

A couple of things on that. If that's going to be something that's true of you, you got to remember, just having a gift does not make you effective in the kingdom. Paul tells Timothy, fan it into flame. You have a role to play. Just possessing the gift of teaching doesn't make you effective in your church. You've got to use your gift. You've got to stir it up. All of you, if you're a Christian, when you became a believer, the Holy Spirit of God came and lives inside of you and gave you a spiritual gift, but just owning that gift in the church doesn't make you effective in the church.

You've got to put yourself in situations in which you are caused to use your gift. Put yourself where you're uncomfortable. I got a friend that says you grow where you're uncomfortable. And so put yourself in situations where you're serving the church and as you're put into those situations, the gift that God has put in you will begin to be drawn out and you'll be fanning it into flame and it'll grow. And as you do that, what will happen is the fear that you have will begin to go away and power and love and self-control will begin to increase.

And the fear that he's talking about isn't fear of spiders, it's not lions and tigers and bears, oh my. It's not that fear. It's the fear of man. It's the fear of, well, I don't know, what if they don't like me? What if they don't accept me? What if we can't raise enough money for this project? What if this ministry idea that I have totally busts? That fear, the fear of man will begin to shrink. And here's why. The bigger people are in your life, the smaller God is. But the bigger God is in your life, the smaller people will be.

And as you press into what the Holy Spirit of God is doing in your life and a vision of the glory of God gets bigger and bigger and bigger, then the relevance of what people think about you will get smaller and smaller and smaller. And you'll eventually come to a point where you can say what the apostle Paul said, which was I have a low opinion of what you think about me. I have a low opinion of what I think about me. I'm only concerned about what God thinks about me.

And he has convinced me that I am dearly loved and accepted in Christ, and I've been called to this work, and so I will persevere. So you're not given a spirit of fear, you're given a spirit of power and love and self-control. And the power isn't power to abuse and misuse your authority. It's a power to endure suffering. It's a power to be opposed from all sides and not give in. It's a power to not abuse other people, it's a power to be abused and not return evil for evil. It's a power to love and to do the things that love does, to be patient and kind instead of self-seeking and obnoxious—well, yes, obnoxious—but arrogant and rude and all those things, but instead to believe the best about people, even when it's not easy, but you believe the best because you're doing what love does.

You're not giving up because you have hope of a better tomorrow. Why? Because of a spirit of indifference in you? No, but because of a spirit of love that's been made alive in you through the Holy Spirit of God. Not a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and love and self-control. So you go from lovelessness, indifference to love, you go from weakness to power, you go from a lack of control to self-control. Someone called it the sanity of saintliness. So self-control is not just not caving to your addiction.

Self-control is more appropriately a calm balance, a put-togetherness, a, even though the world's going to fall down all around me, even though I may be opposed from all sides, I'm cool, I'm okay, I'm content, I have peace in my heart. That's the self-control that the Holy Spirit provides. And it can be in you. And you find yourself at odds with these virtues. You say, I'm led by my gut. I'm led by my emotions. I'm led by anger. I'm led by fear. Well one of the ways to fix that is not to try harder, but it's instead to remember the gospel, to remember what Christ has done in you for you.

What he's doing through you and in remembering those things and cooperating with what the Holy Spirit is doing in you, then self-control will begin to rise as will love, as will power, and fear will begin to fade. And some of you need to be reminded of that. Some of you walked in here discouraged and ready to quit. And you need to be reminded that people believe in you, that you have a role yet to play, that your best days may be ahead of you and that it begins with you remembering what Christ has done in you, that he has alive in you the hope of glory, and he's called you to continue to advance the kingdom in a powerful way.

So three exhortations, three different people. Then we're done. For the Pauls in the room, for the baby boomers, for the people in our church who are advanced in years. You're not retired, okay? Just because a new generation has arisen and taken reins of certain leadership positions does not mean your days are over. You do not have a word still to speak, a role yet to play? You do. In fact, your best days may be the days in which you spend your life investing yourself into the next generation so that they can advance the kingdom in a more aggressive way than they would have otherwise.

And so remind people you believe in them. Remember your obligation, your responsibility to pass on the faith in a meaningful way. And to remember that the Holy Spirit is still alive in you. That just because you get a certain age doesn't mean that the Holy Spirit stops working, but that he has something still for you to do. And for the younger people among us, especially those of you who are stepping into leadership positions, you yourself have a responsibility to take what you've been given and entrust it to the next generation.

So many young parents here. Don't cause another generation to rise up and raise another generation of hypocrites, but let's give them a faith worth owning, something that we ourselves can be proud of. And to remind those people that we have faith in them and to tell our friends and family, the people we're doing ministry with that we believe in them, not just because they're great people, but because of what God is doing in them. And let us ourselves reject fear and embrace what the Holy Spirit of God is doing in us, giving us power, love, and self-control.

Not because we're going to try harder, but because a perfect one, the Lord Jesus Christ, came, lived the life we couldn't live. He perfectly entrusted to us the faith, the living faith. He was the image of the invisible God. He remained faithful even when we were faithless. He did not give up on us even when we gave up on him. And he perfectly obeyed the Lord, not fearing man, but being obedient to his father, even to the point of death, a death on a cross, dying for your sins and my sins, so that we could be forgiven and free and made alive with his Spirit.

And so remembering those gospel truths, let what God is doing in you position you to be used by him in a powerful way.

[Recording ends.]