



“THE KEY TO FAITHFULNESS”

2 Timothy 1:13-18

Theme: *Faithfulness mandates a willingness to submit to the Word of God.*

Introduction: Each of us has a problem. There is no escaping it, nor do we ever truly resolve it. We can move, make new friends, get a different job, change churches, divorce our spouses, or seek to isolate ourselves from others, but it remains. Our problem is the cause of most failures, frustrations, and foibles we experience in our lives. Although we often assign blame for our problems to others, we cannot successfully overcome our problem – even with changes. The problem we have is ourselves. I am the biggest problem of my life. I can’t seem to overcome “me.” Only by dying to self and surrendering myself to God’s Spirit and the Lordship of Christ can my problems be resolved. Additionally, the foundational way I do this is by submitting myself, my desires, will, and actions to the Word of God. Only when I am faithful to Christ can I overcome “me.” If I will be faithful to Christ, I must be faithful to His Word. Our text tells us that *“faithfulness mandates a willingness to submit to the Word of God.”* Let us turn our attention to it ...

I. THE PRESERVATION OF THE TRUTH – 1:13

A. The Stewardship of Sound Doctrine

1. Having advocated for courage in the face of opposition and hostility, Paul now provides direct exhortations to Timothy for applying his boldness – *“Retain the standard of sound words ...”*
2. The notion of *“retain”* [ἔχω] is to have, or possess, to “hold” as your possession.
3. It describes a tenacious adherence to what had been given to him to care for – and refers to the Scriptures as the *“standard of sound words.”*
4. As servants of Christ, we must recognize that not only is our calling a stewardship, but the very truth with which we have been entrusted is a stewardship for which we will give an account.
5. *“standard”* [ὑποτύπωσις] refers to what is used to analyze other things – the touchstone of truth by which any other assertions are to be affirmed or refuted.
6. Paul tells Timothy that these *“words”* [λόγος] – are the teaching *“which you have heard from me”* as an Apostle of Jesus Christ sent with the divine message of truth contained in God’s Word – cp. [2 Timothy 2:2](#).
7. This is even more essential given that the natural proneness is to veer toward a man-centered, humanistic, affirming doctrine that allows individuality and carnality to settle in – cp. [2 Timothy 4:3-4](#).

B. The Sentiments of Sound Doctrine

1. However, we must not allow a hostile or harsh spirit to characterize us as

we hold fast to the truth – “... *in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.*”

2. Two factors that dominate our approach:
 - a) “... *in the faith ...*” – an attitude of confidence and trust in God to work.
 - b) “... *and love ...*” – an attitude of kindness and compassion toward those opposed to the truth – cp. **2 Timothy 2:24-25**.
3. These things are uniquely possessed by those who are “*in Christ Jesus*” and therefore possess His Spirit and must characterize those representing Christ.

II. **THE PROTECTION OF THE TREASURE** – **1:14**

A. **The Endeavor of Protecting**

1. The coordination and partnership between the servants of Christ and the Spirit of Christ is described for us – “*Guard, ... the treasure which has been entrusted to you.*”
2. “*Guard*” [φυλάσσω] – emphasizes the activity of protecting something by taking careful and deliberate measures to avoid vulnerability or danger.
3. The “*treasure which has been entrusted to you*” is the Gospel itself, the Word of God.
4. Whereas Paul tells Timothy that we can trust God with what we entrust to Him, we must be trustworthy with what God has given us – cp. **v. 12**.
5. We can faithfully protect God’s Word by:
 - a) *Recognizing it for what it is* – **1 Thessalonians 2:13**.
 - b) *Carefully handling it with appropriate hermeneutics* – **2 Timothy 2:15**.
 - c) *Continual life-long learning* – **Titus 1:9**.
 - d) *Exercise of Discernment and critical thinking regarding novelties* – **1 John 4:1**.
 - e) *A dutiful defense of it against contraction* – **Jude 3**.

B. **The Enabling of Protection**

1. Of course, these things can be pursued merely out of duty and attempted in the arm of the flesh, resulting in disaster.
2. Instead, we must ensure that our ministries are conducted in the power of the Holy Spirit – “*Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us ...*”
3. Believers have the power of God’s Spirit to engage in the struggle against error and preservation of the truth – cp. **Romans 8:9; Acts 1:8**.
4. One of the weapons in our defense or protection of the truth is the Word of God, called “the sword of the Spirit.” – cp. **Ephesians 6:16-17**.
5. We will never be able to protect the Gospel through human reasoning,

worldly philosophies, or secular strategies, but only through the provision of God in His Word through His Spirit.

III. **THE PATTERNS OF TRUSTWORTHINESS - 1:15-18**

A. **The Dangers of Defection - v. 15**

1. Paul reminds Timothy of the realities of the common departure from the faith that occurs among many who begin faithful but then turn from the truth to pursue the world.
2. Such defection among their peers is known by virtually all servants of Christ whose hearts are broken by people they have poured themselves into but who defect,
3. Paul tells Timothy – *“You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.”*
4. Apparently, once Paul was arrested, the entire district where he had faithfully preached considered the Christian faith, as presented by Paul to be “not worth it.”
5. In their desire to avoid controversy and to ensure self-preservation, they *“turned away from [Paul]”* and, by so doing, away from Christ.
6. Two “ringleaders” or notable personalities in this were two men of whom we know nothing else – *“Phygelus and Hermogenes”* – men who may have started out as courageous devotees to the Gospel but who became timid and decided that faithfulness to Christ was not worth it.
7. These deserters' dereliction and betrayal caused many to depart from the faith.

B. **The Demonstration of Devotion - vv. 16-18**

1. However, in contrast to the cowardice of those who deserted him is the example of devotion by *“Onesiphorus.”*
2. He serves as an example of what all servants of Christ ought to be:

- a) *He was selfless – “The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me ...” [ἀναψύχω] – to relieve from the weight of obligation or trouble.*
 - b) *He was fearless – “... and was not ashamed of my chains;” – the very courage and confidence Paul sought to stir up in Timothy this man displayed.*
 - c) *He made himself available – “... but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me ...” – he did not have to be recruited or lured to serve.*
 - d) *He had eternal priorities – “... the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day ...” – he anticipated standing before the Lord – cp. **2 Timothy 4:8**.*
 - e) *He was consistent – “... and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus.”*
3. We cannot see our ministries as “one and done” – but serving our Lord must be the characteristic of our lives – it is who we are.

So What?

1. What interaction with God’s Word am I relying on to enable me to retain it.
2. What safeguards do I have in place to guard the truth in my own life?
3. Am I concerned about walking in the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit?
4. Do the characteristics of devotion characterize my life?

Faithfulness mandates a willingness to submit to the Word of God.