



“THE BENEFITS OF A SINCERE FAITH”

2 Timothy 1:3-5

Theme: *Sincere faith notices grace in action.*

Introduction: We are approaching Thanksgiving this week – looking back over the myriad ways God has blessed us. When we do this, we often spot many occasions when God has done things, some of which came and went so numerous that we didn’t even express our gratitude. It is attributable to grace when we are grateful for the Lord’s goodness when we struggle or suffer. How grateful are you for what God is doing in your life? Are you grateful only when God causes life to run smoothly? Or are you thankful when you struggle as well – knowing that God is at work to glorify Himself in your life as you cast yourself upon Him to sustain you? What is it that buoys Paul in the hour of peril and martyrdom? He has the ability not only to remember innumerable things God had done for him, but chiefly, he recognizes and rejoices in the grace of God that he found in Jesus Christ. In our text, Paul leans heavily on his memories of God’s grace. Memories are referenced in each of our verses. As he comes to the end of his life, he is grateful for both events and people who touched his life. These verses show that **“Sincere faith notices grace in action.”**

I. A SINCERE FAITH RESULTS IN ACTIONS OF GRACE – 1:3

A. Appreciation for God

1. Paul is continuing his introduction and his greeting of Timothy in these verses.
2. As Paul struggles physically in the prison in Rome, where disease, malnutrition, and dehydration prevail, his spirit chooses to think about things that are “worthy of praise” – cp. ***Philippians 4:8-9***.
3. The work of God in Paul’s life was uncontestable and certifiable. His grace had fashioned Paul into the man that he is, and Paul consistently walked before the Lord with sincere faith – the goal of his ministry – cp. ***1 Timothy 1:4***. (no slide)
4. When our faith in God is “sincere,” it results in various actions that exhibit the grace of God in our lives.
5. The first of these in our text is an “appreciation for God” – ***“I thank God ...”***
6. There are two possibilities, given he doesn’t clearly state for what he thanks God:

- a) *Paul could be grateful specifically for Timothy – the one to whom he is writing. This would be consistent with the book's deeply personal and intimate tenor.*
 - b) *Paul could also be reflecting on his life as it is ending and expressing deep gratitude for the life of faith that he had been blessed to live – especially in service to the Lord.*
7. It is likely best to see both emphases, but with the significant emphasis on a general gratitude for his fruitful life lived in service and a minor emphasis on his gratitude for Timothy and his faith.

B. Adoration of God

1. Even though his death would result from serving his God and Savior Jesus Christ, he feels no true indictment because he has obeyed the Lord in proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ even as he had been called to do – ***Acts 23:1.***
2. His ministry had been for the Lord, from the Lord, and to the Lord – cp. ***1 Corinthians 8:6.***
3. It is interesting the word he uses for “*serve*” [λατρεύω] – a term that is used in some places to refer to “worship,” meaning that his ministry was done as an act of worship – cp. ***2 Timothy 4:6.***
4. Additionally, it is a present, active, indicative meaning that even as he was suffering in prison, he was adoring God and seeing his sufferings as an act of worship.
5. He adored God so deeply that anything that God brought into His life was viewed as another opportunity to bring glory to God – ***Romans 8:38-39.***
6. As he faced death for his service, he declared that even though men might condemn him for his ministry, he had nothing for which he felt guilty before the Lord – “... *whom I serve with a clear conscience ...*” – ***2 Corinthians 1:12.***
7. Part of the “*clear conscience*” he possessed is that his faith is not novel, but the fulfillment of the faith that characterized the “*forefathers*” – “... *the way my forefathers did,*”
 - a) *This is not a reference to his father but to all those who truly hoped in the Messiah - cp. Acts 24:14-15.*
 - b) *Paul is here stating that his service was in line with the genuine believers, all of whom had anticipated the coming of the Messiah whom Paul preached - cp. Philippians 3:3.*
 - c) *True believers anticipated the Lord Jesus Christ, essentially what he believed was believed by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Isaiah, and all pious - Hebrews 11:37-40.*
8. When we live our lives in worship of God, we know that we have sincere faith – what is a difficult experience through which you are currently

suffering that could be viewed as an act of worship as you remain faithful to God and His purposes of bringing Himself glory in your life?

C. Appeals to God

1. The third evidence of Paul's sincere faith is seen in him turning to the Lord on behalf of others - *"... as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day,"*
2. Paul's awareness of the continuity from the "forefathers" to him was passed to Timothy, for whom he turns to the Lord in prayers.
3. Whenever he thinks of Timothy, he sees a man who likewise serves the Lord with a clear conscience and sincere faith.
4. He communes with the Lord and "remembers" Timothy with thanksgiving, intercession, and blessing.
5. There is clear evidence that grace produces not only an appreciation for God but also the adoration of worship and a habit of appealing to God in prayer for the glory and grace of God to extend to others who will carry on the long-standing faith that belonged to the Patriarchs and prophets.

II. A SINCERE FAITH REJOICES IN AFFECTION FOR THE GODLY - 1:4

A. The Reliance on One Another - *"longing to see you"*

1. The Lord has intended that believers live interdependently with one another, needing each other to help comfort, encourage, and support one another.
2. Everyone, regardless of how godly or their role within the church, needs others to encourage them.
3. Paul, as he was facing death, says that he was *"longing"* [ἐπιποθέω] – "to have a strong desire for something, with implication of need"¹
4. Paul tells Timothy that he "needed" to see him – for consolation, comfort, encouragement, and strength – cp. **2 Timothy 4:9**.
5. If one of the most outstanding leaders in the history of the faith needed to be encouraged by the presence of another believer, how much more do you and I need to be intentionally seeking those who can strengthen our faith?
6. Paul says, "I need to see you one more time before I go on to glory!"

B. The Reciprocation of Affection - *"remembering your tears"*

1. Part of the affection Paul had for Timothy was demonstrated by Timothy's affection for Paul.
2. We are not exactly sure what Paul is referring to when he says, *"remembering your tears,"* it could summarize numerous occasions when

¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 377.

they had wept together in ministry or when Paul saw Timothy for the last time.

3. Some have suggested that it was when Paul called for the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, and when it came time to leave, they wept – cp. [Acts 20:36-38](#).
4. Spiritual intimacy, affection, and commitment to one another caused both to be more vital servants of Christ.

III. A SINCERE FAITH RECOGNIZES AFFIRMATIONS OF THE GOSPEL – 1:5

A. The Genuine Work of God

1. Finally, we see another element demonstrating sincere faith – the mindfulness of the genuine works of God in the lives of others.
2. He declares: *“For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you ...”*
3. *“mindful”* [ὐπόμνησις] – refers to the act of remembering, typically sparked by some trigger.
4. Perhaps the isolation and abandonment of everyone who had once professed to stand with him caused him to prize Timothy’s faith even more.
5. He describes his faith as a *“sincere”* faith [ἀνυπόκριτος] – or without pretense or authenticity.
6. The term is a compound word composed of a negative prefix attached to *hypokritēs*, from which we get the related English word *hypocrite*.
7. God had done a genuine work of grace that caused Paul encouragement and joy.
8. This is a discipline many of us need to foster – the recognition and attentiveness to what God is doing in the lives of others around us.
9. He doesn’t think of Timothy’s faith as something in the past but as something active *“within you”* - currently.

B. The Generational Work of God

1. He then recalls how Timothy received that faith – *“...which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.”*
2. Paul had likely won Lois and Eunice to Christ during his first missionary journey.
3. They were probably Jewish believers who “served” God as did all faithful believers and were prepared by God’s grace to receive the word of salvation through Christ Jesus – [Romans 2:28-29](#).
4. By the time of Paul’s 2nd Missionary Journey, these two ladies had led their son/grandson Timothy to the faith – cp. [Acts 16:1-3](#).
5. He speaks to Timothy’s heritage of godliness that ought to invigorate him as it seems that Timothy’s faith was facing challenges:

THE EPISTLE OF 2 TIMOTHY

- a) *False Teachers continued to harass the believers in Ephesus.*
 - b) *Paul, his mentor, was about to die a martyr, which would cause Timothy to ponder his future.*
6. This leads to him telling Timothy regarding the “sincere faith” - ***“I am sure that it is in you as well.”***
 7. There were generations of faith without pretense – something we ought to yearn to see true in our families – even if you will be the first generation of “sincere faith.”

So What?

1. During this Thanksgiving week, can I describe my general attitude as one of gratitude – despite struggles?
2. Do I see my service to the Lord as an act of worship?
3. Are there individuals who truly encourage me in my faith - people I can thank for their influence?
4. How have I seen God at work in the past week—in me or others?

Sincere faith notices grace in action.