



“A PROFILE IN COURAGE”

2 Timothy 1:6-11

Theme: *The resources needed to serve Christ faithfully are gained solely by focusing on the Gospel.*

Introduction: Earlier this week, we observed the 60th year since the assassination of President Kennedy. In 1956, before he was elected, he wrote a Pulitzer Prize for Biography for his book Profiles in Courage. It was a work highlighting eight US Senators throughout the Nation’s history who faced opposition and career-threatening situations in which they remained committed to the greater good and modeled moral courage, even at significant personal cost. These Senators included John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster, and Robert Taft. It describes how they placed their principles above pressures and sacrificed to maintain their integrity.

Far more significant than either politics or altruism is the “greater good” of the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ. The salvation of sinners, destined to condemnation, is why Christ came. Having successfully redeemed us, He has given us the responsibility to represent Him in the ministry of reconciliation. Each of us who has been saved is given the calling to serve Christ however and wherever He chooses to use us.

Yet, often, we fail to serve Him as called. We struggle with fear and shame. We allow things to become of greater value and importance than this “greater good” of redemption. In our text, Paul addresses Timothy because of his weakened commitment and the rising fear threatening his ministry. He provides us with a more significant treatment of courage than Kennedy provided in his celebrated work. He allows us to see how we can maintain our courage – showing us that ***“The resources needed to serve Christ faithfully are gained solely by focusing on the Gospel.”***

I. THE STRUGGLE FOR COURAGE – 1:6-7A

A. The Challenges Facing Believers – v. 6

1. Having affirmed Timothy’s faith as “sincere,” he begins to address one of his concerns about the struggle Timothy is going through.
2. Paul desires that since he had this “sincere faith” that ***“for this reason, I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God ...”***
3. Timothy’s faith was genuine but “weak,” having been weakened from the things he was experiencing.
 - a) *The false teachers relentlessly undermined the message of grace in the church in Ephesus, where Timothy was serving as pastor – **2 Timothy 2:14-19.***
 - b) *Persecution was becoming virtually inevitable for those who would remain faithful to the Lord – **2 Timothy 3:1; 12.***
 - c) *The most outstanding leader the church knew was condemned to death and was in prison awaiting death.*

- d) Timothy was dismissed as too young to take leadership – **1 Timothy 4:12**.
- e) Timothy possessed a timid personality – cp. **1 Corinthians 16:10**.
- f) Timothy was physically ill – and needed medication to restore his health – **1 Timothy 5:23**.
- g) The general threats to fruitfulness in the Gospel must always be defended against – cp. **Matthew 13:18ff**.
 - (1) Afflictions or persecutions – v. 21.
 - (2) Worries of the world – v. 22a.
 - (3) The deceitfulness of wealth – v. 22b.
- 4. This is not uncommon among believers – as demonstrated by even John the Baptist – cp. **Luke 7:19-20**.
- 5. As a result, Paul admonishes Timothy to **“kindle afresh”** [ἀναζωπυρέω] – a term that means to re-light or allow a flame to take on new life.
- 6. He calls on Timothy to rededicate himself to the task God had given him – **“the gift of God.”**
 - a) **“gift”** [χάρισμα] – refers not to salvation but to the ministry gifts God had bestowed upon him when he was saved – his spiritual gift.
 - b) **“which is in you through the laying on of my hands”** – a reference to the ordination where duly qualified spiritual leaders on behalf of the church recognize God’s gifting and set a man apart for the Gospel ministry.
- 7. Every believer is endowed with a spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit to promote the church's growth and the edification of the individuals in the church. **Ephesians 4:11-13**.

B. The Cowardice Hinderers Believers – v. 7a

- 1. However, believers face various oppositions, intimidations, threats, and persecutions designed by our enemies to shut our mouths and cause us to shrink from engaging others with the Gospel.
- 2. However, Paul states that such cowardice is unworthy of the Christian – **“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity.”**
- 3. **“timidity”** [δειλία] – a lack of mental or moral strength – cowardice¹.
- 4. Whenever we cower because of such intimidations, we know that the Holy Spirit is not prevailing and has been quenched.
- 5. If a person fears Satan’s persecuting power more than he trusts God’s faithfulness to empower, he has cowered before gods that are not and threats that are powerless without God’s permission.
- 6. How can we overcome these natural anxieties, worries, and phobias?

¹ This term is used only here in the NT – phobia is the typical word for fear.

II. THE SOLUTION TO COWARDICE – **1:7B-10**

A. The Cooperation with God's Spirit – **v. 7b**

1. The first solution to our cowardice and **"timidity"** in serving Christ is realizing the resources that God's Spirit provides – **"... but of power and love and discipline."**
2. Each of these things individually cancels our fears and enables us to face serving the Lord without hesitation:
 - a) **"power"** [δύναμις] – *This is a term that describes the dynamic energy behind the accomplishment of God's purposes – including victory over death – cp. **Zechariah 4:6; Ephesians 1:18-20; 3:20.***
 - b) **"love"** [ἀγάπη] – *describing a priority not on our own welfare but on the welfare of the object of our love – the love that overcomes the concern for oneself and one's own welfare with a laser-focus on the need of others you can meet – cp. **1 John 3:16-18; 4:18.***
 - c) **"discipline"** [σωφρονισμός] – *means to have a sound mind – enabling us to remain constrained in our thinking, avoiding conceit and self-promotion, while also avoiding bitterness and hopelessness of circumstances.*
3. God's Spirit causes us to realize that God can overcome any threat, yet motivates us to be willing to sacrifice ourselves on behalf of others without becoming proud for doing it or hopeless in the potential outcomes.
4. When we cooperate with the Spirit of God, we engage, evangelize, edify, and equip others to the glory of Christ.

B. The Camaraderie with God's Servants – **v. 8**

1. The next solution God's Spirit leads Paul to provide is the ability to join other believers who are victorious, fruitful, and obedient to the call of God – **"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God."**
2. Paul tells Timothy that the consummate example to follow is the Lord Himself – **"the testimony of our Lord"** – cp. **1 Timothy 6:13.**
3. At the same time, Paul states that he was **"His prisoner"** – conveying the thought that as Jesus said to Pontius Pilate that Pilate had no authority had it not been given to him from above, Paul didn't see Caesar as the one who had him imprisoned – cp. **Philippians 1:12-14.**
4. Essentially, Paul said that to be **"ashamed"** of him because he was a **"prisoner"** was to be ashamed of Christ because it is His will that he is imprisoned.
5. He called on Timothy to submit himself so wholly to the Lordship of Jesus Christ that he refused to see suffering for Christ to be below Him –

Philippians 3:10.

6. Instead, it ought to be a great privilege to ***“join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God”*** – cp. **Acts 5:41.**

C. The Confidence in God’s Son – vv. 9-10

1. Finally, Paul calls Timothy to recall what Christ has accomplished – ***“... who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,”***
2. We see here several vital elements that motivate us to serve Christ:
 - a) ***The accomplished work of redemption – “who has saved us ...”*** – we cannot ever be more saved than we are positionally, nor can we ever be less saved; the work of redemption is done, and therefore, we need not be timid about what happens to us.
 - b) ***The intention for redemption – “who ... called us with a holy calling”*** – refers to the effectual call to redemption initiated by God to bring Himself glory.
 - c) ***The irrelevancy to redemption – “... not according to our works,”*** – meaning that nothing we have ever done or ever will do will alter what God has done in redeeming us.
 - d) ***The instigation of our redemption – “... but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.”***
3. Our story is written ***“from all eternity,”*** and we can confidently trust the Lord to use us to bring Himself glory during our earthly sojourn to maximize our joy in glory.

III. THE SERVICE TO CHRIST – 1:11

A. The Unashamed Announcement of the Gospel

1. Here, Paul sets an example for Timothy and us as one who has not merely volunteered and thereby can quit.
2. Instead, even as we are, Paul was ***“appointed”*** as a believer to serve Christ in particular ways as determined by God’s Spirit – ***“... for which I was appointed ...”*** [τίθημι - ἐτέθην (Aor. Act. Ind.)] – a term meaning to deliberately place in a particular location or position. (Illust: the fastidious way a decorator sets an item in position).
3. The first way God intentionally places us where we are is for us to announce the Gospel without shame – ***“... for which I was appointed a preacher ...”***
4. The word ***“preacher”*** [κῆρυξ] – describes the function of believers who have been entrusted with a message to announce to the public.
5. Through the Great Commission, Christ Jesus has placed upon us all the

responsibility to declare His name to all the nations – cp. [Luke 24:45-49](#).

B. The Ultimate Accountability for the Gospel

1. The second emphasis Paul provides Timothy is that Paul has been *“appointed as ... an apostle ...”*
2. The term *“apostle”* [ἀπόστολος] – means a delegate or envoy carrying a message.
3. It speaks not only of the unique authority Paul possessed as an “Apostle of Jesus Christ,” but here, the emphasis is on the allegiance incumbent upon him to refuse to alter the message he was given.
4. It speaks to the fact that every believer has been entrusted with the Gospel and is accountable for how we fulfill our ministry.
 - a) *Build upon the foundation* – [1 Corinthians 3:10-11](#).
 - b) *Parable of the Talents* – [Luke 19:13ff](#).
 - c) *Command to take the message to the ends of the earth* – [Matthew 28:19-20](#).
5. Many would seek to alleviate the pressures of resistance by those hostile to the Gospel by morphing the message to be more palatable or acceptable to those in opposition.
6. Yet, to change the message is the ultimate dereliction by servants of Christ.

C. The Useful Application of the Gospel

1. Finally, Paul states that he was *“appointed as ... a teacher.”*
2. *“Teacher”* [διδάσκαλος] – describes a person who tells another what they should know and do; it conveys more than information, but application – cp. [Matthew 28:20](#).
3. This is the component of serving Christ where we are intentionally helping another follow Christ more, but admonishing, exhorting, and teaching one another what the Lord desires as revealed in His Word.
4. Believers must consistently “speak to one another” concerning the truths of Who Christ is and what He has done, compelling one another to more excellent submission to Him through gratitude and praise.
5. Our fellowship with one another cannot be stunted by our fear of reprisal, resistance, or rejection, but our boldness must rest in the awareness that Christ has overcome and that we, too, will overcome through our faith in and faithfulness to Him.

So What?

1. What are the things that cause me to fear faithfully serving Christ?
2. How does fear demonstrate my focus?
3. Which solution in our text will most likely help me overcome fear?

4. Where has God “placed” me to serve Him fearlessly?

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gained solely by focusing on the Gospel.**