

SPEAKING UP IN A "SHUT-UP" WORLD

2 Timothy 1:3-18

Did you get the message?

- I. IN DISCOURAGING DAYS, WE NEED ENCOURAGEMENT TO SPEAK UP
 - A. "I'm _____ for you" (vs. 3)
 - B. "I _____ you" (vs. 4)
 - C. "I _____ in you" (vss. 5, 6b)
 - ➡ "Your _____ is the real deal!"
 - ➡ "God has _____ you!"
 - D. "I'm _____ you to rekindle your gifts" (vs. 6)
 - E. "Trust the Spirit's _____" (vs. 7)

- II. DISCOURAGING DAYS CHALLENGE US TO SPEAK UP
 - A. Sometimes, the choices are _____ (vs. 8)

 - B. But the Gospel is always worth it: (vss. 9-10)
 - 1. It's a message of a _____
 - 2. It's a message of an _____ rescue
 - 3. It's a message of a _____ - _____ rescue
 - 4. It's a message about One who has altered _____ and _____

 - C. We who trust Christ should entrust Him
with the _____ (vss. 11-12)

- III. IN DISCOURAGING DAYS, SPEAKING UP MEANS DRAWING LINES
 - A. In Thinking: (vss. 13-14)
 - 1. You must speak up to _____ the Gospel

 - 2. You must speak up to _____ the Gospel

 - B. In Relationships (vss. 15-18)
 - 1. Many may _____ you

 - 2. Some will _____ you

Engage with the Gospel!

SPEAKING UP IN A "SHUT UP!" WORLD

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Intro: "Hi, this is Steve, leave a message." So goes my voicemail on my iPhone. What I often have gotten is less clear.

- Sometimes someone would call, but they wouldn't leave a message. All I heard was, "You have one message....Saturday, 9:15 a.m.....Click." That's called the "*I'm not leaving a message*" message.

- Or someone would leave an incomplete message. "Hi this is John"—"Please call me *right away*. Click." Oh, that was helpful. I only know 23 Johns. Before I had caller ID that would show a return number, it was maddening.

- Or the message was garbled: "Hi Steve, my name is Bill—my number is 208.643.82puhvah. And no matter how many times I'd replay it, it was indecipherable. The absolutely worst ones were the least comprehensible: "menkoskl...kklkp kwin kkdiln." Huh? I knew someone was trying to say something, but I had no idea what, or how important it was, or how to get in touch w/them.

- God has left a message with us, and we Christians are the world's voice mail. It's possible that we might garble the message so that's not clear or understandable to them. Or we might engage a person, but at the point when they're listening, we might not say anything understandable. Worst of all, we might not say anything at all; it's possible to not let others know that God has left a very important message. And Christianity is all about that message—a message that is known in the Bible as The Gospel, or Good News, or as Paul calls it in 2Tim. 1.1, *the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus*. From Day One when the church was born, Christians understood that their primary responsibility was to speak up.

- I've heard some quote Jesus but apply it just the opposite of what I'm saying:

[*Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven.* (Mt. 5:16)] "See? You don't have to speak—you let your works talk. A famous quote attributed to St. Francis of Assisi was, "Preach the Gospel. If necessary, use words." I get what he's getting at, but taken alone, that's terrible advice! Of course words are necessary! If I just lived a compellingly moral life, but said nothing about Christ, you know what other would say about me? "What a nice guy." And if they heard the gospel from others, they might dismiss it, saying, well, what about Walker? He's a great guy and I've never heard anything about this from him." If you don't speak up, they won't know even to glorify your Father in Heaven—much less anything about Jesus. You gotta explain the truth as well as live the truth. Jesus says so. [x]

- So we have to speak up. But it wasn't as easy as it might sound. For the church, & for Timothy, these were discouraging days. Remember the situation? NB:

- Caesar Nero, who hated Christians, pinned the blame on them for a series of fires he himself had set in Rome. So, he outlawed any practice of the Christian faith, and promptly arrested its most visible leader—the Apostle Paul, where he sat in a small, dark,

dank dungeon on death row. In his greatest hour of need, Paul was deserted and forgotten. Outside, Roman society had turned spiritually sour against Christians, so to speak up was at best discouraged and at worst dangerous. Once outspoken Xian leaders grew quiet and many believers lost their voice. In his prison, facing execution, Paul wrote to Timothy, his friend and follower, who was pastoring the church in Ephesus, and urged him to be faithful and urge faithfulness on the part of those believers in his care. Engaging with the message involves *speaking up, even when the world around you is telling you to clam up*. But that isn't where Paul begins with Timothy. He suspects it's been rough for him, and so speaks personally to him:

I. IN DISCOURAGING DAYS, WE NEED ENCOURAGEMENT TO SPEAK UP

•What can someone say to us that would move us to speak up?

A. ["I'm praying for you"] (vs. 3)

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.

NB Paul is stuck in a prison, accused of practicing an illegal religion, even though he is innocent (i.e. he has a *clear conscience* and has done nothing wrong, and in fact has expressed his faith no differently than his forefathers—it is Rome who has changed, not Paul). Now out of circulation, he could have sunk into bitterness and depression, and cried, "What can I do?" Well, he could pray. In fact, no circumstance short of loss of mental ability or death can cut us off from the service of prayer. No matter how far away you are from a person, no matter how little you know or how bad it's gotten, you can pray. I read this from Tony Evans this week: [Prayer/x]

B. ["I love you"] (vs. 4)

⁴ As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.

Tears came when they parted at Paul's arrest. It signaled their close relationship and the value they placed on each other's friendship. When the air around you crackles with criticism, who wouldn't want to hear, "You bring me joy when I see you."

C. ["I believe in you"] *More specifically:*

[√"Your faith is the real deal."] (vs. 5):

⁵ 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.

sincere = not hypocritical or disingenuous. When the heat turned up on professing Christians, the pretenders quickly separated themselves from those who persisted in faith.

[√"God has gifted you."] (vs. 6b):

^{6b} ... fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, the gift of God... prob. his calling as a pastor/teacher, and all that involved. Paul laid hands on Timothy as he commissioned him to that ministry. Occasionally, I wonder if God uses me at all, if he has gifted me, or if I ought to just give it up. I usually call those days, "Mondays." Sometimes we're too close to ourselves. We wonder if we do any good at

all, because we know our weaknesses and failures. Not only do we know we aren't perfect, we're pretty confident we're pretty messy. So to hear someone else affirm that our faith is genuine, that they see God at work in/through us is very encouraging indeed. *Yet not everything said is sweet:*

D. [I'm reminding you to rekindle your gifts"] (vs. 6)

6 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...

• Apparently, it's possible for your wood to get wet. In discouraging days, when people around you are more hostile, and antagonistic about your faith, when world polarizes over moral/spiritual issues, it can quickly put a damper on sharing your convictions about Christ. They don't want to hear it, and so you don't really want to say it. You may need someone to remind you that you need to rekindle the fire in/for your gifts, to make a difference. *But how?* Paul doesn't say exactly, but I've thought of some possibilities:

√ Just reminding me that *God* has *given* me abilities and responsibilities rekindles my passion and desire to use them.

√ Reminding me how I came to believe (evangelism) encourages me to participate in that life-changing venture for others. My desire is stirred up.

√ Taking my cue from mentors and following in their footsteps rekindles my determination to be like them—to serve and make a difference too,

√ And, as we'll see further in this passage, being reminded of what's at stake if I do or don't use my gifts reoxygenates the fire in me. *All this is reinforced by the Spirit of God in us:*

[E. Trust the Spirit's empowering] (vs. 7):

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

• God has not given us a spirit of *timidity*. Word actually refers to "cowardice." It describes someone who cuts and runs in battle. The Spirit of God in you doesn't turn you into a [*coward*: a i.e. person who backs down in the face of opposition, who quickly responds to intimidation with fear and compliance.] Instead, the Holy Spirit enables us to speak up:

1) He provides power or *ability*: i.e. "I can do this."

2) He stimulates *love*: "I do care about others"

3) He inspires *self-control*: i.e. the ability to subjugate your emotions to your will. "I will act as I believe, not as I feel."

• When we pray/commune w/Him we realize what has given us: *Courage*. It isn't *fearlessness*. Fear is a good thing. It's part of what keeps us alive and aware of danger. *Courage*, though is being able to act on principle or conviction despite being afraid. [Eddie Rickenbacher WWI Flying Ace, 1890-1973] *Courage* can only exist in a charged atmosphere. And Paul's evident courage calls to Timothy and to us. In the flyleaf of my Bible I have a quote from Billy Graham: [Courage/x]. So Paul reminds Timothy (and us)

that God has given us not just genuine faith and gifts, but also the spirit of courage to speak up when the world tells us to shut up. Still, it won't be easy:

[II. DISCOURAGING DAYS CHALLENGE US TO SPEAK UP]

vs. 8 begins w/ "therefore" — and draws a conclusion as to what to do: (vs. 8a). ⁸ **Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner...**

• This one directive is what rest of chpt is about:

do not be ashamed... (of Jesus/Gospel/Paul) (here in vs. 8)

I am not ashamed... (i.e. Paul) (vs. 12)

Onesiphorus was not ashamed... (of Paul) (vs. 16)

• When we think of the word ashamed, we might mistakenly think of guilt/shame; that's not what Paul means. Think *embarrassment*. I'm *embarrassed* about Jesus or the Gospel or going public as a believer in Christ.

• It's a real possibility that a Christian under pressure will be embarrassed of the Gospel, or of associating w/others who belong to Jesus. How would you know? They don't speak up. They go with the flow. They back down. They do everything they can to fit in and not rock the boat. They're cultural chameleons. They're "ashamed." *But:*

A. [Sometimes, the choices are limited.] (Look again at vs. 8)

⁸ **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,**

• A person could be faithful and speak up, and become a target and suffer; or they could shut up, be ashamed, and be safe. "Uh, isn't there an option C?" Not at that time. Historically, there are seasons when the culture looks with favor on Christians. This wasn't one of those times, and now increasingly it isn't around you.

• (NB: Who is Paul a prisoner of? Rome? No. *Jesus!* He believes so strongly in God's sovereign power that if Jesus wanted Paul out, he'd be out. So, he concludes, there must be some higher purpose for the imprisonment.) Is speaking up and suffering worth it? Depends on what you speak up about:

B. [But the Gospel is always worth it]: The message is not a philosophy about God and the world, nor a set of self-help tips and techniques to improve your life and self-image; nor does it advocate a spiritual To-Do list to perform in your search for God & your quest for meaning and purpose. It is essentially an announcement about something God has done for you, something you could never have done for yourself: (vs. 9-10)

⁹ **(God) 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,**

¹⁰ **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, So:**

√[It's a message of a rescue]: Assumes that a person is in a position where he is unable to escape on his own; so someone else intervenes and [rescues] him. Heaven's rescue operation has gone on since the beginning, and is at this moment continuing.

√[It's a message of an undeserved rescue] "Grace" = something that I can't earn/didn't deserve. God intended to give us this "promise of life" (vs. 1) long before we stepped on this earth or could do anything to merit it. When you explain the message to others, one of the most important things you can do is explain "grace"—that we could not be good enough, or promise to do better to the point that God would feel good about forgiving us, and giving us a fresh start. It isn't about us. Not about what we have done, but what God has done.

√[It's a message of a life-changing rescue]. The rescue changes our lives: we are now *called...to a holy calling*—i.e. I have a different purpose now. What is it? God's *own purpose*. I now live to fulfill God's purposes for my life. One of them is to speak up, to share this Good News with others. Will it affect others? Think of the generations it affected—go back to vs. 5.

⁵ 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.

- Two generations before Timothy, Lois somehow believed in the God who would send the Messiah to save them; Eunice her daughter and Timothy's mother caught the faith as well. Then Timothy as well. You/I have no idea how far-reaching the effect may be when someone understands and accepts this message! It can affect people not yet alive! Future generations! Is it worth sharing? Absolutely.

√[It's a message about One who has altered life and death.]

- Jesus' death has destroyed/*nullified* death. How? Last time I checked, death rate still hovering around 100%. NB: It has been stripped of its threat: [Heb. 2:14-15]. When Christ paid for the sins you've committed w/his own death, there is no future punishment on the books for you before God. Death has been robbed of its curse, and has been turned into gain: [Phil. 1:21, 23]. Death is only the gateway to His presence. [x]

- Jesus' resurrection has illuminated or spotlighted what life and immortality will be like. Eternity is no longer hidden in dark shadows of wondering and speculating. As Christ lives, so shall we. That's the promise of life that the Gospel offers. Isn't that worth sharing? *But what if few accept or if things don't work out as I hope?*

C. [We who trust Christ should entrust Him with the results] (vss. 11-12)

¹¹ for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher,

¹² 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.

- What did Paul entrust to Jesus? The results of his life and work. What does he have left? He's in prison. At the end of his life, he has lost everything. He has virtually nothing. No wife or family. No house. No car. No money. No vacation time. No visitors.

No freedom. No entertainment. Nothing. Just a damp, dark cell and a pen and scroll. He's gone for broke. He's poured his whole life, all his days and energy into seeing people understand and respond to the Gospel. Now, he has no regrets. He knows Jesus and trusts Him with the results. We who trust Christ to make us right w/God, should entrust to him results of our lives. "Lord, whatever sacrifice I make, I trust you to make it worthwhile in the end." Listen to Paul: *I know...whom (not what) I have believed...and I'm convinced...he is able to guard...* Are you convinced? Do you know?

III. IN DISCOURAGING DAYS, SPEAKING UP MEANS DRAWING LINES (1:13-18)

A. IN THINKING: (vss. 13-14)

[1. You must speak up to explain the Gospel.]

13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

- the *pattern* (wd refers to an outline sketch of something — e.g. as an architect might make before getting down to the detailed blueprints of a building.) Paul isn't saying Timothy or we have to say it exactly like he does, or parrot his words; but he does want us to follow his outline. There are some things we are to *explain* in the Gospel: [2+2+2]? Two facts, two promises, two responses?

- What did Jesus do? He died for our sins. Jesus rose from the dead. What is God offering/promising? Complete forgiveness. And a new, unending life! How am I to respond? (repent/change my mind; and put my faith in what X did/who he is). [x]

- *Faith and love...in Christ Jesus* could refer to your own faith as a model (i.e. you're not a disinterested party) and your love for your listeners; or explaining that the faith you have is in Jesus and your love for Him as a result. (Prob both.)

[2. You must speak up to defend the Gospel.] (vs. 14)

14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

The idea is that the message is entrusted to us, and we must defend the ideas and convictions from being watered down, or distorted, or added to. The temptation when heat turns up is to either alter the message to make it more palatable to the critics, or more harsh on Christians who aren't measuring up. Don't do either. Defend it from wrong thinking. Speak up.

But when you do, lines will be drawn also:

B. IN RELATIONSHIPS: *As you speak up, the reaction will be mixed:*

- [Many may avoid you]. (vs. 15)

15 You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

- Phygelus and Hermogenes were Xian leaders who could have come to Paul's defense; instead, they decided to protect their popularity and social status and stay away. This isn't a pity party on the part of Paul. It's a warning that what happened to him might happen to you. Some may think you are not safe or fun to be around, or you embarrass them. When you speak up, and decide your faith will be public, you might find some

people backing away from you. Don't be surprised if holding Christian convictions and faith puts you in a minority status. Some will disappoint you. But:

•[Some will refresh you]. (vss. 16-18).

16 May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, 17 but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me—18 may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day!—and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.

•We don't know who this guy was, nor what he did. Most think he opened his home in Ephesus to Paul and Timothy as they first traveled through, and became an encourager in the early church in Ephesus. When Paul was imprisoned, he traveled the long distance to Rome, searched hard for him, and *refreshed* him: Visited him? Brought him chocolate or coffee? Played checkers? Prayed for him? No one knows. Except the effect: *refreshed*. His very presence encouraged Paul, and endangered him and his family. He never looked back. When you stand up and speak up—even winsomely and honestly, some people may surprise you. They may speak up too. They may encourage you, and strengthen you, and stand with you. So speak up even if some are telling you to shut up. [x]

Concl: Years ago a young HS gal decided to go public w/her faith. She decided at lunch she'd give to her friends and acquaintances a booklet explaining the basic Christian message/Gospel. The responses were varied, but two young men were particularly sarcastic with her. They called her a fanatic, and mocked, "Oh hallelujah, praise God!" One wadded up the tract as he ridiculed her, and tossed it into the trash can; but the other slipped it into his pocket, wondering why she would expose herself to such scorn. He later read the message and couldn't shake what it meant. It really got to him. That second guy was me. That was the first time someone went out of their way to speak up about the Gospel to me.

•God has left a message with you, as his voice mail to the world. You could ignore it. You could start but back away from telling it. You could garble it. Or you could clearly speak up. And what a message we have to share! So *engage* with the Gospel! Speak up! Who knows what will happen? Someone like me, just might listen. *Pray*

Lord Jesus,

When the days discourage us from speaking up about You, remind us how wonderful the message is about what You have done for us, and how desperately everyone needs it. Give us courage and love always to speak up, and never to be ashamed.

Amen