

## **I Would Stand for Truth**

The movie *Paul: Apostle of Christ* opens with Paul in Mamertine Prison in 67 AD, awaiting execution. Christians were accused by Emperor Nero of starting fires that burned half of Rome. Luke, Paul's only companion, is writing the book of Acts, and during this time Paul also wrote his second letter to Timothy. As Paul did, every Christian should prepare for death by asking, "If I only had a year... how would I live?"

### **Four Ways to Inspire Others to Stand for Truth:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ **(Motivate Graciously)**
  - a. *"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." II Timothy 1:1-2.*
  - b. God had a plan for your life to rescue you from sin and offer you an opportunity to become his child forever (Ephesians 1:4). Unlike man-made promises, God's promise of eternal life is a guarantee. *"By grace are you saved thru faith." Ephesians 2:8.* We access eternal life by faith, which is a whole-hearted trust in Christ that results in an obedient lifestyle.
  - c. Paul motivates Timothy in a gracious way, calling him a "dear" (beloved) son. Paul is extending to Timothy the same unconditional agape love that God bestowed on him.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ **(Pray Constantly)**
  - a. *"I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers." II Timothy 1:3.* The battle for truth will not be won by clever argument, but by prayer. *"Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." I Peter 5:8.*
  - b. *"Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests... for all the Lord's people." Ephesians 6:18.* Job offers up sacrificial offerings to God on behalf of his children leading to a hedge of protection around them (Job 1:1-10). Satan roamed the earth, going back and forth, but could not touch Job or his family or his possessions.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ **(Encourage Joyfully)**
  - a. *"Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also." II Timothy 1:4-5.* Paul was like a father to the churches where he ministered (Acts 20:37-38).
  - b. Paul assures Timothy that his faith was not superficial but genuine and sincere. Give thanks to God for mentors and encouragers who have cheered you on!

4. \_\_\_\_\_ (Serve Courageously)

- a. *“For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you thru the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” II Timothy 1:6-7.* Some of Timothy’s fear may have been due to his youth (I Timothy 4:7), but he may also have had a tendency to get wobbly knees when the pressure was on.
- b. Throughout history, Christians have been called upon to have courage even in the midst of persecution. During the 1899 Boxer Rebellion in China, anything foreign, including Christianity, was rejected and Chinese converts were commanded to renounce their faith in Jesus. This was also true in Communist Russia and Eastern Europe where persecution was intense.

**On April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1999, two 17-year old girls, Rachel Scott and Cassie Bernall awoke in the morning totally unaware that they only had hours to live. Rachel was a vibrant Christian throughout her teenage years, but had become more outspoken in the last year. However, Cassie had rebelled against her Christian upbringing, but had recommitted her life to Jesus at a church retreat a year and a half earlier.**

**At 11:19 am, two student gunmen started shooting their fellow students and one teacher. By 12:08, 15 were dead including Rachel and Cassie. Witnesses claim that both girls were asked by a shooter whether they believed in God, and both of them said yes. Cassie’s mom Misty wrote a book *She Said Yes*, and Michael W. Smith wrote a song about Cassie called *This Is Your Time*. Both courageously stood for truth. How about you?**