

Small Group Guide: The Word Repeated

Based on 2 Timothy 1

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word, and to give courage to live faithfully for the gospel.

Ice Breaker

Question: What was your first thought when you woke up this morning? What were you most concerned about today?

(This connects to the pastor's question about whether our first thoughts are about enduring for the gospel or about avoiding discomfort.)

Sermon Overview

Paul writes to Timothy from prison, near the end of his life, encouraging him not to quit despite persecution and hardship. The core message: we must choose between fearing God or fearing man, and we're called to "retain the standard of sound words" and join in suffering for the sake of the gospel.

Key Scripture References

- **2 Timothy 1:6-14** (Primary passage)
- 2 Timothy 2:3, 8-10
- 2 Timothy 3:10-12
- 2 Timothy 4:2-5
- Philippians 1:21

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. **What does it mean that Timothy needed to "kindle afresh" his gift (2 Timothy 1:6)?** Have you ever experienced a time when your faith needed to be rekindled? What caused it to wane?
2. **Paul says God has not given us a "spirit of fear, but of power, love, and discipline" (v. 7).** What fears most commonly hold believers back from living boldly for Christ today?
3. **What did the pastor mean by "choose your fear"?** How does this choice play out in everyday life?

Going Deeper

4. **Paul had a "clear conscience" because he never held back from sharing the gospel (Acts 20).** If you examined your life this past week, would you have a clear conscience about sharing Christ? Why or why not?
5. **The sermon emphasized that "to live is Christ, to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).** How does this contrast with the typical American mindset of "to live is about me, to die is loss"? What would need to change in your life to truly embrace Paul's perspective?
6. **Paul tells Timothy to "retain the standard of sound words" (v. 13).** What are "sound words," and why are they described as a "treasure" to be guarded? What threatens this treasure today?

Personal Application

7. **The pastor asked: "Do you know if the people around you know Christ?"** Think about your family, friends, neighbors, and fellow church members. Who comes to mind that you're uncertain about? What holds you back from having gospel conversations with them?
8. **"Are you willing to say no to self so someone else can say yes to Christ?"** What would this look like practically in your life right now?
9. **Paul invites Timothy to "join with me in suffering for the gospel" (v. 8).** What kinds of suffering might believers face today for living faithfully? Have you experienced any?

Challenging Questions

10. **The sermon stated: "We often avoid pain at all costs and move toward pleasure."** How does this tendency compromise our witness and effectiveness for the gospel?
11. **If something happened to you today, would your children/spouse/loved ones know Christ?** Have you done what you need to do? What needs to change?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **God has not given us a spirit of fear** - We have power, love, and sound minds through the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ **All who desire to live godly in Christ will be persecuted** - Suffering for the gospel is normal Christian life, not the exception.
- ✓ **Sound words are a treasure to guard** - We must know, protect, and pass on healthy, wholesome doctrine.
- ✓ **Choose your fear wisely** - Will you fear God and stand on His Word, or fear man and avoid pain at all costs?
- ✓ **We are called to join in Christ's sufferings** - This means laying down our lives so others can hear the gospel and be saved.

Accountability Questions

- What fear has been holding you back from living boldly for Christ?
- Who is one person you need to have a gospel conversation with?
- What comfort or pleasure might you need to sacrifice for the sake of the gospel?

Closing Reflection

Read together 2 Timothy 1:12:

"For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."

Question: What have you entrusted to Christ? Are you convinced He is able to guard it until "that day"?

Prayer Focus

- Pray for courage to fear God rather than man
- Pray for opportunities to share the gospel with specific people
- Pray for those in the group who are suffering or struggling
- Pray for faithfulness to guard and pass on sound doctrine
- Pray for families - that parents would faithfully disciple their children