



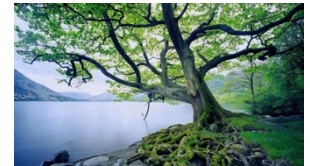
## 2 Timothy 1:1-7 The Gifts God Has Given You

**Summary:** God gives us redemption, relationships, and roles along with the gifts necessary for them all.



Last week we looked at the contrast between a shrub in the desert and a tree planted by waters – Jeremiah the prophet gave us this imagery to describe two ways to live and importantly, they were both pictures of people who knew God. Both situations acknowledged that times of difficulty, frustration and opposition enter our lives. But when this happens some trust in themselves or other people and become like a desert shrub.

Others lean on God and are like a tree planted by rivers, whose roots push down further and further into spiritual soil and find refreshment even when the heat beats on their leaves and the year of drought wears on.



Naturally, the question becomes: which one are you? And so we asked, how does your life *feel* on the inside – *not how does it look from the outside*, how does it *feel* from the inside? Are you fundamentally full and content or fundamentally empty and searching?

Today we begin our study of the book of 2 Timothy and we'll continue to explore the issue. Second Timothy is widely considered to be the last book written by the Apostle Paul. He writes from a prison cell in Rome – this isn't his first time he's been in such conditions, but he has a sense that this will be his last. He has a sense that the end is coming.

And so, he writes a letter to a young man he's been mentoring. Timothy faces his own challenges pastoring a church in the difficult city of Ephesus and Paul wants to encourage him. It's a very personal letter giving us a glimpse into Paul's thinking and his abundance mindset for all who are in Christ.

I hope what you'll see this morning is how many benefits you already have in Christ. I hope you'll see that even though life is hard, we've still been given redemption, relationships, roles and supernatural gifts and you'll walk out of here this morning reminded of all that God is doing and has done for you.

Read with me:

**2 Timothy 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

**2 To Timothy, a beloved son:**

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Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **The Gifts God has given you: 1. Redemption**

Every thinking person has to grapple with the question of death. It comes for us all – sometimes you get a warning and a lot of time to think about it – maybe there’s a diagnosis of a disease like cancer. Or maybe it comes suddenly and unexpectedly through an act of violence or an accident or through the suicide of someone you didn’t really know was struggling. It came this week for my eldest son when he stood in our kitchen and casually opened his phone and learned of the death of a friend – at 18 years old. I gathered with a family this week and prayed that it would come quickly for a beloved wife and mother who is tired of fighting her disease.

Regardless of how it comes, death comes for us all. It makes an unwelcome intrusion into our lives, it does not RSVP or ask if we’re interested. For many people, death is a leech, a parasite that only takes and does not give. As a result, there’s a lot of bitterness, fear, anxiety, and wrestling for power and influence that happens in this world among people who have no promise of tomorrow.

But for the Christian, death is pictured as the process of moving out of a temporary tent and into the house of God. The Christian may wonder how they’ll get there, what the journey will be like, they may pray for grace and strength to make it through the pain, and perhaps for God to take them quickly, but there is no fear of death. It has no sting.

And that means we can have freedom in this life. We’re not afraid of losing what we know we cannot keep and we’re not trying to hang on to what’s only temporary when we know what eternity brings we have [the promise of life, eternal life, which is in Christ Jesus](#).

And in the meantime, we have an inheritance of things like [grace, mercy, \*and\* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord](#).

Allow me to emphasize, this is all routine stuff. This may be a letter written from an apostle to a pastor, but these gifts belong to all believers. Christian, this is your present-day reality in Christ. You might not know you have it, you might not fully appreciate it or understand it, but it’s yours and you can learn more about it if you’re interested.

Do you remember, last week, we looked at the Heidelberg Catechism, an ancient study guide for the faith – a series of questions and answers used by the church to help people learn what Christianity is all about. And it starts with this question:

Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

And the answer begins:

A. That I am not my own but belong  
—body and soul, in life and in death—  
to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

My friends, no matter what else is happening in life – whether the sun is shining or it’s dark and dreary and it’s been cold and wet for weeks – this is always true. This is where we start. This is the key to how we understand the world and our place in it. Yes, you face challenges and trials. Yes, you need *comfort*. Where do you find it? Where is the *only* place you find it? In the knowledge that ‘I am not my own, but I belong – body and soul, in life and in death – to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ’ because I have been redeemed, picked up, purchased, and adopted by God.

This fact gives shape to everything else. It defines my life. I *belong* to my *Savior* Jesus, and that is why all these other things flow into my life. [Grace, mercy, and peace](#) are mine because, to use Paul’s opening words, I have [the promise of life in Christ Jesus](#).

Well, again, this is just the first of four major benefits we receive in Christ – redemption. But this redemption brings us into our second benefit: relationships. Read with me:

[3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, 4 greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, 5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.](#)

## **The Gifts God has given you: 2. Relationships**

When Jesus was asked to identify the Greatest Commandment – to reduce the entire faith to a single sentence summary, He said it was this: to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and to love your neighbor as yourself. In other words, to prioritize our relationship with God and other people and the flip side of that means other people who love God are also to prioritize their relationship with us. This is God’s plan – to draw people to Himself toward others.

So, look at the relationships God surrounded Timothy with. First and foremost, he has a mom and a grandma who love God and love him. Jesus made a difference in the lives of Lois and Eunice and now they’ve made a difference in Timothy.

That wasn’t always the case. Elsewhere (Acts 16:1) we learn that Timothy grew up in a bi-racial home. His dad was a Greek and his mom was a Jew. And mom compromised culturally – she never had young Timothy circumcised as an infant. We’re not sure exactly what his upbringing was like, but at some point, mom and grandma received the gospel and were born again and began to take responsibility for Timothy’s spiritual formation leading him to faith as well.

So, I want to do a little experiment here, a little data collection if you will. I want to ask where you first encountered the gospel or who led you to faith.

- If you first encountered the gospel or were led to faith at a large crusade or event please raise your hand.
- If you first encountered the gospel or were led to faith at church or by a pastor please raise your hand.
- If you first encountered the gospel or were led to faith through a campus ministry at college or youth group, please raise your hand.
- If you first encountered the gospel or were led to faith by your mom or grandmother, please raise your hand.

Research consistently shows that most people who come to faith do so because they receive the faith of their family and most often, that's through the influence of mom.

Now, events and church and campus ministries and youth groups are all great and helpful and definitely have their place, but I want to encourage you moms - you have an essential role to play in the spiritual life of your children. You don't have to be an expert, you don't have to have all the answers, but you have a unique role to play, a unique position of influence and it never goes away, even when they leave the house. Mothers especially, are the evangelists of the Church.

But dad, that doesn't take anything away from you. Notice that Paul calls Timothy his **beloved son**, he's adopted him spiritually and taken an interest in Timothy. Earlier, in a letter written to the church Timothy now pastors, Paul highlighted the important role of Christian fathers. He said,

**Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.**

**Eph 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.**

Men have an obligation, a role to play, in the spiritual development of their children. Men, you have this blessed opportunity to lead your sons and daughters into the most important things they will ever know or experience. You can make them angry; you can frustrate them – you have more power physically, positionally, financially, you exert this umbrella of control over their lives – you can use that to **provoke them wrath**, or you can use it all to point them toward the Lord.

What's more important? Teaching them to play sports or introducing them to Christ? Teaching them to code or how to read their Bible? Paying for their college or teaching them to pray? Taking them on vacation or taking them to church? None of the other things are bad, do them if you can, by all means, but first and foremost – show them the love of Christ.

And listen, you can't teach what you don't know, right? So, maybe, just maybe, God brings kids into your life and uses them as the push you need to level up. There's nothing wrong with that. Absolutely nothing wrong with that. But if that's you – then get after it! Receive everything that God wants to give you SO THAT you can pass it along and reflect it to others.

Now, in an ideal world, you have a mom and dad who love each other and love Jesus and then they have kids and pass their faith along. That's the best-case scenario. But notice, that's *not* what we see here.

Timothy's dad isn't in the picture. But two other people are – grandma and Paul.

So, let's talk about grandparents first. Grandma and Grandpa, you still have the chance to make an impact on your grandkids. And the cool thing is, I see it happening. We have grandparents stepping in to help their kids with the kids. We see grandparents spending time with grandkids and even bringing them to church. You're praying for your grandkids.

And, you're reaching kids that aren't even yours. You serve in the nursery holding babies. We've even got a couple in this church that volunteer to serve in the nursery all week at a camp for single moms. Friends, grandparents matter.

And then, there's spiritual adoption. Paul saw something in young Timothy and took a special interest in him. Some of you have followed his example. You've opened up your heart or your home to take someone in. You've become like another mom or dad or aunt or uncle, or even brother or sister to someone.

And yeah, maybe Timothy has some daddy-issues or father wounds. That's not uncommon right? According to recent research,<sup>1</sup> nearly 1 in 4 Americans under the age of 18 lives with just one parent, and usually, it's mom. Compare that to China where only 3% of children grow up without mom and dad, or Nigeria where it's only 4%. In India 5% of children live in single-parent households. Even up north in Canada only 15% of kids live with just one parent. Out of 130 countries in the study, the US led them all.

What's the point? Well, yeah, we've got some messed up, non-traditional families and maybe you weren't able to have the mom, dad, grandparents, or family you wanted. That's real. And it hurts.

But, God provides surrogates and spiritual adoption in the church. Here Timothy has someone who sees him as a **beloved son** (vs 2). Not just a son, a son who is **dearly loved** –

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/12/12/u-s-children-more-likely-than-children-in-other-countries-to-live-with-just-one-parent/>

and yes, for you Bible nerds, that's agape. Timothy has someone who **prays** for him **night and day**. Someone who is facing death and yet says he **greatly desires** to see Timothy and when he does it will **fill** him **with joy**.

Timothy has someone in his life who says 'I believe in you.' 'I have confidence in you.' 'I trust you.'

And I'm here to say, *every man you know* needs exactly this today. Every man you know wants to be Paul *and* wants to be Timothy. Men are meant to exert positive pressure on each other. Men are meant to care for and about other men, to teach, train, chastise, mock, harass, mentor and love other men and to receive the same thing from men they respect.

They don't always get it though, so they slide toward apathy, cynicism, idleness, and disengagement or foolish, dangerous, and destructive behaviors. All because they don't have anyone else to invest in or because no one of any quality is investing in them.

When a man hears the words 'I'm proud of you,' or 'I believe in you,' or 'I want you on my team' from a man he respects, it fills a deep, deep need inside. This is why men want to be on a winning team with other winners or off on their own doing their own thing. There's very little middle ground.

And the point that I want to make is: *that's exactly what Timothy has*. His biological dad is out of the picture, but he's got the apostle Paul: a man he respects who also respects him. That's a gift. And *you* could either be that gift *for* someone else or receive that gift *from* someone else as you follow Jesus because *He made us for relationships*.

OK, we're looking at all the things we find in Christ and we've already seen redemption and relationships, now it's on to roles and gifts – God gives you something to do and the power to do it.

**2 Timothy 1:6** Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. **7** For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

### **The Gifts God has given you: 3. A Role to play**

Paul opened this letter by introducing himself as an **apostle** – that's a leader in the early church. And he's writing to Timothy who is serving as the pastor of this local church in modern-day Turkey. They both have a *role* to play.

But, you could say the same thing about **Lois** and **Eunice**. They had a role to play as well: mom and grandma. And quite possibly they had another role to play in the community - maybe they were bakers or merchants, certainly they were neighbors.

Today we operate in these same spheres – the home, the workplace or community, and the church. And we have roles in each. You might not be called to be an apostle or to pastor a church, but that doesn't mean you don't have a role or that your role isn't valuable or necessary.



Last year was the fiftieth anniversary of TubaChristmas – a holiday concert featuring nothing but instruments from the tuba family. It's unique, it's a novelty, it has a certain appeal. But it will never match the beauty of a symphony where different instruments make individual contributions to music that is rich and complex.



Could you have a football team with nothing but linemen? A baseball team with nothing but catchers?

Scripture is clear about the fact that we all have something to do for the glory of God and the good of others. We have roles. God-given roles. And they're important.

The Bible speaks of the church like a body with all it's different parts – hands, feet, eyes, ears – and we need all the parts. We're not all the same, we're different, for a reason.

Are you able to see, with clarity and conviction, the role God has given you? You haven't been put in the relationships you're in or given the job you have simply for your own sake – you're there to be used by God for His glory and the good of others. You're there to see things and see people from an eternal, spiritual perspective. No matter what you do, no matter who you're around. You've got a God-given role – can you see it and appreciate it? Have you allowed the gospel to affect the way you see each of the roles you're filling?

I hope it would seem inconceivable to you for your pastor to fill his role in the church and give no thought to God as I go about fulfilling my pastoral duties. But I want to bring you to the place where it seems just as inconceivable for *you* to go to the office, or the studio, or the classroom, or wherever it is that you go to fill *your* role and give no thought to God. In the home, in the community, in the church, we all have different roles to play.

And here's why that's so important to me – you need to see that your whatever your role is, wherever your role takes you, it's supernatural. There's a spiritual aspect to it. God wants to influence it. I want you to see your 'ordinary' life as the extraordinary thing it is. Whether God calls you to be a pastor or a parent, a missionary or a mechanic, a counselor or a chiropractor – it's a role for you to fill for the glory of God and the good of others. This is the life God wants to shape, enable, direct and bless, right here, right now. We work out our redemption in the context of relationships and roles.

Fortunately, we're also given literal gifts.

#### **The Gifts God has given you: 4. Gifts**

Paul says Timothy received a special [gift](#) for the ministry he was called to and that it was associated with a time when Paul laid hands on him and prayed.<sup>2</sup> This was likely a public event that happened with the church leadership or possibly even the entire congregation – they affirmed Timothy’s role and calling and the Holy Spirit gave him the supernatural ability to do what he was called to do.

And Scripture is clear – this kind of thing happens *all the time*. God gives you a certain role, position, calling or mission and then He gives you supernatural abilities and equipping for it. God does not put you in a position just to watch you fail. If God has given you a role – in the home, the community, or the church, He wants to give you everything necessary to succeed in it too.

That includes everything from skills to knowledge, abilities and experiences and things that are general as well as specific. Timothy’s specific gift is not mentioned here, though it’s likely the ability to pastor this church and all that goes into that.

I’ve had similar experiences. I sincerely believe that God gives me supernatural enabling and wisdom and understanding to do what I do – not because He loves me, but because He loves you. If for any reason I were no longer the pastor of this church, He would give whoever came along behind me whatever they needed to love and lead you as well.

But then notice, God also gives gifts that are more internally focused and character or virtue based like a [spirit of power, and of love, and a sound mind](#) in other words, self-discipline or self-control. These are all going to be extremely relevant to Timothy’s role as pastor but they’re not unique to him. And here’s the point I want to keep making and making until we all believe it’s true: this is not exceptional Christianity. This is the base-level package. This is the standard issue.

Paul says God gave Timothy a spirit of power. But remember Timothy is pastoring the church in Ephesus and when he wrote a letter to the entire church he prayed that they would be

[Eph3:16 ... strengthened with might through His Spirit \[the Spirit of Jesus in the inner man.](#)

Paul tells Timothy that he has been given a spirit of love. But in his letter to the entire church in Rome he says:

[Romans 5:5 ... the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.](#)

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<sup>2</sup> We learn from 1 Timothy (4:14) that other elders were involved too.

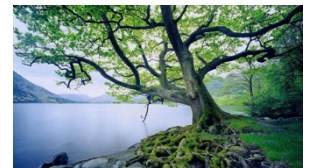


And we could go on and on proving that God gives extraordinary spiritual gifts and enhanced personal virtues to all of us in Christ and that these gifts can be developed and grow over time.

Our problem, like Timothy, is not that we're spiritually impoverished or weak, it's that we need to remember all that God has given us.

Three times in this short passage we find the word **remember** or **remind**. We're prone to forget our benefits and all we've been given. Especially when the heat comes. Especially in the year of drought. When life gets hard. When discouraging news comes. When we're thinking about all we stand to lose or what we cannot reach.

But today we've been reminded. We've been reminded of what we have in Jesus. We've been reminded of our redemption. We've been reminded of our relationships – what others have been for us and what we get to be for them. We've been reminded of our roles – the places God has put us and what we get to do while we're there. And we've been reminded of the gifts we receive to make it all possible.



So, I hope you walk out of here encouraged – encouraged by what God is doing for you, what He is doing in you, and what He is doing through you.

Let's pray.



## Sermon Application and Discussion Questions

### 2 Timothy 1:1-7 The Gifts God Has Given You

**Summary:** God gives us redemption, relationships, and roles along with the gifts necessary for them all.

- Who were the family or friends that led you to faith?
  - o What kind of Christian lineage do you have? Who else in your prior generations was/is a believer in Christ?
- What elements of your family and home life were hard for you spiritually? Which elements were helpful?
- Paul was like a spiritual parent or mentor for Timothy. Has anyone played this role in your life?
  - o Have you been able to mentor or 'adopt' anyone? How did it happen? Did you approach them or did they approach you? What has been your goal for the relationship?
- How do you experience a spirit of power and love and sound mind? What form does that take? What does it look or feel like in your life?
- What role(s) has God given you to play at home, in the community and at church?
- Review Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. Has God given you any of these gifts?
  - o Most scholars believe these lists are not meant to be representative, not exhaustive, in other words, God may give other gifts. Is there anything else that God has given to you that you would classify as a 'gift'?
- HOW do you stir up the gift of God that is in you? How do you reinvigorate yourself spiritually?
  - o What is the tension between God's role in giving you a gift and 'jump starting' your faith and then your responsibility in developing, nurturing and employing it?