



3/2/26

I loved the message from Sunday, and I'm really excited about our baptism celebration coming next Sunday. I think the statement from the message that rocked me the most was this, "Never spend my time where Jesus is NOT." Look for where God is at work, and go there with Him. I think doing that would save me a lot of trouble!!!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

2 Timothy 1:5-14

In this last letter Paul ever wrote before he was executed for his faith, I think it's pretty cool that he wrote it to his spiritual son, Timothy. I see in this letter direction for a pastor leading his church intertwined with heartfelt words specifically pointed to someone he deeply cared. And though these words were Paul's words for Timothy, I can see how God wanted these words written for all His people to apply to our own lives. What does God want me to learn?

Vs. 5-7 ~ Paul spoke of his sweet memories of Timothy's mom and grandma, how they had such a sincere faith in the Lord. He could see how their faith had such a profound influence on Timothy, to the point that he embraced that faith for himself. Truly, God is grandfather to no one. The faith of parents and grandparents can contribute to the lives of the kids, and I pray it does, but it cannot save them. They have to come to a place where they personally confess Jesus as Lord of their lives. But I'm so grateful that the Lord uses people to reach the lost, especially when the lost ones are their own flesh and blood.

Paul said, "I am reminded" of your mom and grandma's faith that you took as your own. And then he said, "I want to remind YOU of something." What? Remember to fan into flame the gift of God. What is the gift of God and why do we need to fan it into flame? The gift of God is the Holy Spirit who seals us for the day of redemption, when Jesus takes us home.

How do I know Paul's talking about the Holy Spirit? He said Timothy has the Spirit through the laying on of his hands. During that time, they didn't have the whole word of God like we do

today, and apostles laid hands on people to receive the Holy Spirit when they confessed Jesus as Lord. It was a definitive sign to them of their salvation. Now we are automatically sealed with the Spirit when we believe in the gospel and receive Jesus Christ as our Lord. Ephesians 1:13-14 says, "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

Timothy had received the Holy Spirit. He was a Christian. But Paul reminded him to "fan into flame" that gift. Why? When the flame of the Spirit in us is quenched, we fall into fear. The Greek word for fear means "cowardice". God wants to protect us from letting fear of our circumstances take control. Instead, when I fan into flame the gift given me through the Spirit, a fire of power, love, and self control burns away the fear. Through the Spirit, I have courage to do and be what God calls me to do and be.

This is a big deal. Fear, or lack of courage in the Lord, keeps me from experiencing the power and strength God wants to give me to accomplish His purpose. It keeps me from loving the way Jesus loved. Loving behavior motivated by the fear of rejection may look like God's sacrificial love, but it is not. I know when I truly have the confident courage to love by how I respond when I'm not treated with love. When my love is not genuine like the Lord's, I will either shut down or lash out. God wants me to kindle the fire of His genuine love... poured into my heart so that it can also be poured out for others.

Fear also keeps me from being self controlled. True self control only comes by the power of the Holy Spirit. I would even call it being Spirit controlled. I can't fan into flame the power to do any of this in my own strength. I have no strength apart from God. I need Him to strengthen me, fill me with love, and help me not to lose self/Spirit control and give up.

Vs. 8-10 ~ "Therefore..." What's the therefore there for? Therefore, since I have the Spirit who grows in me His power, love, and self control...

- *Don't be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. The Greek word for testimony is "martyrion". Martyrdom. Don't be ashamed that Jesus was martyred for me. It was not weakness that put Him on the cross, but power, love, and self control. If He had let fear control Him, He never would have gone to the cross.*
- *Don't be ashamed of Paul's imprisonment. As he said in Philippians 1, his imprisonment served to advance the gospel. Don't shrink from that in fear but let the cost of following Christ in a world that hates Him only serve to grow my confidence and courage.*
- *Willingly share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God. Shrinking back from the suffering because of fear of the cost will keep me from experiencing the joy that comes in standing strong in the Lord regardless of the schemes of the devil. Fear will keep me from loving my enemies in hopes that they might turn to the Lord in repentance. Fear will make me fight against the suffering, and possibly even turn from*

Christ, causing me to forget that Jesus suffered so that my suffering would only be temporary. Fear will make me do foolish things and break out of the self control and clarity that come from the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the source of everything I need to keep from being ashamed. Turning to my flesh and quenching His flame from keeping my heart of fire for Him will only leave me with regret.

Why be I willing to suffer for the gospel? Jesus saved me and called me to His holy calling, not because I did anything to deserve it, but because of His own purpose and grace. His intentional purpose and blessing of grace were planned for me before time began. He KNEW that when He created man, He would have to give him the opportunity to rebel against Him, or there would be no chance for a relationship based on love. He knew man would rebel. He knew a price would have to be paid for man to be restored to relationship with Him, without which man would be completely hopeless. He knew He had to have a plan for redemption. His plan was to send His only Son, Jesus, to be my Savior began before He even said, "Let there be light."

So Jesus came... as planned. He abolished death. He rendered it ineffective and brought the hope and light of the gospel for eternal life. Remember this... so that I will cooperate with God by fanning into flame what He has already giving me! If I did not have the flame of the Holy Spirit burning in my heart, no amount of fanning would even create a spark. But because the Holy Spirit dwells in my heart, I fan that flame into a bonfire of hope by dwelling with Him, walking with Him, being transformed by Him, and keeping in step with Him as so many scriptures describe.

Vs. 11-12 ~ Paul spent his life fanning that fire into flame. He was only reminding Timothy to do what he himself made a practice of doing. For the testimony of the gospel, God made Paul a preacher who preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified. God made Paul an apostle, a special position for the church that carried unique authority in the beginning of the church. Only 13 apostles ever lived, the 11 disciples who walked with Jesus (excluding Judas who betrayed Him), the 12th apostle appointed after Jesus rose again, and Paul... who was appointed miraculously when God turned him from persecuting the church to becoming the persecuted for the sake of the gospel. And God made Paul a teacher who taught faithfully by example. With his ministry given through Jesus, he took on enormous suffering... and he was willing. In 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, he described his suffering. He said, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our bodies." Wow.

How could Paul, imprisoned and afflicted, suffering for the gospel, encourage Timothy to fan the flame of the Spirit into his own life? How could Paul even be so committed to God that he wanted that for himself??? He said, "I am not ashamed to suffer like this because I KNOW Jesus. I know that He will guard what really matters... my soul." So... God wasn't guarding him

from suffering. He was guarding his soul! And Paul knew that eternal life with Jesus was really what mattered. At the end of this letter in 2 Timothy 4:18, after all the suffering he had been through, and while he sat in prison, he said, "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen." O Lord, I want to know You like that!

I want to know You so well that nothing can shake my faith... that my circumstances don't determine my strength, but You do. I want to be so full of Your love that I can't help but pray for those who would persecute me... and grieve for THEM rather than myself. I want to know You so well that nothing causes me to give up self control and indulge in escape. I want to be so dependent on You that nothing can pry my arms from clinging to You... as You hem me in behind and before. O Lord, let me know You like that. Help me to fan that into flame. The relationship Paul had with you was not reserved only for him. It's for ALL who will fan the gift of God into flame! Praise Your name!!!

Vs. 13-14 ~ I KNOW that You did not just reserve a close relationship with You only for Paul, because he told Timothy to follow his example through what he observed in Paul and what he heard him speak. I can do the same. I have his words written down for me, words written through the power of the Holy Spirit.

How do I follow that example? First, I do it in the faith and love that come through Jesus. I never forget the gospel. And second, by the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in me, I guard what God has given me. I fan into flame His Spirit of power, love, and self control.

O Lord, please help me to do this! Let no fear or circumstance derail my faith. You are everything I need. Help me to look nowhere else. Help me not to be deceived into thinking that my suffering is a sign of Your rejection or absence. Help me not to be deceived into thinking that I shouldn't have to suffer. Help me to remember the gospel... and then I will know that my suffering is never in vain. Praise Your name!