

FBC Service Mother's Day Sunday 2 Timothy 1:3-5 Thanks for the Memories

One of the greatest gifts anyone can have growing up is to have godly parents and grandparents.

Paul appeals to Timothy to remember his wonderful spiritual heritage that goes back at least two generations.

His grandmother Lois was a godly woman who picked up the torch of truth and handed it down to her daughter Eunice who (despite being in a mixed marriage spiritually) passed it on to Timothy.

In reminding him of this, Paul means to build some steel into Timothy's soul. "Son, you've got a great heritage. I can see the faith of your mother and grandmother in you as well. Now live up to it." Those words coming from a beloved mentor would have a powerful impact on this young believer.

We all have a heritage, a family tree. **We all have a spiritual history**—whether good or bad. We're Christians because someone influenced us to come to Christ.

No one comes completely on his own. We all have others who make their mark on us and helped us come to the place where we put our trust in Christ.

Can you remember who influenced your life for Christ?

When you think about your own testimony, can you remember the day you came to saving faith in Jesus?

I know I can, just like yesterday! I didn't have a Lois or Eunice, but I did have big Sammy Noble.

Not everyone can point to a particular moment of decision when they put their trust in Christ. For some they seemed to grow up in the faith.

There were many along the way who instructed them (Sunday School teachers, Pastors, parents, authors, and friends). But still they stand on the shoulders of those people.

Consciously or unconsciously we are the fruit of the labour of others. If you can pinpoint some of those people who helped you come to Christ, let them know that you appreciate their influence in your life.

There are also spiritual mentors who impact our lives. These are people who help us to grow. They teach us, they walk with us and they pray for us.

For me, I look back on the work of a youth worker who opened his home to young people. Sam Bell had an impact on my life. He faithfully taught the Word of God, patiently answered my questions and he made room in his life for me. **Quartet. M Davison.**

Abraham Lincoln said, "No one is poor who had a godly mother." He went on to say, "I remember my mother's prayers, and they have followed me; they have clung to me all my life.

We're here today to celebrate Mother's Day, a day that has been set aside as a time for "public expression of our love and reverence for the mothers of our country."

As we reflect on all that our mother's did for us at home, and even after we left home, how deserving our mothers are on this day we honour them!

We honour them because of all of the roles that our mothers filled while we were growing up, nurse, counselor, spiritual and financial advisor, educator, nutritionist, accountant, transportation specialist, maid, peacemaker, entertainer, **and someone who loved us unconditionally.**

So on this Mother's Day service, we want to say thank you to all of our mothers for their undying love, their untiring work, their unselfish giving and their undivided devotion.

I heard about a little boy that forgot his lines in a Sunday School presentation. Who do you think was sitting on the front row to help him just in case this happened? His mother!

She waved her hand at him and tried to get his attention, and tried to mouth the words silently to help remind him of the line that he'd forgotten but it didn't help.

Finally, she leaned forward and whispered the line, **"I am the light of the world."** All of a sudden, the little boy stood ramrod straight and his face lit up and with great feeling and a loud clear voice he said, **"My mum is the light of the world."**

Here in 2nd Timothy chapter 1, Paul is writing to the young preacher named Timothy and he says, *"I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you."*

Can there be any higher compliment of your life, than to hear someone say those words about you.

What you have here in 2nd Timothy chapter 1 is what I call "family faith."

When I talk about family faith, please don't get the idea that I'm saying that a person is a Christian because his mum or his dad was a Christian.

Folks, God only has children, he doesn't have any grandchildren.

Now having said that, I do believe that it's God's plan for Christian parents and grandparents to instruct their children what it means to have faith in Christ.

"Paul went first to Derbe and then to Lystra, where there was a young disciple named Timothy. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek." Acts 16:1

Luke tells us here about the day that Paul first met Timothy. His mother was Jewish but his father was a Greek. The word 'Greek' here, is a word that was used to describe those who weren't Jews.

Timothy's mother was a believer, but it doesn't say anything about his father. Most Bible scholars believe that Timothy's father was not a Christian, and so when Paul writes his letter to Timothy, he doesn't mention his father's faith, because he didn't have any, **but he does mention his mother's faith.**

Lois and Eunice are not very well known and only mentioned once in the Bible, but their grandson and son is. Timothy was a faithful servant of the Lord in the early church and Paul thought very highly of him.

Timothy was greatly influenced by both his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois. These two ladies provide a wonderful example of passing on a godly heritage.

Here, we see that a man of faith was given a legacy of faith by two very important women of faith—his mother and his grandmother.

But there's much we know about their story of faith from the details that the Bible does tell us.

E.G. I remember reading about a group of pastors who were arguing over which translation of the Bible was the best. One pastor argued that his favourite translation was the best; another argued that another one was the best; and on and on they all went.

Finally, one pastor piped up and said, "I think my mother's translation was the best." When the others asked which translation that was, he said, "It was the Everyday Life Translation."

The other pastors said that they'd never heard of that one; and he said, **"She translated the Bible into everyday life; and it was the best translation I've ever read."**

Timothy evidently had a great translation of the Bible presented to him in the life of his mother and his grandmother. They had a faith that was "sincere". It was worked out into everyday life. That sincere faith had also found its way in the life of Timothy.

Our mothers deserve so much. They deserve our hearts, our love, and our appreciation. Whether you had a great experience in your upbringing, or you came up in a broken home, **God chose your mother to play a vital role in your life and bring you into this world.**

I know as parents we say that our children are gifts from God. **In a similar respect, let's see our mothers as God's gift to us.** They nurtured us. Cared for us. Fed us. Clothed us. Changed us. Bathed us. Held us in our best moments. Held us in our darkest.

When we could do nothing, they did everything.

God has given mothers as gifts to cherish and learn from. On Mother's Day, let's join together and celebrate them for their God-given role in helping us to become the men or women we are today.

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice..." The word for **"lived"** is better translated as **"dwelt."** **A dwelling is a house or place where people live.**

Wyn and I moved to the farm in Arkona in 1976.

As I think about that place, we have a lot of memories there. As a family we worked together, ate lots of meals together, went to church together, had game nights with friends, had fire pits in our backyard. We raised three kids there. Our home was our dwelling place.

What Paul is saying is that faith made its home in Lois and Eunice's lives. It took up residence. It made a bunch of memories. On good days and bad days faith was present. Faith in God has been there through it all, living life with them.

The Bible defines a living faith as one that goes through life every day and seeks to know God, love Him, and follow the Holy Spirit wherever he leads. **That's an alive faith.** That's a faith that dwells in us every day.

I think there's a lot to be encouraged by here. Eunice didn't have an ideal Jesus-loving husband, and yet Timothy still saw her faith and wanted to take it as his own. This should be really encouraging for those wives who have husbands who aren't yet where they need to be spiritually.

You can't control their faith, but you can live your faith every day, even in less-than-ideal circumstances, and that is enough.

Lois and Eunice were genuine in their faith, and they lived their faith daily. That's all something we can do.

And I want to encourage you in that. Keep going. Some days it's easy. On other days it's hard. Just keep genuine faith and live that genuine faith every day, through the good days and the hard days.

Later, in Paul's second letter to Timothy, who has become a pastor at Ephesus, writes:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:14-15 (NIV)

Another thing that helped Timothy take ownership of his faith, become a Christian, and follow Jesus, is that Lois and Eunice taught him the Scriptures from childhood. That means not just the New Testament, which they might not have even had access to yet, but the Old Testament too.

Ever since he was knee high to a grasshopper, Timothy had seen and he had heard and he had watched and he had learned from his mother what it meant to have real faith.

You say, "How do you show that? How to you teach that? Pastor, I want my son or my daughter to have that kind of faith. How can I give them that legacy of faith?"

First of all you've got to possess that kind of faith. You can't share what you don't have.

Show that son or that daughter what real faith looks like. Let them see it each and everyday.

So let me ask you a question. **How in the world did Timothy know the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, from the time that he was a little baby?** Was he some sort of child genius? No. Then how did he know the Scriptures? **His mum taught them to him.**

She quoted those Bible verses and many more over that little baby, so that when the day came and God began to speak to his heart, the Holy Spirit found fertile ground in which to work.

It's something that you can give them that will never pass away.

Lois and Eunice taught him the Bible, and over time, Timothy became convinced that it was true. Paul encourages him to remember those who taught him, including Lois and Eunice.

These two women had a powerful effect on Timothy's life as they taught him the Scriptures, were genuine about their faith, and their everyday lives showed that faith. Fathers need to teach their kids the Bible too.

I'm so glad for all the Eunice's and Lois's in our world who faithfully tell their children and grandchildren about Jesus and wanting them to believe in him. But it doesn't stop there. They keep praying for those precious loved ones all the days of their lives.

I wonder how many young lives were influenced for Jesus by those prayers.

And that's the best gift Christian mums want, isn't it? Children who follow Christ. And if your kids aren't there yet, don't give up. We can be genuine, have real faith, and teach the Bible, but our children make their own choices. But you never know, given time, what the Holy Spirit can do.

Some of you don't have biological or adopted children, **but you still have the opportunity to have spiritual sons and daughters,** to find someone and mentor them to know and love Jesus Christ better.

All of us can invite someone into a spiritual mentor relationship.

I hope that, if you have had a godly mother or grandmother who passed a sincere faith on to you, you'll take the time to thank them today if you can. And I hope that you'll thank God for them!

What a gift He has given you through them!

But I hope that you'll also do more than be thankful for it. I hope that your thankfulness will be expressed in the fact that you'll hold fast to that faith, and protect it, and guard it as a precious treasure.

I hope that you'll give yourself to build on it, and grow in it, and learn of it, and mature in it. And I hope that you'll pass it on to others who will faithfully then pass it on as well.

May we follow the example of these two great women, and their 'migrating' faith in Christ.