

Finishing Well with a Sincere Faith (2 Timothy 1.3-5)

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Dominant Thought: Sincere faith inspires future generations for Jesus.

Objectives:

I want my listeners to know the descriptions of sincere faith.

I want my listeners to inspire others in following Jesus.

I want my listeners to cultivate relationships with future generations of Christ followers.

Focus Question: What does sincere faith look like?

As Paul writes his second letter to Timothy, he may be days away from execution in Rome. These are some of the final words we have from the apostle Paul. These final words encourage Timothy and all who will follow to finish strong. As we study these four chapters of 2 Timothy, we'll look at the following themes: Finishing well with: a sincere faith, a simple gospel, sound doctrine, and special friends. I hope you will join us and read through this special letter in the coming weeks.

Paul highlights the sincere faith of Timothy in [2 Timothy 1.3](#). Sincere has a basic meaning of unhypocritical. There is no mask. In [Romans 12.9](#), Paul writes, "Let love be genuine/sincere." The question we want to ask today is what does genuine or sincere faith look like?

As we look at [2 Timothy 1.3-5](#), we discover three descriptions of sincere faith.

First, sincere faith is a memorable faith ([2 Timothy 1.3-5](#)). Three times in these three verses we encounter a form of remembering. Paul says, "I constantly remember you in my prayers" ([2 Tim. 1.3](#)). "Recalling your tears" ([2 Tim. 1.4](#)). "I am reminded" ([2 Tim. 1.5](#)). A sincere faith is a memorable faith.

I can remember when I was 16 or 17 years old. The alternator had gone out on my 1981 Chevy Citation. One of the men in our church had helped us fix our cars in the past. So, I called Randy. Randy helped me change the alternator out of my car. As we were talking, I was telling him that my dad wasn't very handy and didn't know how to fix things. I think Randy's dad had showed him how to work on cars. Randy replied, "Your dad has shown you more important

things. Your dad has shown you the ways of Jesus.” Randy’s dad was not a follower of Jesus. I’ll never forget that conversation in the driveway of 11 Oak Ridge Dr. in Seneca, MO. Randy recognized, recalled, and reminded me of my dad’s sincere faith.

Second, sincere faith is a living faith ([2 Timothy 1.5, 10](#)). Paul highlighted that a sincere faith lived in Timothy. As Paul remembers Timothy’s sincere faith, he also was reminded of the sincere faith of his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. Later in [2 Timothy 3.14](#), Paul commands Timothy to continue in what he has learned and become convinced of because he knows those from whom he learned it. Then Paul says in [2 Timothy 3.15](#).

2 Timothy 3:15 NIV

and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Who taught infant Timothy the Holy Scriptures? I have a hunch it was his mom and his grandma. This verse is also a great reminder that we can teach even our littlest family members the truths of Jesus.

I’m thankful that I trace my spiritual lineage through my mom and my grandma. When we visited grandma, we went to church. We would join her at the First Baptist Church in Moline, IL. Her preacher looked just like Phil Donahue for those who remember him. Reverend Bailey knew my grandma. He knew her story. She was a faithful member. When we would arrive at church, she would visit with her friends. She was an active member of her church family. When we would visit my grandma, we would read Scripture with her at bedtime. She loved to hear us read the Bible to her. She even had some favorite stories she’d want us to read.

My grandma loved Jesus. One of her favorite songs was “How Great Thou Art.” I still can remember singing that song at our home church in Missouri around the time my grandma had open heart surgery. As we sang that song in Missouri and as grandma was either preparing or recovering from heart surgery, I saw my dad cry.

Later, when I started preaching here in Illinois, my grandma would drive the 3 hours from the Quad Cities to Berlin on a Sunday morning to surprise me and hear me preach. I miss my grandma. But I hope her sincere faith lives on in us because we have followed her lead.

She shared her faith with my mom, and my mom shared her faith with us. We have shared our faith with our children. Generations of sincere faith.

What I've learned from my mom is the power of prayer and the importance of relationships. My mom is a praying woman. She reminds us of the story of three bad things happening to my dad in 24 hours: he broke his arm at work, his brother drowned, and his workplace closed. Two and a half years later, Dad was still unemployed working odd jobs to put food on the table. Through that season of prayer, Dad had 3 job offers in the course of 24 hours.

Sincere faith inspires future generations for Jesus.

Third, sincere faith is a persuasive faith ([2 Timothy 1.5](#)).

Paul uses this same word for persuade or convince in [2 Timothy 1.12](#)

2 Timothy 1:12 NIV

That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

The Battle of Vicksburg, one of the bloodiest conflicts recorded in American history, was over. Among the many badly wounded soldiers was Union officer Major Daniel Webster Whittle. After losing his right arm in the battle, Major Whittle spent months as a prisoner of war (POW) recuperating in a hospital. The young soldier became weary of having nothing to do while recovering. Finally, looking for something to do to pass the time, Major Whittle began reading the New Testament his mother had given him when he joined the Army.

As Major Whittle read the little Bible, the Holy Spirit convicted him of his sin and his need for a Savior. However, he resisted surrendering to Christ, and soon he fell asleep. A short time afterward, a hospital orderly awakened him. The orderly explained that another POW was dying and wanted someone to come pray with him. Major Whittle protested that he could not pray with the dying patient and suggested that the orderly ask someone else. "But I thought you were a Christian; I have seen you reading your Bible," the orderly replied.

Major Whittle later wrote:

I dropped on my knees and held the [dying] boy's hand in mine. In a few broken words, I confessed my sins and asked Christ to forgive me. I believed right there that He did forgive me. I then prayed and pleaded God's promises. When I arose from my knees, . . . he [the soldier] was dead. A look of peace had come over his troubled face, and I cannot but believe that God who used him to bring me to the Savior used me to lead

him to trust Christ's precious blood and find pardon. (<https://iblp.org/hymn-history-i-know-whom-i-have-believed/>)

After the war in 1883, Daniel Whittle wrote a hymn that may have been inspired by this verse, 2 Timothy 1.12.

Here is verse one and the chorus of this special hymn, "I know whom I have believed."

I know not why God's wondrous grace

To me He hath made known,

Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love

Redeemed me for His own.

Chorus: But "I know Whom I have believed,

And am persuaded that He is able

To keep that which I've committed

Unto Him against that day."

As we read through [2 Timothy 1](#), I want us to hear some more context of this sincere faith. Paul reminds Timothy of the Holy Spirit who lives inside of the followers of Jesus.

2 Timothy 1:7 NIV

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Hear these encouragements.

How would people know you are a follower of Jesus? Think deeply on that. Could they tell you love Jesus? Could your life and words persuade others of your faith? Do people sense something different in your life?

This week, one of the members of Berlin Christian Church passed away. Jean Tolliver finished her race well. She lived out a sincere faith. Jean was homebound most of the past two years. Her husband, Ralph, was a longtime elder in this church. Ralph and Jean were instrumental leaders in helping

us relocate to this property and build this building. I told our youth group on Wednesday night we would not be in this building without Ralph and Jean's leadership. Jean was smiling even as she was confined to her chair. She organized many funeral dinners and was known for her mashed potatoes. When Nancy called me to tell me her mom, Jean, had passed away Nancy said, "She's home." Jean's sincere faith persuaded others.

A sincere faith is a memorable faith, a living faith, and a persuasive faith. How will you share your faith so the next generation can follow Jesus? Who will you share your faith with this week?