

2 Timothy - Part 3

by John Hunter

In this sermon, John Hunter emphasizes the importance of stirring up spiritual gifts and remaining faithful amidst challenges, as exemplified in Paul's encouragement to Timothy in 2 Timothy.

Duration: 29:11

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:3-7, 2 Timothy 1:13-14

Topics: "Spiritual Gifts", "Faith Legacy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on inspiring Timothy by reminding him of various aspects. He starts by mentioning his affection and confidence in Timothy, emphasizing the tender link between them. The speaker then highlights the importance of family tradition and the qualities that the Spirit of God produces. He also mentions the ministry of tears and encourages the audience to be sensitive towards one another. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the importance of remembering and being inspired by God's gifts and the legacy of faith.

Transcript

2nd Timothy 1, verse 3. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles, for the which cause I also suffer these things. Nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep, by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. You'll keep your Bibles handy, please, won't you? I want just to look elsewhere in a moment.

Brother Walsh was telling you that he had two nights previous, and he covered two verses. Well now, in the two nights I covered five verses, so obviously there's much more to say than I have. And could you just bear with me while I draw attention just to those who weren't here last night, that we began at verse three.

And we noted that from verses three to seven, Paul is inspiring Timothy by way of remembrance. Verse three, he says, without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers. Verse four, being mindful of thy tears.

Verse five, when I call to remembrance. Verse six, wherefore I put thee in remembrance. We noticed in verses three and four that he inspired Timothy by reminding him of his affection for him, and his confidence in him.

Verses three and four, affection and confidence in Timothy. Verse five, he inspired him by reminding him of his family tradition. Grandmother, mother, and now Timothy, three generations in the faith.

Verse six, he inspires him by reminding him of the gift of God that was in him, sovereignly bestowed. Verse seven, he reminds him of the qualities that the Spirit of God produces, power, love, and a sound mind. Now, last night we dealt with verses three to five, indicating in verses three and four the tender link between Paul the older and Timothy the younger, and picked out for special mention the ministry of tears.

When he says that being mindful of thy tears at a previous parting, we expanded on that by looking at the ministry of tears in the life of the Lord, the ministry of tears in the life of Paul, and the ministry of tears here in Timothy, and made a plea for a sensitiveness amongst us in relation to each other. Then in verse five, he draws attention to the family tradition, which some of us never had, and which many of our young people reared in Christian homes don't appreciate. Very often the third generation is a vital generation.

Very often it will stand or not. And here Timothy comes out, the third generation of believers, and we saw how that when the gospel enters a home, then it becomes a place of unparalleled privilege, whereas there is the possibility of a succession of generations who will be believers by the grace of God. Now we come to verse six.

In verse five he's drawn attention to his unfeigned faith, which he says, dwelt in your grandmother. I drew attention to indwelling faith. Called your attention to an indwelling God in 2 Corinthians 6. The indwelling Christ in Ephesians 3, Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith.

The indwelling Holy Spirit, verse 14, the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us. The indwelling word in Colossians 3, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Drew attention to the sinister reference of Romans 7, verse 17, indwelling sin.

But here, indwelling faith. He says at the close of verse five, Timothy, I saw it in your grandmother, I've seen it in your mother, and I'm persuaded and convinced that you've got it, this unfeigned faith. And you remember, as we closed the meeting, I drew attention to the fact that Timothy would be quite clear he was saved, but it was good to have the witness of Paul, looking on and knowing him, Paul's just as convinced that Timothy is saved.

Would that be right? Do other people look at you and are quite sure that you're saved? And I closed the meeting with this. If it was a crime in Vancouver tonight to be a Christian, would the police get enough evidence to convict you? Unfeigned faith dwelling in you. Now you'll notice verse six, wherefore, in the light of that unfeigned faith indwelling, Timothy, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee.

You see, there were difficult days. Nero had burned Rome and was blaming the Christians. Paul was in the dungeon having reached the end of the road.

I've tried to tell you in these nights that one of the backgrounds to 2 Timothy is a change in leadership. The older man's going on, the younger man will step in to take his place. And Paul recognizes this, that it's very easy when the, how shall I put it, the ponderous, fearful persecution of the state comes upon you.

It would be very difficult to close your mouth and say nothing. Timothy, you'll need to stir up the gift of God that is in thee, look at the close of the verse, by the putting on of my hands. So the gift was imparted by apostolic authority.

Now, this is interesting. Now let me lift up this idea of the gift of God in connection with hands. Turn back please to 1 Timothy 4, verse 14.

Not now stir up, neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee through prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. That word presbytery is just elderhood. It's one of those unfortunate translations in your New Testament.

There's quite a number of them in your authorized version. It's just a pity that the translators were told not to change ecclesiastical terms. Because if you didn't know any better you might think that the presbytery was a particular meeting of the presbyterian form of government, whereas the word presbytery is just the word for elderhood.

You've got the same with the word bishop that means overseer. If you didn't know any better you would connect it with a bishop over a diocese in the Roman Catholic Church or the Episcopal Church. Whereas the word bishop is just the word for overseer, indicating the work of a local elder.

Again, you get the word minister. If you didn't know any better it's just the ordinary word for servant. If you didn't know any better you might think it was an ordained minister that you see all around you in Christendom, of which there are none in the New Testament.

These are unfortunate and brethren, teachers should constantly remind young people of these things. I can't go into any more. The word deacon is about the worst of them.

It amazes you the way brethren expound on this question of deacons. It's only the ordinary word for a servant. Sometimes used in a particular way and not the way often times that the brethren explain it.

Now, let's come back now. You'll notice 1 Timothy 4 verse 14. Neglect not the gift that was in thee which was given thee through prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the elderhood.

Now 2 Timothy 1 verse 6, the laying on of the hands of Paul, here the laying on of the hands of the elderhood with the added idea of prophecy, through prophecy. Now, you'll see the connection now. Back to 1 Timothy 1 verse 18.

Paul says to Timothy, this charge I commit unto thee son Timothy, according to, in harmony with the prophecies which went before on thee. Now, this is interesting. Here you've got now, again, the prophecies that went before on thee.

Neglect not the gift that was in thee which was given thee through prophecy. The laying on of the hands of Paul, the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Now brethren, I want to suggest to you what happened.

Through prophecy, or as he says in chapter 1 verse 18, according to the prophecies which went before on thee or about thee. So there must have been an occasion when one of the New Testament prophets rose and indicated the nature and scope of Timothy's gift. You remember the other night I was telling you that there are no apostles and no prophets today.

Now that will be another safeguard against Pentecostalism. No apostles or prophets today, but a prophet was a brother who rose and he spoke by direct revelation from God to give the mind of God for the time that was then present when they had no New Testament. So here, obviously one of these prophets rose and he indicated the nature and scope of Timothy's gift.

Now 2 Timothy 1 verse 6 indicates this. Whether it was the same occasion or not, you may not be too sure, but possibly it was. In the light of the prophetic word about Timothy's gift, Paul stepped forward and he laid his hands on Timothy.

And thereby he expressed his fellowship with the word through the prophet by the Spirit of God. And he says, Timothy, the gift of God which was given thee through the laying on of my hands. Now of course apostles could do things that we can't do.

And the gifts of an apostle were not passed on. There is no official apostolic succession. There are no apostles today.

But the elders were there and they stepped forward and they put their hands on Timothy and expressed fellowship with Paul and with the word of the Spirit through the prophet. So that all together, Timothy's gift was made known by the prophet, imparted by Paul and accepted by the local elders. Now, so he says, the gift of God which is in thee.

Unfeigned faith verse 5, the gift of God verse 6. For these gifts of God or of the risen Christ are only given to those who possess faith. Now it's a big subject that I'm not going to take time to deal with on the whole obviously. There would be, speaking very broadly, there would be three lists of gifts.

I know it can be expanded. In 1 Corinthians 12 there are 9 gifts. In Romans 12 there are 7 gifts.

And in Ephesians 4 there are 5 gifts. Now that is the order in which the epistles were written. And it's most remarkable that there is no mention of sign gifts after 1 Corinthians 12.

The next list that comes to the Romans, there is no question of the sign gifts of tongues and healing. And when you come to Ephesians chapter 4, here's what it says. That the risen Lord gave gifts unto men, to some apostles, to some prophets, to some evangelists, to some pastors and teachers.

You'll notice that the last two, pastors and teachers, come under the one word some. And some think it's a two-fold gift in one man. However, I've no doubt.

But notice there's just 5 gifts in Ephesians 4. These are the permanent gifts on the whole. To edify the body of Christ. Now, no doubt that Paul possessed the 5. He was an apostle.

He would exercise the prophetic gift. He was an evangelist. He was a pastor and a teacher.

Now let me say this please. Because after all, we must not only explain the scriptures but must warn you. That word pastors is the word for shepherds.

And it refers to the work and the heart of the teacher. It never was intended to be a title. For somebody to call himself pastor so and so, never was intended to be a title.

Brethren, let me warn you against the brethren's mild form of clerisy. And in all probability, when he says some pastors or shepherds and teachers, he is indicating that the teacher there ministers with a shepherd heart. That he is both a shepherd and a teacher.

And he teaches the word of God because of a deep concern and care for you. He's got a shepherd heart. After all, excuse the personal reference, I'm not alone.

But why should some of us spend most of our time living out of a suitcase? Going into different continents to teach the word of God. If deep down in our hearts, although we might arrive at places where we don't know you, but we do it because it's very humbly. We feel for you.

We want to help you. We haven't come to Vancouver to damage you. Nor to hinder you.

We've come to try and help you according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Gifts from the Sovereign Lord. And it's high time, brethren, that we recognize that there are such gifts.

I'm not calling for a separate class. I'm not calling for a separate class. But I am calling for recognition of those who are gifted of the Lord.

And please, brethren, don't think that all evangelists and teachers are full-time men. Big mistake that. Big mistake that.

And it's good to recognize that the Lord has sovereignly bestowed gift. You know, none of us merited it. It was given by the Lord.

Teachers. And I believe that every assembly should have a teaching meeting. Oh, yes.

How often you have it's your business. But you should have a teaching meeting where the great truths of the Bible are taught. And I believe that there are many truths far better taught than discussed in a Bible reading.

Now, please, no one has learned more from Bible readings than the man that's speaking to you. Now, listen to me, brethren. Please consider it.

If every week you have a Bible reading during the week and not a ministry meeting, then that means that there is no development of gift for teaching in the local assembly. It means that the only opening is gospel preaching so that your system's producing gospel preachers and you begin to worship in a gospel setting. Now, I want to make an appeal here in Vancouver to you good men.

Have meetings for the ministry of the word of God and develop your own gift in the assembly. God never intended an assembly of gospel preachers without teachers. Now, let me come again.

Let me make a distinction now, please, because there's quite a bit of confusion in thinking. I want you to understand, please, that ability to teach is not a gift and gift is not ability. Now, Matthew 25, in the parable of the talents, it says that he gave to every man according to his several ability, so gift is given to ability.

When you come to Ephesians 4, he says he gives grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, so gift is given to ability, Matthew 25. Grace is given to enable the gift to operate in Ephesians 4. Now, when he says that he gives to every man according to his several ability, that would indicate this, that when the Lord bestows a gift, he takes into account the person concerned, his background, his culture, his mental capabilities, etc., and he gives the gift accordingly so that the ability of the person consecrated becomes in measure the channel through which the gift operates. But the gift is not life eternal here or in Ephesians 4. The gift is given by the Lord himself and in Ephesians 4 the person becomes the gift.

He gave some apostles, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, and so there is indicated to us how gift functions. Now, you will notice here in 2 Timothy 1, he says stir up the gift. He says in 1 Timothy 4 verse 14, neglect not the gift, don't neglect it but stir it up.

As I indicated, difficult days, just the danger maybe that to avoid reproach, Timothy will keep quiet. So he says, Timothy, stir up the gift. You know, after all, there were lots of pressures on Timothy.

Wouldn't that be right, brethren? Lots of pressures on Timothy. For instance, he had a weak stomach. That could tend at times to depression.

M. Dix had a bad stomach, knows that. Secondly, he seemed to be, at least in contrast to Paul, quite a timid sort of man. And so therefore he would be inclined at times maybe to go into the background a little.

Again, he would be serving amongst brethren who were much older than himself. Let no man despise thy youth. He may have been around 35.

You might think, well now, especially young folks, you think 35 is pretty old. Now I've passed 35 and it's not so old really. But in comparison with the men and women amongst whom Timothy served, he was quite young.

And so therefore that itself can at times be a barrier, isn't that right? You older brethren know how you feel when a younger man gets up, isn't that right? And you younger folks know sometimes when you look down at them how they're taking it. So that it does take a bit of grace. That's why he says, let no man despise thy youth but be an example to the believers.

If you're going to counsel believers as a younger man, you make sure that you're living out the teaching. Close criticism by conduct. And then again, the opposition could be fierce.

For instance, if the good Lord will, somewhere between Deep Cove and West Richmond, we'll come to chapter four. And he'll say to Timothy, now Timothy, remember Alexander the coppersmith, he did me much evil. Now he says, you watch him.

So you see there were men who were quite formidable in their opposition. And after all, you know, not everyone naturally has a stout heart. And then there was possibly state persecution.

That can mean a big thing, can't it? So you can understand all the pressures that were crowding in on the young man. And so he says, now Timothy, don't neglect, stir it up. Now I don't think it was dying.

The present tense of the infinitive would indicate that he's to keep it going, blazing at white heat. Timothy, don't neglect the gift, but stir it up and keep using it. You see, gift develops with use.

That's right. For instance, now, you come along to these meetings and other meetings and you listen to us ministering the word of God. Now you'll understand this, won't you? We weren't always what we are tonight.

Oh yes. You're possibly getting the benefit of years of study and experience from older men who have given themselves to this great business of the exposition of the word of God. And so the constant use of the gift will develop.

Just as if you stop using your limbs, they would atrophy. So here, you don't just get up and open your mouth and talk. You know, that's one of our weaknesses, brethren and sisters.

We're far too many brethren that can talk. A brother must earn the right to speak. He'll earn it by diligent study.

After all, you'll admit this, won't you? A man's not on his feet three minutes till you know whether he's done his homework or not. And there is a great need for us to recognize those whom God has gifted among us. Others will be a good judge of what gift you possess.

Don't try to force yourself. Your gift will ultimately make room for you and give you a place in the affections and respect of the people of God. I want to say to you young men, give yourself to your Bible.

You see, if you don't provide outlets, brethren, for ministry, then you'll rear a generation that read their Bible to preach the gospel and begin to interpret it in a gospel setting. Now I'm not being critical, I'm trying to be helpful. Let me repeat, please, what I said to you at the conference over the weekend.

Especially you younger folks, read your own Bible. Read your own Bible. Get to know your own God.

Stay where God has put you and then finally go where God would send you. But give yourself to the word of God. So he says, Timothy, he inspires him by reminding him of the gift of God that is in him.

Now, note, one preacher inspiring another, yet they're both leaders. Do you ever think of that, brethren? That even the best of us need a word of encouragement. We need a word of inspiration.

I know that usually you expect all that sort of thing to come from the platform. And put in your right, you're quite in order. But you know it's a great thing to inspire others by reminding them.

I go way back to early days, yonder, away in Lanarkshire in Scotland. Just a young man, starting out on this business with no background at all. You see, I had no knowledge of my Bible when I was saved.

I used to sit up to one o'clock and two in the morning till mother came and hunted me to bed. The old fire would go out in a coat around me and I would sit and study. Didn't think I got very much.

Lots of things come back from time to time I must have read in those days. You know, I can remember the assembly yonder, there was a little old sister. She had a hard life.

Just a, I was going to call her a wee buddy, a wee buddy, you know. Just a little lady, grand old lady. Every now and again going out the meeting, she would shake me by the hand.

And she would say, keep at it, son. It's good. And you know, a word of encouragement means a lot, doesn't it? It means a lot to the men who, ah please don't misunderstand me, I'm not asking you to come and congratulate us, I don't mean it that way.

I'm trying to indicate this, that every saint, every brother and sister needs a word of encouragement. As I said last night, it's so easy to develop a critical spirit, that when names are mentioned, you can say no good. So he inspires him.

By reminding him that he has affection and confidence in him. He inspires him by reminding him of his family tradition. And now he inspires him by reminding him of the gift of God that was in him.

I'm getting as bad as you, I've only covered one verse tonight. And there we'll need to leave it. And if the good Lord will, I'll begin at verse 7 tomorrow night.

The Lord bless his work.

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