

Encouragement from the Life of Timothy

by Stephen Kaung

This sermon focuses on the life of Timothy, highlighting his upbringing in a Christian family, his conversion through the Apostle Paul, and his growth in faith despite being an introvert. It emphasizes the importance of looking to Jesus, living with unfeigned faith, and allowing God to transform and use individuals according to His purpose.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:5, 2 Timothy 1:6, 2 Timothy 1:7, 2 Timothy 1:8, 2 Timothy 1:9, 2 Timothy 1:10, 2 Timothy 1:13, 2 Timothy 2:1, 2 Timothy 2:2, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Faith Development", "God's Purpose in Our Lives"

Description

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Transcript

Will you please to second epistle to Timothy, 2nd Timothy, and we will begin with chapter 1, verse 5. 2nd Timothy, chapter 1, verse 5. Calling to mind the unfaith faith which has been in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Louis, and in thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also. For which cause I put thee in mind to rekindle the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power, and of love, and of wise discretion.

Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but suffer evil along with the glad tidings, according to the power of God who has saved us and has called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace. Which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time, but has been made manifest now by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has anointed and brought to light life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings. Of which I have been appointed heir, apostle, and teacher of the nations.

Shall I have a short word of prayer? Dear Lord, we want to thank you for giving us this opportunity to be together in thy presence. We look to thee, thy Holy Spirit, to open thy word to our hearts and bring us into thy very presence, into thy very thought, that all will be taken up by thee in such a way that we may glorify your name. We commit this little time into your hand and trust thy Holy Spirit to do his work to the glory of God.

We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen. I would like to share with you, dear brothers and sisters, this time on the life of Timothy.

Timothy was very different from Titus, because as you recall, Titus came from a complete Gentile background. And yet the Lord took hold of his life and transformed him and made him an example to many of God's people. But Timothy was very different.

Timothy came from a Christian family, even though his father was a Gentile. We did not hear much about his father. Most likely his father passed away when he was a little child.

So in a sense, Timothy was brought up by his grandmother and by his mother. It is very probable that his grandmother and mother were among those thousands who were converted to the Lord on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. So from his childhood, she was brought up by his mother and grandmother in the Lord.

In a sense, he knew the Scripture even when he was young. But it was through the Apostle Paul that Timothy came to conversion, to really knew the Lord when Paul was in Lystra. And this young man grew before the Lord in such a way that both the brethren in Lystra and Starconia recommended him to Paul.

So Paul had the intention of bringing this young man with him to educate him and to train him for the work of the Lord. But because his father was a Gentile, so we found Paul baptized Timothy and then he brought Timothy to be with him. We thank God for the Apostle Paul, how God used him after he was converted.

But Paul had a special gift. He had the gift of helping young people grow in the Lord Jesus Christ. So we find in the Scripture how he surrounded himself with young people, such as Titus, such as Timothy.

He brought these young people with him, traveled with him, trained them, and according to the various gifts, he sent them out to use them in the work of the Lord. So here we find in 1 Timothy how Paul encouraged him in faith. Now Timothy was a young man totally different from Titus.

Titus was an extrovert. That is to say, he was a person who looked outside and forward. He did not look within himself.

But Timothy was exactly the opposite. He was an introvert. That is to say, he was a person who tends to look upon himself, to look within himself.

We know that generally speaking, people are divided into two, these different groups. Some people are extroverts. They look outside of themselves.

But other people are introverts. They tend to look within themselves. Now God created us all differently.

We cannot say who is better. Whether you are an extrovert or you are an introvert. But God loves variety.

So he created us all differently. But however different we may be, he may be able to train us and use us accordingly. So this time we would like to share together on this matter of Timothy.

Because his mother, his grandmother, came to the Lord probably among the thousands, converted on the day of Pentecost, according to the book of Acts. So they brought up these young people in the word of God. But Timothy was not saved until Paul came and brought him to the Lord.

And that was usually the case. I think of myself. Thank God I was brought up in a Christian family.

My father came to the Lord while he was in a missionary school. He was greatly opposed by my grandfather. My grandfather was ashamed because my father came to the Lord.

You know at that time in China. So my grandfather decided to cut him off from any connection with foreigners. And my grandfather thought he would be alright.

So in China at that time, he contracted a person and apprenticed my father to him. The next day he was going to send my father to apprenticeship to cut him off completely from any foreign connection. Of course, neither my grandfather, nor my grandmother, nor my father could sleep.

They continued in this situation until midnight. And my grandmother suddenly suffered. My grandmother said, let him go back to school.

So my father finished school. But when my father went to college, my grandfather would not support him. My father spent eight years in college.

He was part-time teaching and part-time studying. He was the only graduate from Sucha University Theological Seminary. Thank God for that.

When I was born, I was born to a Christian family. I can recall very vividly. My father had seven children.

And every evening before meal, he would gather us children in the sitting room. He would read from a big Bible. And he asked all of us to kneel down.

And he would lead us in prayer. That's the life I spent when I was young, just like Timothy. But that doesn't mean that I was saved.

As a matter of fact, I wasn't saved. Not only that, but I consider myself a good man. Now think of that.

A young man in high school. How bad he can be compared with the people in the world. He is to be the model, as it were.

So at that time, I consider myself a good man. From my youth, I believe in the Lord Jesus. That he is the savior of the world.

But I do not believe in him. I say let him save the world. I'm too good to be saved.

But thank God. When I was 14 years old, I was seriously sick. At that time, there was no medicine for my sickness.

It all depended whether I could pull through or not. And as a young man, I did not want to die. So I prayed to God.

I said, Lord, save me. And my father prayed for me. Missionary prayed for me.

After four months, I was recovered. So a natural thought came to me. Now brothers and sisters, even though I came from a Christian family, because I was not converted, so the thought that came to me were all natural.

I thought it was God who saved me. I wanted to do something to repay his goodness. And that was how it all began.

It so happened, a fellow student of mine came to me and said, can we organize some Christian meetings in schools? Now that was my opportunity. So we began to organize Christian meetings at schools. We would knock the door of the dormitories, invited students as well as teachers to come to our meeting.

We used the library as the place for meeting. They can come and pray with us. A number of students and even teachers came.

And I was supposed to lead the meeting. Now that was easy for me because my father had a big library. He had lots of Christian books.

So I went to his library, got a book of prayer, translated it into Chinese, memorized it. And on that evening, I gave a message on prayer. And after I gave the message, I asked everybody to kneel down and pray.

And as you know, nobody was saved. So nobody prayed. And after a while, some students began to laugh, and I scolded them.

I said, this is serious. Before God, we cannot laugh as it were. That was how I led the first prayer meeting.

And I even preached before I was saved. I went to my father's library. I still can remember I got a message from Dr. Garwood.

Garwood at that time was the most famous preacher in America. So I translated one of his sermons on Noah's Ark into Chinese. I memorized it.

And on Friday afternoon after school, I began to preach on Noah's Ark. I still can feel, after I preach, I feel good about it. The only thing was nobody praised me.

That was my only regret at that time. But you know, brothers and sisters, God has his strange way of touching people. When I really began to try to repay him for his goodness, you know what he did in me? His spirit began to touch me.

He began to reveal to me that I was not as good as I myself thought. I was a sinner. I was at that time only 14 years old.

But sometimes I would sit by myself and wept. I wept for my sins. I cried to God to save me.

In Shanghai at that time, many famous preachers came. And they usually preached in my father's church. Even in his final examination, I would go and hear them.

I wanted to be saved. I went to the altar a number of times, but nothing happened. So when the summer came, there was a summer conference in Shanghai, in the Bethel Mission.

I intended to go there and get saved. So I went to that conference. Three young men from this country, Asbury College, came to preach at that time.

But what they preached I already knew. Nothing was new to me. After a few days, I still wasn't saved.

I remember I was sitting in my own room one morning. I do not know whether I was praying or I was talking to myself. I said, why is it other people got saved so easily? And it is so hard for me to get saved.

So I told God. I said, God, if you want to save me, save me now. If you don't, goodbye.

That afternoon, I went to hear Mr. Kirkpatrick, a young man. He spoke on John 3.16. I knew it all. Nothing was new.

After he finished, he said, everybody knew the one prayer. So I knelt by my chairs. An Indian preacher came and knelt by my side.

And all he did was to persuade me to go to their altar. Now, I've been there a number of times. I didn't want to go anymore.

But out of courtesy, I went. I prayed. I wept.

I confessed. But nothing happened. The meeting was over.

Hundreds of people were in the meeting. But when I was walking out, a Chinese brother. He wasn't a pastor yet.

He was just a preacher. He must be noticing me. So he stopped me.

And if I told you his name, those who are older would know him. N-U-G. He was, at that time, a young preacher.

He stopped me. And he point blankly asked me this question. Are you saved? Probably, he was thinking, I must be saved because he was noticing me.

But I had to be honest. I said, I want to be saved. So he stopped me.

Everybody left, just the two of us, in the big auditorium. He asked me the question, do you believe the Bible is the word of God? I say, from my childhood. He said, turn to 1 John 1 verse 9. So I turned to 1 John 1 verse 9. He said, you read it.

You put your name in it. If Stephen should confess his sin, God is faithful and righteous to forgive his sin and his righteousness. He asked me to read it twice.

Then he said, let's pray. So we knelt down. I started to pray.

I confessed my sin again. I said, Lord, according to your word, I have confessed my sins. I have done my part.

Now it is your part. Whether you will save me or not is up to you. You know what? Immediately I felt such peace in my heart.

I got up. So he asked me, are you saved? I say, I am. He said, how do you know you are saved? I say, I feel such peace in my heart.

He shook his head. Immediately the word of God came to me. I say, I know I'm saved because God has said so.

He said, you're right. Your feeling may change, but God's word never changes. He told me to go out, tell somebody else what the Lord has done to you.

And this is my confession. Brothers and sisters, this has existed more than 80 years now. It still is there.

God has done it. Thank God for that. So brothers and sisters, here we find this Timothy.

He knew the Bible when he was young. But he wasn't saved. That is, came to a real relationship with the Lord.

Till Paul met him. Paul led him to the Lord. And this young man loved the Lord.

He made such progress in the Lord that the people in Lystra and Ciconia recommended this young man to Paul. So Paul decided to take him on the way to train him. But because his father was a Gentile, so Paul baptized him.

And Paul led him in the way. Brothers and sisters, we thank Paul. Not only he had a wonderful conversion, and he was greatly used by the Lord.

But he had the gift of bringing up young people with him. He trained them. He helped them.

He sent them out. He used them for the work of the Lord. And Timothy was one of the people used by the Lord.

But Timothy, as we say, was an introvert. That is to say, he is a person who tends to look within himself. Not an extrovert that looks outside of himself.

And because he tends to look into himself, he tends to be dealing very drastically with himself. The apostle Paul, you know, at one time said, Timothy, you can drink a little wine because of the stomach problem. Now he dealt himself so strictly.

He would drink no wine. So Paul had to help him to sleep. That for his health's sake, he may do so.

Timothy is a person who is an introvert. He looks into himself and deals with himself very drastically. So Paul tried to help these young people to look outside of himself.

Brothers and sisters, if you look into yourself, what will be the result? There can be only two results. One result is you look into yourself and you find yourself so good that you become elated. Or you look into yourself and you find yourself so bad that you become disappointed.

So people who are introverts usually looking into your own self will usually be people pessimistic. Timothy looked at himself and dealt drastically with himself. In spite of his bad health, he was a person who totally gave up wine.

So Paul had to encourage him for his health's sake, have a little wine. Throughout his life with Paul, he was the closest to Paul. Paul knew his weakness.

Paul knew what he needed. So when you find in the letter of Paul to Timothy, he encouraged him to faith. In other words, he said you don't look into yourself.

You look off unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. He helped Timothy to look off unto Jesus. He helped Timothy to live a life of good conscience and unfeigned faith.

Even though he was a young man, he became an example to the people in Ephesus. And God used him in that way. And that is Timothy.

So brothers and sisters, we are all different. God created every one of us different. We thank God because God loves variety.

So don't be disappointed or elated because you are an extrovert or because you are an introvert. That is just the way God loves variety. But whether you are an extrovert or an introvert, if you put yourself in the hand of God, He is able to use you.

He is able to moderate you. He is able to use you in the way that we really perform the purpose of God. And that is what we find in 1 Timothy.

So dear brothers and sisters, I believe that among you here this morning, there might be people who have the same temperament as Timothy. And because you have the same temperament as Timothy, you tend to be passive. You tend to look upon yourself and disappointed at yourself.

But dear brothers and sisters, you don't need to. Because the Apostle Paul encouraged you to look off unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. Paul couldn't send Timothy to Corinth.

Yes, he passed through Corinth. But he was no help there. He was no match to these Corinthian believers.

So finally, Paul sent Titus there. He made an arrangement with Titus to spend certain time in Corinth to convert these people. And then they were met, the two of them.

But at a point in time, Timothy, Titus didn't arrive. So Paul left and went to Macedonia. Why? Because Titus was such a person, he had to be thorough.

He had to see the Corinthians completely converted. So it took time for him to be there. And eventually, Paul was able to send Titus back to Corinth to complete the work.

But Timothy was completely different. Paul sent him to Ephesus. And there he was to be an example to the Ephesians.

Even though he was young, he was to be a good example of faith. And we believe God had graciously used him. So dear brothers and sisters, whether you are an extrovert or an introvert, if you put yourself in the hand of God, God is able to transform you.

God is able to use you, just as he was able to use Titus as well as Timothy. So this is the purpose of our time this morning. You brothers and sisters, if you have a temperament like Timothy, remember, look off into Jesus, the author and finisher of faith.

And if you do that, God will be able to use you as he has used Timothy. Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, we want to thank you because you are able to use whatever kind of person we may be. Whether we be an extrovert or we be an introvert, Lord, if we put ourselves in your hand, you are able to transform us, able to use us accordingly.

So Lord, pray that thou will take each and everyone of here this morning. Whether we are an extrovert or an introvert, we come to believe ourselves totally over into your hand. And pray that thou will work in each and every one of us until thy purpose can be fully realized through each and every one of us.

We want to give thee all the praise and the glory. In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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