

Reminder of the Call

I don't even know why you are trying to post a response to that crazy person," said Tanesha to her good friend, Deisha.

Deisha was bent over her notebook, scrolling through her church's website pages. She was on the Adult Education tab, looking for a lesson she recalled one of the teachers presenting on salvation and the work of the Cross. She had been tagged in a Christian post where the writer was elevating the need for women, Black women especially, to "cover themselves and be modest" to be saved. While the virtues of modest dress and living were Scriptural and beneficial, Deisha had heard a loud alarm in her head upon reading it.

"What was the need for the work of the Cross? Why did Christ die, if we could just cover our heads and bodies and be saved?" asked Deisha to Tanesha.

"Who are you asking?" asked Tanesha "I recognize legalism when I see it. For some, it's more appealing to abide by rules than enter into a relationship."

"Rule observance also strokes the ego, and lets the person think that the solution is dependent on them," Tanesha added.

"Exactly," Deisha replied. "That's why I am replying to the person. Ah, here are the Scriptures I was looking for." Deisha then added Romans 5:1, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 3:28, Galatians 2:16, and Galatians 6:13-14 to her post.

- 1.** *In your own words, describe what the Gospel says.*
- 2.** *What other "gospels" have you heard that contradict the true Gospel?*
- 3.** *Why would we follow teachings that are not the true Gospel?*

Sound Upbringing

2 Timothy 1:3-6, KJV

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;

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 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.

6 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.

2 Timothy 1:3-6, NIV

³I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. ⁴Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.

⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Paul began this letter by identifying himself as writer and Timothy as its recipient. Then, as with so many other letters, Paul expressed sincere thankfulness to God. He could give thanks with a “clear conscience” (vs. 3) because he was faithful to pray “night and day” for the one whom he considered to be his spiritual son in the faith.

Though the apostle may have been the young man’s spiritual father, we see that Timothy’s mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, had much to do with his spiritual upbringing. While Eunice was a Jew who had come to believe upon Jesus, her husband was a Greek (see Acts 16:1). Therefore, it was up to her and her mother to raise Timothy in the faith, first regarding the truths of the Old Testament, and then the Gospel of Christ after they had come to faith in Him. From Paul’s personal observation,

their faithfulness had reaped a blessed reward, because he could see clear evidence that Timothy shared the same faith in the Lord that his mother and grandmother had.

As a result of their diligent efforts, Paul was able to build upon the foundation of faith those women had laid in Timothy's life. So he reminded Timothy of the gift of God and the need to stir it up, like a flame that needed to be fanned to produce heat. Though the specific gift is not stated, it is likely Timothy was gifted by the Holy Spirit with teaching. Paul's mention of "the laying on of my hands" is likely a reference to a commissioning service.

4. *Why was Paul thankful?*

5. *By whom did Timothy come to faith in the Lord?*

6. *What was Timothy to remember?*

Sound Mind

2 Timothy 1:7-10, KJV

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

8 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;

9 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,

10 But is now made manifest

2 Timothy 1:7-10, NIV

⁷For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. ⁸So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. ⁹He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰but it has now been revealed

by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Not only does the Holy Spirit gift us with the ability to serve our Savior and others, but He also empowers us to do so. He does not give us a spirit of fear or timidity. Rather, the Spirit gives each believer power, love, and “a sound mind” (KJV), or “self-discipline” (NIV), to carry out His purposes via the spiritual gifts that we have received.

Further, we see that there is neither shame in testifying about the Lord nor in standing with His faithful servants. Paul was imprisoned for his testimony, and he encouraged Timothy to be prepared to suffer too. Instead of being faint of heart and mind, those who are saved from sin have God’s power and soundness of mind to live by. Therefore, we can gladly answer His call “to a holy life” (vs. 9).

It is by grace that God’s people were saved, and this grace, which was part of God’s eternal plan before the world and time began, is now available to people only through what Jesus Christ did, for it was He who by His death, burial, and resurrection destroyed death and so give eternal life to those who respond to His Gospel.

7. *What has God given His people in the place of fear and timidity?*

8. *How has God saved and called His people?*

9. *What did Jesus do at His appearing?*

Sound Teaching

2 Timothy 1:11-14, KJV

11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

12 For the which cause I also

2 Timothy 1:11-14, NIV

¹¹And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹²That is why I am suffering as

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.

13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

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.

¹³What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

As one who was a herald of the message of God, an apostle of Christ, and a teacher of truth, Paul was neither ashamed of his own testimony for the Lord nor of the suffering that accompanied it, for he had absolute confidence in the One whom He trusted. Paul knew his calling to suffer, and he also knew the One who called him. And based upon that knowledge, he was fully “persuaded” (vs. 12, KJV) that both his temporal life and his eternal destiny in Christ were absolutely secure.

One way to stand faithfully for our God is to remain true to the sound teaching of His Word. Paul told Timothy to remain true and guard closely “the good deposit” (vs. 14) of “sound teaching” (vs. 13) he had heard from Paul. Sound teaching must always remain faithful and guard diligently the truths of Scripture, which we can do in the power of the Holy Spirit. Sound teaching of the Gospel points the way to salvation, and sound teaching of the rest of Scripture equips those who are saved for God’s work.

10. *For what cause did Paul suffer?*

11. *Why was Paul not ashamed to suffer for that cause?*

12. *What did Paul admonish Timothy to guard?*

False Prosperity

The apostles John and Peter warned the early Christians that even in the first century, false teachers were promoting different “gospels” than the one true Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Peter said of these false teachers, “They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute” (2 Pet. 2:1-3). John warned, “Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).

Peter and John could have been describing those today who promote what’s called the prosperity gospel. Several televangelists push the idea that financial blessings come with great faith and grand tithing—especially when *they* are collecting the tithing. God wants to bless you with abundant material things. You just have to pray enough and give enough money.

The nephew of one prominent televangelist told *Christianity Today* that at least for him, the prosperity gospel gave him a life of luxury. He and his uncle traveled on a private jet doing “gospel” ministry. “Our lifestyle was lavish, our loyalty was enforced, and our version of the gospel was big business.”

Paul in his prison cell writing to Timothy was hardly living in “prosperity,” and he told Timothy that people “will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (2 Tim. 4:4). But like Timothy, we must guard the true Gospel and share it, no matter the cost.

13. *Why are false gospels so appealing to people?*

14. *What is God’s definition of being prosperous?*

15. *How is the true Gospel of Jesus Christ better than any false gospel?*

When the Winds Blow

Many winds of false doctrines can carry us away from sound teaching. It's important to be mature, solid, and strong in sound Gospel teaching. Paul warned the Ephesians and us to "no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming" (Eph. 4:14).

► *Fill in this promise to be on guard against the false doctrines that try to pull us away from the Gospel: "I _____, promise to guard my heart against following any false doctrines and always follow the true Gospel of Jesus Christ."*

KEY VERSE

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. —2 Timothy 1:13, KJV

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. —2 Timothy 1:13, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of February 13 through February 19

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** James 1:19-27—Pure and undefiled Religion.
- Tues.** Amos 5:7-15—Defender of the Oppressed.
- Wed.** Psalm 68:1-13—Father of Orphans, Protector of Widows.
- Thurs.** Proverbs 31:1-9—Defend the Poor and Needy.
- Fri.** Luke 4:16-30—Good News for the Poor.
- Sat.** James 5:1-11—Coming Miseries upon the Rich.
- Sun.** James 2:1-12—God Has Chosen the Poor.