

April 25, 2021 - II Timothy 1:6-11 - “Serving God with Courage”

Introduction:

In January of 2020 Open Doors Ministry released their annual World Watch List, on behalf of persecuted Christians. According to the report, the situation in China continues to worsen as more and more churches are experiencing pressure at the hands of the Chinese state. In this reporting period, over 5,500 churches have been destroyed, closed down or confiscated. In India, Christian minorities are subjected to extreme persecution which was revealed in over 1,400 physical attacks and death threats against Christians. Again in 2019 in Nigeria, approximately 1,350 Christians were killed for their faith. Indeed, these numbers do not give much hope to the persecuted.

As Christians, we should be prepared for persecution we shouldn't be living our lives in lukewarm faith or complacency as Laodicea believers. We are still living in a country where we can speak about our faith and we can stand up and can be bold in our faith. Yet so many of us are too timid and so many of us don't share our faith and our convictions. Agreeing with what our society dictates is “publically correct” and fleeing from our beliefs in fear of persecution is not what God has calls us to do.

Paul earnestly instructs Timothy that he must be bold and courageous in the midst of Roman persecution. He was soon to pass the Spiritual torch to Timothy. However, we know Timothy was a bit timid and fear confrontation. These final words of a dying man who knows his days are numbered are vital for the cause of the gospel. That is why He begins with...

I Keep the Spiritual Fire Burning vv.6

1. Paul writes: **Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God ... (1:6a)**. The word wherefore refers to Timothy's unfeigned (sincere) faith (1:5). When God saves us, He gives us spiritual gifts in seed form to equip us for His purpose. The words translated **that thou stir up** is all one Greek word (an-ad-zo-poor-eh'-o) and is in the present tense and means “to continue rekindling.” Just as a fire must be constantly stirred and refueled, so must we do, if our spiritual gifts are to flame with continuous vigor and power? We all need regular spiritual rekindling; that is why we have revivals and special meetings and places of service.

2. Timothy was a gifted, valuable man for the Lord; but he seems to have had a timid streak in him. For this reason, Paul encouraged him to be strong and bold. Like every Christian, he needed an incentive and reminder to keep the fire burning to fulfill God's purpose for his life and for the church. Folks, we too must discover, develop and be challenged to use our spiritual gifts. This is what it means to stir up the gift of God. Are you stirring up the gift God gave you? Paul continues with one of my favorite Bible verses.

II Serve with Courage, not fear vv. 7

1. We sometimes get tired and lose our enthusiasm for serving the Lord because we face opposition. Sometimes we feel intimidated or helpless, which Paul calls the spirit of fear. The

secret to alleviating our fears is found in this Bible verse. To overcome fear we need courage... When our faith is placed in our God, our courage is more than a match for fear. It is inner strength that comes from God and knowing who you are in HIM. Fear is the result of our lack of faith in God's love for us.

2 Timothy 1:7- **For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.**

2. Christians were horribly targeted for persecution as a group by the emperor Nero in 64 AD. A massive fire broke out at Rome, and destroyed much of the city. Nero himself was responsible. In order to divert attention from the rumors Nero ordered that Christians should be rounded up and killed. Some were torn apart by dogs, others burnt alive as human torches. He took advantage of the resulting devastation of the city, building a lavish private palace on part of the site of the fire. Christians were persecuted and by the mid-third century Roman emperors had intensive persecutions. So you can understand the significates of this letter to Timothy.

Application:

The Holy Spirit enables us to keep cool heads when the monster "giant" fears come. We are living in difficult and troubling times but still we are not experiencing the kind of suffering and horror that Timothy and Paul was enduring. A spirit of fear will cause us to disown our spiritual gifts. The Evil One's most effective weapon in quenching our spiritual flame is fear.

When we fear it is a lack of spiritual self-confidence of whom we serve. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to serve God, and through Him we can overcome fear and weakness. The word "fear" in 2 Timothy 1:7 means "timidity, cowardice." The Holy Spirit gives us power for witness and for service (Acts 1:8). It is useless for us to try to serve God without the power of the Holy Spirit. Talent, training, and experience cannot take the place of the power of the Spirit.

3. From this verse we find God has given us three great resources that should cause us to serve with great courage. **First**, God supplies us with His power. Without God's power we will constantly be victimized by fear. According to 2 Timothy 1:7, God does not give us the spirit of fear he supplies us with the spirit of power. The word translated power "dynamis" is the Greek word from which we get our English words, "dynamite" and "dynamic." It refers to a great force or energy. God infuses us with His power so we can effectively use our spiritual gifts and fulfill His purpose for our lives. Sometimes we forget God's power is made perfect or complete in our own weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The **second** resource the Holy Spirit gives us is "**love**". God supplies us with the assurance of His love. God's love helps us overcome our fears. I John 4:18 tell us: **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.**

Dr. Warren Wiersbe -"Selfishness leads to fear; because, if we are selfish, we are interested only in what we will get out of serving God, and we will be afraid of losing prestige, power, or money." - True Christian love, enables us to sacrifice for others and not be afraid. If we have love for lost souls and for the people of God, we will be able to endure suffering and accomplish the work of God.

Third, He is also the One who gives “**a sound mind**” or self-control. This word is related to the words sober and sobriety that we often encounter in the pastoral letters. “Self-discipline” describes a person who is sensibly minded, well-balanced and who has his life under control. As Christians we should never, fear the future because of God’s power and love for us. We can alleviate any fear if we focus on God’s incredible love for us. God supplies us with a sound mind. This literally means God gives us self-discipline or self-control. We don’t get hysterical or become paralyzed by fear when serious problems come. The Apostle Paul tells Timothy...

III Don’t Be Ashamed v 8-11

1. Another aspect of serving with courage is “not to be ashamed”. Sometimes we are tempted to be ashamed of a brother or sister in Christ. Maybe it has to do with their boldness in expressing their faith or their unwillingness to compromise their convictions. We may not agree with their methods or convictions, but we must cherish their commitment to the Lord and the fact we are part of the same spiritual family. We must not be ashamed of the gospel. - **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. – Romans 1:16**

2. Paul continues, “**But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God (1:8b).**” Suffering, ridicule, or persecution in any form is not something we will endure by our own power but by the power of God. This kind of enduring power is not available until we need it. When we are suffering for the gospel, we will receive supernatural strength according to the power of God (2 Timothy 1:8b).

Do you know why most Christians never really experience the power of God in their lives? They are never in the midst of circumstances where they need it. They just “go with the flow.” But when you endure suffering, in whatever form, because of the Gospel, you will experience God’s supernatural power in your life. Frank Bennett was a great example of this. This kind of power is reserved for those who are not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord (1:8a).

3. The message that Timothy is not to be ashamed of is God’s plan of salvation. The emphasis in these last three verses is on grace. God saved us; we did not save ourselves (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). He called us, not on the basis of our good works, but wholly on the basis of His grace. Serve God with courage serve Him without being ashamed.

Conclusion:

The result of serving God with courage and not being ashamed is effective. God asks us to be available. He asks us to serve Him to the best of our ability; knowing that He is the One who makes us effective. If you are here without Christ as Savior, there will come a day when time will be up. It is good news that God thought of you and loved you before you even existed. Find new life in Christ today before it is too late. We need to get on fire for God knowing and we need to remember who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling.