

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD Arlington Presbyterian Church (PCA)

Equipped for Ministry

2 Timothy 1:6-7 (577)

September 2, 2001

To see someone profess faith under your pulpit ministry or in response to your personal witnessing is one of the most satisfying things that a pastor can experience. To see evidences that that faith is genuine lifts the joy to another level. To see that person grow in grace and exercise his gifts in ministry is life to a pastor. One morning last week I ran into a dear sister in the Lord who came to faith 10 years ago under this ministry. Her conversion remains one of the most pleasant and encouraging memories of my pastorate. It is a delight to see that she is still growing in grace, still enthusiastic about her faith, committed to the local church. She is married to a godly man and seeking to raise her children in the fear and instruction of the Lord. Folks, it just doesn't get any better than that.

Paul shares a similar delight when he considers Timothy. One of the great sources of joy and encouragement in Paul's life is knowing that Timothy's faith is the real thing. In **1:5** he says, *I am mindful of the **sincere** faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.* **Romans 10:17** says, *faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.* In his home, Timothy had been nourished on the Word of God and one day at the preaching of the gospel by the apostle Paul, God caused true faith to spring forth. Timothy was granted life by the Spirit (**John 6:63**). God impressed upon his soul the reality of divine things. God rendered that sense lasting and effectual. What external evidences of sincere faith do we see in Timothy and can we look for in our own lives?

The **first** is a tenacious **loyalty** to the body of Christ, the church (**Phil. 2:20, 22**). Timothy's was a genuine concern for the welfare of the saints. **Second**, a sincere faith is a **singular** faith. The bloody battle of competing interests has

been fought and won (**Phil. 2:21**). Timothy's interests were the interests of Christ. Is that the way it is with you or are you wrapped up in your own agenda? **Third**, a sincere faith is **well-anchored**. It is like a marker buoy in the sea. It takes a beating in rough seas but when the storm has passed there it is in the same place securely anchored to the bottom. Such faith is not blown here and there by *winds of doctrine*. **Fourth**, sincere faith is **authentic**. There is no pretense. There is no gulf between what you profess and what you possess. **Fifth**, a sincere faith is **durable**. It doesn't wear out. There is a vitality to it over the long haul. Now this state of affairs opened up opportunities for Paul to instruct and encourage Timothy. He could say things to Timothy that he couldn't say to less committed and spiritually mature men. Think of Arthur Busby teaching violin to a young pupil. He can legitimately expect things from and teach things to a kid who loves music and the violin that he can't expect from a kid who is half-hearted about the whole thing.

And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidly, but of power and love and discipline.

I remind you. Paul is an apostle but he doesn't talk down to Timothy. Paul is his spiritual father but he doesn't order Timothy around. He is the mature, faithful pastor of the church in Ephesus. Paul's words now are those of a heartfelt appeal. With Katheryn particularly the days of spankings ... Yes, she felt the sting of the strap ... the days of spankings are over. The days of grounding and eliminating phone privileges are past. The days of "just because I said so" are no more. And you know what. I'm glad. I can now approach my daughter in a way that I never could when she was younger. I can "appeal" to her. I can express my desire and my counsel based upon our mutual love and respect. I can appeal to her based upon her own convictions and her sense of what is lawful and what is not. I can appeal to her based upon her own love for Christ. And this is exactly what Paul does with his spiritual son.

Kindle afresh. Now, of course, the word relates to fire. Many of you live or have lived in a house with a fireplace. Some are outdoor types and are familiar with how to start and maintain a campfire. Left to itself a fire will inevitably burn low. At times there is no flame at all, only redhot coals. A poker can be used to rearrange the burning wood and fresh flames will rise. Sometimes simply adding more wood will do the trick. Sometimes you have to get down and blow on the glowing embers, fan them, or use a bellows. The fresh supply of oxygen will cause the coals to burst into flames. This is the idea behind Paul's appeal.

That which is to be fanned into flame is **the gift of God**. What is Paul talking about? He is not suggesting that Timothy's faith is burning low. The word for gift here is *charisma*. It seems that the context often determines the exact meaning of this word. What does *charisma* mean here? Let me list the options which are most common : **1)** the ministry itself (ordination, Hendriksen, p.229); **2)** the grace that God had given Timothy to fulfill the pastoral/teaching office (Bentley, p.204); **3)** an ordinary gift of the Spirit (Now a spiritual gift is a special ability or capacity, given by the Holy Spirit to every believer to be used to minister to others and therefore build up the body of Christ. Giving, faith, teaching, and mercy are examples); **4)** some extraordinary gift of the Spirit (healing, miracles, prophesy, and so forth); **5)** the Holy Spirit himself (Towner, p.160).

This gift, Paul reminds Timothy, is **in you through the laying on of my hands**. At this point I want you to turn back to **I Timothy 4:14**. This is an important cross-reference. *Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery*. Just as there is not unanimity on the gift, neither is there complete agreement as to the occasion in view here. Most commentators believe that **I Timothy 4:14** and **II Timothy 1:6** refer to the same occasion. Others think that the event recalled in **I Timothy 4** is Timothy's ordination and that the event ought to be distinguished from the event in **II Timothy 1:6** (Towner). Matthew Henry held this view. He says, "You see that this gift was in him by the putting on of the

apostle's hands, which I take to be distinct from his ordination for that was performed by the hands of the presbytery" (p.834). I think these verses refer to the same event (See Robertson, p.581).

In both **I** and **II Timothy** the gift is associated with the occasion of Timothy's ordination to the Christian ministry. Now in a Roman Catholic view, ordination or Holy Orders, is one of the seven sacraments of the church. Listen to this quote from the Catholic Catechism, "Today the word 'ordination' is reserved for the sacramental act which integrates a man into the order of bishops, presbyters, or deacons, and goes beyond a simple *election, designation, delegation, or institution* by the community, for it **confers a gift** of the Holy Spirit that permits the exercise of a 'sacred power' (*sacra potestas*) which can come only from Christ himself through his Church" (1538, p.384). So was the gift actually mediated through the laying on of hands? In other words, did God use that means at that time to **confer** a gift on Timothy? Towner concludes, "Rather than understanding the prophetic pronouncement and laying on of hands as the instrument of mediating the "gift" (the conferring of special gifts, or office, through the sacrament of ordination ...), we should probably interpret them as a prophetic **confirmation** of Timothy's "gift" **accompanied** by the public recognition of his calling by laying on of hands" (Towner, footnote, pp.110-111). See A. T. Robertson, p.581.

I am inclined to say that Paul is thinking in broader terms than a specific gift or even a set of specific gifts. He has in mind the grace that God had given Timothy to assume and fulfill the pastoral/teaching office. Timothy fan this grace given to you into a flame. God has called you, gifted you, and authorized you. You are adequate through the Holy Spirit. Now get with it. Make full use of what God has given you. I am a technological fossil. This past week the guys fixed me up with an updated, faster computer. I'll guarantee you that my computer has far greater capacity than I am able to take advantage of. Paul is telling Timothy, exercise the gifts and graces God has given you.

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity. Is *spirit* in this verse *spirit* with a little “s” or *Spirit* with a capital “S”? In other words is Paul talking about an attitude, a disposition, or is he talking about the Holy Spirit? I think this spirit of timidity is surely a human disposition. However, the terms *power*, *love*, and *discipline* do refer to the Holy Spirit (See Knight, p.371).

What is ***a spirit of timidity*** (*deilia*)? Vine explains that the Greek word *deilia* “denotes cowardice and timidity and is never used in a good sense” (Vol. II, pp. 84-85). Now I don’t think that Timothy is curled up in his home or pastor’s study paralyzed by fear; unable to perform the duties of his office. But why does Paul feel the need to mention timidity specifically to Timothy personally? Hendriksen says, “We should bear in mind the following : **a**) Timothy was handicapped by frequent physical ailments (**I Tim. 5:23**). **b**) He was naturally timid (**I Cor. 16:10**). **c**) He was, in a sense, “a young man” (**I Tim. 4:12; cf. II Tim. 2:22**). **d**) [Those who opposed him in Ephesus] were very determined (**I Tim. 1:3-7, 19, 20; 4:6, 7; 6:3-10; II Tim. 2:14-19, 23**). **e**) Believers were being persecuted by the State ... (**I Tim. 4:6**)” (pp.228-29). Now we do not know whether all or only some of these factors contributed. We do not know the extent to which each contributed. All we know is that because of Timothy’s personality and situation the flame of his ministerial office needed attention.

What about you? Is the flame of your own ministry burning low? Are you in need of the same reminder as Timothy? Timidity creeps into all our lives at one time or another; to one degree or another. **First**, timidity manifests itself in plain old **fear** of men. **John 7:13** (NIV), *Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.* You’re afraid of what others will do or, more commonly, of what they’ll say. **Second**, you’re kind of **disillusioned** by the whole thing. The thrill of the gospel is gone and you’ve lost confidence in the power of the gospel. **Third**, timidity manifests itself in **hesitancy**. You’re indecisive in terms of God’s call, His gifts, His will. **Fourth**, spiritually timid people are usually **silent** people. You can’t remember the last time you verbalized your faith to an unbeliever. **Fifth**,

there's a dreadful **half-heartedness** about your spiritual life. There's no life, no zeal, no earnestness driving your ministry. **Sixth**, the spiritually timid **avoid** difficulty. You skirt the hard people, the hard problems, the hard obligations attached to ministry? You slither through the Christian life leaving the tough ones to somebody else. **Seventh**, carelessness, slothfulness and weariness in the work are evidences of the spirit of timidity. All of these plague the minister at one time or another. Paul's point is that these things are **inconsistent** with true Christian ministry. You are not to accept these in your lives nor are you to make excuses for them. They are evidences of timidity which is incompatible with the fact that *the Spirit of God dwells in you*. The issue seems to be one of dependence or reliance upon the Spirit. You are to *fulfill your ministry (4:5)* in prayer and hearty reliance upon the resources of the Holy Spirit. He who dwells in you is the Spirit ...

But of power. *Power* here is that divine strength of the indwelling Spirit by which Timothy will be able to boldly proclaim the truth of God in every context. Notice the connection in **Acts 1:8** between power, the Spirit, and our witness. *“But you shall receive **power** when the **Holy Spirit** has come upon you; and you shall be My **witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”* Essential to the pastoral office which Timothy occupied is the ministry of the Word. This ministry must be pursued with clarity, compassion, conviction, and courage. This is the case whether that Word is proclaimed from the pulpit to the saints or in public to unbelievers. Timidity is inconsistent with an effective ministry of the Word because it will inevitably lead to compromise of the truth (**4:3-4**).

He who dwells in you is the Spirit **of love**. We, of course, know love as that fruit of the Spirit mentioned in **Galatians 5:22**, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love.* **Romans 5:5**, *the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.* **Ephesians 4:15**, *speaking the truth in love.* “There are two great enemies of a successful ministry, whether carried on among

believers or among unbelievers. One is departure from the truth, compromise with the lie, whether in words or deeds. The other is chilling indifference with respect to the hearts and lives, the troubles and trials, of the people whom one is ostensibly trying to persuade” (Hendriksen, p.202). Observe how conviction and compassion are wed in **II Timothy 4:2**, *Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season [power]; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction [love]*.

He who dwells in you is the Spirit **of discipline**. Calvin has a great sentence which, I believe, hits the heart of this. “But why does Paul add love and self-discipline after power? I think it is to distinguish the power of the Spirit from the intemperate zeal of fanatics who rush in recklessly, boasting that they have God’s Spirit. Paul specifically says, therefore, that the powerful energy of the Spirit is tempered by love and self-discipline – that is, by a calm concern for edification” (p.121). The word for discipline is used only here in the New Testament. William Barclay calls it “one of these great Greek untranslatable words ... It is Christ alone who can give us that self-mastery which will keep us alike from being swept away or from running away. No man can ever rule others unless he has first mastered himself. Discipline is that divinely given self-control which makes a man a great ruler of others because he is first of all the servant of Christ and the master of himself” (p.144-145). Self-control is mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 as a fruit of the Spirit. Phillip Towner is helpful. He says, “Paul has in mind a measure of control over one’s thinking and actions that allows a balanced outlook on any situation. When everything is coming unglued, this quality of ‘levelheadedness’ will keep the Christian focused calmly on the power and love that the Spirit provides, and so it makes perseverance in life and ministry possible” (p.161). Calm, clear, and consistent thinking. Capacity to see things as they are and to make good, wise decisions; to think calmly, clearly, and consistently. It usually includes the virtues of discretion and moderation.

READ VALLEY OF VISION, “God All-Sufficient”, p.157. The rekindling of the flame always begins with a renewed vision of the person and work of Christ.