

2 Timothy 1:1-14 Our Godly Heritage Falls Ch. PM 5/14/2023

Through our mothers we all received a bad heritage – the heritage of Adam who fell, which means that we all are going to die. That is, while from our mothers we received physical life, we also possessed spiritual death. At our birth, the Fall of Adam became ours. Romans 5:12, “...*sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men...*”

That is the bad news. So, we need some good news. **The good news is that God gave His church a godly heritage.**

When we were stuck in the death of Adam, the heritage of Adam, the heritage of death, God gave us grace. Listen to God’s promise in Romans 5:20b-21, “*the law was added so that the trespass might increase. BUT where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” When sin reigned in death, God sent grace that was greater than our sin, so that grace reigned instead. We were brought out of the heritage of death, into the heritage of eternal life.

As we come to 2 Timothy 1, we see this truth. Timothy’s mother Eunice was given the heritage of death from her own mother Lois. In turn, Timothy was given the heritage of death from his mother Eunice. Then, God gave the heritage of life to Lois, to Eunice, and to Timothy. The apostle Paul recognized this heritage of life.

1. God gave us a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline, so that we testify and suffer for the gospel. (v.1-8)

Context: Paul wrote to Timothy from prison in Rome and in danger for his life. (4:6). Paul had already stood before the emperor Nero, and everyone deserted Paul. (4:16). This was the last letter that Paul wrote.

Paul was in prison and was preparing for his own death. Since Paul knew he was about to die, Paul wanted to hold high the good news of the gospel of Christ.

First, Paul reminded Timothy of Paul’s status as an apostle called by the will of God. So what? Well, Paul was not speaking as one man to one man or writing as one individual person. Instead, Paul was an apostle of Christ, which means that Paul was writing on behalf of Christ Himself! Also, Paul’s audience was already more than just the one man Timothy. Paul, as an apostle, had a message for the entire church of Jesus Christ, the whole family of God.

Paul was a Jewish man. Paul came from a Jewish background, with training in Jewish schools by Jewish teachers in the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament. In verse 1, when Paul wrote the word promise, he was writing of the promise of God in the Jewish Scriptures through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David and the prophets. Those who had the Jewish religion were people who followed the laws of God. However, Paul here did not say the promise of life for

those who followed the law of God. Instead, Paul wrote the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.

Verse 2 – *“To Timothy, my beloved child...”* This was Paul’s second letter addressed to one of his students, a Christian man named Timothy. Exactly how was Paul related to Timothy? Paul was Timothy’s pastor/teacher. But in his heart, Paul loved Timothy like a dear son. Paul was the one who led Timothy to Christ (together with Timothy’s mother), so Timothy was a spiritual son to Paul. Paul also had a father-like care and love toward Timothy, so that is, in an ongoing way, a relationship in the household of faith much like a father to a son.

Verse 2 – what we really need, we get! Grace, mercy and peace. God the Father and God the Son are in harmony with this. We need God to pardon our sins, because of His mercy. We need God to bear with our weaknesses because of His grace.

In verse 3, Paul was constantly remembering Timothy in prayer, night and day. In verse 4, Paul recalled the tears that Timothy shed when Paul and Timothy said good-bye. Paul longed to see Timothy, so that tears could be replaced with joy in a reunion.

In verse 5, we see the godly heritage, the gift from God, as it was handed down within a Christian family from one generation to the next. Paul wrote in verse 5, *“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now I am sure, dwells in you as well.”* So what? Paul explained that because Timothy had the faith walk of his mother and the faith walk of his grandmother as part of his godly heritage, that the godly heritage should be applied to Timothy in a specific way. That is found in verse 6, *“For 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 reminded Timothy, a pastor, of Timothy’s ordination to the gospel ministry, and Paul reminded Pastor Timothy to keep passing on the gospel. To fan into a flame the gift of God meant that Paul was exhorting Timothy to serve as a pastor with passion.

There are plenty of grandmothers in the Bible. However, the word *“grandmother”* is itself only used once in the whole Bible, and that is right here – Lois, the grandmother of Timothy. Lois was a devout Christian woman, a godly woman. As many other Christians at that time, Lois was also a Jewish woman. She had instructed her daughter Eunice in the Scriptures. Later, Lois had also instructed her grandson Timothy in the Scriptures! This 3-generation family (Lois-Eunice-Timothy) lived in a town called Lystra. How did this woman, this Jewish grandmother Lois, first hear the gospel in the town of Lystra?

Probably, she heard it from the Apostle Paul or from Barnabas. In Acts 14:6, *“[Paul and Barnabas]...fled to Lystra....where they continued to preach the gospel.”* In Acts 14:8-20, the story is told of how God healed a crippled man in

the town of Lystra through the ministry of the apostle Paul. This event had caused quite a controversy in the town. Later, in Acts 16:1, Paul came back a second time to the town of Lystra, “[Paul] came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciples was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. [Timothy] was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra...”

We have no record of Timothy’s father, except that he was a Gentile man. He was not a Jew. He was probably not a believer, or else Luke would likely have included that fact in Acts 16:1, when Luke wrote that Timothy’s mother was a believer.

Many times God has provided a godly heritage through one parent. Consider Timothy as an example of a godly heritage coming from one parent. Consider also that the heritage within that Christian family went back earlier than just Timothy’s mother. Timothy’s grandmother was also mentioned by the apostle. Paul recognized Timothy’s grandmother, and the faith of Timothy’s grandmother Lois as part of the heritage God had given, and that the mother and grandmother had a mighty influence on young Timothy. The presence of a parent with a bad influence does not need to be the determining factor. God can use one parent to pass on a godly heritage.

God gives us more evidence of a godly heritage even if only one parent is godly. Consider Paul’s explanation of how the heritage of God can be handed down through either a father or a mother, even with the presence of the unbelieving parent in the lives of the children growing up. Listen to 1 Corinthians 7:14, “*the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.*”

Consider also the powerful influence of the Scriptures used by the Spirit in passing on the heritage of spiritual life. Here in Paul’s 2nd letter to Timothy. In fact, consider that sometimes a parent can be a source of ridicule, mocking and persecution to his/her own child, who is a believer. Listen to 2 Timothy 3:12-15, “*...all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*”

Paul was showing that Timothy was made wise for salvation by the Scriptures that Timothy had heard and learned when he was young. Paul was making the point that Timothy was given knowledge of the Scriptures from his infancy, and that it was knowledge of the Scriptures that God used to bring Timothy to wisdom and a saving faith in Christ Jesus. Paul was showing that it

was God the Father who raised Timothy to be a believer. Yes, God used Timothy's mother Eunice, and God used Timothy's grandmother Lois to read the Scriptures to Timothy. But it was God, through His Word, who brought Timothy to faith. It was God who converted Timothy from death to life. It was God who through His Spirit and His Word, gave Timothy life in Christ.

What does this mean? God can use a grandmother or a mother, God can use a grandfather or a father, God can give us knowledge of the gospel through one parent or the other parent, and God can use two Christian parents, and God can bring people to a saving knowledge whose parents and grandparents all hate God. God is our Father, and God is our heritage. God lived inside of Lois. God lived inside of Eunice. God took up residence inside of Timothy. It is the same God and the same faith, passed on through three generations. However, our heritage is God. Everyone is a first-generation believer. Lois believed in Christ directly. Eunice believed in Christ directly, not through her mother's faith. Timothy believed in Christ directly, not through the faith of his mother or grandmother. God saved Lois directly. God saved Eunice directly, and used Lois to teach her. God saved Timothy directly, and used Eunice and Lois to teach young Timothy.

In verse 7-8, we see the application to our lives – not a spirit of fear or a spirit of timidity. We are not to be afraid to speak up for God's truth. Instead, we operate out of the spirit of power, the spirit of love, and the spirit of self-control. The heritage of Adam, the heritage of death that we received from our mothers includes a spirit of timidity = which is a shameful state of fear or a lacking in heart. However, we do not live within that heritage anymore. In Christ, we are given a new heritage of spiritual life. We now have a heritage of power. This is the Greek word *dunamos* = dynamite power. Our new heritage is a lifestyle of love. This is the word *agape* = love. Our godly heritage is a pathway of self-control. This is the word for a sound mind = sound judgment, a capacity for understanding practical matters, an ability to cognate, to use sound judgment. Advice for making decisions. This results in a state of self-control, self-discipline, and sensible behavior. We were trained how to think!

What is the result? We see in verse 8 the command from Paul to Timothy – “*do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord.*” Also, Paul added, do not be ashamed of me/Paul, who was a prisoner for the Lord.

What is the heritage of the dynamic loving power of God to be used for? How to endure suffering! Look at verse 8, when Paul directly calls Timothy to a life of suffering for Christ. “*...share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.*” It is this same spirit of power that is in us when we have to face suffering for the gospel. It is not our own personal power that helps us to suffer for the gospel. Rather, it is the power of God that helps us to endure suffering for the gospel.

Lois and Eunice suffered in Lystra when the gospel turned up a great controversy in their town. Timothy suffered. Christ Himself suffered at the cross. Paul suffered in prison. We are called to take our share of suffering and to take a stand with those who suffer for Christ.

I don't know what your mother taught you about suffering for the gospel. A lot of mothers try to protect their children from any suffering at all. A lot of grandmothers try to protect their children from any suffering at all. That is not exactly how the Christian life goes, so that is not exactly what a Christian mother or grandmother would teach to her child or grandchild.

Christian parents and grandparents teach that there is no shame in suffering. Suffering is our calling from God. Suffering is our righteous calling. Suffering is our glorious calling. If we have to choose between being ashamed and suffering, we as Christians choose suffering every time. That is what a godly heritage teaches.

2. God saved us and gave us the grace and power to live a holy life. (v.9-12)

Let's follow Paul's train of thought here.

Verse 9 – God saved us! Praise be our God! We are saved from death. We are saved from the heritage of Adam, the heritage of death given to us by our fathers and mothers at our birth. We have a new birth in Christ.

What is next? Verse 9 tells us. God called us to a holy calling, in other words, a holy life. We were saved from a heritage of death in order to be holy. Verse 9 went on to show us that in the Christian heritage, we have not done anything to get this calling. We did not qualify for the calling to be holy. We were quite unholy, but God called us anyway in Christ Jesus. It is God's purpose

Verse 10, Christ has abolished death! Verse 11, it is of this news that Paul was appointed an apostle! Verse 12, this is precisely why Paul was suffering – for the gospel! Look at verse 12, Paul wrote to Timothy, "...*this is why I suffer as I do.*" Paul was appointed as an apostle, and that automatically included suffering for the gospel. Paul's trust was in God, because Paul knew God. Paul was not ashamed, because He knew God. Paul was convinced of God's ability to guard Paul with God's grace and God's power. Paul was able to live a holy life, because Paul turned over his suffering to God. Paul turned over his life to God, until Christ comes. When we follow Paul's train of thought, this is a godly heritage.

3. God gave us the Spirit within us, to help us to guard our heritage. (v.13-14)

In verse 13 Paul applied all of this truth to Timothy, passing on the godly heritage. What Timothy heard from Paul, now Timothy must follow and KEEP. The pattern of sound teaching was to continue to be the pattern for Timothy. The faith that Paul had, Timothy was to have. The love that Paul had, Timothy was to have. The teaching that Paul gave, was the teaching Timothy was believe, and Timothy was to teach and give out in his ministry.

In verse 14, what Paul guarded, Timothy was to guard. What Paul deposited in Timothy, Timothy was to consider a good deposit or spiritually of high value. What Paul entrusted to Timothy, with that Timothy was to show himself trustworthy. The godly heritage placed a high calling on Timothy!

So, Paul reminded Timothy of the provision and equipment that Timothy had for the calling. Look at the first three words of verse 14. “*By the Holy Spirit...*” The Holy Spirit lived inside of Paul. The Holy Spirit lived inside of Timothy. The Holy Spirit helped Paul to guard the teaching. The Holy Spirit will help Timothy to guard the teaching. The Holy Spirit helped Paul to keep the pattern of the Christian walk. The same Holy Spirit will help Timothy to keep the pattern of the Christian walk. This was the passing on of a godly heritage from an apostle to a minister in the church of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: By the Holy Spirit, live out the pattern of our godly heritage.

My concluding story is an encouragement for those who did not grow up in the church. When God brings you into the church, you gain this godly heritage. It is yours. You become a child of God and all of us have this heritage as a gift.

I illustrate with a story. While walking through the forest one day, a man found a young eagle who had fallen out of his nest. He took it home and put it in his barnyard where it soon learned to eat and behave like the chickens. One day a zoologist passed by the farm and asked why it was that the king of all birds should be confined to live in the barnyard with the chickens. The farmer replied that since he had given it chicken feed and trained it to be a chicken, it had never learned to fly. Since it now behaved as the chickens, it was no longer an eagle.

"Still it is an eagle," replied the zoologist, "and can be taught to fly." He lifted the eagle toward the sky. The eagle, however, jumped down to be with the chickens again. The zoologist took the bird to the roof of the house. But the eagle jumped down once more for the chicken food. Finally the zoologist took the eagle out of the barnyard to a mountain. There he held the king of the birds high above.

The eagle looked around, back towards the barnyard and up to the sky. Then the zoologist lifted him straight towards the sun and it happened that the eagle began to tremble. Slowly he stretched his wings, and with a triumphant cry, soared away into the heavens.

God has given us an incredible heritage in the church of Jesus Christ! Someone might have told you that you are a chicken, but you are an eagle. Someone might have told you that you are a child of this world, but you are a child of God. We have received the Spirit of God, dwelling within each of us, to help us to walk with Christ. By the Holy Spirit, live out the pattern of our godly heritage.