

## LIFE: Stir-up Your Faith

*Stir-Up Your Faith*

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**Bible Text:** 2 Timothy 1:1-6

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I want to encourage you to turn in your Bibles to the book of 2 Timothy 1. Today we are going to be in verses one through six.

And it seems just like an introduction. We have names listed, places listed, a kind of greeting, so to speak. But the last two verses, verses five and six, is really where we are going to put our teeth into it, so to speak, and really diagnose what the Word of God tells us about the thing called life. And today really what we are doing in studying about how to live life is laying a foundation. If we are going to live a life that is honoring to God, if we are going to live a life that is blessed by God, if we are going to live a life that is pleasing to God, that house we build of life has got to have a firm foundation.

2 Timothy 1:1-6 lays that foundation for us. It says:

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 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; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy.<sup>1</sup>

Now listen to verses five and six.

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.

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.<sup>2</sup>

And so if you are in that position, like most people are today, of not really understanding how do I live this thing called life, in particular this thing known as the Christian life, today in this passage of Scripture verses, primarily five and six, are three simple things that we need to understand to build a foundation for this thing that we know as life. And the first thing that we need to understand, the first thing we need to grasp is: What is this thing known as salvation, this word we use all the time because here he says, "Timothy, you possess this faith. You possess this faith that your mother and your grandmother

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy 1:1-4.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Timothy 1:5-6.

possessed. And you possess it as well.”

And if we are going to live a life that is honoring to God, if we are going to live a life that glorifies God, then we must have the foundation of our faith established. So what does it mean to understand salvation? Two simple concepts are under this. The first one is this. We must understand that salvation has been endowed to us. We are not entitled to it.

Let me share with you the differences there. An entitlement is a position, it is power and it is resources that you are given “just because.” That is an entitlement. In other words, salvation through Jesus Christ, this thing known as Christianity, does not happen in your life just because you were born. It doesn’t happen just because you are reading. It doesn’t happen because you live in a certain area or speak a certain language. Salvation is not that which we are entitled to, but it is that which has been endowed to us.

Now if you are not familiar with the term endowment, let me share with you what that means. An endowment typically in human sense or fleshly sense comes from an individual or a set of people who are deceased. And what they do with their resources, what they do with positions, what they do with the myriad of different things is they give a specific set of instructions to a specific group of people that if they so desire and choose they can reap the benefits of what they, “left behind.”

Let me share with you what that means. When Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, when he went to Calvary’s cross, when he died that death and when he rose from the dead three days later, he did not entitle humanity to go to heaven and not go to hell, he endowed us with the opportunity to be forgiven. He endowed us with the opportunity to be saved. He endowed us with the opportunity not to spend forever in a place the Bible calls hell, but in a place the Bible calls heaven. He did the work. He provided the means and we have the opportunity to reap the benefits thereof.

Now let me share with you in, “real world” terms how this works. I am in possession of a life insurance policy. If something tragic were to happen to my life and I were to be terminally ill or if I were to be in an accident, if I would cease to live physically this very day, obviously my wife Traci and our boys would be the beneficiaries of that life insurance. They would receive the resources. They would receive the money that is there. They would receive all of the, “estate” that is currently in my name.

But there is an opportunity. There is that slight risk and chance that an actuary would tell you that my wife and I, including my children, could be in a situation where our lives all end at the same time. It is possible. In fact, as I get a little bit older, the day will come, hopefully, when I have grandkids. And I hear that having grandkids is the reward of not killing your own. Some of you can testify that. I heard that.

The way that my life insurance policy reads is that as I get older, as our family expands, there could be this rare case that every know direct descendant of mine would cease to be living upon my death, i.e., plane crash, car wreck, horrible natural disaster, whatever it is. The reason I share that with you is because I set up my life insurance policy so that if that

were to occur, everything that is, “in our estate” as a family is to be given to a specific institution. They do not know who they are, because I don’t want them to conspire against me. It is being given to a specific institution to create a series of certain positions of professorship to teach specific classes.

Now listen. That institution, upon receiving that endowment cannot use it however they wish. They cannot take it and say, “Well, we don’t care what the Meyers family wanted. This is really what we need.”

No, no, no. Because that has been endowed, it must be used the way the person who is deceased gave instructions. Listen to me very clearly. Christianity, faith in Jesus Christ is not to be lived how you so choose to live it. It has not been given to you by Jesus so that you can say, “Well, I don’t care what the Bible says. I have got my opinion or my idea.” And today there is no shortage of opinions about how to live this thing called Christianity. But when he says the faith that is in you, understand, it has been endowed. And Jesus Christ not only gave his life on Calvary, he has left us a series of instructions known as the Bible and said, “If you want to understand this thing called life, this is how you do it.”

Our salvation is not entitled. It is has been endowed. The second thing about our salvation, though, is this. It comes as an extension.

I want you to look at verse five of this passage. He says you have this:

“... 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.”<sup>3</sup>

And what we see from the Scripture is this, that every single person who has called on the name of the Lord, according to Romans 10:13:

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”<sup>4</sup>

Whoever does that at some point and in some way, has received the message of Jesus Christ from somebody else. Someone spoke to you. You heard a message in a public environment such as this or maybe it was one-on-one with a friend or a family member. have heard people say, “Well, nobody actually was involved. In fact, I got saved because I read a gospel tract.” Who do you think wrote that gospel tract? Another human being.

Somebody said, “Well, I was reading a book when I realized I needed to be saved by the blood of Jesus.” How do you think that book came into existence? A human being put those thoughts down. In other words, our salvation can be linked all the way back to these guys we are reading about. Timothy would not have heard of the faith if it hadn't been for Lois and for Eunice and his family members. There is this direct correlation.

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<sup>3</sup> 2 Timothy 1:5.

<sup>4</sup> Romans 10:13.

You know, last week we finished a series on the Roman Road where we talked about everything from Romans 3 all the way to Romans 10. And our service looked a lot different than it normally does as we just sat down and I walked you through how to walk somebody through the process of knowing how they can be saved by the blood of Jesus. We just walked though the Roman Road. And I have had more compliments and comments in the last week about how simplistic it was and how basic it was and how useful that it was.

Let me share with you some of the fruit of last week's labor. We had one of our students, one of our teenagers who is a part of our church, this weekly sit down with a friend of his and he shared the Roman Road with him and that friend got saved. Why is that friend now saved? Because it was an extension of this young person's faith, which by knowing this person is an extension of his parents' faith and his grandparents' faith and it goes on and on and on and on.

In other words, this salvation that has been endowed to us by the person of Jesus Christ has been communicated to us by somebody else. And therefore, since someone shared with us we must share with somebody else.

The first thing we need to understand about living life is that without salvation there is no real life. Without being forgiven of our sins, life will never be what God designed our lives to be.

But there is a second thing that is mentioned. Not just understanding our salvation, but understanding the spiritual gifts that God has given you. Look in verse six.

“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.”<sup>5</sup>

Now today's message isn't a diagnosis of spiritual gifts and how they are implemented and how they are used. If you want to go through a study of spiritual gifts, 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Romans chapter 12 list them, discuss them, dialogue about them. But what I want you to know is this. If you have come to a place and a point in your life where you have confessed you are a sinner in need of saving and have confessed that Jesus Christ is the only one who can save you and have called on him to save you, according to the Bible, according to 1 Corinthians 12, you have been given at least one, but not all of the spiritual gifts. You are in possession of, you actually have within you a supernatural gift from God designed to help you live this thing called life.

Now I know often times we can get into big discussions and we can start working through the minutiae and the details and start saying. Well, what is my gift? And there are tests that you can take. We give them to our new members' class. You can take them online. This person has an opinion and that person has an opinion. Sometimes we can literally miss the trees for the forest when we get so interested in diagnosing that we never actually live out that which we have diagnosed.

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<sup>5</sup> 2 Timothy 1:6.

And so let me help you with this idea of spiritual gifts. The first thing you need to understand is this. They are given to you supernaturally. Now this is key to understanding your spiritual gift. You can go back in 1 Corinthians 12 and you can read more about them, but the way that I read the Bible, our spiritual gifts do not necessarily play directly in line with our personalities, our traits and/or just the way that we would naturally do things. In fact, when you go to 1 Corinthians chapter 12 it says that there is the gift of prophecy. There is the gift of exhortation. There is the gift of healing. There is the gift of tongues, discernment of tongues. There is the gift of faith, the gift of giving, and the gift of administration.

And I think one of the biggest problems is that we start looking at how God wants us to live this thing called life and we say, Well, I have a natural inclination to this so therefore that must be how God, “wired” me.

Here is the problem with that. When we start saying our spiritual gifts is what we are naturally good at, who ends up getting the credit for it? We do. Because that is how I am “wired.” Spiritual gifts most often, if not all the time, are that which God does through you that in your own strength you never could accomplish or pull off. They are supernatural.

Now what I am about to share with you is one of the gifts that is listed in 1 Corinthians 12. It is called the gift of discernment. I am going to share a story with you about a man in our congregation whom I believe for years has had the spiritual gift of discernment.

Now don't get this confused with women's intuition. You ladies just know where things are placed. You have an intuition. You have this idea of where everything is to be and in order. Discernment isn't that. The spiritual gift of discernment is knowing the spiritual condition of a person or a situation without possibly even having any dialogue.

Let me give you an illustration from a person in our church's life that happened over the last couple of weeks. This individual had a lunch meeting with somebody where they were going to discuss business, so to speak. And he shared with me that upon meeting this other individual everything went fine with the conversation. Everything went fine, “with business.” But he said from the very beginning something just wasn't right. Something just wasn't connecting. There was something about this person. He said it is just kind of like the radar went off inside and said something doesn't work.

Over the course of about 45 minutes to an hour this individual discovered that this person not only was a part of a, “false faith,” but a “radically false faith.” Never even discussing the parameters of what this person believed, not even having a, “Bible study” together, the Lord just supernaturally worked in this man to say, “Hey, this guy is not on the straight and narrow path.”

Now that being said, the spiritual gifts that are listed, yes, we could talk about all those and we could even discuss them and maybe even one day do a whole series on them, but

understand. This is God supernaturally working in us that which we could never do in our own strength. They are supernatural.

But here is the thing I want you to hear, this second aspect about spiritual gifts. You don't get the chance to select them. You don't get to go in your prayer closet and say, "Ok, God, this is the one I want."

Why? Because if that were the case, everyone of you would choose the spiritual gift of giving, because you can't give that which you don't have, right? And so we say, "You know what? I think the Lord wants me to have the spiritual gift of giving." And I think one of the problems that we have today among those who are passionate, actually desire the things of God in their life, is they go in their prayer closet, they have conversations with God and they say, "God, this is how I want you to work in my life."

Understand. In 2 Timothy when he says the gift that is in you, Timothy never chose it. He never selected it. What happened was that God endowed it. God gave it to him and he, according to this passage we just read, was not utilizing it. He was not living it. He had decided that he knew better how to live life than even God did. And that is a bad position to put ourselves in. And so as we see these first couple of verses in 2 Timothy, we discover that if we are going to live this thing called life, the first thing we need to know is how we are even saved. How are we forgiven? Jesus Christ endowed it on the cross and somebody else has at some point shared it with us.

The second thing is knowing that to live life out in the world, that God has given us spiritual gifts. He has endowed us with his Spirit and his power to move and to work in our lives. We don't get to choose what, when, where or how. We just get the opportunity to be obedient. In other words, God knows best how to live this thing called life than we do.

And so acknowledging those two points, why is it that time and time again it just doesn't seem to work out the way that we would hope it to?

I want to introduce you to the third point found in verse six where Paul says, "I want you to stir up the gift of God." We need to understand what salvation is. We need to understand what the spiritual gifts are or how God works in our lives. But the final thing that we desperately need to grasp is this. We need to understand how the Lord stirs up this gift. How has God designed us to live? How does he want our life to look day in and day out, anyplace, anywhere among anybody? And I want to clarify something for you. I want to make a clarification. And I am fixing to use two kind of big words, but they have very simple definitions. I want to clarify what it means to have God stir up your life. It is the difference between compartmentalization and consistency.

Now I realize those are big words. So allow me to unpack them for you. To compartmentalize our life is to say that I have this section over here and I have this section over there and the two shall not meet and they shall not blend.

Let me give you very blatant, obvious example. We compartmentalize our lives when we get excited and passionate about the things of Jesus on Sunday morning, but we forget about him by Tuesday afternoon. We compartmentalize our life when we treat people differently at work than we do at church. We compartmentalize our life when we say things on Facebook that we would never say to their face.

I want to repeat that again. You are compartmentalizing your life when you will say something on a Facebook post that you would never say face to face to that person. Why? You are saying that is reserved for the virtual world, not the real world. Compartmentalization is what we are in the flesh naturally gifted at. I want to segment. I want to segregate. I want to keep this away from that.

However, when we live a life of consistency, that means that no matter what the situation, no matter what the day of the week, no matter what the location is, our life looks the same everywhere among everybody. That means that our excitement for the things of God, our excitement for Jesus Christ ought to be the same, “on the ball field” as it is at church. We ought to treat strangers with the same respect that we treat a friend. We would talk to somebody face to face the same as we would on Facebook.

Consistency is what being stirred up means, not compartmentalization. So when we talk about our faith, when we talk about spiritual gifts, and when he says, “Timothy, you need to stir it up,” he is saying the problem with his life isn’t that he doesn’t have the right tools. The problem with his life isn’t that he doesn’t have the right resources. The problem is that he is not allowing God to stir it up and make every part of his life consistent with the things of God.

Now I understand you use compartmentalization, you use consistency, those are big words. Lots of syllables. So this morning I thought I would help you out and give you an illustration to show how this really works in our life by doing something that every one of us tends to enjoy when the process is over. So today I thought that we would do a little exercise. I bought something that I am not very good with and that is a mixer. We are about to mix up some cake batter. Does that sound good to you all? Because I am a big fan of cake, particularly double fudge. And that is what I brought today.

So what we are going to do is we are going to mix up the ingredients for a cake. Now, before I do this, I don’t want to get messy and I have been to Nicaragua. And we have a sewing ministry in Nicaragua. I don’t know if you know that. And those ladies down there make these and we purchase them and I think I look good. You may not. But this is my apron. I don’t want to get dirty, don’t want to get messy.

All, right. Now, we are going to make a cake, double fudge cake. I have got all the ingredients here that we need. The first thing we need is the cake mix. Now, ladies, I know. You all know how to do this by scratch. I know how to do this by way of Publix, ok? Two for one special, no less, why? Because we are going to make two because the mixer is so big.

So this is my essential cake mix and I am assuming it has everything in it that needs to because I don't know how to do it the way you are really supposed to. So that being said there is cake mix number one. Oh, and because we are doing a double recipe we need cake mix number two here, there we go. Oops. Cake mix number two.

Now, according to the recipe on the box that is not enough to make a cake. It said I needed eggs. Now it said I needed three, so since we have doubled it, I have got six eggs here. So we are going to pour the eggs in. There we go. And I also need butter. Half a pound of butter.

Have you all noticed that butter just makes anything taste good? I just thought I would mention that. That being said, so there goes the butter. Now this recipe also called for a half a cup or for a cup of water. And, well, I don't have any measuring cups with me, but this will do just as good. And so here we go. Looks pretty good to me.

Ok, so that is our cake. Now here is the thing about this. Before it spins, this cake is completely compartmentalized. You have got four different ingredients. You have got the mix. You have got the eggs. You have got the butter and you have got the water. And even though they are all in the same area, I don't think anybody would be real interested in grabbing a spoon and just going for it and saying, ooh, that would taste good. Why? Because you might get the egg yolk. And you might get a big old slab of butter, which, if it is deep fried, isn't bad. But nonetheless, we all know that in its current state it probably is not going to taste that good. So what we need to do is stir it up.

It just so happens we have the ability to do that this morning so without further ado let's crank it to three. What do you say? More power, right? And ... oh, there we go.

Now let me conclude with this illustration. We began with eggs. We began with a mix. We began with butter and water and no one really got excited about all that. But barring the fact that maybe you are allergic to chocolate or for some reason you just really don't like sweets, I bet I would not have trouble getting anybody to volunteer to come up here with a spoon.

So double fudge chocolate. And I will be honest. I like the batter better than the cake. I just want to be honest. That tastes good.

But you know the question I have for you as we close. Why is it that our faith in Jesus Christ doesn't taste good to those we go to school with? Why does it not taste good to people we work with? Why does it not taste good to our neighbors? Why are people not beating down our doors to get a taste of Jesus? It is because we have a bad tendency to compartmentalize. But when we are consistent, when we let God mix up our life, let me give you a prediction. Everybody is going to want to hear about the Jesus that you are talking and living about. If we will allow him to stir us up this fall and be consistent then everybody in our community is going to want a taste of the Jesus that we talked about all day.