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Sermon Notes

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Boldness & Faithfulness in the Gospel, pt. 1: Fan the Flame

2 Timothy 1:1-7

I. Series Introduction

A. Our Place in History

B. God's Timeless Charge: Bold, Faithful Proclamation of the Gospel

C. Clearest Scriptural Charge: 2 Timothy

D. Read Text

E. Series overview: Paul's series of charges to Timothy

1. Fan your gift into a flame (1:6)
2. Don't be ashamed of Christ; be willing to suffer (1:8)
3. Guard the message of the gospel (1:14)
4. Work diligently for Christ (2:1-6)
5. Flee evil desires & be holy!! (2:22)
6. Handle Scripture properly (2:15, 3:14-17)
7. Preach and live the Word! (4:1-5)

F. Today's Sermon

1. Introduction to Paul & Timothy (vs. 1 & 2)
2. Paul's Motivational Methodology (vs. 3-5)
3. Paul's First Charge: Fan Your Gift Into Flame (vs. 6-7)

II. Paul and Timothy: Leaving a Spiritual Heritage (verses 1-2)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus

A. The origin and purpose of Paul's apostleship

1. apostle means "sent one"...one sent as an official representative with authority of the sender
2. Paul: conscious of the origin of his apostleship

... by the will of God

- a. not his own will, for his "will" was to destroy the Church and oppose Christ
- b. God's will was that Paul should build the Church by preaching Christ
- c. God's will takes precedence over and shapes man's will
- d. Paul's authority came from the divine origin of his apostleship

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle, sent not from men nor by man but by Jesus Christ and God the father who raised Him from the dead

3. Paul is writing his good friend Timothy... WHY DOES HE "PULL RANK?"
 - a. some liberal scholars say this proves Paul never wrote 2 Timothy
 - b. actually, the whole tone of this letter shows Paul's seriousness in challenging Timothy... this charge is bigger than our friendship

...according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus

4. Clear statement of the purpose of Paul's apostleship
 - a. promise made by Jesus Himself

John 10:10 "I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly"

John 14:18 "Because I live, you will live also"

- b. apart from Christ, we are dead in our transgressions and sins
- c. Paul's whole purpose was to carry on a ministry of life among the Gentiles, to bring all the elect out of death into eternal life

- d. he is underscoring to Timothy the absolute importance of this ministry
5. Final purpose of Paul's apostleship: SUFFERING!! As Christ said to Ananias:

Acts 9:16 "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name!!"

- a. suffered from the very beginning to the very end
 - b. Acts 14: in one city in Asia, Lystra, he was first worshipped as a god, then stoned and left for dead ...
 - c. in that city was a young man named Timothy, and perhaps his first experience of Paul was seeing him, bloody and crushed by stones, dragging himself back into Lystra to carry on his work
 - d. now Paul was drinking the last bitter dregs of that cup of suffering... sitting in a dark, cold, Roman prison... no visitors, no hope of escape, merely waiting his final trial and execution under the despot Nero, who was personally persecuting Christians to cover his own blame for setting Rome on fire
- B. Timothy: Paul's "son" in the faith
- 1. Their relationship: Father & Son

To Timothy, my dear son... or "beloved child"

- a. History: Acts 16:1-2... Jewish mother Eunice led to faith in Christ through Paul on first missionary journey... Timothy also came to faith; father a Greek unbeliever... Paul "adopted" him spiritually
- b. Paul led Timothy to Christ, then poured his life into him
- c. perfect picture of discipleship... "teaching & way of life" (3:10)

App.: Do you have any "spiritual children"? Have you led anyone to Christ, then disciplined them to be fruitful evangelists themselves? Wouldn't you love to be a spiritual grandparent? Someone you lead to Christ leading someone else into eternal life? MY VISION: in ten years, many of you will be spiritual great-grandparent, seeing people move all the way from being non-Christians to being fruitful Christians!!

2. Timothy's strengths: faithfulness in the gospel

Philippians 2:19-23 "I have no one else like Timothy who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father, he has served with me in the work of the gospel."

- a. genuine interest in other's spiritual welfare
- b. denies self interest, focuses on Christ's purposes
- c. proven faithfulness in gospel ministry, even in persecution

3. Timothy's weaknesses

- a. youth: 1 Timothy 4:12 "Let no one look down on you because you're young"; 2 Tim. 2:22 "Flee the evil desires of youth"
- b. sickness: 1 Timothy 5:23 "weak-stomach, frequent illnesses"
- c. fearfulness: naturally shy, afraid of persecution, tempted to be ashamed of the gospel, afraid to suffer for it

4. Timothy's commission: this whole letter shows how important Timothy was to be in God's purpose... Paul had been God's "apostle to the Gentiles"; Paul was choosing Timothy to take his place

5. Timothy's benediction:

"Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord"

- a. grace to cover Timothy's sins
- b. mercy to cover Timothy's weaknesses
- c. peace to comfort Timothy's heart

III. Paul's Motivational Methodology (verses 3-5)

A. Constant Prayer (verse 3)

“I thank God ... as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers”

1. Paul never gives in to self-pity... keeps asking God how he can serve

Illust.: Servant in this church, bed-ridden and aged, used to call members of the church and say “I can’t do much for you, but I want you to know I’m praying for you”

2. not just any prayer, but **CONSTANT AND THANKFUL PRAYER**

- a. Paul would have no way of knowing how his prayers were having effect
- b. just knew that God commanded him to stay at his post praying
- c. driven by his love for Timothy, but even more deeply by his love for Christ and for His Church
- d. thankfulness: act of worship which ascribes sovereignty to God
- e. in thanking God for Timothy, Paul teaches us two crucial lessons:

1) God is sovereign over the spiritual development of people

2) The secret of constant contentment in all circumstances is a trusting thankful heart

3. in constant, thankful prayer, Paul prepares Timothy for hearing the series of charges he’s going to lay on him

B. Citing Personal Example (verse 3)

“I thank God, whom I serve as my forefathers did with a clear conscience...”

1. KEY DISCIPLESHIP PRINCIPLE: you can’t teach what you don’t live out
2. Paul constantly used his own personal life as a pattern for his disciples

3:10 “You, however, know all about my teaching and my way of life”

3. here, he says he has served God as his spiritual ancestors did... Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses ... the same eternal God, timeless and changeless;

his life of service is patterned after theirs, so Timothy's should be patterned after Paul's

4. "clear conscience": conscience is the constant, silent record-keeper of your moral performance... it testifies for or against you, based on your memory
5. Paul was able to say at the end of his life of service to Christ:

4:7 "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"

6. His personal example prepares Timothy for hearing these charges from Paul, because Paul has already lived out a life of faithfulness in front of him

C. Cultivating Deep Relationships (verse 4)

Vs. 4 "Recalling your tears, I long to see you again, so that I may be filled with joy"

1. Paul here reminds Timothy in a very moving way of their deep relationship
2. True spiritual growth travels over road paved by deep loving friendships
3. NOTE: mutuality: Timothy's tears, Paul's joy

Illust.: Japan & Hiroichi

4. Paul's obvious love for Timothy over many years gives him the right to charge Timothy with these weighty responsibilities

D. Constant Encouragement (verse 5)

Vs. 5 "I have been 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."

1. Paul used encouragement constantly in his ministry
2. Encouragement: seeing something God has done in someone's life and speaking lovingly and enthusiastically about it to them
3. Here Paul highlights the key aspect to Timothy: SINCERE FAITH
 - a. "sincere" = "unhypocritical"

Illust.: Sharing the gospel... people constantly talk about hypocrites in the church;

- b. Timothy's faith was real and genuine
- c. especially poignant for Paul, since vs. 15 says

"Everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me"

- 4. Timothy's faith was genuine... it first lived in Lois and Eunice (whom we will discuss more in chapter 3)
- 5. Paul's confidence in Timothy's true faith enabled him to lay these serious charges on him

SUMMARY: Four-fold preparation, Paul's motivational methodology

1) Constant thankful prayer; 2) Citing personal example; 3) Cultivating deep relationships; 4) Constant encouragement

"Timothy, I love you; I pray for you all the time; I have lived out in front of you what I'm charging you to do; you are my son in the faith, and I trust what God has done in your life... FOR ALL OF THESE REASONS, I NOW CHARGE YOU..."

IV. Paul's First Charge to Timothy: Fan Your Gift into Flame (verses 6-7)

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

A. On Spiritual Gifts

- 1. Paul's ministry of reminding... lit. to "put it into your mind again"
- 2. the "gift of God" should be understood this way ... spiritual gifts
 - a. Paul says it's "in you"... not a material possession, but a spiritual one
 - b. "through the laying on of my hands"
- 3. laying on of hands:
 - a. Jesus' healings frequently done with his touch
 - b. in Acts, came to be connected with the coming of the Holy Spirit
 - c. Paul himself received the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid his hands on him

d. best background: 1 Timothy 4:14

1 Timothy 4:13-14 “...devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching, and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid hands on you.”

4. spiritual gifts one of the most important topics in the life of a local church
5. Eph. 4, 1 Cor. 12-14, Romans 12 all discuss this vital issue
6. Def'n: Special spiritual abilities given to Christians for the purpose of building the body of Christ into maturity...
7. Bible teaches that each of us has at least one spiritual gift... Timothy's was preaching and teaching
8. BUT spiritual gifts can lay dormant, be unused, neglected, immature and undeveloped... they are meant to be used constantly

B. On Spiritual Fire

“fan your gift into flame...”

1. Paul reminds Timothy that boldness and faithfulness in the Gospel ministry starts with personal revival
2. Gk. Word: rekindle, re-ignite, add fuel to that fire, make it burn... these are words readily associated with revival
3. Zeal, passion, fire... cold ministry is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil
4. God meant his church to be a passionate place, where the fire of the Spirit burns within us... passion for God first, and for dying souls second

Illust. Great evangelist George Whitefield...died before the American Revolution; crossed Atlantic Ocean 13 times in a sailing vessel to preach the Gospel both in England and in the 13 colonies... last sermon, preached from his bedroom until candle died

C. On How That Fire Burns

“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but of power, of love and of self-discipline

1. Timothy had a special spiritual gift, vs. 6; BUT Paul here refers to the same Holy Spirit that every believer possesses
2. He is like a burning fire, filling God's people with zeal, passion, & incredible boldness

Illust. John Knox's sermon to the Queen of England

3. NOW we come face to face with Timothy's great enemy: FAITHLESS FEAR
 - a. Gk. word implies cowardice based on lack of trust in God
 - b. such fear in ministry is one of Satan's biggest weapons
 - c. perhaps many of you are hindered from sharing your faith because of fear... we'll discuss this more next week; but faithless fear has nothing to do with Christianity
 - d. Jesus Christ never failed to speak God's truth, though it cost Him His life
 - e. Paul courageously proclaimed the Gospel, though he was beaten and ultimately killed for it
 - f. BUT TIMOTHY was holding back a little
 - g. the fire doesn't burn where there's cowardice... who are we to fear men more than God?
4. HOW DOES THE FIRE BURN
 - a. **power**: commentators often tell us the Greek word here is related to "dynamite"... true, but not the right image: dynamite blows things up, leaving fragmentation, ruin, and destruction; God's power builds, puts together, heals, and brings perfect order
 - b. **love**: the power of the Spirit is awesome, yet it is controlled by love... God's power is loving power, a power to transform an entire world and fill it with the knowledge of Christ and His glory; true zeal and passion is always constrained by love

Illust. Too many passionate leaders have left a wake of crushed spirits behind them; God does not call our fire to burn leaving destruction, but to be zealous for love

c. **self-discipline**: it is a controlled burn, channelled power... like the mighty water of the Colorado flowing through the turbines of the Hoover Dam generating millions of watts of power for useful purposes

-discipline implies strict control over sinful passions as well, which we will discuss in chapter 2

FAN YOUR GIFT INTO FLAME:

- 1) start with prayer: begin again with the majesty of God and ask Him to rekindle your zeal for His glory***
- 2) stoke yourself up to see God's purposes in this world; afflict yourself with the condition of the lost in the Durham area, their terrible spiritual plight***
- 3) ask God to show you your spiritual gift, and to train you to use it properly***
- 4) banish coldness from your life, for God is a consuming fire***
- 5) let your fire burn CONSTRUCTIVELY, with love and self-control***

NEXT WEEK: we discuss overcoming fear in sharing the Gospel