

2Timothy 24-08-21b

We're resuming our study here in 2 Timothy. We are now at verse six, having reminded Timothy by example and by personal reference of the heritage of faith. We are not alone, even when we might be physically or circumstantially isolated.

We are part of the people of God, past and present. And to remember that we are connected, even over distances and even across time to fellow believers who have an enthusiasm for God, a desire to understand his plan and purpose and to be a part of it. The forefathers who serve with a pure conscience that Paul refers to, the grandmother and mother of Timothy.

And Paul says, if you look around, you will find other like-minded believers and all of us travel this road that is sometimes rough, sometimes goes through the shadowy veil, the valley of tears or of death, but we're never alone. The Lord Jesus has sent us the Holy Spirit as our comforter and our encourager. He never leaves us.

When we have his words and keeps them, the father and the son are present with us and it is a reminder that it is the heritage of believers to enjoy this fellowship across time, across distance with a common goal, a common opportunity and a common potential, every single one of us. So in verse six, Paul says, therefore, with all of that as introduction and background, therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. The laying on of Paul's hands is an early metaphorical or physical representation of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Later on, it doesn't require a physical touch, but in these earlier days, at the inception of the church age, there were miracles that happened by touch, by contact. Even a shadow passing over someone could heal. A cloth that one of the apostles had touched could then touch someone else.

And it was this laying on of hands that was both a recognition and a physical sign because people didn't have a New Testament where they could look these things up, but they would remember the visual. And so Paul says, you have a gift that is yours and it has been imparted to you through the Holy Spirit. He says through the laying on of my hands, but Paul's hands have no power.

Paul as a human being has no power to in-giftify someone, to imbue someone with a spiritual potential. This is very obviously and clearly a work of the Holy Spirit. Well, guess what? You also have a manifestation.

The same Holy Spirit that unites you and me to the body of Christ has gifted us, has given us a particular ability or enablement that is unique because it is a capability that operates within our circumstance. No two of us are in exactly the same relationships or circumstances or stage of life or time of life. There are just multiple unique

characteristics today right now that you exist in, that I exist in, and that every other God-fearing believer exists in.

And there is a unique enablement given by God through the Holy Spirit for you and for me. It's reasonably obvious that a major part of mine is to be a guy that studies and learns and then shares what I learned with you. That's the pastor-teacher function.

And I can't imagine myself doing without that, not doing it or deciding I'm gonna go off and become a world-class pianist or guitar player or something. I just, this is a wonderful opportunity. And mine is fairly clear.

Sometimes it is not so clear. You don't always have a list you can refer to and say, oh, it's this one, it's helps or it's administration or it's evangelism or it's washing the feet of the saints or it's, and it doesn't have to have a name. It is a unique capability.

Every single believer receives at the point of the baptism of the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, we become a member of the body and every part of the body has a function. You think about your physical body, there's very little of it you could do without. And I would like to think that we're muscle and bone and eyes and ears and capabilities, and we're not just fat, we're not being carried around as excess weight that doesn't do anything except slow stuff down.

It's possible to be in the body of Christ and not be fulfilling a function, but to those who serve God with a pure conscience, as Paul notes in verse three, you have a function. And if you are willing, and if you pray and ask God for opportunity and light on the path and wisdom and discretion, your gift will function. This particular enablement is always for the benefit of fellow believers to include in the evangelism circle, those who are not yet believers, but are going to become such.

And as you give a reason for the hope that is in you or speak the truth in love, we can reflect the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And those who are drawn to God and drawn to the light will be drawn in and through those words. And those examples, but nobody doesn't have a spiritual gift.

It is a matter of being prepared, being qualified and being willing to cultivate it and use it. And you don't have to know what it is. A flashlight doesn't have to have consciousness that it's a flashlight.

All it has to do is turn on when someone hits the switch. And when God hits our switch, if we are prepared because we're doing what we're doing tonight, we are imbibing the word of God. We are partaking of the living water of the word.

We're being washed and cleansed by it. We're being refreshed and strengthened by it. We are putting something in the hands of the Holy Spirit that he can minister to our hearts and can communicate to us, lead us and guide us, lead us into all truth, give us

perspective, give us discernment, give us wisdom to know when to speak and when to stay quiet.

And when we are prayerful, when we are sensitive, when we are watching for that leading, not just impulses and signs and, ooh, two doves flew over, so I should do something different. It is the word of God that the Holy Spirit uses. So we are here learning the word of God.

We prayerfully wait for the Holy Spirit to bring that word, those promises, principles and doctrines to our mind in the situation that we are navigating and our goals and our values and our priorities, our wisdom, our knowing what the good, acceptable and perfect will of God is, comes to us in that way. And that is the way your gift works. That's the way my gift works.

You can't say, well, I know I have the gift of pastor teacher, so I'm just gonna go start blathering on about this subject and that idea and this weird interpretation of a verse because I'm a pastor. So what I say goes, it is gonna fail and fall to the ground. And the scariest thing is there is double discipline for someone who stands up and misrepresents the word of God.

And we are back to the false teachers. Of all of the people you see mentioned in scripture, the two guys who get turned over to Satan are teachers. And Paul says, Hymenaeus and Alexander, I'm turning them over to Satan so they will learn not to blaspheme, not to misrepresent and falsify things about God and his word.

There is double judgment for a communicator because you're not only harming yourself, but others. So in verse six, therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God. He doesn't say the gift of Paul, it was mediated.

It was recognized and blessed, so to speak, by the laying on of Paul's hands. It was formally launched. It was inaugurated.

The bottle of champagne was cracked on the bow of the ship for Timothy's pastoral ministry. This is in the modern day what an ordination ought to be in a church. Recognition that God has gifted usually a young man to preach and teach the word.

And there is a formal recognition. Fill out a little piece of paper and say, we as a fellowship think this guy, by manifestations that have been evident in our fellowship over time, has been genuinely gifted by God. And we want to pray for him.

We want to encourage him. We hope that he will either minister to our group or find a group that God has prepared him to shepherd. And there is this formality.

That's what the laying on of hands was. It was just Timothy's ordination service. There's nothing wrong with that.

It is a great starting point. And it is a reminder to the people who do the ordination that they need to pray and encourage and support in whatever way they can with their own spiritual gifts, this individual who's going to be launching forth to do the job. But notice, therefore, because of your spiritual heritage and because of my spiritual heritage and because of the connection between you and me, Paul binds those together.

His service with a pure conscience, Timothy's heritage through his maternal line. Paul says, I laid my hands on you. And so now you are in the line of my forefathers, serving with a pure conscience.

You are in the line of your mother and grandmother. The laying on of my hands. Paul, it's just such a beautiful thing.

The inspiration of the Holy Spirit and this part of the word of God is just, it's like looking at a master work painting. There's not a wasted word. The flow of ideas, Paul starts with himself, moves to Timothy and then unites it at the point of the laying on of hands.

And these two streams come together and it's going to be Timothy moving forward. So I remind you, I remind you, it's me and you, Timothy, stir up the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. There's been this transfer and this commission and this, I've passing the torch and giving you a push in the right direction.

This word stir up is a fascinating word and I'm not going to belabor Greek, but you can't pass this one. It's too good. This is anazopurine.

There's three parts. Ana is again. Zo is zoe, it's life.

Purine, pur is fire. So you've got again, life, the fire. Light the fire again, hit the bellows and liven the coals.

This is blow on the fire and bring it back to flame. It may be falling back to kind of a simmer. Bring that thing back to a full boil.

So again, give life to the fire. That's what stir up means. There is a fire.

And of course you remember this idea of the gift. We saw it in 1st Timothy 4.14. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. In both letters, Paul did not ever mention this to Titus.

Titus needs a different kind of guidance. Titus doesn't seem to have personal insecurity or personal discouragement as a problem. And so Paul doesn't give him the kind of personal encouragement that he does Timothy.

The word of God is tailored in different parts and in different ways for different kinds of people. We all have areas of strength and area of weakness. It's a huge mistake to do comparisons.

Paul never says, well, you know, Timothy, I don't understand why you're struggling here and why you're weeping. Think of Titus, he's over there in Crete and he's facing the lions and the filthy liars and beasts in Crete and they're gluttons. And he's doing fine.

What's your problem? Scripture never does that. Paul's encouragement doesn't include thinking about others who are allegedly doing a better job. And we shouldn't either.

We should not be comparing ourselves to others. I don't understand why so-and-so is doing so well and I'm falling down. That's subjectivity.

You remember the elements of subjectivity. We haven't reviewed it in a while, but subjectivity is eyes on self, eyes on circumstances and things, or eyes on other people. Objectivity is looking at myself in the context of my relationship with God the Father and my fellow believers in a positive, unified, Holy Spirit-enabled and empowered way.

It is the Spirit and the Word that impart power to me. And I don't need to worry about comparing myself to others, either favorably, which is arrogance, or unfavorably, which is unnecessary inferiority complex. It's a waste of time.

It's not inspired. God the Holy Spirit doesn't encourage us. The Word of God does not encourage us to compare ourselves to others.

Do you notice that as far back as Cain and Abel, when Abel's sacrifice is accepted and Cain's is not, God doesn't say, well, look at your brother Abel. Why don't you just do what he does? What's your problem that you can't be more like Abel? What does God say? If you do well, you will be accepted. If not, sin is crouching at the door, wanting to pounce on you.

God leaves Abel out of the equation, even though Cain wants to make the direct comparison. And because Cain cannot escape the subjectivity, he winds up killing his brother because his eyes are on his brother instead of on his own relationship with God. So these letters were written within a few months of each other, all three of these past orals.

But Paul doesn't mention Timothy to Titus, and Paul doesn't mention Titus to Timothy. You stir up the gift that is in you. You breathe flame and life into the fire.

Why? Why? For God has not given us a spirit of fear. Now we get some insight into why Timothy is weeping. Paul says, I'm aware of your tears.

I wish I could be there and be joyful so that you could be joyful. But instead of being depressed and discouraged and continuing to shed tears, stir up your gift. Remember your purpose.

Who are you and why are you here? Every single one of us, even if you don't know what

your spiritual gift is, this is in the context of a pastoral letter and it is a pastoral encouragement where the gift is known. If you don't know what your gift is, the principle is the same. Stir up the presence and power of the Holy Spirit that is in you.

This is something we do. The Holy Spirit is present. He is waiting for us to come and warm ourselves at the fire and to blow some oxygen into that fire and to stir up the power of God that is in us.

Timothy's gift is the power of God. It's not some unique talent that is physical in nature or genetic, hereditary, or acquired by experience. It's an enablement from God.

Stir up what God has given you. So you say, well, but I've got a limitation here and a fence here, and I'm walled in over here, and I've got a discouragement here and a setback here and a limitation here, and it discourages me. I just, you know, there don't seem to be very many good options.

Stop looking to the outside, which is subjectivity, eyes on circumstances, eyes on other people. These people are failing. These people are falling short.

These people are doing me desperate. These people are attacking me, persecuting me, causing me affliction. You think about the apostle Paul, gracious sakes.

There were hundreds of people trying to do him in, trying to stop him at every turn, whole sects. Remember the Sicarii that took an oath and said, we're not gonna eat a morsel until we kill this guy? I assume they all died of starvation because Paul outlived them all. But take your eyes, and this is something only we can do.

This is a decision. This is something we do by choice. I choose to take my eyes off of circumstances.

I choose to take my eyes off of people and their opposition, their failures, their whatever they are doing that's negative for me, and I am going to look at what God has given me. What has God given me? For Timothy, it was his gift, authenticated by the last and perhaps greatest of the apostles. Wouldn't it be a privilege? How would you like to be a pastor that got ordained by the apostle Paul? The only thing better is Paul's ordination by the Lord Jesus himself as an apostle, as with the other disciples.

But Paul says, look, I laid my hands on you. You've got something in you that is a gift of God. Concentrate on that.

Take your eyes off of all this stuff that's bringing tears to your eyes. Look at what God has given you. Breathe fire into that.

Enliven the fire again. Why? God has not given us a spirit, a pneuma. It's another one of these questions as in Ephesians 1 where is this the human spirit or is it the Holy Spirit?

And the answer is yes.

The spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And when you talk about the spirit that we have, our spirit and the Holy Spirit are so interconnected that you can talk about either one at the same time. God has not given us a spirit.

It could be capital S, it could be small s. But the Holy Spirit and what God has given us, notice the gift that is in you, the gift of God in verse six, God has not given us. Concentrate on what God has given. There's a gift that God has given.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, a pneuma, an inner sense, a spiritual identity of fear. Now, most of you know the standard Greek word for fear is phobos, right? This isn't it. Phobia, God hasn't given us a spirit of phobia.

That's not it. This word is delia, D-E-I-L-I-A. And delia is not the same as phobos.

Phobos is an unreasoning, you can't control it with reason. It seems to be innate somehow. This isn't that.

Delia here is a timidity. You're timid. It isn't, oh my gosh, I've got to get out of here, there's a spider.

This is the idea, the feeling you get when somebody says, I want you to stand up in front of this crowd and speak, and you don't like getting up in front of people and speaking, it is timidity. It is an unwillingness to expose yourself to possible hardship or criticism or ridicule. And I would just rather not put myself in a position where I could be ill thought of.

That's what delia is. It's timidity, cowardice is a translation. But it basically is, you lose all initiative because you're self-conscious.

I'm conscious, I don't want something to happen to me. I'm better off sitting here. I'd rather keep my mouth shut and be thought a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.

I'm just timid. I don't want to put myself out there. I'm not, I don't, you know, when I was a teenager and you think, well, how are you ever gonna get a date unless you ask a girl out? But it's hard to do because if they say no, you've put yourself out there and you've been rebuffed.

And it's easier to just say, well, I'm not gonna ask. That's the safe course. You choose safety over initiative or over seizing an opportunity.

It's timidity. God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power. This is our classic, one of the five Greek words for power.

This is dunamis. And anytime you see dunamis as the word for power, you can

substitute, a great translation is ability. God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of ability.

You know how people, you see people say all the time, I can do this. You know, you can do this, talking to themselves. That's a spirit of ability.

I can do this. I've got this. Hold my coffee.

I'll do this, right? I can do it. Confidence, not a spirit of timidity. Remember the description of those who fall back again unto perdition, but those who by faith and patience inherit the promises.

That's what this is. This is the can-do spirit. You don't hear that anymore.

Used to hear it all the time when I was growing up. Can-do, we've got a can-do attitude. We can do this.

Let's pitch in. Let's tackle it. Let's get it done.

How hard can it be? Let's do it. That's the spirit that we should have spiritually. So we're in a dark place.

We've had setbacks, limitations, trials, sufferings, afflictions, persecutions, difficulties with other people, difficulties with our own body, difficulties with our own failures in the spiritual realm. And it's discouraging. Paul says to Timothy, the spirit that is in you doesn't encourage that.

If you're listening to those voices, if you're reflecting and meditating and churning around on those thoughts, that's not the spirit that God gave you. God didn't give you a spirit that wallows in the mire. God gives us a spirit of ability.

By God's grace, I'll leave this hole. I'll leave this darkness. I'm coming out of this valley.

It's God who is at work in me to will and to do for his good purpose. And his good purpose is not for me to sit, soak and sour and fall apart and be discouraged, be disabled and be neutralized. That's not the will of God.

That's not the spirit God has given me. But we've got to call up that truth and we've got to aim our faith at it and believe it. I know whom I have believed.

I'm persuaded he is able. I may not have it in my own strength, but God has given me a spirit of ability. Dunamis, where'd we get dynamite from? This is general ability.

It was used of the mighty. There's no specific case you're talking about. You just say, here's one of David's mighty men.

You give him an assignment, he's gonna get it done some way. He's able, he's capable.

So not a spirit of timidity, but of ability, capability, and of love.

This is agape. This is, I can look outside myself and look out not only for my own interests, but also for the interests of others. Philippians 2. This is the mind that was in Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus, who recognized his mission as a human being.

That's why Christ comes first and then Jesus. Spirit that was in Christ Jesus and a sound mind. Sound mind is another great word.

You would think that it's two or three words in Greek. It's one word. Sophronism.

Sophronos is the word for wisdom. And this is understanding. This is, I see what's important here.

I can discern the priority, the value, the goal. I see clearly. Or Johnny, somebody used to have that song decades ago.

I can see clearly now the rain is gone. I can see all the obstacles in my way. This is the rainbow I've been praying for.

It's gonna be a bright, bright, sunny day. I can see clearly now. That's what Sophronism, it's not just, I've got kind of a sound mind, I can rely on it to draw good conclusions.

This is the ability to perceive with wisdom and clarity. And when you see it clearly, you know exactly what to do. You've got a pain in your, you grab something, you say, ow, something is wrong.

And every time you grab something, you get this terrible pain. And so what do you do? You start looking at your hand and you discover there is a thorn or a splinter. Well, before you can get rid of that pain and go on to use your hands effectively, you've got to see clearly what needs to be done.

I need to remove the splinter. I need to dig out this thorn that's under the skin. That's what Sophronism is.

I've got the kind of perception and wisdom that can see the problem at its source and fix it. Wisdom, clarity. God has not given us timidity.

He's given us ability. He's given us love and he's given us clarity, visibility. Therefore, here's our second therefore.

We saw the first one. Therefore, I remind you, put life into your gift. Breathe the flame back into what God has given you.

All of us have wonderful, at least three dozen things that God did for us just at the point of salvation, not to mention what happens as we grow in grace and knowledge. So

instead of focusing on circumstances, everything that's wrong, all of the negativity, all of the disappointments, breathe life into the gift God has given. It's a Holy Spirit presence.

There is a power, there is an ability, spiritual. There is love and that love is gonna, when you're looking outside, love is going to express itself outside. You know, the world says, you've got to love yourself.

You've got to forgive yourself. You've got to give yourself permission to do this, that, and the other. And it's all ingrown, self-gratifying evil.

Agape love is outside. It benefits someone else. God so agape'd the world that he sent his son.

God has given us a spirit that looks outside ourselves to see who can I love, who can I benefit, even if it's at a cost to myself. I have the ability, I have the love. Romans 5.5, God's agape is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit.

It's a gift. And I've got the wisdom to know when, where, and how to do it effectively, not misdirect it, not waste it, to do it right. Therefore, do not be ashamed.

This is the second problem that Timothy has causing tears. The first one is this timidity, the circumstances, the resistance, the pushback that Timothy has encountered in Ephesus, the opposition, the contradiction, these false teachers has kind of overcome him. He's subdued.

He's now kind of timid. And Paul says, like the fire, man, get your boilers up to full pressure, full steam ahead. Therefore, secondly, not only don't be timid, don't be ashamed.

Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. This is another wonderful word that talks about shame in the sense of being embarrassed. It's not so much a state of the soul, but a situation into which you are brought and shamed by others.

You allow others to make you feel ashamed. It may not even be legitimate. There are people who don't want to speak up on certain subjects because they will be ill thought of or rejected by a desirable group.

And it isn't shameful in and of itself. It is shame that is heaped on you by others. And that's Timothy's situation.

He is allowing others to shame him when he's doing what's right. He's preaching and teaching the word of God accurately and properly. For example, if you point out certain evil, abomination lifestyle choices in this day and age, you will be roundly condemned as intolerant, as holier than thou, as self-righteous, as holding to old out-of-date ancient Hebrew traditions that have long gone out of date.

And there's something wrong with you for believing what the word of God says about perversion as it is detailed in the last half of Romans chapter one. And you believe what the Old Testament says is an abomination. You believe what the New Testament says is wrong and shameful.

And by simply holding to that view, people try to make you ashamed. You're out of step, you're wrong. And you ought to be ashamed of yourself for making somebody feel bad about what they can't help or whatever else.

Paul says, do not be shamed when you give the testimony of our Lord. You're letting people shame you and you shouldn't. That is causing you to be timid.

It's taking the wind out of your sails. You're losing your confidence. You're not exerting your authority.

You're not rebuking and calling out erroneous false teaching. You're letting people use shame to shut you up. And Paul in particular is emphasizing this to Timothy because Timothy is a communicator.

We can be a bit more strategic in what we say, to whom we say it, where and how we say it in private conversations. But remember now, this is Timothy's calling. It is his charge to publicly proclaim the testimony of the Lord.

We may not be calling out evil lifestyles or bad teaching or something per se. Our testimony of the Lord, however, when we live our lives and say, the reason I don't do this is because I love the Lord. The reason I have taken this stance, the reason I follow this policy, the reason I have this association and I don't have that association, I pursue this and I refrain from that is this is my belief that as I live my life under the Lord, I can involve myself in this and I stay away from that.

And it is our personal actions, our personal words, our personal involvements that are the testimony of the Lord in our life. For Timothy, his testimony is in his preaching. And he's got to do some calling out in a sort of a prophetic and preaching way that isn't every single believer's calling.

We don't have to go preach against homosexuality or a lot of these other social issues. But as we implement our private decisions and someone asks us a reason for why we do what we do and don't do what we do, that is the testimony of the Lord in our life. And we should not hesitate to say, I'll tell you why I don't vote this way or act this way or talk this way or involve myself in this or associate with this issue or that person.

I'll tell you why, it's my Christian faith. And to not be timid, to not let someone shame me into explaining it away and well, I just haven't had time or that's probably a good idea and fail to give the testimony of the role of the Lord Jesus in our lives. To be timid and not to speak up and to speak out when called upon for the hope that is in us.

And do not be ashamed of me, his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel. This is another string of English words that's just one word in Greek and this is our closing word for the night. When he says, share with me in the sufferings, that whole thing is just one word.

It starts with soon, which means with, and then kako, which is bad stuff. And patheo is to feel, you know, pathos. Patheo, if you have empathy or you have sympathy.

Sympathy, soon, patheo, you feel with someone. Empathy, you enter into their feeling. Empathy, empathy.

Well, this is soon, kako, patheo. And this means enter into what causes bad feeling, bad experience, share in the suffering, but it's not so much suffering as share with me in what's hard to take when someone wants to shame you and ostracizes you and rejects you and calls you out and bad mouths you and gossips and maligns and judges you when you're doing what's right. This isn't just suffering, you know, share with me in the beatings and the shipwrecks and the stonings.

This is share with me in the rejection and the affliction and the hardship that comes from people who want to make you feel bad. Well, sufferings for the gospel, according to the power of God. And when you come to the power of God, you're right back to the power of God in the life of the believer, which is the spirit and the word.

So this is where we'll pick up next time in verse eight. But remember, we are members of the body of Christ. We are members of the family of God.

We are here for a purpose. And God has given us a mission, has given us a gift, has given us resources, has sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, has given us his inspired word to speak truth to us, to keep us on the straight and narrow, to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. We hide it in our hearts so that we don't sin.

And that is the power of God. And we're given that power and that ability, that spirit of ability, that spirit of love, that spirit of discernment and seeing what we're supposed to do for a reason. We are here to accomplish.

And if we prayerfully request light and understanding from God, he's never going to deny that request. If you go to God and say, Lord, please shine a light on my path. Help me to know what I should do and how I should do it.

Can you imagine our father in heaven ever saying, no, sorry, I'd rather leave you in the dark. I'd rather let you bumble around skinning your shins and bruising your body on obstacles you can't see. If we pray for guidance, if we pray for strength, if we pray for power and love and a sound mind, God is searching the earth for believers who have that as their goal and their priority.

And when we make that prayer, it will be answered. You pray it and watch what happens. We will suddenly have clarity.

We will suddenly have strength. We will find that we're outside of ourselves and we are no longer hampered or hindered or discouraged or depressed or in tears over hardships. We will be fighting our way through and out of those circumstances in the grace and by the power of God.

That's what this letter is all about. Let's close here in a word of prayer. We'll pick up next Wednesday at verse eight.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the wonderful gifts that you have given us, the opportunities we have to rise above the earthly, the temporal, the mundane, and convert our time and our circumstances into eternal treasure, eternal value. Prepare ourselves for service and function now and in the kingdoms to come.

We pray that our study tonight will contribute to that goal, that the Holy Spirit will remind us of what we've seen and learned and use it to empower us to live the life that you would have us live. Accomplish the purposes that you have placed us on this earth to serve. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.