

2Timothy 24-09-15b

We're ready to pick up our study now in 2 Timothy chapter one. We have seen how important it is to hold fast the pattern of sound words. And scripture is replete with references to this.

There is great benefit, blessing and reward for so doing. God is canvassing the earth, looking for people who will appreciate his character and love him and trust him and commit their way unto him so that he can bless us, so that he can embrace us and hold fast to us just as we do to him. But it is a conditional opportunity.

God does not impose himself on those who are more interested in other things, who are easily distracted or deflected or become self-absorbed, who are deceived and enjoy the momentary stimulation that comes from some of these human ideas and human solutions. Progressive Christianity today is rife with ear tickling concepts. It sounds good.

It lets you associate with people in society without embarrassment or without being ashamed. People are ashamed to point out that there is perversion, that there is corruption, that there is defilement, that there is debasement, that there is a lot of awful patterns of life, a lot of awful values, a lot of rationalization and vindication of that which is identified as wrong, evil, and even an abomination in the scriptures. People are reluctant to express their understanding of what scripture teaches.

And that is to be ashamed. That is not to hold fast, sound words. So Paul goes on in verse 14, that good thing which was committed to you.

God has committed these things to us, to each one of us. How does it work itself out in practice? The parable of the talents, the parable of the minas, the master entrusts, he commits resources to his servants. And some of them do their best.

They take five and turn it into five more. They take three and turn it into three more. But the one that was entrusted with one can't even double the single mina or the single talent.

Wrap it in a cloth and shove it in their pocket. It was committed and they do nothing with it. It's already there.

They didn't have to earn those resources. They belong to the master. The master committed them to the care of his servants.

Some were faithful and some were not. And there is reward for the faithful. There is dire consequence for the unfaithful.

So that good thing which was committed to you, keep. You say, well, that all sounds good, but there's hard times, there's challenge, there's temptation, there's difficulty,

there's distraction. I don't feel like I've got the strength to do it.

What does the rest of that verse say? Can you read it? That good thing which was committed to you, keep by means of the Holy Spirit. We don't have to do it in our own strength. In fact, you can't do it.

We can't do it in our own strength. We keep it, how? By means of. This is an instrumental of means.

That good thing which was committed to you, keep by means of the Holy Spirit. That's the power. That's the enablement.

And it's easily accessible because he dwells in us, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And notice he dwells in us. Watching your pronouns, that good thing which was committed to you, singular Timothy, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

And this is a subtle reference back. Paul says, I am not ashamed. You should not be ashamed.

I am keeping and holding fast to what was committed to me. And you should do the same because the means by which I do it is the same means available to you. The Holy Spirit dwells in us.

And this is the encouragement of personal experience. Someone who's earlier, younger, not as far along, we can remind them as Paul does here. I know what you're going through.

I've been there, I've done that. And we together have the indwelling Holy Spirit and this is the power. You don't have to rely on me cheering you up and encouraging you.

The encouragement is God's power is available to you just as it has been to me, to us, to believers ever since the Lord Jesus gave us the gift of the comforter. Verse 15, this you know that all those from Asia, it says in Asia, but these are of Asia, they're from Asia. Those who have come to Paul because he is in Rome, he is in prison and the ones from those churches, these are the ones that the Lord Jesus is going to send letters to via John.

The seven churches which are in Asia and from that region, this includes Ephesus, this includes Timothy's home church, his pastorate. All those in Asia have turned away from me, have turned away among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. I'm sure that there was no intentionality when these men were named as infants, but their names are significant and Paul mentions them and they become a part of the inspired record for a reason.

Phygeles is Greek for fugitive. Someone who is ducking accountability, who is not

wanting to be held responsible. You can see the P-H-Y-G there, the Y is a U in Greek and that's fugitive.

He's Phygeles, and his name means fugitive, one who is attempting to escape justice. Hermogenes, Hermas is the Greek name for the God Mercury and Genes, this is what gets generated. So this is son of Mercury, son of Mercury.

You talk about someone who is mercurial, mercurial. Mercury is a liquid metal. It's very unstable, also poisonous.

Mercurial, when I was a kid, they still put Mercury in thermometers. Do you ever break one of those Mercury thermometers and Mercury comes out? It's a little silver bead. We would play it.

We didn't, you know, who knew the stuff was absorbable through the skin? You could get Mercury poisoning. Well, this is son of Mercury and they have turned away and Timothy knows these men. They are from Asia.

Among the Asians are these men who are known to Timothy and Timothy thought, well, they're gonna stick. They're gonna stay. They're gonna be faithful.

Paul says, no, they have turned away. We're gonna find out later in the letter that there are others who have turned away. Flip the page to the fourth chapter in verse 17.

The Lord stood with me and strengthened me at my first defense, which he mentions in the previous verse. 416, at my first events, no one stood with me, but all forsook me. This is the same word that's translated turned away in our verse.

No one stood with me, all forsook me. Can you imagine? You would think this is the apostle Paul. He is widely known throughout the budding Christian community in region after region and province after province.

And he is standing there at his defense and everyone faded. They were ashamed. They were fearful.

They did not stand with him. May it not be charged against them. Look at verse 14.

Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. Look at verse 10. Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world and has departed for Thessalonica.

Crescens has gone to Galatia. Titus has gone to Dalmatia. We're hoping that this isn't the Titus that was addressed when he was the pastor in Crete.

And that if he is leaving Paul, it's because he was sent. But notice verse 11, when Paul says, everyone has forsaken me and no one has stood with me. At the present time, when he's writing this letter, Luke is with him.

And evidently Luke wasn't yet there when he was at his first defense. Luke would have stood with him and Luke has stuck and Luke has stayed. Luke is with me.

Get Mark and bring him with you when you come. He's useful to me for the ministry. Tychicus I sent to Ephesus.

So Timothy can expect to see Tychicus. Tychicus may have carried this letter. But there are those who stay the course in difficult times, in perilous times, in times of hardship.

And there are those who find it convenient to be elsewhere. Among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes in verse 15. Now look at verse 16.

And I find it not without significance that through no fault of my own, we have come to this verse on this day. The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain. But when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me.

The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day. And you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus." This is where Timothy has been and Paul knows Onesiphorus in that time. So again, in our passage here, chapter one, verses 16 through 18, we have three verses dedicated to the faithfulness and the blessing that God brought to Paul through Onesiphorus.

Now, if you look at this closely, it becomes apparent, Onesiphorus, by the way, Pharaoh is to bear or carry. And remember Onesimus, the slave and Philemon? This is Onesiphorus. Onesimus means profit, something that is profitable, something that brings added value over and above.

So Onesiphorus, his name means bringing profit, bearing advantage. But notice when Paul says in verse 16, the Lord grant mercy, he doesn't say to Onesiphorus, he says to the house, the oikos, the household of Onesiphorus. Onesiphorus has passed away.

Onesiphorus has gone to glory. And so Paul can't confer blessing on someone who has died. So what does he say? The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus for the benefits that he conferred.

This is blessing by association. Onesiphorus is no longer with us. And the things that he has done for Paul and with Paul are all in the past tense.

But he will continue to be a blessing to his household. And the same mercy that Paul greets Timothy with in verse two, Timothy, beloved son, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord, the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus. He often refreshed me in the past.

Paul is in Rome, Onesiphorus came to him in Rome, diligently sought him out and

refreshed him. But notice it's in the past tense. He often refreshed me and he was not ashamed of my chain.

Onesiphorus has made a long trip from Asia to seek out Paul. Paul, there wasn't one giant jail in Rome. There were a collection of small prisons and Onesiphorus initially couldn't figure out which one Paul was in.

And so he had to inquire and he had to out himself and he had to say, I'm a friend of Paul and I'm looking for him. And this identifies him with Paul. And if Paul is being looked at askance and his persona non grata, and it's dangerous to mention his name or be associated with him, Onesiphorus doesn't care.

He's not ashamed of his chain. He's not ashamed to say, I'm looking for the prisoner, the criminal, the insurrectionist Paul. Can you tell me where he is? Can you tell me who might know where he is? Who can I talk to and find him? And he had to search diligently to find him.

And he was undeterred. He wasn't afraid. He wasn't ashamed.

He didn't give up. He persevered until he found him. And when he found him, he was a refreshment.

This idea of refreshing is such a wonderful thing. He refreshed me. You have this same idea in Matthew 10, 42, when Jesus says, talking about the little ones, suffer the little ones to come to me.

Those who do them mischief, it would be better for them if a millstone were around their neck, cast into the sea. Whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward. Paul knows that Onesimus has reward coming to him in the resurrection, at the judgment seat.

And Paul says, he was such a blessing. I pray mercy on his household who are still here with us. They're bereaved.

He has recently departed this life. They have to be grieving over the loss. He was a wonderful man.

But Paul prays mercy on his household because of who he was and what he did, his faithfulness, his dedication, his recognition, not only of the apostle Paul, but of the gospel that Paul preached. He appreciated the good news that Paul shared. And he loved to spend time in Paul's presence and hear him talk about the Savior and talk about the plan of God and talk about the present and the future and that these momentary light afflictions are working an eternal weight of glory.

And Onesimus for us basked in that truth. And he held fast to the form of sound words that he received directly from the apostle Paul. We think, oh, if I lived in that day, I would have done the same thing.

Fear is a powerful thing. Ask Simon Peter on the night of Jesus' arrest. Oh Lord, all may abandon you.

I will never abandon you. The proof is in the pudding. And Onesimus proved it out.

It was dangerous to know Paul, to speak his name, much less to look for him and try to do something for him. Onesimus didn't care. Man of great courage.

So the Lord grant mercy. Paul can't do anything, but he can talk to the Lord and say, bless the household of this wonderful and faithful man. He often refreshed me.

This refreshment, Matthew 10, 42, I just mentioned. First Corinthians 16, 18. Paul is talking about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus.

What was lacking on your part, you Corinthians, these men came and supplied. Like Onesimus for us, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus are immortalized in scripture. Their names are recorded for eternity.

Why? What was lacking on your part, they supplied. They refreshed my spirit and yours. They were the go-betweens.

They maintained the connection between the believers in Corinth and Paul. Therefore acknowledge such men. Appreciate these faithful men who have courage, who are willing to put themselves out to refresh my spirit and yours.

You have the same idea in Philemon chapter seven, talking about another Onesimus idea, Onesimus. But writing to Philemon, we have great joy and consolation in your love because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother. We don't spend enough time looking at that short, but important letter to Philemon, a beloved friend and fellow laborer, and Achaicus, Archippus, our fellow soldier, and the church in your house, another house church with Philemon.

But this slave Onesimus is under discussion there. And in that verse seven, Philemon, like Jude, just has a single chapter. We have great joy and consolation in your love because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, Philemon, brother.

Refreshed. Same thing in verse 20. Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord.

Refresh my heart in the Lord by receiving Onesimus, treating him as a brother and not as an escaped slave. Your actions, your attitude, your willingness to honor this request in the Lord, for the Lord, will refresh my heart. Believers can refresh one another, can be a source of joy.

And this is the heritage of Onesiphorus. Often refresh me. He sought me out zealously and found me.

The Lord grant to him in verse 18 of 2 Timothy 1, that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day. Why does he say the Lord grant that he will find mercy in that day? Because his life here is finished. And Paul is telling Timothy and the household that is in Ephesus, Timothy knows them, and they will hear this letter.

And he says, I honor the head of your house. Even though he's no longer with us, may you be blessed. May he find mercy from the Lord in that day.

And this is, may he in the sense that he's going to. Paul is certain that his work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope is gonna be rewarded in that day. Where have we heard that day before? Remember verse 12, he will keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

That hope is so pervasive and so definitional and so constant. Paul doesn't have to talk about the day of the return of the Lord Jesus or the day when we all stand before the throne. What does he say? That day.

Timothy well knows what that day is. And Paul doesn't have to describe it. I've committed these things to him in view of, looking forward to that day.

May Onesiphorus, may the Lord grant that he finds mercy from the Lord. And notice the Lord is mentioned twice in that run up to mercy. The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord.

The Lord grants mercy in that day. And you know very well how many ways he ministered in Ephesus. It wasn't just what he did for Paul, it's the ministry that he did in Ephesus.

He's been a blessing and a refreshment to many. And Paul honors the fact that he is going to receive mercy from the Lord in that day, when there is the great reunion and the great gathering in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. So we should recognize two things here.

First of all, holding fast and continuing in the things which we have learned sometimes means risking hardship, not being ashamed of that which is definitional for being a believer. And sometimes this means making hard decisions about associations and about those with whom we fellowship and those who we have to put at a distance and put them in the outer ring of love. It may even be enemy love or it's at a distance love.

They're not even close enough to be a neighbor and they're certainly not in the one another realm. And we have to have the courage to not be ashamed of the guidance from God that says, you cannot touch the unclean thing. You have got to hate the

garment spotted by the flesh.

The Lord Jesus is gonna be a sword that divides households sometimes. And it takes courage. It takes fortitude.

It takes recognition that this is what we have been called to and to compromise, to weaken, to do something in the interest of what makes me feel better or what I personally think might be a good idea. That's to be ashamed. That is to be reluctant to fully follow the Lord.

Well, I'll do it as long as it's convenient. But if Paul gets arrested and the Romans are bringing him up on capital charges, I suddenly have somewhere else I need to be. All have forsaken me.

Demas has forsaken me. He loved this world. He loved the cosmos, the associations, the connections.

He loved the benefits that he could get by not being associated with Paul. So he forsakes him. Paul says, all these fair weather friends from Asia, they've all turned away.

There's a few faithful men and the reason they're not here is I have sent them. But you know who's still with me? Luke. You read the account in Luke in Acts where Luke is with him and all of those we sections, Luke sticks with him through thick and thin.

I personally think Luke had a romantic distraction perhaps when they met Lydia, the seller of purple, because that's right where the we section ends. Then Paul goes on and Luke seems to stick around in the Lydia environment. And I'll be very interested to see if Luke finally found the woman of his dreams there.

But as soon as they meet Lydia, the seller of purple and the fellowship there, now Paul takes off and it's no longer the we's. But Luke has whatever he found, whatever he was doing, he has returned and he is with Paul at the end. And it's gonna be Luke and Timothy.

Paul is gonna say, Timothy, come to me and bring Mark if you can. Mark can stick around. He's young, he can get things into the prison for me.

But Paul is down to the only most faithful of his friends. Only the ones that have got the courage. Onesiphorus would come if he could, but he's gone to glory.

So who's left? There's Timothy, there's Luke, and hopefully Mark. But this idea that when someone is faithful and when they don't care about the personal consequences and they're faithless and their loyalty in ensuring that they come and refresh the heart of a believer in need, that is Onesiphorus's legacy. And it brings blessing and mercy to his entire household.

So the Lord grant to him that he may find mercy. The Lord grant mercy. Notice in both cases, it isn't peace, it isn't joy.

It's not happiness, it's not even material blessing. What is it? What's the centerpiece? What's the centerpiece up in verse two? Between grace and peace, what is the... Paul often says grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in his salutations. But what's the centerpiece in this letter? Mercy, God's compassion, God's loving kindness.

What do we need more than anything else? Why do we have so many benefits and blessings in Christ? So many wonderful assets and providences and provisions from God. Why do we have them? It is the mercy of God. The mercy that overlooks our faults and our failures and our shortcomings.

God in his mercy overlooked sins in the earlier ages. God is merciful. He is a God of mercy.

And when Paul wants to pray the highest, greatest prayer for someone, when he wants to wish them the best from the throne of grace, it is mercy that he prays for. We can pray this for ourselves and we can clearly pray it for others. God grant mercy, compassion, grace, provision, loving kindness are all wrapped up in that word mercy.

We seek it for ourselves. We can refresh the hearts of other believers. We can be a source and a conduit for God's mercy as we first of all, hold fast the form of sound words and continue in them.

And through that, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts and we then can reflect God's love to others. This is what Onesiphorus has done both for Paul personally and he says, you well know Timothy what a blessing he was in Ephesus. Well, that brings us now to chapter two and what is the conclusion? You therefore my son.

Once again, an appeal to their connection to the pattern like father, like son. Timothy, I'm reminding you of how that pattern of sound words works itself out in practice. You therefore, what is the therefore therefore? That section we just covered.

Because of these truths, because of the example of men like Onesiphorus, you therefore my son, be strong. It's easy to say be strong, how? Where does the strength come from? Be strong, same thing he mentioned earlier, by means of grace, by means of grace. That good thing, verse 14, keep it by means of the Holy Spirit.

Be strong by means of the grace that is in Christ Jesus. There is grace, there is power, there is strength. It is not in and of ourselves.

To be strong, we have to access the enablement that God has made available to us. And verse two, the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit

these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Above all, it is truth that is taught, that is learned.

And having been learned is then communicated to others. Someone teaches it, we learn. Now that we have learned, we can teach.

We can pass along, we can speak that truth in love. But the power is in the truth. The power is in what the Holy Spirit does with the truth and it is nowhere else.

There is no power in emotion. There is no power in wishful thinking. There is no power in abstract hope.

It is a solid hope, it is a truth-based hope. And there is no deliverance in any other. Neither is there salvation deliverance in any other.

There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we are delivered. Delivered at the point of salvation and delivered in every trial, enabled and strengthened and given the perspective and the enablement to survive the screening, to shine in the screening, to be someone that God desires to have in His presence who says, well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord.

You have been faithful in a few things. I'm gonna make you ruler in many things. You are who I'm looking for.

You didn't let the test distract you. You did not become ashamed. You stuck with it.

Onesiphorus, faithful unto death. It seems as though, and it's hard to know, we don't have any extra biblical records, but it is implied here or suggested here that Onesiphorus left his home, left his household, came to Rome, sought Paul out and refreshed his heart, ministered to his needs and never made it back home. And this is why Paul tells Timothy, be sure and communicate to his household.

What a blessing it was that he came. And he's gonna have mercy in the day. And I pray mercy on his household in the meantime.

But he is a, and the example that Paul concludes this first section with, he essentially says, Timothy, you've seen my example. Be like Onesiphorus. This is the example worthy of the Lord.

This is the example worthy of emulation. He did it, not just because he's a wonderful guy, but because he held fast and continued in that form of sound words, the pattern of teaching. And he loved Paul for what Paul taught.

And he was a blessing to Paul all the way up until he died. And God is gonna honor it in the future. So it's a great place to be on this day in particular for our family.

I feel like we all have individuals in our periphery that we appreciate because of their faithfulness and the way that God was able to use them because they held fast, because they were faithful right up to the end. On that note, we will close. We'll pick up here in the first part of chapter two of 2 Timothy next week, but we'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for the inspired scripture that has been preserved down through the centuries for us, the indwelling presence of your spirit to minister to our hearts, to remind us of it, to help us see how it applies in the situations we face, the opportunities we have, the decisions we must make, the challenges we have to work through. We pray that as we reflect on these wonderful words, these great examples, that we will find it a source of strength, that through your word and through your spirit, we will be those who are worthy to receive your mercy or qualified to stand in your presence. On that day, the Lord Jesus returns to take us to himself.

We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.