

SERMON TOPIC: LIVE A LEGACY, LEAVE A LEGACY

SERMON TEXT: 2 Timothy 2:1-13

1. LEGACY PROCESS

What Paul handed to Timothy was a non-monetary inheritance. After all, Paul was writing from his prison cells, down trodden, penniless and very well knows that these were probably going to be his last words to Timothy. It is a type of “wealth” that cannot be monetised but it is exactly the treasure Timothy needed.

1.1 Legacy Entrusted and Taught

- The object by which Paul entrusts refers to the Gospel, or more broadly speaking, the apostolic teachings.
- Part of our role as Christians is to preserve the purity of the Word and pass this legacy on to the next generation intact.
- When we teach or disciple someone else, we are not just discipling a disciple but we are discipling a discipler and this is the lifeline of Christianity!

Four-Stage Process (True Apostolic Succession):

- 1) From Christ to Paul,
- 2) From Paul to Timothy,
- 3) From Timothy to ‘faithful men’
- 4) And from ‘faithful men’ to ‘others’.

1.2 Legacy Process Strengthened

- Paul’s imperative for Timothy to be strong is not an order to Timothy to be strong in himself.
- Timothy is NOT to find his resources for ministry in his own strength, but in the grace of our Lord. (v1)
- The present tense of the Greek passive imperative “be strong” suggests the need for continual dependence on God.

- Our dependence on God could be in areas like:
 - 1) Parenting or Spiritual parenting where we are never in control of the outcome.
 - 2) Times in ministry or in our faith journey where we get tired or burnt out from serving God.
 - 3) Times in our human weakness where the Gospel might be compromised because of our reluctance, sloppiness or perhaps just pure laziness.

1.3 Legacy Consequences Shared

Share in the suffering (v3)

- Today, there are people suffering for the sake of the Gospel.
- Acts of terror and persecution against Christians in Syria and Iraq; bombings in Sri Lanka are stark reminders of our precarious state.
- Christianity does not guarantee a good and prosperous life, not in this fallen world. Will we still be faithful?
- Paul's choice of language here "suffer together with" underscores that the experience of suffering is a shared one.

2. LEGACY VALUES

3 pictures of a good Christian servant to illustrates for us that serving Christ and the preservation of the Gospel is hard work and it requires total commitment.

2.1 The Soldier

Firstly, Paul uses the metaphor of a soldier. It describes a dedicated man, who shows his dedication in his willingness both to suffer and to focus.

- In Paul's time, the Roman legions were a model of discipline, and because of that discipline, they were unbeatable. Such ideas were in Paul's mind when he chose the image of the soldier to describe the servant of Christ.
- The military commander is the reason for the Roman's soldiers' resolute. The soldier's goal is to "please" or satisfy the wishes of the commander. Likewise, the emphasis is on the need for discipline and single-minded commitment in Timothy's ministry because of his allegiance to Jesus and Jesus as our commander of faith expects no less from us.

- The gospel message needs to be lived out intentionally, seizing every opportunity to share Christ. The imperative laid out by Paul here is clear, its either we are all in or all out for Jesus.

2.2 The Athlete

In the second metaphor, Paul speaks of an athlete deserving of the crown only if he or she competes according to the rules.

- The Christian life is regularly likened in the New Testament to a race and here in Timothy, Paul instructs readers to keep to the rules. We are to run the Christian life lawfully.
- But the context presents a wider application than to our individual moral conduct. Paul is describing Christian service, not just about our Christian life.
- He seems to be saying that prize for service depends our faithfulness to self-discipline and integrity.

2.3 The Farmer

Paul's third metaphor of a farmer illustrates two main points.

- 1) On the one hand is the farmer's right to enjoy the produce of the field he worked.
- 2) On the other hand, the farmer exemplified diligence; it was this kind of effort that promised to return a crop.
 - The point of this metaphor is to connect the promise of reward with diligent service. However, the dominant eschatological atmosphere in 2 Timothy suggests that Paul is underlining the certainty of final rewards on "judgement day" and not necessarily now.
 - The emphasis is not so much about the reward per se but the diligence we put into sowing, what and how we sow. The farmer's metaphor teaches us the principles of a well-known adage: "You reap what you sow".
 - Let not our diligence be displayed only in the marketplace or in school but let us also be diligent in the kingdom's work keeping in mind our eternal recompense.

3. LEGACY BASIS

Paul rounds up by asking Timothy to think over these things and close the call to suffering from verses 8 to 13 with three things:

- 1) A statement of the gospel
- 2) A personal testimony
- 3) A quotation from what some scholars suggest to be a baptismal liturgy.

It forms a theological basis or conclusion by establishing a focus on the gospel, which places the Christian experience in proper perspective.

- There is a need to facilitate the salvation of the elect. However, one may address the matter of election, the conversion of a person involves the faithful ministry of the saving gospel.
- Serving Christ requires total commitment but the church must “remember Jesus Christ”. Paul suggests that we need to return to the basis of everything, to remember that we are doing this for Jesus.

Conclusion

Through Paul’s letter to Timothy, we learn that the church needs to hold fast to the legacy of the Gospel, to teach the truth of salvation and to share in the suffering. Through the examples of a soldier, athlete and farmer, the church is to exemplify the values of single-mindedness, integrity and diligence. Paul is not just asking Timothy to live a life that’s worthy of the cause but also to leave a worthy legacy for others to inherit.