

“The church rekindled – 1st and 2nd Timothy”

October 16, 2022



“No shame in the Gospel”

God calls us to worship:

Responsive reading: Psalm 121

Hymn: #313 “Oh worship the King”

We respond in praise, confession, and supplication:

Prayers of Praise and supplication (*Please remain standing*):

Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit,
you breathe life into all things and nourish your whole creation.
You are a rock and refuge for your people,
for you are trustworthy in all things.
Your desire for peace with justice can never be defeated.
You alone can bring life out of death,
and restore wholeness to broken lives,
so we praise you and rejoice in the hope you offer.
For your love is the power at work in every situation,
seeking goodness and revealing truth,
a love that will never let us go.
In our time of worship, we offer you our love and loyalty
through Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayers of Confession (*Please be seated; said in unison*):

**Merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you
with our whole heart, mind, and strength;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be,
so that we may delight in your will**

**and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name.
Amen.**

Assurance of grace: 1 Timothy 1:15; 2:5
(The response to: “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good” is: **“His love endures forever.”**)

God speaks to us:
Prayer for illumination

No shame in the Gospel

This fall we’ve been engaged in a series of sermons which I’ve called: “The church rekindled.” Prior to Thanksgiving, we considered the apostle Paul’s first letter to the young pastor Timothy. We learned that the primary reason Paul wrote to Timothy was that the church in Ephesus was in danger of being led away from God by the teaching of leaders within the congregation who were relying on extrabiblical sources and traditions for their doctrine. As such, they were teaching falsehoods about the person and work of Jesus, about the trustworthiness and use of scripture, and about how one ought to behave in the household of God.

Paul wrote 1st Timothy to encourage Timothy to hold fast to the “sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.”

He wrote that to do so, what is of first importance is that the church be a community at prayer, offering intercessions, supplications, and thanksgivings to God for everyone. In addition, the church is to be a community in which the needs of the vulnerable are met in the name of Jesus by the sharing of the community’s resources, and that the government of the household of God is to be according to God’s design: with teaching and ruling elders, deacons, and bishops.

Paul’s second letter to Timothy is more personal.

Paul was in prison and wrote this letter – which would be his final letter – as a “personal encouragement [to Timothy] in his ministry.”¹

Over the next few weeks, we’ll wrap up the series by studying Paul’s second letter to Timothy. Today we’ll consider what I’ve called “No same in the Gospel.” Next Sunday we’ll look at what it means to be “Strong in the grace of Christ”. I’ll be away on October 30th and the following Sunday is Remembrance Sunday, but on

¹ R.C. Sproul, Introduction to 2nd Timothy in *The Reformation Study Bible*

November 13th we'll conclude the series with "The Crown of Righteousness" which leads us into Christ the King Sunday on November 20th and on to Advent!

Let us now listen for the Word of God:

READ 2nd TIMOTHY 1:1-18.

(The response to "This is the word of the Lord" is "**Thanks be to God.**")

1. Timothy was tired. And, faced with great opposition – "with wars without and fears within", as the hymn says – was discouraged. In the face of his opposition he was finding it harder and harder to uphold the gospel that there is *One* God and *one* mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all and who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. Not to mention trying to encourage the faithful in behaviour that was becoming members of the household of God while the other teachers were proposing much more attractive lifestyles!

So, Paul encouraged Timothy to not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord *or* about Paul who was imprisoned for this very testimony.

2. Shame is a feeling of disgrace because you are regarded (either by others or yourself) as less valuable/honourable than others because of who you are.

Guilt is related to something you've done, shame is related to who you are.

"I did something bad, I feel guilty."

"I am bad, I feel ashamed."

Because of the testimony of the Lord, which is the Word of God – including Paul's letters, whoever believes Jesus is the Son of the Living God, the Messiah, is a Christian. The church is the community of Christians in the world. We belong to the body of Christ, we are indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are beloved daughters and sons of the Living God who created heaven and earth, and we are his representatives engaged in His work in this present age.

Does that make us less valuable to society than our neighbour who is not?

In his fatigue and discouragement, Timothy, it seems, wondered.

I wonder how many of us are affected by this condition.

We know that Sunday worship attendance and church membership is quickly declining. We know that congregations are making the decision to sell their assets and discontinue their fellowship. We know that most people walk past church doors

without giving a second thought to what they represent. We know that in the public sphere, the testimony of Jesus seems irrelevant on one hand or even offensive on the other. And, we know, that we have misrepresented Christ in various ways over the past 2,000 years.

I wonder how many of us, like Timothy, become discouraged in the faith and maybe even ashamed of the testimony about our Lord. How many of us stumble over the word “Christ” or “God” or “Gospel” or “salvation” when we are talking with others. How many of us shy away from publicly affirming that there is one *living* God who created heaven and earth, who will keep you from all evil, and in fellowship with whom all things come together; that there is one mediator who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light: Christ Jesus who gave his life a ransom for all.

3. Paul reminded Timothy that what he had been entrusted with didn’t depend on ascriptions of value by others. It has inestimable value in, and of, itself. He described it as “the good treasure.”

As Christians, we have been entrusted with the good treasure which is the Word of God. And we’ve been entrusted with the doctrine that is aligned with the testimony of Scripture and which conforms to “the glorious gospel of the blessed God.”²

We have been entrusted with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.

4. Proclaiming that Jesus has “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light” might leave you feeling silly, or unenlightened, or unscientific. So you privatize your faith, you shy away from conversations that might expose your belief. And, in consequence, your faith becomes but a small ember buried under the ash of a long-extinguish fire of enthusiasm.

I think Timothy was experiencing something like this. So, Paul encouraged him to rekindle his enthusiasm for his ministry of guarding and explaining the Word of God and for Christ Himself and for his gospel.

When a fire burns down so there are only coals, the red embers buried beneath the ashes need to be stirred up. They’ve been buried in the ash; they need to

² 1 Timothy 1:11

be uncovered and brought to the surface where the oxygen of the air can mix with the heat of the ember. Then, fresh kindling needs to be strategically laid on so that when the oxygen meets the heat from the embers, the ensuing explosion can ignite the wood and the blaze is rekindled.

If you can identify with Timothy, if you're tired and discouraged and wondering if this Christian thing is worthwhile, remember: God will bring to perfection what He has begun.

Remember the gospel that is the promise of life in Christ Jesus; expose that ember of faith to the breath of the Holy Spirit; lay on the kindling of the Word of God, and allow the power of God's Spirit to rebuild the blaze that is your enthusiasm for your Holy Calling.

We have been entrusted with a good treasure. We've been entrusted with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.

There's no shame in that!

And, what's more, Christ's church will never die.

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild restless sea;
day by day his voice still calls us
saying, "Christian, follow me."

Amen.

We respond by affirming our faith, offering our tithes, and prayer:

Hymn: #683 "I know not why such wondrous grace"

Apostles' Creed (*see bulletin insert for text; please remain standing*)

"Let us return to God the offerings of our life."

Offering:

(*Offering plates are presented at the Communion Table while congregation sings:*)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

praise him all creatures here below;

praise him above, ye heavenly host;

praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost

Prayer of dedication

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession:

God of life,

You open our eyes on the world you love
and show us your presence and your purpose.

We see the beauty and wonder throughout creation
and feel the love and compassion you offer through friend and stranger.

For all these gifts we give you thanks.

We pray for those who cannot recognize these gifts in their lives.

Open their eyes to your presence and our companionship
so that they may know your steadfast love.

God who listens, hear our prayer,

and in your mercy, answer.

God of justice,

You open our eyes on the world and its anxiety
and show us struggle and conflict.

We see the burdens many carry in these stressful times.

Today we pray for those whose businesses are struggling;

for producers unsure they will receive a fair return;

for workers uncertain about their jobs prospect;

and for families weighed down by rising costs.

Open their eyes to new possibilities

and open our eyes to ways we can support them,

God who listens, hear our prayer,

and in your mercy, answer.

God of compassion,

You open our eyes on the world in pain
and show us suffering and despair.

We see all the challenges in health care

and tired professionals stretched beyond their limits.

Renew their strength of purpose.

We pray for communities struggling with chronic hunger

as well as the shifting reality of the pandemic,

and for all who face difficult diagnoses, painful illness, or delays in treatment.

Keep silence for 15 seconds.

Open their eyes to your mercy
and open our eyes to ways we can offer support.
God who listens, hear our prayer,
and in your mercy, answer.

God of wisdom,
You open our eyes on the world out of balance
and show us its many complexities.
We see old animosities and fresh upheavals
that put innocent lives at risk.
We pray for the millions displaced by current conflicts and natural disasters,
and pray that leaders in every country and community
will attend to the suffering of their people with mercy and justice.
Equip all those who prepare for ministry in our Colleges
with the knowledge and commitment needed to serve in complicated times.
Open all our eyes to creative solutions
for situations which break your heart and ours.
God who listens, hear our prayer,
and in your mercy, answer.

And so we pray that your kingdom will come among us, in the words Jesus
taught us:

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: #672 "Jesus calls us, o'er the tumult"

God sends us with God's blessing:

Benediction

Congregation sings "Amen"