

Living in God's Church Today

My Beloved Child

2 Timothy 1:1-2

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August 7, 2022

My Beloved Child

Introduction

In his book titled *All the Last Words of Saints and Sinners*, Herbert Lockyer writes:

Infidels and agnostics are usually cowards when the death dew lies cold on their brow. Unprepared to enter eternity, they lose their braggadocio as its gates open to receive them. What fear grips their hearts and how pathetic and hopeless their last words are! The only Light that could have shone through the gloom of death and pointed them to the skies was rejected, and they die, even as they lived, without God and therefore without hope.¹

One example of an unbeliever named Antitheus who died without Christ gave this despairing, final cry:

“You must not let me die! I dare not die! Oh, doctor, save me if you can! My mind is full of horror, and I am incapable of preparing for death. As I was lying sleepless in my bed this night, the apparition of my friend presented itself before me, and unfolding the curtain of my bed, stood at my feet looking earnestly upon me for a considerable space of time. My heart sank within me, for his face was ghastly, full of horror, with an expression of such anguish as I can never describe. His eyes were fixed upon me, and at length, with a mournful motion of his head, “Alas! Alas!” he cried, “we are in a fatal error,” and taking hold of the curtain his hand shook them violently and disappeared. This, I protest to you, I both

¹ Herbert Lockyer, *All the Last Words of Saints and Sinners* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1969), 130.

saw and heard. And look! Where the print of his hand is left is blood upon the curtains.”²

When a person knows that his life is coming to an end, he wants to pass on to others that which is on his heart. His focus is on the things that are most important to him. Lockyer summarizes that truth as the purpose of his book *All the Last Words of Saints and Sinners* with these words:

As this volume deals with the last words of both saints and sinners about to enter eternity, what they had to say before their stammering tongues lay silent in the grave demands our deepest attention and most earnest concern. If, when the soul is face to face with eternal realities, true character is almost invariably manifest, then we can expect the lips to express glorious certainty or terror concerning the future.³

As King David came to the end of his life, he passed on important instructions to his son Solomon, who was to succeed him. In 1 Kings 2:1-4, we read David’s final instructions to Solomon:

¹When David’s time to die drew near, he commanded Solomon his son, saying, ²“I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, and show yourself a man, ³and keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn, ⁴that the Lord may establish his word that he spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, you

² Herbert Lockyer, *All the Last Words of Saints and Sinners*, 130.

³ Herbert Lockyer, *All the Last Words of Saints and Sinners*, 12.

shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’ ”

Paul's Second Letter to Timothy is the last letter he wrote. At least, it is the last letter Paul wrote that is extant. Paul wrote this letter from prison in Rome (1:16; 2:9). Timothy was still serving the churches in Ephesus. Unlike Paul's confident hope that he would be released from his first imprisonment in Rome (Philippians 1:19, 25-26; 2:24; Philemon 22), Paul had no such confidence as he wrote his Second Letter to Timothy, for he wrote in 2 Timothy 4:6-8, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

So this final letter of Paul is his final testimony before his death. It expresses his deepest concerns about living in God's church. John MacArthur summarizes this letter as follows:

In this letter, Paul, aware the end was near, passed the non-apostolic mantle of ministry to Timothy (cf. 2:2) and exhorted him to continue faithfully in his duties (1:6), hold on to sound doctrine (1:13, 14), avoid error (2:15-18), accept persecution for the gospel (2:3, 4; 3:10-12), put his confidence in the Scripture, and preach it relentlessly (3:15-4:5).⁴

Scripture

Let's read 2 Timothy 1:1-2:

⁴ John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1873.

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,
²To Timothy, my beloved child:
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (2 Timothy 1:1-2)

Lesson

2 Timothy 1:1-2 shows several truths about living in God's church today.

Let's use the following outline, which is similar to the outline we used in Paul's First Letter to Timothy:

1. Submit to God's Called Officers (1:1)
2. Continue to Serve God (1:2a)
3. God's Blessings Bind Us All Together (1:2b)

I. Submit to God's Called Officers (1:1)

First, submit to God's called officers.

Paul's Second Letter to Timothy begins as follows, **"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus"** (1:1). Let me restate what I said when I preached about this in Paul's First Letter to Timothy. **Paul** was born as Saul in Tarsus, which is on the southern coast of modern-day Turkey. The exact date of his birth is not known. Paul's mother was Jewish and, since he was a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28), his father was likely a Roman citizen before him. He studied as a Pharisee under Gamaliel in Jerusalem. After his conversion to Christ, his name was changed from Saul to Paul. He became an itinerant preacher, the first missionary in the Christian Church. Paul

also worked as a tentmaker so that he would not be seen as a preacher trying to peddle the gospel. He was imprisoned on numerous occasions for preaching the gospel. Describing his hardships preaching the gospel, Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11:24-28:

²⁴“Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.”

Paul most likely met Timothy on his second missionary journey in the city of Lystra. Timothy joined Paul for the rest of that journey. Timothy became a lifelong assistant to Paul. Sometime after his third missionary journey, Paul was placed under house arrest in Rome. Paul was eventually released and perhaps traveled to Spain. He also had Timothy go to Ephesus to deal with problems—primarily false teaching—that had arisen in the church. It was during this time that Paul wrote his First Letter to Timothy and also a letter to Titus. Paul was then rearrested. During this second imprisonment in Rome, Paul wrote his Second Letter to Timothy. Paul was martyred between 64 - 67 AD.

Paul notes that he is an **“apostle.”** The word means “delegate, envoy, messenger.” Of the 82 times the word “apostle” is used in the New Testament, 78 times it refers to “an envoy

of Jesus Christ commissioned directly by him or by other apostles; normally someone who has been taught directly by Jesus and who is invested with the authority to speak on his behalf.” Paul was called and commissioned by Jesus to speak on his behalf. That is why Paul goes on to write that he is an apostle **“of Jesus Christ.”** Moreover, he received this commission **“by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus.”** He was ordered to serve as a messenger for Jesus.

The office of apostle is now closed. The office of apostle is an “extraordinary” office. Yet, while there are no longer apostles today, Jesus still calls certain men to serve him as evangelists, pastors, and teachers (see Ephesians 4:11) in an “ordinary” office. Normally, they have an inner sense of calling, which is then ratified by the outer call of God’s people. For example, a man senses God calling him to be a pastor. He prays about it for some time. He may seek Godly counsel. He will then receive training so that he may be equipped to do what he believes God is calling him to do. However, a very important part of the process is the approval of God’s people. Unless an overseeing body, such as a congregation or presbytery, agrees for a man to serve as a pastor, he cannot serve.

So, God uses a different approach today in calling men to serve him in ministry than he did when he called apostles to serve him. Nevertheless, officers today are still called by God.

When Paul wrote this letter, he addressed it (as we shall see in a moment) to Timothy. It was a personal letter. And yet, Paul expected the letter to be read to the entire congregation in Ephesus. Paul was exerting his authority as an **“apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.”** He did not have to remind Timothy about his authority, for Timothy already knew that and respected Paul as one called by God. Timothy submitted

himself to God's called officer. No, the reason Paul stressed this was so that others in the congregation would submit to Paul's authority through Timothy. It was for *their* benefit that Paul introduced himself as he did in this letter.

A healthy church has officers and members. A healthy church has members who submit to God's called officers. It is true that sometimes officers fall into sin and need to be disciplined. But for Christians living in God's church today, we all need to submit to God's called officers. And as we do so, we will discover God's smile and blessing on us.

II. Continue to Serve God (1:2a)

Second, continue to serve God.

Paul wrote in verse 2a, **“To Timothy, my beloved child.”** Paul called Timothy his **“beloved child.”** The Greek word for **“child”** (*teknon*) denotes a person of any age for whom one has a special relationship of endearment and association or a person who regards another as being like a son in the faith and one's disciple. And the Greek word for **“beloved”** (*agapetos*) refers to someone who is dearly loved and cherished, and sometimes preferred above all others and treated with partiality. Timothy was Paul's assistant and was appointed by Paul to serve in his place over the churches that were based in Ephesus. Timothy's mother, Eunice, was Jewish (2 Timothy 1:5) and his father, whose name we do not know, was Greek (Acts 16:1). Because people spoke so well of Timothy, Paul asked him to join him on his second missionary journey and Timothy traveled with Paul to Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). Timothy is named as a co-author of six of Paul's letters (2 Corinthians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; and Philemon 1). By

the time Paul wrote this Second Letter to Timothy, Timothy had been in Ephesus for perhaps as long as six years.

A special bond develops between a teacher and his disciples. The teacher pours his life into his disciples and they learn and grow and imitate their teacher more and more. When I was a student at the University of Cape Town, I attended a Christian student ministry on campus called the Student YMCA. I had become a Christian just before starting university and I was very involved in the ministry and activities of the Student Y (as we called it). Our Campus Minister was a wonderful man who had a profound impact on countless students. After some years, I noticed that almost all of us who had sat under our Campus Minister's ministry were not only shaped by him but many even imitated his sense of humor! That is the impact of a good teacher on his disciples.

It seems that we are having a hard time getting the COVID pandemic behind us. We are still hearing of people getting COVID, although for most of them it does not seem to be as life-threatening as the strain of COVID we had two years ago. I have heard for some time now that the biggest challenge that churches face as they return to in-person worship and ministry is the difficulty of finding Christians to serve in ministry. That is certainly true for us here at the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church. I think people got comfortable not attending in-person worship services and not being active in ministry. Now it seems that the attitude is that someone else can serve because the church seems to be functioning fine without my service. But that is not true. If we are going to be effective in reaching our community for Christ, then every one of us needs to serve God. As the new ministry year is starting, every ministry needs team members. So, let me urge you that if you are waiting to serve, get busy serving God.

III. God's Blessings Bind Us All Together (1:2b)

And third, God's blessings bind us all together.

Paul wrote in verse 2b, **“Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”** The standard procedure for writing letters in ancient times was to begin with the sender's name, followed by the recipient's name. Then there was a simple greeting, followed by the body of the letter, and a conclusion to close out the letter. Paul Christianized the greeting, usually by saying “grace and peace” as he did in 11 of his 13 letters. Only in his letters to Timothy did Paul add the word **“mercy.”**

In this wonderful greeting, Paul wished for Timothy **“grace,”** which refers to God's undeserved favor, love, and blessing.

Paul also wished for Timothy **“mercy,”** which refers to God's kindness, pity, and help. While **“grace”** deals with sin and guilt and extends pardon to the sinner, **“mercy”** deals with the pain and misery that result from sin, and it extends relief.

Finally, Paul wished for Timothy **“peace,”** which is the result of grace and mercy. It refers to harmony between God and the sinner, now that the hostility of sin has been put away. And all of these blessings come from **“God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Christians are blessed people. Among the many blessings we have received from God are the blessings of grace, mercy, and peace. Christians have come to know God as our loving, Heavenly Father. He has adopted us into his family. He has given us his undeserved love, his kindness, and has reconciled us to himself so that the hostility that existed between us has been taken away.

God's blessings bind us all together. His blessings bind us to himself and to his Son. And they bind us to one another as we worship and serve and continue living in God's church today.

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed the life of Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:1-2, we should commit ourselves to living as God's children in his church.

Brothers and sisters, we are living in God's church today. We are called to live as faithful and fruitful disciples in God's church today. Our older brother Jesus gave his life so that we might receive new life in him. Now that we have been given life in Jesus, we belong to him and we also belong to one another. Let us live in such a way that our love for God and for one another compels others around us also to want to live in God's church today. Amen.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church
is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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1. <https://tampabaypresbyterian.org/SermonAudio>.
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