

DEAR TIMOTHY...

AN 8 WEEK SERIES IN THE BOOK OF 2 TIMOTHY

Connect group questions

2 Timothy 1:1-8 – Dear Timothy... do not be ashamed of Jesus

1. Do you have some old correspondence you like to look back on? What's good about doing that?
2. We are privileged to be able to read some 1st century correspondence between a mentor and his trainee. But what else are we doing as we read this letter?

Who will be thankful for you?

Paul served God as did his ancestors; Timothy had a sincere faith which first lived in his grandmother and mother.

3. For who are you thankful, for sharing the gospel with you and nurturing your sincere faith?
4. Discuss the significance of the home and family for passing on and nurturing a sincere faith.
5. What are the greatest challenges today in teaching our children and grandchildren about Jesus?
6. Are there ways in our church could help more in this area?
7. Who will be thankful for *you*? Share for prayer, those in your life, you're endeavouring to share Jesus with. Pause to pray.

Are you shy?

Many of us are! Timothy was.

8. What is your greatest fear when it comes to speaking about Jesus? What's the worst that could happen to us?
9. There's a good reason we feel inadequate: we are! When we feel inadequate, what ought we to do?

Have you RSVPd?

What an invitation! To join with Paul in suffering for the gospel!

10. What resources are we given to bear with any suffering we may experience? (Read this section of the message again.)

Pray that we will be prayerful and intentional about influencing the next generation for Jesus. Pray that by the Holy Spirit's power, love and self-discipline, we'll cease being timid about Jesus, and pray that we'll be ready – by the power of God – to join in suffering for the gospel.

Mark is considering a series for Term 3 and would love your help. He has in mind a series called "Dear God", where he deals with some (less common) questions we have for him. Here are some he's thought of, but he's really open to suggestions. (However, probably not on suffering and evil which we've covered previously). Above all, he wants this series to be very practical and pastoral. Please be in touch with other ideas.

Dear God... my kids don't want to know about you.

Dear God... do I have to go to church?

Dear God... sometimes I'm not sure if you're there.

Dear God... sometimes I'm not sure if you care.

Dear God... Do I have to love people I don't like?

Dear God... I'm not a very good Christian.

Date: 5th May 2019
Services: 730, 930 Tewantin and Peregian
Series: Dear Timothy
Title: ... do not be ashamed of Jesus
Passage: 2 Timothy 1:1-8
Outline:

1. Who will be thankful for **you**?
 2. Are you **shy**?
 3. Have you **RSVPd**?
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INTRODUCTION

- Reading old letters when you're clearing out your parent's place can be fascinating...
- I still have letters dad wrote to me when I was in Bible college... and it is great to have a read every now and again to see what the issues were.... to recall the nature of the relationship I had with dad at that time... to hear his words of **encouragement**....
- We're going to spend some time this morning and the following 7 weeks, pouring over a letter from a **mentor** to a **ministry trainee**... from the **1st century** – in the **earliest** years of the **church**!
- How **wonderful** that such correspondence has been preserved for us... we'll gain insight into the **relationship** – see what issues were **important** – how Paul – an **apostle** appointed by God – related to **Timothy** – a leader he was training up to take over many of his ministries / because he knew he was nearing the **end** of his **life**...
- A letter written while Paul was under house arrest in **Rome**... to **Timothy** who was on **assignment** in **Ephesus**...
- What a **privilege** that we have this correspondence preserved for us to pour over this morning...!
- But friends – we'll actually be doing more than just looking over correspondence between a **mentor** and his **trainee**...
- ...yes, we're absolutely reading a **real** piece of **correspondence** from the 1st century – but we're also reading words which have come from God **himself** to **us**... to **you**...
- I don't know about you – but I find that **thrilling**... to be able listen to and wrestle with what God is saying to **me** through this **Word**! //
- I've loved working on this opening passage this week and here is what I want to ask you...
 1. Who will be thankful for **you**?
 2. Are you **shy**?
 3. Have you **RSVPd**?
- first

1. WHO WILL BE THANKFUL FOR YOU?

- Let's have a look again at the opening verses... v3 - *I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.*
- See the **warmth** of the relationship here... this is not a professional coaching situation... there is a deep and spontaneous **affection** evident here which Paul had for Timothy... in v2 he calls him his '**dear son**'!
- There's **gratitude, prayer, longing, tears**...
- Paul recalls the history in his **own** family of serving God.... I am serving God as my ancestors did...
- And he wants Timothy to see the rich heritage he has in **his** family **too**...!

- You see Paul knows that life and ministry will be **hard** for Timothy... there will be **challenges** and **struggles** and **persecution**...
- What will help his young protégé through all those things?
- Knowing his **roots**... knowing his **story**...
- How did Timothy get to where he is **now**?
- How did he get to have a **sincere** and **real faith**? – whereby he was now **giving** of himself to **ministry** – following Paul and taking over from him? //
- ...because of the sincere faith which was first seen in his grandmother **Lois** and in his mother **Eunice!** /
- How **precious** and **important** is the influence of **mothers** and **grandmothers**... and of course – **fathers** and **grandfathers**...
- Now, we are not told any details here...
- **How** did Lois' and Eunice's sincere faith rub off on, or transfer to Timothy?
- I'm sure a lot of it was by **example**... what is **precious** and **important** and **real** and **vital** to **you** will be **precious** and **important** and **real** and **vital** to your **kids**...
- But you can almost guarantee that there was **intentionality** there too...
- **Teaching**... reading the **Scriptures** together... **praying**... family discussions over **dinner**... //
- Who are **YOU** thankful for, for passing on their sincere faith to **you**?
- Maybe for you – your **parents**...
- Or maybe your parents **weren't** Christians – **aren't** Christians – but you're thankful for someone *else's* influence in your life...
- Take time to be **thankful**...
- Maybe go home and tell them today if they are still around – 'thank you' – 'for your **example**, your **prayers**, your **teaching**... thank you for reading the **Scriptures** to me... and living out in **front** of me what it means to **serve** and follow **Jesus**...'
- along with my **parents**, I'm thankful for **Mrs Hill**... a Sunday school teacher in years 5-6. No idea what happened to her... I remember going to see her for a chat as an older teenager... but nothing after that... but Mrs Hill had a great impact on me... ..
- God is enriching **you** in **your** journey – and the **memory** of those who influenced you, will **keep encouraging** you – will keep **telling you** that you are not **crazy** to serve the Lord – so **keep on, keep on, keep on** and, // then **keep on!**
- You will be drawing strength from those who have gone before you for the **rest** of your **days** // and then **you** will do the **same** for the **next generation**...! //
- But here's my **question** for you.... /
- who in **20** years from now, **30** years from now... will be thankful for **you**?? /
- You **matter** more than you know
- You're going to matter to people who aren't even **born** yet!
- your **faithfulness** will still be making an impact, long after your **expiration date**
- You may be a **parent** or **grandparent** or **aunt** or **uncle** of **younger children**... or you may be a **neighbour** or family **friend**... or **teacher** or **children's leader**...
- ...and they will see in your life; / your **sincerity** for Jesus, your **passion for Jesus**... the **sacrifices** you **make** for Jesus... your **generosity** to **others** because of **Jesus**... and they will learn what it means to put Jesus **first** in every area of life.... through **you!**
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- Hard isn't it when you've done **all** that and your kids don't follow Jesus... **painful**

- Also hard if you realise on reflection and with regret, that you did **little** of that and would like to go back and **change** all that...
- I want you to leave all that in the Lord's **hands** today... you can't change the past... but keep **trusting... praying... loving... living faithfully...** today!
- So – no **guilt** or **burden** this morning – but just **inspiration** to do all **you** can *now*, to lead those in your sphere of influence... to pass on your **sincere faith**....
- Because there is nothing more **important** to pass **on** to them.... ///
- Will someone pick up a letter (text) to your **child or your niece or nephew...** or someone significant some time... and read... "I'm reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother and in your mother (or your dad and grandad or aunt or uncle or neighbour – or whatever)... and, I am persuaded, now lives in **you** also!"
- May it **be**... may it **be**.... //
- Now here's **another** question for you... let me ask you:

2. ARE YOU SHY?

- Specifically – are you shy when it comes to **Jesus**?
- **Timothy** was /
- Many of **us** are...
- Have a another look with me at vv6-8a - *⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. ⁸ So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner.*
- the 'laying on of hands' was most likely, something like an ordination where Timothy was set apart for the ministry
- obviously, that is not the situation for most of us here... and we don't know exactly what gift Paul is telling Timothy to 'fan into flame'
- however / the next bit **IS** our story... – we **all** have God's Holy **Spirit**...
- ...residing **within**... **that's** how close God is to you!
- And God's **Holy Spirit** – his **own** Spirit – is not a spirit of **timidity** – he doesn't make us **timid** about the things of God – rather – the Spirit gives us **power, love and self-discipline**.
- ...and as a result – v8 – neither **Timothy** – nor any one of us here – should be **ashamed** of the **testimony** of our **Lord** – **ashamed** of the **gospel**... /
- We ought not be **embarrassed** by the gospel, **awkward** about the gospel, **shy** about the gospel, **embarrassed** to be known as Christians...
- ...but we **are**... /
- at least **I** am... //
- you know the worst question I am asked in a new social situation? "And what do **you** do for a living"
- nothing like saying "I'm a church minister" to kill a conversation!
- *But the Spirit God gave us, does not make us **timid**!*
- I sometimes feel so **helpless** and awkward....
- Hairdresser – barber – Scumbags.. end of Noosa junction opposite the "J" ...
- **Always** asking what I do and how was my day and what am I doing over the **weekend**...
- **Opportunity** after **opportunity** thrown before me to say something sensible about Jesus... and I'm usually thinking – "will you just cut my hair!"
- *But the Spirit God gave us, does not make us **timid**...*

- But does what? *but gives us power, love and self-discipline*
- And that's **exactly** what I need in the barber's chair isn't it?
- **Power** to overcome my **fears** and **inadequacies**
- **Love** – **enough** love for the person cutting my hair that I **care** whether or not they know **Jesus**...
- And **self-discipline** not to give in to the **temptation** to hide under that black **thing** they put over my **head!!! //**
- At the conference I was at in LA last October, the speaker opening up this passage for us said this - "If you feel **inadequate** for what God has called you to do, there is a **really good reason** – you **are** inadequate – and so **am**!"
- And that feeling of inadequacy which we all feel is meant to drive us **back** to God to call out to him – "God – I can't do this on my own – please give me a cool head and wise and gracious answers... please by your Spirit take away my natural timidity and fill me with your **power**, your **love** and your **self-discipline**!"
- **Every** Christian needs to be reminded no matter how **great** the task... God never calls **anyone** to do something or puts an opportunity in **front** of them, without imparting a divine **gift** / **appropriate** for it!
- ... So, step **out** and see what God will do **for** you/**through** you!
- Fan into flame whatever gift God has blessed you with – and use it **boldly** for his **glory** and in the service of others... so that **together** we become a church on **fire** **with** and **for** God!
- *Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord...!*
- Which brings me finally to this very strange question...

3. HAVE YOU RSVPd?

- Now what am I talking about??
- V8b the final part of our passage this morning – have a look with me – recall the context – Paul has said "don't be ashamed of the gospel" or of me... then he says: *Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.*
- This is not join me for **coffee** or for **dinner** or a stroll along the **beach**... it's not join me for a **movie** or **drink**... its – join me in **suffering** for the **gospel**!
- Well **that's** an invitation you're not going to get every day...
- Have you **RSVPd**?
- This is not "are you willing to speak up for me in the **barber's chair**?" not much is going to happen really if I **do** that is it?... the barber will just keep **cutting hair**, **change the subject** and go on to talk about nothing much at all... there's **nothing** to risk in that **circumstance**....! And that ought to be a no brainer to talk **confidently** and **joyfully** about **servicing Jesus**... *whatever* the outcome of me talking about Jesus to the barber, I doubt it will **ever** be capable of being labelled '**suffering**'.
- **suffering?** //
- **Suffering** for following **Jesus** is what took place in **Sri Lanka** two weeks ago...
- Christians are the most persecuted religious group around the **world**...
- Last Sunday there was an attack on an Assemblies of God congregation in a northern village of Burkina Faso which left six people dead, including the pastor.
- The long-time pastor had sensed danger, but told family members "he prefers to die for his faith rather than leave the village where he has served for nearly 40 years,"
- And he **died**
- **Nigeria, China, Indonesia, Pakistan... Egypt...**
- Do you think **we** will be spared **here**?

- Christians in our nation, are now a ridiculed minority...
- **Side-lined, maligned...** *some* of the reasons for that, we fully understand given the royal commission...
- And we feel the pressure don't we, not to **say anything**... not to **defend** our **belief**... not to stand up for what is right.... /
- Are you prepared to join Paul in his **suffering**?
- To take a **stand** for **Jesus** no matter what that might **mean**?
- What **might** it **mean**?
- Oh yes - the neighbour not talking to you... / that's **hard** but hardly qualifies under the heading 'suffering'
- ... but what if - without being alarming - what if you were the target of **terrorism**... someone wanting to harm you **physically**, because you live openly for Jesus...
- "What - here on the **Sunshine Coast** of **Queensland**?" you might say... /
- well - we have to say that's not **impossible**... /
- Just a few short weeks ago, we thought that what happened in **Christchurch**, could never happen.
- Have you **RSVPd** to this **strange, unusual invitation**? //
- But you're not expected to do it **alone**...
- The Lord has brought us **together** as his people in order that we **all** might let go of our **hesitancy**...
- And our **unbelief** //
- He has supplied us **richly** with all the **essentials**
- We have our **Bibles**...
- And we have our **backgrounds**
- The Bible is **perfect**
- And our backgrounds are **imperfect**
- But even our imperfect backgrounds prepare us because we look back and see how the Lord has been at **work** in our lives... and everything that is happened in our lives to this point, the Lord has used to train and shape and form you so that you are ready for **TODAY!**
- So **today** is the day to let go of every excuse... to stop being **shy** about our Lord... to allow our feelings of inadequacy to drive us **back** to God to depend on him and to step **out** to stand **up** for him... //
- But did you notice...
- I haven't mentioned the last five words of the **verse**
- *join with me in suffering for the gospel, **BY THE POWER OF GOD.***
- How did that pastor in **Burkina Faso** stay and face what was **coming**?
- How did **brave** people in Sri Lanka **stay** and try and **help** others who had been injured?
- How do Christians in **China** keep on meeting under risk of **arrest**?
- How to believers in **Nigeria** keep going back to church Sunday after Sunday?
- By the **power** of **God!!**
- And by the **power** of **God**... **you** can endure that neighbour scorning your belief... that relative who never lets you say **anything** about Jesus... // and the shooter who walks into our **gathering** one **Sunday** morning ready to cause us **harm**... /
- You can... **by the power of God!!**

- Who will be thankful for **you**... because you've passed on your sincere **faith** to them...?
- Are you **shy**? Because the Spirit God gave us does not make us **timid**, but gives us **power, love and self-discipline**....
- And have you **RSVPd**? ...to the most significant invitation you will **ever** receive? – to join with others throughout **history** and around the **globe** today... in **suffering** for the **gospel**... by the **power** of **God**!