

Equipped to Endure (Part 1)

2 Timothy 1: 7-10

We have read from the last letter the Apostle Paul would write. He had written 9 church epistles, three personal epistles, and many agree one general epistle to the Hebrews. This last letter is given to young Timothy, Paul's son in the faith and fellow preacher of the gospel.

The setting for the letter comes very near the end of Paul's life. He is confined in the Roman Mamertine prison, awaiting his execution. His final days are lived in the shadow of the executioner's ax, knowing he will give his life for his faith.

As one looks at the circumstances of the writing of the letter and the difficulties that Timothy faced, many would have assumed it was a hopeless cause. Paul had been tried and sentenced to death for preaching the gospel. Society wasn't very receptive to Timothy's preaching either. But, this is not a letter of resignation or defeat; it is a letter of encouragement and admonition to remain steadfast. Paul knew that serving the Lord and remaining faithful to Him would far exceed any adversity faced in this life.

Our circumstances are different in many ways, and yet they are similar as well. We are not confined in prison, sentenced to death for our faith. We face very little physical abuse for living for Christ, but the opposition we face continues to mount. We are in the midst of trying times. Just as Paul encouraged Timothy, we too must press on and continue for the Lord. You might ask how that is possible when difficulty abounds on every hand. If you are a child of God, you already have everything you need. Let's take a few moments to look at the [qualifications](#) the believer has in Christ as we consider: [Equipped to Endure](#).

I. The Possession of the Believer (7) – As we look at this, keep in mind that Paul has been sentenced to death and Timothy is facing much adversity and opposition. Paul reminds young Timothy of his possession in Christ. He affirmed that the believer possesses:

A. Courage (7a) – [For God hath not given us the spirit of fear](#); There would be times when Timothy would face doubts and fears. There would be occasions when he would question whether it was all worth it, and if he would survive in this life. The adversary would likely even create seasons where Timothy might even question his faith.

- Paul reveals that those doubts and fears are not of God. He has not given us a spirit of fear. When trials come and fear grips our hearts, we must remember that God has not placed those fears and doubts within us. [Ephes. 3:16 – That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;](#)

- The adversary likes to create doubt in all our hearts. I am certain that we have all dealt with doubt and fear. Those are likely two of the biggest hindrances to the Christian and their witness for the Lord. We do not have to live in fear. We can live in confidence through the power of our Lord. When times of fear come, lean upon the Lord and remember that the enemy has planted those seeds of fear and doubt!

B. Confidence (7) – *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* The adversary may seek to create fear and doubt, but God can enable us to overcome through Him. We do not have to live with fear and doubt. We do not have to question whether or not we will make it. We can rest assured in full faith and confidence in the ability of our God to equip us to face whatever comes our way and endure for Him.

- God has not placed fear in our hearts, but He has given us **power** to overcome. This is the Greek word *dunamis* from which we get our word dynamite. Satan cannot overcome the power of God. He has given us a **spirit of love**, Agape love; God’s love. We also have been given a **sound mind** in Christ our Lord. This speaks of “*self-control, sobriety, sound judgment.*” The world looks at things from a physical perspective and often acts on impulse. God has given us the ability to maintain ourselves and make sound decisions.

- Trouble and adversity will come as long as we live upon this earth. Serving the Lord will not be without difficulty, but we possess the courage and confidence we need to overcome if we will only look to the Lord and rely upon Him!

I. The Possession of the Believer (7)

II. The Commission of the Believer (8) – Paul knew Timothy would continue to face difficulty. He knew there would be times when he was tempted to abandon his calling. Here Paul reminds Timothy, and all believers, of their obligation to fulfill the commission given. Notice:

A. A Word Concerning Affirmation (8a) – *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner:* Timothy faced a hostile environment, even as we do today. Many would not receive his message. He would be ridiculed and scoffed at for his faith. There would be temptation to deny the faith. Paul urged him to stand strong in the faith and be willing to affirm it at all costs. We too need that resolve in our day. This affirmation is two-fold. We are to affirm:

1. The Word – Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Timothy must not deny the testimony of Christ. This was given in the Word of God. He was to remain committed to the truth of God's Word and share the Word in full assurance of its power to convict and bring about salvation. If he denied the testimony of Christ, he had actually denied the faith. Apart from the testimony of Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection, there is nothing of lasting value to share. That was the message, and Timothy must remain committed to sharing that message with assurance and boldness.

- We are living in a time where the testimony of Christ has been minimized and cast aside by many. Many are ashamed to take a stand and identify with Christ. Very few today stand firmly upon the truth of God's Word.
- We must remain committed to sharing the gospel message of Christ recorded in this blessed book. Apart from that message there is no hope for the perishing. How great is the darkness in a society where the Word is not preached and taught. All believers must be willing to stand with the Lord and share the gospel without apology, compromise, or shame. The world will not embrace the testimony of Jesus. There will be ridicule for your stand. However, we must be willing to stand unashamedly for the gospel and our Lord. **Mark 8:38 – Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.**

2. The Witness – Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: Keep in mind that Paul had been sentenced to death for his preaching of the gospel and his faith in Christ. Many in that day shared the views of those who opposed Paul. Timothy must have known that he too might be called upon to suffer if he stood with Paul and identified with him. He was urged to stand for truth and identify with Paul, his message, and his suffering. This was asking a lot of young Timothy, but it was necessary.

- What a challenge that presents to us today. We must be willing to stand with those who are willing to testify for Christ. Many of us have likely felt a bit uncomfortable when someone started to share their faith in a particular setting. We may not like to admit it, but we probably felt a bit embarrassed. Rather than being embarrassed or uncomfortable, we ought to be praying for them and desiring to possess the same compassion and boldness to share our faith!
- Our world is in desperate need of the gospel. We ought to encourage those who desire to share their faith. We ought to surround ourselves with like minded people. The world will scoff and even make fun, but we must be willing to identify with Christ and those who seek to serve Him. This is asking a lot in our day, but it is necessary of us as well.

B. A Word Concerning Affliction (8) – *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;* Paul did not seek to be deceptive or portray the situation any better than it actually was. He was in fact informing Timothy that identifying with the testimony of Christ and those who followed Him would come at a price. If Timothy followed the instruction of Paul, he would be expected to be a partaker of like afflictions. He must be willing to endure the same treatment that Paul had endured.

- We cannot appreciate the enormity of this challenge. Timothy had witnessed the suffering of Paul. He understood the severity of the beatings he endured. He knew the harsh conditions he faced while in prison. He was aware of the loneliness that accompanied Paul because of his stand for Christ. But, how could he refuse such a challenge? Paul had experienced something so great and wonderful that he was willing to die for it. The resolve of Paul must have strengthened young Timothy to endure whatever affliction he faced.

- I must ask a difficult question at this point. Are we willing to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel? Are we willing to suffer for the cause of Christ and the good of humanity? Before we answer that, may we consider the suffering that has preceded us? Take a moment to consider all that Christ endured on our behalf. He suffered as no man ever suffered. He endured the cruelest scourging and death imaginable for you and me. All of the apostles suffered for the faith. With the exception of John, they died for their faith, and history teaches us that he was boiled in oil prior to being placed on Patmos. Many in the early centuries were tortured and burned at the stake. Even today many around the world are called upon to give their lives for the cause of Christ.

- Surely we can identify with the Lord and endure the ridicule we face. When we consider all that others have faced, our sufferings seem so small, and yet we grumble and complain about how difficult it is to live for the Lord. *2 Cor.12:9 – And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

C. A Word Concerning Anticipation (8) – *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;* Paul wanted Timothy to know that suffering and affliction would come, but in the midst of it all, he was not without hope. God would enable him to endure whatever he faced by His mighty power. He may be called upon to suffer for a season down here, but there was a future glory awaiting that the trials of life would never compare. He was to live life in anticipation of receiving the strength necessary to endure and the promises of God being fulfilled.

- Life will be hard to bear at times, and I don't see it getting any easier. Things will continue to get worse and the world will grow increasingly wicked and less tolerant of our faith. There are

going to be some dark days for the church ahead, but even then we can look through eyes of faith and receive the power of God to endure. We can face each day and the challenges it brings in full anticipation of help from the Lord and the glory that waits the children of God. [Rom.8:18 – For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.](#)

I hope to conclude these verses next week as we consider the climatic comments Paul shared with Timothy regarding being equipped to endure. You don't want to miss next week's message. But for now, has God spoken to your heart this morning? Are you living your life for Christ, revealing the redemption He provided for lost sinners? Are you shining for Jesus in this dark world?

If you are a child of God, you have been equipped to be a witness for Him and endure faithful until the end. Do you need to come and seek the Lord for strength and wisdom to stand for Him? Are you willing to identify with Christ among a world that isn't? There is help for you today if you will only seek Him.

Maybe you are here and you have never received Christ as your Savior. Maybe you have been one who has criticized and ridiculed others for their faith. Has the Holy Spirit shown you your need of salvation? If so, I urge you to come today and receive the greatest gift ever given.