

The Influence of Family

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 November 2008

Preacher: Aaron Hoak

[0:00] We'll read the first seven verses from Paul's second letter to Timothy. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.

! To Timothy, my dear son, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God whom I serve as my forefathers did with a clear conscience.

As night and day, I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.

I have been 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.

For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you with the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline.

[1:11] Amen. Please turn again or keep your Bibles open there to 2 Timothy chapter 1. Having finished up 1 Timothy a couple of months ago, we come to Paul's second letter to his son in the faith, his apostolic representative, Timothy.

And as we do, let me ask you, how important is family to you? I don't think family is the main point of Paul's writing to Timothy, but it is where he begins his second letter.

It's the foundation for what he has to say to him in the second letter. Family was very important for Timothy, and it should be for us as well.

Timothy, the one that Paul sent to Ephesus to help in the church there. Essentially to be their pastor as they were going through difficult times.

A young man who needed guidance and direction and counsel from the older and wiser and more experienced Apostle Paul. He was thrown into the fire, as it were, and needed help.

[2:25] And so Paul has written him one letter, and now a second letter comes to him. There were problems in the church that Timothy was dealing with that. We learned about that some back in the first letter.

As well as the general need for Timothy to know how to conduct himself in the church. How should a man of God lead a church? What is his role? How is he to guide them?

And to help them along the way? And in this letter, Paul addresses the issue of Timothy's relationship to the truth. Paul has taught him the truth. He's been taught it by his mother and his grandmother. And what is he to do with that truth?

That gospel that we are to hold so dear. Well, Timothy, for one thing, hold on to it. Don't let it go. The truth is of the utmost importance. And number two, Timothy, make sure that you tell other people about it.

Tell the church there. Proclaim the truth. 2 Timothy is one of the most personal letters that you'll find from the Apostle Paul.

[3:23] Rivalled maybe only by 2 Corinthians. But we see Paul's heart here. And one of the reasons, I think, is that Paul is nearing his death. And he knows it. He's in prison and he's about to be executed.

He knows that his time of service in God's kingdom is coming to an end. He knows that his life is coming to an end. This is the very last letter that we have from the Apostle Paul recorded for us in the Scriptures.

And so in many ways, this is a deathbed charge to young Timothy. In chapter 4, we hear Paul saying, For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.

The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. He talks about having finished the race and fought the good fight. He's at the end. And this is his

last will, as it were.

His last charge. And it came to Timothy and it comes to us as well. When you read 2 Timothy, it almost feels like you're reading somebody else's mail. That's how personal it is and directed towards Timothy.

[4 : 29] But God preserved it for us. It's our mail. It's God's word to all of his people throughout history. And it will be profitable.

It is profitable, even as we learn here in 2 Timothy 3. But as Paul writes, he aims, as Calvin says, to confirm Timothy, both in the faith of the Gospel and in the pure and constant preaching of it. Confirm it in the faith of the Gospel. Hold on to the truth and faithfully proclaim it to others. Or William Hendrickson helpfully divides up the book. Speaking of this, Paul talks about sound doctrine.

He wants Timothy to hold on to this truth that he's given. The doctrine, the truth. And chapter 1, hold on to that truth. Don't let go. Chapter 2, Timothy, teach that truth.

Chapter 3, abide in it. Chapter 4, preach the truth. And that truth of the Gospel is the emphasis of the letter. Don't lose it and proclaim it to others. Be a good steward of it. But here in these opening verses, we're just going to look at the first five verses tonight.

[5 : 30] We see the foundation in some ways for all of that. And we get a glimpse into Timothy's family, into a little bit of his history. And that will be what we focus on tonight, because that's where Timothy first heard the truth that is so important that he holds on to and so important for him to proclaim to others.

The first place he heard that truth was in his own family, from his grandmother and from his mother. He heard it from his spiritual father, the Apostle Paul himself.

And so we're going to zoom in on the family tonight and see what we can learn from Timothy, the child, as it were. His mother, Eunice.

His grandmother, Lois. And his spiritual father, Paul. But don't forget that this is foundational for what's to come. There are going to be challenges to the truth, Timothy.

So hold on to what you've heard in the past. Don't be afraid. Don't be ashamed. And press on in proclaiming it, even if it means suffering, Timothy. And it will. How is that foundation laid?

[6 : 31] Let's think about Timothy's spiritual father, first of all. The Apostle Paul. And as we look at Paul as a father, ask yourself, Dads, what kind of father am I?

Or you future dads, what kind of father will I be one day? The first thing we see about Paul is that he was more than a father.

Something that none of us here can be. He was an apostle. And he identifies himself as that. An apostle of Christ Jesus. By the will of God. That's how he introduces most of his letters. He's an apostle of Christ.

He proclaims the truth that Christ has given him. And he didn't appoint himself to that task. It wasn't his idea to be an apostle. That's by the will of God. He was chosen for that work. To represent Christ.

And it's according to the promise of life. There in verse 1. According to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus. The promise of life is in the gospel of Christ. The gospel that Paul's been commissioned to proclaim.

[7 : 29] The one that he's explained to Timothy that it's now Timothy's job to proclaim. The promise of life through Christ. And Hendrickson says, It's very fitting that Paul, the prisoner who faces death, should rivet the attention on the promise of indestructible life.

Paul's about to die. And what does he say? He doesn't say this in any of his other introductions. He says, According to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus. As we go, we're going to notice different things about how to die well.

From the pen of the apostle Paul. Here's one. He knows he's coming to the end of his life. How can we die well? Well, here's one way. As Paul is anticipating his coming death, what's he thinking about?

He's thinking about life. The life that he has in Christ. The promise of life. Life that is eternal. Life that does not end. A glorious life that is his through his Savior.

One of those truths that can enable us to face death with peace. Knowing that we're possessors of that very promise. Not despair. Not worry. Not fear even. But rather glad anticipation.

[8:36] Of the life that awaits us. The life that we've begun here in Christ. And will be carried into eternity. And then he greets his son. Grace, mercy, peace from God our Father.

God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Same way he greeted him in the first letter. You can bet that Timothy's going to need all of those things. Grace, mercy, and peace.

To do what Paul is exhorting him here to do. To hold on to that truth. To faithfully proclaim it. He's going to need those things. And when he thinks about his father in the faith leaving the sea. Now the Apostle Paul, he's mentored Timothy.

Timothy traveled with him. They labored together in the Gospel. And when Timothy faced trouble at Ephesus, who is it that helps him? It's the Apostle Paul. Who do you think, humanly speaking, is the first person Timothy thinks of when he needs help in the ministry?

He thinks of Paul. His father in the faith. And he's about to be gone. He's going to get to the end of this letter. He's going to say, Paul's already being poured out like a drink offering. His life is coming to an end.

[9:36] And in some ways, what am I going to do without Paul? Maybe you all have somebody like that in your life. Somebody that's helped you. He's been there every step of the way. They've been a guide, a friend to you.

Always there with advice when you were lost, confused. And think of losing that person. Or maybe you have lost that person. And think about what Timothy must have felt. His mentor, his spiritual guide, about to be gone.

But not his heavenly father. And so he says, Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father. Your heavenly father, though Paul, your earthly spiritual father will be gone.

Your heavenly father is still there. And he has grace and mercy and peace and abundance to pour out upon you. You'll face troubles in Ephesus, Timothy. You'll still have the help that you need, even though Paul isn't there anymore.

So Paul was more than a father to him. He was an apostle. But he was a spiritual father. And how does he speak to his beloved son? He addresses him as that.

[10:36] To Timothy, my dear son, my beloved son. I think it's fitting that Paul's last letter, his dying words are directed to his son. Paul didn't have any physical children, did he? And if a father is dying, you might think that some of his last words would be directed to his children, to his offspring.

It's so fitting that Paul's last letter directed to his son in the faith, Timothy. And what does he say to him? Well, he starts by assuring him that he thanks God for him and prays for him in verse 3.

I thank God whom I serve as my forefathers did. As night and day, I constantly remember you and my prayers. Paul was a man of constant, frequent, day and night, unceasing, all the time prayer. And so should we be. And what a great example for Timothy. Could any of you dads be identified by your children as somebody that's always praying, that loves to pray, that prays for their children often.

What a blessing for Timothy to know that he was remembered by Paul and that Paul was praying for him. Timothy, who at times must have felt very alone there in Ephesus, as many were against him.

[11:47] And he faced all of these troubles. He wasn't forgotten by Paul. He was remembered three times in these few verses. Paul talks about remembering him. Whenever I remember you, I'm reminded of your faith.

Recalling, remembering your tears. He remembers his son. What a blessing to be remembered. And if there were any chance, and of course there's not, but if there were any chance of God forgetting Timothy, Paul wouldn't have let that happen because he's constantly reminding God about him.

He's bringing him before God. He's bringing him before the throne of grace saying, God, be merciful to Timothy. Help him. Strengthen him. Give him grace to face these troubles. He's constantly praying for him and giving thanks for him.

Timothy had proven to be such a blessing that Paul had to praise God for him. I wonder how many of you kids will have parents that are able to thank God and praise Him because you've been faithful followers of Christ like Timothy was.

I hope that will be true for all of you, that your parents will be able to rejoice. I thank God for my son, for my daughter, that they're followers of Christ, that they've served Him faithfully in whatever calling they are.

[12:59] I pray that all of your parents will be able to pray that way and thank God that way. But I fear that's not the case for all tonight. And just another note about dying well.

Will you be praying and thanking God when you draw near to the end of your life? All sorts of things to think about when you come time to die. Is everything in order? Is my house in order? Are things ready? Are people ready for me to be gone?

Are people that need me? Are people that depend on me? And Paul, no doubt, has thought of those things, but what is he doing as his life comes to a close? How is he spending his time? He's spending it in prayer. Constantly, day and night, seeking the good of his family, his child in the faith, Timothy, and no doubt the churches that he had been involved with over the years.

What a difference between the deathbed of a believer and an unbeliever. The unbeliever blames God, fears death, trembles, regrets, perhaps even curses God. The believer thinks on his life in Christ, the promise that is his, and prays to his God.

He's coming to God in prayer through Christ, knowing that soon he will see that very same Christ in glory. God give us the grace to die so well, to be thinking on our life in Christ and praying to our God.

[14:16] Well, Paul says to Timothy, I'm praying for you. I'm praying for you. I'm thanking God for you. And I thank God, the God whom I serve as my forefathers did. Now Paul starts to talk about his own family.

The ones who have come before him. The God to whom he comes in prayers. The God whom he serves with a clear conscience. As he draws Timothy's attention to his four mothers. Not his four mothers, kids, but his four before mothers.

His mother and his grandmother. Eunice and Lois. He reflects on his own heritage. He was the recipient of a rich heritage of those who served God before the time of Christ and now after Christ's coming.

Paul too, worships and serves the living God. In other words, he's not calling Timothy to do something that he himself has not done. He's going to say, Timothy, be faithful. Serve the Lord. Preach the Gospel. Hold fast to it. And what he's saying is, Timothy, that's what I pray for you. And I'm praying to the God that I've served that way by His grace. This is the example that Paul has set for him. A life of service.

[15:18] A life of obedience. He's set the example. Paul has done it and God has sustained him in that service. Then Paul will say in verse 8 of this chapter, join with me in suffering for the Gospel by the power of God.

Timothy, when you serve God, it's going to bring persecution. You've already found that out. But press on nonetheless. Timothy, carry that heritage of faith passed down through the generations of faithful service even as God has enabled me, Paul, to do that.

And remarkably, Paul can come to the end of his life and say that he's done that. He served God with a clear conscience. He served God well in His power and strength.

Paul repeatedly comes back to this idea of conscience when he writes to Timothy. It's in chapter 1. It's here in the first letter. And it's here again in the second letter. A clear conscience is one that's informed and guided by God's Word and one that does not go against God's Word.

Paul has it and he wants others to have it too. And he's warned previously of those who have rejected the faith and a good conscience and made shipwreck of their faith. Timothy, make sure that you too serve God with a clear conscience.

[16:29] Don't shipwreck the faith. Don't abandon it. And you too, dear people of God, as you serve the Lord, make sure you do it with a clear conscience.

Not sinning against God's Word. Not sinning against Him. But obeying Him. Following Him. And of course, no one here can have a clear conscience in their own strength, can you?

Is anybody here able to say I have a clear conscience? I haven't done anything wrong? Of course not. A clear conscience comes as we take our sin to Christ and find it there washed in His blood. Forgiven by God's grace. When we come in genuine repentance, God does forgive. So we can have our consciences cleansed and cleared once again. When we sin against others, we go to them and seek their forgiveness.

And what a blessing it is to be able to go to sleep at night with that clear conscience. What an even greater blessing for Paul to come to the very end of his life. Not just the end of the day, but the end of his life and to be able to say I've served God with a clear conscience.

[17:33] Will you be able to say that? With all humility, acknowledging it's by God's work. Can you parents say to your children, serve the Lord even as I have served the Lord with a clear conscience. Can you call them to look at your own example and say follow Christ even as I am not perfectly. You know that I'm not perfect. But can you call them to that even as Paul points Timothy to his own example.

The last thing we see about Paul as a father is that he longs to see a son. Verse 4, recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.

He wants to see his child in the faith in whom he finds such great joy. Later in the letter he's going to say Timothy, get to me as soon as possible. He wants to see him before he dies. He wants to see him face to face.

He's remembering Timothy's tears possibly at the time they last parted ways and it moves him with a desire, a longing to see him. This verse is packed with strong words and deep emotions.

[18:41] He's remembering and he's remembering Timothy's weeping and he longs to see him so that his joy might be full, might be complete. It's not surprising when you think about the close bond that Paul and Timothy had.

Listen to how Paul talks about him when he writes to the Philippians in chapter 2 of that letter. I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.

I have no one else like him who takes a genuine interest in your welfare for everyone looks out for his own interest but not for those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the Gospel.

You hear how he talks about Timothy? He's his son. Paul's his father. And they've worked together in the Gospel. No wonder Timothy takes such joy in them. No wonder he longs to see them. Any of you fathers here ever bonded with one of your sons over a project?

Some work? Rebuilding an engine? Or restoring a car? Or building a barn or a deck? Or Legos when they're little?

[19:49] You work together on something. You've got that common bond and there's a sense of satisfaction in knowing that you've worked together. And there's a bond that forms. And for Timothy and Paul it was laboring in the Gospel together.

Timothy had traveled with him. No wonder Paul takes such joy at his memory. No wonder he longs to see him again. And so dads, I have to ask us and ask myself, what kind of father are you?

What kind of father am I? And moms, don't tune out here. There's plenty for you here as well. But thinking especially of fathers. The first question is, do you remember your children?

Three times Paul talks about remembering his son in the faith. Do you remember your children?

And I don't just mean remember. Yeah, I can tell you all their names. Ryan, Andrew, Mitchell.

I got them in the right order. And I don't always remember them when I'm trying to get one that's misbehaving. The wrong name comes out. I'm not talking about that kind of remembering your children. Knowing who they are.

[20:55] And knowing their names. But do you really remember them? Do they know that you love them? That you pray for them? Do you carry influence with them like Paul did with Timothy?

At this point, Timothy and Paul are separated. And still, Paul carries this great influence in the life of his son in the faith. Parents that have children that have moved out of the home.

They're away at school. Or they've moved on. They have jobs and lives of their own now. Do you still carry influence with them? Timothy receives letters from Paul long after they had parted.

And you can bet that Timothy didn't receive this with a sigh and go, Oh, Dad again. I don't need this right now. I bet when he got a letter from the Apostle Paul, he was excited to get it.

He was eager. What does he have to say? How is he going to encourage me? How am I going to deal with this problem? Yes, a word from Dad. Do you carry that kind of weight with your children? Or would they rather not even read the email or ignore what you say?

[22:03] Do they know that you remember them? That you pray for them night and day? Do they know by your actions that you remember and love them? Would they gladly receive a message from you like Timothy does from Paul?

Or would they resent it? Now some of that responsibility is on them if they do resent it. But how much of the blame goes squarely on your shoulders if you don't have that?

relationship with your child where they know that you remember and love them. We'll talk more in a moment about concrete ways to remember your kids. But do you remember them?

And it doesn't have to be for parents that have children that are away. It seems very easy these days for parents to forget the children right under their own roof.

And if you have forgotten the kids that live in your own house, they know. And you'll lose their respect. Don't forget your kids. Pray for them.

[23:03] Focus on them. Teach them. Don't always brush them aside. Show them that you remember by talking to them. By listening to them when they talk to you. And by listening, I don't mean keeping your nose in the newspaper or transfixed to overtime of the football game that's on TV.

Really looking at them and listening to them so that they know they have your ear and your heart. Do you remember your kids that way? Like Paul remembered Timothy.

I'm not saying there's never a time for uninterrupted time for dad to be alone. To have some time with the paper or with the game. But do your kids know that they can always have your ear?

That you'd be willing to put down whatever it is you're doing and to look them in the eye and to listen to them and to talk to them and to give them wisdom and guidance and counsel. They just cheer about the problems that they have.

Do they know that you remember them and that you love them? Do you know what's going on in their life? Do you make it a point to find out at the end of each day when you get home how school went?

[24:10] How their activities were? What they did that day? How they got in trouble? What happened when they got in trouble? Did they learn from it? Do you know your kids?

Do you remember them? The two could be interchangeable knowing them and remembering them. Spending time with them. Being accessible to them. If you've failed in remembering your kids, I'm not here to beat you up tonight.

I just want to draw your attention to a potential problem. And don't go home and just wallow in your guilt about it. Right where you sit tonight, go to Christ, the one in whom we have the promise of life and forgiveness of sins.

You know, right now you can be forgiven for forgetting your children. You go to your perfect heavenly father. Even though a mother may forget the babe that nurses at her breast, God will not for you.

You go to that one and you seek forgiveness and you go to your children and you seek forgiveness from them and you seek power from that heavenly father to change, to walk in ways that are new, to remember your children, to go forward in the power of God seeking to be a better father like Paul and really like your heavenly father.

[25:28] This is all in a gospel context. It's not be a better dad. It's go to the cross. Go to the cross and find forgiveness for your shortcomings and find their power to go and to be the sort of father that you should be.

There's sufficient power in our God. There's grace to be found for forgiveness. And it's never too late to start. Never too late to humble yourself and to go to your children.

You know, that's a hard thing to do is to ask forgiveness from your own children. But that will go miles and miles toward growing their respect for you and their love for you when they see that you know you're not perfect and you're willing to admit it and seek their forgiveness when you've sinned against them.

I sinned against my youngest son last night. I wanted to sleep and he wanted to be awake and went up to change his diaper and he was fighting me and I was upset.

I was angry in a sinful way and he doesn't get it but I had to ask his forgiveness and kiss him and hug him and tell him that I was sorry. I'm nine month old.

[26:43] We need to do that fathers with our children. Do you remember your children? Second, have you told them about the promise of life that is in Christ?

Do your children know that there is more to living this life than living for yourself? Do they know the alternatives for the life to come?

That if they don't serve the Lord like their parents and grandparents have, that the place they're headed is a place of eternal punishment but if they trust in Christ, if they lay hold of that promise of life, that it's a place of eternal glory in the presence of God.

Do they know the only way to true life is through Christ? Paul had helped Timothy down this path when Paul met Timothy, he was already a disciple but he had explained that gospel more fully to him. He had shown him the great truth.

Are you, parents, showing these truths to your children? Is your life, can you say, follow me as I have followed Christ? Is your life an attractive advertisement for the kind of life that's found in Christ?

[27 : 48] You say, oh, Christ holds out the promise of life and do they look at your life and go, you know what? If that's the kind of life that Christ gives, if that's what being a Christian does to somebody, then I want no part of it. Now, I hope that's not what your children say when they look at you.

I hope that you can say with your mouth, here is the way of life. Walk in it. And I hope that with your life, you're backing it up and they can look at that and say, look, that's the kind of life I want.

I don't want the kind of life my friend from school's dad has. He's miserable. He's sad. He's all the time. But look at the joy my parents have. Even in the midst of trouble, even without very much, we can have joy and happiness.

Is your life an advertisement, an attractive one for the kind of life that's found in Christ? Are you serving God with a clear conscience? Or does your whining and worrying and complaining and anger leave them thinking they don't want that kind of life?

If that's the case, again, the answer is go to the cross and find the grace and mercy that you so desperately need to set that kind of beautiful example before your children. That sort of transparentness willing to seek forgiveness where they see the gospel being worked out in your life as you seek their forgiveness.

[29 : 04] As you show them what they did wrong and why it was wrong according to the Scriptures and as you lead them to the throne of grace to ask God for forgiveness. Do they see the gospel being worked out in your life? Have you told them about the life that is in Christ and have you shown it to them by the way you live?

And then lastly, do you pray for your children and thank God for them? Do you love them that much that night and day you not only remember them, you remember them before God?

your children need your prayers. Pray for them. Pray for them when you have your devotions, when you get up in the morning. Remember and pray for them throughout the day even though you may not see them because they're at school or you're at work.

Remember them and pray for them. Pray for them during family worship where they can hear your concern for them. Pray for them when you check on them at night.

I'm going to tell you how I know that my father, my earthly father, never forgot me as a child growing up.

[30 : 16] There were lots of ways. My dad wasn't a perfect dad, but I hope that I will never forget this about him. That he prayed for me and he would come into my room and I think every night, I don't know, I was usually asleep, but there were some nights when I was not asleep and he didn't know that or at least I didn't think that he knew that.

And every night he'd come in and I assumed to check on us, at least that's what I do with my children. I have to still see if they're breathing before I go to sleep. But he would come in and I remember laying in bed and knowing that he had come in the room and just, you know, it's dark so he can't see.

I just opened my eyes enough to look over and see. And my dad would be on his knees praying for me every night. And I knew that he had not forgotten me and that he prayed for me night and day. It's the kind of fathers we need to be, ones that pray for our children. May God give us grace to be that kind of father, like our heavenly father that never forgets us.

And so, remember your children. hold out to them the promise of life in your words and in your deeds and pray for them. As Paul did for his son in the faith, Timothy.

[31 : 39] And if you've fallen short, you can't go back and change what you've done. But you can go to the cross and find forgiveness and resolve from this point on by God's grace to honor him in the way that you're a father to your children.

What kind of mothers and grandmothers should we be then tonight? For you moms and grandmothers. Seen about fathers. Now mothers. Especially mothers and just a little bit for grandmothers too.

And dads, you can't tune out this either. There's things for you here as well. What role did Timothy's mother and grandmother play in his life? First thing we see about them is that they were women of faith.

Verse 5, I've been reminded of your sincere faith which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice. They were women of faith. Faith without hypocrisy.

Sincere faith. Genuine faith. True faith. They had anticipated the coming of Christ. Believing in the Messiah that was to come and had lived to see His coming. They were among the Jews that didn't reject Jesus as the Messiah.

[32 : 48] They believed and were counted among those with true, genuine faith. Acts 16 and verse 1, when we first meet Timothy, we read that he, Paul, came to Derbe and then to Lystra where a disciple named Timothy lived whose mother was a Jewess and a believer but whose father was a Greek.

She was a Jewess and a believer. A follower of Christ. One who trusted in Him. It's likely that his father was not a believer. His father a Gentile.

Not a follower of Christ. And we learn that this faith went back at least one more generation to his grandmother Lois, likely his maternal grandmother. And what a privilege then for Timothy to have this heritage of faith in his family.

While being the child of a believer coming from a family of Christians does not guarantee that a child will be a believer. It does not give us the right to baptize them and assume that they will be a believer.

It does give that child great advantage and great privilege. And if you tonight are the child of a believer, of believing parents, of parents that have faith, it is a blessing.

[33 : 55] What a blessing to grow up with that example in your home of people of faith. What a blessing to be brought to church and to grow up really in some ways in a community of faith and to be able to see that faith worked out in the lives of other people.

It's a great privilege and Timothy knew that privilege growing up in the house of a woman with faith. What a privilege to see that example, to be taught these truths and what a great stewardship and what a great responsibility for all of you children tonight, having grown up with one or two parents that love the Lord and trust in Christ.

But Eunice's mother had made every effort to pass that truth on to her son. She was a woman of faith, but she also taught her son. They didn't just influence by example, they did it with their words as well.

From infancy you knew the Scriptures. Look over in chapter 3 for just a moment. 2 Timothy 3, verses 14 and 15. But as for you, and he's writing to Timothy, as for you, Timothy, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of.

You hear that? Remember, we're getting here the foundation for the truth. Hold on to that truth and proclaim it to others. Remember, he says, continue in what you've learned and become convinced of because you know those from whom you learned it and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

[35 : 27] How did Timothy know the Scriptures from infancy? His mama told him. She read him the Scriptures or quoted them, taught them to him, and likely his grandmother as well.

They passed that truth on to young Timothy. He had been faithfully taught. Moms noticed that it was the mom that did this teaching.

It appears that, again, Timothy's father wasn't a believer, but even if you have a believing husband who leads your family in worship, and I hope you husbands, you fathers are doing that, leading your families in worship, you moms will have numerous opportunities to teach your children the Scriptures from infancy, from day one.

When your husband is away at work and the bulk of discipline and raising the children falls to you, use those opportunities to teach them the Scriptures. Don't just tell them what they're doing is wrong and tell them to stop.

Show them why it's wrong from the Scriptures. Show them from the Scriptures what is right and what they should be doing. Show them Christ. Don't just stop by saying here's what you should do and what you shouldn't do.

[36 : 38] Take them to the cross and show them how those sins can be forgiven and wiped away. Point them to God, the God of grace, the God of mercy, who will forgive those sins.

Take those opportunities to teach them and show them the blessedness of the Gospel. Again, Timothy was a believer before Paul got on the scene. He was a disciple already through his mother's, his grandmother's influence.

Maybe you are single or without a believing husband. Maybe all of the work for instructing your children in the faith falls to you as it would have to Timothy's mother.

Don't say that you can't do it, that it's beyond you. Oh, it is beyond you and your own strength. But in the power of God, it is not beyond you. God will enable you just as He did Eunice, if you would but ask.

Are you falling short in that task? Have you fallen short in the past? Say the same thing I did to the dads. Now is not the time to...

[37 : 42] You can't go back and change the past. And now is not the time to grab yourself by the bootstraps and pull yourself up and say I'm going to do better from now on. Now is the time to go to the cross. Say God, forgive me where I've fallen short.

God, thank You for Christ and for His perfect work. Forgive me for not teaching my children as I should. Help me to do better now in whatever opportunities I have now.

Even for children gone and out of the house, whatever opportunities that are there, give me grace to take advantage of them. Don't wallow in the past. Take it to Christ and find forgiveness and let it motivate you to use the moments and opportunities that you now have.

And a word for grandmothers and grandfathers. You don't know how big of a role Lois had in Timothy's life. But Paul knew about it and I bet Paul knew about it because Timothy had talked about it.

He knew about Lois. So it was big enough to make mention of here. So I hope your grandparents aren't just a grandma or a grandpa who spoils your grandkids and shows them a good time.

[38 : 49] That's all fine. That's part of grandparents' job and they're not the parents anymore. At least that's what my parents think. They're all about spoiling my kids. But I hope that you do more than that.

I hope you take advantage of opportunities to show them the truth. I hope you're a living example of faith in Christ. I hope that your children, grandparents, your children can say, have you ever noticed grandma and grandpa?

Ever seen their faith? See how much they love the Lord. Do you know that your grandma and grandpa pray for you? Do you know your grandma and grandpa love you because they love the Lord?

Grandparents, can your children talk about you like that when they speak to their children? I hope you're that living example of faith so that children can look at their fathers and their forefathers before them.

I'm very grateful for multiple generations of faith on both sides of my family. I have grandparents and parents that love me and pray for me and speak the truth to me.

[39 : 55] I was, I am a privileged person. Many of you here are as well. So may God give us parents and grandparents grace and boldness and wisdom to live the truth before our children and to speak it to them and to our grandchildren.

So a word for fathers, a word for mothers, grandparents. Now a word for sons and daughters, for children, young people.

Timothy was a good steward of all of these blessings. He was privileged to have Lois and Eunice. He was privileged to have the Apostle Paul. Privileged to have the truth taught to him from a young age, from infancy.

And many of you here share those privileges. Timothy was a good steward of them. He made good use of them by God's grace. What are you doing with those privileges?

Many who had the privilege of being influenced by the Apostle Paul didn't turn out as well as Timothy. He talks later about Demas because he loved the world, has deserted me, he's gone back to Thessalonica, he abandoned it.

[41 : 12] Will you be that way? You may be followed for a while, but then abandon the faith. Or reject it like Hymenaeus and Alexander back in 1 Timothy 1.8. Paul exhorts Timothy to hold on to a clear conscience and to the faith.

But some reject these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Will some here shipwreck their faith? I pray not.

Those of you that have had such a blessed heritage, will you be a child with sincere faith or will you waste that heritage? Many of you have one, if not two, believing parents and many have grandparents that know the Lord.

It's blessing beyond measure, but God's Word tells you that to whom much is given, much will be required. Your blessing is great and so is your responsibility for what you do with that blessing. Will you follow in the ways that your parents have gone? Or will you go astray? You know what? This isn't just like following in the family business. You know, your parents might be a little disappointed if you don't do what Dad did, or maybe they don't care.

[42 : 23] My grandfather was a florist and owned a greenhouse and it had been in the family for a hundred years. A hundred years. And my grandparents had three boys and one of them is my dad and none of the three boys wanted the greenhouse.

None of them wanted the family business. I'm sure that was disappointing to my grandparents. But you know, it would have been way, far, exceedingly, pales in comparison to the greenhouse to the disappointment that would have come as if their three boys didn't know the Lord.

I know about my dad. I'm not totally confident about the other two, but they could have cared less. They would have sold the greenhouse before they retired if they had known that their children would have followed in their faith.

It's not like following your dad in his occupation. It's not like that. The importance is far greater. Far more significant that you follow in your faith. And just as, though if your father's a lawyer doesn't guarantee that you'll be a lawyer just because your parents are Christians doesn't guarantee that you will be one.

I fear that many children of believers are very complacent. One of these days, I'll grow up, I'll be like mom and dad, I'll be Christian, we'll go to church, we'll do this whole thing. And you need to understand something tonight.

[43 : 37] And that is that having parents for Christians doesn't guarantee that you will be one. It is your responsibility to repent and believe. Your parents can tell you the glorious truth of the Gospel of life or the Gospel of Christ and the promise of life.

They can live that before you, but they can't come to Jesus for you. They can't believe for you. They can't repent for you. You have to do that. Just as Timothy did, you must run to Christ.

I hope you view these things as a blessing. I hope there's no one here tonight that would say, I wish I hadn't been born to Christian parents. And if you do say that, you'll live to regret those words.

I wish they weren't always telling me about Jesus. Timothy was blessed to have this family we've seen tonight and you are blessed to have yours. May God help you to see it as the blessing that it is that you might come to faith in Christ.

When your parents come to the end of their life, what will their last words be to you? Will they be like Paul's to Timothy? I thank God for you.

[44 : 47] I know the faith that your mother had, that your grandmother had, and I'm confident now that it resides in you. Look at that in verse 5 with me. I've been 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.

Will your parents have that kind of confidence when it comes time for them to die? And they write you one last letter, they talk to you one last time on the phone, or face to face, will they be able to say, I praise God that you're following Christ.

Or the last letter, read more like this, I pray to God every time I think of you that He would save you, that you would come to Him in repentance and faith.

When I remember your laughing at the truth and your rejection of the truth, it pains my heart. I'm filled with longing that you would know Christ and trust in Him.

the memory of you fills me with not great joy, but great pain and sorrow. I'm reminded of the faith that your grandma and grandpa had, that your mom and I have, and that I'm persuaded that you don't have.

[45 : 56] And one last time, before I die, Son, let me plead with you. Turn from your sin and come to Christ. What will your parents say when it comes time for them to die?

Hope they'll be able to speak like Paul was able to do on his deathbed to his spiritual son in the faith, rejoicing, persuaded that he too was walking in the truth. Well, Paul gets it right tonight.

There's a promise of life. Parents, it's our job to hold out that promise to our children. Children, and any others here who do not believe, it's for you to come to this Christ like Timothy did. Come, leave your sin behind.

Repent and believe. Maybe there's someone here that has no spiritual heritage at all. He said, I didn't have those advantages. I didn't have those blessings. I didn't have a mom or a grandma or a dad or a spiritual dad or any of those things.

Well, you have the opportunity tonight to hear the truth. And you too can come to grace and you can start your own heritage for your children and grandchildren after you. Come to Christ.

[46:56] Without Christ, there is no promise of life. Paul doesn't have anything to write about. We don't have any hope tonight. We don't have anything to talk about tonight. But Christ has come.

There is a guarantee of life for all who are in him. The gospel is true good news. And so come to Christ in repentance and faith and then stand for that truth.

This is the foundation. This is where it all begins. Timothy knew the truth. He knew it from his mother, his grandmother, and from his spiritual father, the Apostle Paul. Now it's going to be for him to hold on to it and to pass it on to others.

May we be found faithful in holding the truth and passing it on. Let's pray together. Our Father, we thank you for the promise of life in Christ tonight. And we thank you that there is life to be found in him.

And we thank you that there is forgiveness to be found in him. And so we pray tonight that you would forgive us our shortcomings. Forgive me, my shortcomings as a father, my failings.

[47:57] And we pray that you would give us grace to be the kinds of fathers and mothers and grandparents that you've called us to be. Those that love your truth, that live it.

Those that can come to the end of our life and say that we've served you with a clear conscience. Those parents that can and will pass the truth on to the next generation.

We pray that you would work in the hearts of our children and young people to draw them to yourself. May none try to coast in on the coattails of their parents, but we pray that they would come in repentance and faith to the only one that can save them from their sins.

And so we give you thanks tonight that there is hope for us in the gospel, that there is hope in Christ. We pray that we might put our trust in him for salvation and for the grace to live the life that you have called us to live.

We cannot do these things in our own strength, and so we pray that you would be our help, that you would be our strength. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.