

Fan Into Flame the Gift of God

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[0:00] 2 Timothy, chapter 1, and we'll read through the first twelve verses. 2 Timothy, chapter 1, and we'll read through the first twelve verses.

3 Timothy, chapter 1, and we'll read through the first twelve verses.

But a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me, his prisoner.

But join with me in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life, not because of anything we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace.

This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

[1:54] And of this gospel, I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am.

Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

Please turn again to 2 Timothy, chapter 1. What is it that you are afraid of? What causes you to fear?

Maybe it's crowds. Pights. Many people fear failure. Fear. The loss of job.

Rebellious children. And I'm thinking not so much of fearing a rebellious child himself, but fearing that our children might be rebellious children, though certainly the other could cause fear as well.

[2:57] Economic meltdown. Persecution. Public speaking. Small spaces. Witnessing. The opinion. The opinion of others.

What is it that makes you afraid? And should it make you afraid? All sorts of things can cause us fear. And Paul has something to say about it in the passage that's before us tonight.

But of course, Paul's words were first directed to Timothy. His son in the faith. And so what do you suppose caused Timothy fear? What might have made him afraid?

That would draw out these exhortations from Paul. Stir up the gift. Fan into flame the gift of God. God did not give us a spirit of timidity.

A spirit of fear, but one of power. Why did Paul write that to Timothy? Could have been many things, but no doubt. The trouble he faced from the false teachers in Ephesus that had given him so much difficulty.

[3:56] The everyday pressures of the ministry for a young man. He's thinking, I have to feed this church every week. Give them truth that will profit their souls. Hold Christ before them.

Enable them by the word of God to go out and live for Christ in a world that hates Christ. Things that weigh and put fear into a young minister. And then you add to those particular struggles that he faced there in Ephesus.

And the everyday weight of the ministry upon him. The fact that Timothy's earthly mentor, his helper, his guide, and spiritual father, the apostle Paul, is nearing the end of his life. And in some senses, Timothy will be on his own when Paul dies.

And you've got the very real possibility that young Timothy is afraid. That he's scared. That he's not sure what to do. And so since Paul is confident that Timothy has sincere faith.

He started well. He's learned the scriptures from the very beginning. And he has that faith that his mother and grandmother had before him. Paul builds on that foundation to exhort and encourage him.

[5:01] Don't be afraid. Don't give up. Press on in the work of the ministry that God has called you to. Don't quit. And we want to take his encouragement to a young, perhaps fearful minister.

And apply it to all of the people of God tonight. To all of those of you that are here tonight with sincere faith. That are in Christ.

Trusting him. He is your hope. Your strength. To encourage you. To press on in the work that God has called you to. Without fear. Or without shame.

It doesn't have to be the work of the ministry that God has called you to. He's still giving you a gift. And you need to fan that gift into flame. And he still called you to face difficult things. And you will need that spirit of power and love.

And level headedness. If you are to face them without fear. Or shame. And so we want to see two things tonight. One, what God gives to his people. And secondly, what God expects of his people.

[6:04] What does God give to his people? It's not as though God calls us to do things. That he hasn't equipped us to do. He doesn't send us into the battle and say, Go fight. Without giving us the armor.

And the weaponry that we need for that fight. He gives us everything that we need to face every situation that will come across our paths. And Paul tells us a few of the things that he gives us here. He gives gifts. Verse 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. Now here he's talking about Timothy's gift.

And it was a gift of ministry. He had the ability to minister to God's people. And God is still giving that gift. And through the laying on of hands. The ordination of Paul.

And there were other elders we learned back in 1 Timothy. That laid their hands on Paul. That gift was confirmed. And Timothy was set apart to do that work. Now only.

[7:02] That I know of. Only. Six people here tonight have been ordained. Four deacons. And two of your pastors. And the third who's not able to be with us.

Say, so this doesn't apply to me. Nobody laid hands on me. Nobody set me apart to use my gift. Well, that's not it at all. This was true of Timothy. His was a particular gift. He's told later in chapter 4.

That he should do the work of an evangelist. Discharge all the duties of your ministry. That was his calling. The gift that God has given. And the way that people are set apart for the ministry. Is through ordination. But he gives other gifts.

That aren't recognized through the laying on of hands. But he's given gifts to all of his people.

There's no dead weight in the church. He's given various spiritual gifts.

Those of teaching. Hospitality. Administrative gifts. Other areas of service. Encouraging. Giving to the needs of others. Leadership. Mercy. He's given these gifts.

[8:01] And we are to exercise them. And beyond spiritual gifts. He gives natural gifts and talents. In accordance with various callings. Some people have special athletic talents. Some are more naturally gifted with numbers and math.

Than other people are. God has given each one various gifts. In keeping with your calling. And all of these spiritual and natural gifts.

Are to be used in the service of Christ. In bringing glory to his name. And so don't sit back today and say. Nobody ordained me. I don't have a gift. This isn't about me. It's specifically about Timothy.

But there's application for everyone. Who has received a gift from God. False humility won't do here. Each part of the body of Christ. Has its place. And it's work to do. And that includes.

Each one of you believers here tonight. God has given you. Talents and gifts. That's one of the things he gives us. The second thing Paul tells us. That he gives us.

[8:56] Is. Not a spirit of timidity. But a spirit of power. Of love. And of self-discipline. The first thing we have to determine here.

Is what does he mean by. He's given us a spirit. Is that the Holy Spirit. Capital S. Or just. Our spirit. Small. S. I think you could go either way. And be safe.

But I tend. To lean towards this being. The Holy Spirit. Who then works in us. Not a spirit of fear.

But one of love. And power. And good judgment. If it is the spirit.

Small s. The way God works. That kind of spirit. In it. Is by his spirit. Capital S. The Holy Spirit.

Those who are in Christ. Are. Indwelt.

By. The Holy Spirit. We've just. Sung of it. And it is the spirit of Christ. And when we read. In Isaiah 11. About the coming of Christ. We find that the spirit. Of the Lord.

[9:54] Will rest on him. And what is true. Of that spirit. Isaiah. The spirit of wisdom. And of understanding. The spirit of counsel. And of power. The spirit of knowledge.

And of the fear. Of the Lord. Christ. Dwelling in us. By his spirit. Brings this spirit. Of. Of wisdom. Understanding. Counsel. Power. Knowledge. And the fear of the Lord. The only thing. That's missing. From the list. Here in 2nd Timothy. Is love. And he is that as well. Or you remember. When Jesus promised. The coming Holy Spirit. To his disciples. John 14. 26 and 27. He said. But the counselor. The Holy Spirit. Whom the Father. Will send in my name. Will teach you all things. And will remind you. Of everything I have said to you. Peace. I leave with you. My peace. I give you. I do not give to you. As the world gives. Do not let your hearts. Be troubled. And do not be afraid. [10 : 52] That's the verb form of the word. That's here translated. Timidity. The noun. Fear. Right after Jesus says. I will give you. The Father will give you.

The coming Holy Spirit. He says. Don't be afraid. I'm not going to treat you. Like the world has. I give you peace. Not a spirit of fear. But the spirit who. Can bring peace. And so. God gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit. And works in us. A spirit. Of power. And love. And level headedness. It's first of all. Not a spirit of fear. Of course the Holy Spirit. Is not a spirit of fear. And so neither are we. Who are indwelt by the spirit. To have a spirit of fear. Or timidity. Or it could even be translated. Cowardice. Some may say. That's easier said than done. By nature. I'm a fearful person. That's just who I am. And that's my makeup. [11 : 45] I'm prone to that. I can't. Help that. And. You don't know. The situations that I face. That cause me to fear. And so don't tell me tonight.

That I can't be a person. Of fear. Because that's just. Who I am by nature. Some people may be more prone. To fear than others. That's true. It seems that that may have been the case. With Timothy. Even. And I think Paul anticipates. That even tonight. And I don't want to make light. Of anyone's fears tonight. Because fear is a very real thing. And the sources of our fear. Are great. But I do want to show us tonight. What Paul says. To the one who says. You don't know the huge sources. Of my fear. I think he says. You don't yet know. The full power of the spirit. Who dwells in you. This is the spirit. That we have. Why. Why is it. [12 : 39] Brothers and sisters. That we tonight. Can have a spirit. Without fear. It's through the indwelling. Of the Holy Spirit. And faith. And the promises. And words of God. Listen to some of the. Things the scriptures. Have to tell us. About the Holy Spirit. And fear. Or the lack thereof. Psalm 27. One. The Lord is my light. And my salvation. Whom shall I. Fear. Fear. That's the verb form. Of our word. That's found here. We live in a dark world. Children are afraid. Of the dark. Aren't they? Things that might. Come out of the dark. And get them. And that makes them afraid. When they're young. And maybe even now. You too. As an adult. When you find yourself. Walking down the street. In the dark. Your. Your. Your. Heartbeat quickens. It's dark. And you can't see. What's coming next. And there's something. Fearful about that. [13 : 34] Well. What better than to have the Lord. Who is my light. And my salvation. Whom then shall I fear. And this is a dark world. We live in. Not just literally. But figuratively. It's a dark world. With many attacks. Around every corner. And we don't know. Where the next one will come from. But we have the Lord. Who is our light. And salvation. Who then shall we fear. The implied answer is no one. Nothing. Haggai 2. 5. The prophet. Reminding God's people. Who have come back. From exile. Encouraging them. In the work of. Rebuilding the temple. And he says to them. The word of the Lord. This is what I covenanted. With you. When you came out of Egypt. And my spirit. Remains among you. Do not fear. See. The presence of the spirit. Don't fear. And that's the spirit. Brothers and sisters. In Christ. That dwells in each one. 2 Samuel 10. [14 : 31] And verse 2. Joab. The commander of David's armies. The armies of Israel. Is emboldening his troops. As they face the Ammonites. And he says. Be strong. And let us fight bravely. For our people. And the cities of our God. The Lord will do. What is good. In his sight. We can have courage. Which is the opposite. Of fear. Or even the ability.

To act. In the presence of fear. But we can have courage. Knowing that God. Always does what is best. The Lord will do what is best. Therefore be courageous. As true today.

As it was when Joab. Uttered those words. John. 16. And verse 33. The words of our Savior himself. I have told you these things. That in me.

You may have peace. In this world. You will have trouble. But take heart. I have overcome the world. It's not a trouble free world. We live in. That's not what Paul is saying.

[15 : 25] He's not saying. Timothy. The trouble you're facing. Is imaginary. There's no trouble. Get over it. And he's not telling us. That we're going to live. A trouble free life. And if you've walked. The Christian road.

Any length of time. You know that there's troubles. You're walking through it. Right now. But Jesus says. As you do that. In this world. You will have trouble.

But take heart. I have overcome. That world. Christ said that. And it's his spirit. That dwells in us. So that we can have. Confidence. And facing trouble. Knowing that Christ.

Has already. Overcome it. And Romans 8. In verse 15. Reminds us that it's because. We're God's children. We have no reason for fear.

For you did not receive. A spirit. That makes you a slave. Again to fear. But you receive. The spirit of sonship. And by him. We cry. Abba father.

[16 : 18] Father. I'm a father. I've been a father. For five years. A little more than that. And. If I could.

I would move. Heaven and earth. To protect my children. I will do whatever. I can. In my power. To make sure. That they are safe.

That they are protected. But there's only so much. I can do. I can't be everywhere. At once. My son put a hole.

In his lip. The other day. When I say a hole. I mean a hole. Like all the way through. And I wasn't home. I can't be. In two places. At one time. I couldn't protect him. From that.

I don't know everything. I didn't know. That it happened. Until my wife. Picked up the phone. And called me. And so. I'm limited. In what I can do. For my children. And they can have.

[17 : 14] A certain amount. Of confidence. In knowing that. I'm their dad. And if you've ever seen. A child cling. To their father's hand. Or find peace. In their father's arms. Or their mother's arms.

You know. There's comfort. That comes with being a child. And knowing that your parents. Will do everything. They can to protect you. But parents can only do. So much. But our heavenly father. Isn't like us.

Is he? He can be everywhere. At once. He does know. Everything that's going on. He can move heaven and earth. To deliver his children.

And the spirit that we have received. Is not one to make us a slave to fear. But rather. A spirit of sonship. And by him we cry. Abba father. And so.

We need not fear. With God. As our heavenly father. His spirit. Dwelling in us. When Jesus talks to his. Disciples. And wake him up in the boat.

[18 : 09] Master. We're drowning. Don't you care? We learn that. Fear comes from a lack of faith. Because Jesus says. You of little faith.

Why are you so afraid? And that's our word. The adjective. Form of our word. You of little faith. Why are you so afraid? Then he got up. And rebuked the winds. And the waves. And it was completely calm.

No. It's not a spirit of fear. That we've received. So what is it? Paul. It's a spirit of power. Instead of being paralyzed by fear.

We're enabled by. Power. That power that characterizes. And this is coming from a commentator. And he says. The power that characterizes the spirit. Capital S.

That characterizes the Holy Spirit. Is that which he brings. Into the life of the believer. As he indwells them. Thus believers are. Ephesians 3. 16. Strengthened with power.

[19 : 05] Through his spirit. In the inner person. When the spirit comes. And dwells in us. He doesn't leave his power out. He brings that with him. And he enables us. And he empowers us.

Dwelling in us. And so we can be told things like. Psalm 31. Verse 24. Be strong and take heart. All you who hope in the Lord. It's not that we hope in ourselves. You say.

I'm strong. I can do it. I can handle this trouble. Whatever comes. No. We hope in the Lord. And therefore. We can take heart. Knowing that he's dwelling in us. By that powerful spirit. Our trust is in

him.

As the Israelites. Are about to enter the promised land. After 40 years of wandering. In the wilderness. Because they didn't trust the Lord. To enable them to conquer. The giants that were in the land.

They're punished. They wandered 40 years. And they come up to the edge. Of the promised land again. And Moses is exhorting them. Before they cross over. And he says. Be strong. And courageous.

[20:00] Do not be afraid. Or terrified. Because of them. Imagine. Some of those people were thinking. You don't have to go over there. Moses. You're going to stay on this side. And those same people.

That were in the land. 40 years ago. Giants. They're still over there. So how can you tell us. To not be fearful. To be strong. And courageous. But Moses doesn't stop there. Don't be afraid. Or terrified. Because of them. For the Lord your God. Goes with you. He will never leave you. Nor forsake you. The basis of their courage.

Wasn't their great strength. The weakness of the enemy. They were about to face. But rather the strength. Of their God. Who was on their side. Many reasons for them to fear. Moses says. You be strong. And courageous. And many reasons. For us to fear. And yet we can receive. That exhortation. And Joshua gets it. And Joshua 1.9. Have I not commanded you. Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified.

[20:54] Do not be discouraged. For the Lord your God. Will be with you. Wherever you go. And that is true for you. He is with you. Wherever you go. He's dwelling in you. By His Spirit. That powerful Spirit.

So. Whatever you face. Whatever comes across your path. You face it. In the strength. Of the Spirit. It's a Spirit of power. Not one of fear. It's also a Spirit of love.

It's this that will enable Timothy. To continue to serve. A stubborn. Frequently straying people. And you think. Well the people that I serve. On a daily basis.

Aren't very lovable. And it's hard to have a spirit. Of love. Sometimes. Well. Shouldn't we then think on. God's love for us. Who loved us.

Who are so unlovable. And shouldn't that in turn. Drive us to love those around us. Even when they are not lovable. Maybe you never say it out loud.

[21:55] Some of you moms. Ever find your own children. Unlovable. At certain moments. Remember the Spirit of love. Dwells in you.

Enabling you to love. Not a spirit of fear. But one of love. And also of. Sound mind. Here it's. Self discipline.

Sound mind. Clear. Level headed judgment. Moderation. Self control. The Spirit doesn't make us. Unrational. Or irrational. Unthinking. Careless people. It makes us.

Careful. Thoughtful. Doing that which is wise. In his eyes. William Hendrickson says. He's talking about someone. Who's not level headed. Someone who's.

Imbalanced. In their mind. He says. If a person. Fears. Satan's. Persecuting power. More than he trusts. God's ability. And ever readiness. To help. Then he's lost his.

[22:50] Mental balance. And that's the balance. That we're speaking of here. A spirit of self discipline. Of level headedness. That knows how to act. When certain situations arise.

I don't know what to do. Well you have the spirit of wisdom. Dwelling in you. Ask him for help. Like pilgrim. What is the meaning of this? Show me. He's right there. He's dwelling in you.

Ask him for help. And so for Timothy the minister. It will be important to remember. Not just one of these things. But all three of them. Spirit of. Power. Of love. And of.

Level headedness. Power. Without love and good judgment. Will just be overbearing on a people. And won't be. Power executed rightly. Love. That has no power and good judgment.

To go along with it. Will get walked all over. Might have good intentions. But it won't get anywhere. A sound mind. Without power. Or the love. Without the power to do it. Or love. Will know.

[23:45] What to do. But won't be able to do it. But the spirit provides all three of these things. Power. Love. And a sound mind. This is what God has given us.

Dear people. This is what we have. If someone. Were to observe your life. What would they see? What kind of spirit.

Do you have? I'm talking about the Holy Spirit. I know what kind of Holy Spirit you have dwelling in you. What kind of spirit would you have? These words written to a minister of the gospel. But it's not only ministers who receive the gift of the spirit. And it's not just really holy people that receive the gift of the spirit. And it's not just people who get a second blessing that receive the gift of the spirit. It's all of God's people.

Everyone here tonight who has sincere faith in Christ. Possesses this spirit. And so this is for anyone who's ever said. I can't.

[24 : 44] It's too hard. I'm too afraid. To do something that God has called you to do. God working by his spirit in you says you can. Be strong.

Don't be afraid. And to say otherwise is to deny that God has given you what you need. This problem is too big. I can't do it. God working in you can.

2 Peter 1 and verse 3 says. His divine power has given us. I love this word. And I love it in this verse. His divine power has given us everything that we need for life and godliness.

Through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. It's not that he's given us some things and we have to come up with the rest. It's not that he's given us most of what we need. He's given us, dear people, everything that we need for life and godliness.

Especially this spirit. The Holy Spirit that dwells in us. There is no obstacle in your life that is too big.

[25 : 47] There is no unemployment problem that God cannot solve. There is no financial crisis that he will not give you the wisdom and the ability to survive. There is no discipline or child raising challenge that is too scary.

There is no issue at work that is too difficult to say that there is. It's to question God. This is the spirit we have dwelling in us.

Are we taking advantage of him? Are we living in conscious dependence upon him every day? Are we praying every day, every moment that we might know his power and love and sound judgment, his wisdom, his insight?

And this is not some self-help drivel. Yes, you can. You're good enough. You're smart enough. And doggone it, people like you. No.

You're not good enough. You're not smart enough. But you know what? God is good enough. He is powerful enough. He is loving enough. He is wise enough. The question is, do we believe it? This is the spirit that you have.

[26 : 50] As though Paul were saying, be what you already are. Now, you have this spirit, Timothy. Live like it. Don't live like you did before. Before you professed faith in Christ.

Before that spirit came to dwell in you. And you all, we here tonight need to be what we already are. We are a people that have a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline.

We just need to be what God has made us. To live in the power of what he has given us. Do you have that faith?

And that faith was so lacking in the disciples and the boat. Sometimes it seems like it might take a few crises like that. Those disciples that were saying, Lord, don't you care?

On the other side, eventually they're out preaching the gospel with boldness. Willing to suffer for the name of Christ. Willing to do what Paul says in verse 8. To not be ashamed. To testify about our Lord. And to suffer for the cause of the gospel.

[27 : 48] Those who are so little faith, their faith grows as they endure these various things. So maybe you're in the midst of a trial and you say, I hear what you're saying, but I don't feel it. I don't believe it. I can't see it.

When God brings you through on the other side. And he's demonstrated that he is able. Once again, make sure that your faith is strengthened. Don't lose that lesson. Don't forget what you've learned.

Come out stronger on the other side by God's grace. Make sure that you're seeking to have your faith strengthened and increased by spending time in the word. Coming and partaking of the means of grace that God has given to the preaching of his word and the sacraments that he gives us.

Don't miss out. Every time you miss out on the means of grace, you're missing another chance to have your faith strengthened and built. We're a rich people, aren't we?

We give thanks then to God who's given us so much. He's given us gifts and he's given us the spirit that we've spoken of. But we know that to whom much is given, much will be required.

[28:54] We've been given much. And so what is it that we are to do with these gifts and with the spirit that God has given to us? What does God expect from us?

First, to maintain those gifts that he's given us. Back in verse 6 again, for this reason I remind you, talking to Timothy, to fan into flame the gift of God.

Fan into flame that gift of God. You know, when Paul laid it, it wasn't Paul's gift and he gave it to Timothy. It was the gift of God. It came from him. In other words, be a good steward of what God has given you.

Don't bury your gift in the ground and do nothing with it. Use it. Let it bring a great return for the sake of the kingdom. Rekindle that gift. Give life to the fire again.

Doesn't necessarily mean that the fire has gone out, but it seems that maybe some of the troubles Timothy is facing have caused his zeal to wane, to decrease a little bit.

[29:55] And Paul comes along and he sees maybe the fire's burning a little bit low. And it's like Paul's got a poker and he shoves it in that fire and the sparks fly upward. He says, Timothy, rekindle your gift.

Put some more wood on the fire. Exercise that gift. Discharge the duties of your ministry. Do the work of an evangelist. Stir up that gift. He had to tell him back in the first letter, 1 Timothy 4, Do not neglect your gift which was given you when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

Be diligent in these matters. Give yourself wholly to them. You be diligent in exercising your gifts that God has given you. Give yourself wholly to them. If Timothy needed those charges back in the first letter when Paul's death wasn't imminent, how much more now?

If Paul's about to die and go off the scene, how much more now does he need that exhortation, that encouragement to put some wood on the fire? Exercise that gift. What are you doing with the gifts God has given you?

Maybe you need somebody to come along tonight and give you a kick in the pants or poker in the fire. Stir it up. Don't be complacent with your gift. Oh, I'm gifted in that area, so I don't have to work on it.

[31:06] I've seen athletes like that that were so gifted. They had so much talent. But they didn't feel like they needed to do the work. Because they had so much talent and they never amounted to half the athlete they could have been because they were just complaining.

I'm gifted. So I don't need to put in the work. And they were lazy. Don't you do that. Don't say that. I'm gifted. I'm okay. I'm complacent. I'm good in that area. So I don't need to work at it. I don't need to exercise that area. You ask a pianist.

Oh, you're gifted in music. Oh, yes. But you know what they do? They practice every day. Or almost every day. And they work to hone that craft.

To fine tune it. To use it to the best of their ability. It takes practice. Just because you're gifted doesn't mean that you're using that gift well. Put it into use.

God's given you that gift so that it will be a blessing to others. And so don't you, by your selfishness or laziness, try to stand in the way and hinder the usefulness that you could have to the people around you.

[32:05] Don't bury that gift in the ground. Not use it. If God's given you a gift, and if you're in Christ, He has gifted you, use it.

Maintain it. Rekindle it if you need to tonight. And use it for His glory. You know the way God has gifted you. What kind of steward have you been lately? Do you need to get back to that work of hospitality that you once went about wholeheartedly?

You're an encourager. Get to doing that work of encouragement. Do you have a gift of teaching? Stir it up. Don't sit on that gift. Scrambling to have enough teachers for Sunday school and Wednesday nights.

Use people that are gifted to teach in our adult Sunday school class. Don't sit on that gift. Stir it up. Fan it into flame.

As God called you to be a father or a mother, then He's gifted you for that work. Stir it up. Work at it. It takes work. Read a book about it. Read a book about hospitality or about parenting.

[33:11] Sit down with your wife, man, and get a book out on parenting. I can recommend some if you're interested. If you're feeling challenged and the fire's dying low in that area in your life.

I have to stir up the gifts that God has given me. I need to work on preaching and shepherding and loving the flock. I've got to stir those things up. They don't just come naturally.

God has given gifts, yes, but it's for us to rekindle. To do that work. Don't sit on your gifts, but use them. That's what God expects of us. But then in verse 8, and this is as far as we'll get tonight in verse 8, or only through verse 8.

What else does He expect of us? He's given us this spirit of power. One of love, one of self-discipline. Not a spirit of fear. So what is expected? Verse 8. So, therefore, for that reason, since you've received that spirit, don't be ashamed to testify about our Lord.

Or ashamed of me, His prisoner, but join with me. I'm suffering for the gospel by the power of God. You've got a spirit of power dwelling in you.

[34 : 22] What's expected of you? You say, this is for Timothy. This is for ministers. He can't be ashamed to testify to the truth. Neither can you. It's for all of God's people, though, directed first to a minister.

You don't be ashamed. And with the spirit of power, we need not be ashamed. How many times have we been ashamed of the gospel of Christ because we were afraid of what someone might think?

These verses tonight should blow that fear right out of the water, right out of our hearts. We're not to be ashamed of the gospel. The witness of our Lord. The testimony of our Lord.

The words that He spoke. And that will include, as it's translated here in the NIV, our speaking that truth. But it says, don't be afraid of the words Jesus spoke, of the testimony that He gave.

The truth that He is the Savior of sinners. That He is the only way to the Father. People are ashamed of that message. Oh, we want to say that there's lots of ways to the Father.

[35 : 22] We want to be sort of ecumenical. We want to say that, oh, if you have your way there, and I have my way, and if we're all sincere, we'll get to heaven. And people tend to be ashamed of the exclusivity of Christianity.

And Jesus' testimony is, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. And no one comes to the Father except through Me. We can't be ashamed of that, as many would be.

Jesus says, if anyone is ashamed of Me, and My words, My testimony, My witness, in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of Him when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.

The gospel might make us ashamed because it's exclusive, or maybe because it says that we're all sinners, and we're all helpless, and we can't help ourselves, and that's not very popular. People don't like to be called sinners.

People don't like to be told that you're helpless. You can't do anything to fix your problem of sin and unrighteousness before a holy God. Maybe that makes some people ashamed.

[36 : 22] We don't like to tell. Do-it-yourself and strong types that they're weak. We're ashamed of that. Maybe we're just afraid of being made fun of, but that, brothers and sisters in Christ, is not the Spirit that we've received.

And so let us not live as though it is. Let us be bold when Christ is being mocked. And take a stand for Him. Let us be brave to speak up for Him and His truth. Let us be as Paul was.

Romans 1.16 I am not ashamed of the gospel because this is the power of God for salvation to those who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. It's going to be vital, obviously, for a minister like Timothy to not be ashamed of the message of the gospel, but for each one of God's people, we've just come off a series on evangelism.

And we saw that it's the responsibility, the duty of all of God's people to bear witness by deed and word of the truth of the gospel. How are you doing, by the way?

Have you had opportunity? And take an opportunity to speak a word of witness. Or have we looked in the mirror and walked away and forgotten? Let us be bold and unashamed of Christ and His testimony.

[37 : 40] And the remarkable thing is that He is not ashamed of us. Hebrews 2.11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are being made holy are of the same family.

So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. How then could we be ashamed of Him? So we can't be ashamed of the gospel, the message of Christ, or of servants of the gospel, or ashamed of me, His prisoner.

Paul calls himself His prisoner, the Lord's prisoner. He's in bonds. He's in prison because of His service to Christ. children who grew up with criminals for fathers might be embarrassed to claim them.

Dad's in prison. That's an embarrassing thing. They're ashamed. But Paul says, even though I'm in prison, Timothy, don't be ashamed. Don't be ashamed of me and my chains. I hope that you're not ashamed of servants of the gospel.

Servants of God. Rather, I hope that you're thankful for them, that you uphold them in prayer. Even if they're not popular with the world around you, your preacher teaches what? He says what?

[38:51] You say, oh yeah, well, I really don't buy into that either. I was just telling you what he said. I don't get it. Don't be ashamed. Don't be ashamed of the message of the one who delivers it. Don't be ashamed of one like the Apostle Paul.

Even if you'll be seen as one of those kinds of people. Let's gladly be numbered with those who are ridiculed and persecuted for the sake of Christ. Remember, we don't have to fear. We have a spirit of power.

Therefore, don't be ashamed. Whatever comes, be not ashamed. God will give you power to face it. And it's also expected that we would stir up our gift, that we wouldn't be ashamed, and that we would suffer for the gospel.

Paul says, join me in suffering for the gospel by the power of God. Matthew Henry says, expect affliction for the gospel's sake.

[39:47] Prepare for them. Count upon them. Be willing to take thy lot with the suffering saints of the world. The gospel, laboring for it in whatever your calling is, being unashamed of Christ will bring you suffering.

It might be a look of disdain from a classmate or co-worker. It might mean enduring false gossip about yourself, being slandered.

It might mean being laughed at and mocked at when you bow your head to pray before you eat or for taking a stand.

It might be being passed over for a promotion. It might mean that people will try to place limits on you and what you can and cannot say. It might be that your viewpoint will be such a minority that people will be incredulous that there's anyone who actually still believes that.

It might mean all sorts of persecution. It might mean that you will suffer physically. Bodily harm. It hasn't come to that in our country and we can thank God for it.

[41:00] But it could. And it happens in other countries every day where people are imprisoned and suffer like Paul did and where people are put to death like Paul was shortly after he wrote these very words.

Because of their faith. Are you willing to suffer with Paul with all the saints for the cause of the gospel? If you're not ashamed and if you take a stand persecution will come in various forms but it will come.

Are you ready for it? Well certainly not in our own strength. But we come in the strength of the spirit, don't we? We come with a spirit of power and not a spirit of fear.

And as though Paul doesn't want us to forget he adds at the end of the verse join with me in suffering for the gospel and don't forget what I said just moments ago by the power of God.

He's going to go on to talk about God in verses 9 and 10 but I'm glad that he put that in there because I have a short memory and I might have already forgotten that I have a spirit of power and love and wisdom and not a spirit of fear and I get down there and I say suffer for the gospel?

[42:17] I can't do that. I'm afraid. And he says by the power of God not in your own strength but in His strength. That spirit is dwelling in us. We have access to all that we need to endure whatever suffering may come to us.

Here John Calvin on the power of God says there's an admonition here for Timothy and there's consolation. The admonition is to turn his eyes away from his present weakness and relying on the assistance of God to venture and undertake what is beyond His strength.

The consolation is that if we endure anything on account of the gospel God will come forth as our deliverer. That by His power we may obtain the victory.

There's consolation in the power of God. We can undertake whatever He calls us to knowing that He will watch over and keep us by that power. Is the truth really all that important?

That's where Paul's going with all this. Timothy don't let go of the truth. You've started well. You've received it from a child. Hold on to it and tell others and if need be suffer for it, Timothy.

[43:28] Is it really that important that we suffer? That we would be willing to suffer for it? Is the message that significant? Well, just look for a moment.

We can't. We'll look at this next time the content of that message that we're suffering for in verses 9 and 10. Who is this God who empowers us to enable us to suffer for the gospel?

It's the God who, verse 9, who has saved us and called us to a holy life not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.

But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. That's a message worth suffering for.

That's the message that's given us life and so shouldn't we be willing even to die knowing that we have eternal life for that truth. Hold on to it, Timothy. Hold on to it, people of God.

[44 : 26] Don't let it go. Don't be afraid when people challenge it. Be strong. Be courageous. Be level-headed. Take the gift that God has given you.

You're not all going to be ministers but take the gift and God has intended for you to use that gift for the good of His kingdom, for the furtherance of His truth in whatever capacity, whatever sphere you work in. And so the challenge that comes to Timothy to pass on that truth comes to you.

You be a faithful witness where you are for that truth. You stand firm and I've given you everything that you need to be able to do that. You have the gifts that you need and you have the Spirit dwelling in you that you need.

So don't be afraid. Stir up that gift. Don't be ashamed. And even join with me in suffering by the power of God. Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank You that You have given us everything that we need for life and godliness.

We thank You that You've given us Your Spirit to dwell in us, to empower us, to strengthen us, and not to make us fearful.

[45 : 33] So we pray tonight that You would forgive us for our fear. We pray that You would embolden and strengthen us to be faithful servants that love You, that follow after You, and that are willing even to go to death if need be for the cause of Christ.

Show us the importance of the truth. Make us to cling to it. And we thank You that You've given us everything that we need in order to do that. Help us then to walk out of here and to remember and to do, even as we've heard this morning, to not forget.

But may we go from here in that Spirit of power that You have given us and be faithful testimonies for the cause of Christ in the world where You have placed us. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.