

## THE GIFT OF GOD

2 Timothy 1:1-18

Key Verse: 1:7

"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."

In the study of 1 Timothy we learned the basic attitude of being a Christian leader. No one wants to be a leader with heavy responsibility. Everyone wants to live an easygoing life. But Paul admonishes all Christians to be responsible leaders and stewards of God's world. The best way of becoming a Christian leader is to become a godly man. The best way of becoming a godly man is to believe even one promise of God in his heart. St. Paul could be one of the greatest leaders in Christian history because he believed in God's

promises; Jesus gave his life to save us from our sins. In Jesus, all men have eternal life. All men have the kingdom of God as our inheritance. Paul wrote this second letter to Timothy from Rome, where he was being held prisoner. In this letter, Paul seemed to know there was little chance of his getting out of prison and that he would soon die (4:6,7,16-18). Paul wrote this second letter to Timothy in the hope that Timothy would carry out missionary work after his death. In 2 Timothy 1 we learn how Timothy can become a great leader. We also learn why we have to suffer much to defend the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord.

## I. Fan into flame the gift of God (1-7)

**First,** Paul's greeting (1,2). Look at verses 1-2. "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." In his greeting to Timothy Paul emphasized the fact that they became servants of God, not by their own decision, but by the

will of God. These days many people think servanthship to Christ is a career. But servanthship to Christ is not a career, it is a ministry. A career man works for himself. But the servants of God work for God's will for world salvation purpose. The servants of God work for God to bring all people to the promise of God through his Son's death and resurrection.

In verse 2, Paul called Timothy, "my dear son." When Paul called Timothy, "my dear son," Paul had in the first place of his mind, "Our Father, which art in heaven." Because of this, Paul cared for Timothy, his young coworker, like his own son very dearly and affectionately. One of the shepherds said, "One of my sheep has studied the Bible for several years and emptied my refrigerator so many times. But he takes everything for granted. I want to give up on him." But his senior shepherd said, "Well, don't give up on him. Look at your son David and think of him as dearly as your son David." When Paul said, "my dear son," he teaches us the secret of success as a great shepherd. Paul

was always happy to bless Timothy. Look at verse 2b, "Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." We must see our sheep with God's abundant blessing instead of confronting him as he is.

**Second,** Timothy's gift (3-6). There is a saying which goes, "Out of sight, out of mind." Paul was far away from Timothy. But Paul prayed for Timothy as if he was praying with Timothy face to face. Not only did Paul pray for him, but also he longed to see him because Paul felt that if he saw him one time he was happy to die. Look at verses 3-4. "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."

Paul was familiar with Timothy's grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. Both of these widows were godly and very faithful and sacrificial. Paul

could see such faithfulness and sacrificial heart in Timothy. Paul saw Timothy's faithfulness as God's gift for him. So Paul and other elders ordained him as the leader of the church (6). But as long as Paul was in command, Timothy was dependent and not as active as Paul had expected him to be. So Paul admonishes him to fan his gift from God into flame so that he can be as great a leader as Paul. Look at 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." Here we learn that not only Timothy, but each of us has a unique gift endowed by God. If one discovers the gift of God in him and develops it, he is promised to be a great man. But if one does not discover what his gift from God is, he is an idle man and he does not know who he is.

Everybody wants to be great. In order to be great they make many decisions. But they forget about them in a few days. Paul explains how to fan one's gift into flame in three ways.

Firstly, God gives us the spirit of power. Look at verse 7. "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline." People ignore spiritual realities because they do not see with their physical eyes. Once China ignored America as if it were not there because the Chinese did not see Americans with their eyes. Even if we do not see them with physical eyes, there are spiritual realities. There are the Holy Spirit and the evil spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is the power of God. King Saul was a head taller than other people. But he was a sissy man, so much so that he ran and hid himself among the baggage when Samuel came to anoint him as the king of Israel. When the Spirit of God came upon him, Saul became mighty powerful. He grabbed a pair of oxen, tore them into twelve pieces and sent a piece to each tribal leader to draft soldiers to fight the Ammonites (1Sa 11:6-7). When the Holy Spirit came upon New Testament Saul, he was changed from a wretched man to a servant of God, Paul.

We cannot do anything, but when the Holy Spirit comes on us, we can do a great work of God. Paul really wanted Timothy to give his gift to God so that the Holy Spirit may work in him and help him overcome his timidity and become a great general. As long as we are gripped with the evil spirit we cannot get out of the spirit of fear (Ro 8:15).

Secondly, God also gave us love. What is love? God is love (1Jn 4:16). When we do not know the love of God we become slaves of "I, my, me" mentality. Day and night an ungodly person thinks of himself and has pity on himself. But one who knows the love of God through his Son Jesus Christ can love people. A godly man loves God first. A godly man loves others second. He loves himself third. Then the love of God grows in him and his joy is complete (Jn 15:11). Hudson Taylor is a good example. He was a physician. He was physically weak. But he saw the people of China with the love of God. Finally he went with his family to China. He shaved his head like the Chinese and

wore Chinese clothes. In the course of time, his eldest daughter died. Soon after, his wife Maria died. During 10 years' time, 200 of his coworkers died mostly by pestilence. But he did not go back to England. He continued to preach the gospel to Chinese people. It was possible because he had the love of God in his heart.

Thirdly, God gave us self-discipline. Those who do not know God cannot practice self-discipline. It is a great imposition that we ask a dog to read Shakespeare 10 pages a day. Likewise, ungodly men are physical men. Physical men are animal men. We cannot expect self-discipline from animal men. Only godly men can enjoy self-discipline. It is amazing to know that John Calvin began to write the "Institutes of the Christian Religion" at the age of 22 and finished when he was 25. He wrote this book in order to defend Protestant Christians. In Calvin's time Protestant Christians were known as religious criminals, and the old and corrupted Catholic church mass-murdered

Protestant Christians. But no one dared to defend against the corrupted power of the church. Calvin wrote a letter to the king that the Protestant Christians believe in the Bible teachings. His introduction, which was an apology, extended nearly 100 pages. His Protestant theology extended 1,200 pages. He is a genius who exerted his effort 99%. He quoted Bible references, whatever he wanted, freely from the entire Bible. Nobody can master the Bible like Calvin. Most of all, his self-discipline is remarkable. He looks like a rejected piece of dry wood. He needed to eat more. But he practiced eating one meal a day in his lifetime in order to concentrate on the Bible study. His self-discipline is the most outstanding. Paul wanted Timothy to have this kind of self-discipline in order to lead the church of God.

II. Join with me in suffering for the gospel (8-18)

**First**, do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord (8-11). At that time, St.

Paul was in prison. Because of his imprisonment so many Christians ran away. Verse 15 says, "You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes." Paul did not know when he was going to die because he was too old. Many Christians who had no promise of God in their hearts ran away. Fearful Christians were afraid and ashamed of being Christians. Paul tells Timothy not to be ashamed to testify about our Lord and about Paul's imprisonment. Rather, Paul encourages Timothy to join with him. Look at verses 8b-9a. "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."

In verses 10 and 11, Paul explains why Christians should not be ashamed of Christ as follows. Men's salvation from their sins and the privilege of receiving eternal life and the kingdom of God was God's grace given us through Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus Christ? He was God before the beginning

of time (9). But God promised to send a Savior of the world after the Fall. This Savior has been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It has been hidden. But since Jesus Christ came to this world, he destroyed death and has brought us to immortality, that is, eternal life, and to light from the power of darkness of Satan. In short, God made a promise to send a Savior and kept it. God also saved us from our sins and gave us eternal salvation and his kingdom. This had been the secret but now it is fully revealed. Therefore, Timothy did not have to be ashamed. Paul said in verse 11 that he thinks it is glorious for him that he was appointed as a herald and an apostle and a teacher of Jesus' gospel. We must be proud of ourselves as the servants of Christ Jesus. Ungodly men are spiritually blind men and are always ashamed of Jesus Christ our Lord. But those who know God cannot be ashamed of our Lord Jesus Christ and his gospel.

**Second,** I know whom I have believed (12). Paul said he knew whom he had

believed. Paul believed that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Paul believed that God raised Jesus from the dead and made him King of kings and Lord of lords. Paul believed that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. Paul believed that there is eternal life in Jesus. Paul believed that there is the kingdom of God in Jesus. Paul believed that Jesus would come again to judge the living and the dead. This part reveals Paul's deep gratitude toward God's grace for him through his Son Jesus Christ. Paul was an ambitious young man. In order to satisfy his ambition he damaged and destroyed so many people. He could have lived in the darkness all his lifetime and been cast into eternal condemnation. But Paul was chosen to believe in Jesus, who is the promised Messiah. In addition, he was appointed an apostle in spite of himself. In past and present, people in the darkness of the world did not understand him. But Paul understood what God is doing and what he is doing. He was greatly thankful for the privilege of knowing Jesus. So he said, "I know whom I have believed."

All human beings worry about their future. But Paul had the peace of God in his heart because he knew whom he had believed and was convinced that he was able to keep what he entrusted to him for that day. In other words, to Paul, God was his inheritance. God wins his final victory and he rewards us more than we expected.

**Third,** guard the good deposit (13-14). Paul believed that God chose Timothy and appointed him as the leader of the church. So Paul gives him final encouragement. Look at verse 13. "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus." In verse 14, "Guard the good deposit..." means God's mission for Timothy. Paul encouraged him to guard it as a matter of first importance. It is possible for him when he asks the help of the Holy Spirit, who lived in him (14).

**Fourth,** Onesiphorus (15-18). The work of God was lifegiving. Paul has done

his best, but it was just the beginning. There was a household of Onesiphorus. He often refreshed Paul and was not ashamed of Paul's chains. When many were running away to the hiding places, Onesiphorus came to Rome and he began to search for Paul until he found him. This one person's help seemed bigger than the mountain to St. Paul, who was in prison. So Paul blesses him. Look at verse 18. "May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day!"

Here we learn that the work of God is like Jesus in a manger of a stable. And the evil of the world looks too big to overcome. But when there is one faithful man like Timothy, the work of God is going on mightily. Most of all, we must discover our unique gift and give it back to God so that God can use us as great Christian leaders.