

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## A Study of Paul's Second Letter to Timothy – Part 2

### I. Exposition of Chapter One (Continued).

A. Verse 3 – “I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day,”

1. “...whom I serve with a pure conscience...” – Paul certainly was not saying that he never had done anything morally wrong. We know, for example, that, before his conversion, he was responsible for opposing the Gospel and leading Christians to prison and to their death (cf. Acts 7:54-60; 8:1-3; 9:1-2). One thing this demonstrates is the amazing forgiveness of God and the power of a changed heart. Paul didn't allow his past to bring him under condemnation (Romans 8:1; Philippians 3:12-14).

2. “...as my forefathers did...” – This refers to Paul's Jewish ancestors. Dr. Warren Wiersbe writes: “Paul had known God from his earliest years because he was ‘an Hebrew of the Hebrews’ (Phil. 3:5). His ancestors had given him the orthodox Jewish faith. But when he met Jesus Christ, Paul realized that his Jewish faith was but preparation for the fulfillment Christ gave him in Christianity. He did not serve God with a pure conscience ‘from his forefathers,’ as the *King James Version* says. Rather, he heard about the true God from his forefathers; and *now* he was serving that God with a pure conscience. The fact that he had a pure conscience helped give power to his prayers.”<sup>1</sup>

3. “...as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day” – In Paul's epistles, he often refers to the fact that he is praying. He believed in the power and effectiveness of prayer. It's safe to say, he did not see it as some kind of religious ritual but as something that was vital for one's relationship with God and as a help for other people's relationship with God. (cf. Ephesians 1:15-23; 3; 14-21; 6:18; Philippians 1:3-11; Colossians 1:9-12; II Thessalonians 1:11.)

B. Verses 4-5 – “...greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.”

1. “...greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears...” – There was, perhaps, no other person Paul felt closer to than Timothy. Paul loved him like a son but also as a friend who could relate to the things Paul went through. The words “greatly desiring” mean: “to long for something, with the implication of recognizing a lack”<sup>2</sup> Scholars propose that the “tears” of Timothy probably referred to either the last time Timothy saw him when he left for Macedonia (I Timothy 1:3) or possibly due to him hearing of Paul's Roman imprisonment.

2. “...that I may be filled with joy...” – It's possible that Paul was experiencing loneliness and discouragement expecting that he didn't have much longer to live. To see Timothy one last time was his heart's desire.

3. “...when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you...” – NOTE: The KJV and NKJV reads as if the joy Paul would experience was his remembering of Timothy's “genuine faith”. Most other translations connect the joy with seeing Timothy again. The word “genuine” means; “sincere, without hypocrisy”<sup>3</sup> Concerning verse 5, Warren Wiesbe writes:

“Paul was sure that Timothy's faith was genuine, and that this faith would see him through in spite of the troubles he was facing. Apparently Lois, Timothy's grandmother, was the first one in the family won to Christ; then his mother, Eunice, was converted. Timothy's father was a Greek (Acts 16:1), so Eunice had not practiced the orthodox Jewish faith. However, Timothy's mother and grandmother had seen to it that he was taught the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15); and this was great preparation for the hearing of the Gospel. When Paul came to Lystra on his first missionary journey, that was probably the occasion for Timothy's conversion. When Paul returned on his second journey, he enlisted Timothy into Christian service.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 240.

<sup>2</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 290.

<sup>3</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 240–241.

**C. Verses 6-7 – “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”**

1. **“...stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands...”** – Because Paul was certain that Timothy’s faith was genuine, he encourages him to **“stir up the gift of God”**. This **“gift”** was in Timothy through Paul laying his hands on him. We know that salvation or, the **“gift of God...eternal life”**(**Romans 6:23**), doesn’t occur by the laying on of hands, so this is referring to something else. **Verse 7** tells us what that gift is.
2. **“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”** – Notice in **verse 6**, Paul mentions the gift of God and then in **verse 7** he states what God has, and has not, given. Let’s look at what God has given first, which is the **“gift of God”** which Timothy was to **“stir up.”**
  - a. The **“spirit...of power”** – Jesus told His disciples that they would **“receive power”** when the Holy Spirit came upon them (**Acts 1:8**). See also **Romans 15:13-19**. The Bible teaches us that one way people receive the Baptism, or Filling of the Holy Spirit, is by the laying on of hands (**Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:1-6**). The most Biblically consistent interpretation of what Paul told Timothy to **“stir up”** is the Baptism, or Filling of the Holy Spirit. The words **“stir up”** mean; **“to rekindle a fire,’... to cause something to begin again—‘to reactivate, to cause to begin to be active again.’”**<sup>5</sup> Some ways of **“stirring up”** the Baptism in the Holy Spirit are praying in tongues (**I Corinthians 14:4; Jude 20**), praise and worship (**Ephesians 5:18-20**), and fellowshiping with other believers who are on fire for God (**Hebrews 10:19-25**). **NOTE:** The words **“stir up”** in this last reference mean; **“to sharpen”; “to spur on,” “to stimulate”**<sup>6</sup>

**“That is why I would remind you to stir up (rekindle the embers of, fan the flame of, and keep burning) the [gracious] gift of God, [the inner fire] that is in you by means of the laying on of my hands.” – II Timothy 1:6 – Amplified Bible**

- b. The **“spirit...of love”** – The Holy Spirit is also connected to the love of God. The Bible says that the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (**Romans 5:5**). Also, an attribute of the fruit of the Spirit is love (**Galatians 5:22**). Praying in the Holy Spirit is said to help us **“keep”** or **“guard”** the love of God (**Jude 20-21**). See also **Romans 15:30**.

**“But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith, by praying in the Holy Spirit, maintain yourselves in the love of God, while anticipating the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that brings eternal life.”**

**Jude 20-21 – New English Translation (NET)**

- c. **“...a sound mind.” – “sound judgment, act sensibly, moderation, self-discipline”**<sup>7</sup> – This soundness and self-discipline is given by the power of the Holy Spirit. (**Cf. I Corinthians 2:6-16; Ephesians 1:15-23**).

3. **“For God has NOT given us a spirit of fear...”** (Capitalization added). The word for **“fear”** here is defined as: **“a state of fear because of a lack of courage or moral strength—‘cowardice, timidity.’”**<sup>8</sup> Scholars believe that Timothy was struggling with a lack of courage due to the persecution that was occurring during this time period. This is a lesson for every believer, when opposition increases, the answer is not to back off in fear but to be stirred up and rekindle the fire in our hearts for the things of God.

**“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control.”**

**II Timothy 1:7 – Amplified Bible**

<sup>5</sup> Louw and Nida, 655.

<sup>6</sup> Heinrich Seesemann, “Παροξύνω, Παροξυσμός,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 857.

<sup>7</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Louw and Nida, 316.