



river west church

The Courage of Your Calling

2 Timothy 1:3-7

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Now, It's Your Turn To Step Up!

2 Timothy is Paul's last word. He writes from prison knowing he will be executed any day. His final thoughts aren't about himself, but about Timothy, a young man who became like his own son in the faith. Paul tells Timothy that his days are numbered. Paul is going to leave this world and go to Jesus his savior. Paul won't be here to do the work he has been doing for Christ, but still, the work of the Gospel must go on! So now it's Timothy's time to step up. What Paul has been to Timothy, Timothy must now be to others. This is the pattern of the Christian faith through the ages. It's the continuous "relay" of Gospel life, truth, and love.

This pattern isn't revealed in 2 Timothy just to teach us a history lesson about Paul and Timothy. The pattern is revealed because it's exactly what God intends for each of us. God is calling us to step up and take our place in this "relay" of gospel life, truth, and love. There is nothing more pressing or important than this.

More Like Timothy Than Paul?

Many of us are nervous about this. We don't think we have a lot to offer. We're timid and shy about our faith. In this way, we resemble the character of Timothy. This is why 2 Timothy can be so powerful in our lives.

The portrait of Timothy in the New Testament is not a picture of the dynamic leader that we expect. Timothy was timid, frail, reserved, and insecure. Paul knew all this and yet he didn't dump Timothy from his team. In fact, he kept promoting Timothy into roles with more and more responsibility. Paul believed in Timothy. Paul knew that God had called Timothy to do something significant for Christ and the Gospel. That's why he spent his final days on this earth encouraging Timothy to push past the limits of his own personality and to boldly serve Christ.

The truth is that most of us are far more like Timothy than we are like Paul. So listen to the words of 2 Timothy...these are words of truth for each of us!

God's Assignment(s) For Your Life

God had a particular "calling" for Timothy. This had been confirmed in Timothy's life, both through Paul and others. So now Paul reminds Timothy of his calling. Paul knows that courage is directly linked to our sense of calling. Courage actually increases in our lives whenever we recognize and step into the role or assignment that has been given to us. Courage is connected to "identity." It's not a matter of how you see your strengths or abilities; it's a matter of how you see your calling, your role – your assignment. If you are convinced that God has actually given you an assignment, your perspective will be transformed. If God has called you to a task, then you can be assured that God Himself will be with you in that task. It will not be dependent on your natural ability or resources to accomplish that task. You are not on your own. Timothy needed to be reminded of this.

What about you? Does God have an assignment for your life?

One of the great fallacies of the Christian life is that the only people who have a “calling” in life are those who are called to be pastors, missionaries, or other “full time” Christian workers. This is profoundly wrong thinking! The truth is that EVERY Christian has a calling (and usually more than one) in their life. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that each of us is a new creation in Christ and that God has specific things designed ahead of time for us to do as Christians. This is one of the most exciting truths in the Christian life. But how many of us live like this is true? Courage actually flows from believing and living like this is true.

The Holy Spirit and You

The Holy Spirit has been given to each of us as Christians. The Holy Spirit is the presence and power of God himself for life and service. When Paul wants to encourage Timothy he does two things. First he reminds him of his calling. Second, he reminds him of the Holy Spirit.

This word of encouragement is for us too. But what does it mean that the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives? What should we expect? What should we be looking for? Listening for?

As we study 2 Timothy this week and next, let's pray and ask God to teach us about the work of His Spirit in our lives. As we do, and as we recognize and answer God's calling in our lives, we are going to grow in the courage and passion of our calling as Christ followers.

I'm trusting God for a miracle in your life, in our church, and through our church for the world!