

The Epistles to Timothy

Part 5

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[00:00:00] 2 Timothy, Chapter 1, Verse 1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son, grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I thank God, of whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy. When I call to remembrance the unfading faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also. [00:01:06] Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, who hath saved us and called us with unholy faith, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to life through the gospel. For unto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles, for the which cause I also suffer these things. [00:02:11] Nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelt in us. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia will be turned away from me of whom have I jealous and homogenized. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he ought to refresh me, and was not ashamed of my shame. But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy on the Lord in that day, and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus thou knowest very well. [00:03:16] Now lastly, chapter 4.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

[00:04:09] We have been privileged to look at the first epistle to Timothy, and we have seen a little, I

think, of the truth of the house of God, some of its blessings, some of its privileges, some of its responsibilities.

Now not for this last address, we might say a few words about the second epistle. We have often been taught, and rightly so, that the first epistle takes account of the church when there was order, when there was blessing, and when there was no division or great failure attached to it. But in the intervening period between the writing of the first letter and the second letter, a great deal of declension had come in amongst the people of God. [00:05:06] And now the beloved apostle is not free to carry on his service as the Lord guided him, he's a prisoner in Rome. He's not a free agent, although he's under the hand of the Lord still.

And from Rome, a prisoner, he writes this letter to Timothy to encourage him to continue in the path of faith and obedience.

I don't think that we fully realize just how much the apostle was under pressure at this time.

You think of this devoted servant of the Lord, and for years he had gone about Asia preaching the word of God, what we call Asia Minor, preaching the word of the Lord. Souls were blessed, assemblies were formed, and everything seemed to be successful and thriving. [00:06:02] And then the apostle is arrested and he is sent to Rome, and there shortly he's to be on trial for his life.

But he's writing from Rome to encourage a young man who showed such great promise. And yet, apparently, he was on the point of being turned aside because of the circumstances of the day. And I think it's a great chapter to us all, that when things are going well, souls are being blessed, there's great interest in the meetings, great interest in the truth, and everything is flourishing, and it's so easy to go along in such conditions. But when the trials and difficulties and oppositions and problems come along, and it's not a popular thing to be a Christian, indeed involves a great deal of danger, then things aren't so easy. And it would seem from what Paul wrote to Timothy in this first chapter, the element of fear, perhaps of cowardice, had entered into Timothy's mind and spirit, and he wasn't so bright as he ought to have been. [00:07:08] And so this father in the Lord, because it's obvious this is what Paul was, he addresses Timothy as his beloved child or his beloved son, and he's seeking to encourage him to continue in spite of the difficulties that prevail. I believe, dear brethren, this is a word that we all require, because it is, because of some reason or another, so easy to feel, well, others can go on and carry on the work, it doesn't really matter if I go on, others will do it, and it won't be noticed if I fall out of the ranks. Now that's a fatalistic view, a defeated view, and we don't want to have that in our mind in any shape or form. We want to be encouraged to go on, and if Satan puts anything in our pathway, to overcome it, and to make sure we allow nothing to deviate us from the pathway of faith and obedience to the Lord. [00:08:06] In recent years we have seen many Christians giving up. Giving up because their well-ordered system came to pieces. And one is faced with this conviction that many of them felt, well, this is all that existed in Christianity, and when that failed, there was nothing else worth going on with. That's a terrible point of view. Now, it doesn't matter what happens, we are always Christians. We are responsible to the Lord, directly to Him, and suppose every other Christian gave up, we individually are responsible to go on, because we belong to the Lord, and our responsibility is to Him.

I feel it's a very, very bad indication, a very poor indication of one's devotedness, or of one's faithfulness, if we assume because conditions have gone bad, we must give up. And yet, apparently, this is what was happening with Timothy. [00:09:12] Now, I feel in this chapter there's a tremendous

amount of encouragement for us. And I think it's great to see the Apostle Paul taking account of what has happened. He says, look, all those in Asia have forsaken me. All that he had labored for, all that he involved himself in, seemed to have come to an end. They had all forsaken him. Here he was in prison, and yet he's so happy in his soul, and he's presenting positive truths for the encouragement of his child Timothy. And I think we can well take account of this, each one of us, tonight, to our own hearts and consciences, that this is what the Lord desires of us. And perhaps, very similar circumstances, because there's a great deal of opposition to the truth of God, there's a great deal of attraction in the world, and to draw us away, and unfortunately we know in our hearts and minds, there are many things that are contrary to the truth. [00:10:17] Because we have a nature that would follow all that's evil and corrupt, and all that's an abomination to God. Thank God we also have a nature that thrives and enjoys the precious things, thrives in the precious things of God, and enjoys them too. Now this is what we want to concentrate on. What is positive? What is encouraging? What is helpful in these last closing days? I suppose when you were going through the second book of Timothy, the second epistle to Timothy, you would notice, I'm sure you did, because it's often spoken about, that seven times the Apostle Paul draws attention to the things that are in Christ Jesus. [00:11:01] Seven times he mentions this in this short letter. Now this is as much as to say now, suppose everything goes by the board down here in this world, suppose everything fails that is in the hands of men in responsibility, everything is secure in the man who is at God's right hand. Now that is a very encouraging thing. Because you see, what Paul is presenting to Timothy is very closely related to what he had taught the Ephesians. That there was a man in glory, the saints were united to him, and all God's purpose is centered in him. So again and again he comes back to this point, the things that are in Christ Jesus. Three times in this chapter he mentions them. But before we speak about that, we want to show how Paul spoke to Timothy in an encouraging way. He mentions him as his dearly beloved son in verse 2, and then at the end of verse 5 he says, I am persuaded that there is in you also unfamed faith, just like your mother and your grandmother. [00:12:13] Now sometimes, unfortunately, we may be subjected to a form of ministry that tells us all about our faults. And that's not a very happy form of ministry, because I'm sure we all feel in some way or another that there are many faults attaching to us. But if someone tells us that there is something in us that is pleasing to God, then at least we're going on something positive. And from that standpoint, we can move on a little further. And there's nothing more demoralizing than to be told, well, you're a failure, you don't do this, you don't do the next thing, and all that kind of ministry, that's extremely demoralizing. But Paul, as was his wont, he sought to encourage the saints. Look at the epistle to the Corinthians. There were many, many things amongst them that were a positive disgrace. And yet again and again Paul says, my beloved brethren, my beloved brethren, ye are the temple of God, ye are the body of Christ, ye are this and ye are that, referring to what God had made them and to what God has done in them. [00:13:23] And I think this is the same. Paul's saying to Timothy, you're my dearly beloved son. There's a bond between us that's divine and it can't be broken. This is something positive. No matter how far you may go astray, no matter how much you may fail, you are a child in faith. And then he says, I'm persuaded that there's faith in you that's real, it's unfeigned, there's no hypocrisy attached to it, it's something that you have through faith in Christ and it's the same kind of faith that your grandmother and your mother had. [00:14:01] Now I feel these are very encouraging things for Paul to say to young Timothy and calculated to encourage him. Dear brethren, let's encourage each other and try and see the best in each other. There may be things that we have to draw attention to and let us do it in love and in faithfulness in such a way that recovery or adjustment is done for the Lord's glory. And I feel again I say this is what Paul is doing, seeking to encourage before he goes on to draw attention to things that Timothy should adjust. Now he says, another thing I ought to speak about is Paul's remembrance of Timothy in his prayers for Timothy. Think of this man in prison. He might very well have been thinking of his difficulties, his trials, his privations and saying to Timothy, Timothy, please

pray for me. [00:15:01] Please help me. I'm in difficulties. Terrible conditions. I'm living in here. And he might have been entitled to speak in this way. But instead of that, he's telling Timothy, Timothy, I'm praying for you night and day. He says, I'm remembering your prayers. I'm very, very much concerned about you, greatly desiring to see you. Now this is surely not part of a father, a real spiritual father who is concerned about his son. But he says in verse 6, wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. Those who have missed the Darvish translation will know that instead of stirring up, Mr. Darvish put rekindle, rekindle the gift of God that is in thee. And of course the figure is so easy to understand, like a fire. It's dying down. It's in danger of going out. There are only a few glowing embers. And if it's not stirred up and more fuel put upon it, it's going to die out. Die out completely and then be cold and lifeless. [00:16:15] Now says Paul to Timothy, you rekindle the gift that is in thee. And again I would refer to a footnote by Mr. Darvish in connection with this verse. And he says what Paul is designing of Timothy is energy in the darkening state of the assembly. All around there was gloom. There were those who had departed from the apostle. They weren't faithful. It doesn't suggest that they had stopped being Christians. But they had stopped following the apostle Paul. His ministry was too exacting. It demanded too much of them. And so they left Paul and they didn't follow him.

[00:17:01] Now says Paul to Timothy, in this darkness I want you to rekindle that gift that is in you and be faithful to the Lord. Well, we've all got to take account of our own hearts. Is that enthusiasm that once marked us dying down? Are there influences coming into our lives that would hinder us from being faithful to the Lord in the way that he has revealed it to us? Are we more concerned about other things than the will of the Lord? Then says Paul to us through the Spirit, now let's get back to that real zeal that we had at the beginning when everything was so fresh and we were keen to make progress in the things of the Lord and keen to do his will. Rekindle. Put more fuel on the fire. Make sure it's burning bright. And you see Paul is deeply concerned that this young man should regain his position in the testimony where Paul had so much confidence in him. Paul said many things about Timothy. He said, I have no man like minded. He cared with genuine concern how the Christians are getting on. [00:18:15] He said, he works the work of the Lord as I do. What a testimony from the beloved servant of God to this young man. He worked the works of the Lord as Paul did. He was marked with genuine concern for the people of God. Surely the mark of a real man of God. Indeed we now read in the first epistle that Paul spoke to Timothy and said, O man of God. Now that was a wonderful commendation. A man of God. The only person in the New Testament who is spoken of in this way. So Paul is saying now, Timothy, rekindle the gift of God that is in me. And if any of us feel like giving up or wavering or not so bright as we ought to be, well the word of God is coming to us this evening. Don't give up. Don't let your testimony die down. [00:19:09] Rekindle that fire for the Lord. That fire in your life that will be so much in testimony for him. Now he says to Timothy, God has not given us the spirit of fear. He has not given us the spirit of cowardice but of power and of love.

Here of a sound mind or wise discretion. Now I think here we have this inference that Timothy was somewhat intimidated by the opposition to the truth and he was, as it were, drawing back in some measure of fear and trembling.

Now this is Paul to Timothy. We are well equipped to meet this, Timothy. God has given us a spirit of power, of love and of a sound mind. Let us take the last thing first, a sound mind. It means that we are able to take account of things in a clear, understanding way. [00:20:13] Now if we look at the difficulties and we say they are too great. We can't overcome those difficulties. I need to give up. I can't possibly go on any longer. The difficulties are too great for me. It's tantamount to saying God is not able to deal with the difficulties. You see you are not thinking soberly. You are not thinking rightly.

You are only thinking of the difficulties and you are not remembering what God can do. I am sure it doesn't matter how great the difficulties are. If we get down before God and we tell him simply we want to do his will and we want to do it with humility and faithfulness, then help will come from the only place we can get help, through God our Father and through our Lord Jesus Christ. So he says, think properly. Wise discretion or a sound mind. And then love. Well if the spirit of love is in us and say love to whom? I believe it would be to God himself, to Christ, to the saints of God. Love of the truth as John says in his epistle. Love would be operative rather than this fear and this drawing back. [00:21:21] And then power? Well this is exactly what we require above all else when we think of difficulties of one kind or another. My dear brethren, we all know how easy it is to be theoretical. Comparatively easy for me to stand here behind this table this evening and tell you these things. And yet when the slightest difficulty comes along, that's another matter. We forget about the power. We forget about the love. We forget about the wise discretion. We forget about the Lord and the Holy Spirit. And everything seems so difficult and so impossible. And I believe this is a continual challenge with us every day of our Christian lives. To put into working effect the truth that we have been told, the truth that has been laid before us. [00:22:13] So Paul is saying to Timothy, now we have these things and I believe we have them in the spirit of God. The spirit that dwells in us is the source of power, of love and the ability to think clearly. So says Paul, we have the spirit. Timothy lets it be put into effect. Now he says in verse 8, Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor be his prisoner. Now Paul was the servant of the Lord in a very marked way. And Paul in prison was an object of reproach and shame as far as everyone else was concerned.

He wasn't there because he was a criminal, we see it so often. Hadn't done anything wrong, either against the state or against society. He wasn't a criminal in any shape or form. He was the servant of the Lord and that was the real reason why he was in prison. And anyone who was ashamed of Paul was ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. [00:23:19] And so this is what Paul is saying to Timothy, don't be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. I don't know how you feel, but quite often in prayer I have been asking the Lord to give me help and courage to do some form of service for the Lord. Let's say for instance we give some tracts away and one rises from one's knees imbued with desire to do this service for the Lord and out we go, a bucket full of tracts and we go along the road and we see a person coming towards us and we're ashamed. Fear takes over. If I give this tract to this person they'll be offended. Oh what good will it do anyway? [00:24:03] All sorts of things come into the mind and I believe this is a direct power of Satan to hinder us from doing this particular form of service. Now maybe you haven't felt that, thank God if you haven't. And if in your courage and strength you serve the Lord. I'm only expressing what I have felt on some occasions and one feels it's a direct power and interference by Satan into service for the Lord. But of course when we forget our fears, our forebodings and we say well this is what the Lord wants me to do, I'm going to give this tract away. And then you're amazed when the person receives it so happily, so glad to receive this, a message from the Lord. And then you say well that was well worth while. I don't know why I was afraid. And I know the scripture says that if a man's ways please the Lord he'll make even his enemies to be at peace with him. And so we have to be marred by the spirit of not being ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. If the Lord gives us something to do then seek his grace and power to fulfill it and do the thing that pleases him. [00:25:13] Now he says from verse 9 to verse 12 some of the most wonderful things that Paul could say to Timothy. I feel that here between his exhortations to Timothy to be true and faithful he includes this parenthesis from verse 9 to 12 which is full positive blessing.

And we can all take account of this. As much as to say now Timothy just sit down quietly and think of what the Lord has done for us and then see is it not an awful thing to be ashamed of the Lord, to be ashamed of his testimony. Is it not an awful thing to give up the service for the Lord that he has given

you to do. [00:26:01] So first of all he says who has saved us. Now it's a wonderful thing to be saved. It's a marvelous thing to be saved. You think of all the people in Moses who aren't saved and there are many thousands of them and yet God in his mercy has saved us.

Isn't it a marvelous thing. We are sure that we are on the right side of the fence. We belong to God. Our sins are gone. We are bound for glory and every blessing that God has for us belongs to us because we are saved. Who has saved us and I'm sure if we just sat quietly and took account of the things that God has done for us and meditated upon them it would produce blessing to our souls and would give us firm resolve not to give way and to be maintained here in the pathway of obedience. [00:27:03] Then he says he's called us with an holy calling. There are many unholy callings in this world, many of them. Their object is to overthrow the truth of God. That might not be their vowed object but in Satan's power it is the object. And men are blind of course and don't realize that they are the tools of Satan and they give themselves wholeheartedly to those objects little realizing that they are overthrowing the truth of God. But we have been called with a holy calling. He's called us out of this doomed world. He's set our vision upon another world. And in the meantime he has given us the power to walk here in this world for his pleasure. Just as Abraham was called out of out of the colonies and his eyes set upon the land of promise and God empowering him every step of the way so we too have been called. [00:28:03] Bishop Redmond, oh how wonderfully blessed we are that we ever heard the call of God. Who are we that we should be called by God? And we would say we don't deserve to be called by God, not one of us. And yet God called us by his grace. You remember Paul saying that? He said he was set aside from the day of his birth and then God called him by his grace. We believe that purpose belongs to eternity, calling belongs to time and the call of God comes to us as we hear the gospel. Oh how wonderful that God calls us through our Lord Jesus Christ with a holy calling.

Then he says, according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. God's purpose and his favor that was to rest upon us was all secured in the man who was to be for his pleasure Christ Jesus.

[00:29:11] And it's all secure in him now. Now we often say if you search the Gospels you never find this title Christ Jesus. If you search the Acts of the Apostles you don't find this title Christ Jesus. James the Apostle never mentions it. John the Apostle never mentions it. Peter only mentions it once. And when he does we could say it's a Paul-like expression. Paul uses it some 48 times. So it's clearly a characteristic of Paul's ministry. What does it mean? It means that Paul saw man in the glory of God at God's right hand and he saw all the truth of God centered in that man. Now if anyone is at the right hand of God in glory he's outside the realm of Satan's power or man's malice. He's there right in the presence of God representing the people of God and the depository if you like of every thought of God. [00:30:13] So everything's secure. What a wonderful man to know as our Savior. That all our blessings are in Christ Jesus. And so Paul said to Timothy the purpose and favor of God that is resting upon us now and that we enjoy is in Christ Jesus the man who is our Savior.

Well who wants to be ashamed of such a one who holds all our blessings for time and for eternity? Are we going to turn our backs upon this Lord and Savior and not represent him in this world? Are we going to allow anything to come into our lives that will hinder our testimony for him and for God? I believe this is a powerful lever that Paul is bringing forward to produce movement in the life of Timothy. [00:31:03] Then he says it was made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ who has abolished or annulled death. We can't say that death is abolished. That's not the true meaning of the word. All of us know that death is very busy around us. It's not yet abolished. The time

will come when it will be abolished. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. At the present time it's very busy. But its power has been annulled. You see if you're a Christian, if you're a believer in Christ, you have what Paul mentions in verse 1. The promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. The life that we have now is a life that is subject to decay and eventually will come to an end when our responsible life is over. This physical life that we have. But then, thank God, we have another life. A life which is in Christ Jesus. Eternal life. A life that has come to us as a result of his death on the cross and the descent of the Holy Spirit consequent upon Christ drawing on high. [00:32:11] How time and sense and Satan's power and man's malice mean nothing at all to this kind of life. It cannot affect it, cannot destroy it, cannot in any way interfere with it. Why? Because it's in Christ Jesus. It's beyond the reach of any opposing power. And every believer in Christ has this wonderful life. Oh dear brethren, how wonderful it is to have the possession of eternal life and to know too that the source and power of that life is Christ Jesus. Finding its origin no doubt in God himself but made available for us through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. And so Christ coming here and accomplishing the work of redemption on the cross has brought to light life and incorruptibility. Now you know that death, death itself is really the end of the physical life and also the beginning of corruption and decay attaching to the body.

[00:33:17] But this kind of death, this kind of life rather that Christ has brought to light, there's no incorruptibility attached to it. None whatsoever. How could there be? It's the very life of the Lord himself, the eternal life. And so this is beyond the reach of corruption. And the Lord has brought it to light and we thank God it's made known to us in the preaching. Now in verse 12 Paul gives his own personal testimony and it's a wonderful thing to listen to the testimony of a man like Paul. He says I'm suffering, I'm suffering because I'm appointed a preacher, an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. [00:34:01] That's why I'm suffering. The Lord appointed me to these things. I'm a chosen vessel and because of these things I'm suffering. Was he complaining? Was he grumbling? He says nevertheless I am not ashamed.

I wonder if you'd been able to say to Paul, Paul was it worth it? And Paul would have said yes it was worth it. Every moment of it. I'm sure Paul would say I'm glad I've been able to suffer for the Lord because I've entered somewhat into fellowship with his sufferings. Short of course of the atoning sufferings in the hours of darkness. Paul went through the experiences of his master in a very real way. You see the Lord Jesus as you very well know laid down his life for us, suffered for us, died for us. Paul when he got converted and was made to realise he was a chosen vessel says I don't count my life dear unto myself but I might finish my course and administer which I have received from the Lord Jesus. I think you'll notice that I left out two words there which are quoted in the authorised. [00:35:17] That I might finish my course with joy. I understand with joy should be left out because it didn't matter whether Paul finished his course with joy or with sorrow. The main thing was he was to finish his course and do what the Lord wanted him to do and do it in faithfulness and obedience and that he was prepared to do. He was not ashamed and he was ready to lay down his life in service for his master and in service for the people of God. So like his master. He goes on to say I know of hope whom I have believed. That's a very wonderful thing to say.

I say yes we know that Jesus Christ the son of God is our saviour but I think this is something deeper. Paul knew him. You remember when he wrote to the Philippians from the prison he said the consuming passion of his life was to forget all else and give up all else for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord on whose account I suffer these things. [00:36:23] He was prepared to give all else up if he might increase in the knowledge of his saviour and I think this is an intimate knowledge. Personal knowledge. A knowledge that he acquired through communion with his

Lord and Master as he sought to serve him. So when he says I know whom I have believed it's not just a what shall I say the technical knowledge that Jesus Christ the son of God was his saviour. It was more than that. It was an intimate knowledge that he acquired in the company of his Lord and saviour. And how much knowledge have we of that time. [00:37:01] I think it's one of the great challenges of the Christian life is how much personal communion do we have with the Lord Jesus. We know a lot about him. A great deal of information about him but personal communion where we speak to him and we know him is another matter and I'm sure we could all make greater progress in this form of knowledge. I know whom I have believed and I'm persuaded Paul had many persuasions and this is one of them. I'm persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. There might be a great deal of speculation as to what it was that Paul committed to him but there is one thing definitely clear that Paul considered that the Lord was able to keep what he had given to him. There was no possibility of breakdown, failure, no possibility of anything being lost. Paul could safely say now what I commit to the Lord will be held secure against that day. I don't think Paul was referring to his soul salvation. That he well knew was secure because of the death of Christ. [00:38:15] I feel there was something intimate here between Paul and his saviour that he had committed to the Lord and that he well knew that the Lord was able to hold it until that day. Then he goes on to say in the exhortations again, hold fast the form of some words which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Paul is encouraging this young man to go on in the face of these wonderful blessings or should I say because of those wonderful blessings and in the face of all the opposition that was against him.

[00:39:05] He is saying now hold fast the form of sound words or as we said last night have an outline of sound words. Keep it in your mind the truths that have been presented to you and don't give them up let them govern your life. Now he says in verse 14 that good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. Now the first thing we want to speak about is that every Christian has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Every Christian, every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is sealed with the Holy Spirit. God does not put his seal upon anyone who is unclean. But the moment a person accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as their saviour their sins are gone, all their uncleanness and guilt and folly and shame is dealt with because of the Lord's atoning death. [00:40:05] And then immediately they are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. If you want to look this up you find it mentioned in the first chapter of Ephesians. You'll find it also in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. You remember there was a great deal of concern about the giving of the Spirit to the Gentiles and I think the speaker says now look these Gentiles received the Holy Spirit in exactly the same way as we did because they believed. It was given to them when they believed the truth of the glad tidings. So we say this on the authority of the word of God that every believer in Christ is indwelt with the Holy Spirit and this is the power by which things are kept. I think we've all lived long enough as Christians to realise we don't keep anything in our own power. We are so powerless, so helpless. [00:41:05] But we have a power that enables us to keep going on for the Lord and to keep faithful to the things that he has committed to us. Now says Paul to Timothy this good thing. Now I'm not going to try and specify what the good thing is but this I know that every Christian is responsible to keep the truth of God in all its variety and fullness. And I'm thankful to say that they have the power to do this because they are indwelt by the Spirit. That's a very wonderful thing dear brethren. And if we desire to be faithful, thank God we have the power to be faithful. Now Timothy of course was an exceptional case. He was a unique vessel. He was one called of God. He was a gift, an outstanding gift. And so in this sense he was unique. And in the exercise of this gift he had the Holy Spirit to help him. But we are Christians. We are all believers and we are all responsible to God. [00:42:13] And God gives each one of us something to do. As we said already we can't do it in our own strength. Thank God we can do it in the strength and power that the Holy Spirit provides. Now Paul says to Timothy

there are those who have gone sadly astray and he speaks about them by jealous and homogenous. They have gone sadly astray and he mentions all those in Asia too. Then he breaks off exhorting Timothy.

As much as to say now Timothy all those in Asia have gone aside. These two well known persons have gone aside by jealous and homogenous. But there are those who are going on Timothy. And so he mentions Onesiphorus. And he says the Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus for he ought to refresh me and was not ashamed of my change. [00:43:11] I like to think of this man. I think he was a remarkable man. First thing is he was a refresher of Paul. He went and he visited Paul and by so doing he was able to impart some spiritual refreshment to him. It's a very encouraging thing when someone comes along and has some work to say or a prayer to offer or even just by their presence just to show that they're thinking about you and they're concerned about the difficulties you're in and they want to try and help. That's real refreshment. It's very fine too if you can sit down and write a letter to someone who needs a little bit of encouragement. I think it's better still if you can go along and just sit with the person and impart some spiritual encouragement and refreshment in that way. [00:44:01] Now I don't know where Onesiphorus came from but Paul says he came to Rome and he sought Paul out very diligently. It must have been a difficult thing to find Paul but eventually Onesiphorus found him. And what I often like to think about are things that Rome boasted of are all the marvellous acquisitions of the Lord in that day and how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus thou knowest very well. He was a diligent worker for the Lord.

He hadn't gone astray. He hadn't forsaken Paul. Instead of leaving him as those in Asia had done he sought him out very diligently. He says I want to keep close to this man. I want to encourage him. I want to be a help to him and he certainly was. Paul says he had done a great deal of service at Ephesus. Now lastly in chapter 4 I just want to draw attention to two things. In verse 5 Paul says to Timothy watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

[00:45:25] Just a word about this do the work of an evangelist. Many amongst the saints are feeling that this is a form of gift that is sadly lacking amongst the saints of God. How do we cure this?

You can't make a gift. Nobody has any power to do this kind of thing. What we can do is we can pray that God will raise up evangelists who will be empowered by God to reach the people, to reach their consciences and to bring about salvation in the hearts of many people. [00:46:07] Now this is something we can do. We can pray that God will raise up evangelists and we need them. Now Timothy is exhorted to do the work of an evangelist. He didn't say that Timothy was an evangelist but he was to do the work of an evangelist. So in the absence of evangelists who are known and recognized there is work to do and that is to have a desire to reach the unconverted. It doesn't mean that you conduct a large campaign. We are not disparaging that kind of thing but those who want to do it go on with it. But the work of an evangelist can go on in all our lives all the time whether we are brothers or sisters we can have a desire to reach the unconverted and we can do this by giving away of tracts, by personal conversation or as we did the other evening by preaching in the open air. [00:47:03] This is the work of an evangelist. Now I think there is a great need as I have said and many others feel the same of obvious gifts given to brothers to be evangelists to reach the unconverted. Now there is no reason why the Lord should raise up others again and if the exercise is there and prayer is given to the Lord we might see before the Lord comes brothers empowered to do this kind of service.

Dear brethren make it a special plea in your private and collective prayers that the Lord will raise up those who are competent witnesses in his hands to meet the unconverted.

[00:48:01] Now he says and I want to draw your attention to this before I close at the end of verse 5 make full proof of thy ministry. I think Mr. Darby uses the expression fill up, fill up. Now I want you to note this because in verse 6 I am now ready to be offered, Mr. Darby renders this, I am ready to be poured out. Now you cannot possibly miss the influence. Paul is saying I am ready to be poured out. I know that my life of ministry and service for the Lord is coming to a close. I am poured out just like this tumbler full and slowly we can pour it out until the last drop is gone. Now that was like Paul's life. He was full, the Lord had empowered him, he had served the Lord all his life since he was converted and now he was finished. He had come to the end of his life. He had fought the good fight, he had run the course, he had been faithful. Now he says to Timothy you fill up because you can't pour out unless you are filled up. [00:49:09] Now this is what he is saying to Timothy, you are a young man, you get filled up. Now I believe the way to get filled up is to be in the presence of the Lord, to seek constantly daily his will, to be guided by the word of God and to be free from all the hindering elements. Filled up with all that belongs to the Lord and that means the exclusion of all that is contrary to the Lord. There is no mixture. It is not a mixture of the world of flesh and sin with divine things. It is the exclusion of those things and filled up with the things that belong to the Lord. And when you are filled up with those things then you can start pouring out. Thank God this kind of process has gone on since Pentecost. The brothers of a few generations ago, they are gone, they are home with the Lord. There are those today who are carrying on. If the Lord doesn't come, you young brothers and sisters upon your shoulders will rest the maintenance of the testimony as we know it today in simplicity in gathering to the Lord. [00:50:15] You will be responsible to maintain it. So you have to start filling up and you can't start early enough. The younger you are the better. And keep on filling up and when it comes your turn in responsibility you will be able to pour out and be a blessing to the younger ones who may come along if the Lord should come for us. So here is something that the Word of God is saying to you, to me, to us all that we have a part to play in the maintenance of this testimony that began nearly two thousand years ago and is coming to an end shortly. What a happy thing it would be if the Lord came and we were all pouring out. Pouring out something of divine blessing that had already been poured into our souls in the power of the Holy Spirit. May it be so. God bless you. [00:51:05] End