

Paul's testimony about Timothy

Part 1

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[00:00:01] I'd like to read from Paul's letter to Timothy, his second letter.

Firstly from chapter 1.

I'd like to read the chapter in its entirety.

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.

[00:01:01] I thank God, 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 unfeigned faith that is in Thee, which dwelt first in Thy grandmother Lois and Thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in Thee also. 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 and of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. [00:02:02] Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, 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 light through the gospel. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the witch cause I also suffer these things. 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, and faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, that good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. [00:03:05] This thou knowest that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me, of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. 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 of the Lord in that day, and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus thou knowest very well. And then a few verses from two of the other chapters. First of all, chapter 2, verse 3.

Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. [00:04:11] And then in chapter 4.

Verse 5. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry, for I am now ready to be offered.

The time of my departure is at hand. 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.

[00:05:06] I'd like to speak this evening in exhortation firstly to myself, then to you I'm sure.

We all feel, having studied the verses we've been looking at in Ephesians, the challenge to work these things out in our lives. Individually, yes, but also as companies of God's people.

And we may feel perhaps that the times in which we live are so difficult that it really is something that's beyond us to be able to do. We've already confessed several times in our Bible readings that when we look at ourselves, when we look at the Christian profession in general, it's falling short of what was there at the very beginning. [00:06:11] We've also heard that the word of God holds out no promise of a general revival. But despite this, God is looking for faithfulness in each person, each one of his people, and collectively and corporately in their gatherings.

And this will please the Lord. And because we live in a difficult day, the possibility of living like this isn't beyond us.

We've read about the power of the Holy Spirit, and we've also seen that Paul addresses these exhortations to Timothy, who also lived in a difficult day. I think most of us are aware that in one Timothy, in the first letter to Timothy, Paul sets out things as they should be. In fact, we had this, didn't we, in one of our Bible readings. [00:07:10] He sets things out as they should be. But in two Timothy, the second letter, he speaks about things as they were becoming. And Timothy, who naturally was timid, was contemplating living out the things that he had been taught by the Apostle Paul, which he had taught himself, no doubt, without the Apostle Paul being there. And even there, for as we saw in the closing chapter of this letter, Paul was about to be offered up. But the exhortations still come to him. Paul doesn't lessen the exhortation. In fact, he encourages, he challenges Timothy, and through Timothy, ourselves too. I'm sure we're all aware, there's a little kind of picture, that as you look through these windows in each of these buildings, you see that large church down in the middle of Canterbury.

[00:08:16] What many of you may not know is that a man was murdered in that building hundreds of years ago. One of the Archbishops, so-called, Thomas of Becket.

He was a man who, in the 12th century, had the privilege of being brought up in a very rich and well-

to-do family. He was a creature of the king. He was a favorite of the king.

And he was a very eminent person in the courts and in the life of those days. But then, all of a sudden, he was made Archbishop of Canterbury by the king, or by the Pope, together. I don't know exactly the details of how it happened. [00:09:10] But at that point, he completely changed his life. From pleasure-seeking, he lived his life instead for the church. I don't know what his soul state was with God. But because of that change, suddenly, he was brought into sharp conflict with the king, Henry II. So much so, that the king got increasingly angered by the things that this man was saying.

There came a time when the king, so angry, said in the presence of his knights, who will rid me of this turbulent priest? And four of those knights took his words to mean that he wanted Thomas of Becket dispatched. [00:10:03] And that's what they went and did. They rode through the night to that cathedral and they murdered him inside. Now, that's an incident from British history, or English history. I'm not quite sure how to put it. But it's something that many children and the older ones will know about from studying history. But it does show us something of what can happen when we make a stand.

As I say, I don't exactly know where he stood with God. But he certainly was against the king trying to dominate the church in those days. And if we just think of that as a little picture, a very pale picture maybe, we can see that if we want to stand for the truth of God, in our day, it may cost us.

[00:11:01] It may cost us our lives. It will certainly mean that our lives won't be as comfortable as they would be if we didn't make that kind of stand. And this was the message that Paul wanted to get over to Timothy. That he was going to find there would be hardness in his life. And Timothy, sensing this, feeling very much the fact that Paul, his great mentor, was now in prison.

Sensing that he was soon to depart from this scene, was troubled, was anxious. There was a risk that he was becoming ashamed. And so, Paul writes this lovely letter to him. Not hiding from him the difficulties. You can read about them, especially in chapter 3, which we didn't read from. But nevertheless, encouraging him. And I feel as I read those words, how I need that encouragement. Perhaps you do too. [00:12:09] In the light of the things that we've read over these past three days. These precious things that we've read about. The great privilege we have, as we heard it, spoken about, especially towards the end of our last Bible reading. Which surely make us realize that this is what really counts. For time and for eternity.

The wonderful truths connected with the assembly, the church.

We are privileged, we are graced to be members of the body of Christ.

We are members of one another and we are wonderfully united to him as our head in heaven.

[00:13:02] And we are here to be for him in this world, to set him forth in this world. Lots of what is written and said today in Christian circles is all to do with the individual. And of course, as we've read, Ephesians deals with the individual too. What God has done in bringing us to himself and enabling us to live for his glory is a truly wonderful thing. But to think also that we, with every other believer, form the body of Christ on earth. And one day when we go to heaven, we shall be complete with all the other Christians who have lived in this world, but who have now passed away. And we shall be with the Lord Jesus at his side throughout the kingdom and into eternity.

[00:14:03] As that company which has a special place in his heart.

The church for which he gave himself, the son of God gave himself. He loved, gave himself upon the cross of Calvary. And it's a challenge I think to us, how much this really means to us. Are we going to work it out in our lives now? Are we going to put the things that we've been speaking about into practice? I'm sure you're like me, you review your life. In fact, I was listening to a brother, one of Andrew's MP3 discs, who was saying. And for me, he's a brother still with us, who ministers to us, though he's not been able to do so much in recent years. A brother that I've always looked up to, and yet he could say in the address that I heard, that as he looked back over his life, he had seen a decline. [00:15:08] A decline in his devotion to the Lord.

And I'm sure those of us who are a bit older detect that there is always a tendency in us to slip away, to lower the standards. And yet, we're living right at the tip of the end of this dispensation.

The Lord Jesus is about to come. Is it not a great privilege for us? We who feel ourselves to be the very tail end of the dispensation. We who feel ourselves to be so failing and weak, as we also said in the Bible readings. Is it not a privilege for us that we may be here for the Lord Jesus when he comes? To take his church, to be with himself. To be with himself. [00:16:10] Speaking about Paul and Timothy.

It was beautiful, wasn't it, to see this expression in the last verse we studied. The joints of supply.

The point where member meets member and ministers to member.

And surely there's no better example of a joint than the one that existed between Paul and Timothy.

And this is a great practical point for us all, as I hope we will see as we go through these verses and some other verses too.

How that Timothy received from Paul, yet also Paul received from Timothy.

[00:17:05] And as a result of that mutual fellowship relationship, they were able to be a blessing to others.

So there is that self building up of the body in love.

Just to put this in a bit of context, it would be good just to refer to some verses in which Paul speaks about Timothy. 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 17.

For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son or child.

[00:18:09] And faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways, which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

When we think of the state of things in Corinth, you might have thought, well, Paul, don't send Timothy there. He's only young and he's a bit timid. But Paul could send Timothy to Corinth because he had this confidence in him, this affection for him, a loved child.

He had the same interests, the same nature as Paul.

[00:19:02] He would deal with the situation there for Paul in a way that Paul could not, because had he been there, he would have had to take very firm action. So he sends Timothy instead.

This truly is the grace and patience, long suffering of the apostle. But he didn't just leave them where they were. He could send his right hand man, knowing that he would help them in putting matters right.

He would be able to bring unto them the remembrance of Paul's ways.

And we heard, didn't we, the importance of not just saying things, but doing things. Our actions should be what our words are.

[00:20:05] Lord Jesus could say to the Jews, didn't he, that he was altogether what he said unto them. He is the perfect example. But we see a reflection of him in Paul and we see a reflection of him in Timothy too. Timothy's life would convict the Corinthians of what he was saying to them.

Another verse, or verses, in Philippians chapter 2 verse 19.

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy as shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state. [00:21:04] For I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. For ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. I sometimes wonder, when I read verses like this, how Timothy felt. When he got a letter, perhaps, when he wasn't with the Apostle Paul. He got a letter from the Apostle Paul, or perhaps the Apostle Paul said to him when he was with him, now Timothy, I've got something for you to do. Maybe we would have said, not another trip to another trouble spot. But Paul knew Timothy had the same heart as he did for the people of God.

[00:22:01] That's what he says in these verses. For I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state.

We were thinking, weren't we, earlier on in the week, that firstly, our love must and should be for the Lord Jesus, who loved us and gave himself for us. Each one of us individually can say, the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. But we can say, the Son of God who loved us, gave himself for us. But how wonderful it is to have a love for the people of God, to have a love for the people that God loves, that the Lord Jesus loves. Sometimes when we find, perhaps, them difficult, not to let that get in the way of us ministering to them.

That was like, that was what the Apostle Paul was like. [00:23:03] That was what Timothy was like. We saw, didn't we, in the beginning of chapter 4, the character that we are meant to have.

Let's remind ourselves of that in Ephesians chapter 4.

A little bit of revision while we're still here. Verse 2, with all loneliness and meekness, with long-suffering for bearing one another in love.

That's what Paul taught and that's what Timothy practiced, as well as the Apostle Paul. So that Paul

could write those beautiful words, for I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state. [00:24:02] Who had a desire for the blessing of these believers.

In Philippians, remember, although we often feel when we read the letter to the Philippians, very encouraged by it. Not so much a teaching letter as one that's to do with the experience of Christians. But one of the problems that the Philippians had was that they weren't always united. There were elements of division among them. And we all know, or many of us know, that this is often the most difficult matter to deal with. When saints are divided. And to go into that situation and to try to help, we have to have that love of the Lord for his own.

What is the object?

Yes, it's their blessing that they might be reunited if they're separated, [00:25:02] but it's also that God might be glorified. And incidentally, Timothy's name means to honour God.

To honour God.

And it's for God's honour that we practice these truths that we've been reading about in our localities.

As we heard, that is the place where we have to start. We can think of problems which are occurring hundreds or even thousands of miles away. But our first responsibility is to promote things of which we've been reading in our own locality. Not, of course, to be ignorant or indifferent to problems elsewhere. We can bring them, when we know about them, to the Lord in prayer, and we should do. Our first responsibility is where we are.

[00:26:03] And then, finally, in 1 Thessalonians 3, verse 2.

Incidentally, you'll know if you have an opportunity to look back at those previous verses from Philippians, that the verse I didn't go on to read explains how much a cost it was for Paul to let Timothy go to the Philippians. He valued the company of his brother.

And here in 1 Thessalonians 3, verse 2, he was going to send Timotheus, our brother, a minister of God, and our fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and to comfort you concerning your faith. [00:27:06] That's something Paul did when he had to leave Thessalonica because of the persecution of the Jews.

And we know from elsewhere, we know from here, that Paul was so concerned about the state of the Thessalonians, he had only been able to be with them barely three weeks, three weekends at any rate, maybe two weeks, maybe a little more, that he couldn't be happy where he was.

He had to find out how they were getting on. Who does he send to comfort them during this time of persecution? He sends Timothy to them to sustain and to help them. This was the man that Paul had at his disposal.

And I suppose we could say, as those who have been studying the person, the character, and the ministry of the Apostle Paul, [00:28:07] are we, like Timothy, are we going to be able to be used by the Lord in whatever way possible, brother and sister alike, to promote the things that will be for God's glory and for the blessing of his people. And let's not forget, those two things are completely

intertwined. If you want the blessing of God's people, it will glorify God, and if you glorify God, it will be for the blessing of God's people. Now, in the verses we read from the second letter, we won't be able to touch on all of them, but the thing that really strikes me first is verse four.

[00:29:03] Greatly desiring to see thee, be mindful of thy smiling face, that I may be filled with joy.

That's not what he writes. As you well know, he writes, be mindful of thy tears. It reminds me of what Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 28, when he lists the many experiences which he had encountered in his life. He can say, besides those things, and some of them were things that we can hardly imagine going through, but this seems to be something that troubled him more than any of those things. Besides those things that are without that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

[00:30:04] And Paul valued in Timothy tears, real heartfelt concern for the people of God.

I'm sure Timothy wasn't always crying, wasn't always weeping. There's a time always for joy in the fellowship of saints. But there are times when we are cast down and we're cast upon the Lord as a result. And there should be that genuine care and desire for blessing elsewhere. And Timothy was a man who manifested that, a brother who manifested that. He wasn't indifferent, he wasn't careless about the welfare of the people of God. He wanted them to not only know the love of God, but work it out in their lives. And there were tears in Timothy's life.

[00:31:03] Timothy's life. And Paul valued those tears. It was part of his natural caring that we read about in Philippians.

But he expressed it.

Now we are all a bit different. Some of us are more inclined to tears than others. We're not talking here about tears of sentimentality, which can often cloud situations. We're talking about genuine tears of concern and love and care. Timothy had those in his life.

And Paul, as he thought about Timothy, he really wanted Timothy with him.

Of course, as we read these verses, we see a remarkable parallel between them and what we read in Ephesians.

In verse 9, we read, [00:32:04] Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling. And when we were reading in Ephesians chapter 4, we read those words. I therefore the prisoner of the law beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation or the calling wherewith ye have called. That was to an assembly, this is to an individual. And in both cases, the Apostle Paul writes from prison. As we heard the first night we were together, the address that Paul gave to the elders from Ephesus was the last address he gave to believers as a free man.

As far as we can see in scripture. And now he's in prison, unable to get about as he used to be able to get about.

[00:33:09] Just as he wants to see the Ephesians working out the truth where they were in the liberty that they had. He wants to see Timothy doing the same in his individual life. Such is the care of the

Apostle Paul. Very often our desire for others is characterized by the problems that we're going through.

But in Paul we see a selflessness. He was in prison. No doubt he had accepted it from the Lord that that was the will of the Lord for him now. Without that, I'm sure he wouldn't have been able to write such wonderful epistles as Ephesians and to Timothy. He was no longer able to get about, no longer to be the active man. And we've been thinking of those who are traveling many thousands of miles. [00:34:03] But when we think of the Apostle Paul, he may not have traveled the same number of miles, but he had a much more difficult proposition when it came to getting around because of the limitations of transport in those days. And it takes us back, doesn't it? To those verses in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, which explain the many difficulties and problems he went through in order to get around to the people of God. But now he wasn't able to do so. And he would encourage Timothy to do this instead. And then in verse 5, When I call to remembrance the unfamed faith that is in thee, then which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded in thee also. We had, a couple of nights ago, a very clear statement of the fact that these things are for brothers and sisters.

[00:35:09] For the members of the body of Christ. They're all to be worked out. Of course, the way in which we work them out differs from brother to sister. As we know from the teaching of Paul's letters himself.

But they're all to be worked out in that appropriate way by all the members of the body.

And here we see that Timothy, who was so important to the Apostle Paul, had had his spiritual constitution, his ability to do these things, formed firstly by two sisters, his grandmother and his mother.

And I think that shows to us the great importance of the work of sisters in bringing up our children.

[00:36:09] In the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. Oh yes, husbands, fathers have a very important part to play, of course.

But Timothy had seen the life of Lois and Eunice, had heard their words from their knees.

And it had made a great impact on him because he was already a disciple. When Paul first came across him in Derby and saw in him that godly potential that would enable him to be the one who would be his beloved child, his companion, his fellow labourer, his worker. [00:37:02] I was at a funeral recently and the sister whose body we laid to rest, the brother could say of her that she had been a keeper of her house.

And as a result of that, a small gathering of God's people had grown out of what she and her husband had done in that home. She had perhaps, like a Priscilla, been a wonderful helper of her husband, as Priscilla had been of Aquila.

And he was able to say that the kinds of things that she had given herself to, the things that this world despises, bringing up of children, [00:38:02] why a mother is despised in our country today, regarded as too unimportant to be done by the parent, leave it to someone who gets paid to do it.

Now, everyone's circumstances are different. This is not to say, of course, that sisters shouldn't be occupied in other things. But we see in this that one thing is paramount when we have children, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Timothy was such a one.

And what a result came about because of the devotion of Lois and Eunice.

So let's take heart and encouragement from that, [00:39:03] that we don't follow the standards of this world, the way we bring up our children.

This isn't, of course, the only role that sisters have to play by any means. But it's a very important part of the service they do for the Lord when they have children. Then we come to the heart of this chapter.

Timothy was anxious.

He was perhaps at risk of being ashamed of the reasons we've given earlier. And the Apostle, he doesn't dispense with Timothy.

He doesn't say to him, [00:40:01] Timothy, come back to me when you've got yourself sorted out. In this we see that Paul was a wonderful exemplar of shepherd care.

And we were thinking, weren't we, how can you be a shepherd? In a general sense, as a gift to the church as a whole.

And one of our brothers suggested the telephone. Well, of course, that wasn't available to the Apostle Paul, but he could write a letter to Timothy and encourage him. Even though he was in prison, he could be a shepherd to Timothy. I'm not saying that Timothy had gone astray, but I think we see that Timothy might have become so discouraged that he no longer fulfilled his ministry. [00:41:01] And in these verses, Paul says a number of things.

He says, I think there are four exhortations in the chapter. To stir up, to be not ashamed, to hold fast and to keep.

As I said, he was in prison, unable to get around to the same extent as he had been. And yet, because he was faithful, even in prison. He was still in his own way carrying out what he had been appointed to, verse 11. A preacher, an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles. Paul was still in his own way in the firing line. And he encourages Timothy to get back in the firing line too. And for us, I think it's true to say that we've let circumstances get in the way of continuing to serve the Lord. [00:42:10] We've often allowed the things of life, our responsibilities, our jobs, to get in the way of that.

But my special remarks here are for the younger brethren with us.

When you are young, when you have got energy, when you've got a sharp mind.

When you're thinking about what you might do in your life. Think about what God's will is for you first.

The world will encourage you to choose that career or this career. And the great motivation will be, in most cases, how much money you can earn. Perhaps there will be other things, like this is the kind of

job that's really an interesting job.

[00:43:08] Well that's good to do a thing that interests you. But these things, however important in their own way, are only for this life. Whereas the things that we've been talking about over these last few days go on into eternity. So you have an opportunity, perhaps more than those of us who are older, who've perhaps allowed ourselves to be a bit diverted. And are now at a stage in life where it's not easy sometimes to get out of that. You have an opportunity to set your course in such a way that you will be living it for the things that really matter. The things that go on into eternity. The things which bring glory to God and eternal blessing to others. Aren't those the things that really count? [00:44:01] Haven't we seen that what we've been talking about doesn't just stop with this life. It goes on into eternity.

And the most, if I may be excused saying this, the most exalted part of eternity. To be with the Lord Jesus. To be by his side when he reigns over this world. And to be in heaven with him for eternity in the Father's house. These are the things that really count. And Paul puts in mind of the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Time, not so much when the Lord Jesus comes for his own, although that's a wonderful incentive for us, isn't it? But when the Lord Jesus comes in his glory and his saints come with him.

[00:45:05] Won't it be grand to be with the Lord Jesus in that day?

Grand to be by his side.

Especially if we have lived for him in the time of his rejection here in this world.

So, Paul says, For the which cause I suffer these things in verse 12, nevertheless I am not ashamed. For I know whom I have believed.

And this is I know him. I know him. And part of the problem I think for me and perhaps for some of you is that we don't know the Lord Jesus well enough. And that's often why our lives are blunted and blurred in their effectiveness for the Lord and his glory. [00:46:01] But Paul knew the Lord intimately. And I think our brother last night touched a bit about this. It's a question of actually knowing the Lord day by day.

How far should I fall of this? If we know him in that intimate way, if we know him as the one we love, really he's alive in heaven and we can know him, we can be related to him, we can be in communion with him day by day. Then if we're like that, we'll be able to live for him. We'll be like Timothy. We'll be ones who will have his desires, his will as what is really direct in what we do day by day.

Just as Timothy knew what the apostle would want him to do because he had that direct connection with the apostle's Lord, so we, if we're like that, will know how to live for the Lord and how to witness to others [00:47:04] and how to bring what other believers need in the way of encouragement and help and building up. We'll be able to bring that to them. But if we don't know the Lord, and it's often been said, and it's often been said, and I have to confess that this has been my situation sometimes, more than it should have been. If we don't talk to the Lord, how would our closest friend feel if we never talked to them? How much would they think of our friendship if we never talked to them, if we never listened to them? Yet sometimes our prayer and our Bible reading is so sparse. Sometimes my

prayer, my Bible reading is so sparse. Because of that, I'm not able to live for the Lord in the vibrant way that the apostle Paul did and Timothy did. Let's be encouraged to give ourselves to the things of the Lord. [00:48:05] And so he says, I know whom I have believed.

He had that confidence in the one. It wasn't just a question of the fact that he had believed on him for his salvation, but he knew him in an intimate way. And because of that, he was persuaded that he was able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. He had committed everything to the Lord. Everything about his life was in the Lord's hands. He was in the Lord's hands. And he could have absolute confidence that when the day came to depart from this world, he would be with the Lord. Perhaps a little word here to any children. Perhaps somebody here with a friend who's not yet trusted the Lord Jesus.

[00:49:07] Can you say with the apostle Paul, I know whom I have believed. Have you believed on the Son of God?

Can you say that he is going to keep that which you've committed unto him?

If you haven't trusted him, you haven't committed your life to him. Everything about you is still in the balance.

And if it remains that way, you'll go into a lost eternity. The Bible makes no bones about it. Be without Christ.

When we pass out of his life, it's to go into a lost eternity. We would appeal to you if you haven't trusted the Lord Jesus as your saviour. That you believe on him tonight. [00:50:01] The apostle Paul himself who wrote these words said to a man who cried out, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? He said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Thou shalt be saved.

But what the apostle Paul also says to Timothy here is, Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me. If we, like the apostle Paul, have committed everything to the Lord, our eternal salvation, our lives, everything, and that's what we should do as believers. It shouldn't just be, I'm going to trust the Lord for my salvation, so I know I'm getting to heaven. The rest are thought out as time goes by. It should never be like that with us as believers. We should commit everything to the Lord. [00:51:01] But if we've committed everything to the Lord, we should remember that there are things that he's committed to us. One thing that the apostle Paul says to Timothy is this, Hold fast the form of sound words. What does he mean? He means those things which he had taught Timothy, which we have read in Ephesians. Those things are a form, they're the sound words.

We're to get them into our heart and into our minds. So that we've got the form of sound words, we know what we believe, and we can put it into practice in our lives. In faith and love. We saw the importance of love earlier on today. Love as well as faith, which is in Christ Jesus. That's a good thing, the apostle Paul, and this is the deposit. [00:52:04] I think it should be translated deposit. What is the deposit? Well, it's the truth that Paul received from the Lord that we've been reading about. It's explained by the sound words, but the actual truth, those sound words set out. That's a deposit. And I think in the original language, it doesn't say unto thee. It just says entrusted. So we can say that it's something that's not just entrusted to Timothy, it's entrusted to all of us. We've all got a responsibility to keep it. We've committed everything about our soul's salvation and everything about our lives to the Lord. And shouldn't we keep what he's entrusted to us? That's the challenge of these words to

Timothy. But I think it's good to use the authorized rendering [00:53:02] just for the purposes of this meeting and to try and make this personal to each of us. These words which we've heard in our Bible readings, let's make them our personal responsibility to work out where we are in our lives. It's very easy. I've heard it said, perhaps I've even said it. I think probably I have. Oh, the meetings, they're the brethren. If it wasn't for them doing this, it would have been a lot better. But it's not like that. We are those who have had the privilege of understanding the word of God. That shows us that we are each members one of another. We can never say it's somebody else's responsibility. We're all responsible together.

Let's work that out together in our lives. [00:54:01] And then Paul gives a beautiful illustration. So, Vanessa for us. And you might say, well, now Paul's going to bring before us Titus. Something that Titus has done. In serving him, visiting another assembly. That will really show Timothy what he should be like. But he doesn't. He brings before him a man who was prepared to just simply visit the apostle Paul and refresh the apostle Paul when he was in prison. When the apostle Paul was a marked man, and anybody who went near him was under suspicion. And Vanessa for us did that. And Paul says, just think of Vanessa for us. And you know, Vanessa for us paid the price for what he did. We were thinking about the archbishop in 1170 earlier on. Here's a wonderful example of a man who died. [00:55:04] Because I believe that's what these verses show us. He effectively gave his life for visiting the apostle Paul in prison.

And this is the motivation that is put before Timothy.

Just the simple act of loving kindness towards the apostle on the part of Vanessa for us is an example to us of how we should be in our gatherings and towards one another individually. Now the time's gone on, so I'm not going to detain you any longer except to make a reference to the other two scriptures very briefly. Paul calls the deposit, the teaching that we've received, a good deposit. If you read the New Translation, you'll see it's a good deposit that's been entrusted to us. [00:56:06] Good! It could even be said beautiful, lovely, wonderful, precious, good.

Everything that comes from God is good, of course. And we're to treasure it because it's a good deposit.

We're to work it out in our lives. We're to commit it to others. If you look at the beginning of the next chapter, it was to be committed to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

We're the others also, aren't we? We're the others also. But let there be some faithfulness in our lives. And one of the ways in which we can be faithful is to follow out what Paul writes in verse 3. Therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier. [00:57:03] You don't often think of beautiful soldiers, do you? But this is the encouragement to Timothy because he was going to have to work out these truths on enemy territory. And this world is enemy territory. So in order to work out these truths, we have to have the character of a soldier. And Paul says, no man that wreath entangleth himself with the affairs of this life. Why? Because he wants to please him who has chosen him to be a soldier. Even the Christ pleased not himself. We should seek to please the Lord Jesus in our lives by being good soldiers.

And then finally in our last chapter, in the last chapter, we read that the apostle could say in verse 7, not I have fought a good fight.

[00:58:04] That's what it says in the authorised version. I don't think that's right, but I'm not a great expert on the languages. I think it's the good fight. There's the good fight for all of us to fight. According to how the Lord directs us in our lives. Paul could say that he had fought the good fight or the good combat. And he had finished his course. We had a reference earlier on to Jacob. Jacob started his life going a bit wonky. But at the end, he finished resting on his staff as we heard. Worshipping God. He made a good end. Some of us make a good beginning. We're good in parts like the curate's egg. May we make a good end too in our lives.

Pray the Lord that he will come before any of us here pass off this scene. [00:59:04] That's what we're looking for. To see the Lord Jesus come in the air. To go to be with him. That's what we want, isn't it? Even so, come Lord Jesus. We had it at the end of our word. Last night.

But may it be that when he comes. We shall be living for his glory. And for the blessing of his people. That the things we've read about. And they've been difficult sometimes to understand. But surely we should go back and research them. Get the Lord's mind. And then put them into practice in our lives for his glory.