Motivating a Spiritual Son
2 Timothy 1:1-5
55-1

As you know, the commitment of the ministry of Grace Community Church is a commitment to expository preaching and teaching of God's Word. We are committed week in and week out to explain the meaning of the Scriptures. We desire to preach the Word as it says in 2 Timothy 4:2. And so over the years we have gone through book after book after book in God's holy Scripture and this morning we come to another one in our series, that the epistle of 2 Timothy. So, if you will, open your Bible to 2 Timothy chapter 1 and we'll begin by looking at the first five verses as Paul introduces this wonderful letter to his beloved son in the faith, Timothy.

Reading the text, "Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus, to Timothy my beloved son; grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God whom I serve with a clear conscience, the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you even as I recall your tears so that I may be filled with joy; for I am mindful of the sincere faith within you which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and I am sure that it is in you as well."

Some years ago I had the wonderful opportunity of visiting the magnificent and rather stunning city of Rome and spending several days wandering about in that great place, seeing all that history has to say and to visually represent through the art and the architecture and the structures of that ancient place. My mind was staggered at the scope of history represented in Rome because it goes back so many thousands of years. I was stunned by the magnificent architecture and the great works of art that I saw everywhere, from the Raphael statues in the little plazas of the city to the great works of art at the Vatican.

But one thing in my visit to Rome stood out above all other things and that was visiting the ruins of what was known as the Mamortine(?) Prison in the ancient city of Rome. When I say ruins I don't want to misrepresent the situation. What is now remaining of the Mamortine Prison is a dungeon in the ground, literally a circular pit about 30 feet in diameter with a hole at the top a little larger than that of a manhole in the street. That was the place of incarceration for the criminals of the time of the Apostle Paul. That prison today has on top of it a building and to see the prison you climb the stairs, enter the building and you're given a little bit of a tour. You look through the hole and you can see the pit underneath with its stone floor and stone walls in the shape of a circle. We were then allowed to go down into the pit and found there just a couple of things of interest. First of all, there was an altar built there by some Roman Catholics at some point in history. And then against one section of that circular pit there was a door, a great large door that was able to be pulled up and then dropped back down in place.

The guide instructed us concerning the altar which had been built in somewhat recent centuries and then told us that the door basically was there for execution purposes, that it was common to place

prisoners, dropping them through the hole into the dungeon, up to about 30 to 35 prisoners. And then in order to make room for the next group of criminals, the door would be pulled open and running alongside that cell was the city sewage system of Rome. As the door was pulled open, the cell or dungeon would fill with the sewage and drown all of the prisoners and wash them back out. The door would be shut, the place would be drained and ready for another 30 to 35 criminals.

It was a moving experience not only because you could stand there and imagine what went on in that place with sanitation, without light, without any of the comforts that we might imagine to be absolutely necessary for existence. And you can imagine it jammed with 30 bitter, angry criminals about to be executed. But what made it so very stunning was that one of the people who has had a greater impact on my life than almost anyone who ever lived, one of the men who has been my teacher in many ways through the years of my ministry, one of the men whom I love beyond other men spent the last days of his life in that very hole in the ground. His name is the Apostle Paul. And I was moved deep within my heart as I contemplated him in that place awaiting execution. In a very public display of hatred for the Christ he taught and the gospel he preached, he was not drowned in sewage, he was taken out of that place and his head was placed on a block and an axe cut it off his body. And publicly the Romans said, "We will not tolerate the teaching of Jesus Christ nor anyone who represents Him."

And when you can think back and imagine the life of the Apostle Paul, a life of self-sacrifice on behalf of the spread of the gospel, the life of a man who lived literally to communicate the greatest message the world has ever heard in order that men might know joy and grace and mercy and forgiveness and peace, when you imagine that that's how he ended his life it seems like such a tragic and ungrateful expression of man's response. What an unjust reward for an innocent man. Not just an innocent man but a man who had brought the good news of salvation to the very people who took his life. He had endured so much. In 2 Corinthians he chronicles a bit when he says, "In far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death, five times I received from the Jews 39 lashes, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys and dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren. I have been in labor and hardship through many sleepless nights in hunger and thirst, often without food and cold and exposure and apart from such external things there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches," 2 Corinthians 11:23 and following.

All of this he endured, selflessly sacrificing his life and any comfort that anyone might assume to be just basic for the sake of reaching people with the wonderful good news of salvation in Jesus Christ and this is how it ends...in a stinking dark damp unsanitary pit in the ground occupied by a bunch of criminals, we find him. It's not the first time he's been in prison. He was in prison in Jerusalem. He was in prison in Caesarea. He was in prison in Philippi and he has been in prison even in Rome before this. His earlier imprisonment in Rome, however, was much mild...much more mild than this one. In fact then he was in house arrest and not actually in a prison at all. Under Roman guard but in a house where his friends could come and go freely and he could control the environment to some degree and there were comforts to be had in that place. In fact, in his house imprisonment he was able to write Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and the wonderful little letter to his friend Philemon. It was a productive time, a time when he could win many of Caesar's household to faith and so at the end of Philippians says, "Those in Caesar's household who are in the faith, greet you." But that was five or six years before this.

He had been released from that first house arrest and having been released, you remember, he went to Ephesus, met Timothy his son in the faith there, left Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus to set it right for it wandered in terms of doctrine and behavior. And then pursued a missionary tour again from which he soon wrote a letter called 1 Timothy to tell Timothy exactly what to do in the church at Ephesus where he had left him. After writing 1 Timothy it's apparent that for a few years he wandered around preaching and teaching and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, if we can put the pieces together, we assume that he went from Ephesus over to Macedonia, visited Nicopolis, Crete, Militus and some think he may even as well have gone as far as Spain. He also very likely went to Troas. Now there's no chronicle of that, those are bits and pieces that we illicit out of his letters. We really have no specific record like we do in the book of Acts for his time prior to being imprisoned, for the time after his imprisonment gives us no such record. But no doubt for those five or six years between the first epistle and the second one, he is moving about ministering, preaching as he always did.

Suddenly in the midst of this new found freedom he is arrested. Very likely at the place called Nicopolis. What caused it to be, what made it happen that halted his progress? Well in 64 A.D. Nero who was an insane madman torched the city of Rome. He set a match to the place and burned it. Not wanting to bear the public shame and the public wrath for that kind of thing, he pushed it off on this group called Christians and blamed them for the burning of the city of Rome. As a result of that, an avalanche of animosity broke out against the believers in Jesus Christ and it was in the radiating of that animosity out of Rome that permeated the whole Roman Empire that finally caught the Apostle Paul eventually and caused him to be arrested because he was the leading spokesman for the Christian faith. He was then taken back to Rome and dropped into the hole in the ground at the Mamortine Prison.

And so he is there because of a furious wave of persecution. The leading Christians have been arrested, many have been executed and Paul, of course, is next. As we come to 2 Timothy that's the scene in which we find the Apostle Paul, sitting in the dungeon. His liberty of a few years has now ended and he is back in the most difficult incarceration of his life. And in that dungeon he sets out to write the last letter he ever wrote. This is his "swan song." This is the final will and testament of the Apostle Paul. These are his last words and as such we should listen to them with great great concern and commitment.

Now he chooses to write to Timothy. Of all the people that he might have written to, of all the churches that he might have written to, he chooses to write to Timothy and there is great reason for that which we shall see in a moment. Let me give you a little look at his circumstances, okay?

Chapter 1 verse 16 tells us he is in chains. It remarks about not being ashamed of my chains. He is chained in that place. Furthermore, in verse 17 it says that when Onesiphorus came to Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me...which means to say it was an obscure place, hard to find. And perhaps there were not too many people who were sort of in the Christian network who wanted at all to be associated with Paul and those who sought to find him may have had great difficulty in doing so. So he was in a place hard to find and in fact a place where he was chained.

Chapter 2 verse 9 tells us he was in a place with criminals, an imprisonment as a criminal. Even so the Word of God, he acknowledges, is not imprisoned. Further in chapter 4 we get a little closer to the heart of this man. He knows he's near his own execution, chapter 4 verse 6, "I am already being

poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure has come." He knows his death is imminent, he knows it is near. And what makes it so very sad, down in verse 16, when he was arrested and set to defend himself it says, "At my first offense no one supported me but all deserted me," and then says with such loving kindness, "May it not be counted against them," which sounds like Stephen when he was being stoned praying for the ones who stoned him and like Christ who when being crucified asked the Father to forgive His crucifiers. But he says, "At my first offense no one supported me," everyone was afraid of the persecution and they left him on his own. That is the situation. Not only is he experiencing physical discomfort but the deep emotional pain of having been deserted by everybody. That's the gratitude that a redeemed church has for the beloved source of that message of redemption? That's all he can expect out of people to whom literally he gave his life in the expounding of the gospel of Jesus Christ? He only has one friend with him, verse 11, only Luke is with me. Only Luke was somewhere nearby and it may be that Luke was a part of the letter in the sense that it could have been even dictated to him, if not written by Paul in that dungeon.

Going back to chapter 1 for a moment and verse 15, we find a little more about his situation and the sorrow and sadness of it. In verse 15 it says, "You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia...that's Asia Minor...all of them in the area of Ephesus and the surrounding area turned away from me." Not only is there no one to his defense, not only is there no one but Luke in Rome to be alongside of him, but no one in Asia Minor has stuck true to the Apostle. They've all defected. What sadness. What a way to come to the end of your ministry. When you should be having accolades and you should be literally embraced by all the people who have loved you because you brought them Christ, instead you're alone, you're in a pit in the company of criminals and no one around to care.

In chapter 4 we get a little deeper into the heart of Paul in the sadness of the time. Verse 10 he says, "For Demas having loved this present world has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica," must have broken his heart. "Crescens, he's gone to Galatia; Titus, he's gone to Dalmatia." Verse 12, "Tychicus I sent to Ephesus." Backing up one verse to 11 again, "Only Luke is with me." What a sad time. Nobody to defend him. Nobody to be with him. And he's still so concerned about ministry, one man forsakes him, Demas, and the other he sends on missions of the gospel...Titus, Tychicus and Crescens have gone to minister and I'm alone.

Boy, when I think about that I wonder how it would be to spend your whole life in absolute total self-sacrifice, giving yourself up for a people so they might come to know Christ and then be literally alone at the end. Sad time. And he has needs...he has needs. He is lonely. Chapter 1 verse 4 he says, "I long to see you, Timothy...I long to see you," it's a very strong word as we shall see in a moment. He literally hurts inside over the pain of wanting to have the companionship of Timothy.

Chapter 4 verse 9 he repeats to Timothy, "Make every effort to come to me soon. I need you, Timothy, and I don't think I have very long." And then in verse 11 he says, "Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service." That was the same Mark that once Paul said "I don't want him in my company, he's..he's a coward, he doesn't have courage," and he split up with Barnabas over that issue, now he wants Timothy to come and bring that beloved child in the faith also, Mark.

And then in verse 13 he says, "And when you come, bring the cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus and the books, especially the parchments." He needed things for his own physical comfort. Bring me the cloak, at least it will be a place on the stone where I can lie down and it will keep me warm when

I need that. Bring me that cloak, a cloak of warmth, a cloak of rest, a cloak of privacy, if nothing else. And bring the books, the parchments, the things most dear to his heart, the things on which was written the Word of God. In verse 21, again he says, "Make every effort to come before winter." Please hurry, Timothy.

Your heart almost breaks when you come to understand the scene. Apparently Nero had wanted to kill him already one time but something had stopped Nero and he had been spared from the lions of death, as it were. If for no other reason God spared him then in order that he might write this marvelous second epistle that we might be blessed by it. So it's probably about 67 A.D. or so as he takes up pen or dictates to Luke and this is what's on his heart. He's coming to the end of his life. He says in chapter 4, "I have finished the course, I fought the good fight, I've kept the faith, I'm ready to be offered, this is it. And I want to say this before I go..." And he writes to Timothy because Timothy is the key to carrying on the work. So what he is doing in 2 Timothy is passing the torch, passing the baton, passing the mantle, as it were, of the prophet. He at this particular time is in his upper sixties, maybe 66 or 67 years of age and having spent his life now ready to go to be with the Lord, having accomplished all that God wanted him to accomplish. Timothy is in his upper thirties, maybe 36 or 37, and carries the brunt of responsibility for ministry and extending the kingdom in the next generation. Timothy is his child in the faith, his protege, his student, his disciple. And Timothy faces tough times, persecution, hostility, animosity, resentment to the message, resistance to the truth. And it will not be easy.

We believe that at the time of the writing of this, Timothy is still in Ephesus. He's been there three to five years. Sometime between when Paul left him there and when Paul writes this letter he has seen him. Perhaps he went back to Ephesus and they met there, but Timothy is still in Ephesus. We believe that because of the reference to Ephesus in chapter 1:18 and also a further reference to Ephesus in chapter 4 verse 12 where he says, "I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus." In other words, I know you're coming to be with me, so I sent Tychicus to take over for you there. So we assume from that that he is still at Ephesus. It's been three to five years trying to set that church right, it's been a very very difficult time. But Paul wants to be sure Timothy carries on the work.

Can I give you a little insight into great men of God? They have a sense of mission that expands beyond their own life. They are not driven by ambition, they are driven by mission. They are not driven by their own sense of success or their own need to attain, they are consumed by the bigger picture. And it was far more important to Paul that the work go on than that his life go on. He does not write his last letter and say, "Woe is me, look what's happened, all of this I have given and now I have nothing." He does not write and castigate the people who have refused to show their heads and identify with him. He writes to carry on the mission because great men of God are moved not by personal comfort, personal success, personal attainment, but by mission. They see themselves as engulfed in something beyond their own life time. And the desire of his heart is to pass the baton and carry on the work and build up a new generation of godly men. The specific instruction to Timothy is with that in regard. "Timothy, you'll have to do this to carry on the work." And the work must carry on. The work that Jesus began must carry on until Jesus comes and finishes it Himself.

Now, with that as a general understanding, his instruction to Timothy begins in chapter 1 verse 6 and runs all the way to the end of the epistle. The whole epistle is basically instruction to Timothy for how Timothy is to carry on the mission, the work, the mandate, the Kingdom ministry. It's clear, it's direct, it is demanding exhortation. It calls for the best that Timothy or any other man or woman of God has to offer. But what you have to understand beneath the surface is, it is very impassioned because

Paul is very concerned. Listen carefully. He is concerned not only about the mission itself but about the state of Timothy. He's concerned about Timothy...knows him well, knows his strengths, knows his weaknesses. And there are hints in this epistle that Timothy was at a weak point in his life. Let me show them to you.

Chapter 1 verse 7, Paul says, "God has not given us a spirit of timidity." In other words, God didn't make us timorous, timid, cowardly. God didn't make us weak and vaccilitating. Could it be that under the stress and duress of trying to turn that Ephesian church around and battle those Ephesian errorists and those false teaching elders in the church and the ungodliness that it reached in and gotten so deeply entrenched there, could it be that Timothy was becoming intimidated? Could it be that because he couldn't answer every argument and win every situation he was beginning to weaken? And Paul says to him, if you have a spirit of cowardice or timid nature, that doesn't come from God. God has given us power, love and discipline.

Verse 8 he goes a step further. "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." Could it be that Timothy actually because of the persecution which was growing and growing as it radiated out from Rome was becoming ashamed to speak to speak of Christ? And it says, "Or of me his prisoner," didn't want to be identified with Paul who was now known as the leading Christian exponent and was incarcerated for that very thing. Timothy, could it be, did not want to be so identified because it might have threatened his own freedom? In verse 8 he says, "Be willing to join with me in suffering for the gospel." Could it be that Timothy was thinking about doing all he could to avoid suffering and therefore compromising his ministry?

In verse 13 he goes even further, of chapter 1, and says, "Retain the standard of sound words which you've heard from me in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." Could it be that Timothy might let go of truth? Could it be that he might alter his theology as so as not to offend somebody? Verse 14, "Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us the treasure," that means the Scripture, the truth, the gospel, "which is entrusted to you." Could it be that he was letting go of the very basics that he was willing to alter his theology?

We don't know how far Timothy had gone. We don't want to assume that he had gone far, but any movement at all toward weakness, illicited out of Paul the greatest amount of concern and expression in this epistle. Also we find in chapter 2 several places, verse 15, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of truth." He enjoins on him not to let go of his discipline study in God's truth so that he can handle it accurately. Could it be that Timothy was even letting that slip? And verse 16 he says, "Avoid the worldly and empty chatter, it leads to further ungodliness. It's talk that spreads like gangrene." Could it be that Timothy was spending a little too much time listening to the false philosophies of his age and being engulfed and influenced by them? Verse 22, "Flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness." Verse 24, "Foolish and ignorant speculations refuse." Verse 24, "Don't be quarrelsome." Verse 25, "Be gentle." Basic things that may have spoken directly to a weakening of the spiritual character of Timothy against the heat of the present persecution.

So, in chapter 3 verse 1 he says to him, "Realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come." You have to expect it, Timothy. Verse 11, "Persecution, suffering such as happened to me at Antioch should be expected." Verse 12, "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." Verse 14, "Continue in the things you've learned and become convinced of knowing who you learned them from."

So you see here that Paul's concern is that Timothy's letting things slip. In chapter 4 verse 1, the most strong command of the whole epistle, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead and by His appearing in His Kingdom, preach the Word...preach the Word." That's what you're to do. Down in verse 5, "Be sober in all things. Endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry." Fulfill your ministry sums the whole thing up. Timothy, do what you've been called and gifted to do. Do what God has committed you to do. Do what the elders laid on hands for you to do. Do your ministry.

It could all be summed up in chapter 2 verse 1. "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." What a statement. Timothy, be strong. Could it be that he was in danger of being weak? I think Paul assumes that possibility. That's the picture. On the one hand, the strong almost indomitable spirit, the Apostle Paul in a stinking dungeon in the city of Rome at the end of his life, waiting to have his head chopped off writes a final letter to a disciple out there who is to be his protege, his successor, the one to carry on the Kingdom mission and the Kingdom work who is apparently vaccilating to some degree and weakening under the pressure of all that's going on around him. And Paul writes to him to infuse strength into him to carry on the Kingdom work.

Now I don't need to say to you because you already know it but I say it for emphasis that this is a passage and an epistle that gets to my heart because I believe in great measure God has called me into the world to carry on a Kingdom ministry and to raise up other godly men who will carry it on after me. So I identify with the heart of the Apostle Paul in this regard. God had laid upon him the tremendous burden that he needed to have a successor who carried on the work. Frankly few works survive the death of the great men who begin them, but the Christian ministry does. The baton is passed from generation to generation to generation. And Paul writes with that goal in mind.

Now as I said, in chapter 1 verse 6 he starts the instruction. But before the instruction comes the motivation. And verses 1 to 5 is a wonderful motivation passage to Timothy. In fact it's wonderful for all of us. You're going to see how practical it is. Here is how to motivate a spiritual son. You're discipling your children, you're discipling someone in the faith in Christ, you're teaching someone, you're leading someone toward maturity in Jesus Christ...here are the elements that motivate them. And they're not explicitly mentioned here, they're implicitly in the text of what Paul says but they're so rich and, I think, so easily visible as to almost jump off the page to enhance our understanding.

Number one, if Timothy is going to respond he has to be motivated, right? That's the assumption. The first motivation is authority...you have an outline you might want to follow along, it's in the bulletin. The first motivation is authority. In other words, if I'm going to motivate Timothy, Paul says, he's got to understand that he doesn't have an option...that I rank over him, that I have the leverage of authority. So he introduces himself this way in verses 1 and 2, look at it: "Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God according to the promise of like in Christ Jesus to Timothy, my beloved son."

Now some critics of Scripture have wanted to deny Pauline authorship of this epistle. They want to say that Paul didn't write it. There's no reason to say that other than some people would rather criticize the Bible than believe it. But they attack it and one of the attacks is that if this was really an intimate letter from a sad broken-hearted sorrowing soldier who is now in a dungeon to his dear beloved son in the faith whom he loves with all his heart, it wouldn't start out with all of that technical data about his apostleship because Timothy didn't need the verification of that. Timothy knew he was

an Apostle who was sent by the Lord Jesus Christ who came because of the will of God to proclaim the promise of life in Christ Jesus. He knew all of that. And so if this were really Paul to Timothy, heart to heart, man to man, loving mentor to loving student, it wouldn't be there.

But such thinking really shows the shallowness of such a critical approach. It is a very very simple axiom and you ought to get it and remember it...very simple. Intimacy never precludes authority...basic. Intimacy never precludes authority. Think of it as a father. Try dealing with your children strictly on the basis of friendship and not authority. Try it at work. Try to deal with your employees strictly on the basis of friendship and not authority. It can't happen. Intimacy, friendship, fellowship, love bond, all of that does not preclude authority.

And so, Paul introduces himself with an introduction that carries weight. Paul, he says, means "little" in the Greek. His Hebrew name was Saul. He probably had both names all his life, since he was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, but born in a Hellenistic or Greek culture he bore both names. He is called by the name of Saul, his Hebrew name, until Acts 13:9 when he launches into his ministry to the Gentiles and from then on he's only called Paul. And that's how we know him. One Christian writer of the first century described him as moderate in statue, bow-legged, bald headed with a long nose. And we know that in 2 Corinthians it says that he didn't have any kind of earthly presence that anyone thought much of. In Philemon chapter 9 written about five or six years before 2 Timothy, he calls himself, Philemon verse 9, I mean, he calls himself, "Paul, the aged," and that puts him over 60 so by now he's 66, 67 years of age or so.

He had had a hard life of travel, a hard life of deprivation, prisons, suffering constantly without normal creature comforts that we could assume to be basic. But he did it all because he was a man under orders. And so he introduces himself as that kind of man. "Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus," that's the fact of his authority. He was called by Christ Jesus to be an Apostle. The word Apostle, a sent one, an emissary, an ambassador, an envoy. Jesus Christ Himself had called him to be His representative. In Acts 9, do you remember at his conversion when he met with Ananias afterward it says in verse 15, "The Lord said to him, Go for he is a chosen instrument of Mine to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel, for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name sake."

In other words, Christ said he is My chosen vessel, sent by Me. He had three visions of Christ. The first one on the Damascus Road. And every time he gave his testimony, in Acts 22 and again in Acts 26, he reiterated the fact that the Lord said he was chosen as a vessel to represent Christ in the extension of the gospel. So the fact of his authority, he was sent by Christ. He stood in the place of Christ. He spoke the word of Christ. The means, the will of God. Notice verse 1 again, "by the will of God." He was the Apostle of Jesus Christ because that was God's will. He was sovereignly chosen by the <u>thelema</u>, the deep desire of God. It was God's desire that he be the man sent by Christ.

So, he come with orders under the divine God of the universe. When he speaks then he's not making suggestions, he's not rubbing up alongside Timothy and saying, "Let me give you a little friendly advice, pal." What he is doing is commanding him. So he says, "I am Paul, the fact of my authority is I am an Apostle of Christ Jesus, the means of that authority is because of the will of God and the purpose of that authority according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus." What does that mean? It means that my message is to preach the promise of eternal life that comes in Christ Jesus. And "in Christ Jesus" is a favorite Pauline phrase, meaning union with Him, that marvelous reality that the sinner becomes one with Christ in His death, His resurrection and His on-going life. So Paul says the

purpose of my calling is to preach the wonderful promise of eternal life provided in Christ Jesus. Jesus said, "I am come that you might have...what?...life." He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting...what?...life." It is the gospel of life, spiritual life, eternal life. Christ, it says in Colossians 3:4, who is our life. I love that statement.

So, he comes then, sent by Christ, by the will of God, commissioned to preach the gospel of eternal life in Christ Jesus. He is a man under divine authority. And then verse 2, "To Timothy, my beloved son," there's the intimacy, there's the love, there's the bonding together but it never precludes the authority. As a father, in raising my children I want them to know I love them, I want to have an intimate relationship with them, I want there to be an unbreakable bond between the two of us. I want it to be deep and refreshing and rich and enduring. But no time does it ever preclude the fact that I'm their father and that God has given me the authority in their life. Some have thought these two don't go together, but they do. There can be a deep spiritual bond, a love from man to man like a father and a son, between Paul and Timothy, but Paul is still the one who speaks the Word of God. And in any discipling relationship, when you speak the Word of God, you go into a command mode. Do you understand that? That's part of it. This letter is loaded with imperatives. I didn't count all of them but there are many of them.

For example, here are some of the imperatives in this epistle. Directly from Paul to Timothy, these are commands. "Kindle afresh the gift of God...do not be ashamed of the Lord...retain the standard...guard the treasure...be strong...entrust to faithful men...suffer hardship...remember Jesus Christ...remind them...solemnly charge them...be diligent...avoid worldly empty chatter...flee youthful lust...refuse foolish and ignorant speculations...continue in the things you've learned...preach the Word...be ready...reprove...rebuke...exhort...be sober in all things," and that's the way it goes. They're all commands and they all presuppose authority. Paul never gives that over. He has rank when he speaks for God. He was under orders from God to speak to Timothy. Any time you have a discipline relationship, you're under orders like that from God. And you speak His Word from a position of authority. He was a man under orders. He was the Lord's own general and the one who listened to him listened to God.

And I tell you, beloved, this applies in the discipling process in the home and with whatever area of discipling you're involved. We can become friends, we can share fellowship, we can enjoy love but we never relinquish authority. And authority is not based upon our personal abilities, our human position, it's based upon the fact that we speak the Word of God.

There's a second thing here that I see in terms of motivation. Timothy will be motivated because he gets these things from someone who is commanding him. That's a strong motivation. But there's more to it than that. That might not stand alone. There are lots of folks who might command you and command me that we wouldn't respond to but look at the second thought. I call it altruism, that's a perfect word to explain what is here. I don't know if you've ever used the word altruism, it's a beautiful word. It simply means the practice of unselfish concern for and devotion to the welfare of others.

In other words, altruism is the idea that I am very much concerned about your good. That's an altruistic spirit. And that is exactly what you find in verse 2, look at it. What is Paul's wish for Timothy? "Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord, that's what I wish for you, Timothy." That was Paul, wishing for Timothy the very best. Grace--that refers to God's

undeserved favor, God's undeserved love, God's undeserved forgiveness given to sinners to free them from sin and enable them to live and serve Him. Mercy--that refers to God's undeserved compassion in freeing sinners from the misery that their sin creates. And peace--that's the heart tranquility and settled relationship that results from grace and peace....grace and mercy. That's the tranquility that comes from grace and mercy. The best that God has to give...grace, mercy, and peace. Grace to cover your sin. Mercy to overrule your misery. And peace to dominate your life. That's the best. And it comes, he says, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord, and he equates the two as the source of grace, mercy and peace, therefore they're equal in deity. This again one of the great statements of Paul about the fact that Jesus and God are one and the same as the source of the best gifts that the trinity has to offer.

So there's the altruistic spirit. What do I wish for you, Timothy? The best that God can give. I wish for you grace, saving grace, and keeping grace, empowering grace, serving grace, all the grace of God for every need. And what do I wish? Mercy, that is relief from the misery that sin should cause. What do I wish for you? Peace, peace and more peace. He has Timothy's interest in his heart. You want to motivate somebody who is under you? You want to motivate a disciple? You want to motivate a person that you're trying to build up in the faith? Then prove to them that the most important thing to you is their spiritual blessedness. That's the altruistic spirit. Paul wanted God's best for Timothy. Boy, that's motivating. If I'm Timothy, I'm saying to myself, "Paul, who I know is an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God who has been sent to preach the promise of life in Christ Jesus, I know he speaks with authority. Boy, when he speaks, I want to do that. Not only that, I know this beloved saint of God has in his heart my best interest, for he is asking God for grace and mercy and peace to be my continual portion." That motivates my heart. I want to say I'm under his authority and I'm also the beneficiary of his...of his kindness.

And now things get a little more personal, a little more tender, the third one, beautiful thought...appreciation, appreciation. Verse 3, notice this, the essence of it is, "I thank God...and then skipping a little bit...as I constantly remember you." That's the essence of it. I thank God, he just can't say God though, he launches off, "Whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did as I continually, or constantly remember you." This is appreciation. "Timothy, I appreciate you. When I'm praying and I'm praying for you, I stop and thank God for you. I thank God for what you mean to me. I appreciate you." He's incarcerated in that dark filthy stinking dungeon, crowded with criminals, facing an unjust execution and he's thinking about his beloved son, Timothy. Sweet memories flood his heart. No complaints. No bitterness. No anger. No vengeance. He's so tender. He's so sensitive. He's so concerned about Timothy. He's so lonely without him. He's thanking God for him. I thank God as I constantly remember you. He's on his mind all the time. That's appreciation.

You want to motivate a disciple? You want to motivate a student? You want to motivate somebody who is under you? Then let him know you appreciate him. Let him know you thank God all the time for them. That's a beautiful, beautiful perspective. I thank God. He doesn't say, I thank you, Timothy, because he knew that if Timothy was anything it was because God made him that, right? God was sovereign. God sovereignly saved him. God sovereignly gifted him. God sovereignly used him. The Greek emphasis is verse 3 starts, "Thanks, I have to God." He starts out with thanks. He was thinking he might never see Timothy again. He didn't know when he would die. But he was so thankful to God for him.

And notice that little almost parenthetical reference he makes between his thankfulness and the mention of Timothy. "The God whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did." He

puts that in because what he is saying by that is "I may be going to the death and I may be getting my head chopped off and there may be some people out there who think I deserve it but I want you to know my conscience is...what?...it's clear." I'm not here because I've violated God or I've sinned. I'm not here going to die because God is bringing some just retribution and chastening upon me. Listen, I...literally present tense...I thank God whom I am continually serving, latreuo, it can be translated worship, it has to do with temple service, the God who I continually worship through my service with a clear conscience, or a clean conscience. What does that mean? It means that the faculty of self-judgment which is the conscience is not accusing him, it's not accusing him. It's not pointing out some sin of which he is guilty and for which he should die or be imprisoned or be chained. No. He says, "I've done a self-examination, I'm not perfect but I have dealt with the sin in my life and confessed it to God and as much as is possible in this world I am living in holiness before the Lord and my conscience is clean and I am continually serving God through the worship that I offer to Him."

It's almost as if he wants to remind Timothy and everyone else who might say, "Well, he's probably there because God is chastening him," you know they did say that about his first Roman imprisonment and he reacts to that in Philippians chapter 1 and perhaps there were others who were saying it again. There was nothing in his heart accusing, nothing in his heart throwing things in his face.

By the way, in 1 Timothy 1:5 he had told Timothy the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience. Chapter 3 verse 9 he said, "Hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience." And then he talks in chapter 4 about men who had seared their conscience like putting scar tissue on it with a branding iron by constantly rejecting the truth of God. His conscience was clear. As I said, it is the self-judging faculty. It's the thing that condemns or does not condemn you when you act. And he's saying here...I am in prison waiting to die, my conscience is clear, all the accounts are right with God and I have faithfully and continually served God. Then he says-- the way my forefathers did.

Who does he mean there? Who are his forefathers? Well we can't know for sure because he doesn't say. Some think the Old Testament saints he has in mind, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the great Old Testament saints who were his Jewish forefathers. Some say he means his own family. He remembers in Philippians chapter 3 his heritage, he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee, zealous of the law and he had received that from his own father and his own family and maybe he was referring to them.

But on the other hand, thirdly, it may be that he's referring to the other Apostles who were in a spiritual sense his forefathers...James and Peter and John and Philip and Nathaniel and Bartholomew and the rest who truly served the Lord Jesus Christ and were his spiritual forefathers. But since he doesn't say who he means we can assume that he means all who have gone before him faithfully serving God...whether they were old covenant or new covenant. So he is saying...I'm serving the Lord faithfully with a clear conscience just like all those who faithfully served Him in the past have done. As if to say...and if you'll check the record on them, some of them have died the same way I'm about to die also. So before you accuse me of being punished for my sin, you better check back through the annals of the chronolog of the saints of God and find that many of them suffered for righteousness sake as well. It would do well for us if we question that to read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

So there he is in a dungeon, thanking God, the God he has faithfully served as an act of worship like his forefathers all the days of his ministry. His conscience is clear, nothing accuses him. And in those moments as he thinks about Timothy, he thanks God for this beloved young man. That is a wonderful appreciation. And that kind of appreciation motivates the heart.

I can remember men of God in the early years of my ministry saying to me, "John, God's going to use you in a wonderful way, I thank God for you." I can remember that. That puts a weight of responsibility on me. That at the same time acts as a motivation in my heart to know that saints of God, men of God who are in the know spiritually would feel thankful to God for me. That's a...that's a motivating force. And so it must have been for Timothy, to imagine that that greatest of all living Christians about to be bloodied as a martyr for the cause of Christ appreciated Timothy. It must have gone a long way to motivate his heart.

Furthermore, get this, Paul knew a lot about Timothy. He had traveled with him. He had eaten with him. He had slept with him. He had seen him in every vicissitude, struggle, trial of life. He had seen him impinged into every difficult and hard circumstance and he still appreciated him. He thanked God for him. And so, indwelling on the memory of Timothy he is grateful to God.

Fourthly, another motivating thing that rises out of this introduction is what we'll call appeal. At the end of verse 3 he says, "As I constantly remember you...and then adds...in my prayers night and day." It's almost redundant to say I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day...you could say I constantly remember you...period. Or, I remember you in my prayers night and day...period. But to say constantly and then night and day is to really make a strong emphasis. What he is saying is, "Timothy, I pray for you all the time. The reason I think about you and the reason I have sweet memories is because you come up in my prayer life, I pray for you." Oh my, what a motivating thing. I constantly...that means without interruption, without ceasing. It is used in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, pray without ceasing. I constantly remind God of your needs, I plead for you. The word prayer here is deesis, petition, pleading to God on Timothy's behalf. I'm pleading to God for you, I'm praying for you night and day. I don't know whether night and day could be separated in a dungeon. I don't know, maybe the two are indistinguishable, but what Paul means is all the time, all the time I remember you and all the time I pray for you. That was just his heart. If you read his epistles you'll see how many times he says I unceasingly pray for you. He said it to the Romans, the Roman church, the Corinthian church, the Philippian church, the Colossian church, the Thessalonian church and also to his friend Philemon. And here to Timothy, "I pray for you all the time, night and day, constantly."

Do you know how compelling that is on the heart of a young man? Do you know how compelling that is to a disciple to know somebody is constantly praying for him? Not only does it unleash the power of God for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, James says in chapter 5 verse 16, but it also acts as a compelling force in the life of the young man, to know that the saint of God, the saintliest of all saints daily prays for him. Do you want to influence someone for Christ? You want to move someone's heart in great ways? You want to hold them accountable for how they live? Put them under authority. Let them know that you have an altruistic spirit that seeks their best, appreciate them and then remind them that you never stop praying for them and see if that doesn't motivate their heart.

Fifthly, and this is beautiful, affection...affection. Verse 4, "As I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you." I miss you, Timothy. I miss you. He wants him to come, he says that in chapter 4, "Make every effort to come to me soon," in verse 9. Verse 13, "And when

you come, bring the cloak." Verse 21, "Make every effort to come before winter." Timothy, please hurry, he really wants to see him. The word "longing" is an intense word, epipotheo, it means to have a strong desire for, to yearn for, it's a compound word, intense in its meaning. He has...he hurts because he wants so much to be with Timothy. And what is it that comes to his mind? "Even as I recall your tears." The last time we were together you wept. When was the last time they were together? We can't be sure but it's likely that some time between when he had placed Timothy in Ephesus and left there and written back 1 Timothy and this letter, he had visited Ephesus in the meantime during those travels in that period and had had a meeting with Timothy, before he was arrested at Nicopolis. And it was at that meeting that they together wept, they loved each other. They couldn't imagine not seeing each other. Boy, that kind of bond is hard to find today, isn't it? Hard to find among men, might be laughed at by some. The Apostle Paul when leaving the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 verse 37 had them all over his neck weeping and weeping because they wouldn't see him anymore. What bond those people knew in that day. That's because they gave their lives away to each other, not protected their lives from each other. And so there is a deep and affectionate love in the heart of Paul to Timothy and he misses him deeply, the years of ministry, fellowship, travel, the years of danger, the battles, the teaching, the suffering, it knit their hearts so closely together. And his longing was stimulated when he remembered how Timothy wept when the last they had met.

So he says, "I long to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that...implied in seeing you...I may be filled with joy." The implication is he doesn't have full joy here, he's sad. He feels sorrow. His heart hurts. But he says, "If I could just see you I'd be filled with joy." What affection. I love you, I care about you. That's a great motivator. That's a...that's a compelling motivator. If you want to nurture someone in the faith, if you want to influence someone, let them know how deeply you love them. That's inspiring. That's motivating. Who can resist the compulsion of a strong affection? Who can resist the compulsion of love?

And then finally, and this is very important...affirmation. The last element of the motivation that Paul lays down before he starts the instruction is affirmation. Verse 5, this is the third time he remembers in this passage, once in verse 3, once in verse 4, and again he says, "I am mindful," he uses different words but this is the third time he's remembered something, "I am reminded...literally...of the sincere faith within you which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and I'm sure that it is in you as well." This is affirmation. Hey, Timothy, I am reminded of your true faith, you have real saving faith, you have genuine faith. And not just that, it's rich faith. It's the faith that came through your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and I know it's in you, it is a rich and real faith. It's as if he's saying, "I know you can do it...I know you can do it...I know you can carry on, I affirm your great potential, I know your character, I know your faith."

He doesn't write to Timothy and say, "Oh Timothy, you really disappoint me all the time. What a weak wishy-washy character you are. It's questionable whether you'll ever survive." You don't want to plant that kind of thought. He plants affirmation. "I am mindful" is a passive action. I have received a reminder, I don't know what happened, maybe it was just his prayers or his memories or maybe it was a letter or a note from Timothy or someone who had met him, but something reminded him of Timothy's genuine faith. That word for "sincere," anupokritos, unhypocritical is the English equivalent, no hypocrisy, no phoniness, genuine. He was a true child, as it says in 1 Timothy 1:2. Genuine...his faith was real. His faith was what it ought to have been. Not only was it real it was rich. Look at the mention here of Lois and Eunice, "It first was in your grandmother Lois, your mother Eunice." How does he know that? Because they were no doubt led to Christ by Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey to Timothy's home area in Galatia. When Paul and Barnabas came in Acts 14,

these women were no doubt influenced by the gospel. Paul and Barnabas took them, they were surely Old Testament saints, godly women of old, Jewish women, he had a Gentile father who was dead but these were Jewish women. And these dear Jewish women became believers through the ministry of Paul and Barnabas, that's on the first missionary journey. By the time Paul comes around his second journey in Acts 16, they have led this young boy Timothy to Christ and he then receives the faith of Christ from his mother and grandmother which they received from Paul, so he is in a sense the child of Paul's preaching and yet through his mother and grandmother.

So he has received a rich faith, a rich faith. He has been instructed from a child. Verse 15 of chapter 3, "From childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." He had the benefit of a deep root kind of Christian exposure. Boy, that makes you rich.

Recently, one of the leading Christian ministries in the United States was searching for a leader to head up the whole ministry. I happened to be involved in some of the discussions and they presented a list of eight names of men that should be considered for that position because it was a very important position. I read over the eight and I said to the gentlemen in the meeting, I said, "Do you see a common denominator in every one of these names?" And they looked and no one said anything and I said, "Did you notice that every one of these eight names that you men have collected are men who had a well-known godly preacher for a father without exception?" And they hadn't even chosen them on that basis. But the point was, the roots were so deep and the heritage was so rich in these men that they stood out above their peers as unique. There's something to be said for that. And Timothy was the beneficiary of a rich deeply rooted Christian heritage that came from his mother and his grandmother, his father--no doubt--being dead because he's not mentioned. And it had come by way of the Apostle Paul into his young life and then from then on he had been nurtured by Paul. Paul says, "I have great confidence in you, I know your roots, I know your faith, it's rich, it's real." And he says at the end of verse 5, "I am sure that it is in you as well as in your mother and your grandmother." This is affirmation. That's such an important thing.

Now listen carefully, will you, as I wrap this up. Anybody in a leadership position spiritually ought to know these six things. If you want to motivate people to respond to spiritual truth and to grow in Christ...one, you have to establish a position of authority. In other words, they need to know they are bound to respond when you speak the Word of God. Secondly, you want to convey to them the attitude of altruism, that is they must know that you have their best interest in your heart. Thirdly, an attitude of appreciation. They need to know you thank God on every remembrance of them. And then an attitude of appeal which means you constantly pray for them, an attitude of appreciation which affirms that...of affection, rather, the attitude of affection says you care about them in a deep, loving relationship. And finally that spirit of affirmation that affirms them that says I know you can do it.

These things, frankly, are so universal in application they could be applied even beyond the discipling process to any area of life..any area of life. If you put these into practice, you'll have a major impact on the people you influence for the Kingdom of God. Let's bow together in prayer.

We thank You, Father, for the Apostle Paul. What a model he is. What an example. Caught up with the mission so unconcerned about his own circumstances...so oblivious to his own pain, lost in wanting to pass the baton and the torch to another generation. God, give us that spirit. We thank You for the privilege of doing that here at Grace Church as parents, as disciplers, as teachers, Bible study leaders. We thank You that we can do it through the Master's College and through the Master's

Seminary as we raise up godly men and women for the next generation to be the shining beacon lights for the advancement of Your glorious Kingdom in the hearts of men. O Lord, thank You for giving us this wonderful privilege and this wonderful model in Paul. Help us to be able to motivate folks in the same way that he motivated Timothy by calling on those things that would move Timothy's heart to response. And may we as well be moved, Lord. May we come to be obedient to all that You would have us to do, as those who are under authority, as those whose very best interest is being sought, as those who basically are loved, those who are prayed for, those who are the concern not only of You but of those who serve you in this world. May we know the affirmation, the appreciation that moves the heart.

Lord, may these things work in our lives that they might be used in the lives of others whom we influence. And, Lord, like Paul we know that all of us will come day to our own dungeon awaiting death, the circumstances may be different, but there will come a time when we have to pass the torch. Give us those Timothys, those young men and women of the next generation in whom we can invest our lives to carry on what You've given us to do. And may none of us assume that we have nothing to pass on for we have nothing to do, what sin that is to think even that for we are gifted and we are called every one to serve faithfully. Help us to make every investment in the generation to come that they may guard and propagate Your holy truth for the Savior's sake. Amen.

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