

This is the apostle Paul's last inspired epistle before he was martyred by the Roman Emperor. Written from prison, it is addressed to his son in the faith, Timothy. Son because Timothy was a young but mature brother who was of the same mind in the Lord's things as Paul. Also a spiritual son initially saved under the ministry of Paul in his visit to Timothy's home town on a missionary journey. In his first letter to Timothy Paul has laid out the order for believers to observe in the Assembly. He charged Timothy, and now you and me, to impart this order through instruction backed by example. Now he is in prison again and sure he will leave only through martyrdom. And he sees ominous signs of trouble ahead for faithful saints of God. Satan is gathering his forces for both frontal attacks and infiltration aiming to destroy the testimony of the Church on earth. The inspired word of God prayerfully read and used with the power of the Holy Spirit is our only resource and recourse in the last days. "Last days" that have been upon us for over 1900 years now while God prepares a Bride for His Son and the Lord awaits completion of His body on earth. These are times where God honors individual faith as it is necessary to maintain any Christian testimony on earth at all. Yet it is a day where provision is also made for individuals to be gathered with others who call upon the Lord out of a pure (undivided) heart. This despite the massive departure, yea even persecution of the faithful by that which has usurped the claim to be Christian. This Epistle informs, authorizes, enables and encourages saints to take advantage of the provisions made available, in the grace and holiness of God, to the faithful in the last days.

In such circumstances one could easily become disheartened and discouraged. But Paul remains upbeat despite his own impending decease imposing upon his mind. He sets about reviving Timothy's spirits and reinvigorating him to carry on in his absence. He reminds us of his apostleship. His unique apostleship established by the supernatural intervention of God, independently from those apostles already at Jerusalem who had been eyewitnesses of the Lord's life, death, resurrection and ascension, 1John 1:1-4. Similarly he reminds Timothy that his own spiritual gift was also imparted in a unique manner, by the laying on of Paul's hands in an exercise of Apostolic authority. Timothy apparently was sagging a little under the mounting burden of the decline and departure surrounding him. Paul tells him to stir up the "gift that is in thee." Don't we each need to do that as well. Not to be occupied with whatever gift might have been bestowed upon us but to tend to the work, the mission, the duties, the purpose for which the Giver has given it. Let's get on with it.

Though Paul was facing **imminent death** he cites his apostleship as according to the **promise of life** which is in Christ Jesus. The Lord is alive. He has conquered death.

He imparts the promise of life, of a full realization of eternal life in the body fitting what we have now in soul and spirit. He authoritatively blesses Timothy (and us) with grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He expresses thankfulness upon his remembrance of Timothy in his prayers. Timothy's empathy and faith were of great value to Paul in his lonely isolation from fellow saints and the stimulating, uplifting conversations enjoyed normally among believers. He greatly misses Timothy because of his tears. Tears of concern and sorrow at the conditions emerging in the assemblies they had spent so many years establishing and nurturing together. He was truly like-minded with Paul, really, therefore, like-minded with Christ. Paul earlier could say of him,

Philippians 2:20 For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.

Timothy's tears were Christ's tears. How can Timothy's tears fill Paul with joy? Because they share the same sorrows and concerns together for the flock. They fellowship together in sorrow and deep concern for the same thing. Do we? How we need fellowship with one another when facing spiritual dangers and especially when the enemy appears to have lured away another of the faithful to be taken captive for his will, ch. 2:26.

Paul further encourages Timothy by reminding him of the faith of his mother and grandmother. Paul himself had lived religiously with a clear conscience (but without faith) even before he was struck down on the road to Damascus. Yes, Paul had a clear conscience while persecuting the Church of Christ in his zeal for the law of Moses and the nation of Israel. A clear conscience is nice to have but not always a reliable indicator that one is in the right path, or not guilty of serious sin. Paul names himself "chief" of sinners upon reflecting on his attitude and conduct toward the Church.

1Timothy 1:3 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

If God could save him He certainly will not desert any, saved by the shed blood of Christ, who endeavor to follow and serve Him by faith. Take heart!

So Paul reminds Timothy of the spirit God has put in him. It is NOT a spirit of fear! It is a spirit of energy (force), of love, of a sound mind, (discipline, self control). Fear can disable focused, energetic action and paralyze clear, decisive thinking, but there is no fear in love.

1John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.