

AN UNSAFE MESSAGE



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Key verses: 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Introduction

An unsafe message - THE GOSPEL

What is the gospel?

It's the GOOD NEWS about Jesus our Saviour, Rescuer, Redeemer! The message that God is not holding our sins against us anymore because Jesus paid the price on the cross. We can receive forgiveness of our sin, eternal life and become a child of God by turning away from our old ways and receiving Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

Why is it unsafe?

It's a life-changing violent force, pulling people out of the domain of darkness and transferring them to the kingdom of His beloved.

It attracts opposition, persecution and trouble. Look at Jesus and the apostle Paul's life. There was much opposition. Everywhere Paul went to share the gospel he encountered opposition, from 2 main sources, the envious religious group and business people who were losing profits because of the outcome of his message.

Paul described it in 1 Timothy 1:11 as **the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to his trust**. He was a custodian of the truth, a guardian of the gospel message.

Its all about the GOSPEL. Paul's life was all about the gospel. Jesus' life was the GOSPEL.

What is your relationship to this unsafe message?

This morning, we are continuing our series on Paul's letters to Timothy. We finished looking at his first letter last Sunday and are now moving onto his second letter to his younger apprentice and co-worker in the ministry.

2 Timothy 1:1-14 NIV

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

²To Timothy, my dear (beloved) son:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. ⁴**Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.** ⁵I am reminded of your **sincere faith**, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

⁶For this reason I remind you to **fan into flame the gift of God**, which is **in** you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷For the **Spirit** God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us **power, love and self-discipline**.

⁸So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.

⁹He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹And **of this gospel I was appointed a herald (preacher) and an apostle and a teacher**. ¹²That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

¹³What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴**Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.**

Backdrop

Background of Paul and Timothy:

Timothy's mother and grandmother likely got saved during Paul's first missionary journey to Lystra, where he was stoned and dragged out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, the disciples gathered around him and he rose up and continued his journey.

On his second trip to Lystra (yes, he went back!), he met Timothy who was now a disciple of Jesus and was well spoken of (recommended) by the believers there. He then joined Paul and his team from there as they travelled and ministered from place to place.

After Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, he visited Ephesus, then left shortly afterwards, putting Timothy in charge of the church there. During this time of his further travels, he wrote his first letter to Timothy.

Now we find Paul in prison in Rome again, but not like before which was more like house arrest. This time he was held in a dungeon in chains with certain death awaiting him. Friends could only see him with difficulty. It was a time of heightened persecution. Many had turned away from Paul at this time.

The tone of this second letter was very different to the first. It is charged with emotion and conveys the cry of Paul's heart. He is strongly appealing to Timothy concerning his life passion and calling, and his stewardship of the gospel. He's imploring Timothy to stay faithful in the face of opposition, hardships and suffering, speaking from his personal experiences.

This message is for us too! Preserved for our benefit, so we can all be encouraged by Paul's life and ministry and his love for the gospel. We hear his heart so clearly in this book!

Timothy's character and disposition:

- Genuine faith – taught by his mother & grandmother. Greek father, who didn't appear to have influenced his life much.
- Trustworthy. Recommended by the brethren at Lystra as a young man.
- Tendency to be timid.
- Sensitive (tears).
- Stomach issues, frequent infirmities. Indicates he's not a robust, strong individual physically.

The relationship between Paul and Timothy:

Disciple, co-worker, apostolic apprentice, 1 Tim – true son, 2 Tim – (dear) beloved son.

Paul was his **mentor in ministry** and a **father figure** in his life. He had ordained him, endorsed him, prayed for him, encouraged him, even circumcised him.

Timothy was a young man leading a large congregation of older and younger people, where he had to correct false teachings that became popular with some influential people in the church.

How would you feel if you were Timothy at this stage? I think I would feel alone and vulnerable and a bit scared.

Paul knows him and his nature. He loves him like a son. So now he is trying to put strength into him with the words of this letter. He's wanting to prepare him to stand firm now, and in the future, and he's wanting him to be unashamedly courageous with the gospel and fulfil God's calling on his life.

Paul's instruction – fan into flame the gift of God

⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

- **KJV – re-ignite** | stir up (fan into flame)

Illustration: TRUTH ABOUT FIRES: Embers (coals) from a fire can re-ignite long after the fire has gone out and the coals are cold.

FACT: Many people don't realize the length of time required for ashes to cool enough for disposal. Coals and ashes from fires can remain hot enough to reignite and start a fire for many days after the fire is out. The exact amount of time for complete extinguishment and cooling depends on many factors such as how hot the fire was, what was burning, how much unburned fuel remains, etc.

If you have the Holy Spirit within you, there is an endless supply of unburned fuel. It's never too late to fan it into flame!

What was Timothy's gift?

1 Timothy 4:14-16 ¹⁴Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. ¹⁵Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. ¹⁶Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will **save both yourself and those who hear you.**

2 Timothy 4:2&5

²**Preach the word!** Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

⁵But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, **do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**

Paul was a preacher and an apostle and a teacher, a guardian of the gospel. It seems Timothy was to follow the same path, as he was doing apostolic work and teaching. But here Paul is especially charging him not to neglect the gift of **preaching and doing the work of an evangelist**.

He encourages him **not to be ashamed of the gospel nor of him** Christ's prisoner, but to join with him in **suffering for the gospel, by the power of God**.

Like his spiritual father and mentor, Timothy was to:-

1. **Guard the gospel** as a sacred deposit committed to him
2. **Proclaim the gospel** faithfully with a clean conscience and pure lifestyle
3. **Suffer for the gospel** if needed (be ready and willing to suffer persecution like Paul did)
4. **Pass on the gospel** to faithful followers of Jesus (chapter 2)

Everything that is happening here revolves around the gospel, this sacred deposit entrusted to Paul and us, this life-saving message of hope.

What gift has God put in you, and what has He called you to do?

My story

This Scripture was speaking to me! God reminded me of a number of incidents from when I first got saved that I had honestly forgotten about. This is my confession.

- Scriptures from Timothy
1 Tim 4:13-16 ¹⁶*Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*
2 Tim 4:5 ⁵*But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*
- Anointing at intercession meeting (praying for evangelist) – did not take it to heart
- Weeping uncontrollably at Elizabeth Austin home meeting as she shared...
- Taking out teams to do outreach (Southernwood, etc.) – **salvations, deliverances, supernatural air-conditioning**, experiencing the **sweet presence of Jesus** like never before or again, experiencing the **fire of God**.
- CCA sharing passion for the lost in early days
- I allowed this passion to grow cold and I didn't even realise it. But now God has reminded me! 😊 (GRACE)

He gives us a ministry – of His choosing (who are we to say otherwise – Moses said I cannot speak, Gideon was fearful, David was overlooked by everyone, but handpicked by God, etc. many examples in the Bible of unlikely custodians of God's mission and mandate.)

Our responsibility – to stir up the gift

Here Paul is saying its our responsibility to stir up the gift God has given us, to fan it into flame, by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit and our spirits:

At the new birth, your spirit is regenerated. Made alive, made new. You are new on the inside and able to have a relationship with God. In fact the Bible says that your spirit becomes ONE WITH GOD. God comes and lives in you. He indwells you.

Romans 8:10-11

And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

John 14:20

At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

John 15:5

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who **abides in Me**, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

1 Corinthians 6:17

But he who is joined to the Lord is **one spirit with Him**.

John 14:23

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and **We will come to him and make Our home with him**.

Colossians 1:27

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**.

1 John 2:27

But the **anointing which you have received from Him abides in you**, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

1 John 3:24

Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And **by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us**.

1 John 4:15-16

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, **God abides in him, and he in God**. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but his Holy Spirit!

The Holy Spirit who lives within is our **helper**, our **guide**, our **teacher**, our **strengtheners**, our source of **power**. He **fills us with God's love** and **enables us to exercise discipline and self control**.

Our will is the "hinge" – we can choose to follow the Spirit or the flesh. Following the flesh is easy; we've been training for it all our lives. Following the Spirit requires denying the dictates of the flesh and looking within to the leading of the Holy Spirit. There is always that moment of choice involved.

We must take responsibility for our actions. God has given us the power to live a godly life. **Holy Spirit will always back us up when we choose God's way! He will always help us.**

Beyond our daily lives and choices, we need to **consider who is Lord of our lives**. Are we serving God, or our own will and desires?

Have you taken the time to seek God to discover what His plan and purpose for your life is? It is always a plan for your good, for a good future filled with hope (not necessarily without persecution, but a life with His presence, joy and peace).

In order to obey the Lord, we need to **learn to listen** – to hear God's voice.

The prophet Samuel said this to king Saul in the Old Testament, after he only partially did what God had instructed him.

1 Samuel 15:22-23 ESV

²²And Samuel said,

"Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,

as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice**,

and **to listen** than the fat of rams.
23For rebellion is as the sin of divination,
and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,
he has also rejected you from being king.”

We need to learn to **listen** to the voice of God, **so we can know His will to do it** in every situation in life.

We heard two weeks ago that sheep are not too bright; they need a good shepherd to lead them in the right path. It's the same with us. We have a **shepherd** who promises to lead us. He said His sheep **hear His voice and follow Him**.

We must practice listening. Recognise that the Holy Spirit lives within you and gives you the power to do the right thing. Lean in to Him and listen. He's very close and His voice will sound a lot like your own thoughts sometimes, but they will come from within, not without.

God's Word is a guide and His Spirit is a guide, and they work together. The Word is a discernor between the spirit and soul. How do you know if what you're hearing is from your spirit or your soul? – the WORD.

6For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Disciplines are vital if we're to stay on track with God and do His work. We cannot be moved and led by our feelings but need to learn to be consistent and faithful. To **show up, even if you don't feel like it**. Otherwise, you will never progress. **When you make the right choice, God is always there to back you** – He WILL strengthen you, even carry you. But we must co-operate with Him. Say yes to Holy Spirit and not the desires of the flesh. Trust Him.

A good discipline will become a routine, then it is easier to do. Routines are good, as long as they don't become your God. We must always be following the Holy Spirit's leadings.

Practical application

So how does this all apply to us?

- Maybe you, like me, have received a gift or calling from God that has grown cold – you may even think it has died completely; but it hasn't! If God gave it to you, it remains! So, what now?
FAN IT INTO FLAME!
 - Repent and ask Holy Spirit to revive it in you.
 - Then give yourself to it! Apply yourself to it – do whatever comes to mind and keep listening to God. Holy Spirit will empower and lead us.
- We are all called to be custodians of the gospel – to guard it, share it, suffer for it if necessary, and pass it on to others, by the Holy Spirit who lives in us. If you are willing, say in your heart, YES LORD.
- If you have never heard or responded to the gospel. The good news is that Jesus made you and loves you, and He wants a relationship with you, and He made it possible through His death, burial and resurrection. He offers freedom from sin and everlasting life, to all who receive and follow Him. You will need to turn away from your life of sin and surrender your will to Him. Hand over the rulership of your life to Him and let Him

shepherd and lead you. It is a good life of knowing Him, learning from Him and walking with Him, but is it not without suffering for Him for the sake of the good news, which we are called to share. He offers LIFE today. If you are ready to respond to Him, give Him your yes today. If you are willing to follow where He leads you, say in your heart, YES LORD.

He sees and hears.

End by declaring **grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.**