

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

III. II Timothy: Church Ministry Amid Hardship

A. Handling Timidity Before Oppressive Hearers

(2 Timothy 1:1-7)

I. Introduction

- A. Church ministry involves the spiritual realm, and the spiritual realm for the believer is marked by a great war between the forces of God and of Satan. Consequently, believers in Church ministry face hardship.
- B. The Apostle Paul's second epistle to Timothy, and the last correspondence we have from him before his martyrdom, is an epistle on handling hardship, and 2 Timothy 1:1-7 deals with the hardship of handling timidity before oppressive hearers. We view this passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. Handling Timidity Before Oppressive Hearers, 2 Timothy 1:1-7.

- A. When Paul wrote 2 Timothy, his martyrdom was imminent (2 Timothy 4:6; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 758) and he was corresponding with a man who had long struggled with fear in ministering to oppressive listeners:
 - 1. Ten years previously, Paul had written to the difficult, carnal Christians at Corinth, urging them not to cause Timothy to be afraid of them, 1 Corinthians 16:10a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1619, 1716.
 - 2. Paul had then clarified how Timothy performed God's work as did Paul, that no one was to despise him so that they might send him on his way to Paul in peace, 1 Corinthians 16:10b-11.
- B. Timothy's battle over timidity before difficult hearers had been an ongoing one, so near his passing when Paul knew he could no longer run interference for Timothy before his hearers, Paul gave him an admonition to equip Timothy to function above timidity without Paul's help in 2 Timothy 1:1-7 (as follows):
 - 1. Paul's opening greeting to Timothy reminded him that Paul's authority to address Timothy with instruction was divinely based, 2 Timothy 1:1a.
 - 2. Paul's greeting also reminded Timothy of the importance of Paul's apostolic authority, that of offering the Gospel of eternal life in Christ Jesus, 2 Timothy 1:1b.
 - 3. Then, unique to this epistle of his pastoral epistles, Paul addressed Timothy as his dearly beloved child, focusing on the strong spiritual father-son bond between them so that when Paul gave his admonition, it would carry a strong force for Timothy's welfare, 2 Timothy 1:2; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 749.
 - 4. With the solemnity of his authoritative apostleship and expression of love for Timothy, Paul affirmed his awareness of Timothy's **true** faith as rooted in his strong family heritage even amid Timothy's tearful trials in his pastoral ministry with the difficult hearers he faced, 2 Timothy 1:3-5.
 - 5. Accordingly, Paul directed Timothy to "fan into flame" (ESV) the spiritual gift for Christian service that God had given him and had been recognized by Paul's putting on of hands in ordaining Timothy, v. 7. [Such fanning into flame may involve developing that gift through training or practice, but it always involves relying on the Holy Spirit as noted in 2 Timothy 1:7.]
 - 6. Paul's **reason** for this admonition was that the Holy Spirit Who was **behind** the believer's spiritual gifting for ministry (1 Corinthians 12:4-11) was **not** a Spirit of "timidity" (*deilia*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 172), "but rather" (the strong adversative particle *alla*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 731) of spiritual power, love and a "regulated life," T. D. N. T., vol. VII, p. 1104; 2 Timothy 1:7.

Lesson: *In view of Paul's soon passing and Timothy's ongoing battle with fear over oppressively carnal hearers he faced in his pastoral ministry, Paul urged Timothy to utilize the supernatural spiritual resources with which God had equipped him for ministry, to rely on the Holy Spirit for fanning into flame the supernatural gift bestowed upon him by the Holy Spirit of spiritual power, love and self-control. In summation, Timothy was to shift away from relying on his human inability to rely on the divine abilities God had given him and upon the Holy Spirit.*

Application: *(1) If we struggle with timidity in serving the Lord in the calling to which He has clearly assigned us, we struggle because we are functioning in the power of the sinful nature and stand in need of shifting over to reliance on the Holy Spirit and the utilization of the supernatural spiritual gift God gave us for a ministry marked by spiritual power, love and self-control. (2) This may explain why God at times allows difficult events to arise to unsettle our humanity in its weakness: such difficulties remind us of our need to rely on the Lord and on the supernatural gifting He has given us that we might retain our effectiveness in ministry, cf. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Thus, instead of dreading difficulties or even difficult people we face in ministry, we need to view the bright side of the hardship -- God's reminder for us to rely on His power and gifting for ministry effectiveness!*