

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

III. II Timothy: Church Ministry Amid Hardship

B. Sustaining Spiritual Courage Amid Ministry Afflictions

(2 Timothy 1:8-12)

I. Introduction

- A. Since there is a great spiritual war between God and Satan in the discipling process, those who serve Christ can suffer debilitating spiritual fatigue from afflictions over time that can lead to spiritual defeat in ministry.
- B. The Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 1:8-12 provided a theology on sustaining one's spiritual courage amid afflictions in the ministry, and we view it for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. Sustaining Spiritual Courage Amid Ministry Afflictions, 2 Timothy 1:8-12.

- A. Having called Timothy to fan into flame the spiritual gift God gave him to function victoriously over timidity in front of oppressive hearers (2 Tim. 1:6-7), Paul urged Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of Christ nor of Paul His prisoner, "but rather" (*alla* strong adversative, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 731) to "suffer together with" (the root *sugkakopatheo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 780) Paul in the afflictions of the Gospel according to [relying on] the [Holy Spirit's] power of God, 2 Timothy 1:8.
- B. The command "suffer together with" is written in the aorist imperative form (*sugkakopatheson*, Ibid, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; The Analyt. Grk. Lex., 1972, p. 379), and since this verb is used to "express the coming about of conduct which contrasts with prior conduct" of being timid (2 Timothy 1:7), the aorist imperative here carries an **ingressive** force, what calls Timothy to the **CONTINUAL** behavior of willingly suffering together with Paul for the Gospel instead of yielding to timidity from oppressive hearers he faced in ministry. (Blass, Debrunner, Funk, A Grk. Gram. of the N. T., 1973, p. 173, par. 337)
- C. To encourage Timothy **continually** to suffer with Paul in his ministry afflictions, Paul put his **ministry** in the **context** of God's *eternal plan*, providing great motivation to be willing to suffer for Christ, 2 Timothy 1:9-12:
 1. Paul told of God's grace that had prepared the ministry of Paul and Timothy from eternity past, 2 Tim. 1:9:
 - a. According to God's divine foreknowledge, literally "before times eternal" (ESV ftn.), God purposed in the grace He planned to offer men in Christ to call those who would believe in Christ for salvation unto a holy calling of life and ministry that was absent any human meritorious works, 2 Timothy 1:9b,c.
 - b. Having established this purpose, God then saved believers and put them into the Christian walk and service the Lord had planned and purposed for them from "before times eternal," 2 Timothy 1:9a.
 2. Paul told of God's grace that equipped Paul (and Timothy) for ministry in the present, 2 Timothy 1:10-11:
 - a. Christ appeared on the earth in His Incarnation, and He abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through Christ's Gospel of salvation, 2 Timothy 1:10.
 - b. Having done this, God appointed Paul to be a preacher, apostle and teacher of the Gospel truth, v. 11.
 3. Paul told of God's grace that preserved his ministry (and Timothy's) into all of the future, 2 Timothy 1:12:
 - a. The Apostle Paul explained that he suffered the way he did because of opposition he faced in godless men who rejected his message of the Gospel and ministry as a preacher, apostle and teacher, 2 Tim. 1:12a.
 - b. Nevertheless, in view of God's eternal plan, Paul was convinced that the God Who had planned his life and ministry from eternity past and who had so graciously saved him was able and willing to guard until the Day of Paul's accounting at the Judgment Seat of Christ what God had committed to him by way of what Paul had believed in Christ and what spiritual gifts for ministry Paul possessed. Paul was thus sure that he could finish God's ministry assignment for him regardless what afflictions he faced, 2 Tim. 1:12b.

Lesson: Paul encouraged Timothy to sustain his willingness continually to suffer affliction together with Paul in ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit by focusing on the eternal plan and purpose of God in his life and ministry. Specifically, since God "before times eternal" had purposed each person He foreknew would trust in Christ to be saved and equipped to live and serve God apart from human meritorious works, since God had sent His Son to provide redemption and abolish death, bringing life and immortality to light through the Gospel and since God had applied that salvation and calling to those who believed, every believer could trust God to carry him through all the afflictions he faced in his earthly ministry until he reached the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ.

Application: May we courageously continue to be willing to suffer affliction in life and ministry by focusing on God's eternal plan for us and thus His commitment to provide all we need to fulfill His assignments for us until we safely reach the Judgment Seat of Christ beyond the potential negative impact of all ministry afflictions.