

“ENTRUST THESE THINGS TO FAITHFUL MEN”

II TIMOTHY 2:1-2

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INTRODUCTION

Far too often, those who are truly called of God face discouraging trials and are tempted to abandon the ministry for a life with fewer pressures and hardships. Paul has some advice for these in the first part of chapter 2. We must not test modern teachers by their popularity, education, or skill. We must *test them by the Word of God*. Also, the ability to study, understand, and teach the Word of God is a gift of God’s grace. Let us never forget that!

We have done a fairly miserable job of obeying this command of Paul in II Tim. 2:1-2; we must do better!

BE STRONG IN GOD’S GRACE, AND PASS ON TRUTH TO FAITHFUL PERSONS.

- I. BE STRONG IN THE GRACE IN CHRIST JESUS (1).
 - A. Continually be strong—present tense.
 - B. Timothy’s effort is involved—he is not to be passive (a command; cf. Eph. 6:10).
 - C. Such strength is found only in union with Christ Jesus—in Him.
 1. Through his atoning death and resurrection.
 2. All who thus are in Him can find and evidence such strength.
 - D. Such strength is only available through God’s grace—God’s unmerited favor.
 1. Timothy cannot so live through his own efforts.
 2. This is the same grace spoken of in 1:9—granted us in in Christ Jesus from “all eternity.”
 3. Faith itself is not the key to such strength—but the object of one’s faith.

How would Timothy manifest such spiritual strength?

- II. ENTRUST SOUND TEACHING TO FAITHFUL PERSONS—Men (v. 2).

Spiritual strengthening in the grace of Christ precedes both in importance and in time the transmission of the apostolic deposit of truth.

 - A. Paul speaks of the apostolic Gospel—the entire series of sermons and lessons which the disciple had heard from the mouth of his teacher during all the time they had been acquainted and working together.
 - B. Paul speaks of **4 levels of transmission of spiritual truth**:
 1. Paul initiated the process: “from me.”
 2. Timothy received these truths from Paul: “which you have heard...in the presence of many witnesses.”
 3. Timothy passes them on to others: “entrust to faithful men.”
 4. These others then instruct a fourth level: “who will be able to teach others also.”Clearly, this is a description of the process by which the Christian faith, doctrine, and lifestyle has passed on from generation to generation. It is vitally important that the chain not be broken; it must be an endless chain of teacher-training and gospel

propaganda. Each “generation” must continue passing on the doctrine of the faith in Jesus Christ.

- The application is especially to preachers, teachers in the local churches, and to Bible College and Seminary professors.
 - The application extends to every Christian parent.
 - The application extends to every Christian who disciples another.
- C. The witnesses are those who have heard these same truths as Timothy and can bear witness to the accuracy of what Timothy reports to others. They can also serve as encouragers and accountability partners for Timothy.
- How important it is that we stand by those who have responsibility to hold, carry, and promote the truth.
 - Such witnesses must help and hold accountable teachers and preachers—and yes, even fellow Christians who have and hold the truth.
- D. “Entrust” speaks of a “deposit” as in 1:12 and 1:14.
- E. Such a deposit must be given “to faithful men.”
1. Persons with genuine faith.
 2. Persons who are reliable, dependable, and trustworthy.
- F. Such faithful men must “be able to teach others also.”
1. They are sufficient—they have what it takes.
 2. They are capable, qualified.
 3. Their sufficiency is only from God (II Cor. 3:5).
- G. The “others” are also qualified and faithful persons who will carry on the chain.
- “Others” of a different kind—i.e. not of the original group taught by Timothy.
 - Each level of those taught must take seriously the requirement to transmit truth!
- H. Neither this passage nor any other carry an idea of a deposit of truth infallibly handed down” *through Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or any other ecclesiastical machinery*.
- These truths are carefully delivered and taught through faithful men of God who take the “deposit” seriously and carefully transmit it to others.
 - **Infallibility is found only in the original deposit, not in its transmission.**
 - Paul’s concern here is with the reliability of the message—not the status of the men.
 - Paul is here contemplating **an apostolical succession in respect of teaching rather than of administration.**

CONCLUSION

Paul was zealously concerned for the transmission of Christian truth.

THE CHURCH HAS NOT DONE A VERY GOOD JOB OF TRANSMISSION OVER THE CENTURIES.

BE STRONG IN GOD’S GRACE, AND PASS ON TRUTH TO FAITHFUL PERSONS.

Let us as a church continue making the deposit and continue training others who will in turn train others.

WE MUST TAKE OUR JOB SERIOUSLY—individually and as a church.