



## river west church

Entrusted with the Gospel

2 Timothy 1:15-2:2

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11.13.2011

### **Gospel Relay**

When you stop to think about it, it's really quite amazing. The Apostle Paul is alone, languishing in a prison cell in Rome, facing certain death. Although a prisoner now, he will soon be a martyr. But with his execution looming, what is Paul thinking about? What is he praying for? As we read 2 Timothy it becomes clear that Paul was totally fixated on one thing: the faithful transmission of the Gospel to future generations.

2 Timothy 2:2 captures what many believe to be the central message of the letter. "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Paul wrote his letter to remind Timothy of the immense treasure that he had entrusted him with. Paul spoke of the Gospel as a "good deposit" that Timothy must guard and preserve (2 Timothy 1:13-14). It was this very same good deposit that Paul had been entrusted with as a part of his own call to Gospel ministry (Gal. 1:12; 1 Tim. 1:11). Now he exhorts Timothy to take up the torch and to advance the Gospel in Paul's absence.

In our study of 2 Timothy, we have described it as a "continuous relay of Gospel truth." From Jesus to Paul to Timothy and on, the Gospel has been sounding forth, passed like a baton from person to person. Someone went before you. Someone invested in you. Someone took a risk, made a sacrifice, and reached out. Someone handed you the baton of Gospel truth, and you are meant to hand it to someone else.

### **Don't Be a Phygelus**

In order to underscore the importance of all this, Paul reminds Timothy of two examples, one bad and one good. He says, "you are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes" (2 Timothy 1:15). We don't know anything about this desertion other than what is written here, but apparently Timothy was familiar with it. He also apparently knew Onesiphorus, whom Paul holds up as an example of someone who remained strong in the Gospel (vv 16-18).

The message is clear. Don't be like Phygelus or Hermogenes. Be like Onesiphorus. Stand with me. Guard the truth that has been entrusted to you. Run the race.

You probably don't have to think long for an example of someone who has "turned away." Every one of us knows first-hand a person or perhaps even an entire community of believers who have given up on the Gospel. These examples of desertion can be very painful to remember, but that is precisely the point. There is a lot on the line. We should learn from the example of others, both good and bad. But, as Paul is about to remind Timothy, we will need more than just examples to run the race. We need supernatural power.

### **Draw Strength From the Grace of the Gospel**

In the beginning of chapter 2 Paul returns to the theme of power. "Be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1). The power for the assignment is a theme that has already come up in the letter (1 Tim. 1:6-7; 1 Tim. 1:14), and one that Paul will continue to address. Where can Timothy go to find strength for the race marked out for him? How can he possibly take his place in the Gospel relay?

According to Paul, the power comes from the very heart of the Gospel itself. We not only grab hold, guard, and pass along the Gospel, we draw strength from its truth along the way. The message of the Gospel is a message of grace that is found "in Christ Jesus." We have received that grace and have been saved by it. Now Paul reminds us to draw strength from grace.

### **Hand It to Someone Else**

If you are a Christian, you have been entrusted with the Gospel. You have in your possession an unbelievable treasure! And the fundamental purpose of your Christian life is to give that treasure away.

Paul used the word "entrust." It's the perfect word, because it captures the care and the intentionality with which we ought to share the Gospel with others. It's a lot like handing a baton to the next runner. Who is that person in your life? Who will you go before in the relay of the Gospel? My prayer this morning is that God will strengthen you by His grace and encourage you to take your place in the relay.