

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 5/31/92
II Timothy 1:15-18 "Role Models for Life"

Scripture: II Timothy 1:15-18

Intro: Faithfulness...

Illust: A faithful mother rabbit in our back yard looking for her nest last week..
This morning God's Word is going to challenge us to be FAITHFUL people.

Review: II Timothy is a very personal letter. The apostle Paul is on death row. His days are numbered. In former days, he had traveled the known world of the Roman empire spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. 15 years earlier, while in the city of Lystra, he met a young man around 20 years of age named Timothy. He led Timothy to Christ. Later he invited Timothy to join him in missionary service. That's what Timothy did. He labored by Paul's side for 15 years. He was a great second man, an associate. But Paul's impending death meant Timothy would soon be thrust into a new, unsolicited, and even uncomfortable, position of church leadership.

Timothy was timid by nature. It really hurt him when he saw the Roman soldiers drag Paul away. He was intimidated, perhaps even embarrassed and ashamed.

Out of that background Paul wrote II Timothy. Paul was in prison in Rome. Timothy was leading the church in Ephesus.

Paul's appeal to Timothy was straightforward. He talked to him about:

1. His Perspective in Life--1:8 "Be not thou ashamed..."
2. His Need for Confidence--1:13 "Hold fast the form of sound words"

Challenge: Timothy, be FAITHFUL. Be faithful to Jesus Christ. Be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Be faithful to the people of Jesus Christ.

Illust:

Challenge: To graduates, and to all, BE FAITHFUL.

Then Paul became very practical. It's as if he stopped for a moment, reflected, and said, "Timothy, I don't want to lose you. I don't want there to be any confusion in your mind about what I'm asking. So let me give you a couple of examples. Some role models, both negative and positive."

Note: Paul was not telling Timothy he didn't already know in vv 15-18.

v 15 "This thou knowest"

v 18 "Thou knowest very well"

Proposition: Paul reminded Timothy in II Timothy 1:15-18 of 2 role models of faithfulness--the first negative, the second positive.

I. Negative Role Models of Faithfulness (15)

- A. Who?
- B. What did they do?

II. Positive Role Model of Faithfulness (16-18)

- A. Who?
- B. What did he do?

I. Negative Role Models of Faithfulness (15)

Allow me to pose 2 questions. And let's handle them at the same time.

A. Who? Who were the negative role models of faithfulness?

V 15 "...all they who were in Asia turned away from me"

B. What did they do?

V 15 "...turned away from me"

Timothy knew all too well what had happened in Asia (= Asia Minor). He grew up in Asia Minor in the Lystra area. He had seen Paul come to Asia Minor on his first missionary journey (Acts 13). Paul introduced Timothy to Jesus Christ while in Asia Minor. Later on Paul's second missionary journey Paul returned to Asia Minor, and recruited Timothy for service in the ministry of the gospel. He was well aware of the fact that Paul had led many to Christ, and started many churches in Asia Minor. Timothy knew that well. Timothy knew that Paul had devoted many years of his life to Asia Minor. He spent 2 to 3 years alone in the city of Ephesus. He spent months in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch of Pisidia, and Perga.

Timothy knew that Paul saw great fruit in Asia Minor. Do you remember what Dr. Luke said about the impact of Paul's ministry in Asia Minor? Look at Acts 19:10. Paul spent 2 years teaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ in Ephesus. That was his home base of operations. The ripple effect was so powerful here's what happened-- "...so that all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Everyone in Asia Minor heard about Jesus because of Paul's ministry!

Illust: Like saying everyone in southern Ohio heard...

ALL in Asia heard of Jesus. But what else did the ALL in Asia do? Tim knew. V 15 "...ALL who are in Asia turned away..."

The tense of the verb (aorist) "turned away" seems to refer to some particular event. Paul seems to have a specific scene in his mind. One likely scene may have been the day he was arrested. It's possible Paul may have been arrested in Ephesus. Timothy may have actually seen the soldiers drag him away (in 1:4 Paul said he remembered seeing Timothy crying, perhaps at that time). And when it happened, it knocked the wind out of the believers in Asia. They may have been embarrassed or ashamed of Paul. News spread throughout the churches. Paul was a convicted criminal. So the churches repudiated him. They disowned him.

V 15 does not necessarily mean that every single Christian in Asia turned from Paul. Nor that a total defection from the faith occurred. Remember some 25 years later John would pen the book of Revelation and send it to what churches? Rev 1:11-- the 7 Churches in Asia Minor.

Think of it. In his great hour of need, the very people Paul had introduced to Jesus Christ turned their backs on him. They wrote him off. They committed spiritual mutiny.

Illust:

Note: Crowds are fickle. I'm convinced that a person can fill a church up with people if they wanted. Give people what they want, and they'll come. But Jesus Christ didn't tell us to fill up church buildings. What did He command us to do? Make disciples of Him (Mt 29:19).

Illust: Conversation with Pastor Grollmund. "Preach the Word. That'll bring longlasting results. We tried the big SS campaigns back in the 1960's. We went out and rounded up people to come and help us reach our goal. We even set the record--averaged 330+ for a 6 week period. But you know, after the campaign was over, our attendance dropped back to right where it was before the campaign."

So it was with Paul. One day people were cheering him. The next they abandoned him.

But it wasn't merely "people" in general that hurt Paul. No. They were real people, with real faces, and real names.

V 15 "...of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes"

Who were Phgelus and Hermogenes? They're just funny names to us. But not to Paul. Perhaps out of all the believers in Asia Minor that turned away from Paul, these were the 2 that shocked him the most. Perhaps they used to be his friends, his helpers, his close confidants.

Illust: My pastor told me something a long time ago. Don't minister to please your people. You can do it for awhile but the time will come when you'll have to tell them what they don't want to hear. Minister to please the Lord.

Who did David say betrayed him?

Ps 41:9 "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

Who betrayed Jesus? The one He'd poured given 3 years of his life to...

Perhaps Phygelus and Hermogenes were the guys that used to applaud Paul the most. But no longer.

Or perhaps they were the ringleaders of the defection in Asia Minor. They had some clout. Paul points them out to Tim because they were the ones who caused the cancer to spread in the Body of Christ. Perhaps they didn't like Paul's apostolic authority. And his imprisonment gave them a good chance to promote their own agenda.

Whatever the case, Paul was heartbroken. And with great transparency, he shares his personal pain with Timothy. He says, "Tim, you know this even before I say it. You know that there are UNFAITHFUL people in the church in Asia Minor. They've cast their vote against me. And they've cast their vote against the gospel of Christ. But Tim, don't let that discourage you. Just be aware that not all who name the name of Christ are FAITHFUL. Don't be like them Tim. Be FAITHFUL."

Note: Have you ever heard someone say, "The Bible says don't judge! You don't have any right to judge a person!" That's true, to a point. We can't know what's in a person's heart. But we can see their life. Their fruit. And the fruit of a person's life reveals the condition of their heart (Mt 7:20).

Someone could say, "Well I don't like it when preachers name names!" To be honest, I usually don't either. I think preachers are notorious for going overboard in criticising others who don't march to their drumbeat. But listen. Sometimes it's necessary to name names. At the proper place, in the proper time, with the proper attitude. Paul did. Especially in II Timothy. He spoke frankly to Timothy about real people who were jeopardising the ministry:

- 1:15 Phygelus and Hermogenes (Their problem? Unfaithful)
- 2:16-18 Hymenaeus and Philteus (Their problem? Doctrinal error)
- 4:10 Demas (His problem? His priorities. He loved the world.)
- 4:14 Alexander the Coppersmith (His problem? Pride, rebellion)

Key: Unfaithful people are people you can't count on.. They're self-centered people.

Illust: At Red's game concession stand 4 weeks ago...

The world is full of self-centered people. Unfaithful people.

Illust: When a marriage crumbles, v 15 occurs--one "turns away from"

Tran: There's the negative role model of faithfulness. But there was also...

II. Positive Role Model of Faithfulness (16-18)

Faithfulness is a great quality. God's Word commends it highly:

Neh 7:2 "Hanani... was a faithful man, and feared God more than many."

Gal 3:9 "So then, they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

Paul commended this quality in his associates:

Eph 6:21 "Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord..."

Col 1:7 "Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ."

Paul will eventually tell Tim to find what kind of men to train for ministry?

II Tm 2:2 "And the things... commit to faithful men..."

Q: But what does a Faithful man really look like?

A: I love II Tim 1:16-18! What a refreshing picture of a selfless, faithful servant! In a world full of self-seeking people, how encouraging to see the true story of a man named Onesiphorus! He is a positive role model!

A. Who? Who was a positive model of faithfulness?

V 16 "...Onesiphorus"

His name means "a bringer of profit." We know very little of him. The Bible mentions him only here, and in 4:19.

Outside the Bible, an apocryphal book written in the second century AD called "Acts of Paul and Thecla," tells us a few things about Onesiphorus (reliable?). He had been a citizen of Iconium. He and his wife had entertained Paul in his first missionary journey, and in fact was converted to Jesus Christ by Paul.

Onesiphorus was some person!

Illust:

B. What did he do?

Notice something that's not in vv 16-18. Paul DIDN'T use the word "faithful" to describe Onesiphorus. Why not? He didn't have to. He merely told Tim what Ones had done. His actions spoke for themselves!

Illust: A pastor and bus driver before St. Peter...

Ones wasn't flashy, just faithful. Paul tells us 5 things Ones did for him.

1. He refreshed me.

V 16 "for he often refreshed me"

"refreshed" = to give someone a breath of fresh air; to revive, refresh

Illust: What's one of the first things paramedics do for people? Oxygen
"often"--Paul says, "Tim, I could count on Ones, through thick and thin. When I needed him, he was there. When I heard the prison door rattle, and saw his smiling face, and felt his warm handshake, it was like a breath of fresh air in my foul-smelling prison cell. He refreshed me."

2. He was not ashamed of my chain.

What did Ones and Chuck Colson and Bob and Shirley Litteral have in common? All involved in prison ministries!

Ones was some fellow. When everybody else fled in shame, he was not ashamed. So what if it wasn't good for his reputation to be seen associating with a criminal like Paul! So what if it might hurt his chances for a job promotion! He didn't care. He wasn't ashamed!

3. He sought me (17)

One word strikes me--"diligently." That tells me 2 things. First, Paul's imprisonment was harsh. He was locked away in some forlorn, forgotten hole in a Roman dungeon. And secondly, Ones was committed. In order for Ones to see Paul, he had to travel from Ephesus to Rome, a trip of at least 800 miles. And getting to Rome wasn't the half of it. Once in that teeming capital city, it was not small task to find a prisoner like Paul. It was dangerous to ask questions about his whereabouts. If he asked the wrong person, he might be escorted to Paul, in chains himself! But Ones looked and looked. Why? Because faithful people don't give up! And finally...

4. He found me (17).

Ones was an encourager. He meant so much to Paul.

But this wasn't something he did just once. It was a pattern in his life, going way back to earlier days when Paul was a free man in Ephesus...

5. He ministered unto me.

V 17 "The Lord grant...he ministered unto me..."

Q: What made Onesiphorus tick? What was the key to his faithfulness?

A: Two words in v 18--"THAT DAY."

Ones was dependable in ministry. Not because he got paid for it. But because he lived with the same motivation that controlled Paul. He knew one day he would see His Master face to face.

Challenge: "Faithful" people live their lives with one clear focus--They're constantly thinking of "THAT DAY." They don't get sidetracked by their senses. They don't get tripped up by the trivial. They don't live for temporal pursuits. They pour their lives into things that will matter for eternity!

eg--II Tm 4:6-8 "a crown...unto all them that love His appearing."

That's what Ones did. He modeled faithfulness!

Q: To what was Onesiphorus entitled? What is the privilege of faithful people?

A: Notice carefully what Paul told Tim Ones had coming to him. Paul mentioned it twice.

V 16 "May the Lord give mercy..."

V 18 "The Lord grant...mercy..."

Vv 16-18 are actually a combination prayer and commendation for Ones. Some feel that Ones had died, and that's why Paul prays that his "household" will receive mercy. I don't think that conclusion is necessary (some use this to justify the practice of praying for the dead, which is another notion not supported in Scripture).

What is clear is this. Paul knew that faithful Ones was entitled to receive the blessings of God's matchless mercy. How did he know that? He knew what Jesus said--Mt 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." That is, people who show mercy in the way they treat people will receive mercy from God.

Mercy is more than a theological word for Paul. It should be for us too. We can't live w/o mercy. Mercy is as vital to us as the air we breathe and the food we eat.

--It's because of God's mercy we are not consumed. (Lam 3:22)

--God is rich in mercy (Eph 2:4).

--It's because of God's mercy that we can experience the new birth (I Pt 1:3).

--We can obtain mercy if we come to God through Jesus Christ (Heb 4:16).

Conclusion:

Key: There are 2 kinds of people in the world. There are 2 kinds of people in the church. They are Faithful and there are Unfaithful. Dependable and Undependable. Loyal and Unloyal. Solid and Shaky. Firm and Wishywashy. There are people like Phygelus and Hermogenes, and there are people like Onesiphorus.

Q: Which kind of person are you?

Q: Are you a faithful person?

To help you answer that objectively, let me give you a little self-evaluation quiz:

1. Are you faithful in your relationship with your spouse? Men, do you have eyes only for the woman God has given you? And do you ladies? Is it a priority to you to grow in your relationship with your spouse?

2. Are you faithful in your relationship with your children? Do you make it a priority to teach your children to love and live for Jesus? To spend time with them. Or

do you view them as a noose around your neck, and you don't hesitate to bum them off on someone else?

3. Are you faithful in your relationship with the Church?

You say, "I'm not legalistic. I love Christ. But I don't need the church." Really? What does the Bible say the Church is? Eph 1:22-23--The Church is the Body of Christ. If we say we love Christ, and not love His visible Body, we're guilty of double-talk. Just as we need Jesus Christ, so we need His Body the Church. We need to attend its services faithfully. We need to serve in its ministries faithfully?

Are you? Are you a faithful person?

Listen. It starts here. We will never please God with our lives until we learn to be faithful--I Cor 4:2, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."