

Main Idea: In 2 Timothy 1:12-14, Paul shared two things with Timothy which reveal for us how to be the confident messenger of Jesus.

I. We hear Paul's confession (12).

- A. Confident people keep in mind God's purpose.
- B. Confident people keep in mind God's person.
- C. Confident people keep in mind God's power.
- D. Confident people keep in mind God's plan.

Key: It's God's plan that people like Paul, Timothy, and us pass on the sacred trust of the gospel to a desperate world.

II. We hear Paul's concern (13-14).

- A. We must preserve the gospel (13).

Key: We hold on to the gospel by proclaiming it accurately.

- B. We must protect the gospel (14).

Take Inventory: Some questions to ponder...

- 1. Do I know what I believe?
- 2. Am I living in light of what I believe?
- 3. Have I been proclaiming what I believe?
- 4. Am I being energized by what I believe?

*Scripture:* 2 Timothy 1:8-14

*Video clip:* “Tears of the Saints,” Asia Link (6 minutes)

I've entitled this message, “*The Confident Messenger of Jesus.*” We have been commissioned to be Christ's messengers, for we read in 2 Corinthians 5:19-20, “He has commissioned to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”

This is our privileged assignment, to tell our family members, neighbors, and fellow inhabitants on planet earth about Jesus and what He did to rescue hell-deserving sinners like us.

But consider the word *confident*. As in, “*The Confident Messenger of Jesus.*” Does it describe us? Are we *confident* ambassadors for our Savior? Do we make Him known with boldness and fearlessness?

The truth is, not as we should, not all the time. There are times when we are like Timothy, which is why we need to take heart to the words of encouragement the apostle Paul wrote to him in the letter we call 2 Timothy.

The question is, do you live your life as Jesus' messenger with confidence?

This morning, I want you to hear the words of a confident messenger. He had ever reason NOT to be confident! He was a convicted felon. He was staring death in the face. He would soon be executed. He was all alone in a dingy, Roman dungeon. And yet as we read the letter he wrote to his spiritual son Timothy, we can't help but see and feel his sense of confidence and stability.

Of course, let me say up front that Paul's confidence was not in himself. It was not his education, not his friends, not his accomplishments, and certainly not his material possessions that produced confidence in his life. In fact, remember what he said about

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himself in Gal 2:20? "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me..."

There's the key to Paul's confidence. He says that Jesus Christ lived in and through him.

So how could he be so confident in such a bleak situation? And how can we learn to exhibit confidence? In 2 Timothy 1:12-14, Paul shared two things with Timothy which reveal for us how to be a confident messenger of Jesus.

Last week, in 2 Timothy 1:8-11, Paul challenged Timothy and us about our perspective in life. We learned we must develop a proper perspective of three things, of the gospel (8), of God (9-10), and of ourselves (11).

That's where we left off. Paul exhorted Timothy, "Don't be ashamed Timothy. Don't be afraid to suffer for the gospel. Of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. And you've been appointed too, Timothy, to be a messenger of this gospel message."

Now, lest we think, "Well that's easy for you to say Paul! What right do you have to tell Timothy and us to be willing to suffer for the cause of Christ?!"

Good question, and here's the answer. Listen to Paul's confession in verse 12.

#### I. We hear Paul's confession (12).

Notice the first part of verse 12, "That is why I am suffering as I am." The KJV says, "For which cause I also suffer these things..."

And then he says, "Yet I am not ashamed." Suffering, yes. Ashamed, no.

So Timothy, I'm not asking you to endure something I'm not willing to endure. In fact, right now, I am suffering for Christ. And I am not ashamed of it.

Paul knew what suffering was all about. In fact, let's take a few moments to scan this very letter and look at the verses dealing with suffering—1:8, 12, 16; 2:3, 9, 10, 12; 3:10, 11, 12; 4:5, 6, 7, 14, 16, 17, 18.

We have a problem in the west. Most of us have a deficient view of suffering. We don't understand what Paul did, namely the purpose of suffering, even the value of suffering. We try to avoid it, even pray to get out of it.

But Paul accepted suffering. He viewed suffering for Christ as an opportunity to make Christ known to others, sort of an object lesson of Christ's reality. He viewed suffering as God's refining tool to sharpen his life (Phil 3:10). He knew that God could use affliction to keep him humble (2 Cor 12:7).

He will later say to Timothy in this letter, in 3:12, "All who will live godly will suffer persecution..."

How could Paul exhibit such confidence in the face of suffering? He gives the answer as he gives the rest of his confession in verse 12. It's very autobiographical, very personal. Notice how many times he refers to himself.

"That is why **I am suffering** as I am. Yet **I am not ashamed**, because **I know** whom **I have believed**, and am convinced that he is able to guard what **I have entrusted** to him for that day."

Confident messengers of Jesus live with four things in mind.

**A. Confident people keep in mind God's purpose.**

Paul begins verse 12, “*For which cause I also suffer*” [KJV]. Confident people live with a cause in life. Now some people are confident because they live with a cause, but it's a deficient, or even illegitimate cause. It's a cause that one day will crumble.

Think of the suicide bomber. Think also of the person who sacrifices his or her soul for the sake of career advancement.

So what was the cause Paul had in mind? Look back again to verse 11, “And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.”

Here's the cause that consumed Paul's life. He lived with God's purpose in mind. And what was God's purpose for Paul? God had told him almost three decades earlier, “I have chosen you to be my representative to the Gentiles. I want you to invest your life making Jesus Christ known to them. That's My purpose for you.” [See Acts 9:6, 15-16]

From that day Paul lived with God's purpose in mind. That's why he could be confident when the hostile mob of angry Jews wanted to rip his head off in Jerusalem.

Remember that incident? The Jews hated the fact that Paul preached Jesus. They hated even more that he preached Jesus to Gentiles. Why did he do it then? Listen to what he told the frenzied Jews in Acts 22:21, “And He said to me, Depart, for I will send you to the Gentiles.”

That statement caused Paul to spend the next four years in prison! Yet he said it, and he knew those four years in prison were not a waste. It too was God's purpose. Paul knew the reason he suffered was because of the gospel.

Specifically, Paul knew that being a preacher of the gospel was God's will for his life. That was God's purpose for him, which he joyfully embraced.

Do you know what God's purpose is for your life? Do you?

It isn't God's will for every Christian to be a missionary or a pastor. But God *does* have a purpose for each of us.

First, it's not His purpose that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Have you repented of your sin and put your trust in the One He sent to rescue you from sin's penalty? Come to know Christ. This is God's purpose for you. Knowing Christ is eternal life (John 17:3).

And then make Christ known. This too is God's purpose for you, if you're His. “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you,” said Jesus to the disciples in John 20:21. “In your going make disciples of all nations,” He said in Matthew 28:19.

So the Living God purposes to use our lives to make His Son known to this world. It's His will for some to fulfill this assignment as pastors and missionaries, yes, and for others to fulfill it as Christ-honoring school teachers, and engineers, and housewives, and nurses, and salesmen.

Do you view your job as just a job? It puts bread on the table. Or can you say, “I know this is God's purpose for my life. I know, by God's grace, that I am doing what God wants me to do with my life. I am Christ's ambassador, right where He has placed me. And I am not ashamed.”

Paul could say that. Can we?

By the way, if you make a commitment to live your life with God's purpose in mind, don't expect the world to be impressed. It seldom is with a faithful Jesus' follower.

That brings us to a second mark of the confident messenger that Paul modeled.

**B. Confident people keep in mind God's person.**

Verse 12, "I am not ashamed, because I know *whom* I have believed. What gave Paul confidence? What He KNEW. Rather, WHO he knew.

He knew a Person. He had a relationship with a personal God. He shared with us his view of this personal God back in verses 9-10. In verse 9 he contemplated God the Father's plan ("He saved us," and "He called us by His own purpose and grace"). Then in verse 10 he marveled at God the Son's work ("He destroyed death," and "He brought life and immortality to light").

This is basic, but critical. Confident people live with God's person in mind. Christianity is not a religion. It's a relationship with Someone you know. It's highly personal, and if it becomes less than personal, we'll lose our confidence.

So why do we come to church anyway?

Because it's our duty? No! So we can get to know a Person better, the One who shed His precious blood for us!

When people say, "Why do I *have* to come to church for SS, or on Sunday evening, or Wednesday evening?", my response is, you don't *have* to.

The better question is, "How much do I really want to get to know the Person of Jesus Christ? And become the person He wants me to be? And get to know others who love Him, so that together we can more effectively make Him known in this community and world?"

Is it important for me to grow in my relationship with Jesus Christ?" Listen. If something is important to me, I'll make sacrifices to make it happen.

I think back to when Sherry and I were dating. I'd always loved sports, but now sports didn't seem so important. Why not? Because there was something in my life that I now wanted more, getting to know this amazing person.

Confident messengers are the ones who make it a priority in their lives to get to know God better. The confident messenger of Jesus lives with God's purpose in mind, secondly, with God's person in mind. Thirdly...

### **C. Confident people keep in mind God's power.**

Paul says next in verse 12, "And am convinced that He is *able to guard*." "...He is able to keep," says the KJV.

We serve a God who is ABLE! The word translated "able" is *dunatos*. We get our english word dynamo, dynamite, from the same root. It's translated elsewhere "power".

Paul didn't live life trusting in his own abilities. What gave Paul confidence? The power of God.

And what specifically was God able to do? To keep something. And that brings us to our fourth characteristic. God's purpose, God's person, God's power, and...

### **D. Confident people keep in mind God's plan.**

Look at the end of verse 12, "What I have entrusted to him for that day." Or as the KJV puts it, "...what He has committed to me against that day."

What did Paul mean by "that day"? He's talking about the second coming of Jesus Christ. Paul lived this life with an eye on that coming day. He saw beyond the chains. He saw beyond the lash marks on his back. He knew His God had a plan!

What is God's plan? Simply stated, this. God created this world. Mankind rebelled against Him. His judgment was inevitable. But God loved this world. He devised a plan whereby sinful people could be rescued from their plight. He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die the death sinners deserved, to pay their penalty for sins. That was God's plan. It was also God's plan that His Son would conquer death, and return to heaven. Why? To prepare a place for His followers. And then one day, He is coming again, to judge the world in righteousness, and establish His eternal kingdom, ultimately a new heaven and earth.

That's God's plan. An amazing plan which is as reliable as the God who designed it. And Paul lived his life with that plan in mind. It was always on his mind.

There's something else about that plan. Look at the phrase in v 12, "*what I have entrusted to Him* for that day."

It's true that Paul had entrusted everything in his life to God. And we should too. But it's possible to translate the phrase differently. In fact, in the Greek, there are only two words: lit. "my deposit" (same word in v 14 "the thing committed unto you").

Here's what Paul's saying. God is able to keep "my deposit" until that day. Paul's not thinking so much about what he has committed to God, as what God has committed to him. What had God given to Paul? What had Paul passed on to Timothy? What has been passed on to us? It's *the gospel*.

*Key: It's God's plan that people like Paul, Timothy, and us pass on the sacred trust of the gospel to a desperate world.*

To give you a heads up, that's what this evening's service is all about. We're going to focus on how to be more effective in passing on this gospel. Dave Beam will be leading us in an important how-to session.

So how do we know this plan will succeed? After all, we're prone to stumble and fall, so what if the church fails?

Here's the basis of Paul's confidence. "I know God won't fail! True, He has entrusted this gospel to us. But He'll take care of it Himself."

Jesus said, "I WILL build my church." And He is, and will, until He's finished.

Do you ever get discouraged when you look around and see how increasingly secular our society is becoming? How the public tries to snuff Jesus Christ out of existence? I do.

But Paul would say, "Be assured of this. It may get dark. But God will never allow the light of the gospel to be extinguished. His plan will succeed!"

To be a confident messenger of Jesus, we must keep these things in mind: God's purpose, God's person, God's power, and God's plan.

We've heard Paul's confession to Timothy. Paul bore his soul to Timothy. He told him the things that generated confidence in his life. Then he shared perhaps his deepest concern.

## II. We hear Paul's concern (13-14).

Now, if we had been in Paul's predicament and were writing this letter, I wonder what we would have shared as our deepest concern. Keep in mind that Paul was chained like an animal in a hole in the ground. He had not received fair legal treatment in the

court room, and would not. He was facing execution, and had been abandoned by almost all of his Christian friends. This man had every right to be concerned about himself.

And he will be practical about some needs in his life in chapter 4 (he was lonely, verse 9; he needed warm clothing, verse 13; he missed his books, verse 13). So Paul's not a robot. He had feelings. He had needs. And he didn't ignore them.

But when it came to what was most important, what his greatest concern? Here it is, verses 13-14. "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us."

Paul's greatest concern was the future of the gospel after he was gone. That's why he gave Timothy, and by application *us*, two assignments regarding the gospel.

**A. We must preserve the gospel (13).**

Verse 13, "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus."

The verb "keep," or in the AV, "hold fast," is a command. It doesn't happen automatically. In fact, it takes intentionality to *keep*.

Keep what? Keep "what you heard from me." Paul elaborates in 2:2, "The things you heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men."

Timothy had heard Paul preach hundreds of times, and in every town or city or jail or lecture hall the message was the same. *Keep* it, Timothy.

But not just *keep* it. Timothy, keep it *as the pattern of sound teaching*. The word "pattern" (or 'form') is an interesting term. It's what an architect makes before he gets down to the detailed plans of a building, the outline or the sketch. It's what a writer puts on paper before he arrives at the final production, the rough draft.

Timothy, I want you to hold on to what you heard me preach. Make it the pattern for every sermon you ever preach. It's the standard, the sketch, the outline of *sound teaching* ("sound words," that which is healthy; lit. "healthy doctrine").

No doubt, Timothy didn't look like Paul, or have mannerisms like Paul, or move his arms like Paul when he preached. But he needed to sound like Paul. No, not tone of voice, or illustrations, but in content.

There's no room for a novel preacher in God's work. We've been given a sketch, from the apostles themselves, and the messenger's task is to be faithful to that message. To flesh it out, yes. To apply it to various situations, yes. But always, with a desire to say nothing that would obscure the sketch and only that which would make it clearer.

I can't resist this story. One of our young men, Austin, graduated from high school last night. I'm so encouraged by the work God has done in his life. I remember something Austin said when he was just a little guy. "When I grow up, I want to be a pastor." And why? "Because you only have to know *one book!*"

Fellow messengers of Jesus, we need to lock in on what Paul told Timothy. Timothy, remember where you got your message. You got it from me. I got it from the Lord. Now hold on to it. Preserve it. I gave you the outline, the draft, the sketch. Now wherever you go, remain true to that message. Preach the gospel. Teach the gospel. Preserve the gospel.

But there's something else here. Paul told Timothy not only what to do, but *how* to do it.

Verse 13, “Keep...with faith and love in Christ Jesus.”

Timothy, it's not enough merely to preserve the right message. You must also have the right attitude. Resemble Christ not only in what you say, but also in how you say it.

Friends, we must be willing to stand up for the truth, no question, but when we do, when we proclaim the message we have received we must do so *with faith and love in Christ Jesus*.

With *faith* in Christ Jesus. It's not a religion we're promoting. It's not a way of life, or a philosophy. It's a person in whom we believe and to whom we have given absolute allegiance. That must come through loud and clear as we hold on to our message. We have *faith* in Christ Jesus.

And *love in Christ Jesus*, too. We do what we do because we love God and love others with a love we have received from our Savior. “By this will all men know you are my disciples, if you *love one another* (John 13:35).”

Truth without love is brutality. Love without truth is hypocrisy. We're truth *and* love people.

And this is critical. In verse 13 Paul says to *keep* the gospel message, to preserve it. How do we do that? By writing it on our doctrinal statement. By having good theology books on our shelves. That can help, but there's no substitute for this.

*Key: We hold on to the gospel by proclaiming it accurately.*

Notice again, Paul told Timothy to keep what he had heard as the pattern of sound teaching. So he was to hold it, but also to teach it. We actually hold it as we proclaim it to others, again, and again, and again.

Paul's first concern. We must *preserve* the gospel. The second is related.

#### **B. We must protect the gospel (14).**

Verse 14, “Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.” “That good thing...keep,” says the KJV.

What's “that good thing” or “the good deposit”? Paul said something similar to Timothy back in 1 Timothy 6:20, “Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge.”

Paul's talking again about a message that Timothy received. Don't offer people *godless chatter*, Timothy, or fanciful *ideas*. Give them the good deposit, Timothy, the sketch, the outline you heard from me. *The gospel*, Timothy. Make sure that's what comes out of your mouth.

Paul's adamant, isn't he? To Timothy, and to us. Of all the things to get worked up over sitting in a dungeon awaiting execution! *Make sure you guard the gospel!*

Why's that necessary? Because the messengers of Jesus are so prone to slide into a new message.

I was at a Pastors' day years ago with John MacArthur who made this observation, “Men don't become heretical in one big leap... but in small steps. It happens when they become sloppy in the way they handle the truth.”

Sunday School teachers, it's good to be creative in your teaching methods, to use a variety of methods. There's certainly more than one way you can present the message.

But there's only one message. It's the good news that God sent His Son into the world, who made an atoning sacrifice for sinners on the cross, and who defeated death, and now gives eternal life to whomever will repent and believe in Him. That is our message, a message we unpack, and go deep into, and cherish, and share with others.

Yet to share it, we must first guard it, or before long, we won't have anything to share. Guard the message, brothers and sisters. Don't distort it, dilute it, delete it, or add to it. Don't try and be fancy and clever and innovative when it comes to the message. Guard it.

You say, "But I need help! I'm afraid I won't guard it."

Thankfully, what we need, we *have*. "Guard it," says Paul, "with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in you." The Spirit gives us power to witness for Jesus (Acts 1:8). And He helps us guard the message, too. God gives us all we need.

### Take Inventory: Some questions to ponder...

As we finish, I want us to take inventory by pondering some questions. In verse 12 Paul said, "I know whom I have believed." So answer this...

1. *Do I know what I believe?* Do I believe the message that fortified Paul as he sat in a dark dungeon cell? Do I believe the gospel, the good news concerning Jesus, and therefore know for certain that when I die I will enter heaven and be with my Savior forever?

Take that a step further. Do I know what I believe well enough to defend it when criticized? And if not, what do I need to do to get to know better what I truly believe? That, of course, is what this church is all about, a training center, if you will, for knowing and living. Our Sunday School classes, our Wednesday evening Bible study (we just started a series on the Miracles of Jesus), and more.

2. *Am I living in light of what I believe?* Does my life enhance my message? Are my neighbors more inclined to believe what I believe because of the way I live? Do they *see* the love of Christ that I talk about? Do they *feel* it?

3. *Have I been proclaiming what I believe?* Did I tell anyone last week about Jesus? Did I explain for them what sin is, and what Jesus did on the cross, and what they need to do to be saved? Have I been a faithful messenger of Jesus with my kids, and neighbors, and people at work?

And if the Lord wants to use me to proclaim His message to those far away, am I willing to go as His messenger?

4. *Am I being energized by what I believe?* I don't know what challenges you're facing. I'm sure you have them. And I'm sure that few, if any, of us are facing a challenge any greater than Paul was, alone in that horrid dungeon.

Yet he was energized and full of life. *I know whom I have believed, and am convinced He is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.*

Paul didn't just believe. He was energized by what he believed. Am I? And if not, what needs to change so I am?