

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 5/17/92
II Timothy 1:8-11 "How to Live with the Proper Perspective"

Intro: Dave Dravecky is a household name in baseball circles. You probably know his story...

What strikes me about Dave Dravecky is this word--Perspective. He possesses a great perspective on his life. Chuck Johnson from USA Today interviewed Dravecky, and shares this testimony of his perspective, "I've come to understand that God is really shaping and molding my character. I've come to realize that real growth of character takes place in the valleys of life."

That's perspective.

Q: How can I learn to live with the proper perspective in life?

A: That's what Paul wanted to teach his spiritual son and ministry cohort Timothy. In fact, living with a proper perspective is what vv 8-11 of II Tim 1 are all about.

Why did Paul have to write to Timothy about his perspective? Let me resketch the setting for you. The year was around 67 AD. Paul, the man who had once persecuted Christians, was now himself facing execution because of his commitment to Jesus Christ. He was incarcerated in a dark Roman dungeon. For nearly 30 years he had poured every ounce of his life into this consuming purpose--to know Christ, and to make Christ known to others.

Timothy was in Ephesus. Timothy was Paul's #1 associate. Paul had led Timothy to the Lord on his first trip to Lystra. And Paul had recruited Timothy for missionary service on his second trip. For 15 years, Timothy had served Christ at the side of his mentor.

Here was the problem. Paul would soon be gone. Timothy would soon be thrust into a new position of leadership. The future success of the gospel depended on the faithful efforts of people like Timothy. But Tim had 3 strikes against him--He was young, prone to illness, and a timid introvert by personality.

If Timothy was going to continue to be used by God in the Gospel ministry, he needed to get a grip on his perspective in life. So Paul wrote II Timothy, the most personal of his 13 NT letters.

Illust:

Q: How can I learn to live with the proper perspective in life?

Proposition: In II Timothy 1:8-11, Paul challenged Timothy to develop a proper perspective of 3 things.

I. Develop a Proper Perspective of the Gospel (8).

II. Develop a Proper Perspective of God (9-10).

A. God the Father's Plan (9)

B. God the Son's Work (10)

1. He abolished death.

2. He secured life.

III. Develop a Proper Perspective of Yourself (11).

Last Week:

Paul reminded Timothy of 2 things in vv 5-7.

1. His Call to Salvation (5)
2. His Call to Service (6-7)

V 7 "God has not given us the spirit of fear..."

Now look at the first words of v 8.

V 8 "Be not thou ashamed."

Timothy was afraid, even ashamed.

Illust: Sometimes my wife is ashamed of me..."You're not going to wear that striped tie are you, with that plad shirt?! If you do, I won't be seen in public with you!"

Timothy was ashamed. It was a little embarrassing to know that his spiritual father personal friend was in prison. Not visiting prison, but IN prison. As a convicted felon. A political prisoner. The Romans said Paul was a menace to civilized society.

Note: Do you know what happened in July of the year 64AD? A great fire devoured the city of Rome. Massive destruction. The Romans attributed the fire to the wrath of the gods. The Emperor was Nero. Some felt he started the fire by arson. Do you know what Nero did to divert attention from himself and appease the gods of Rome? He found a scapegoat. He blamed the Christians for the problems in Rome. He instigated severe hatred and persecution against Christians. The ancient historian Tacitus records that under Nero some Christians were covered with the skins of wild beasts and torn by wild dogs. Some were crucified. Others he burned as torches in the night sky. That began in the year 64 AD.

It was 3 years later when Paul wrote to Timothy. Public opinion was still hot against the scum of society known as Christians.

No wonder Timothy was ashamed.

Q: How could he overcome his shame and fear?

A: He needed a perspective adjustment. In 3 areas...

I. Develop a Proper Perspective of the Gospel (8).

V 8 "Be not ashamed..."

What adjustments did Tim need when it came to the gospel? Paul gave Tim 2 sets of instructions. First, Negative Instructions, then a Positive Instruction.

A. Negative Instruction

1. Don't be ashamed of 2 things.
 - a. Of the Testimony of our Lord

When God saves us, why doesn't he just take us to heaven, immediately? Why does He leave us here? The answer is simple. He has given us a job to do. Every one of us.

Acts 1:8 The last words of Jesus to His followers, "You shall be my witnesses." Our mission is clear. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (II Cor 4:5). That is our calling in life--to testify to this world what Jesus Christ has done.

Q: Do you remember why the Apostle John was exiled to Patmos?

A: In his own words in Rev 1:9, "I was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Timothy, don't be ashamed of the testimony of Jesus Christ! Don't be intimidated by the slander and attacks of Nero. Don't be silenced by the biased accounts of the media.

Note: Don't be shocked by the abusive treatment that the Press gives Christianity today either. The message is not popular.

Timothy, don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.

Q: Are you ashamed to speak up for Christ? Illust:

b. Of the Prisoner of the Lord

Timothy, don't be ashamed of me! Look carefully at Paul's wording. Notice his perspective. He was chained in a Roman cell. He was a prisoner. But whose prisoner did he say he was? Nero's? No! The Lord's!

Now that's perspective! Timothy, I'm here because of Christ! I'm not ashamed, so don't you be! What a perspective of the gospel!

Listen. There's a great need for people today who are not ashamed of Jesus Christ!

--Like Paul in Rom 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ..."

--Like Onesiphorus in II Tim 1:16, "he was not ashamed of my chain."

--Like Paul in II Tim 1:12, "For which cause I suffer... I am not ashamed..."

Q: How can I have a proper perspective of the gospel?

Here's where it starts. On the negative side, I must make a commitment, that by God's help, I won't be ashamed of His testimony, or of His people who are suffering for Him.

Illust: What's your attitude towards those participating in Operation Rescue?

B. Positive Instruction

V 8 "But be thou a partaker..."

"be thou partaker of the afflictions" = that's one greek word; Paul coined it himself for the occasion. It means "to bear evil treatment along with." He uses the same word again in II Tim 2:3, where our English Bibles translate it this way, "Endure hardness."

Now that's quite an invitation! Timothy, I invite you to join with me in suffering! Suffering? For what?

If I am going to suffer, it's going to be for something worthwhile...

Illust: Dan Lodwick and his shoulder therapy. After the first treatment, "Man, I thought the guy was going to kill me!" Why did he go back and endure more of the suffering? Because the reason warranted the suffering.

What reason warranted Timothy's willingness to suffer?

"Be a partaker of the afflictions of the GOSPEL."

The gospel. The good news of Jesus Christ warrents paying a price. In fact, no price is too great to pay for the sake of the gospel.

But how can we do it? We're not super-humans! How can we endure?

v 8 "by the power of God."

Q: Do you have a proper perspective of the gospel?

Illust:

Tran: You may be thinking, "Well, how could Paul have such a perspective that he would be willing to suffer for the gospel?" It had to do with a second perspective.

II. Develop a Proper Perspective of God (9-10).

Do you know what strikes me about Paul? Paul never in his life got over the wonder of what God had done for him!

Hymn: "O, the wonder of it all..."

Paul constantly thought of God, and what God had done for him.

Q: What has God done for us? Do you know what He has done?

A: Paul tells us in vv 9-10.

A. God the Father's Plan (9)

Do you know what God did in the beginning? Gen 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth..." But do you know what God did even before that?

V 9 tells us. It takes on back in time, to before time even began.

"before the world began" = lit. "before eternal times"

What did God the Father do even before the world began? He designed our salvation! Notice 2 things God the Father designed for us:

1. He saved us. (=keep, rescue, deliver)
2. He called us to a holy calling.

Please notice carefully what Paul says to Tim. "Tim, God saved us. God called us. God did it. God the Father designed a plan whereby sinful people like us could be forgiven of our sins. God the Father designed a plan so that we could be made holy. Just think Timothy, that's what God has done for us!"

That's what God has done for us too!

I Thes 4:7 "For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."

I Cor 1:2 We are "called to be saints" (=holy ones)

Q: Why did God the Father choose to save and call us in eternity past? On what basis did He do it? Was it because as He looked ahead and saw us, He was impressed with us? Was it because we were worthy? Was it because He knew that one day we would walk an isle? Was it because He knew we'd pray the sinner's prayer?

Look carefully at Paul's answer. It was NOT because of anything we have done--v 9 "NOT according to our own works".

Q: On what basis then did God chose to save and call us to Himself?

A: v 9 "according to His own purpose and grace"

See: Romans 8:28-30

8:28 "...to them who are the called according to His purpose"

What are Christians? People who have been "called acc to God's purpose."

Do you know what God the Father did for us before time ever began?

8:30 "predestinated...called...justified...glorified."

Predestinate = to determine beforehand; to ordain beforehand

Eph 1:3-5 "...Father... has chosen us... having predestinated"

Before God ever made us, these 4 decisions took place in His mind--He predestinated beforehand that we would be His. He called us to Himself. He justified us (declared that we would be righteous). He glorified us (that is yet to happen, yet in God's mind, it's as good as accomplished!).

See also Romans 9:11

9:11 "For the children being not yet born... that the purpose of God..."

Listen. The doctrine of election is controversial for some. It wasn't for Paul. True, it's difficult for us to comprehend with our finite minds. But be assured of this. Election is a biblical doctrine.

Quote: John Stott, "The doctrine of election is never introduced in Scripture either to arouse or to baffle our carnal curiosity, but always for a practical purpose. On the one hand, it engenders deep humility and gratitude, for it excludes all boasting. On the other, it brings both peace and assurance, for nothing can quieten our fears for our own stability like the knowledge that our safety depends ultimately not on ourselves but on God's own purpose of grace." (36)

Key: Election is a positive doctrine. It motivated Paul. Do you know what gave Paul confidence while he was sitting in the dungeon for Christ?

2:9-10 "I suffer.. I endure all things for the elect's sake..."

That same doctrine would stabilize Timothy as well.

Problem: The gospel preached today too often is shallow and deficient. It's a Man-centered Gospel, instead of a God-centered gospel... Illust:

Tran: Tim needed a proper perspective of God. That would start if he refocused on the Father's plan. And secondly on...

B. God the Son's Work (10)

V 9 takes us back before time. V 10 takes us back 2000 years.

V 10 "But is made manifest..."

God the Father devised the plan. God the Son did the work. What did Jesus Christ, God's only Son, do? He accomplished two things for us...

1. Negatively--He abolished death.

V 10 "who hath abolished death"

Death is Man's greatest enemy. It plagues us. It haunts us. We can't escape it. There are 3 types of death acc to the Bible: Physical death (the separation of the soul from the body), spiritual death (sep of the soul from God), and Eternal death (the sep of both soul and body from God forever)

Illust:

"abolish" = render inoperative; to make ineffective, powerless

Illust:

How did Jesus abolish death? By conquering death, by dying and being raised!

2. *Positively--He secured life.*

V 10 "hath brought life and immortality to light..."

This phrase is loaded with implications! Jesus Christ offers us 2 things:

1. Life = Abundant living in the here and now!
2. Immortality = Incorruptible living in the life to come!

Just think of it! Jesus Christ provides us with life that's both abundant and eternal. You can't beat that!

Q: And how can people have access to this life?

A: v 10b "through the gospel"

Do you see what Paul's saying to Timothy? Timothy, don't be ashamed!

Develop a proper perspective of the gospel! The gospel is worthy suffering for. And develop a proper perspective of God. God the Father designed your salvation. God the Son secured it by His work.

Application: There's a popular misconception today. If you asked the average person on the street what he thought about Jesus, here's what he'd say: "Jesus was a great person. He is our example. We should try to live like Him in our lives. And if we do, we'll go to heaven."

Q: Is that true? Did Jesus Christ merely come to be our Example?

A: What does Paul call Jesus in v 10--"our SAVIOR"

Before Jesus can be our EXAMPLE, He must be our SAVIOR. Is he your Savior?

Illust:

Tran: What happens when we develop a proper perspective of God, and what He has done for us? It transforms that way we look at ourselves!

III. Develop a Proper Perspective of Yourself (11).

Paul's self-concept was directly related to His perspective of God.

Note: By the way, if you want to develop a good view of yourself, you don't start with introspection. You must start by getting a good view of God.

Paul had every reason in the world to have a poor self-esteem. But he didn't. Notice what he said about himself.

V 11 "I am appointed..." (passive--GOD appointed me.)

Paul knew what God wanted him to be doing with his life. He wanted Tim to know and do what God wanted with his life.

Q: Are you doing what God wants you to be doing with your life?

Illust: