

Sunday, December 7, 2008
Living Hope EFC

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(2 Timothy) "Timothy: Don't Quit! The cost is too high!"

How often have you heard it happen? Someone accepts Christ into their lives, starts on the Christian life with enthusiasm, runs into difficulties – then walks away from fervent commitment.

It can even happen to pastors...

Erwin Lutzer: *Pastor to Pastor*

A friend of mine, fresh out of Bible College, became the pastor of a small country church. One day the elders asked him to visit a wealthy member who hadn't been attending regularly but continued to contribute to the church coffers. "We don't think he's even a Christian," they said.

So at their insistence, he visited the old gentleman and asked him point-blank if he was saved. The man became incensed at the pastor's audacity to suggest that he, a self-made man, was not a Christian.

Several weeks later, the church building burned down. The congregation met in a schoolroom to decide what to do. After the decision was made to rebuild, the man whose salvation had been questioned stood up.

"This young man had the nerve to question whether I was a Christian-what do you suggest we do about it?" He sat down with an air of importance, waiting for a response. –Silence.

"I move we terminate him as pastor," the man said. There was some discussion, but not one of the elders rose to defend their pastor and explain that he had been acting on their requests. Later a vote was taken, and the young man was given two weeks to resign. After the meeting, no one came to speak to him except a school janitor, who heard over the public address system what had happened. The pastor left the building and began walking in blinding rain mile after mile...

That was 35 years ago. He never pastored another church. –29

• **In 2 Tim. = Paul is concerned about Timothy's staying power!**

Young Timothy joined the apostle Paul in Acts 16:1-3, 50AD.

- It's good to remind ourselves – Timothy was from present day *Turkey*, Paul himself was from Tarsus, part of Turkey (Asia Minor)
- Timothy helped Paul evangelize Macedonia (Greece), was with him in Ephesus (3 yrs), traveled with him to Corinth & various cities, to prison (Phil.1:1), finally stayed in Ephesus.

1Timothy: (63AD)

- Paul, now with some 30 years of ministry experience in planting churches, knows that all who name the name of Christ will not persevere in their faith! He warns Timothy, pastor at Ephesus, that certain "conduct" is necessary if the church is to carry out her mission. **1:18,19; 4:1,13; 6:10,12,20**

2 Timothy: (67AD)

- **Nero's** (37-68AD) horrid persecutions had begun in **64AD**.
- Paul himself is in chains in a prison dungeon – **2:9; 1:15**.

- Peter (64?) and other Apostles had been **martyred**.
- ***It is not surprising that even Timothy might be affected!***

(2 Timothy) “ Timothy: Don’t Quit! The cost is too high!”

CHAPTER 1: Timothy seems to be teetering in commitment.

1:1-7 Timidity! The flame of his “gift/ calling” was going out.

- NOTE – Timothy inherited a “**3 generation**” faith.
- *We never know where our faith will end up, or in whom!*

1:8-10 Don’t be ashamed of the Gospel or Christ...or me.

- Remember Who saved you and from what!
- *It is easy to think that we’re on the “losing” side*, when we focus on the present and not on Christ!
- NOTE: Jesus destroyed death! V.10

1:12 – Paul’s example: He is banking all on Christ’s victory!

- He is suffering rejection too, from his own colleagues –v15.
- JESUS – Is never Someone to be ashamed of! (Nero is!)
- ***The rejection of our culture of Christ – tempts us to shame!***

1:16-18 – The example of a faithful friend, Onesiphorus.

- He was probably from Timothy’s church –4:19.
- He followed Paul to Rome and sought him out despite the stigma attached to being in prison, to help him.
- *Who/ what is it we value enough to so pursue?*

CHAPTER 2: Adjustments Timothy needed to make.

Being a good servant demands strength & perseverance.

2:1-7 Don’t stop making disciples! Christ is raised from dead v.8.

- Serve your Commander. Discipline yourself. Look for a harvest

2:10 – Paul’s example! *No price is too much* – for eternal life!

Piper: “Whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.’ In other words, **it is better to lose your life than to waste it.** If you live gladly to make others glad in God, your life will be hard, your risks will be high, and your joy will be full...Some of you will die in the service of Christ. *That will not be a tragedy.* *Treasuring life above Christ is a tragedy.*” - *Don’t Waste Your Life*, 10

Piper: “**Remember, you have one life.** That’s all. You were made for God. Don’t waste it.” - *Don’t Waste Your Life*, 10

2:14-19 – Focus on teaching God’s Word, avoid speculations.

- In contrast to being ashamed before men –1:8, Paul warns about being **ashamed before God.** V.15
- What brings shame to a pastor? Yet many treat it so lightly!

2:20-21 – Be a vessel for “noble” purposes, one God can use!

- Get rid of attitudes, behavior, fears, apathy that tarnish you.
- 2 Cor.4:7-11 All of us have Treasure within to be noble vessels.

CHAPTER 3: Expect opposition & persecution but keep on!

3:1-5 – Recognize that there will be a lot of people who appear to be doing humanitarian deeds, but who reject God!

3:10-11 - Paul's example! “You know how I've suffered.”

- **3:12** – POINT!: Everyone who serves Christ will suffer. Acts 14:22

3:14-17 – Follow those whose example you know and can trust

- Follow examples of me & your family & God's Word.
- It is the SCRIPTURE that is GOD'S ABSOLUTE reality for eternal life and our guide for daily living. TRUST HIM!

CHAPTER 4: Preach God's Word, focus on God's presence

4:1-5 – When popular opinions are against you, and friends abandon you, and persecution increases – DON'T QUIT!

4:6-8 – Paul's example! **The time of my departure has come!**

- How important is our example to the faith & life of others?
- Our words will only have the force that our life reinforces!
- Paul asked nothing of Timothy that he wasn't willing to do.
- **God asks nothing of us that He was not willing to do.**

4:9-21 – A list of people & varied responses to God. **REALITY!**

- **V.17** – Christ – will stand by your side, not matter what...
- DON'T GIVE UP!
- **V.22:** Closing prayer! **Final words...**

TWO POINTS – IN CLOSING

1- Don't quit when life gets hard and people disappoint you and even desert you!
Focus on God's presence and keep on going!

- **Hebrews 11:5-6!** God sees & knows your life, your heart, your struggles and testings. And HE will bring you safely home!

Piper: “If our single, all-embracing passion is to make much of Christ in life and death, and if the life that magnifies him most is the life of costly love, then **life is risk, and risk is right. To run from it is to waste your life.**” - *Don't Waste Your Life*, 79

Piper: “But what happens when the people of God do not escape from **the beguiling enchantment of security?** What happens if they try to live their lives in the mirage of safety? The answer is wasted lives. Do you remember the time it happened? - *Don't Waste Your Life*, 88,89

- **Num.13:2f** “Lets go up...We are not able.” The result was thousands of wasted **lives and wasted years...Oh, how much is wasted when we do not risk for the cause of God!**”

2 – Why is the Church, the pastoral ministry, our joint mission so important? Important enough to die for – in a dungeon?

- **2 Tim.3:15-17 1 Tim.3:14-15**
- God's Word (gospel) alone, is His power for Salvation.

Barna: *Deliver us From Evil*, 212

- 1991, 67% of US population did not believe in absolute truth.
- 1994, this figure rose to 75%.
- 1991, 52% of **evangelicals** did not believe in absolute truth.
- 1994, this figure rose to 62%.

The Truth of the Gospel will live or die – with the Church!

- If it dies....? 2 Thes.2:9-12.

10-year-old Ashley Danielle Oubre's speech at 1995 Mayoral Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C.

- *Deliver us From Evil*, 197-8=98

Q: Is the Bible merely a fanciful storybook, distorting reality? Or is it fantastically true, challenging the intellect against its escapist illusions? ... Is this God's Word to us?