

Session 1

THE JOY OF MAKING DISCIPLES

2 Timothy 1:1-7

Memory Verse

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.

– 2 TIMOTHY 1:7, CSB



The Joy of Making Disciples

THEOLOGICAL THEME: Calling, comfort, and perseverance are all wrapped up in the person and work of Christ Jesus. Jesus' work on behalf of Christians provides them with a great salvation, as well as surpassing benefits, as they make their way down the narrow road toward heaven.

If a poor man has one hundred dollars picked from his pocket, it would be no wonder that he would fall into despair and dismay. That one hundred dollars was most of what he had to live on. No one would fault him for crying for losing such a sum. But if a millionaire is robbed of one hundred dollars, he may not like it, but he isn't troubled too terribly, because he has much more at home, in the bank, and in his investments. The rich man won't lose any sleep because of the loss of one hundred dollars. It is as nothing to him. It is no great loss.

Similarly, when a person is in possession of the great treasure of forgiveness for sins, justification before God, and eternal life, the loss of temporal things is of little consequence compared to the person who is living only for what is here on earth. The Christian who knows his or her position before God can comfortably and confidently bear up against all the troubles and trials he or she meets. Faithful Christians have held loosely to earthly things (even their own lives!) since the very beginning. Almost all of the apostles met a martyr's death.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, Paul aimed to remind his dear son in the faith that he possessed great riches in Christ, and to be careful to not hold too tightly to the comforts of this world that fade away. Timothy, like Paul, faced persecution and suffering. But Timothy's calling was to preach the Word, and his obedience to his Savior was paramount in his heart. The treasures this world had to offer were so temporal that even rust and moth could destroy them. Christ, however, was Timothy's eternal treasure that never fades, never wears out, and never fails. The same is true for all Christians today.

? What is something you would be very grieved over if you lost it? How likely is it you would be able to regain or replace this item if you lost it?

? What is the relationship between the amount a person grieves over a loss and the ability to recoup that lost thing and/or abundant supply of reserve of the lost item?

Session Summary

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy to encourage him to stay faithful to his call even in the midst of suffering. In the passage we are studying today, Paul reminded Timothy of who he was (Paul's dearly loved son), expressed his affection and thanksgiving for him, and challenged him to continue the work to which he had been called.

1. Of, In, and From Christ (2 Tim. 1:1-2)

From the moment we learn of Paul in the Scriptures, he was doggedly focused on Christ. Even before he was converted, his attention was turned fully toward Christ by persecuting Jesus' followers. He was obsessed with putting a stop to Christ. After his conversion, he was still obsessed with Christ by making Him known among the nations. Paul went from throwing Christ's followers in jail, to appealing to Christ by name three times in the greeting of a letter in which He plead with another to keep preaching Christ.

? What is significant about Paul's use of the words of, in, and from in these verses? What implications do these have for the lives of all Christians?

Paul introduced himself as “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus” in verse 1. The prepositions in these first two verses, as they relate to Christ, are important. They help us see Christ’s identity and role in the lives of Christians. In this first instance, Paul said that he was an apostle of Christ. This means that his apostleship both proceeded from the person of Christ and that he belonged to Christ. In other words, Paul expressed that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ made him an apostle and continued to make him an apostle.

Christians rejoice in this truth. The identity of every true Christian is of Christ. We could say it like this: A Christian is a saint of Christ because he or she came to be a saint through Christ’s work, and he or she continues to be a saint because Christ keeps them. Every Christian has experienced first-hand at least two miracles. The first was when he or she was saved. The second is that he or she is still saved. If people could lose their salvation, they absolutely would. Christ’s saving power, however, both purchases and guards the sinner’s soul for salvation.

Paul mentioned “the promise of life in Christ Jesus.” We have a new preposition to consider: in. “In Christ Jesus” was one of Paul’s favorite phrases. You’ll find it often in his writings. This instance, however, is a little different than his normal usage. Generally, when Paul said “in Christ Jesus” he was referring to a believer’s position and privileges in Christ because of the gospel. Paul’s phrase here, however, was a bit different. Paul focused on the essence of the gospel message, namely justification. Paul was saying that his identity, his apostleship (indeed his whole life) were bound up in the promise of life in Christ Jesus to which he clung, to which Timothy clung, and to which Timothy’s congregation clung.

Like Paul, Christians today cling to and rejoice in the promise of life in Christ Jesus. Like Paul, Christians today understand that they are chief sinners, without personal righteousness, and deserving of punishment. If there is no promise of rescue, then no man is salvageable. There’s no holding out of hope for people who are left to their own devices to be made right with God.

In the end of this greeting, Paul wrote, “To Timothy, my dearly loved son, Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” Here Paul pointed Timothy to the fact that not only was his saving in Christ, but so were his comforting and his sanctifying. Remember, Timothy faced some difficulties in his ministry. He was in need of the grace, mercy, and peace that only God could

provide. Paul made it clear that these blessings proceeded not only from God the Father, but also from Christ Jesus the Lord. The sustaining spiritual strength that Christians need isn't found in themselves, but comes from Christ.

? Application: Do you cling to Christ? Is your identity, your hope for the future, and your strength today intricately tied to Him? How does your life give evidence of this?

2. Paul's Affection for Timothy (2 Tim. 1:3-5)

There is no doubt that Paul loved Timothy. He viewed him as a son and cared deeply for his well-being and his spiritual growth. Timothy had made his spiritual father proud by serving faithfully in Paul's footsteps. Discipleship relationships are much more than simply a transfer of information. Our hearts get entangled when we share our lives with someone. The fellowship and companionship that Paul and Timothy shared was deep because it was rooted in and watered by Christ.

? Who are you investing in as a disciple-making relationship? What are some ways we might guide them in this disciple-making relationships?


When Paul thought of Timothy, he probably felt many emotions, but none so strong as gratitude. He, no doubt, had many reasons to thank God for placing Timothy in his life. These include the comfort of companionship on the missionary trail, a faithful co-laborer to help carry the load of the work, and the joy of seeing a young disciple grow in godliness and wisdom. These are the joys of discipleship that produce thanksgiving. We can be sure that Paul also had struggles with Timothy at times. We know this because we know that even Christians struggle against the sin nature. But Paul and Timothy stayed the course with their hearts rooted in Christ and their hands set to the work, as Paul lead the way.

We also know that Paul cared deeply for Timothy because he prayed for him. When a Christian truly understands intercession as bringing the needs of another before the one true and living God, then he or she can scarcely think of a more significant thing to do for that person. Paul's love for Timothy drove him to pray for him. It wasn't a chore or burden. Rather, to not pray for Timothy would have been the burden. Love makes the labor of prayer light.

Just so, Christians ought to love their neighbors, especially those of the household of faith. Furthermore, this love ought to drive them to their prayer closets to intercede for them.

Further, Paul longed to see Timothy. Paul was filled with gratitude to God for Timothy, he prayed for Timothy, and he longed to see Timothy's face. Christians share a special unity and relationship. This spiritual bond transcends culture, language, economic status, and education level. That's because this fellowship is established by the shared experience of salvation through Christ. Through the lens of the gospel, all Christians were dead in their sins and bound for hell until a gracious God opened their hearts to the gospel message.

This bond, however, only grows stronger in discipleship relationships. As believers seek the Lord together and serve together, the cords of the gospel make new stitches between their hearts, and they are drawn ever closer together. Being together brings them great joy because of the deep fellowship they share in Christ. That's why Paul longed to see Timothy.

 **Application:** Pause and have someone offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the people God has used to disciple you and who he has given you to disciple. If you do not have a disciple-making relationship with anyone today, ask God to show you who He has for you this week.

3. An Exhortation to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:6-7)

Finally, in verse 6, Paul moved into his purpose for writing to Timothy. In verses 1-2, Paul put the focus on Christ's centrality in their lives. In verses 3-5, Paul expressed his deep affection for his "dearly loved son." With that foundation laid, Paul gave Timothy direct instruction.

Remember, anytime we see the word "therefore" in a passage of Scripture we need to realize that it is connecting two ideas. We can think of it like this: "What I am saying now is dependent upon what I just said." In this case, Paul pointed to the verses immediately prior: "I recall your sincere faith . . ." That sincere faith was what eventually led to the "gift of God" that Paul was now telling him to rekindle. Further, "Timothy, because you are my dearly loved son in Christ who saved you, called you, and sustains you; and because I give thanks for you and pray for you and long to see you; and because of your sincere faith that you have had since childhood, you should rekindle the gift of God this is in you."



What is the command that Paul gave to Timothy? How might this type of encouragement and challenge be viewed today? How is this instructive for us as we seek to live in healthy disciple-making relationships?

A key dynamic in discipleship is authority and submission. We live in a context where it is often seen as unkind or even unchristian to correct someone or command someone with authority. The words authority and submission often carry negative connotations in our current cultural climate. These concepts, however, are thoroughly biblical and absolutely necessary for discipleship to take place. A mature Christian has to have the ability and guts to say hard things to a younger Christian who is in need of correction. Christlike, humble, loving authority is a great blessing in the life of an immature Christian.

Paul told Timothy to "rekindle the gift of God." This most likely referred to his gift of preaching and teaching. Whatever it was, Paul warned Timothy to not allow this gift to fall into disrepair or abandon. This probably wasn't an easy thing to hear. First

of all, it is never a pleasant thing to be told that one is lacking. No doubt Timothy wanted to please Paul, and it is quite possible that these words hurt Timothy's feelings. A faithful disciple maker doesn't shy away from saying/modeling what the disciple needs to hear, even if it could cause some emotional distress. At the same time, it is important that these words be guided by the Holy Spirit—as they were in this case—and not just personal preference.

Secondly, Paul told Timothy to do more (and with greater force) of what may have been the source of his trouble. Timothy most likely faced opposition from outside the church as well as trouble within. Most of the troubles that faithful preachers face will go away if they'll just shut their mouths. They often don't even have to shut them completely, but simply avoid certain portions of the Scripture and preach the portions upon which everyone can agree and that won't offend anyone.

Paul knew this. He was in prison because he refused to shut his mouth. He knew what Timothy was facing. Without a firm foundation on Christ and a brother to exhort him, Paul knew it would be easy for Timothy to give up. This is why Paul told Timothy that God did not intend for Timothy to minister, live, and make decisions out of fear, but with power, love, and self-control (v. 7).



Application: All of us have gifts and abilities we are to use in service to God and others. What has God called you to do? Are you doing it?

Conclusion

In our passage today, Paul began 2 Timothy by expressing that his whole world was wrapped up in the person and work of Christ. He was an apostle of Christ (salvation story). He looked to the promise of life in Christ. He depended upon the continued grace, mercy, and peace of Christ (disciple-making story). Next, he laid out his affection for Timothy that manifested itself in gratefulness, prayers, and a longing to see him that he might be filled with joy (equipping process). Finally, Paul exhorted Timothy to fan into flame his gift. He encouraged Timothy to preach Christ and preach Him with passion. And Timothy was to

do this even in the face of danger, because God did not intend for him to operate out of fear, but out of power, love, and self-control.

? What keeps you from pursuing disciple-making relationships in your life?

? Why is it important that Christians both seek to make disciples but also seek to actively be disciplined by others?

? How is disciple making connected to the call of Christ in the Great Commission? How do we necessarily fulfill this call as we seek to lead others in discipleship and to grow in this area ourselves?

CHRIST CONNECTION: Just as Paul was an apostle of Christ, so Christians are servants of Christ. Just as Paul's promise of life was in Christ, so a Christian's promise of life is in Christ. And, just as Paul counted on grace, mercy, and peace from Christ, so do Christians today.

MISSIONAL APPLICATION: Christians today who care about the Great Commission and sending workers into the harvest ought to have the same emphasis that Paul had: faithfulness to the calling to share God's Word and have Gospel conversations.



FOR NEXT WEEK

Gospel First and Always

Main Passages

- 2 Timothy 1:8-18

Session Outline

1. A Gospel Worthy of Suffering (2 Tim. 1:8-12)
2. A Gospel Worthy of Guarding (2 Tim. 1:13-14)
3. An Example of Gospel Living (2 Tim. 1:15-18)

Memorize

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.

- 2 Timothy 1:7, CSB

Daily Readings

- Monday - 2 Timothy 1:1-2
- Tuesday - 2 Timothy 1:3-7
- Wednesday - Hebrews 4:16
- Thursday - Hebrews 10:24-25
- Friday - Romans 5:3-5
- Saturday - 2 Thessalonians 1:3