



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

“PASS THE BATON OF FAITH ON!” – 2 TIMOTHY 2:2

COLORADO

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We are saved by the grace of God, we are kept by the grace of God and we are empowered by the grace of God each and every day. God’s grace is made available to all believers only through the Lord Jesus Christ. Strength for the journey in this life is not found in ourselves, but in the grace God supplies. It is God’s grace that strengthens us to carry on God’s work especially when we just feel like giving up. But the resource for our strength will never come from our self. We must always remember it is God’s divine grace.

I. “BE STRONG, PASS IT ON!” – 2 TIMOTHY 2:2

2 Timothy 2:2 “And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”

We have been given the gospel as a sacred trust from God to keep it, defend it, guard it and now to delegate it. This sacred trust involves passing it on to the next generation. It is a living chain of truth that extends from one generation to the next. For example, in the early 17th century, Dr. Richard Sibbes wrote a little book about Christ titled *The Bruised Reed*. A copy of that book fell in the hands of a tin peddler, who in turn gave it to a boy name Richard Baxter who became the greatest of all Puritan pastors. Baxter wrote, among other things, *A Call to The Unconverted*, which Philip Doddridge read in the early 18th century and he in turn wrote, *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*. William Wilberforce read that book and it so changed his life that in the 19th century he became a huge influence in Parliament and led the fight for the abolition of the slave trade in England which was finally realized before his death. He in turn became an inspiration for Chuck Colson and Prison Ministries in the 20th century.¹ What an example of the baton of faith being passed on from generation to generation. And that’s God’s divine plan.

A. “AND THE THINGS...” – 2 TIMOTHY 2:2

Paul knew that his end was near. He had carried the torch for over 30 years and now he is concerned that the baton of faith be carried forward to the next generation. Paul commissioned Timothy, his son in the faith, to be strong in guarding the treasure of the gospel of Christ, faithful in proclaiming the gospel and now committed to passing the truth of the gospel to the next generation who will not waiver in their faith and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.

What are “the things” Timothy is to pass on? They are the “things” he had been taught by his mother and grandmother. (2 Timothy 1) They are the “things” he came to understand through the Scriptures. (2 Timothy 3) And they are the things that Timothy learned from Paul as he travelled on his missionary journeys. “The things” are the foundational truths of Scripture, the gospel which Christ taught. Only the gospel of Jesus Christ can save and change a life. It is the

gospel which brings all to salvation, but the gospel is also a treasure given to guard, keep, protect, defend, preserve and watch because it is always in danger of being corrupted, diluted and changed. Paul and the apostles saw the gospel for what it is; a true treasure worth sharing, worth guarding, worth living for and worth dying for. The gospel of Jesus Christ is that good “thing” committed to us, our true eternal treasure and we must preserve this sound teaching from being corrupted by any means. Paul fulfilled his sacred duty to faithfully proclaim the gospel and guard this treasure to be passed down without compromise, distortion or diluting in any way. He held tightly to the pattern of truth he was taught as he received the baton of faith from Christ Himself to run his leg of the race. And it is the baton of these “things” which Paul passes on to Timothy with the responsibility to run his leg of the race well.

B. “WHICH YOU HAVE HEARD FROM ME...” – 2 TIMOTHY 2:2

Paul reminds Timothy that he has heard the truth of the gospel consistently not just from Paul himself but others down through the years, confirming the same gospel and affirming the same message. These are other faithful witnesses like Peter, Barnabas and Silas. (Acts 14:1-3, 21-22; 15:35; 20 4) Luke was also a companion of Paul’s on many trips. Well taught leaders of the church would have also confirmed to Timothy the divine authenticity of Paul’s teaching. From the time Timothy began to accompany Paul (Acts 16:1-3) Timothy was exposed to many godly witnesses in addition to Paul.²

C. “THESE ENTRUST...” – 2 TIMOTHY 2:2

Paul instructs Timothy to pass on these foundational, saving, eternal truths (“the things”) forward. “These entrust” Paul commands.

“entrust” Greek *ὑποτίθημι* imperative, verb form of noun. Carries idea of depositing something valuable for safe keeping, as a valued treasure.

This word has been used by Paul in 2 Timothy 1:12 where he refers to the good deposit Paul has entrusted to God for His safekeeping; *his life, his work, his all*. Then in 2 Timothy 1:14 Paul refers to the good deposit of the gospel that God has entrusted Timothy with and his responsibility to it; *to proclaim it, guard it, defend it and preserve it*. Now Paul calls on Timothy, commands Timothy, to take this treasure of the gospel and “entrust” to others. Timothy is to give this good deposit, which has been given to him for safekeeping, to those who will faithfully carry it forward on the next leg of the race. Just as Paul had entrusted the good deposit of the gospel to Timothy to faithfully preserve and proclaim it, so now Timothy must entrust these divinely revealed truths to others who will be faithful also in their

BIBLE STUDIES

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responsibility to the gospel. It is imperative that Timothy keeps the template of the gospel intact as he passes the baton of the faith forward. And as Timothy passes the good deposit to those who will do the work of ministry, it is with two criteria: *to those who are faithful and will be able to teach others also.*

1. “TO FAITHFUL MEN” – 2 TIMOTHY 2:2

Paul calls on Timothy to pass the baton to a new generation of mature believers who will be faithful in guarding the truth, retaining the standard of truth and committed to proclaiming that truth. Faithful refers to spiritual character and spiritual giftedness. It's one who is believing, loyal and reliable. They would yield neither to persecution nor to error. It would be one whose heart is set on Christ and nothing can lure them from the path of loyalty to Christ or stray from the truth. They are steadfast in life and thought.³ We know there are plenty who are unfaithful as Paul has already noted. Just as in the church at Ephesus, so churches today are loaded with those who compromise the gospel for comfort and convenience. And so Paul calls on Timothy to invest faithful ministry in the lives of other faithful men and women dedicated to guarding the good deposit of truth that has been entrusted to them.

Paul is not referring to those who are creative, popular, innovative, new and contemporary. Scripture never refers to that as being faithful. No, he is talking about those who have proven character combined with fruitful labor in the service of the Lord's work. Paul is talking about men and women entrusted with a sacred charge and proven faithful and reliable over time with what they have been entrusted. Who is Timothy to pass the baton of faith on to? Those who have proven faithful.

2. “WHO WILL BE ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS...” – 2 TIMOTHY 2:2

Key to this last phrase is that Paul is calling Timothy to pass the work of ministry on to those who are “*faithful*” and those who are “*able to teach others*”. He is talking about the careful, systematic teaching of God's Word that transforms the heart. It's instructing and declaring the whole counsel of Scripture that convicts, converts and changes a life rather than gospel light and ear tickling messages. Paul is describing those who are qualified to be the next leg of the relay, the next link in the chain. One must be faithful first and then be willing to faithfully teach and train others. It requires the ability to carefully instruct and nurture in the things of God: first in your life, then faithfully in the lives of your family, then ultimately caring for the eternal destinies of those around you.

The book of Judges sadly reveals what happens when the baton of faith is not faithfully passed on. “*And the people served the Lord all the*

days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the Lord which He had done for Israel... And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel... Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord... and they forsook the Lord...” (Judges 2:7-12) Teaching faithfully is the link that ties one generation to another. Moses wisely called on Israel to pass on the baton in Deuteronomy 4:9, “*Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life, but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.”*

Titus 1:9 speaks to the responsibility we have to faithfully teach God's Word, “*holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”* Teaching others is the ability to explain God's Word so that others can understand and grow. It's the ability to handle God's Word accurately. (2 Timothy 2:15) And it is the critical missing piece in the church today. We have great programs, but do we really value the teaching of God's Word? That's how believers will be able to grow deep and become spiritually mature in their faith and not weak, shallow or prone to be tossed by every wind of doctrine that comes along as Ephesians 4:14-15 says, “*As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ.”* We must grow up in our faith!

Entrusting the good deposit of the gospel to others is our God given task and joy! We must faithfully preach and teach God's Word and find those who will carry it to the next generation. It's running the relay where the baton is the good deposit of the gospel entrusted to us to carefully carrying, strongly securing, precisely passing that baton to the next link and thus faithfully finishing your leg of the race. That's where Paul is and in the end he could say this in 2 Timothy 4:7-8: “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day and not only to me, but to all who have loved His appearing.”*

To end your days as faithful is no small thing! Take seriously your responsibility to the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Guard the Treasure...Be Strong...Pass it on!

¹Hughes, R. Kent and Chapell, Bryan, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus; To Guard the Deposit*. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 2000. Pg. 193.

²MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.40.

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³Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.170.