

"Things Worth Remembering" - 2 Timothy 1:1-7

Have you noticed the amazing power of photos? Every once in a while, the images from the news impact us uniquely because of the emotions they provoke. Photos can capture the things you want to remember from the past, or better yet, the people you want to remember and the events that shape our life journey. Take a moment and pull up some mental photos of who matters in your life. Early in the calendar year, we do well to remember.

With that in mind, we begin a new series of study. This one is from the book of 2 Timothy. This book is a letter of a "father" to his son; a book of remembrance, if you will.

The Setting

Paul wrote 2 Timothy while in prison and most scholars consider this his last writing. The attitude of Paul is very different in this letter to Timothy as compared to that of the first one. Here Paul is more reflective and personal, which might be expected from someone writing from the depths of a cold and dark prison in Rome, with constant awareness that his throat is about to encounter the sharp edge of a quick sword. At the same time, that increases the sense of urgency in Paul's words of concern for the congregation as well as his young "talmid" – a Hebrew word for "disciple". (Note carefully Luke 6:40, a Jewish disciple is *just like his rabbi/teacher*.) Timothy is to be just like Paul as he shepherds the assembly of believers in the city of Ephesus, a cosmopolitan city on the shores of the Aegean Sea and the gateway to all of Asia Minor, the area today called Turkey.

We can conclude that Timothy, although relatively young, is no novice. Paul, in this first letter had given advice for the leadership there not to confer authority on anyone prematurely. Leadership is for those who are tested and proven, have their family under control and walk faithfully. Timothy however, is in need of encouragement, (a word which literally means, "to put courage into") in light of the

magnitude of his challenge, and this book is for that purpose. In 2017, there will be many people to whom we need to be the person who is putting courage into others, and among the most significant are those who give leadership to others and provide spiritual care to a flock. Do you have a spiritual leader in your life? How will you help put "courage into" them?

The Salutation 2 Timothy 1:1

Although this book is addressed to Timothy, it is also for the body of believer's there too, or else Paul, trained as a rabbi would not need to state his authority so formally. Then right away, he adds the purpose for why God made him an emissary/apostle – the promise of life in the Messiah. The uniqueness of Paul's message was something that he had lived for and was ready to die for: life forever through Jesus. It is as if Paul is saying, "I may suffer and they may kill me, but I know that life is promised for all who believe and trust in Jesus atoning sacrifice. I live for Him, therefore, I have no fear in death – it is gain for me." (cf. *Phil 1:20-21*)

That is what we are to be about as believers, no less than they were in ancient Ephesus. With our hope secure and our lives a consistent demonstration of the hope that we have, (*1 Peter 3:15*), we are to live such good lives among those far away from God (cf. *1 Peter 2:12*), that when we open our mouths, there is credibility and receptivity by those who watch and hear. That is true whether we stand before crowds and caucuses, in our offices or closets, or in front of those who call us, dad, mom, friend, or even, enemy. That is the effect "the promise of life in Christ Jesus" makes.

If we have this promise in us, we will want to share our faith, to give it away if you will. It is also why we must be faithful in worship, teaching and study, so that being passionate about our God, we are joyfully equipped and compelled to seek others to come to faith and worship this One True God with us! Is there someone whom God has already put in your

path who needs your voice of encouragement about the Savior? Is there an “enemy” who needs to see the true God in “human clothes”? Who you identify now and commit to pursuing them with kindness, prayer, and truth? _____

The son in the faith v.2

Paul turns his focus very tenderly to this son in the faith and says, “My dearly beloved child...” Imagine an old man in a cold dungeon being warmed by the thoughts of a young man who loved and lived the faith that Paul was ready to die for! He was filled with joy was that his life would live on in his disciple and his life had mattered eternally. So Paul speaks a blessing that as Kent Hughes says is “a promise and a prayer: Grace to the undeserving, mercy to the helpless, and peace to the restless.” Is your life giving out that message daily?

What Paul writes next are several things worth remembering – things that in 2017 ought to be markers for us in our journey among those we influence and do life with. (So keep the photos in your mind up on your screen as you think about these things.)

What is worth remembering?

1. Remember to take look at your own life v.3a

a) Pursue a clear conscience

Paul had done two things – he had obeyed the Law of God – the “Torah” if you will, as he had been taught. And although he had gained clear understanding that the Law was not a means for eternal salvation, he had gained rescue and freedom from sin in 2 ways: the damaging effects of sin in this life caused by disobedience, and the loss of reward in the life to come. It had provided for him the blessing of a clear conscience. We can learn from that. Those who obey have nothing to fear, no skeletons in the closet, no memories to come back to haunt you, no fear of the media finding dirty laundry to air out for you! Yet, for Paul, the guilt of never measuring up and never getting it perfect was erased by the promise of life in the perfect One; his Lord and Savior Jesus, the

Messiah his Bible had promised. There isn’t anyone who can’t have a clear conscience just like Paul. One just has to understand and trust in the work of Jesus on one’s behalf: that the sinless life He lived 2000 years ago effected a payment for the sin of humanity which was full and sufficient for *all* sin. It is applied to *any* life who comes in humble faith and trust. For Paul, it meant that although he wasn’t sinless, he was seen by the Father as blameless!

b) Pursue faithful prayer v.3b

Paul was devoted to others for the sake of the good news about Jesus. A life set free from the bondage of sin can then turn to others and care for their needs. Sin is selfishness, and a sin-driven life is a prayerless life. Paul had a clear conscience and it resulted in a passionate prayer life that sought to implore the God of the Universe to work in the hearts of men and women to bring them to a knowledge of the one true God and to live a life with clear conscience also!

If you want a clear conscience, you must surrender to the God who can erase all sin, then walk in obedience so that you are freed from self and can truly become prayerfully dependent on God. Among the Things Worth Remembering, perhaps the greatest is to take a look at your own life.

Next Bible study: Thursday, February 9, 7:00 am.
WMB Conference room 103www

