

Series Theme: Remaining Faithful in a very unaccepting world.

Sermon Title: Take Note of Paul's example of Gratitude; 2 Timothy 1:3-5

Since we started 2 Timothy, I've been praying for each of you in way different than in the past. In the past I would think of you and pray for you. But since 2 Timothy I've been praying for each of you as in the past, but now, I model Paul's example found in 1:3. I am remembering each of you before the Lord with thanksgiving expressing gratitude for something I appreciate about you. It's amazing to me how every time I think of each of you, I have something to be thankful for. It has become so clear to me that everyone is uniquely a part of this local body of believers, and each one helps make this church family interesting and dynamic. Also, it's important to note, that in modeling Paul's example I find that I love each of you more and have a deeper joy concerning God's kindness to our church.

We are only going to look at 1:3 today but touch on 1:4-5. But this will be an encouraging message that I hope spurs each one of us to pray for one another like Paul prayed for Timothy.

- I) **(1:3-5) Big Picture: Paul's encouragement provides Timothy with motivation for faithfulness.**
 - A) It is likely that Paul has received reports that Timothy is down, depressed, discouraged, possibly defeated.
 - 1) See 1:6-7; 1:13-14; 2:8-9; etc.
 - B) Paul encourages Timothy
 - 1) "I thank God for you...constantly...remembering...in my prayers"
 - (a) Nothing means more than when we pray for one another.
 - 2) How did he pray?
 - (a) With thanksgiving (1:3)
 - (b) Night and day (1:3)
 - (c) With thoughtful remembrance of Timothy and Timothy's tears (1:3, 4)
 - (d) With longing to see him (1:4)
 - (e) With hopes of being filled with joy at seeing him (1:4)
 - C) What made him thankful for Timothy?
 - 1) The remembrance of Timothy's sincere faith. Paul saw it!
 - (a) He saw it first in Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.
 - (b) And because they were faithful to train him from infancy (3:15) Paul is convinced beyond doubt that his faith in God is genuine and alive in him.
 - D) Again, given some of the Paul's imperatives and admonitions to Timothy in this letter it may be that he is trying to reawaken Timothy from the doldrums that accompany the discouraged soul.
- II) **Application #1: How we view our circumstances greatly affects our attitude.**
 - A) The attitude of Paul
 - 1) What circumstances do we find Paul? (**See 1:8, 1:16; 2:9**)
 - 2) Paul's attitude was shaped by His belief in the Sovereignty of God who rules over all circumstances.
 - (a) Rom. 8:28-29: Paul wanted to be conformed to the image of Christ more than he wanted **ease**.
 - (b) Paul, like James, accepted suffering as having a great purpose. (**See James 1:2; 2 Cor. 4:17**)
 - 3) Paul knew why he was suffering. There was no confusion (**See 1:8-12**)
- III) **Application #2: The Power behind an attitude of gratitude.**
 - A) How could Paul be grateful for anything given his terrible circumstances? Yet he overflows with gratitude.
 - 1) God gave the power to suffer faithfully for the cause of Christ (1:8)
 - 2) The Lord Jesus is faithful to aid Paul and Timothy to minister the gospel to others. (Phil. 4:13)
 - 3) Corrie Ten Boom: "If you look to the world you'll be distressed. If you within you'll be depressed. If you look to Christ, you'll be at rest."
 - 4) Understanding this: Even in the sunset of his earthly life, God gave the grace for thanksgiving.
 - (a) So you could say, that as Paul "set his mind and heart on things above" gratitude dominated him.
- IV) **Application #3: Practicing Thanksgiving for others**
 - A) "Thank" is two Greek words: *echo* and *charis*— "having" "grace".

- 1) The way Paul uses the word indicates a continual attitude of thanksgiving.
 - 2) We learn from 1 Thessalonians 5:18 not only is thankfulness to dominate our attitude, but...
 - (a) Thankfulness is God's will for each of us who are IN Christ Jesus.
 - (i) God commands it! You and I are commanded to be thankful.
 - (a) Remember: God **enables** you and me to do **what He commands**.
 1. It is a hard thing to do. It's a hard thing to be. But rely on the God of all grace!
 - a. It is not your grace you are drawing upon, but His grace.
 - i. It's His grace. You have His grace. Express it with thanksgiving.
 - (b) Matthew Henry: "Thanksgiving to God is an act of remembering His favors."
 - (i) Filling your mind with praise and adoration of God's perfections in Himself is the seat of gratitude deep in your soul.
 - (a) It is no surprise then, that Paul is thankful to God for Timothy and for others. He sees God's work at work in each person he's thankful for!
- V) Application #4: How can you and I begin to cultivate gratitude in our souls, expressing it in daily living?
 - A) Develop the daily habit of being grateful to God for all things. (**1 Thess. 1:16-18—the three practices**)
 - B) Strengthen this habit by daily strengthening your heart and mind toward God. (**Colossians 3:15-17**)
 - C) Take opportunities to regularly thank God, expressing gratitude for people He has placed in your life.
 - D) Share testimonies by talking with your Christian friends about the things God has done in your life through fellow Christians. That is exactly what Paul was doing in 2 Timothy 1:3.

By implementing these practices in your life, you will develop a deeper attitude of gratitude. It was a mark of the grace of God in Paul's life. It will become a mark of the grace of God in your life. Others need to see and hear the grace of God.

It starts with you!