

#4 Series: 2 Timothy

December 14, 2025

Series Theme: Remaining Faithful in a very unaccepting world.

Sermon Title: Run Toward the Battle Line, pt 1; 2 Timothy 1:4-14

Action statement: Faithful Christians are those who courageously run toward the battle lines and do not retreat.

What if there was a big fire blazing somewhere in the city. And while the fire blazes you noticed that you heard no sirens signaling the approach of the fire department and you saw no signs of rescue personnel. You drive frantically to reach the fire station and suddenly are alarmed by the fact that some of the firemen are napping, some are washing the fire truck, while some are sitting around playing cards; all are seemingly oblivious to the fire blazing nearby. Outraged, you ask how it is that they are unaware of the inferno blazing out of control and why no alarms are sounding? The chief reports that they turned it off long time ago because its too distracting to the firemen as they try to sleep, or eat, or wash the truck or play games. You stand appalled knowing that that fire station has failed because these are the men that are supposed to charge the fire line and run into the flames if required.

Consider: On that Great Day will I be commended for running to the battle lines, or will I be ashamed because I lacked courage and grit to go where the flames of sin, ruin and misery burn the hottest? What about you? What about this church.

Paul is urging Timothy to rekindle the gift of God and boldly run to the battle lines. Fight the good fight of the faith (1 Tim. 6:12) and courageously take the message of the gospel into a hostile environment with full expectation of suffering for the cause of Christ.

I'm reminded of the great standoff between Goliath and the army of Israel in 1 Samuel 17. Goliath has been insulting the God of Israel, and the warriors of Israel do nothing. This failed courage only served to embolden the wicked Goliath. Young David arrives on the scene and is appalled by what he sees: Goliath taunts and insults God and there is not a leader or a soldier with the courage to charge into battle. But David, full of faith courageously defies the one who has been defying God. As Goliath moves toward David, David charges the battle line in name of the Lord (17:48), not fearing his personal safety. With one stone he silences the great Goliath.

Over the next few sermons on 2 Timothy 1:4-14, we will see how Paul is urging Timothy to come out of his fear and charge the battle lines with the power supplied by God when he was called to be a minister of the gospel. Today we will begin with verses 4-8.

I) (4-5) A Living Faith

- A) Evidence of devotion through service to the Lord (Acts 16:1-5)
- B) An overflow of joy for Paul to see evidence of Timothy's faith. *It is wonderful when a student "gets it!"*
 - 1) Paul was so persuaded by Timothy's **genuine** faith that he became Timothy's teacher and mentor!
 - (a) The necessity of discipleship. See also **2 Timothy 3:10-14** *Timothy listened to and observed Paul.*

II) (v6) A Gift of God that thrives on Faith

- A) The gift of God supplied by God to Timothy: wisdom, understanding, courage pastoral authority and love.
- B) "stir up" or "fan into flame" the gift of God.
 - 1) The gifts accompanying Timothy's pastoral responsibilities were supplied by the Holy Spirit. This is the case for every believer.
 - (a) Timothy is not being commanded to *stir up the Spirit*, but rather cooperate with the Spirit in developing his pastoral gifts such as preaching, teaching, along with boldness, godly self-discipline, which produces the fruit of God's nature (fruit of the Spirit) in us.
 - (i) Timothy's pastoral gift is not secondary to other interests. It must be first and foremost!
 - (a) You should pray for your pastor that he will not succumb to pressures that will tempt him to put his calling as pastor secondary to other interests.
 - 2) How do we stir up the gift(s) God has given us?

- (i) Refuse to let your awe and wonder of the Lord grow cold, or even lukewarm like the church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:15-19).
 - (ii) *Fan into flame the gift of God* by living by the Spirit and keeping in step with the Spirit (Gal. 5:25)
 - (iii) Do not neglect the routine of daily exercising the gift of God for ministry (Philemon 1:6)
- C) The gift of God given to Timothy and the gifts given to us, thrive on faith. That is, Timothy's effectiveness, yours and mine **directly correlates** to the value we place on the **preeminence of Christ** in our daily lives!
- 1) One way we lose effectiveness is by quenching or neglecting the Spirit. (see 1 Thes. 5:19; 1 Tim. 4:14)

III) (v7) A courage that displays the gift of God

- A) First of all, understand that Paul is referring to himself and Timothy.
- 1) Timothy may have had a timid streak as part of natural temperament.
 - 2) But God has endowed Timothy with a spirit of power, of love and self-discipline through the Spirit.
 - (a) This is necessary to carry out his pastoral responsibilities. To boldly speak the truth in love.
 - (i) The Living Bible on this verse: "For the Holy Spirit, God's gift, does not want you to be afraid of people, but to be wise and strong, and to love them and enjoy being with them."
 - (b) **Timidity and fear drive us inward and away from the action of ministering to people of all kinds.**
 - (i) We've been given a spirit of power, of love and self-discipline to enjoy ministering the gospel to people of all kinds.
- B) If we lack godly courage we will be afraid to go where the action is. We will probably only be comfortable when we are with other believers in the safety of our church. **But if we are full of the Spirit and full of awe and wonder for Christ and His saving power to deliver sinners from destruction, we will run to the battle lines with great courage and plead with people of all kinds to surrender to Him.**

IV) (v8) A courage that expects suffering for the gospel

- A) Do not be ashamed to testify about Christ. Spirit led people, like Paul, found no shame in proclaiming a suffering, dying savior who raised from the dead, neither should Timothy, and neither should we.
- 1) Two reasons for people to feel ashamed:
 - (a) First, many people will reject the message as something foolish, acceptable to stupid people.
 - (b) Second, there is a sense of shame when the messenger is rejected as being gullible and foolish for believing the message.
- B) A courageous Christian so loves Christ and adores Him that suffering persecution is expected.
- 1) Paul expected it, but suffering for Christ's message was an indicator that he was on the right track.
 - (a) Paul's message to Timothy: **"So don't be embarrassed to speak up for our Lord or for me, his prisoner. Take your share of suffering because of the gospel along with the rest of us. As it is true for us, its is true for you too, we can only keep going with courage by the power of God."**
 - 2) Jesus never commanded His people to merely talk about the gospel among themselves, but to go out into the highways and hedges and compel people to come the Lord's table (Luke 14:23).
 - (a) We are to run to the battle lines with the gospel that God saves sinners through faith in Jesus Christ, our Savior, our Redeemer, who is the Lord!

The Lord wants me, He wants you, He wants our church to charge the battle lines where the fight is the fiercest. He is calling His Church to step out of our fear and self-preservation and to go where the real action is to be found; to go where sin abounds so that the grace of the gospel will abound even more. He wants His church to go to sinners, to the broken, to the belligerent, to the coworker, to the dysfunctional families, the confused, etc. And go courageously in His power and proclaim freedom for the captives and salvation in Christ alone!