

## The Unchanging Message: Our Trust

2 Timothy 1:8-14

**Introduction:** (Read 2 Timothy 1:8-14) This is the concluding study for VBS addresses the theme “The Unchanging Message in Changing Times.” I’ve chosen this theme because it seems more than any other time in our culture we are feeling the pressure, at the level of the church, to change the message of the Gospel to fit the shifting cultural values. We noted last week that there is the strong and growing sentiment that if the church/Christianity doesn’t off-load some of its “truths” or doctrines that it will die.

This morning’s message is “The Unchanging Message: Our Trust.” Our theme text for the week has been 2 Timothy 1:8-14 and the key verse from that text for this morning’s message is Paul’s primary admonition to Timothy found in 1:14. We started this study last Sunday and pursued it throughout the week with the admonition of 1:14 in mind. The hope was to look beyond cliché and the popularized gospel to the very foundations of our faith and the hope we have in Jesus so that when we arrived to this point in our study you would be repulsed by any suggestion that the gospel could or should be adapted to shifting cultural values.

Paul builds to the admonition in 1:14 by showing the “deposit” to be the Gospel – the message of the person and work of Jesus with all that it means (cf. 1:8-11). In our first 3 studies – which included all that we discussed Sunday morning through Thursday evening – we broke down the Paul’s development of the gospel and why it is unchanging irrespective of the pressure from a shifting culture into 3 parts. The 1<sup>st</sup> part was a look at the text itself – the Bible – what it is and how we got it in its present form. We did this to show that it can be trusted. The 2<sup>nd</sup> study was the longest and most difficult and we titled it “The Unchanging Message: Its Nature and Content.” In it we addressed the nature and unchanging character of God and the eternal plan for creation and redemption which was established before time and creation. In the third study, titled “The Unchanging Message: The Scope of Its Power,” we discussed what was actually accomplished by Jesus – the fundamental and exhaustive nature of His work in redemption – and how that meets us at the point of our deepest need and includes the redemption/restoration of creation itself. In addition we noted that when the Word of God is faithfully declared – by word and by the witness of life – that word in the hands of the Spirit makes dead people alive and transforms them into “the new man.”

**Transition:** For our purposes this morning - Paul’s primary admonition is found in 1:13-14. It is in this text that Paul sets the overarching context for the details of his exhortation to Timothy to faithfully “discharge all the duties of your (his) ministry” (4:5b - NIV), which make up the remainder of the letter.

*\*Paul Exhorts Timothy To Guard The “Good Deposit” Or Trust Of The Gospel – (τὴν καλὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος ἐν ἡμῖν - 1:14)*

*\*\*The basic meaning of παραθήκη – Thayer’s – “a deposit, a trust or thing consigned to one’s faithful keeping (Vulgate depositum): used of the correct knowledge and pure doctrine of the gospel, to be held firmly and faithfully, and to be conscientiously delivered unto others.” (See Mounce, pg. 487). Note:* The repetition of this word and its cognate verb (cf. 2:2 – “**entrust** to faithful men”) makes the thematic connection in what I want to say about the gospel as our trust.

*\*\*God deposits the trust of the gospel with Timothy through Paul – 1:13 – The deposit of the gospel is the “pattern of sound teaching/words” (Υποτύπωσιν ἔχε ὑγιαίνοντων λόγων ὧν παρ’ ἐμοῦ ἤκουσας - 1:13). The gospel was passed on to Timothy by Paul as a “trust” or deposit from God. It is God’s design that the sacred trust of the gospel of the glory of God in the face of Jesus be passed on from one generation to another – from those who have seen and been transformed and enthralled/captivated by His glory. **They pass it on in its truths taught in purity and by the Christ-like character of their lives.***

**Note:** This is consistent with Paul’s exhortation to Timothy in 2:2 to do the same – (ἃ ἤκουσας παρ’ ἐμοῦ διὰ πολλῶν μαρτύρων, ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, οἵτινες ἱκανοὶ ἔσονται καὶ ἑτέροισι διδάξαι - 2:2). παράθου is the aorist imperative of παρατίθημι, a cognate of παραθήκη meaning “to deposit with” or “entrust something” to someone. This pictures the process of passing on the treasure of the gospel in its purity – intact and without compromise – from generation to generation. That is the call of the pastor and of every Christian.

**Note:** The call to guard the deposit of the gospel is more than simply a call to take care not to misplace or be careless in handling the gospel. **Paul’s call was issued with a greater sense of urgency in the light of the real, fierce and multi-faceted opposition which the gospel faced – and its messengers – in the culture of the 1<sup>st</sup> century church – and in every century since (cf. 3:1-10; 4:1-5).**

*\*Paul’s Call To Timothy To Guard The Trust/Deposit Of The Gospel Was Issued Because Of The Danger Of A Wilting Resolve In The Face Of Fierce Opposition To The Gospel – 1:8-12*

*\*\*The basis of Paul’s initial admonition to Timothy is the day when Paul commissioned him to the gospel ministry - (cf. 1:6-7). Paul appeals to Timothy’s **initial call** in order to encourage boldness and perseverance in the ministry of the gospel. For you and me the appeal might be to the day we first believed. Whether one sees the “spirit” in 1:7 as the Holy Spirit or the human spirit empowered by God is a complicated discussion which includes the implications of “the laying on of hands” at Timothy’s commissioning (I prefer the Spirit - cf. 1:8c - κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ). **Nonetheless**, the fact remains that Paul was reminding Timothy **1.** of the call of God on His life to be a steward of the Gospel of God’s glory in Jesus **AND 2.** of God’s faithful equipping/gifting for the challenges of such a call (οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα δειλίας ἀλλὰ δυνάμεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ σωφρονισμοῦ). The translation “timidity” in the NIV seems to carry the stronger sense of “cowardice” (δειλία, ἡ - *cowardice*; LS abridged; also Louw-Nida, Thayer, Gingrich).*

**Note:** There is the implication in this reminder that the God who gifted and called Timothy is personally attentive to Timothy's plight in ministry – οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα δειλίας ἀλλὰ δυνάμεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ σωφρονισμοῦ οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα δειλίας ἀλλὰ δυνάμεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ σωφρονισμοῦ. **Timothy is not simply called, equipped, and sent – God is personally invested in Timothy's success as a steward of the gospel and He is overseeing Timothy's ministry or present with Him. Hence, Paul builds his admonition on/from this truth.**

*\*\*Paul calls/exhorts Timothy to join with him in suffering for the gospel with an appeal to the power of God – 1:8-9 – (μὴ οὖν ἐπαισχυνθῆς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν μηδὲ ἐμὲ τὸν δέσμιον αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ συγκακοπάθησον τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ)*

1. **μὴ οὖν ἐπαισχυνθῆς** – The idea carried in the verb “to be ashamed,” though it has to do with embarrassment or “shame,” it is beyond embarrassment or “shame” as we know it. This is evident here from its contrast with a call to an intentional, eyes wide open, choice to suffer with Paul (and Jesus) for the gospel (*ἀλλὰ συγκακοπάθησον τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ*). *The opposition mounted to the gospel is designed to cause Christians, with whom the gospel has been placed as a trust, to shrink back from its faithful proclamation or to be quieted.*

**Note:** The object of shame is initially stated to be Jesus and then Paul, His witness. This is a sobering thought – especially in the light of *Hebrews 12:1-2*.

2. **κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ** - as with the exercising of the gift of his calling – Paul is reminding Timothy (us) that the power to be faithful to God's call is not innate to Timothy (cf. 1:14). He (we) is able to choose suffering for Jesus over the inclination to shrink back because the power of God exerted in Jesus to save us (with all that means) is at work within Timothy and every believer. We are called to face suffering for Jesus' sake in the strength of that power.

**Note: 1.** Not only is Timothy included (called to join), with Paul, in the fraternity of faithful sufferers for Jesus (*συγκακοπάθησον τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ*) **2.** but the phrase - κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ - carries with it the obvious implication that Paul/Timothy are in the sovereign hands of God even in the experience of suffering for Jesus/the gospel's sake. The persecuted believer is never really at the mercy of their persecutors – rather, they are in the sovereign hands of the God who saved them and sent them (cf. John 17:11-19). **3. There is the added implication that these times – times of sharing/proclamation are by Divine appointment. This gives me an added sense of accountability. This is emphasized in Paul's qualification of God in 1:9-10**

*\*\*Paul's call for Timothy to “suffer” for the sake of Jesus was based in the majestic glory of the “unchanging” God on display in the gospel - The God who called Timothy is the God who saved him - 1:9-10 – (1. τοῦ σώσαντος ἡμᾶς καὶ 2. καλέσαντος κλήσει ἀγία, οὐ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα*

ἡμῶν ἀλλὰ 3. κατὰ ἰδίαν πρόθεσιν καὶ χάριν, τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων φανερωθεῖσαν δὲ νῦν διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ,  
καταργήσαντος μὲν τὸν θάνατον φωτίσαντος δὲ ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) –

1. The God of power is the God who exercised that power in saving Timothy. Paul follows his appeal to Timothy to join with Paul in suffering for Jesus/the gospel **by God's power** with a reference to the goodness and grace of this very God in saving us. God's power is always directly in love toward His children. You can trust God because He is powerful AND He is good and loving!!
2. This good and powerful God is the One who gave us this unique, holy and high calling. Not only our salvation but also our stewardship/trust of the gospel, which includes suffering, is an eternal grace calling.
3. This calling is in service to the timeless purposes of God **in Jesus** (οὐ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ἡμῶν ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἰδίαν πρόθεσιν καὶ χάριν, τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων). This eternal purpose in grace for us includes the “holy calling” or “holy life” of living as faithful stewards of the gospel - τοῦ σώσαντος ἡμᾶς καὶ καλέσαντος κλήσει ἁγία (cf. also 1:11-12a).

**Note:** I hope you're able to recognize that Paul's call to Timothy to “guard the deposit” is essentially a reviewing of the gospel truths to Timothy – preaching the gospel to yourself. That is the implication of 1:10 at this point in the passage - φανερωθεῖσαν δὲ νῦν διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, καταργήσαντος μὲν τὸν θάνατον φωτίσαντος δὲ ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου.

**Note:** In addition, it is this God who, compelled by love, exerted in Jesus the power to reach to the very foundations of our existence to win salvation, who sustains us in the calling He has given us (cf. Ephesians 1:19-23).

*\*\*Paul had complete confidence in the power and faithfulness of the “unchanging” God who is the gospel - (...ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπαισχύνομαι, οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι πεπίστευκα καὶ πέπεισμαι ὅτι δυνατός ἐστιν τὴν παραθήκην μου φυλάξαι εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν – 1:12; cf. 1:13-14; cf 4:16-18) – Paul was able to faithfully guard the trust of the gospel in the face of fierce opposition because he was utterly convinced that God, who called him, was able and faithful to guard the deposit/trust of his life and deliver him safely into His own presence, in glory.*

Paul wanted Timothy to understand that this same God used him (Paul) to pass on the “good deposit” of the gospel to Timothy. He/We must, like Paul, be utterly convinced that God Himself is able and faithful to guard the trust of our lives and deliver us safely into His presence in that day – if we are to endure and carry out/guard good deposit of the gospel which He has entrusted to us, in the face of the relentless and multifaceted opposition brought against the gospel in our time.

**Transition:** Paul's encouragement to faithfulness as he finishes his letter consists of a reminder of the nature of the gospel, the power of the gospel faithfully preached, and the necessary and eternal perspective of the one who would faithfully discharge the trust of the gospel.

*\*It Is God's Message Genuinely Embraced And Faithfully Proclaimed Which Goes Out With The Promise That It Will Accomplish His Purposes And Return To Him Bearing His Intended Fruit -*  
The power inherent in the word is not the ink and paper but the Spirit of God opening eyes blinded by sin and the enemy to see the glory of God in Jesus (cf. 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Isaiah 55:10-11; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6, esp. vv. 4 & 6).

**Note:** I want to identify 3 general threats to the gospel against which Paul warns Timothy in the text leading up to his final exhortation. **1.** He warns him against the folly of youthful pride which would lead to him to involve himself in "quarrelling about words" of indulging in "godless chatter" or engaging in "foolish and stupid arguments" (cf. 2:14, 16, 23). These all detract from the beauty of God's glory in Jesus – the majesty of the gospel – and they exalt one person over another. The clear antidote to such foolish pride is to gaze into His glory and be humbled by the privilege to bear it as a trust. **2.** The tendency in these last days, for men and women to have abandoned the right love of God for inordinate loves/passions, which lead them create a caricature of a god which will endorse their lives and to resent and oppose the immutable/unchanging God of the gospel and persecute those who proclaim Him (cf. 3:1-13). **3.** The corollary to this is the tendency, in the last days for people to abandon "sound doctrine" (Ἔσται γὰρ καιρὸς ὅτε τῆς ὑγιαίνουσης διδασκαλίας οὐκ ἀνέξονται - 4:3) and in place of it they will gather around themselves "teachers" who teach what they want to hear (cf. 4:4).

**Note:** These are at the worst – outright rejections of the gospel and of the God who is the gospel. These are at the best, on the part of the church, as R.C. Sproul implies, attempts to "improve the gospel." Think about what that is saying – this gospel of God, which is God, is cause for embarrassment to the church within our modern culture. We are implying that we are ashamed of God – He is to us like the embarrassing relative about which we don't speak in refined company. We would do well to heed the words of Jesus – ("If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." - Mark 8:38 NIV).

**Note:** In keeping with what we have already seen – Paul's remedy for this tendency to shrink back from the gospel – out of the shame or fear of being identified with Jesus and such an old fashioned and outdated message is;

*\*\*Be a gospel person – (cf. **Romans 1:16-17**; 2:15; 3:14-17) - Jerry Bridges echoes what Paul seems to say and do here in this text – "Preach the gospel to yourself" daily. Becoming a gospel*

person means being owned by the gospel – being enthralled with God’s glory on display in the gospel!!

1. This brings with it the conviction of accountability to both God and those among whom we live (cf. 2:10, 15).
2. This brings with it a confidence that the gospel produces transformed lives (cf. 3:14-17).
3. This brings with it the perspective a compelling and transcendent hope which forms the context of your life and mine (cf. 2:15; 4:1-2, 5-8).

*\*\*Preach the Word* – (cf. Romans 1:16-17; **4:1-2**). This is done with the confidence that I live and minister in His presence, in the assurance that He will judge the living and the dead, and in the certainty of His appearance and His reign.

*\*\*His Word, faithfully proclaimed, accomplishes His purposes* – Isaiah 55:10-11

*\*\*This is true with respect to regeneration/salvation* – 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 – It is glory which transforms us. There is a veil that remains over the face of every unbeliever – we cannot see “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (cf. 4:3-4; also 3:12-17). It is only when God shines into our hearts with the light of His glory in the face of Jesus that we are saved – ***glory unveiled is irresistible and utterly transforming!!***

**Note:** This understanding protects against the methodology trap in which a subordinate outcome (church attendance; “reaching” the culture or being perceived as culturally “relevant” etc.) is allowed to drive primary methodology - to dictate which elements of gospel are proclaimed and which are moderated. Paul addressed this fairly fully in **1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5; Galatians 6:14**

*\*\*This is true with respect to transformation into the likeness of Jesus* – (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:1-4) – This is presented as the purest and most powerful basis for the transformation of life – for conforming us to the image of Jesus. When we look into His glory – as revealed in the gospel – are hearts are drawn to Him in love and worship and He is glorified in our satisfaction in Him (cf. Ephesians 3:14-21). Our “first love” remains our primary, our all defining love – AND our love for Him makes us love holiness and loath our sin.

***To “be ashamed” of the gospel and to compromise the message by submitting to the mind of the culture, is to deny glory of God on display in the gospel and to negate the power of the cross!!***