

A sermon preached by Martin Tanner, Vicar, in St Mary's, Market Drayton on Sunday 7th February 2016 at 10.30am

SS1 2 Timothy Chapter 1

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-A subdued Epistle, A Confident Epistle, A Determined Epistle

When Terry Wogan was asked what qualified someone to be a member of his Fan Club, the TOGGS, he replied that you would be the sort of person who thought you were asleep -but your friends thought you were dead!

In other words, it would appeal to a SUBDUED person!

Well, today, we have A SUBDUED EPISTLE.

We begin a new Sermon Series on 2 Timothy.

A subdued Epistle is appropriate for Lent.

It is a subdued Epistle **because Paul is IN PRISON.**

1 v8 "Do not be ashamed of the Lord OR OF ME, his prisoner"

1 v16 Onesiphorus is commended because

"he was not ashamed of my chains"

Not only is he in prison but he **has NO HOPE OF RELEASE.**

4 v6 says, *"the time of my departure is near"*

So this is St Paul's last letter, written after 1 Timothy and Titus.

Not only is Paul in prison and without hope of release but Paul is also

DESERTED BY FRIENDS AND COMPANIONS.

4 v11 famously says, *"Only Luke is with me"*

Alexander the metalworker did him great harm. Demas and two others in v15 have deserted him. Mark, Titus, Tychicus and Crescens have all gone on missionary work elsewhere.

No wonder Paul is subdued. The circumstances of life were against him.

And they may be against us. We may feel there is no hope of release and we are imprisoned by our life.

IF SO, then let us learn from St Paul.

-What was his response?

It was to speak of the CONFIDENCE that comes from a secure faith in Christ built on an unshakeable foundation.

Listen to verse 12

*"Because of the gospel, that is why I am suffering as I am. YET THIS IS NOT A CAUSE FOR SHAME because **I know whom I have believed** and I am convinced that God is able to guard what I have entrusted to him"*

(2)

Paul doesn't go flaky in adversity.

Paul isn't ashamed or embarrassed.

Paul has SHINING CONFIDENCE **'I know whom I have believed'** v12

And he knows God is TRUSTWORTHY

Paul has a sure and certain faith in a sure and certain Lord and this gives him a confidence that can face hardships and set-backs.

VERSE 7 rings out: *"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid but gives us power, love and self-control"*

SO, in the next verse he says to Timothy, *"So, join with me in suffering for the gospel"*

God has NOT given us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of CONFIDENCE. (Hallelujah!)

Then, there are several brief but confident and heart-warming summaries of the gospel. Here is 2 Timothy 1 v9 & 10:

⁹ He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Paul, also, is sustained by many relationships. 2 Timothy is an intensely *personal* Epistle. Timothy he calls in v2 "my dear son". He prays for him constantly v3. He longs to see him v4. He gives him a charge in v6.

Likewise, Paul is close to Mark and Titus and Luke and Tychius. The bonds of Christian fellowship are very strong and supportive. They are also cross-generational. Paul, the older man, is coaching the generation below him for usefulness.

There is warmth. There is respect. There is mutual support. And all benefit. **The truth is this: Because God is TRINITY and Father, Son and Spirit are in a relationship, the Christian church should be built on GOOD RELATIONSHIPS.**

A web of relationships, spanning different ages, so the enthusiasm of the young and the wisdom of the years can be mutually shared.

(3)

Finally, 2 Timothy 1 is a **DETERMINED** Epistle.

“Guard The Gospel” John Stott called his Commentary on 2 Timothy.

We guard something with vigilance so it is kept safe and can be used and not lost.

The church is the place where the gospel must be guarded and kept safe and preserved and not altered. The gospel is given to us in trust. It is ‘a deposit of truth’ which is entrusted to us as trustees so, as trustees, we hold it now and hand it on to the next generation.

Our role is to be just one link, but one good link, in the chain that started with the Apostles and will continue until the Second Coming.

St Paul is determined this be so and writes in v13&14

¹³ What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

8 days ago in this church, Michael Harvey told us how research shows that by far the biggest factor in people becoming Christians is not books, not missions, not courses like Alpha **BUT A CHRISTIAN HOME where faith is passed down from parent to child.**

This was true in Timothy’s own life.

Verse 5 mentions his Mother, Eunice, and grand-mother, Lois.

And they did a good job because Paul speaks in the same verse of Timothy’s ‘sincere faith’.

The home is the most effective place for the seeds of faith to be sown and nurtured.

When Terry Wogan was asked what qualified someone to be a member of his Fan Club, the TOGGS, he also replied that you would be a person who was **proud of your lawnmower!!**

I think we, the people of St Mary’s, can do better than that!

2 Timothy 1 shows that, even when the circumstances of our life are difficult, we can be proud of the GOSPEL. Proud of a gospel that allows us to be confident and determined. In all circumstances, St Paul shows us that it is a GOSPEL OF HOPE.