

2 Timothy 1:13-18 - When Faith Gets Quiet

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[0:00] All right, good morning. It's good to see you. Thanks, Hannah, for bringing that.

! It would be good to send some of those prayer points out and all of those contact details so people don't have to struggle to write things down this morning. We'll get that done this week so we know how to pray for you.

Moving forward. So this morning we're in 2 Timothy. And last week we finished verse 12. So this morning, guess where we are?

Verse 13. And we're going to finish the chapter. OK, so if you have a Bible, turn there. If you don't have a Bible or something on your phone, please go ahead and grab one from the back table.

We're in 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 13 reads like this. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

[1:08] Guard the good deposit entrusted to you. You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, amongst whom are philegious homogenies. May the Lord grant mercy to the house of one Ciphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.

But when he arrived in Rome, he searched me earnestly and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for bringing us here today. Lord, we thank you, Lord, as we've just read. We're reminded, Lord, that your Holy Spirit dwells in us. Lord, we pray as we come to your word, Lord, that you would help us.

Lord, that you would open our eyes and open our ears and soften our hearts, Lord, to receive what the Holy Spirit who already dwells within us is saying to us. And for those, Lord, we pray who do not have the Holy Spirit.

We pray this morning, Lord, that you would speak to them especially. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. So last week we echoed Tim's, who's Tim?

[2:16] Paul's question to Timothy. The question was, who are you and where have you come from? Do you remember asking that question? Who are you and where have you come from?

And one of the things that we said was that identity, which is like a massive buzzword at the moment, isn't it? Identity is who you are before God because of God.

That's what identity is. And of course, you know how much you believe that and how much you then identify with that identification. It all gets very complicated.

So this is the backbone of this letter as Paul is writing to Timothy there in Ephesus. Who are you and where have you come from?

And as Paul writes now in these verses and in the following chapters to write about calling, and he's going to, you know, exhort Timothy to do certain things in accordance with his calling, it's really important to remember that identity in Christ comes before calling.

[3 : 23] It comes before calling and identity sustains calling. You could never do what Hannah is doing, for example, if you didn't have security in your identity in Christ.

You could do it for a little while, but you couldn't do it for a very long period of time, especially when struggles come on day one.

And so identity is super important. And Paul is writing this letter to remind Timothy, look, your calling has to be rooted in your identity in Christ.

You have to be secure in knowing who you are before God because of God. I'll just remind you, Paul is writing this letter at the end of his life.

This isn't theory. This isn't pastoral advice from a comfortable distance. This is a man in chains. He's in a Roman prison. He's been abandoned, as we will see.

[4 : 30] He's been abandoned by his friends. He's awaiting execution. And what he's most concerned about is not Timothy's comfort or his comfort.

He is concerned whether the gospel is going to do its work, is going to continue to do its work. Paul knows something that we tend to forget in that we don't normally lose.

And this is what he's alluding to with talking about these three people in this passage. We don't tend to lose our sense of identity or our walk with Christ, or we don't tend to lose the gospel in a dramatic moment.

We lose it quietly. We lose it slowly. We lose it by drift. We lose it by one step of disobedience after another step of disobedience.

If you watch the Christian news this week, you'll know. You know, this news is broken about Philip Yancey, who's had an affair for eight years. And, you know, been the author of many, many books, been mentored many, many leaders.

[5 : 42] Listen, that doesn't happen in a dramatic moment. That is a long, slow drift in the wrong direction. It doesn't come from simply rebellion.

It comes from neglect. And so Paul is writing to Timothy, a young pastor in a hard place, and he says, in fact, in effect, if you forget who you are, you will stop guarding what matters.

And so today we're going to walk through this text, and one simple question comes up, one uncomfortable question comes up with this command about guarding.

What are we guarding? How are we guarding it? What is our calling? And so he opens with verse 13 with this command, and he says, follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

That word pattern matters. And I love the fact that Paul begins with it because he isn't starting with some kind of grand statement about like you have to be innovative.

[7 : 00] Like, Timothy, this is how you're going to keep going. This is how you're going to walk out your calling. You need to be innovative. He's not saying that. He's not saying you have to reinvent the gospel. He's not saying that either. He's not saying you have to, you know, find some new personal expression of the gospel in your place.

He's not saying that. He's saying pattern. And pattern means model or template. You will no doubt remember the days, maybe you still have those days, of tracing paper.

Yes? Now, some of you have no idea what tracing paper is because computers do it all for us these days, right? But you remember when you were given like some kind of shape or something on a piece of paper, and then, you know, your teacher would give you that, and then you were given a piece of tracing paper to trace over the top of that line, right?

That wasn't an invitation to draw any kind of picture that you like. You understand that? If that was true, that's probably where you were going wrong. The teacher was giving you a pattern, a model, a template to follow.

It's not a vague idea or flexible outline or some kind of suggested way of doing things. This is a fixed shape that something else is meant to conform to.

[8 : 23] And this matters because Timothy is ministering in a culture, pressurizing him to adapt, soften, and adjust his message. Ring any bells? Paul doesn't say, look, create something meaningful.

Make it work for your context. He says, hold the pattern. Which, of course, cuts against our cultural voices, doesn't it? We live in a world that calls us to speak our own truth or define our own reality.

But Paul says, there is a pattern of sound words to follow. That word for sound means healthy.

Healthy words. Follow healthy words. Like, I wish that that was just more of the case everywhere, but especially in the church.

That we followed a pattern of healthy words. What is good for spiritual health. These are life-giving words. And Paul is saying, look, your calling, and in respect, our calling, is not to edit them, but to hold them.

[9 : 36] And notice how Paul says to hold them. He says, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. In faith and love. Like, that's important, isn't it?

That we balance faith and love. Paul refuses to separate these two. Because faith without love just hardens our hearts.

But love without faith misleads our hearts. And so we need both. And it's difficult, isn't it? It's difficult to hold that balance sometimes. We are to follow the pattern of sound words, balancing faith and love.

Well, how are we to do that? And it is a challenge. Well, I'm glad that Paul tells us in verse 14. He says, by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

Now, I'm glad that there's not a one, two, three right there. Like, step one, do this. Step two, step... You know, I'm glad that that doesn't exist. Right? Paul has said, you know what? Actually, the way that you're going to balance faith and love and continue that pattern of speaking healthy spiritual words is through the Holy Spirit who dwells in you.

[10 : 49] Good. Now, we talked about this last week, didn't we? The idea that who you are before God is because of God. And look, we need to hear that again.

And we need to hear that constantly. Because this is where calling is born. Right? When we come to Jesus, like, when we eventually, when we eventually, if it was anything like me, when we eventually stop running, right?

Or stop performing or stop negotiating. And we surrender to the Lord and we begin walking with Him. The Bible says that something astonishing happens. And what is the astonishing thing that happens?

It's the Holy Spirit, third member of the Trinity, God Himself dwells or unites us with Christ. He doesn't visit us.

Like, I think He does. But I think primarily in the first instance, He doesn't visit us. He doesn't give us a boost when we're struggling. Although I still think that is true.

[11 : 49] He dwells with us. And He dwells within us. Like, that's astonishing, isn't it? And that when He dwells within us, everything changes.

Like, everything changes. And we talked last week about status, belonging, and calling, right? And look, here's the three things that change.

First, He changes our status before God. Our status before God. So where we were, enemies of God, you know, outside of God's, like, if you want to say, we weren't friends with God, we were enemies of God, that status has changed.

Before God, we are no longer now defined by our record, our CV, our resume, the past things that we've done.

We are defined by Christ's. His obedience becomes ours. His righteousness covers ours. And our sin is no longer accounted against us because it was counted against Jesus at the cross.

[13:06] Sometimes I think, like Christians, we think we're probably still under probation. Or we're just waiting for our review meeting to come up.

And we're just waiting for God to say, no, you don't qualify. But our status is really important. And we understand that this union with Christ means that we are justified.

So justified, if you want a catchy phrase, it's just as if we'd never sinned. Justified. Fully and forever. That's our status before God as Christians.

But not only that, he also changes our relationship with God. We're not tolerated servants or distance followers.

We are welcomed sons and daughters. Paul said to the church of Galatia that God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

[14:16] Father, Father. God is not merely for you, and he is, but he has brought you into his family. You belong.

Now most of you, I'll say most of you are part of a family. Most of you are. It's true. Most of you have a family. That is also true. Many of you have sons and daughters.

I know it's true in my house, is that when my kids come home, they don't have to knock the door. They just walk in.

They raid the fridge. They plonk themselves on the sofa. And when I mean plonk, they proper plonk. They grab the remote.

Do you know what I mean? It's like they're not asking for permission. They're not wondering. They don't get up in the morning and wondering, I wonder, am I still on probation? Now oftentimes, I want to say, yes, absolutely you are.

[15:19] Give me that remote. But that's not the way things are with the Lord. We belong.

And then thirdly, what the Holy Spirit does, is that he gives us a calling. Not a calling, and we saw this last week, not a calling powered by guilt or fear, but a calling rooted in who we are now.

Look, verse seven last week, for when God gave us his spirit, it was not fear that we receive, but power, love, and self-control. The spirit walks with us.

He shapes us. He patiently conforms us into the likeness of Christ, day by day, step by step, through obedience that flows from grace. This means your faithfulness is not fueled by willpower.

It's sustained by God's presence in you. Salvation is more than a decision. It is a divine invasion of your life that bends the mind, melts the heart, and redirects the world towards God.

[16:36] You see, you are who you are before God because of God. So when Paul says, in verse 13, follow the pattern of sound words that you've heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

By the Holy Spirit, he dwells within you. God, the good deposit entrusted to you. He's reminding us that we are never doing that alone, never in isolation.

Why? Because the same spirit who saved you now sustains you. The same grace that justifies you now strengthens you.

The same God who called you walks with you every single step. Why? Not next to you necessarily, but in you. And look, one of the questions that might be asked is something like this.

Well, what happens when the Christian isn't confident in their identity? and so doesn't guard the good deposit in their lives? What happens when the Christian isn't confident in their identity and so maybe wanders off?

[17:55] What is this exactly what Paul addresses in verse 15? He says, you are aware, Timothy, that all who are in Asia and that's Asia Minor, the area that we call Turkey and Greece today, you are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me.

Now look, pause there because Paul isn't being dramatic. He's being honest. This is a personal, vulnerable confession that he has been wounded by the shame of others.

these were people Paul prayed with. People he taught.

People he stayed in in their homes. People who once said to Paul, Paul, we're with you. But it seems that when it costs them something, when the chains are visible, when association is dangerous, they're gone.

They're gone. And it seems, at least, there's no confrontation. We don't seem to get any record of that in the book of Acts or in Paul's writing.

[19:10] He does, there are some confrontations, but mostly they're with unbelievers, not with believers, right? No confrontation, no explanation, just distance. You're aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me.

That's the pain of abandonment that you can hear. It's the pain of betrayal that you can hear. It's the pain of lost friends that you can hear. In fact, if you listen to Paul's words closely, you can hear the ache of realizing that faith was easier when it was safe.

And then look, Paul does something absolutely heartbreakingly.

He names names. Amongst whom are Philegus and Homogenes. Look, these aren't the villains of the story.

These would probably get your clickbait on Facebook or Instagram, right? But these aren't the villains of the story. They're reminders that shame has faces.

[20:25] These were real people who once walked closely with Paul. But when the gospel became costly, silence felt safer than loyalty. And you can almost hear Paul saying, Timothy, this is what fear does.

Remember when we linked identity with fear and shame with fear? Paul is saying, look, this is what fear does. This is what shame produces. You could argue, and I'm going to argue, not very strongly, I'm just going to say it and we can have the argument later, that these two guys didn't have their identity rooted in Christ.

It was in performance or victim or the approval of others. And this is what shame produces. It's not a loud rejection. It's a quiet withdrawal.

And you know, ashamed withdrawal is rarely loud. It doesn't argue theology. It doesn't post a farewell.

It just creates distance. That's ashamed withdrawal. It says, I still believe, but just not publicly. I support you, but just not visibly.

[21:40] I'm still in, but just not all the way. It's faith that goes quiet when it becomes costly. So Paul names these two men.

And I don't know how long it took Paul to decide whether to name them or not. For sure, Timothy knew them. You would assume that the church in Ephesus also knew them.

But then look at the next verse, verse 16. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of one Ciphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.

You see how Paul is linking, continually linking, this idea of fear, shame, and identity. Paul is reminded that not everyone is like those two men.

And we should praise God for that. There will be people like that, but not everybody's like that. And where he said, everyone in Asia, all, everyone in Asia deserted me.

[22 : 55] It's not everyone. Because God, by his grace, reminds Paul, in that moment, there was a guy. And his name was Onciferous.

And notice what Paul highlights about this man. It's not his gifting. It's not his platform or his influence.

At no point does Paul say, I'm so glad Onciferous went behind these two other men and cleared up all their mess. It doesn't say that. The thing that he points out was his presence, him being with him.

He wasn't ashamed of my chains. He says in verse 17, when he arrived in Rome, he searched for me earnestly and found me.

Now I'm going to use a word that none of us like very much. Effort. That's what that means, right?

[24 : 08] He searched earnestly for me and then he found me. That means effort and it means risk. And then Paul says in verse 18, may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day.

And that day, we presume, means the day of days when Jesus comes back. When some will find mercy and some will not find mercy. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day.

And you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus. Look, Paul doesn't say reward him for his bravery. He asks for mercy. Why?

Because look, look, just pause there. Because look, this guy had done really, really well. And yet, even after he'd done really, really well, Paul asks that he might receive mercy, not a reward.

That's good, isn't it? Listen, even our best faithfulness still rests on grace.

[25 : 19] Even our best days, the best things that we do. Like, we know that these two men who deserted Paul, they needed mercy. But we also know that one, Ciphorus, also needed mercy.

The unfaithful need mercy and the faithful need mercy. The big difference between Philegius and Homogenes and then Onciferus, listen, they all heard the same gospel, didn't they?

They all faced the same pressures. The difference wasn't information. The difference was identity. One of the reasons, one of the reasons that calling feels so heavy for Christians is because we often reverse the order.

I can't tell you how many times I've had conversations with people and they'll go, I just don't know my calling. Or do you know your identity? Are you fixed there? Before you start stepping out, do you know who stepped in for you?

Do you know that? one of the reasons we find calling so heavy, so often, too often, we try to live our way into an identity instead of living from the identity we've been given.

[26 : 49] We try to answer the questions, who are you and where you come from by doing stuff. But when calling comes first, it just feels like pressure.

Like you can't keep up. But when identity comes first, calling becomes a response to grace. Obedience becomes gratitude.

We talked about that last week. And look, this is probably where shame quietly does its work. Because again, shame is not primarily about doing something bad.

It's about the belief we have about who we are. Shame says, if people really see me, I'll be rejected. And in some cases, we might even be tempted to say, if God could really see me, I'll be rejected.

And we don't get theological in that moment and say, well, God can see everything. Because fear is driving us.

[28 : 01] If God could see me, so I'll sin in private and make sure nobody knows. I'll have an eight-year adulterous affair with someone. Right? Philip Yancey. So no one knows.

And maybe I can even keep a secret from God. But listen, shame is ultimately the fear of being exposed.

And we talked about this before. But listen, it's the fear of being exposed before the wrong judge. Like you or me or someone else.

If we're people pleasers, we are fearful of being exposed before other people. If we're performance identity people, we have a fear of being exposed against the chart that said we should have achieved this, that, or the other.

When our identity is anchored in the opinions of others or our own performance, we live constantly on trial, don't we?

[29 : 10] Calling, then, becomes terrifying. failure feels like condemnation. But listen, the gospel, what the gospel does is it changes the courtroom.

It changes the judge. In Christ, the verdict has already been rendered. Your status is righteous.

your belonging is accepted and your calling is beloved. That means your calling is no longer a way just to prove yourself.

It's a way to express who you already are. Who are you and where have you come from? And again, look, this is why Paul keeps returning to this idea of identity in 2nd Timothy.

He doesn't motivate Timothy by saying just try harder. Have a plan. Get a strategy. Make a spreadsheet. He reminds him you are known, you are secure, and you are loved.

[30 : 21] And in our world, that is a complete impossibility. To be fully known and fully loved, not a chance. But in God's courtroom, because of Jesus, not an impossibility.

So maybe the invitation today, the way we respond to this text, isn't to try harder or promise more. So super easy to leave this place and just kind of go, right God, I'm going to commit to you one more time.

I know the first 11 days of my New Year's resolution Bible reading hasn't gone to plan, but tomorrow, Lord, why don't we get off the treadmill? Maybe the invitation is to simply stop living from an identity that can't carry you and receive again the one that Christ has already secured for you.

to be to be and look, can I say that some have been withdrawing, not because we don't believe, but because we're afraid to be seen, afraid to fail and afraid to be exposed.

But listen, the gospel doesn't call you into hiding, it calls you into freedom. That's what we sung about this morning. And maybe the most faithful response that you can make today is simply to say, Jesus, I trust who I am because of you.

[31 : 58] And I'm ready to live from that, not from another identity. and I don't care who I upset on the way because I'm looking for the approval of one and that is you.

So let's bow our hearts, bow our heads this morning. The musician is going to come back up and lead us in a song. And as we pray, I just want you to maybe ask the Lord, is this relevant for me?

Not for me, but for you. It may be relevant for me too. You can pray that. Father, we come to you as we are.

Tired, hesitant, fearful, sometimes ashamed. And yet here we are because you are faithful and your love never fails.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you are not ashamed to be identified with us. You carried our sin, you carried our shame, our fears, and our failure. All the things that we tried to hide and you took them to the cross and you stood firm when it cost you everything so that we could stand unashamed.

[33:17] God. Father, thank you for sending the Holy Spirit. Lord, and we ask him again now to hear his voice.

Deep down in our souls, Lord, we would hear again Abba Father, that reminder that we belong to you. Amen. And our performance or our acceptance isn't based on our performance.

Lord, we thank you, Lord, that we get to obey you, Lord, because we are grateful to you. Lord, we want to obey you, but not out of fear.

Lord, we pray this morning, Lord, that those who have been living cautiously or quietly, who have been shrinking back in fear or shame, we ask would you breathe new life into us.

Give us boldness to show up, persistence to stay faithful and joy to serve because we already belong. May we leave this place today not striving to earn your favour, but walking in the freedom that you have given, rooted in grace and filled with courage, ready to guard and proclaim the gospel that we've been entrusted with.

[34:50] Father, we pray this in the powerful, steadfast name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.