

Death Bed Statements

Last week Karen and I attended the funeral services of one of the elders from Clovis, a man that I had the privilege to serve with there and a long-time member of that congregation. Just this last Tuesday we received word that another long-time friend from the Sun Garden congregation where Randall Jarel preaches is now under the care of hospice. We had opportunity to go and visit her this last Friday. This is a lady, and I don't use that term lightly at all, who truly epitomizes the definition of what a Christian woman should be. She is a strong woman that is well versed in the scriptures who raised her children in the Church while her husband, Bill, fought that tooth and nail. Her two sons are both faithful Christians though her daughter is not. I grew up living across the street from Ida and her family, I have always thought of her as my second mother. She was as responsible as my own mother in giving me my love for cooking. To say that it is difficult to watch friends and loved ones in the last days of their lives is a gross understatement, but one of the most difficult things, that as family and loved ones that we must do, is attend to those whose passing is imminent and they know it. I sat and talked with my mother while she waited for her time, which she knew was soon to come. The clarity of thought and purpose becomes intense. I will always remember how mom gathered dad and her four children to her. She obviously had something to say to all of us and it was of prime importance to her that it be said. She shared her deepest thoughts for each of her children, not necessarily pleasant to hear, but in her estimation, as she knew this would be the last opportunity to say it, absolutely vital. **1**

Think about that for just a moment, as I am sure that we have all had experiences just like this. What is it you would say, what is it you will say to your loved ones when your time is imminent. What are your most sincere and heart-felt thoughts. It is interesting how all the minutia of life goes away when there just isn't time to worry about it.

This is where we find Paul in his 2nd letter to Timothy.

2 Tim 4:6 **2**

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

Paul saw his imminent departure from this life in the not too distant future and he had some thoughts he felt of vital importance to share with Timothy. These thoughts, while directed to Timothy, are also for the Christian today, what Paul's thoughts for us might be.

2 Timothy, as nearly as can be calculated, was Paul's last letter from the prison where he was at in Rome. Paul was certain of the imminent verdict of death, as we saw in **2 Tim 4:6-8**. As is natural at times like these, thoughts turn to those who are of greatest import and love. Paul wanted his son in the faith, Timothy, to hurry to him. Timothy was in Asia Minor when he received this letter.

In...

2 Tim 1:1-5 **3**

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus, **2** to Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. **3** I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, **4** longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. **5** For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.

Paul, in his address here, covers a variety of things. He talks of himself as an apostle, one sent to witness, for Christ Jesus, according to the will of God, read, by His authority, through the

salvation brought by Christ. He addresses the letter to Timothy, whom he calls his son. This is an expression of the great love Paul felt towards Timothy. There was obviously a very deep connection between Paul and Timothy in their lives, but most especially in the faith, so much so that Paul took special care in remembering Timothy unceasingly in his prayers. Unceasingly comes from the Greek word that means without intermission. Now this doesn't mean that Paul did nothing else but remember Timothy constantly, but rather that whatever Paul did, he did it in such a way that the recalling of it would affect and influence Timothy.

We can see this same thought in Paul's exhortation in...

1 Thess 5:16-18

4

16 Rejoice always; **17** pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

"Pray without ceasing". Whatever we undertake to do, we need God's guidance, we need to always keep in contact with Him through prayer. It does not mean that we pray to the exclusion of doing other things, rather, we must always focus on how what we do, combined with prayer, is going to influence all others we have contact with. Paul prayed for Timothy's particular, specific needs. The word used is not *proseuchai*, the general Greek word for prayers, but *deuceis*, supplications, for the particular needs of Timothy. That is how we should pray for those for whom we are concerned. What a joy to be able to give the gift of prayer. What a wonderful expression of love for those that are the object of our prayers.

This is the love that Paul expressed for Timothy.

Acts 20:36-38

5

36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. **37** And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, **38** grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they were accompanying him to the ship.

Whether Paul refers to the parting with the Ephesian Church, mentioned **Acts 20:37**, or to the deep impressions made on both his and Timothy's hearts when he instructed him in the doctrine of Christ, or to some other exchange between themselves, it just isn't known. But this mention is no small proof of how he truly felt concerning Timothy.

It is interesting to note that in what was probably going to be his final opportunity to express his thoughts that Paul does not complain about the things that led him to be in prison. He doesn't bemoan his fate because of his efforts to spread the faith. Not a word of complaint is uttered, but he asserts and recognizes his responsibility as an Apostle chosen by God through Christ. Paul is not afraid of death, see what he says in...

Phil 1:21

6

21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Even facing death, an option that he is obviously looking forward to, Paul speaks about "the promise of life in Christ Jesus". When you know that it might be the last opportunity to be had to teach or give advice, you take it very seriously. Facing what he was certain to be his demise, Paul turned his thoughts and heart to Timothy. In verse 5, Paul recalls and reminds Timothy of the faith that was taught him by his mother and grandmother. Don't ever think that your efforts as a parent or grand parent don't mean something. They do, it may not be immediately visible, but there is a residual impact of doing God's will that we can't always see, that is God's promise. Just remember, that our responsibility and accountability is, as individuals, to keep God's Word faithfully and to make every effort to teach that Word to others and our prayer has to be that God will grant the increase. As Paul is sharing his thoughts with Timothy, he starts as we all start, with faith. I find it

fascinating that Paul also reminds Timothy to be conscious of who taught him that faith, and to value and be appreciative of them. He then reminds Timothy that it is his responsibility to grow...

2 Tim 1:6-7 7

6 And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. **7** For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

The idea of "kindle afresh" comes from...

Anazopureo 8

NT:329 denotes "to kindle afresh," or "keep in full flame" (ana, "up," or "again," zoos, "alive," pur, "fire"), and is used metaphorically in **2 Tim 1:6**, where "the gift of God" is regarded as a fire capable of dying out through neglect. KJV - stir up.

There is an amazing dynamic going on here. Paul says that Timothy had received the gift of the Holy Spirit by Paul's own hands. I don't know what you think of when you consider those that had received the gift of the Spirit, and by this we understand that we are talking about miraculous spiritual gifts, but it is difficult for me to think of them as being anything other than exemplary examples of what Christians should be. Yet we see in...

Gal 2:11-13 9

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. **12** For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. **13** And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy,

Paul had to oppose Peter directly because of his error that had caused him to be in jeopardy of losing his soul. Even those who had received the Holy Spirit had to be constantly on guard lest they fall into condemnation as did Peter and Barnabus.

Paul gives three instructions or warnings, however you might define them, to Timothy, all of which are centered on or come as a result of Timothy's faith...

- X 1) Do Not be Ashamed
- 2) Retain the Standard
- 3) Guard the Treasure, the Word

So, let us begin with this first warning...

- X 1) Do Not be Ashamed

2 Tim 1:8 10

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,

As with all who come to God, it is the individual's responsibility to maintain their focus and commitment, lest that testimony of the Lord judges them to be unfaithful or disobedient. That is what Paul means when he says, do not be ashamed. It was foremost in his thoughts as he prepares to leave this life. Do not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. Stand up for the Gospel of Christ and also for those who have taken that stand as part of their lives. This idea of being ashamed is exactly what Paul opposed Peter about. Peter had capitulated, given in, to the pressure of the Judaizing teachers, he had become ashamed of the Gospel of Christ and forgotten his commitment. This can happen to anyone, even those who were entrusted with gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul wanted

to tell Timothy to stay committed, to be proud of the faith that the word of God brings us. What greater expression of love can there be than to try and give the gift of faith to those we truly love.

Paul gives Timothy all the reasons for staying firm in the faith...

2 Tim 1:9-12

11

9 who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, **10** but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, **11** for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. **12** For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

Look at what Paul says the power of God has done; **12**

13

Saved us

14

Called us with a Holy Calling according to His purpose, His desire, and grace

15

Revealed His son from all eternity, Jesus Christ

16

Abolished spiritual death

17

Brought Life and immortality through the Gospel.

I see in this the mental acceptance of Christ and His sacrifice, of Him as our savior. The second thought that Paul had to share with Timothy was...

2) Retain the Standard

2 Tim 1:13

18

13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

While it might seem that Paul is saying the same thing here, he really isn't. Not only are we to stay committed to the Gospel, in the face of opposing teaching, but we are to retain the standard of sound words. This means to not stray from God's word in keeping it.

Col 3:17

19

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Do you see what Paul is saying? He is telling Timothy that he should not only not be ashamed of the Gospel, but that the Gospel, read, the word of God, is and has a standard that needs to be diligently followed, because they are sound words. Following the proscriptions, the details, of the word, is just as important as accepting the Gospel, Christ, into our hearts as our savior.

The third thought Paul left for Timothy is...

3) Guard the Treasure, the Word

2 Tim 1:14

20

14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

This last thought of vital importance that Paul wanted to say, as he sees his departure from this life looming, may be the one he most wanted to leave with Timothy. Guard this treasure, the treasure that is the acceptance of Christ, the treasure that is the diligent keeping of the standard of God's truth.

The idea of guarding the word of God is not restricted by Paul to just his statement to Timothy...

Rom 3:1-2

21

1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? **2** Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

Paul speaks of the Jews as having been entrusted with the oracles of God, His sayings. In point of fact, Paul says that the very first advantage the Jews had was that they were given the responsibility to care for and to adhere to that word. Interesting statement, how important is accepting the calling of God? Paul calls being the chosen people of God is to be entrusted with His word.

In the covenant of the New Testament, Paul states the same thought this way...

1 Cor 3:16-17

22

16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? **17** If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

And in...

Gal 2:5-7

23

5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. **6** But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality) — well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. **7** But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised

Brethren, Paul's dying words to Timothy are his dying words to us.

24

Don't be Ashamed of the Gospel

Retain the Standard of God's Truth

Guard the treasure of the gift of God