



**2 Timothy 2:1-21**

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“We want our kids burning at the stake!” Oh my. This parody would even be funnier even it did not ring so true. It’s the grain of truth that makes any parody funny. Ignatius was obviously referring to 2 Timothy 1:6—*fan into flame the gift of God*. We know what oxygen is to a fire. Most of you have built campfires on more than one occasion. In addition to dry wood and a source of heat, what you need for a good campfire is something to stoke the fire with lots of air. When we were camp counselors we used to use the kettle lids. They are lightweight but stiff, which means you can wave them fast and they move lots of air. Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. You can almost feel the heat as air rushes to feed the flames.

This is what it means to fan into flame and it’s a great word picture of our faith. Paul said to the young pastor Timothy, *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God*. Even if a person does not know the exact verse—like the fictional Ignatius—we often hear people say, “Man, have you seen how Jack is really on fire for the Lord?” Being “on fire” for the Lord sounds like something that would be really good; something to which we should all aspire. And we should. Who doesn’t want to have their faith on fire? Who doesn’t want a red hot faith that glows brightly for Christ? But what does this mean and how do we do it?

**3** *I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your*

grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. **6** For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, **7** for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

**8** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, **9** who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, **10** and which now has been manifested through 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 apostle and teacher, **12** which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. **13** Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. **14** By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

**15** You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. **16** May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, **17** but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me— **18** 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.

### 1. Sincerity—5

Paul wrote to his friend, *I am reminded of your sincere faith*. This is a description of Timothy but as a great example, it is also a general principle for us. A faith that is sincere is a faith that is authentic. And the opposite of authenticity is hypocrisy. The word hypocrite comes from the Greek plays and means to pretend. As you may know, the actors wore masks to let the audience know which character they were playing. These actors were called hypocrites.

I have said it many times but it bears repeating. Hypocrisy is a lame excuse of anyone rejecting



the gospel but why would we want to give the watching world good examples of our hypocrisy? What do you say when someone tells you that the churches are all filled with a bunch of hypocrites? You say, “Yes, I know, that’s why I need Jesus because I don’t do what I want to do. I don’t live up to the standards that I profess and I need supernatural help.” We all struggle with this type of hypocrisy but the true hypocrite actually wears a mask. This mask allows them to pretend to be someone that they are not.

I know a man whom I thought was a dedicated believer and Godly man. He had never given me a reason to doubt his integrity until I watched him officiate sporting events. On three different occasions I witnessed him yelling at coaches at the top of his lungs. It was like a switch was

flipped and this angry man just blew up. I have seen plenty of coaches complain and gripe and even get angry but in all my years I have never seen an official blow up like this—not even close. And I am guessing that most of the officials in the games I watched were not believers.

Here's a good question. Which is the mask and which is the real person? In other words, is this man fundamentally a nice person who only occasionally blows up or is he fundamentally an angry person who wears a mask of niceness most of the time? Is his real self nice and the mask is anger or is the real self anger and the mask is niceness?

The same question could be asked of each of us. Authenticity and integrity is being the same person in public as you are in private. Speaking from my own life, the man you see standing before you on Sunday morning is not the exact same man who lives at my house. The man who lives at my house is more moody, sometimes angry, prays less often and makes more mistakes. I like the Rich Maurer at church better than the Rich Maurer at home. But I am guessing you might say the same thing about yourself. I have never known anyone who is much nicer and more Godly at home than they are in public. About the closest I have seen to this was a kid in my junior high Sunday School class. He was a terror in our classroom but I was told at home he was an angel. His mother was quite authoritarian so I suspect that he behaved at home to avoid severe punishment and then let down his guard in public when he was away from his mother. Because he was so wild, the other kids teased him. I made the mistake of joining in on that teasing and before I could flinch, he punched me in the stomach as hard as he could. He completely knocked the wind out of me and I lay there for a while gasping for breath. David was his name and David wore his mask at home but for the vast majority of us, our masks are worn in public.

We all wear a mask of some kind but here are a few questions to draw us toward a more authentic faith.

- Are you aware of your mask?
- If so, do you admit you have a mask?
- How drastic of a difference is there between the real you and your mask?
- Do you seek help in removing your mask?

## **2. A Godly heritage—5**

Timothy had a Godly heritage since both his mother and his grandmother were both believers. A Godly heritage is not necessary to have a faith that is on fire but it certainly helps. I did a quick perusal through the old church directory and estimated that about half of the adults in our church did not have parents who were true believers. So approximately half of you are building on the Godly heritage handed down to you and the other half is starting their own Godly heritage. I encourage you to look down the road two generations and pray and work toward multiple generations of authentic believers. One of my life prayers is that I would live long enough to see my grandchildren come to an authentic faith. I feel kind of like Moses in this respect. I don't need to live in the Promised Land but I would like to see a glimpse of it. I don't need to see five generations of believers in our family but I would like to see a glimpse of it.

Are you able to see one to two generations down the line and catch a vision of a Godly heritage? Envision someone saying this to one of your grandchildren. "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandparents and your parents and now, I am sure, dwells in you as

well.” Do you see that happening forty years from now and what are you doing about it today to help to make that a reality?

### 3. Holy Spirit power—6-7

Most people who like this verse camp out on the part about power. I find this is especially taken out of context in charismatic circles. In verse six and seven you have the word flame, gift, spirit and power. Since the Holy Spirit came upon the people as a tongue of fire at Pentecost and gave a miraculous gift of speaking in tongues, someone who is inclined toward the miraculous gifts takes these words and concludes that God wants us lay hands on one another to receive the gift of tongues, healing and miracles. The TV preachers really love a verse like this one.

There is Holy Spirit power here. There is no about that. And this power may result in miracles and healing and speaking in tongues on occasion but this is not what these verses mean. The gift of which Paul spoke was the Holy Spirit himself, not a spiritual gift or many spiritual gifts. There are several times in the book of Acts where the Holy Spirit came into a person through the laying on of hands by an apostle.<sup>2</sup> We need to remember that this was the infancy of the church. There were those who had placed their faith in Christ before the Day of Pentecost, like was described in Acts 8.

*Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:15-17)*

They knew about Jesus and were baptized into his name but they were caught, as it were, in between the old covenant and the new covenant. They knew about Jesus but they were not in

Scripture	Date	Event
Acts 14	47-48	Paul preached the gospel in the town where Timothy lived; Timothy, his mother and grandmother were converted.
Acts 16	49	Paul met Timothy on 2 <sup>nd</sup> missionary journey, invites him to come with him.
Acts 28	60-62	Paul in prison in Rome; wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon
1 Timothy	63	Paul not in prison
Titus	64	Paul not in prison
2 Timothy	65	Paul in prison in Rome and expects to die soon

Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out. Peter and John had to explain this to them and then they received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. We have to rightly understand this in context because this is something that no longer happens. This only took place within the first few years of the new covenant and the early church. All believers are baptized in the Holy Spirit at

the moment of conversion. But Timothy was one of those Jesus followers who was caught in between the old covenant and the new covenant. He received the Holy Spirit when Paul met him on his first missionary journey.

Therefore, the gift that Timothy was received was the Holy Spirit and the result was to give him a spirit of power, love and self-control. Now that we know what the gift was, we need to know why Timothy needed power, love and self-control. The word power is contrasted with the word fear. Paul wrote, *for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control*. Paul did not come out and say it plainly, but the assumption is that Timothy tended toward being timid and fearful. Remember that he was probably in his early thirties when he took over as pastor of the church in Ephesus. This was a large and important city. The church in Ephesus went on to plant the other six churches in Asia which appear in the book of Revelation. Pastoring this growing church was an immense responsibility and now Timothy had to deal with all of the false teachers that were leading his flock astray. It appears that Timothy was not naturally as bold as Paul was and therefore struggled with what the NASB calls ‘timidity.’ Fear.

Like a good friend would do, Paul reminded Timothy that he was given the Holy Spirit and the Spirit would empower him to not be afraid. This is why I don’t particularly care for personality inventories. I have taken them all. According to the ancient Greeks I am a choleric/sanguine. If you prefer Gary Smalley’s labels I am an otter/lion. If you are familiar with the DISC, I am a I/D. If you have ever taken the Meyers-Briggs, I am an ENTJ. If you have no idea what I am talking about, you are probably better off. I do like Smalley’s four types: lion, otter, beaver and golden retriever. You can quickly understand how each animal matches a personality. The lion is a doer and a leader. The otter is playful and highly relational. The beaver is industrious and efficient and the golden retriever is a loyal friend.

As I said, I don’t really care for these because they can only tell you—or at least approximate—who you are at the present time. When you label someone’s personality there are ways it can be helpful but I have seen it used as an excuse. The typical weakness of the otter personality is that they are so relational that they don’t always get things accomplished. They would rather talk to you than work on a needed project. The industrious beavers can likewise be faulted for the opposite extreme. They are such efficient doers that they don’t leave enough time for relationships. I actually had a fellow pastor tell me once that he was aware of a deficiency in his personality but it was no use dealing with it because you can’t change a person’s basic temperament.

What if Timothy had taken a personality test? He could have said to Paul, “Listen, I enjoy pastoring this church and we are getting a lot of good stuff accomplished. We have planted three churches in Asia with plans to start three more but I just can’t deal with these false teachers like you do. I am more timid by nature and I am not able to confront them. When you get out of prison, maybe you should come here and deal with it yourself. I just can’t do it.”

Timothy may have been more timid by nature and upbringing. Maybe he was more of a mama’s boy or a grandma’s boy. Maybe Lois and Eunice spoiled him too much when he was little. So what if he was? The transforming power of the gospel can even change your most basic and fundamental personality. And I don’t just mean that the power of God can help you to stop



sinning. I mean it can change your core personality. If you are overly shy, the power of the Holy Spirit can help you to become more outgoing so you can talk with your neighbors and share the gospel with others. If your personality tends to be overbearing, the power of the Holy Spirit can shave off the rough edges of your personality. Personality tests can be good in the sense that they are fairly accurate at describing who you are at the present time but I have seen far too many people use them as an excuse for not changing and growing.

This leads to our final point for this morning. We will finish the others in two weeks after Mother's Day.

#### **4. Freedom from the fear of man—8**

*Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner.*

I sincerely doubt that Timothy was actually ashamed of Paul and the fact that Paul was put into prison for sharing the gospel. But his naturally timid personality could have led to this eventually. If Timothy was timid about confronting the false teachers then in a small way, he was not standing up for the gospel, for which Paul was imprisoned.

This is why Paul wanted to send a word of exhortation to his friend. "Do not be ashamed, Timothy." Timothy was a special young man but like everyone, he was not exempt from giving in to the pressures of those around him. Talk about a natural state of being—I think we most of us are naturally timid when it comes to standing up for the gospel because everyone in this room has a fear of man of some kind.

Even bold Peter in all of his boldness and Barnabus with all of his compassion succumbed to a fear of man. Paul had to confront both of them.

*But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. 13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.* (Gal. 2:11-13)

We are all under immense pressure to compromise our beliefs, to compromise our standards and to compromise our convictions. You may have heard about the news coming out of the pentagon this week that declared that any military personnel caught sharing their faith will be subject to court martial. A day later they clarified the rules stating, "Service members can share their faith (evangelize), but must not force unwanted, intrusive attempts to convert others of any faith or no faith to one's beliefs (proselytization)." <sup>3</sup> Persecution and prosecution are coming. Make no

mistake about it. The only question remains is will we be ashamed of the gospel and of those in U.S. prisons.

Power from the Holy Spirit is available to each of us as it was to Maryam and Marziyeh. They were moderate Muslims who were converted to Christianity in 1999. They devoted themselves to



distributing 20,000 Farsi new testaments in Tehran. They led Bible studies in their apartment for young women and prostitutes. When they were arrested, the police hung signs around their necks before taking their police photos. The sign read, “Accused of promoting Christianity in Iran.”

After languishing in the notorious Evin Prison, you would think that these two women would tone down their evangelistic efforts but they continued all the more.<sup>4</sup> Maryam declared that “The government tried to silence us by keeping us in prison but we had more opportunities to share the message of Jesus with prisoners and even some guards.”<sup>5</sup> Marziyeh said that “We were more free inside the prison than on the outside.”<sup>6</sup>

Yes, there is a verse in the Bible about fire and if you want your faith to be ablaze, then we need to have power from the Holy Spirit that would free us from the fear of man. But most of us will never need the kind of power that is required to evangelize in Iran so we should start with smaller fears. When you look into the mirror and realize that you don’t like yourself. Such a feeling is a result of a fear of man, of what others think. You don’t feel accepted. Can you invite the Holy Spirit into that fear? Can you feel the whoosh of the Spirit fanning your faith into a flame?

How about after church and you are afraid to greet a visitor after church? Or when you are afraid to confront someone about their sin? Or when you are afraid to rightly discipline your children because if you do, they might not “like” you. Whoosh. Do you feel the Holy Spirit? Can you invite him into your deepest fears and allow a transformation?

Rich Maurer  
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<sup>1</sup> This is a parody of a “youth pastor”/speaker who is all about image and being cool. His ministry is called “flame” and is a gross misunderstanding of 2 Timothy 1:6.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2013/05/03/dod-ok-to-talk-about-faith-not-to-push-on-others.html?ESRC=dod.nl>

<sup>4</sup> Thus exemplifying the wonderful prayer of the disciples in Acts 4:29-31. *And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, **30** while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” **31** And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.*

<sup>5</sup> [http://christian-daily-news.com/two-iranian-women-imprisoned-on-death-row-and-miraculously-freed/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1367701383.7254381179809570312500](http://christian-daily-news.com/two-iranian-women-imprisoned-on-death-row-and-miraculously-freed/?doing_wp_cron=1367701383.7254381179809570312500)

<sup>6</sup> Jamie Dean, Finding Freedom, *World Magazine*, April 20, 2013, p. 47.