

7/21/24 - 2 Timothy 1:12b-18 - "Follow the Pattern"

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[0 : 0 0] Our scripture reading today is found in 2 Timothy chapter 1. It begins at verse 12, but for context, I'll begin at verse 11.

Here are these words from the Apostle Paul. I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and teacher, 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.

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, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Figulus and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.

[1 : 1 6] But when he arrived in Rome, he searched for 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.

Amen. This is the word of the Lord. Well, it's good to be back preaching after, I guess it's been a few weeks, so.

We're continuing our series in 2 Timothy. I'm going to probably say 1 Timothy at least once while I'm up here because I've had 1 Timothy in my mind for a while, and I'll probably mix it up.

But we're in 2 Timothy today, just to clarify. If you don't know me, I am Pastor Rick DeShane, one of the elders here, and I do preach on occasion.

And so I'm excited to take part in the 2 Timothy series, which we will be preaching through this summer and fall. And I think I'll be preaching again on August 16th.

[2 : 2 2] So I'm excited to continue in this series. But I want to start out today with a little bit of a history lesson, kind of a cold open.

We're going to jump way back to March 6th, 1933, and hopefully you'll see where we're going here in a few minutes. But I don't think anyone here was alive in 1933, unless you're over 91 years old.

March 6th is actually my birthday, so exactly 91 years ago on my birthday. Franklin Roosevelt, he declared a national bank holiday. And that may sound like a good thing, but if you know your history, you know it wasn't a good thing.

He closed all of the banks because of the Great Depression. And he said that the banks weren't allowed to reopen until they were inspected and declared solvent.

And if you know, during the Great Depression, there was a lot of panic because banks were failing and people were trying to withdraw all of their money. And over this period, about one-fifth, 20% of all the banks in the country went default.

[3 : 33] And people lost over \$7 billion of their deposited assets. That's about \$165 billion in today's money. So pretty significant economic loss.

And actually, because of this, the FDIC was formed. The Federal Deposit Insurance Company was formed. So that since then, if you deposit up to \$250,000, even if the bank goes default, the federal government will theoretically cover your losses.

So in the 90 years since then, if you've been around for a few decades, you know we've been through a few recessions, especially the one in 2007 with the housing market collapse.

A lot of banks failed. And there was about \$73 billion in depositor losses that were this time covered by the FDIC. So the federal government took that loss instead of the American people.

And so why do I talk about this? Well, it's to show that banks, which we typically think of as really stable institutions that will be around for centuries, are not in fact as stable and certain as we often think.

[4 : 48] But it's difficult to participate in modern life without trusting some of your assets to a bank, right? You probably get your paycheck deposited into a bank and then rely on the bank to keep that secure so that when you go there to get your funds, they are there.

And I think most of you probably don't think that much about which bank to trust because it's FDIC insured. Maybe if you have more than \$250,000 in the bank, you'd think more about it.

But I think the more we trust to a bank, the more time we spend thinking about how secure is that bank, right? How well is the bank going to protect what we have invested in them?

Now, you can imagine if you have a very valuable possession, you are going to spend a lot of time deliberating on where to trust that possession.

You're going to spend a lot of time researching which bank to secure it in. And perhaps if you're going to secure it with a friend, you're going to make sure that it is a friend you genuinely trust before you trust your most valuable possession to them.

[5 : 59] So let's imagine further along that you've devoted 30 years of your life to building your legacy and an inheritance for your family.

And you know that all of your life savings, all of your possessions, your legacy is going to be passed along to your children. And oftentimes you would set up a trust fund for those funds to be safely managed until your children are prepared to take responsibility for those funds.

So the question, who would you trust? Who would you trust with all that you have worked for 30 plus years to acquire? Now hopefully we can see the connection to Paul.

Paul is writing to Timothy in the 65th year of the first century. He's been at his ministry since at least the year 48, over almost 20 years at this point.

And really he's been a Christian for over 30 years at this point. And he has devoted his entire life to one thing, to the word of God, to bringing it into all the world, to all the disciples.

[7 : 17] And this is his legacy. Obviously, Paul makes clear it is the Lord's legacy, but it is Paul's legacy as well. And as we'll see later in this letter to Timothy, Paul knows this is the end of his ministry.

He knows this imprisonment in Rome will be his last, that his race is coming to an end, and it's time to pass the torch to his successor.

Now Paul, we saw last week, he's not ashamed that it's to end this way, chained in a Roman prison, unable to see his friends, unable to visit his churches. But instead, we see that he knows the one in whom he believed.

He is convinced that Christ Jesus will be able to guard what has been entrusted to him until the day of his return. But this mission is to pass on to Timothy.

And it is to Timothy, his beloved child, that he is passing the torch, that he is entrusting to continue what he has spent 30 years working towards.

[8 : 34] And so hopefully you can see the concern and conviction that Paul has are motivated by a great deal of love for Timothy and for the church.

And hopefully you can see the connection to the banking story, right? Paul is entrusting this great deposit, not to a bank, but to Timothy, and more importantly, to the Holy Spirit.

And so I've titled this sermon, Follow the Pattern. And throughout these verses, I want to explore how Paul has a plan, not only for his immediate successor, but for all time until the day that the Lord returns.

But before we jump into the text, I do want to take a moment to pray for the Lord's guidance. And so let's pray. Heavenly Father, we do thank you for your word.

We thank you for the time to study it, to reflect upon it, to meditate upon it. We pray that your Holy Spirit would give us eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to receive and to submit to the authority of your word.

[9 : 47] Father, that we would grow in our knowledge of you and our love for you. And Lord, that we would grow in obedience to be imitators of Timothy as he was an imitator of Paul, as he was an imitator of Christ.

We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. So in my first point, I want to look at verses 11 through 14.

I know technically I was assigned verses 12 through 18, but we're going to jump back to 11. Thank you, Duffy, for reading it as well to get a little bit of context. But I've titled my first point The Good Deposit.

And so, starting in verse 11, we are reminded that Paul is not ashamed to suffer for the gospel, as Brent preached last week, because the Lord has called Paul to this task.

And the Lord hasn't called Paul because of anything in him or anything that he has done, but the Lord has called him because of his own purposes and his grace.

[11 : 00] And so the Lord has appointed Paul as a preacher, as an apostle, specifically to the Gentiles, and as a teacher. And so he is not ashamed of his present suffering.

As we pick up in verse 12, we see that Paul is not ashamed because he knows whom he has believed, or as he says, 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.

It's interesting that he says, I know whom I have believed. His confidence, his conviction, comes from faith in the one whom he believes, in Christ Jesus.

He knows that even in his weakness, even in his chains, in his present state, that the Lord will guard him. That Christ Jesus remains faithful.

And he clarifies this further later in 2 Timothy 2.13. Just as you trust the bank with your money when you deposit funds, Paul has entrusted his soul to the safekeeping of Jesus, the one in whom he believed.

[12 : 16] And so it's interesting, perhaps to point out that he ends verse 12 by saying, I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

If you're reading along in the ESV, you'll see that there's a little superscript 3 there at the end of the sentence, and if you look down at the bottom of your Bible, you'll see this could also be phrased or what I have entrusted to him.

And that's because trust is a transaction. And so the way it would be in the Greek is that not only has something been entrusted to Timothy, or in this case to Paul, but Paul has entrusted something to the Lord.

Paul has entrusted his life to the Lord, and the Lord has entrusted his word to Paul. Paul. This word entrusted in the Greek could also be the word deposit.

It's the same word. To deposit is to place in the trust of another. He has entrusted his life to the Lord, and the Lord has entrusted his word to Paul. So, what exactly is he entrusting?

[13 : 32] What is he referring to? And I think it's interesting to take a look back at the pattern that we see emerge between verses 12, 13, and 14, and to note that there's some intentional repetition at the end of verse 12.

Paul says, I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. In verse 13, follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

And then in 14, by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. The repeated words are guard and entrusted, and they come before and after verse 13.

And so it seems what Paul is referring to is in verse 13. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

He wants Paul, or rather, Paul wants Timothy to guard the sound words of the Lord Jesus Christ, to guard the gospel. And so, I believe that is Paul's emphasis, is to guard the gospel.

[14 : 47] The good deposit that has been entrusted now to Timothy is the pattern of the sound words that he heard. Paul heard and obeyed Jesus' commands, right?

Jesus said to teach all of his commands to his disciples in Matthew 28, 20. And Paul has obeyed these words and faithfully taught Jesus' words, and now he is entrusting Timothy to continue this mission of obeying Jesus' words.

in verse 14, we see the word deposit is used, deposit entrusted to you. In Greek, that's really just one word.

As I said, this word is used only three places in Scripture. It's used twice in these verses, 12 and 14, and it's used in 1 Timothy 6, 20.

And in all three cases, it's used specifically in reference to the gospel, to guarding the gospel from false teaching, to guarding it from dilution or contamination, and to passing these words on to others.

[15 : 57] So Paul is encouraging Timothy to guard the gospel, to guard the good news that the Lord Jesus Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light, as he said back in chapter, or back in verse 10 of this chapter.

It's interesting to note that Paul, he knows Timothy. He calls him a beloved child and he knows Timothy's heart. He knows that Timothy is timid or a little bit fearful about exercising this calling.

He was a young man at this point in his ministry and I'm sure he was surrounded by many older, well-respected men who had brought false teaching into the church and he was called to call them out, to rebuke them, to correct them and this would be a difficult task, right?

And so Timothy needed encouragement to take a stand. He needed to be emboldened to speak up and as we see he needed the Holy Spirit who indwelt both him and Paul to speak through him in order that he could proclaim the truth and that he could silence the false teachers.

As Paul said last week, the Lord called him not because of anything that he possessed but the Lord called him for his own purpose and grace in Christ Jesus and we see that the Lord called him to a difficult path and then he equipped him and is equipping him for the difficult task that lies ahead as he is going to be guarding the sound words of Christ for years to come.

[17 : 41] A few things I want to note about Paul's words before we move into the next set of verses is that first of all Paul is not trying to make Timothy a disciple of his own words, right?

He is trying to make Timothy a disciple of the words of Jesus Christ where he heard those words where Paul heard those words directly from Christ.

Paul was a messenger, right? He had a message that he was passing along. He didn't have a new gospel. He had the gospel and although Timothy heard these words from Paul, Timothy was passing the words of Christ on to the next generation.

He was guarding them. A second observation, Paul is passing the torch to a, as he called him, a faithful and a beloved child. Paul has installed many elders in all of the churches that he founded throughout his missionary voyages and he was very deliberate in entrusting these men with the good deposit.

He had 20 years combating false teaching and betrayals and so he exercised great care and caution in who he picked. And we know from his earliest writings to the Galatian church, that was his first letter until his final letter to Timothy, 2 Timothy as we're reading today, his last letter that he penned that we have to this day.

[19 : 10] He vigorously refuted false teaching in all of his letters. He refuted all other gospels as he called them in Galatians, all that have tempted the church away from the sound words of the Lord.

However, we saw last week that Paul has a clear conscience in trusting Timothy. He had no reservation because he knew of Timothy's faith.

He knew that it was genuine and he knew that he could entrust Timothy with this deposit. This leads to the third observation as we see in verse 14.

Paul is not simply trusting Timothy. He is trusting the Holy Spirit who dwells within him. The Holy Spirit is the guarantor of his deposit.

He knows that even if Timothy should fail, the Holy Spirit never will. Timothy has a sincere faith, a spirit of love in Christ Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit he is to imitate the pattern Paul set for him just as Paul imitated the pattern that Christ set for him.

[20 : 20] A fourth observation, this is a pattern of an ongoing spiritual reality throughout Scripture. from the very beginning God has partnered with imperfect humans to act as his representatives in creation.

Timothy was no different. He was not a natural formidable leader. However, the Lord was with him. And as we'll see next week in chapter 2, this plan or pattern of passing along and entrusting the word to the next generation was not just a one-time thing but something that Paul was establishing for all of the churches for all time until Christ's return.

We can see this very clearly in 2 Timothy 2. 2. But that's for next week. Right? So, before we see then, I want to take a look at the next set of verses, verses 15 through 18, and see that Paul takes a little bit of a tangent here.

His flow of thought from verse 13 picks up, or 14 picks up naturally in chapter 2, but verses 15, 16, 17, and 18 kind of take a little bit of a tangent and he brings up these three Greek men that aren't mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, but why does Paul go off on this tangent?

Is it a squirrel that catches his attention and he randomly loses his train of thought only to come back? Well, let's look at the verses and see.

[22 : 03] We see in verse 15 that within a few years the churches in Asia had turned from him. They had turned away from him.

And he mentions two perhaps leaders within the church specifically. Probably their names were recognized by Timothy. Timothy would have known these two and they are Fidilus and Hermogenes.

And these two abandoned, it seemed, Paul. They abandoned him because they were ashamed of his chains. Perhaps it's not clear specifically, but we see Onesiphorus is the antithesis.

He is the one who is not ashamed. They are the ones who are ashamed. And so they turned from him because they were ashamed of his chains. In his time of suffering and imprisonment when he needed faithful friends, they turned away from him and abandoned him.

From the perspective of the world, I think it's understandable that these leaders would distance themselves from Paul. Paul was, it seems, prone to disaster, to persecution, and to suffering.

[23 : 18] And no one wants to align themselves to a seemingly weak leader. So seeing Paul's state of chains, they were ashamed and they distanced themselves from him.

Unfortunately, they couldn't see that he was indeed following the pattern set for him by Christ. He was a servant leader who had meekness of wisdom, as James put it in his epistle.

But we see that Paul, he's not ashamed, right? He's not ashamed of his suffering because it knows, he knows rather, it was for the purpose of God and for the sake of the gospel.

I think this perhaps is something we've all experienced in a time of suffering and a time of difficulty.

We find out who our true and faithful friends are. And the same happened to Paul. But in verse 16, we see another friend on Onesiphorus, he was not ashamed of Paul's chains and instead he ministered to Paul even in the midst of his imprisonment.

[24 : 34] In fact, he searched him out diligently to refresh him with comfort and joy amid his suffering. We see that he also helped Timothy.

Timothy knew Onesiphorus from their time in Ephesus. And so, in verse 18, Paul prayed a prayer that the Lord would grant mercy, not only to Onesiphorus, but to his entire household.

If you remember Jesus' words from back in Matthew 25, 31 through 39, you remember he said that those who helped the least of his disciples were in fact helping the Lord himself.

And Onesiphorus was not only ministering to Paul, he was ministering to the Lord. And so, Paul prayed a prayer of mercy and grace upon his life and his household, so that on the day that the Lord appears, he would not shrink back in shame, but he would receive him with joy.

We see that Paul was deeply refreshed by the love and concern of a faithful friend. friend. He knew he couldn't succeed in his mission apart from faith in the Lord, apart from faithful friends, apart from the Holy Spirit, and apart from refreshing comfort and joy from those around him.

[26 : 03] And so, I don't think Paul was taking a tangent in these verses like an old man rambling on, interrupting his otherwise pristine logic. he brought this up for a reason.

He brought this up to inspire Timothy, that his success in ministry depended not only on the indwelling Holy Spirit, but on surrounding himself by faithful friends.

We see this in 2 Timothy 2.2. Paul calls him specifically to find faithful friends who can aid him in this mission. As Paul is nearing the end of his ministry, he wanted to be sure that his beloved and faithful child in the Lord was equipped and ready to guard the good deposit that had been entrusted to him, and so he was preparing him to suffer for the gospel by the power of God, and to do so without shame.

He was equipping him to surround himself by faithful men who would refresh and encourage him along the way, and he was teaching him how to pass the sound words of the Lord on to all future generations until the day that the Lord appears.

I want to point out a few, six specifically implications that come about from these verses for the church today and for us as Christians.

[27 : 29] First, I think it's worth clarifying that Paul was appointed and called by the Lord to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher by the Lord Jesus himself.

And as such, having received direct revelation from the Lord, Paul was an apostle. In fact, he was the last to be called as an apostle.

Although John outlived him, he was the last to receive the calling. There were no apostles who came after Paul. the role of apostle ended in the first century with the twelve mentioned in scripture who received direct revelation from Christ Jesus.

Timothy was not called as his spiritual successor to the role of apostle. Instead, he was called to be a preacher and a teacher to the churches in Asia.

He was to receive the title of elder, which was a title to be transferred to those whom he called to stand alongside him.

[28 : 37] And so we see that Paul had a plan to pass the role of preacher and teacher not only to Timothy, my second observation here, but to all future generations.

Even from the beginning of his ministry, as mentioned back in Acts 14.23, Paul and Barnabas, they appointed elders in every church that they planted, and they installed them with prayer and fasting.

As we learned in 1 Timothy in our series last year, Paul instructed Timothy to appoint faithful and qualified men as elders who would be able to teach the churches.

And so we see that his plan was for an organic transfer of leadership from one generation to the next, as men were called and appointed to the role of elder within each local church.

This was not just something that began and ended with Timothy. It was something that was to continue in the churches until, as Paul says in 2 Timothy 4.8, the day that the Lord returns.

[29 : 40] A third observation, the Lord had a plan to guard the sound words of Christ for all generations. And this is a bit of an inference from the text and not called out directly from the text.

text. But, do you ever think about how many books there are in the New Testament? We've got the four Gospels, we've got Luke's account in Acts, then we have 21 letters followed by John's revelation.

How many of them did the Lord Jesus Christ write? Not a single word was written by Christ. in the Old Testament, we've got a lot more books, and although we know they're inspired by the Holy Spirit, not a single word was written by God himself.

We know the scriptures are inspired, but they're written by human hands. Why? Why are they written by human hands? Well, I think it's because God is a personal God.

He revealed himself, Yahweh, as a personal God, who we know by name. And he has chosen in his wisdom to work through imperfect people to accomplish his will perfectly.

[30 : 59] Jesus promised in John 14, 21, that he would send the helper, the Holy Spirit, in the name of the Father, bring to remembrance all that he said. And through many wars and dispersion, through captivity, through the scriptures, as he said in Psalm 119, 89, his word is forever.

And as Jesus himself repeated in Matthew 24, 35, his Lord endures forever. And so we know that the Lord has given us his word as the final authoritative record of inspired and infallible revelation.

Paul said later in this letter to Timothy that all of scripture is breathed out by God, is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

This is specifically in 2 Timothy 3, 16. And so the Lord has given us his complete revelation along with millennia of faithful teachers to guard the sound words of Christ Jesus from false teaching in so-called other gospels and to preach the word.

The word of God is unbound, as he said. A fourth observation, the scriptures teach us how to identify faithful teachers. Teachers. Teachers who imitate Paul as he imitated Christ, who follow the pattern of his sound words in faith and love through him.

[32 : 34] And so before we entrust ourselves to a teacher, before we sit under their teaching, we should evaluate their life. Do they follow the pattern of Timothy, of Paul, and of Jesus?

Do they live out what they teach? Are they sober-minded? Are they self-controlled? Are they respectable and hospitable? Are they able to teach?

Are they gentle? Are they free from addiction and the love of money? Do they provide for and protect their family? Do they lead their family in following God?

If these are true, do they uphold scripture as the word of God, as the final and authoritative source of God's revelation? Do they submit themselves under the authority of the word?

These are the faithful men in whom we should entrust, in whom we should sit under their teaching. And I think this is why the local church is so important.

[33 : 37] It's very difficult to know if a person meets these qualifications if we can't observe their life. And that's why in Paul's wisdom, it's revealed through Christ, he planned for the local church to have elders who we can know, who we can observe, who we can trust.

A fifth observation, the same false gospels that Paul fought against in the first century are just as present and dangerous today. Peter warns us in his second letter that many false prophets and false teachers and wolves who are greedy for gain have distorted, have disputed, and have exploited the word of God for selfish gain.

In fact, Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, he was astonished at how quickly some had deserted their calling and turned to what he called a different gospel. This was only a few years after he started his ministry, and so he sternly rebukes them and reminds them that it's not his gospel they're deserting, it is the revelation of Christ Jesus that they are deserting.

They were bewitched, it seems, by false teachers and convinced that works would make them righteous before God. And so Paul reminds them in Galatians 3.16 that a person is not justified by works of the law.

We see that there is no room for false teaching in the church. Paul said those who teach a gospel contrary to the words of Jesus are to be accursed, to be anathema.

[35 : 11] He uses his strongest language here because he is passionate about guarding the deposit entrusted to him. In fact, there are billions of people. If we just include those who were misled by the prophet Muhammad and those who are misled by papal authority, that's already three and a half billion people believing in a false gospel.

That's just those that are alive today. Human tradition and self- righteousness have taken the place of God and many are deceived and many are self- deceived because they do not desire the truth.

And so we must remember always, every day, that justification, which is to be made righteous before God, comes only by faith, by entrusting the deposit of our souls into the faithful hands of the Lord.

That's not the beginning of salvation. That is salvation. There is no other way. A sixth observation and final observation, each Christian must guard the good deposit that has been entrusted to them.

The essential doctrines of the gospel are essential, right? There is no room for compromise. Paul reminds us, as he did in 1 Corinthians 15, 3, Christ died for our sins.

[36 : 43] He was buried. He was raised on the third day. And then he appeared to the disciples and then to 500 others. And all this, as Paul said, was in accordance with the scriptures.

The scriptures give authority to and remind us of the words of Christ. We must be aware of the gospel. We must be aware of the words of scripture if we are to guard it against false gospels and unsound doctrine.

We must be diligent to search the scriptures and to know the essential truths necessary for salvation. And we will at times find passages as Peter reminded us in 2 Peter 3.16 that are difficult to understand.

There are those which are difficult to understand, but we must not allow them to be twisted and used for our destruction. We must instead seek out faithful teachers and faithful friends who can help us to understand and discern scripture.

scripture. And so I'd encourage you to remember that the word of the Lord remains forever. The word of the Lord remains forever, as Peter said in 1 Peter 1.25.

[37 : 55] He will guard his word. He will guard your soul now and in eternity. And so entrust your soul. Deposit your soul into the one, into the guard of the one who brought life and immortality to life through the gospel.

Let's pray.