

2 Timothy 1:1-12 • I Know Whom I Have Believed

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We are starting the book of 2 Timothy today. So, if you need a Bible, the guys are coming down the aisles. They have some extras. Just get your hand up and keep it up until they get one to you so that you can follow along with the study here today.

You know, 2 Timothy is the last letter that the Apostle Paul penned. It's certainly not the last letter that we're going to study in our journey through the New Testament here on Sunday morning, but it is the last letter he wrote on this Earth. I don't know if he's doing any writing in Heaven. It is a letter that shows from its content that Paul knew that he was going to leave this Earth.

He knew that his execution was imminent, not being certain exactly when. And so he was languishing during this time in a Roman prison, which was not a fun place to be. So, he used this letter, this final letter to Timothy, to exhort him in Timothy's ministry in the church. And he exhorted him in many capacities related to simply just being faithful—faithful to serving the Lord, no matter the circumstances.

Yeah, I thought about it. I thought about if I knew, if I was in prison and I knew that my death was just around the corner, I thought, what kind of a letter would I write? You know. What would I say? What kind of a letter would I write to someone that I cared about? Well, this is, this is that very kind of a letter and we're going to this morning take the first 12 verses of Chapter 1. So, I'm going to read it. Follow along with me as I do. It goes like this:

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

² To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

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. (ESV)

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we unpack these verses and dig into the, these scriptures today, Father, we, we just await Your grace and wisdom and insight to fill us as You know we need to be filled. Lord, I'm so thankful that You know every person here, every person who is watching live. You know each and every heart, each and every soul. You know their greatest needs. You know what they need to hear today, and I'm so thankful for that.

That You are able to speak to each heart. And I pray that You would do that this morning. I pray that You would speak to each heart and minister truth that would cause them to be filled up as they leave this place today. Pray that each and every person would say, "I got filled by the Lord today." Do this work, I ask, Lord God. Humbly we come to You in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, amen. Amen.

This letter begins like letters began at that time, ancient letters. They started just quite the opposite of the way we do today. It began with the name of the person writing the letter. The author is listed first and then comes the recipient. And Paul refers to himself, you'll notice in verse one, as "*an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.*" And that was one of Paul's favorite phrases. And he wanted people to know and understand. I didn't sign up for this thing on my own. I didn't just kind of decide one day, you know, I think I'll be an apostle. That sounds kind of fun. It's a good career choice, or whatever.

None of that happened. Paul was a man who knew that he knew that he knew he was functioning and walking out God's calling in his life. God had made that abundantly clear. Paul, you're called to be this, this ministry of an apostle, and so forth.

And I emphasize that today because it's just something we've gotten away from in the church today. We bring people into the church much like any business down the road decides to hire an employee or a manager or a president or a teller or whatever the case might be. We look at their resumes and we have these committees, and we do this, and we do that, and it's all very perfunctory.

That's probably the best word I can think of. But it really has nothing to do with doing the work of the ministry, because the ministry is by calling. When I'm talking to young men going into the ministry today, I just tell them, listen, buddy, you need to make sure you're called. Make sure that God has called you to this position, so that you can say with the apostle Paul, here I am called by God. Because let me tell you something, it's going to get rough, and the enemy is going to attack, and you're going to feel like quitting.

And when you do, if you're not certain of your calling, you are much more likely to throw in the towel and say, you know what, this is not worth it, you know? I wonder how many times Paul was beaten or arrested and had the opportunity to say, I don't like this. This is not fun. Why did he stay with it? He was called. God called him. And here's the deal, when God calls you, it's His responsibility to maintain you, right? It's His calling. He called you and that's so important.

So, Paul emphasizes that. I want you to notice also that he doesn't just say he was called, but he says, *"I was called according to the promise of life."* Now, this is kind of what I would expect the apostle Paul to be thinking about, talking about to Timothy as he's awaiting his own martyrdom. Rather than thinking about his martyrdom from the standpoint of his impending death, he says, "I have been called into this ministry *according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus.*"

So, you see, his emphasis is not on his impending death. His emphasis or his focus is on the life that is to come. Right? And that's really important. And, and you know, we read a little bit later on in these verses that we're looking at here today, he said it again. He talked about life. Did you look? Look in verse 10 in your Bible. Look again.

He's speaking, he's talking about Jesus. And he says, *"our Savior, Christ Jesus,"* look at this *"who abolished death."* Now, isn't that an interesting phrase for someone to say who is looking at death? He's what, he's not thinking about "I'm going to die." What he's thinking about is Jesus abolished death, or in other words, the power of the grave has been taken away. Right?

And what has he done? He's brought life to light along with the immortality that goes along with it through the Gospel. And there's something very, you know, significant about this, especially in light of the fact that the world is kind of heating up and becoming a little more, no, a little, a lot more against believers, against the Gospel, and that sort of thing.

Because, you know, we can sit all day long and we can focus on what's going on here, or we can focus on the life that is ours through Jesus Christ. And Paul talked about life in Christ like it was different from this life. I want to show you. Do you guys remember? The very last, one of the last statements Paul made in his previous letter, his first letter to Timothy. I didn't actually emphasize this when we went through it. So, I want to do it now. Up on the screen, 1 Timothy, notice the 19th verse of chapter six, he says, and by the way, he was exhorting Timothy to tell people who are rich to be generous to, you know, do good things for the poor and so forth:

1 Timothy 6:19 (ESV)

...thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

And I actually like the way the NIV renders this. They say, “*the life that is truly life.*” Isn't that cool?

The reason that is one of those kinds of significant statements is because we tend to look at this life as the definition of life. But it's not the definition of life. It's not truly life. What we have to follow is truly life. And yet, we're afraid of that. A lot of people are afraid of taking that step, and yet they're stepping into what is truly life. We think this is life, but you know what? I mean, yeah, it's life, but it's not truly life.

You know why? We don't like to think about it, but we forget sometimes that the moment we were born, we started the dying process. Isn't that good news? Yeah. I mean, as much as we love to look at new babies and go, oh, it's a new baby, they started dying. We're all in the process of dying.

I think it's so funny—not funny, but weird in movies and stuff—when somebody gets, you know, a terminal disease and they go to their family and they go, I'm dying. And I want to say, you were dying a long time ago. You started dying right from the start. Now you've just been given an end date. That's all. The doctor gave you an end date, but the dying thing, oh, that's been happening a long time. Let me tell you.

So, you see, you see why Paul calls what comes after this, “*the life that is truly life?*” Right? I like that. That's where our focus is supposed to be. That's where Paul's was as he awaited the end of his physical life. He was excited about moving on to the life that is really truly life.

We go on, verse two, this is where he writes to the recipient “*To Timothy. My beloved child,*” I will remind you that Timothy was not Paul's biological son, even though it kind of sounds like it. He was his spiritual son. He says, “*Grace, mercy, and peace from God, the Father and Christ Jesus, our Lord.*”

You know, I got to thinking a little bit about this—this whole idea of having spiritual children. And I'm not talking about that Mormon weird kind of, you know, populate worlds thing. No, I'm talking about kids that you are ministering to that may not be your biological kids. And you might, might not have any kind of a legal adoption process that goes along with it, but they're—you consider them your kids.

I wouldn't have known what this was like when I was younger, but, you know, you know, Sue and I have raised four kids and they're all grown and out of the house and doing their own thing. But it's cool that over the years we have—and I know some of you guys have too—we've adopted in a loose sense of the word, kids who live all over the place.

And we stay in contact with them on a regular basis, and speak into their lives, and pray for them, and love them. And really kind of love them just like our biological kids. And one of them lives in Canada and she's of Chinese descent, and one lives in India, and one lives in Australia, and one lives on the East Coast, and we, we consider them our kids.

And it, I got to tell you something, it's been delightful. Not that my own kids are any less my kids. And you know, everybody knows who is a parent that when your kids grow up and leave home, it doesn't mean you stop parenting. You just do it differently. You do it on your knees. Right? And yet there's that same kind of a ministry that goes on for spiritual kids as well—kids that you love.

And that's kind of the relationship that Paul, you know, had with Timothy. When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he actually made reference to the fact that although a lot of people were speaking into their hearts, they didn't have a whole lot of people who were in a parenting sort of a role. Let me show you this passage on the screen, 1 Corinthians 4 15, he says,

1 Corinthians 4:15 (ESV)

For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

“For though you have countless guides (and that word means counselors or tutors or teachers. Look what he says, although you have all these people) in Christ, (he says) you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” So, Paul literally took on people that he considered himself the father of these people in the sense that I'm praying for you, I love you, I want to see God's best in your life, and we're staying in contact. And I'm going to continue to speak into your life.

So, you know, when your kids grow up, and by the way, if you still have kids at home, that's your focus. Focus on the kids that are there. Speak into their lives because you have this little, tiny time to do that as far as them being in your home. Believe me, 18 years goes like a blink. And then they move out or we kick them out—one of the two. And they're out doing their own thing, and the whole dynamic changes. But when that happens, that doesn't mean that you can't take on more kids and love them, and care for them, and speak into their lives, and bless them.

Because, you know, some of the, and we've got, we got young people right here in this fellowship. I'm talking, you know, maybe even in their twenties, thirties or whatever, who don't have spiritual parents. They don't have parents that are believers. They don't, some of them don't have parents period. And in the case of the gals that I mentioned that Sue and I've kind of taken on as daughters, they don't have parents in that sense, that can speak into their lives and pray for them and that sort of thing. And Paul even talks about in verse three, one of the most powerful things that you can do when you're a spiritual parent.

Look what he says, verse three. He says, *“I thank God whom I serve, (as I did) as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, (here it is) as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.”* Would you like to have someone remembering you in their prayers night and day? I would. That's nice to have people praying for you, and that's one of the things spiritual parents can do.

Maybe you don't have a ton of time to give to them on a physical level, but you can pray for them. And that's just such a, and that, and Paul did it. Paul considered Timothy, his spiritual son, and he prayed for him. He says, I pray for you all the time.

And then he, you know, the, did you notice the first three words, by the way, of that verse? Verse three? "*I thank God.*" He starts off saying to Timothy before he tells him he's praying for him all the time. He says, "*I thank God. I thank God.*" And I looked at those words and I thought, wow, that it's easy to thank God when life is pretty easy. But remember, Paul is in a Roman prison and Roman prisons were not fun places to be.

The Romans didn't necessarily feel any compulsion to feed or clothe their prisoners. It wasn't their job. They were here because they broke the law. As far as they were concerned, you want to eat? You better hope you have some family close by. You need clothes? I hope somebody will bring you some. Yeah, they didn't pamper people. Being in prison was a big fat bummer. And yet Paul begins in this section regarding Timothy says, "*I thank God.*" He is still finding things to give thanks for.

You know, Paul was living at a time when the Gospel was actively being suppressed. We talk about that as a possibility here in the United States. You know, we'll say, it's not too, probably not too far off, you know, before the Gospel really is going to be suppressed. Maybe, but it's not here yet. We're still preaching. We're still talking about Jesus. This message right now is being seen live on YouTube around the world.

So, you know, the message is still getting out, right? You know, but it may be coming, very well. And it was there with Paul. He was living in a world where they were suppressing the Christian message, and they were suppressing those who gave that message.

And yet Paul still managed to say, "*I thank God.*" He's facing martyrdom and he says, "*I thank God.*" I am thankful, thankful to God. And then he talks about what he's thankful for related to Timothy in verse five. Look with me in your Bible. He says, "*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, (that means, I am confident) dwells in you as well.*"

So, Paul is giving thanks for Timothy's heritage as a Christian. Some of you guys have that heritage that you were raised in a home where mom and dad loved the Lord, and they taught you about Jesus all the days of your life. You know that picture of that little sweet granddaughter of mine. Her name is Rosie, by the way, who's almost three. She ends her prayers this way. She says, "Oh, and by the way, Jesus, I'm coming to visit you soon. Don't forget."

I mean if that doesn't tug on your heart, you know. But what a heritage. Now, some of you weren't raised in a Christian home. You came to Christ afterward, but now you have the opportunity to raise others, to encourage others in that same sort of a thing. And Paul gave thanks for it. You might remember that, that when Paul was on his first missionary journey, he came to a place called Lystra, and that's where Timothy lived. And while he was there, of course, he shared the Gospel, he got into trouble and had all kinds of lousy, rotten things happen to him while he was there, but it didn't stop him from coming back.

So, he came back a second time on his second swing into that area. And by the way, Lystra, ancient Lystra is part of modern-day Turkey. But when he came through, he started hearing about this young man with a vibrant faith named Timothy, and he got to know him while he was there. And when Paul finally came to the place where he was ready to leave, he took Timothy with him, and they had a very close relationship on a spiritual level that had a very powerful impact on the churches that Paul visited and ministered to.

And look at us, what we're doing here right now. We're reading a letter from Paul to Timothy 2000 years ago that is continuing to have an impact. So, as I'm sitting here, exhorting some of you people with a few more miles on you about speaking into the lives of younger people, taking people into your life as an adopted son or daughter, understand that the impact can be enormous.

It was for Paul and Timothy, and it can be for you too. So, I just want to encourage you along those lines. Look at verse 6 with me. He says, “*For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God.*” Now this sounds like a wonderful thing. We quote this verse, “*fan into flame the gift of God,*” and it all sounds very cool to you and me.

But you know, wait a minute. Timothy lives in the midst of a culture that's suppressing Christianity. Do you know what flames do? They grab people's attention. Haven't you seen a bunch of movies where somebody's stranded on some island, you know, and they're making a big fire to try to get the attention of some passing ship or airplane or something like that. “Come save us.”

Well, you know, flames get people's attention. They draw attention. And here's Paul in prison. Why? Because he got the attention of some people that didn't happen to like him very much. And he says to Timothy, Timothy, build up the fire! Fan into flame the gift that you have in Christ. And you know, you got to understand, there's probably a temptation in Timothy's heart to keep that flame kind of on the DL.

You know, when people are being literally carted off to prison because they're Christians, you might kind of think to yourself, you know, I'm just going to kind of chill here a little bit. Talk to people about Jesus, you know, kind of on the sly. A little wink there, a little whatever, you know, nod of the head. No, Paul says, fan it into flame. Make a fire. Make a bonfire.

I can imagine that would be a little intimidating to kind of hear that. He says, “*fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*” He says, Tim, I’m going to remind you of something buddy, God hasn't given us a spirit of fear. Do you think that probably has something to do with the fact that he just told him to call attention to his gift?

You know, we quoted that verse last Sunday when we were talking about faith versus fear, but this is the context in which it is given. The context is, Timothy, I know we live in a very rough world today, but I'm asking you not to hold back. I'm asking you not to keep this thing low. I'm asking you to make it hot.

And yeah, I know you're going to get the attention of people that you don't really want but let me tell you something. Let me remind you of something, God hasn't given us a spirit of fear. We're not going to live in fear. We refuse to live in fear because it's not, that's not what God has given us. He's given us power. And Timothy, if you don't, if you're tempted to withhold that gift and not make a big deal of it, let me just remind you, I'm not telling you, Timothy, to do anything.

I'm saying it is through the power of God that we build up the flame and do the work of the Gospel. Even when there are people who are going to be really mad at us for doing so. God didn't give us a spirit of fear—gave us a spirit of power and to love people, even our enemies, and a spirit of self-control. Wow.

And then he encouraged him further saying, “*Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord,*” and do not be ashamed of having a connection with me as prisoner, because that could be a, you know, potentially shameful sort of a thing. But rather he said, and this is important guys, look at this.

He says, share in the suffering—“*share in the suffering for the gospel by the power of God.*” And once again, he's saying by the power of God, he's reminding Timothy, I'm not asking you to share in the sufferings of Christ by your power because you don't have it. And I know that. And that's not an insult. That's just reality. You don't have it. So, share in the suffering by the power of God.

I think it's safe to say that a good many Christians probably wonder if we did come to a place here in the United States where the Gospel was being actively suppressed and opposed, even to the point of maybe getting us into legal trouble for just simply sharing the Gospel, I think some people wonder, and probably rightly so, how would I react? How would I react if the potential was dangerous to me or my family? How would I react?

You know, last Sunday I mentioned Corrie ten Boom, who again, I know some of you know, some of you don't. Corrie ten Boom lived at a time during the Second World War, when the Nazis were kind of taking over Europe, and they had invaded her homeland of Holland. And they were arresting Jews left and right because, you know, that was one of Hitler's goals to eliminate the Jews.

And Corrie and her family, who were very strong believers, determined in their heart that they were going to protect them. So, they built a false wall in their home. They called it the hiding place. And they literally stashed Jews in there whenever the Nazis were coming around and looking into homes.

Well, eventually somebody ratted on them. And Corrie and her sister and her aged father were all arrested. They never saw their father after that night. They don't really even know what happened to him. But Corrie and Betsy were taken off to Germany where they were put in a concentration camp called Ravensbrück.

So, Corrie came to a place of facing martyrdom in the eye, but when she was a child, she just like a lot of other believers was unsure whether she could face that kind of a reality. In fact, she even writes about it. She relates in her book a conversation that she had with her father about her own readiness. And she said, "Daddy," she had said one day, "I'm afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ."

"Tell me," her father wisely responded, "when you take the train trip from Harlem to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?"

"No, Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train."

"That is right," he replied. "And so it is with God's strength. Our wise Father in Heaven knows when you're going to need things too. Today, you do not need the strength to be a martyr, but as soon as you are called upon for the honor of facing death for Jesus, He will supply the strength you need just in time."

Kind of a reminder not to worry about it. We look at what people go through, and we think, how in the world? How in the world? But what we don't realize is that God gave them the strength to be able to endure whatever they were called to endure. And the reason that you look at it and you go, I could never do that is because you haven't gotten the strength because you're not facing that situation. But if you did, God will give you the strength.

Paul goes on to speak in verse nine of, notice here, (the God) *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.*” And this is another verse that talks about our calling.

A lot of people say to me, Pastor Paul, I just don't know what my calling is. Well, the Bible actually says a lot about your calling without talking about some specific ministry. And this is one of them. In fact, this single verse mentions four things about your calling. So we're going to write these down. For those of you that take notes, we're going to call this the “Four points about our calling.”

Four points about our calling

- God has called us to a holy calling
- Our calling is NOT the result of our goodness
- Our calling is based in the purpose and grace of God
- Our calling was planned by God before the ages

Are you ready? Number one, Paul says here, God has called us to a holy calling. Did you see that? Verse nine, *“who saved us and called us to a holy calling.”* The word holy means set apart. Set apart from what? Set apart from the world.

Remember we talked last week from Romans Chapter 12. We're not to be conformed to this world. We're to be set apart. You're to be other than this world. This world is this way. You're to be this way. You're to be other. And that is your calling. To be other. To be different. Okay? It's a holy calling. You've been set apart.

The second thing about this is our calling is not the result of our own goodness. What Paul says is it's not because of our works. And that just simply means you didn't do anything to earn this calling. Paul didn't earn his calling either. You have a calling—that calling to be set apart for the Lord and to be different and to be other—you didn't earn that.

He gave it to you. He bestowed it to you, but you didn't earn it. It's not because of works. And the third one goes right along with it when he says that your calling is based in the “*purpose and grace*” of God. First the purpose of God. God has a purpose for your life. It sounds trite, I know. We say it to people sometimes when we're sharing the Gospel, God has a purpose for your life, but it's true.

Do you know what your purpose is? Do you know your purpose? We often go right along with the world. “My purpose is just to hang on and get through and to find as much happiness and enjoyment along the path as I can. God put me on this world to work and earn money and eat food, go on vacation, play video games.”

Uh, no. That's what the world is doing. And the world is bankrupt. You have a purpose. Your calling is all about God's purpose, not yours. It's all about His purpose and His grace. You've been called by His grace. He gives the power to fulfill that purpose as we talked about before. And then fourthly, our calling, interestingly enough, was planned by God “*before the ages.*”

Paul talks about this in Ephesians. Let me show you this on the screen, from Ephesians 2, he says,

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

“For *we are his workmanship*, (You ever thought about that? He crafted your life to have a purpose) *created in Christ Jesus* (For what? Video games, of course. No, it doesn't say that. It's just) *for good works*, (That means for serving the Lord. Doing what the Lord has called you to do. That's why you were created and put on this Earth. To serve the Lord, right? When did God prepare all that stuff? Well, here he just says) *beforehand*,” but we know from 2 Timothy, it was before the ages. He literally planned out the purpose for your life before the ages.

Isn't that a mind blower? And here we are sitting around playing video games. And concerning your holy calling, Paul says in verse ten, look with me there. He says this whole thing, this whole calling, the incredible stuff, it's now all “*been manifested through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and a teacher.*”

And by the way, that's why I'm suffering. But I want you to take notice of this last statement in Verse 12 where he says, "*but I'm not ashamed.*" I'm suffering, but I'm not ashamed. Why? For "*I know whom I have believed.*" That's the first thing—"I know whom I have believed." And the second thing is, "*I'm convinced He's able to guard.*"

Let me take this first one. "*I'm not ashamed because I know whom I have believed.*" See, here's the point. Jesus came, died for us on the cross, bore our sins on the cross, right? We all agree? We're also agreed that if we put our faith in Him, trust in Him and what He did on the cross, we're saved. Agreed?

Well, you see, that part is the promise. He came and died on the cross for you, but then he made a promise to you that if you put your faith in Him, your confidence and trust in what He did on the cross, you'll have eternal life, everlasting life, the life that is truly life. That's the promise, you see?

Now, there's one interesting thing about promises. They're only as good as the person who makes it. I've made a lot of promises to my kids over the years that I couldn't keep, just because I wasn't in control of my circumstances. Things come up, you know. I tell the kids, "Hey kids, we're going to," we never took them to Disneyland. They never said anything fun like that.

We'd take them like to Boise. It's all we could afford to do. "Hey kids, we're going to Boise. We're going to walk around the mall. We're not going to buy anything. We're just going to look. Yay." And they got excited about that when they were kids. But sometimes I had to cancel and that was a big fat bummer.

But I, you know, something came up, you know. So, my kids kind of learned right away that, you know, dad is just a human being. His promises can only go so far. Let me tell you about God. He's not limited. He's not at a place where any circumstances are going to prevail upon Him to not do what He said.

So, when He makes a promise, it's a done deal, right? He's good to His promises. And that's what Paul is saying here when he says, I'm not ashamed because I know the One who made the promises that I've latched onto. I know Him. I know His character. I know His power. I know His ability. And this is a done deal. That's what he's saying.

So there's no reason for shame. Oh, I wish Christians could get this through their heart because what Paul is doing here in this part of verse 12 is he's basically talking to you about salvation. This is the essence of your salvation.

The reason that you can know that you know that you know that you're saved today is because of Him.

How many times a week do I get emails from people saying, Pastor Paul, I really am struggling with doubt about my salvation. And it's always about them. It's always about something in their life. I had a gal write to me here not too long ago that thought that maybe that the ship had sailed—her salvation ship—because she had lived such a horrible life, and she was 27 years old.

I was like, sweetie, let me just tell you, no, your ship has not sailed. There is forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Come to Him. Confess your sin. You can be saved. But when we focus on what we've done, we're always going to struggle. But when we focus on what He did and the promises He made related to what He did, we will always have confidence, you see? So don't think, don't look at yourself. Let me tell you something. It's a temptation. I know. It's especially when you like really mess up, like big time.

I mean, you fail masterfully in front of other people. And you feel horrible about it. And the natural tendency is to focus on your sin and your failure. Let me tell you something, that's where the enemy is looking for that. He's looking for you to do that. If he can get your eyes on you, then the accuser of the brethren can do what he does best.

And that is bring doubt into your mind about your very salvation because look what you did. You scumbag! You are the worst of the worst! Look at what you did! And we're all sitting there going, oh no, and the Bible is saying to you and me, look what Jesus did, right? Look what Jesus did. I'm not ashamed because I'm looking at what Jesus did, and I know in whom I have believed.

That's going to get you out of the doldrums every single time, folks. So please, if you're, if the enemy's been raking you over the coals about your life and the mistakes that you've made and the failures you've committed, you've got your eyes on the wrong thing. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, bore all of those.

And when He was done, He said, “*it's finished.*” (*John 19:30 ESV*) It's paid in full. You come to Him, and you have your confidence in what He did and know for a certainty in Whom you have believed. And the second reason Paul gives for his lack of shame is he says, “*I'm convinced that he's able to guard...what has been entrusted to me.*”

Now, I got to tell you something. I'm not super thrilled about the way the ESV rendered this verse. Virtually every other major English translation of the Bible

translates this slightly differently. And let me put the New King James up as an example on the screen. Paul writes,

2 Timothy 1:12 (NKJV)

...and I am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

I honestly think this is a better rendering of what Paul is saying here. Paul's saying that I'm confident that He's able to keep and protect. And that means to safeguard, to safeguard what I've literally entrusted to Him as it relates to my eternal salvation. Guys, the reason this is such an important verse, you'd be shocked to know how many Christians in the world believe that they are saved by grace through faith and it's a gift, but they got to keep themselves saved and living a holy life, right?

I didn't even realize until I was well into my ministry as a Pastor, how many people struggle under the burden of keeping themselves saved. Jesus saved me, but I got to do the rest. I got to keep myself safe. If I give in to sin, if I give in to —oh, oh man. See, then my, my, my salvation is now, I don't know. I don't know if I'm even still saved. And Paul says here, I'm not ashamed because not only do I know whom I believe, but I am confident that He can keep and safeguard what I've entrusted to him.

That is so important. And that is in no way, a statement on my part or Paul's part to somehow say that sin isn't a big deal. It's a big deal. Or that you can be casual about sin because, hey, He's keeping my salvation safe for me. So, it's okay. We're just going to kind of live the way we want. No, that's not what we're talking about.

You've been called to a holy calling to be set apart for the Lord Jesus Christ. That is your calling. And you're going to be miserable if you're living in sin. And if you give in to sin for a period of time in your life and God's going to be all over you. The conviction of the Holy Spirit is going to make you one miserable puppy.

So, let's not go there, okay? But that doesn't mean that we can't have an unshakable confidence in what the Lord has done in our lives and His ability to keep it, to safeguard it. You with me? Now, I just want to end this way. If you're one of the many people that I have met who struggles from time to time with confidence in the Lord's ability to safeguard your salvation, I have a couple of things to say to you.

Number one, don't get condemned about it because that's the road to the enemy to accuse. God is not condemning His children. *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* (Romans 8:1 ESV) You with me? That's not God who condemns you. If you're feeling that way, you're feeling that way for a legitimate reason.

You know that your confidence isn't what it should be. So bring it to the Lord. Take it to God. Tell Him. He already knows, but cry out to Him, "Lord, give me an unshakable confidence in Your ability to keep me safe." Ask Him. Ask Him to do it because you can't do it. So, ask Him to do it. "Lord, I need an unshakable confidence in what You have done for me so that I don't get in the way and start thinking that this is all up to me to hang on to this thing," because that ain't going to happen. I'm just telling you right now, okay?

But He will enable you. He will give you that unshakable confidence. Let's stand together. We'll pray about that. And if you have need of further prayer as you're heading out today, we'll have our prayer team down front here to pray with you and lift up to the Lord whatever might be going on in your heart.

Heavenly Father, I just want to pray first of all, for those who recognize in their lives that they need to have, but don't currently possess, that unshakable confidence. They need to have it. They want to have it, but they don't possess it. And so, I ask you, my Father God, to do a work in their hearts and in their lives to bring about that unshakable confidence.

Lord, You do it. You give it to them. Strengthen them, Lord. Keep them. Fill them with that total faith in You to maintain this work that You've begun. Lord, it's the work You began and You're going to finish it. Father, I thank You so much for Your word today. I thank You for all the things that Your word has spoken to us about, and I pray for all of those who have been here today and been hearers of this, this message.

And I pray, Father God, that it would go deep within the heart, make an impact, change lives. We look to You to do it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. And all God's people said together, amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your Sunday.