



“Don't Panic...”

- 2 Timothy 1:7-12

by Pastor Tim Dodson
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7-12 *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,*

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 given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, [who] has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

1:7

We have a lot of human reasons to fear today. After all, it's a crazy world out there. One full of dangers ...mentally, physically, and financially. There seems to be no security, or guarantee of anything. The world certainly offers no safety. So naturally, in the world there is great inner fear. Yet, God does not give us a spirit of fear. When we live in thus, we are clearly living outside of the realm of the Spirit of God.

When you understand our God and the power that He possesses, there comes a great peace. A serenity that comes from knowing that He has us in His hands, and never drops us, and never abandons us...even when we are in times of difficulty. Even when we are sitting in a jail cell as Paul was at the writing of this letter! However...one must be willing to acquiesce to His control, or there is a lifetime battle with God.

1 John 4:18 tells us that *“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.”*

God tells us that in our salvation and with His present Holy Spirit, we are given power, love, and a sound mind. Note that: God gives us a “sound” mind. What does this say concerning the world's approach to peace of heart and contentment, not to mention our mental health?

Many of us are lost in a world of confusion and apprehension. But know this: these traits are not of God. God has a plan! He is not confused and He is not vacillating. He is not fearful or uncertain. The answers lie with Him. And He is not hiding His will and plan from you. The only question I have is are you truly ready to hear it? Because you will never find God's will if you are living in fear!

1Co 14:33 “For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”

Jas 3:16 “For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”

1:8

Paul now begins to instruct Timothy concerning his ministry practice as well as the very living out of his life. Clearly, Timothy was able to take this instruction without being annoyed and resentful. That's a rare artform in our day. Having a heart of humility and having a teachable spirit was no doubt one of the critical traits that placed Timothy in the ministry position that he held, as well as placing all those who have followed him.

It is an strange thing to see so many who desire to be a part of a faith community as long as no one tells them how to live their lives. Yet scripture repeatedly instructs a pastor to do just that:

1 Timothy 4:11 *"These things command and teach."*

Titus 2:1 *"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:"*

Titus 2:15 *"Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you."*

And scripture also tells the **church** to receive that instruction:

Proverbs 19:20 *"Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future."*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."*

Hebrews 13:17 *"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."*

Paul encouraged young Timothy, ...*and us also...* to be 'bold in the Lord and our faith in Him' despite adversity and tribulation. Paul said in Romans 1:16 said *"For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes — the Jew first and also the Gentile."*

Its not like young Timothy didn't have good reason to be a little freaked out. Indeed, in his flesh he certainly had cause for fear upon seeing the situation Paul was in. We all tend to believe that we would not flinch in our testimony during such difficult times of persecution. But this was not *theory*, or some distant story that he had read about. It was real and 'up-close.' Therefore, there would naturally be a human tendency to "back off" from the aggressive situations of the likes that Paul was enduring.

It is also possible that Timothy felt a sense of inadequacy and suffered from a lack of confidence. But the words of Paul here would be just as pertinent and applicable. Fear comes to us in many ways, and is a great weapon of Satan against believers as well as ministers of the gospel in any form.

But the reality is that we must hold tightly to the promises of God, because things can get pretty rough out there.

"God has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" (Hebrews 13:5)

“Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)

Psalm 37:28 tells us God *“does not forsake His saints; they are preserved forever...”*

However...while all of that is immanently true, the fact is, we WILL suffer for the faith! 2Timothy 3:12 reminds us that *“all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”* No persecution in your life? Hmmm. Maybe you don't really “desire to live godly in Christ Jesus...?” According to scripture, it's that or the Bible is not true. Sadly the body of Christ today seems so apt to avoid suffering and quite adept at seeking out the most comfortable church. In fact, this is no secret so thus entire churches have moved to revolve around this idea and cater to comfort and ease rather than challenge, seek maturity and discipleship. Paul was traveling the “road less traveled,” and was calling us rather to endure than avoid.

1:9

Note the careful language herein presented: God saved us, AND He called us. For many however, the journey ended at salvation where we effectively closed our ears to His subsequent call upon our lives.

The scriptural fact is that out of salvation is to come a **response**. God makes a “holy call” upon our hearts, our lives, and our actions. And He makes that call to everyone that is reborn! If we have indeed been reborn, our living is now quite naturally directed toward Him and kingdom pursuits. We love the *salvation* aspect, but once again often shun the *calling* which inevitably follows! But ‘part 2’ of this work of God is not optional! It is factual. It is mandatory. It IS Christianity manifested. However, it is at this juncture that many will walk away from Christ as well as His bride the church!

Are you born again today? What, therefore, is your call? What is your mission? Don't know? Well, firstly, we need to realize that your answer does not come *out* of or *because of* your work and efforts. God has a purpose for you that was written before the world was created! Can you imagine that? Hundreds of years before you were even born you had a job waiting. So obviously it couldn't have anything to do with *your* efforts or works! We can't earn or deserve salvation, nor can we in relationship to our calling either. Few of us think we are that much in the ‘limelight’ of God's greater plans. Thus we are apt to take a back seat, and then slide down in it once we get there.

This call is not just to our ministry, to our “body position,” but a call to special grace and special privilege. It is a ‘holy’ calling. That attribute means “set apart.” Holiness is not an option for the believer; it is a family obligation for all those who are joined together in Christ. 1 Peter 4:10 - *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.* Jesus Himself said in John 13:14-15... *“... since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.”*

I wonder how many of us today have yet to answer that phone call? We don't know our calling and have yet to experience that special grace and privilege. Once again, it is because fear rules the day. We are afraid of what He might ask of us. Which is ironic since according to His word, he actually made us for that task! Will it be difficult? That which He will ask of us? **No doubt**. At least at times! But “His grace is sufficient” he told Paul. And as he sat in a jail cell at the end of his life, it appears that His grace **was** sufficient. Inexplicably “sufficient.” Will it be a challenge? Will it change our lives? Will it affect how we live...how we spend our time, our money, our vocations? Yes, yes, and yes.

The famous psychologist Dr. Karl Jung, once made the statement that "Purposelessness is the neurosis of our day." Well, *HE* certainly didn't have the answer to that dilemma! Yet God's salvation *has* given us the answer to that issue. But the answer is "according to HIS OWN purpose." Until we are willing to live life for HIS purpose, we not only fail to ever know the answer, but moreover we will constantly struggle and resist Him. All because we innately know that by answering that call, we must forgo our natural desire and pursuit for personal happiness and individual fulfillment. God's purpose for our lives is not personal HAPPINESS but personal HOLINESS. (Christ-likeness)

Ro 8:28-30 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him.

And the bottom line will always be: *does that bring you joy and fulfillment?*

1:10

That purpose of and in life has now been revealed. That word 'revealed' is the root of where we get our word 'epiphany.' It's the "ah ha!" that our lives innately seek after. We have that epiphany if we are willing to hear His call. Listen to how John describes it:

1 John 1:1-3 "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

His coming "abolished" death for us. The original term means to "render ineffective." The idea is to make the energy or force of something powerless, to cause it to be idle or useless, inoperative or ineffective.

One of Satan's greatest weapons against mankind is to cause us to fear death. That singular fear is the motivation behind all kinds of panic in our lives. But for the engaged child of God, death is nullified or made of no effect, which is the result of Christ's death and resurrection. Death is reduced to powerlessness. Because of Christ's sacrifice, physical death loses its power or effectiveness over believers. The reality is, for a believer, death is the doorway leading to our entrance into the presence of our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the book "Pilgrim's Progress" Christian and Hopeful come to the final river of death. They are fearful that the water will be over their heads. But Hopeful goes first and calls back to Christian, "Be of good cheer, my brother; I feel the bottom, and it is good." For every Christian, the bottom is good because of the fact that Jesus has promised that He will take us to be with Him in heaven (John 14:3). When you face death, trust in His promise to bring you safely to the other side.

Remember...none of this has anything to do with *your* works, but has only everything to do with **HIS work**...and that work is done. Finished on the cross. He promised He will never let you go. When we work for Him, it is through the power and clarity of what He did for us and thus our response in light of such. When we struggle to allow Him the position of Lord and to serve Him, it is because we really don't get all that...we are still in the dark.

Indeed, when we answer that call upon our lives, trials, tribulations, heartaches, and tears will surely come. But despite them all, we truly live... we truly have life now, and we have it eternally.

Romans 8:22-23 *“For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God’s curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved.”* (If we already have something, we don’t need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don’t yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, on the way to the gallows, turned to a British officer, Payne Best, and whispered to him, *“For me, this is the beginning of life.”*

1: 11

This was Paul’s ‘phone call.’ It had nothing to do with him or his talents or skills. He was simply “appointed.” He was appointed to service, just as we all are. (Acts 9:10-20)

Ironically, this fact of serving Christ as Paul himself clearly did, is something that many believers fight “tooth and nail” concerning. They will say that such an insinuation is legalism, when it is in fact selfish ‘lazy-ism.’ Paul didn’t see it as legalism at all. It was his simply his duty. Remember Luke 17:10 ***“We are unworthy servants who have simply done our duty.”***

Paul certainly did not make up his own mind to enter the ministry of Christ. It was a “call.” An appointment by Christ Himself. The Greek gives us further light, saying that he was literally “made, and put in place” as a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher. He reiterates this in his first letter to Timothy, saying:

1Ti 1:12 *“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,”*

What’s our part? Do we have one? Yes...to pick up the phone and answer....and then move accordingly.

Isaiah 6:8 *“...I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ;Here am I! Send me.”*

1:12

The important thing is because Paul took upon himself the mantle of ministry of God and kingdom, he was then given financial gain, familial comforts, and a life of ease as a reward! Ugh...*No*. Because he answered that call he was given imprisonment, shipwreck, beatings, abuse, slander, and tears, and finally martyrdom.

Even his friends left him, saying in chapter 4 that only Luke was with him. Those who he counted as friends and whom he expected to back him dumped him when thing got rough. This too, is a reality of ministry and service of the Lord. Not much of a worldly recruiting tool, huh?

Yet he says he is “not ashamed”. He has no regrets. He is not disappointed. Through it all, it was worth it all.

Notice an important element here. He says he knows “who he has believed in.” Not in *what* he had believed in. After all, Christianity is not believing in a creed or a set of rules. It is a relationship. A “bond”...and association with God in flesh. If it **is** all just a rule book, then the day will come when you will throw in the towel.

“He” will keep us. Not our Biblical knowledge, or great works and efforts. It’s not anything that we do. It is rather what He has done. A completed work on a cross 2000 years ago.

And herein is His promise: He is able to keep what I committed to him...my love and my life, until “that day.” What day is he referring to? My ‘graduation day.’ It is a day that we all will see, one way or another. The day we graduate from the school of life on planet earth and get on with the real living with Christ... “*where there is no more tears and no more crying.*” And we’ll all be together then.