

2 Timothy 1:1-2 “Not shopping for Jesus”

I. Introduction

II. Vs. 1 No regrets

II. Vs. 2 Three gifts to keep you

I. Introduction

Around the year 66-67 AD the apostle Paul had been rearrested and imprisoned in Rome, confined to a little 20 foot in diameter prison cell awaiting his death by the hands of Caesar Nero (who himself would die in 68 AD). Paul writes what would be his last will and testament to Timothy who is still across the Aegean and Adriatic Seas in Ephesus. As Paul was facing his final hour he wanted Timothy to know how to remain strong in the midst of a society that was collapsing. His emphasis is upon staying the course, not altering or diverting from the course but rather staying on it despite the present outcome. He will write to Timothy four ways in which we all can “Living differently in an age of deformity”. Those four phrases form the division in this letter as each become a subject that Paul explains to his son in the faith.

1. The first phrase is found in chapter 1 verses 13-14 where Timothy is told to “*Hold fast the pattern of sound words*”, simply put Timothy is being told that the time in which they are living is a time for the believer to “**BE BOLD**” in the teaching of the word of God.
2. The next phrase appears in the letter in the 2nd chapter verse 1 where Paul tells Timothy to be “*strong in the grace that is in Jesus*”, in other words the times they

were living was a time when the believer needed to **BE STRONG**, fit in the grace that is only in Jesus.

3. The third phrase that Paul gives Timothy is found in chapter 3 verse 1 where he writes “*know this*” as Paul tells Timothy that the time requires the believer to **BE WISE**.
4. Finally Paul gives his final phrase in chapter 4 verse 2 where he says, “*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season*”, this final phrase is one in which Paul says to **BE READY**.

I suppose it depends upon your world outlook if you consider this to be an “*age of deformity*” or not but ill regardless of that I believe that these four phrases (**BE BOLD, BE STRONG, BE WISE and BE READY**) to be the marching orders of the church at any age.

II. Vs. 1 No regrets

Vs. 1 This is not only one of Paul pastoral letters it is also one of his prison letters as he writes this letter while under incarceration for his faith in Christ. Tradition tells us that shortly after this letter was sent that Paul was taken outside the city of Rome on an April morning and was beheaded. There is a vast difference between this letter and his first letter to Timothy. When Paul wrote his first letter he had just be released from jail after his first trial before Nero. Since that time (four to five years) Nero had burned a third of Rome to the ground in a drunken rampage and to save faced blamed it upon the Christians of which no one in all the world was more visible then Paul. So he had been rearrested and placed not under house arrest but in the darkest jail in all of Rome awaiting

his execution. Paul wrote this letter with the full knowledge of his soon departure from this life. The furry of Nero's persecution had left the church on the brink of extinction. During this time Christians were called idolaters, atheists, cannibals, and revolutionaries. They were the Bane of all society everywhere hated by all in the world. They were hunted down, lit on fire as human touches to light Nero's dinner parties, used as entertainment in the roman theater for gladiators and lions to devour.

Yet despite these dark day, Paul's letter is bright with hope, no regrets, and no thoughts of deviating from the course set out by God. Had Christianity been a myth, a fraud, a hoax, then this would have been a great time to deny the faith but instead Paul doubles down and not only for himself but for all believers tells them to stay the course. There is little doubt in this letter that not all so called believers stood fast the truth concerning Jesus as Paul will remark in this letter in chapter 1 verse 15 that those in Asia had turned away. In chapter four verse 11 he says his good friend Demas walked away. Paul anticipates with prophetic clearness that having stayed the course of faith in Christ the outcome was soon to be his death. What would you do if you were faced with such a choice as Paul or those in Iraq and other places in the world?

Listen to how Paul describes his circumstances to Timothy: "*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Jesus Christ.*"

- With regards to the course of his life, Paul listed being sent out to be Christ's ambassador the highest most privileged course he had ever know.

- With regards to where that course had taken him, Paul considered it the “*will of God.*” Paul did not see himself as a victim of Rome but rather as a champion of Christ’s.
- With regards to the outcome of this course he was not facing “*certain death*” he was facing “*certain life*”! There is no sound or tone in those words of a man with great regrets in his life with how things have turned out. Instead there is an anthem of praise and thanksgiving that he had been chosen to run such a race.

To Paul life as not soon ending, it was soon beginning and he had actively waited for such a time as this. He didn’t write to Timothy about the act that he was going to lose his head, no he wrote as a man that was soon going to gain his life. It is one thing to live like triumphantly when you are facing no trails in this life and another to live victoriously when the world and everyone in it is falling apart. The doubters and atheists can deny all they want but they cannot deny the truth lived out in our lives. Here was a man who according to the prevailing thought in society was insane at best and a criminal at worst, judged by society to not be worthy to breath the same air on this planet and his response to such was, “*Man am I ever blessed!*” Saint’s there is nothing the world or anyone in it can do to a person who despite the situation or circumstances stay steadfast upon the promises of life in Christ.

II. Vs. 2 Three gifts to keep you

Vs. 2 In the 2nd verse we have the necessary gifts from God that produced such heroic faith, “*Grace, mercy and peace*”! Over the years I’ve noticed that there is a difference between believers in the early church to many in the church today in the way they view their faith. **Many view their faith in Christ as something they place in their life.** One

day while at a grocery store I witnessed the perfect example of how many in the church look at their faith. Many of today's Christian's go to the shelf of Jesus and get a 3oz package of Jesus and put him into their shopping cart. Others use Jesus a little more and they prefer the 8oz Jesus. Then there are those super saints who use Jesus a lot and prefer the jumbo Jesus and get the 32oz package. All these "Jesus shoppers" tend to think they are better than the other shoppers because they are adding Jesus to their diet, where others aren't. The 8oz Jesus users think that they are better than the 3oz users. The 32oz jumbo users are far better than the 8 and 3oz users. But in truth all of these folks are just consumers, some are just adding more of Jesus than others. They all place other products in varying degrees that they believe are essential to life and Jesus is just one of the "*many products*" that each person places in the shopping cart. But the *the early church **didn't add more of Jesus to their shopping cart than we do.*** **No the difference is not in the amount of Jesus the early church had in their diet it is that they didn't shop for Jesus at all, as He wasn't "In the shopping cart, He was the shopping car"!** He was their life and what they added to Him was always in accordance to what He desired for each person. Nothing was ever added to Him that He didn't ordain! **The healthy spiritual diet is not to be found in how much Jesus you put into your life it is rather to be found in whom you allow to do the shopping!**

When Jesus is my Shopping cart, He will give a healthy dose of "*grace, mercy and peace*". The great part of these three things is that they will be able to sustain you no matter what you are facing in life. There are a great many people who though have added Jesus to their cart are munching on other things expecting to have "grace, mercy and peace" but when their life is depleted do to adversity they realize that what they have

been feeding on just won't suffice. I love the fact that in this greeting Paul says from experience, that these three ingredients that will sustain and stabilize you and they will always and only be found in “*God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

- **Grace is the consciousness of God's love and presence.** His Goodness towards us that not only forgives our sins but enables us to experience the truth that we are a part of His family. It's this reality that gives the believer the sense of power to obey God's word and choose Him rather than our fallen flesh. There are all apart of grace which we don't earn by works but rather by His work that works.
- **Mercy withholds that which we do deserve.** It's God's mercy that tempers the trails of our lives and adjusts them to our weakness of faith and flesh. Jeremiah said it this way in Lamentations 3:22 “*Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassion fail not.*” Because we struggle with our fallen flesh and live in a sin cursed world everyday ought to be complete and absolute chaos but the truth is those things are tempered by His mercy.
- **Peace is that inner sense of well-being.** It occurs when we realize that, no matter how dark and dismal the circumstances may be Jesus will never leave you or forsake you and He is not only in control He is going with you through the trial. This inner calm that causes us to be panic proof.

These are the three ingredients of “*the promise of life*” which is in Christ Jesus. These are the three that were being experienced as Paul wrote this letter filled with such hope while he lived in the darkness of deformity. The very purpose of this letter is given us in chapter 1 verse 6 “Stir up the gift”. The season of dysfunction is not the time to retreat but to advance.