Join with Me, by the Power of God

2 Timothy 1:1-18

Key verse: 8

‘So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.’

Though Paul was in prison, instead of wallowing in disbelief, he took the time to write letters to his younger co-worker, Timothy, who had a hard time joining with his co-workers. Why is it that people find it so hard to join in serving God? The obstacle to joining that is addressed here is shame, as in being ashamed to join.

Paul’s emphasis here for Timothy is to join his co-workers. My message has three parts. In Part I, Paul emphasizes the power to join. In Part II, Paul invites Timothy to join him, reminding Timothy of God’s personal calling.  Lastly in Part III, Paul gives a good example of a co-worker who joined while others abandoned him.  Through this passage, let’s pray to clearly see what Paul is emphasizing for Timothy, that we take it to heart and carry it out as well.

**Part I. The Power to Join (1-7)**

Let’s read verses 1-2 together.

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

*2To Timothy, my dear son:*

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

Paul was an apostle by the will of God. It wasn’t man’s idea, nor was it Paul’s idea, but God’s will alone. Paul once worked against God and persecuted Christians, but through God’s grace and purpose, Paul received the gospel through revelation in Christ. Paul wrote this letter of encouragement to Timothy whom he addresses as his dear son in verse 2. This shows their close relationship as co-workers in Christ. Timothy was Paul’s son in spirit and grew spiritually under Paul. In return, Timothy brought great joy to Paul. Paul greets Timothy here and reminds him that even through sufferings and trials; grace, peace and mercy are still present. Let’s look at the next part of the passage to see how Paul further encourages Timothy through this letter.

Let’s read v.3-7 responsibly. I’ll go first.

*3I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. 6For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

Paul thanks God that he remembered Timothy in his prayers. Sometimes, we may forget to pray for our friends and co-workers but Paul did not, and he thanked God for it. Two main things Paul remembered about Timothy were his faith and his tears. Timothy’s tears show his compassionate heart, and Paul takes note of his sincere faith. Paul took the time to encourage Timothy by emphasizing his good points, perhaps to remind Timothy of the importance of having a heart and sincere faith in serving God. Paul also encouraged Timothy to remain faithful. Faith co-works with the Holy Spirit, and we will see in the next few verses that Timothy had everything he needed to join his co-workers.

In verses 6-7, Paul reminds Timothy of God’s gift of the Holy Spirit and what to do with it. Paul tells Timothy to fan the Spirit into flames meaning to use it and rely on it as a driving force in his life. We received the gift of the Holy Spirit from God and if we don’t use it, then just sits there in i*dleness*.

*For example, the gift of God can be like a muscle. The more we exercise it, the stronger it gets. But if we don’t use it, then it withers.*

In the same way, God has already given us the Spirit and we should use it. We have to take action and use the gift God has given us. I’ll read verse 7. *‘For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.’* The Spirit covers all of our shortcomings, so it doesn’t matter if we feel weak or fearful. The Spirit has us covered. We see here that the characteristics of the Holy Spirit are: power, love and self-discipline. Paul emphasizes these aspects for Timothy because of his timidity, which clashed with God’s desire for him to be a powerful, loving and self-disciplined preacher. If Timothy relied on his own power to boldly join, he’d fall away. In order for him to join his co-workers, Timothy must rely on the Holy Spirit to overcome his nature because it’s only through this power that he can do so.

**Part II. Join with Me (v.8-13)**

Let’s look at verse 8. Let’s read this together.

*‘8So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,*

In the first part of this verse, Paul tells Timothy to not be ashamed of testifying about Jesus. The gospel is the testimony of Jesus Christ, and it’s this gospel that we share with others. The word ‘ashamed’ appears a total of four times in this passage. Paul’s point of emphasizing this word ‘ashamed’ is to tell Timothy to not be ashamed. Sometimes people may feel ashamed to talk about Jesus in public, and at other times, others quickly fall away when they are persecuted. But if we’re ashamed, we’ll have a difficult time sharing the gospel with others. Paul clearly states here to not be ashamed to testify about Jesus.

In addition, Paul tells Timothy to not be ashamed of him. Paul considered himself a prisoner of Christ. As a prisoner of Christ, Paul was bound to suffer for the gospel, but he was also bound by the promise of eternal life. Paul tells Timothy to not be ashamed of him because Paul’s other co-workers were ashamed to see him in chains. We’re bonded with our co-workers through Christ, and we’re all suffering for the same purpose. So we gotta be ready to join our coworkers. But this is not always easy, and we will see later in this passage that Paul’s co-workers deserted him at his arrest.

Now let’s look at the second part of this verse. ‘But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.’ The power of God has been demonstrated through Christ.God sent Jesus to destroy death. This is a very powerful power. If we’re strong in this power, we can definitely join our co-workers in suffering. Paul encouraged Timothy to be bold and join him by the power of God. Timothy may have had a hard in doing so, but by the power of God, he can be bold and join in suffering for the gospel. This is God’s personal invitation to Timothy by Paul to join him, as it is God who calls us to do the same.

I know of a missionary who comes to campus regularly to ask students to bible study, even though he has to do so all by himself. I came across him a few times last semester, and I hesitated to join him. But I prayed to God about it and felt conviction, because even though this missionary didn’t verbally invite me as Paul did with Timothy here, it’s still God’s calling for me to join in the suffering. When I joined this missionary and he told me how thankful and encouraged he was.

Let’s read verses 9-10 responsibly. I’ll go first.

*‘9Who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.’*

[v.9] God called us not because of anything we’ve done, but by his own purpose and grace alone. The grace here pertains to the fact that we’re all called out of sin and into holy lives. Paul was called forth by God to live a holy life dedicated to serving Him. And even though we dwelled in our sins, God called each of us here to live out holy lives for him as well.

**In verse 10**, Paul talks about the grace that was promised and revealed when Jesus appeared in the world. **While in this world, Jesus DESTROYED death and brought life and immortality to light. Jesus DESTROYED death!** We once belonged to the power of death but Jesus destroyed it! He also brought life and immortality to light. He revealed life and immortality and granted both of these to us!

In addition, Jesus went about serving God and relied solely on God to do so. However, Jesus suffered at the hands of man. Through his death and resurrection, all people are saved. Jesus suffered for us so that we wouldn’t have to pay the wages for our sins. This means that we have no merit in this grace. If we did, we would have had to suffer for it. But this salvation is of free grace, not according to our works. So when we suffer for Christ, it’s not about us, it’s about Him who saved us. Paul identified himself as an apostle, and lived by this truth. And through this gospel, Paul became a herald, an apostle, and a teacher even though he once lived in opposition to God. Yet, Paul too faced many sufferings.

Now let’s read verses 11-12 together.

*‘11And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is ale to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.’*

Though Paul suffered, he wasn’t ashamed. God saved Paul by his own purpose and grace, which was granted to him in Christ. This was enough for Paul to endure suffering for the sake of the gospel. Paul reminds Timothy here that God also called him and that a holy life through in Christ is worth suffering for. In the same matter, we too should suffer for Christ, by giving up our time to serve him, because he is the one who gave us life out of death. Paul entrusted his life to Jesus, and trusted that Jesus has his rewards. As we suffer for the gospel, we can rest assured that we can trust Jesus with our rewards as well.

Let’s look at verses 13-14. I’ll read these verses.

*‘13What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.’*

In verses 13-14, Paul reminds Timothy to keep what he heard from him as the pattern of sound teaching. Paul refers to his teachings to Timothy as the ‘good deposit.’ This reminder implies that even those who are well taught can’t retain what they learned, without Help from the Holy Spirit. Timothy must keep Paul’s teachings not through his own power, but with the help of the Holy Spirit.

**Part III. One Who Joined (v.13-18)**

Let’s read verse 15 together.

*‘15You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.*

Look at verse 15. Paul mentions here that many people deserted him. To start, he says that ‘everyone’ in the province of Asia deserted him. It’s likely he means all of his co-workers in that area. But Paul mentions two particular co-workers by name; Phygelus and Hermogenes. These two abandoned Paul when he was arrested. They didn’t want to suffer with Paul.

However, there was one co-worker who remained faithful and stood by Paul.

Now let’s read 16-18 responsibly.

*16May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesipherus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. 17On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. 18May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.’*

This faithful co-worker was Onesipherus. Paul mentions that Onesipherus was ‘not ashamed.’ Onesipherus remained faithful to Paul as a co-worker, but ultimately remained faithful to God, as one who suffered for the gospel alongside his co-worker. He went above and beyond what a faithful co-worker would do—when others abandoned Paul when he got arrested, it was Onesipherus who searched hard for Paul until he found him. In turn, we must not be ashamed to suffer for the gospel with our co-workers, because when we are, we’ll be like Phygelus and Hermogenes, who abandoned their co-worker. Paul hints that Timothy may end up like these two if he doesn’t join. On the other hand, Timothy can be like Onesipherus who pursued Paul and boldly joined him in suffering. Paul used Onesipherus as a good example of a co-worker to show Timothy what a bold co-worker should do, that is help out co-workers and have no fear in suffering for the gospel together.

As many of you are aware, I was blessed to give my very first message here at this conference. Thank God that he called me for such a blessing! But in all honesty, it was hard to see it as a blessing throughout the preparation. I struggled more than I have before, to deeply meditate and sincerely pray in writing this message. I also struggled with my co-workers’ advice and suggestions, which at times seemed very demanding. I couldn’t believe I joined, and I wanted to quit on several occasions.

Personally, I **learned** through this passage that it was only through God’s power that I was able to join and remain faithful, alongside the other messengers. Giving a message is something that I never expected of myself, and I pray that I would **repent** of such doubts about God’s power. I was the least of the messengers, the youngest with no prior experience. I was also the one who often did not join the other disciples during the Friday night meetings in the past. Yet through God, I was blessed to deliver a message at this conference. This is God’s glory! There’s no need to be ashamed in joining your co-workers. In addition, though it’s my last semester in college, I have the desire to continue campus evangelism. When I see co-workers on campus, I’m usually the one who joins them. I’ve made the decision to be the one who doesn’t just join, but the one to initiate fishing and invite others to join me. So let’s join together, join with me, because God can do such great things through us!

In conclusion, we can see Paul’s emphasis on joining co-workers. To join, we must rely on the Power of God if we are timid. Secondly, Paul reminds Timothy of God’s personal calling for him to join his co-workers in suffering for the gospel. Lastly, Paul mentions Onesipherus, a faithful co-worker who joined and was a great example to Timothy. We’re not here to go on vacation or to relax. God called each of us here to join together and suffer for the gospel. We should co-work for this same purpose through the power of God. Together, we can live out God’s calling and share the gospel with all people.

One word: Join with Me