

CRUCIFIED TO LIVE

“I am crucified . . . nevertheless I live”

by

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

PAUL PROMOTES HIS PROTEGE

**“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God
which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (II Timothy 1:6)**

Timothy, not too robust (I Timothy 5:23), was easily disturbed emotionally, being sensitive to tears (II Timothy 1:4). Imagine the deep impression made upon his youthful mind when Paul was publicly impugned and violently punished at Lystra. His knowledge of this experience is inferred by the Apostle when, later, he wrote, **“Thou hast fully known. . . (the) persecutions, afflictions which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra.”**

And what manner of man was it who would so dauntlessly return to the very scene of his maltreatment with neither protection nor promise of anything less cruel than his recent ignominious experience? What power inhered in such a personality to prompt an engagement in the very practice which had so incited the populace previously—that of preaching the sweetest message man ever heard? Timothy was stirred.

Tradition has it that, soon after their acquaintanceship, Paul sought to interest Timothy in service for the Lord. It is conjectured that they sat long into the night as the rugged veteran laid the challenge at the heart’s door of this affable but less robust newcomer to the faith. Being the candid realist he was, and in spite of (or should we believe because of) Timothy’s conceded character, Paul painted the life of a Christian servant in all the black strokes of its human dangers and in all the drabness of its deprivations.

Then, with forceful directness, he came to the point, ***“Timothy, will you enlist as a soldier of Jesus Christ?”***

His voice had a distinct timbre of its own as he spoke in measured, unhurried phrases. His sincerity and proved dauntlessness denoted a powerful and integrated personality. This man of God was irresistible. His own life was a superb challenge to any one who knew how to detect the traits of a strong character.

Paul was rigid but not rabid, forceful but not frightful, cogent but not coarse, candid but not cantankerous. He dealt with men in a masculine manner.

He was cognizant of Timothy's frailties. He was also sympathetic, but it is ever ill-advised to magnify human deficiencies with regard to Christian activity when God is able to supply our every need—even to the putting of His strength in our weakness. Robert Murray McChesney and David Brainerd made themselves immortal in pressing on, by the grace of God, despite serious and incurable physical indispositions. Timothy was willing to trust God and that, in itself greatly impressed the Apostle. He would do all in his power to encourage him.

Paul deputized Timothy to stand guard at Ephesus.

“Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” This was the concerted cry of the milling multitudes in protest of Paul's preaching which produced pandemonium in the streets of Ephesus. Confusion reigned as for hours the throngs vocally and violently affirmed their faith in the goddess which came down from Jupiter (Acts 19:34).

The town clerk had finally succeeded in quelling the irrational demonstration by explaining that no laws were violated by the visitors; and, if there should be some infraction, the civil authorities were well equipped to handle the case. It was thought best, however, that Paul, the main cause of their concern, move on to some other point. It is to that time he refers when later he wrote Timothy, saying, **“I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia”** (I Timothy 1:3).

There was a two-fold purpose in this move. Timothy was to denounce the infringement of false doctrine and to discountenance the infiltration of fables.

Strange views, like wild weeds, spring up quite readily, especially subsequent to a work of the Spirit. It is Satan's counteraction through counterfeit. Paul was a wise general and well versed on enemy strategy. He exercised the utmost precaution to spare new converts from the traffic of truth-corrupting agents. This was an external defence, but there was also an internal danger.

Some young Christians with good intentions but poor judgment began introducing fables. This, of course, was not to be tolerated—no, not for a moment. When fiction flourishes fact fades and folk falter and faint. Timothy must tactfully show them the folly and utter vanity of such a practice. Then, too, there were among the new believers at Ephesus those who had not been entirely **“loosed from their grave clothes”** and who delighted in protracted discussions of genealogies. Paul instructed his young fellowhelper to discourage this matter, for interminable pedigrees would lead to controversy, and controversy is the precursor or misunderstanding and ultimate dissension.

Paul propounded to Timothy the prospects of proper pedagogy.

The aims, ends, methods and processes of religious education are not devoid of, nor should they be divorced from, the common laws of logic. For years these people had joined in the praise of Diana of the Ephesians. They had been reared in an atmosphere diametrically opposite to their new found position in Christ. To consolidate their faith and strengthen their testimony required more than usual attention.

“Now the end of the commandment [the aim of your instruction],” the Apostle explained, “is charity [love] out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling [fruitless talk]; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm [insist upon]” (I Timothy 1:5-7).

It would have been lamentable indeed for Timothy to have shown himself so incompetent, and, through some miscarriage of discretion, to have destroyed their confidence.

To obtain the desired results, his teaching was to be a ministry of love—a sympathetic and tender coaching of novices with an inoffensive patience until the light of the knowledge of Christ should flood their souls and fill them with a hungering for righteousness. The procedure might prove tedious, but new believers must be rooted and grounded if they are to wax strong in the Lord. **“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”**

This was Paul’s desire, and Timothy should be equipped to thus encourage them, knowing that his teaching must be supported by an exemplary life—a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Paul commanded Timothy to wage a winning warfare.

The Apostle was not one to make New Year’s resolutions. His whole manner of life showed a constant resoluteness to be ever at his best for the Lord. It was his habitual bent and tenor to press on—always on the offensive. His desire could not be less impressive for one so dear to him as Timothy.

“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck [ruin] . . .” (I Timothy 1:18-20).

The admonitory note in this instruction seems to bear upon the hazard of inactivity and the danger of misdirected effort.

The surest way to avoid shipwreck of one’s faith is to exercise that faith with constancy. Those who hide their light under a bushel will sooner or later find a feeble and flickering light. It cannot, under such circumstances, through disuse, have a brilliance and a glow that would impress others who are in sin and darkness.

Neither does a weakened faith afford much comfort in life’s varying vicissitudes or offer much security when a treacherous foe wages an attack. Paul was a staunch advocate of preparedness with a readiness to strike if and when the enemy threatened. He reminded Timothy that he had joined others in predicting, from the very start, that he would be a credit to the cause of Christ, but he must wage a vigorous warfare to avoid violating such confidence as was reposed in him.

Others had missed the mark, having swerved from the faith.

Paul called on Timothy to be strong.

Physical deficiencies do not imply spiritual weakness. On the contrary, these may enhance one's strength by driving one to a firmer dependence upon the Lord.

The contention is not without foundation that the Apostle's "**thorn in the flesh**" was a boon to his finer spiritual traits. "**Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me**", was his submissive declaration, (II Corinthians 12:9).

This was his confident conclusion as he bore an irksome handicap. He knew well that Satan might seek the advantage by magnifying Timothy's impaired health. As a father, he intreated him, "**Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus**" (II Timothy 2:1).

The grace that is in Christ Jesus—was not that the divine answer to his own difficulty? Verily it was. Grace is implanted power, a strengthening potency to make one strong in the inner man, regardless of human frailties. "**For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.**" We are to remember that He is divine and that all things can be done through Christ which strengtheneth us.

Repeatedly the Apostle had advised his son in the faith concerning factors which would make an eminent contribution to his spiritual fitness. "**Timothy,**" he appealed, "**keep that which is committed to thy trust . . . flee youthful lusts . . . follow after righteousness.**"

Not every young man is privileged to have such an able and faithful counsellor, but how timely is the word to "**exhort one another daily while it is called today lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin**" (Hebrews 3:13). A Christian leader, especially in those early days, must be able to withstand the many rebuffs and unfairnesses which inevitably come, for the enemy is active. "**Yea and all who will live godly must suffer persecution.**"

Paul warned Timothy not to shrink morbidly from consequences of the ministry.

Down through the corridors of time has echoed Paul's immortal avowal, "**I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.**"

It has become the shibboleth of all the succeeding faithfuls, for however fit and ready one may be to testify to the power of the gospel, such an one is disqualified utterly who is ashamed. It is more than the trait of cowardice; it is the white flag of surrender to the opposing force, hoisted by fear.

Fear came with Satan's first stroke against mankind and left Adam and Eve cowering at the approach of the Creator in the cool of the day. Fear paralyzes energy and is a master stratagem used by the devil with frequency and effectiveness.

Paul was not one to overlook important matters and Timothy must have some instruction along this line incorporated in his training. **“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,”** he emphasized, **“nor of me His prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God”** (II Timothy 1:8).

The Apostle was a commando-type of Christian soldier. He was never deterred by the portents of danger or by the strength of enemy defenses. He had confidence in his weapons which were not carnal but mighty under God to the dismantling of strongholds. He would have been a sad and disappointed trainer if his protégé failed to emulate his daring for the sake of Christ.

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear,” he assuredly affirmed, **“but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”** (II Timothy 1:7).

The consequences may mean imprisonment or harsh affliction, but a good soldier endures hardness. There should be no relaxation anywhere along the line, for the gospel must be delivered to the whole world.

Paul advised Timothy to major in sound words.

The message of the Christian has neither equal nor rival. The Word of God is quick and powerful, deep and pure, spirit and life. It brings to man the message of heaven, revealing the mysteries of the Father. It is productive of the most transforming results and will accomplish ends undreamed. But it must never be adulterated or deceitfully handled.

This, too, Timothy had to learn, and the Apostle made certain that his disciple’s curriculum embraced this imperative principle. **“Hold fast the form of sound words . . . that good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”**

There it was! A plea to guard the trust of truth. The word **“form”** is listed in the margin as *“pattern”*, and the word **“sound”** is a descriptive connotation stressing *virility, healthfulness and the life-giving qualities of God’s Word*.

This principle has been neglected, and with its neglect has come an influx of unsoundness which falls short of building Christians after the proper pattern. It is not difficult to imagine the deep distress which would seize the Apostle were he to hear the vanities of present-day departures.

The trust of truth, Paul avers, can only be kept by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth within us.

He had explained previously that spiritual understanding is not through sensual faculties. **“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit,”** he wrote, **“for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God”** (I Corinthians 2:10).

One reason why the Holy Spirit deigns to dwell in us is that He might take objective truth and make it an inward reality. He will give a strong grasp of the Scripture to those who yield their lives to Him and definitely prefer divine truth always to the exclusion of error.

If care and interest, prayer and concern could combine in an able advisor to bring results, then Timothy was destined to be an unwavering advocate of Christian doctrine and practice.

Paul charged Timothy to be constantly and consistently orthodox.

It is clear that the Apostle sought to impress upon his pupil the immutability of the divine economy. The gospel was not to be in vogue at one time and outmoded at another. It does not change with the notions and fashions of men. It does not change at all—it knows no fluctuations, innovations or alterations.

Satan desires to see the gospel change; for then, it would not bear the character of its Author Who is the same yesterday, today and forever. Paul envisaged a time when Satan's desire would become prominently reflected in men, a day in which they would overwhelm themselves with teachers to suit their whims and tickle their fancies, turning from the truth and wandering off after fictions.

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ Who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom,” said the Apostle most solemnly, **“preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season”** (II Timothy 4:1, 2).

This was, in a sense, a summation of his counsel—the outflow of wisdom from one whose close contact with God and his direct revelation from the Lord made him an exclusive authority.

He insisted that Timothy think straight and that he should act accordingly, all thought and every action being governed by the Holy Spirit in the light of the revealed Word. This consistency of position was to be complemented by a constancy of procedure which indeed it would produce. Thirst knows no season, and hunger as well is an abiding companion of man. Just so, there is daily, throughout every year, a call for the Water of Life and the Manna of Heaven. “Never relax your efforts while men are dying without Christ,” seems to be the burden of this challenge, and who knew better than Timothy how fully Paul's own life gave force to his plea.

Paul summoned Timothy to his side before his martyrdom.

There are times when none but one's closest friends are desired —times when just a lone individual may be singled out of a host of acquaintances to satisfy an inward longing which wells up indefinitely from deep within. A statement may not be exchanged, not even a word uttered, but sincere affection has a language all its own.

The atmosphere is changed by the presence of a friend. The handclasp communicates a warmth and the fingers upon a heated brow transmit a sympathy which words are too inadequate to express.

The light of a countenance and the penetrating appeal of the eyes can impute more moral stamina to a weak soul than endless applications of earth's soothing balms.

“There’s nothing else upon this earth
With all its money, all its mirth,
Worth half as much as friends are worth.”

The termination of a race well run was imminent. The shades would soon fall on earth’s little day for this magnanimous character of Christian fame. Soon he would fight his last battle.

Then—and he had longed for the day—he would be absent from the body and present with his blessed Lord which he affirmed would be far, far better.

There was no misgiving, no shrinking, no fear. He had achieved widespread reputation, yet he rated himself less than the least of the apostles. What he did, what he suffered was all for Him Whose he was and Whom he served. Had he ten thousand lives, they would all be placed unreservedly on the altar of service. He only had one life, and part of that was consumed by animosity for Christ; but from the moment he saw the Saviour, he was lost irretrievably in His love, lived by His faith, was sustained by His grace and was now ready to seal that love with his own life.

One day, the enemy only halfway succeeded in ending his earthly ministry. There was among the witnesses at that time a young man whose heart was deeply moved, and who, perhaps through that very incident, became receptive to the gospel. Now, the end was sure and wicked hands would succeed in destroying the body. If he had but one request to make before the approaching end came, what would it be? We need not conjecture. He mentions it twice in the last few lines of his writings.

“Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me,” he wrote.

That was all. No need for elaboration. Those few words spoke volumes. He wanted his son, Timothy. Timothy’s heart could dictate but one answer. He must favour the man who found him and imparted to his own life the rich fragrance of his deep experience in love and fatherly tenderness. The curtain falls and we are not given to know whether Timothy arrived in time to bid the departing Apostle farewell, but it is safe to assume that every effort was made to that end.

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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