

*2 Timothy 1:1–14 (CEB)*

From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God’s will, to promote the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.

<sup>2</sup>To Timothy, my dear child.

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

<sup>3</sup>I’m grateful to God, whom I serve with a good conscience as my ancestors did. I constantly remember you in my prayers day and night. <sup>4</sup>When I remember your tears, I long to see you so that I can be filled with happiness. <sup>5</sup>I’m reminded of your authentic faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. I’m sure that this faith is also inside you. <sup>6</sup>Because of this, I’m reminding you to revive God’s gift that is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup>God didn’t give us a spirit that is timid but one that is powerful, loving, and self-controlled.

<sup>8</sup>So don’t be ashamed of the testimony about the Lord or of me, his prisoner. Instead, share the suffering for the good news, depending on God’s power. <sup>9</sup>God is the one who saved and called us with a holy calling. This wasn’t based on what we have done, but it was based on his own purpose and grace that he gave us in Christ Jesus before time began. <sup>10</sup>Now his grace is revealed through the appearance of our savior, Christ Jesus. He destroyed death and brought life and immortality into clear focus through the good news. <sup>11</sup>I was appointed a messenger, apostle, and teacher of this good news. <sup>12</sup>This is also why I’m suffering the way I do, but I’m not ashamed. I know the one in whom I’ve placed my trust. I’m convinced that God is powerful enough to protect what he has placed in my trust until that day. <sup>13</sup>Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you heard from me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

<sup>14</sup>Protect this good thing that has been placed in your trust through the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

*1 Peter 1:3–5 (CEB)*

<sup>3</sup>May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed! On account of his vast mercy, he has given us new birth. You have been born anew into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. <sup>4</sup>You have a pure and enduring inheritance that cannot perish—an inheritance that is presently kept safe in heaven for you. <sup>5</sup>Through his faithfulness, you are guarded by God’s power so that you can receive the salvation he is ready to reveal in the last time.

*What sort of legacy are we building? What will be left behind?*

*Can we really go about building a legacy of faith?*

I’d like to meet Lois and Eunice, the grandmother and mother respectively of a young man named Timothy who lived in the years when Christianity was beginning to spread around the Mediterranean. We know almost nothing about the two women, only what we can infer from Paul’s reference to them in a letter he sent Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5 above).

We know precious little about the facts of even Timothy’s life (see the page two textbox). But we do know that Paul understood how influential these two women had been in making Timothy into a passionate and powerful disciple of Jesus. I’m sure that Lois and Eunice would be greatly pleased to see how God used their grandson and son to work alongside Paul and further his ministry of the good news. Timothy was their legacy of faith. As Lea and Griffin write,

Paul commended the spiritual heritage Timothy had received. This faith in the God of the Bible had first lived in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. Their faith was the expression of the faith of a “true” Jew (Rom 2:28–

29) which found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The pair had a genuine expectant faith for the Messiah of the Old Testament. When they heard the gospel, they believed upon Jesus Christ as the Messiah for whom they had hoped. They passed their faith on to Timothy. Paul was tracing the faith of Timothy back to its roots.<sup>1</sup>

And we can bet that many others also benefitted from the faithful legacy of these two women. They must have really known how to make disciples, as was Jesus' charge to them and to all of those who profess to be part of his family (Matthew 28:19). Do we know how? Do we even know what Jesus meant by disciple?

*What's a disciple?*

We toss the word "disciple" around a lot. Jesus charged his disciples with making more disciples. The stated mission of the UMC is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ." But what does "disciple" really mean? To call someone a "follower" of Jesus doesn't really get to the heart of it. Neither does the word "believer."

"Disciple" translates the Greek word, *mathetes*, and it is all about learning. *Mathetes* might be translated "learner," "pupil," or "student." Disciples sit at the feet of the teacher so that they can learn. What do they learn? They learn to be like the teacher, the master. I prefer the word "apprentice" as a synonym for "disciple." "Apprentice" conveys the full sense of learning to become like our master, Jesus. Apprentice plumbers seek to become master plumbers by discipling themselves so that they might learn the master's trade. Similarly, disciples of Jesus are apprentices seeking to become Christ-like.

### Timothy<sup>1</sup>

Personal name meaning "honoring God." Friend and trusted coworker of Paul. When Timothy was a child, his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois taught him the Scriptures (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). A native of Lystra, he may have been converted on Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23). Paul referred to Timothy as his child in the faith (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2). This probably means that Paul was instrumental in Timothy's conversion. When Paul came to Lystra on his second journey, Timothy was a disciple who was well respected by the believers (Acts 16:1-2). Paul asked Timothy to accompany him. Timothy's father was a Greek, and Timothy had not been circumcised. Because they would be ministering to many Jews and because Timothy's mother was Jewish, Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3).

Timothy not only accompanied Paul but also was sent on many crucial missions by Paul (Acts 17:14-15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 16:10; 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 3:2, 6). For example, when Paul was unable to go to Corinth, he sent Timothy to represent Paul and his teachings (1 Cor. 4:17). Later when Paul was in prison, he sent Timothy to Philippi (Phil. 2:19). Paul felt that no one had any more compassion and commitment than Timothy (Phil. 2:20-22).

So close were Paul and Timothy that both names are listed as the authors of six of Paul's letters (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Philem. 1). In addition, Paul wrote two letters to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2). As Paul's ministry neared the end, he challenged Timothy to remain true to his calling (1 Tim. 1:18). As Paul faced death, he asked Timothy to come to be with him (2 Tim. 4:9). At some point in his life, Timothy was imprisoned, but he was released (Heb. 13:23).

<sup>1</sup> This is the entry on Timothy in: Dean, R. J. (2003). Timothy. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (pp. 1597-1598). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>1</sup> Lea, T. D., & Griffin, H. P. (1992). *1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Vol. 34, p. 185). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> All Christians, all those who have faith in Jesus Christ, have been "born again"/ "born a second

### *How do we learn . . . and why?*

How does a child learn to stay away from a hot stove? Mother's instruction might work . . . or not. But, certainly, if the child touches the hot stove, he'll learn quickly not to do it again. Much of what we learn, and often the most important things we learn, we learn by experience. And learning by experience is a process. The child observes the stove, touches it and assesses the result (ouch!), designs a new approach to dealing with hot stoves (stay away!), and then implements what he learned. It is a circle of learning, a nearly infinitely repeated process that makes us who we are.

In a second letter to Timothy, Paul wrote about Scripture's unending cycle of teaching. Scripture not only teaches us (shows us the way forward), it rebukes us (points out when and where we've messed up), corrects us (shows us how to get back on the path), and trains us in righteousness (shows us how to do a better job of staying on the path) (2 Tim. 3:16).

In *The Divine Conspiracy*, Dallas Willard helps us to see that this training is not about so much about *doing* as it is about *being*. Our goal is to *be* evermore Christlike. In our training and our trying, our aim is not just to control our behavior, but to be transformed. My goal is to *be* a patient person, not just to behave patiently. We want to *be* joyful. We want to *be* faithful. We want to *be* kind. It is transformation we seek, not merely better performance. We can never live Sermon-on-the-Mount lives by reducing Jesus' teachings to a list of rules. The life we seek is a transformed life, a metamorphosis. As we grow in Christlikeness, we are becoming the persons God created us to be. We strive and we train, we work and we pray, as we seek to embody the "living hope" that was given to us when we were reborn in Christ.

Further, as we become a more mature disciple of Jesus we can then teach others what we have learned. That is how it is in all life endeavors – even in faith and discipleship. It isn't that we can pass on the faith that God has given us, but we can model that faith and teach others the shape of a faithful life as Lois and Eunice taught Timothy. All of this prepares us to embody the "living hope" that Peter speaks of in the opening to his letter, 1 Peter.

#### *A living hope*

Peter begins his pastoral letter by lifting up for us all, the living hope that is Jesus Christ. We have been born anew<sup>2</sup> into "a living hope" and the ground of our hope is the truth of the resurrection (v. 3). It is the proof that justifies our hope, our confidence that our trust in God is well-placed.

As the children of God we have an inheritance that can never diminish nor be taken away. God protects our inheritance, our salvation, for us, locking it away in the vaults of heaven.

Peter wants us to rejoice in this knowledge, especially when we are going through difficulties (v. 6). A young woman in one of my classes told me of a saying that she learned a former pastor: "Christian belief is knowing that the worst thing is not the last thing." What a superb summary of the Good News. Peter, you see, reminds the believers that even though they may be suffering in the present, God is protecting for them a glorious future when God's "Last Thing" will be revealed to them for their everlasting joy.

#### *An enduring inheritance*

The inheritance of which Peter speaks is our salvation, our eternal life with God and those we love. This inheritance cannot be touched by the troubles of this world or our suffering. As David Bartlett writes,

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<sup>2</sup>All Christians, all those who have faith in Jesus Christ, have been "born again"/ "born a second time"/"born from above." See John 3 and elsewhere. Using the words "born again" to refer only to a subset of Christians is a mistaken use of the phrase and clouds one's understanding of the New Testament.

The qualities of this heavenly inheritance, that it “can never perish, spoil or fade” (NIV), suggest what it means to say that Christians are born anew to a living hope. It is a hope that no power can destroy, tarnish, or mar. What can keep believers steadfast while they await their heavenly inheritance is faith. Faith is, in part, the confidence that believers do have a treasure laid up for them that neither moth nor rust can corrupt. The letter throughout helps its readers to find what does not perish in a perishable and perishing world.<sup>3</sup>

A question for us to consider is what sort of inheritance we will leave those who come after us. Too often we think of this inheritance in terms of money or property – things that will not endure. But we are called by Christ to do all we can to foster faithful discipleship in all those we can possibly reach.

It is easy to look at our beautiful campus and conclude that St. Andrew is a building, but, instead, we are a fellowship formed by the Holy Spirit. It is this faithful fellowship of disciples that is enduring. It is this fellowship that is the most important inheritance any of us will leave for those who come after us.

Over the next few weeks, we will talk about our legacy, as persons and as St. Andrew. What effect will we have had on those we lived and worked among? Our families and friends? Our co-workers and neighbors? What will we have done to help them hear well the Good News of grace, to change hearts and minds, to show others the shape of a genuinely Spirit-filled life? . . . What sort of inheritance will we have left?

#### Lois and Eunice: Believers or not?

Though it is easy to assume that when Paul speaks of the faith that “first lived in Lois and Eunice,” it is easy to assume that they are believers, having come to faith in Jesus Christ. But was that really the case? Donald Guthrie examines the question of their faith:

The thought of Timothy’s faith stimulates [in Paul] the memory of his grandmother’s and mother’s faith. But there is difference of opinion among commentators whether the Christian or Jewish faith is here meant. The use of the word *first* (*prōton*) in this context has been supposed to indicate that Lois was a devout Jewess and was the first to inculcate religious faith in Timothy; in other words from his earliest days he had been surrounded by religious faith. Yet if Christian faith is intended, *prōton* may mean that Lois was the first to become a Christian, followed by Eunice and her son. The reference to Timothy’s parents in Acts 16:1 is little help in solving this question since the word ‘believer’ used of Eunice could apply equally to both Jewish and Christian believers. Since by her marriage to a Greek Eunice cannot have been a strictly orthodox Jewess, it seems more probable that Christian faith is meant (cf. comment on 3:15). The lack of mention of Timothy’s father, who according to Acts 16:1 was a Greek, was probably because he was not a Christian (cf. Jeremias). Such personal details bear a genuine stamp and some scholars who dispute the authenticity of the Pastorals as a whole list this passage among the genuine fragments (e.g. Falconer). It is difficult to believe that a pseudonymous writer would have thought of mentioning Timothy’s forebears by name if the Epistle was directed to some ‘Timothy’ of a later age.

The apostle was not only deeply conscious of the powerful home influences which had shaped his own career, but was impressed by the saintly atmosphere of Timothy’s home. Lois and Eunice were perhaps well known in the Christian church for their domestic piety. The apostle closes this personal reminiscence by the assertion of a strong conviction (*I am persuaded*), in thoroughly characteristic style, the verb *peithō* being used twenty-two times in Paul’s writings. There is no doubt in his mind about Timothy’s faith.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Guthrie, D. (1990). *Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Vol. 14, pp. 141–142). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>3</sup> David, B. L. (1994–2004). The First Letter of Peter. In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter’s Bible* (Vol. 12, p. 250). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

## Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. If death claimed you tonight, what sort of legacy would you leave behind? How much of it would endure more than a short time? Would you leave any legacy of faith?
2. So many people in our world embrace what is temporary, even disposable, and ignore what lasts, what endures. Do you agree with this observation? If so, why do so many simply ignore the Good News and the inheritance that it proclaims?
3. The inheritance God has given us is “imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.” How well do you manage the inheritance you’ve been given? Is it growing? What could you do in the days ahead to begin building a legacy of faith? What part can St. Andrew play in this?

## *Daily Bible Readings*

Before reading each passage, take a few minutes to get a sense of the context. Your study bible should help. Jot down a few questions that come to mind from your reading of the passage.

<p><b>Monday, 2 Timothy 1</b> Don't be ashamed by the gospel.</p>	<p><b>Tuesday, 2 Timothy 2</b> Pass on the message and be ready to share in the suffering</p>
<p><b>Wednesday, 2 Timothy 3</b> Paul is ready to be a role model!</p>	<p><b>Thursday, 2 Timothy 4</b> Timothy's commissioning and Paul's final instructions</p>
<p><b>Friday, Titus</b> The third of Paul's pastoral letters to his young associates, Timothy and Titus, makes good reading for the weekend!</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weekly Prayer Concerns</b></p>

