

October 20, 2019
19th Sunday after Pentecost
Lincoln Heights Lutheran Church
Timid No More

2 Timothy 1:3–14 (NIV84)

I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. ⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I 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. ⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. 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, ⁹ who 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, ¹⁰ but 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. ¹¹ And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹² That 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 able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day. ¹³ What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Being timid in life can cause some problems. For timid means that you are afraid of something and that will affect whatever it is you are doing. The timid person is afraid of giving the wrong answers in a job interview and therefore does not give answers that mean much of anything. The timid athlete looks at the opponent and is afraid. Therefore, the timid athlete doesn't make much of an effort since they are going to lose anyway. The timid student is afraid to ask questions or give answers because others might laugh at them. Therefore the timid student does not learn as much as they might. Timidity also causing problems for us who are living as Christians in this world. But Paul tells us that in Christ we are Timid No More.

Timidity Causes Trouble

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.

In Paul's encouragement to Timothy, he gives three ways that timidity causes trouble. 1) We may be ashamed to testify about our Lord, 2) We may be ashamed to be associated with people like Paul, and 3) we may be afraid of suffering.

Being ashamed to testify about our Lord is what the devil and our sinful nature want us to feel. Many of us would just like to live our lives and let other people live their lives. Why should I interfere with that person's life? What business is it of mine to tell them what Jesus has said and done? And we convince

ourselves that keeping our faith in Jesus quiet is the best way to get through this life. Maybe we tell ourselves that we are just introverted and prefer to keep to ourselves.

But an extrovert can be just as timid as an introvert by keeping the conversation away from faith in Christ. Some people are more comfortable in big groups or talking with complete strangers than others. On most personality tests, I end up far closer to the introvert end of the scale. But the question before us today is: Do the people who know us (a small group or large) know that we trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life?

Paul next points out that some believers might be ashamed of Paul, the prisoner of the Lord. Paul was back in prison when he wrote this second letter to Timothy. This time Paul might not make it out of prison alive. Were some believers pretending not to know Paul because he was in prison? Maybe they thought he did something wrong. Maybe they did not want their friends to think they followed the teachings of a man who was in prison and would be executed soon. Or maybe they were afraid that they too would suffer if they were associated with Paul in any way. Again it is fear of what the world thinks that can make a believer timid.

Related to the fear of the world is being afraid of suffering. Believers did not want to be arrested like Paul or rot away in a dungeon like Paul. We do not currently face prison or execution for proclaiming the Word of God but there are other ways to make a believer suffer in this world. What will our coworkers, friends and neighbors think if they know that we believe homosexuality, transgender-ism, and abortion are sins? Could there be some social pressure on you to change or be quiet about what the Bible says? Certainly. What will the people of our day think if they google “WELS” and find out from Wikipedia that women may not be pastors in WELS? Might there be some pressure to get out of that backwards, hate filled church?

Fear of what the people of this world might do to believers make believers timid to express their faith in Christ. But that timidity has its roots in the sinful nature and in fear of what man can do to us. This timidity is not from the Lord.

Timid No More

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Whatever our personality, in Christ we are timid no more. Our new nature, created when the Holy Spirit brought us to faith, is the very opposite of timid. Instead, in Christ, we have power, love and self-discipline. Paul points out how the Holy Spirit acted in time to bring Timothy to faith in Christ.

I 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.

Humanly speaking, Timothy is a believer because his grandmother loved his mother enough to tell her the wonderful promises of the Savior in the Old Testament and Timothy’s mother taught him those promises of the Christ. His mother and grandmother were not timid with God’s Word. They did not let Timothy grow up and decide for himself what to believe. They boldly taught the Word of God to Timothy as though it is objectively true no matter what he thought. Of course, they are correct. So

parents and grandparents – don't be timid in sharing the Word with the young people God has entrusted to you. What is more powerful than a father reading a Bible story and praying with his daughter? What is more loving than a mother singing a hymn to her son to comfort him? You don't have to preach to governors, kings and emperors like Paul did to be a bold witness for Christ. Teach your children and grandchildren about the grace and forgiveness of Jesus. Teach them everything Jesus teaches in his Word. That is powerful.

Through faith in Christ, we not only have a spirit of power but also of love. Our new man loves the Lord and all our Savior teaches. For Jesus has forgiveness our sins and rescued us from eternal death. We therefore love him more than we love the world and its attention. We love God's Word more than we love temptation. We love what Jesus says more than we love what a friend tells us. Of course, we are not yet perfect in loving God above all things. But through faith in Christ we can truly love Jesus and his Word. No longer will we always be timid but our love for Christ will compel us to live holy lives according to his Word.

Paul emphasizes that our ability to do this comes entirely from Christ, the One who destroyed death.

[He] 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,¹⁰ but 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.

This is the one in whom we believe – Jesus Christ. He destroyed death. Think about that. We humans have become very good at destroying life. We can kill lots of people in lots of ways in a short period of time. But Christ destroyed death. He brings people back to life. He will bring you back to life after death. Why would we be timid when Christ is our leader? What can man do to us that Jesus cannot overcome? He destroys death itself.

Sometimes being timid no more simply means to hold onto what we have. Keep the faith that has been handed down to us. Do not let deceptive philosophies and false teachings rob us of faith. Do not let the temptations and sins of the world dull our consciences and take us from our Savior. Again, we could not even hold to the faith we were given except by the power of our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It does not depend on us but upon the one in whom we believe. And Christ never fails. Even though Paul is suffering in prison he writes: *I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.¹³ What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.*

Amen.