

2 Timothy 1:1-7 – Fan the Flame
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Turn to 2 Timothy

Lesson 1: God's church grows exponentially when His people fan into flame the gift of His Spirit

Read 2 Tim 1:1-7

Life for believers is a lot like building a fire – *read Matthew 5:14-16*

We are the light of the world

- God created you and saved you so you could be a light of truth and love to the world
- We're that little flame shining light and heat to a dark and dying world

Problem is: the world keeps trying to blow us out!

- Light is unpleasant to those who prefer living in the darkness
- So the world tries to extinguish our flame by conforming us to its image
- If the world can make us look like them, then they won't have to see the light of God's truth
 - o They won't feel convicted anymore; won't feel guilty
- God made us to be lights to the world but the world constantly tries to blow us out

So the big idea of this passage is the verb in v6 "FAN INTO FLAME"

- anazwpurew – only used here in the NT – rare word
- But we get a good sense of the word from the Greek translation of Gen 45:27...
 - o Jacob thought his son Joseph was dead – crushed him – spent years in depression
 - o But the stunning news that Joseph was actually alive "revived" Jacob's spirit
 - Hope and joy came alive again because of the good news
- Word is used similarly in a Jewish book written after the OT called Maccabees
 - o Nation under attack
 - o Battlefield speech: "But I will avenge my nation and the sanctuary and your wives and children, for all the nations have gathered together out of hatred to destroy us."
 - o The speech worked – Maccabees tells us...
 - o Fear replaced by courage
- So "fan into flame" = awaken courage & hope in the heart of someone who had been crushed by despair or fear

- For Timothy it was a fear issue
 - *Read v7a* – Paul uses the word “fear” for a reason – because that’s Timothy
 - Timothy struggled with fear on many occasions – *read 1 Cor 16:10*
 - He was prone to fear in stressful situations
 - Now he was pastor of church in Ephesus
 - The New York of ancient Asia – cultural & economic capital – incredibly wealthy
 - Timothy overwhelmed – in over his head – doubted his abilities – afraid he’d screw up
- **So this passage is a call to courage and hope**
- But not just for Timothy... for anyone who feels overwhelmed by fear, doubt, despair, depression, or hopelessness
- We all struggle with fear, doubt, and despair at least from time to time...
- So Paul challenges us to “fan into flame the gift of God in us”
 - That’s how we find courage and hope in the midst of fear and despair

What is this gift of God?

- *Read again v6-7*
- v7 explains v6
- **The “gift” that God has “given” is the spirit = the Holy Spirit**
 - *Read Titus 3:5-7*
 - We all receive the Holy Spirit the moment we believe the gospel
 - The Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you permanently
- And He fills your life with a variety of gifts – Paul mentions 4
- 1st mentioned in v6 – “gift of God... through laying on of my hands”
 - = unique God-given abilities to serve other people
 - *Read 1 Tim 4:13-14*
 - Timothy’s spiritual gifts = teaching and pastoring
 - Received those gifts the moment he trusted in Jesus
 - Didn’t have opportunity to fully use until appointed pastor by Paul & elders
 - That’s why Paul says “laying on hands” → nothing magical about Paul’s hands
 - All believers already have spiritual gifts – *read 1 Cor 12:7-9*
 - every believer has been given one or more supernaturally powered abilities to serve other people for the glory of God
- V6 – the Spirit gives us spiritual gifts

- V7 – He gives us the POWER, LOVE, and SELF-CONTROL
 - Holy Spirit gives us God’s own power, love, self-control
 - Transcends anything you could muster up on your own
- Just like Timothy we are often fearful and discouraged – often selfish, weak, sinful
 - But we don’t have to stay that way because we now have the Spirit!

Holy Spirit can give us all the power, love, self-control we need to live the courageous life God’s called us to. But to live that courageous life we must fan into flame the gift of the Spirit.

How do we fan into flame the Spirit of God who lives in us?

1. Give Thanks

- So Paul reminds Timothy of all he had to be thankful for:
 - V1 – Timothy had “life in Christ Jesus” = the gift of eternal life
 - Eternal life cost the life of Jesus
 - Jesus is Creator and Creator always more valuable than creation
 - V2 – Timothy was Paul’s “beloved son” in the faith
 - Not Tim’s biological father... his spiritual father = his mentor
 - V5 – Timothy had a believing mother and grandmother
 - Taught him to know and love God
- If you know Jesus you have been blessed!!
- And if you want to fan into flame the Spirit of God in you... you must stop & give thanks everyday
 - Spend 5 minutes giving thanks before you ask for anything
 - Develop a habit of giving thanks
 - That is the first step in replacing fear and despair with courage and hope

2) Avoid Sin

- In *1 Thess 5:19* Paul warns us... “do not quench the Spirit”
 - Yes, the Holy Spirit is 3rd Person of the Trinity – Almighty and sovereign
 - Yet it is possible for us to quench His influence in our lives
 - = throw cold water on the flame of His power, love, discipline, and gifts in us
- How do you quench? Next verse – *read v20-22*
 - “despise prophecies” = reject God’s Word = disobey God
 - If we choose to practice sin – we will quench power of the Spirit in our lives
 - Won’t lose the Spirit – He’s in us forever
 - But we will lose access to His power, love, self-control, spiritual gifts
 - No way to overcome fear and despair IF you choose to sin
- Same idea in *Eph 4:30-31*
 - If we allow bitterness, anger, slander to fester: grieve Holy Spirit – cut ourselves off
- Sin suffocates the power, love, and self-control of the Spirit in your life – like water on a fire
- Please take this on faith because when you are fearful or discouraged Satan will lie to you
- Sin barricades your only way out of hopelessness!
 - You can’t cure fear or despair with more sin! Just makes it worse.
- **Our only hope for relief from fear & despair is the Holy Spirit, and He only helps those who choose to obey!**
 - Doesn't mean you have to be perfect – none of us are
 - Means you have to be willing to try to obey – willing to turn from sin and seek holiness
- Courage & hope found by fanning into flame the gift of the Spirit... that requires obedience

3) Get to Work!!

- If you'll do *something* to help *someone* in need... it will fan into flame Spirit within you
- Helping others is like putting wood on the fire of the Spirit
 - o Fuels the flame of His gifts, power, love, and discipline – drives away fear & despair

4) Join with Others

- *Read Heb 10:24-25*
- Here's the problem: when fear or doubt or despair set in our tendency is to isolate ourselves
 - o Don't want others to see our struggle – feel embarrassed or guilty
 - o That is the enemy talking to you – trying to get you alone, isolated
 - o Why? Because that's how do you put out a fire?
 - Easiest way to put out campfire: pull logs apart and it'll die
- Satan wants to extinguish the flame of the Spirit in you so he will try to isolate you
- You must not let that happen!
 - o When you struggle with fear and despair is when you need other believers MOST
 - o You need them to encourage you, comfort you, help you
 - o And they need the same from you... because NO ONE HAS THEIR LIFE TOGETHER!
- **We need the warmth of other believers around us**
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