

THE Rock COMMUNITY CHURCH

2 Timothy 1:1-17

“Faith Not Fear”

8_27_2023

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Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

26:25

How about if we start with a question? Do you have people in your life that are really dear to you? Very special, but you don't get to see them very often at all?

26:39

If you do, then you're going to want to understand exactly how Paul is feeling as he opens this letter that we call the book of 2 Timothy. This is Paul's second letter to Pastor Timothy, who is Paul's beloved protege or apprentice.

26:56

As we saw when we did our overview of this book, the book of 2 Timothy focuses on the things that really matter in life. And in our opening few verses we're going to read today, Paul wastes no time. He gets right into it.

27:09

Among, just among the topics we're going to cover today from Paul are these. God's will, genuine faith, the guarantee of everlasting life, the power of prayer, and how to have victory over fear. Aren't you glad you came to church today?

27:31

Yeah, I'm glad you're here. I'm glad I'm here. Let's pray together. Father, we just thank you that every time we open our Bibles, the words we read are all from your priceless truth and your wisdom. Thank you for this passage today that is just so rich, so powerful, so life changing.

27:54

Please give us ears to hear your voice and hearts to receive your truth into our lives. We pray in Jesus' precious name. Second Timothy, chapter 1 verses 1 to 7 is our passage. And Paul is writing this book from a Roman prison.

28:17

The Bible seems to indicate that Paul was imprisoned in Rome two different times. The first time he was under house arrest and he had the freedom to receive visitors and he served about two years and he was released.

28:32

But then a few years later he was arrested a second time, but this time he wasn't under house arrest. This time they put him in a dungeon and he knew that he would eventually be executed. So I have a couple pictures to show you because it just so happens, Joanie and I just got back from Rome.

28:49

We got back like two days ago, three days ago, we just got back from Rome. And the dungeon where it is believed, Paul was incarcerated, is right down this road you're looking at. This is right at the edge of the Roman Forum, just about a quarter mile from the Colosseum.

29:04

It's called the Mamertine Prison that was built probably around the 7th century BC. I have to tell you that is not the Apostle Paul standing in front. Not even close. However, in this prison there was a dungeon, this dungeon, built inside the sewer system of the city below.

29:29

The ancient historian Sallust said it was 12 feet underground and he described it like this, it is disgusting and vile by reason of the filth, the darkness and the stench. Here, here is where it is believed, Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, the last words we have from Paul in the New Testament.

29:58

The Bible does not record how Paul died, but tradition says he was beheaded. So, let's do this together. Let's remember this, let's picture Paul in this dark, disgusting dungeon as we read the following words that he wrote.

30:20

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus. To Timothy, my beloved child, grace, mercy and peace from God the Father in Christ Jesus our Lord.

30:35

I thank God whom I serve as did my ancestors with a clear conscience as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. As I remember your tears, I long to see you that I may be filled with joy.

30:49

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now I'm sure dwells in you as well. 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.

31:06

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Paul is locked inside this horrible prison. There were no doors, there were no windows, there's a hole in the ceiling where you were lowered down on a rope.

31:25

He is locked inside this terrible place, but his spirit is soaring free by the power of the Holy Spirit to write these tender, truthful, and encouraging words to Timothy and to us this morning. Just as we start, I have to tell you, I find this particular passage in to be incredibly convicting, personally convicting.

31:50

Here's why. There have been times I've been stuck in traffic for an hour and I was not thankful to God. Here's Paul stuck in that dungeon for the rest of his life, and he's praising God. Wow, ouch. Let's look at verse one.

32:14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus. As this is custom, Paul begins a letter by identifying himself. He writes, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus.

32:31

Let's pause just for a moment and ask the question, what exactly is an apostle? The word apostle appears more than 80 times in the New Testament. The common definition of the word apostle means a representative, an ambassador, someone sent out as a messenger.

32:50

So all followers of Jesus, all of us who call Jesus our Lord, we are all apostles in the sense that we are all called to be his representative in the world. However, the main

definition of the word apostle that Paul uses here refers to the unique group of men, a very small unique group of men.

33:11

While Jesus was on earth, he selected, you know this story, he selected 12 men to be his closest disciples and apostles to spread his message of truth. Of course, one of those 12, a man named Judas betrayed Jesus and then Judas hung himself.

33:26

So when the Lord Jesus returned to heaven, he left 11 apostles on earth. After Jesus ascended, the remaining apostles met and they selected a man named Matthias to fill Judas' spot. Matthias had very special qualifications to be an apostle that do not exist today.

33:47

Peter listed those qualifications for us in Acts chapter 1. So let's read these together. I think you'll remember in first Timothy and Titus, we read the qualifications to be a pastor or an elder, those still exist but the requirements to be an apostle were only for this limited time.

34:01

You'll see why by what Peter said. So Peter said this, so one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us, one of these men must become with us, a witness to his resurrection.

34:21

So an apostle must be someone who accompanied Jesus, was with Jesus, during the whole three to three and a half years of Jesus' ministry. He had to be there to see Jesus day in day out here, see him, understand everything that he said and did.

34:35

Apostle must be an eyewitness to Jesus' baptism when he heard the voice of the Heavenly Father validating Jesus as his only beloved son. The apostle must also be an eyewitness to Jesus' death and resurrection.

34:50

So while Matthias was being ordained as the 12th apostle, there was this angry Pharisee named Saul who was going through Jerusalem doing his level best to arrest and execute any and every follower of Jesus he could find.

35:06

Saul was his Jewish or Hebrew name. Paul was his Roman or Latin name. One day Saul took a road trip to Damascus because he wanted to go to Damascus and arrest followers of Jesus there and bring him back to Jerusalem for punishment.

35:24

Let's read what happened to Saul on that road to Damascus in Acts chapter nine verses one to five. But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus.

35:41

So that if he found any belonging to the way, those are followers of Jesus. Men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him.

35:55

And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And he said, who are you Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Jesus personally chose Saul to be an apostle to the Gentiles.

36:18

And it was during Saul's first missionary journey where he went to Cyprus that Saul began using his Roman name, Paul. And the message Paul preached came directly from Jesus. He explains this in the letter to the Galatians.

36:32

Let's look at it real quick. Galatians chapter 1 verse 11 to 12, Paul explains, He said, I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

36:51

There is a debate among some people whether Paul should be called the 12th apostle instead of Matthias. But fortunately, the word of God does not address this detail, so neither will we. But here's the detail we will know.

37:12

All of this incredibly wonderful backstory of Paul's calling and Paul's amazing transformation and Paul's unique authority in Christ is all captured in that one single word when he writes Paul and apostle.

37:28

Let's look at it again at the opening of this letter, verse 1. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus. Okay, how did Paul say he became an apostle?

37:45

Did he apply for the job? No, he became an apostle by the will of God. What does that mean? What is the will of God? The will of God means God's sovereign, supreme, all - powerful choice. God's choice.

38:06

So, Almighty God is the one who chose Paul to be his apostle, to be his messenger. Just like God has chosen you, Almighty God has personally chosen you to be transformed by the power of Christ and to be his messenger and his servant in this world.

38:28

So, the next time you look in a mirror, next time you look in a mirror, try this. Instead of maybe just focusing on your hair, your makeup, or your blemishes if you have any blemishes, remember who you're looking at in that mirror.

38:43

You are looking at someone personally chosen by Almighty God to be transformed by the power of Christ so that you may know him and serve him in this world and the world beyond. That's who you are. It's okay to smile about that.

39:02

That's really good news. I want you to again think about that photo I showed you of that horrible, dark, disgusting dungeon, absolutely claustrophobic. I spent several minutes in there. It is a very claustrophobic place to stand.

39:21

If you were sitting in that dungeon and you were just waiting to be executed whenever Nutty Nero decided to give the word, what would you be thinking about? What would you be thinking about as you sat in there?

39:37

What is Paul thinking about? Death? No. He's thinking about the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus. In other words, Paul is thinking about the promise. He's thinking about the guarantee of everlasting life in Christ.

39:53

Jesus chose Paul to go proclaim the truth of everlasting life to the Gentiles and to us because Paul was an apostle. He was a missionary. He was a teacher. He was a preacher. And he ended up writing about half the books of the New Testament so that we would understand what eternal life is really and truly is.

40:15

Let's jump to the end of the letter just for a moment because Paul talks a little bit more about death. Let's look at 2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 6 to 8. Paul writes, For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

40:48

Do we all see the wonderful truth about death? Do we all see what Paul just told us, the wonderful truth about death? Death. Death is not the end of things. Not even close. Death is not the end of things.

41:06

Death is merely a departure from this broken world into the perfect world that God has prepared for all who love and trust in His Son. That's all death is. Paul is sitting in that prison looking at death, like a tired traveler in an airport, looking at the departure time for his flight to take him home.

41:31

Death for Paul and death for every one of us who trust in Jesus as our Savior is just an exit from this dying world of sin into an everlasting world of reward. Praise be to God. That's all we have to look forward to, everlasting reward.

41:55

Verse 2, there's a lot in this letter, isn't there? We're just on verse 1. Let's go to verse 2. To Timothy, my beloved child, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Timothy is not Paul's physical son, but Paul thinks of Timothy as his spiritual son because Timothy is his cherished protege or pupil, who's going to carry on in ministry after Paul departs.

42:21

Look at what he writes. He writes, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. In all of Paul's other letters, he uses the greeting grace and peace. But in this letter to Pastor Timothy, Paul adds a word.

42:36

He writes grace, mercy, and peace. So what? So this. Spurgeon made a note of this in his commentary. Let me share it with you because it's really great. Here's what Spurgeon wrote about this extra word, ministry.

42:51

He said, did you ever notice this one thing about Christian ministers that they need more mercy than other people? Although everybody needs mercy, ministers need it more than anybody else, and so we do.

43:04

For if we are not faithful, we shall be greater sinners even than our hearers. And it needs much grace for us always to be faithful and much mercy will be required to cover our shortcomings. So I shall take those three things to myself.

43:19

Grace, mercy, and peace. You may have the two, grace and peace, but I need mercy more than any of you. So I take it from my Lord's loving hand and I will trust and not be afraid. Despite all my shortcomings and feebleness and blunders and mistakes in the course of my whole ministry. Wow.

43:42

Every pastor and every church leader is in special need of mercy from God and mercy from their congregations. Let's go to verse 3. I thank God whom I serve as did my ancestors with a clear conscience as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

44:07

Are you thankful? Are you thankful that God chose you to know Him and serve Him? Are you thankful God has chosen you to know Him and serve Him? Are you thankful when God gives you a tough assignment?

44:27

Are you thankful when God interrupts your schedule? Are you thankful when God leads you someplace you really don't want to go? Are you thankful? As Paul writes these words, he's sitting in a death row dungeon.

44:49

Is he angry at God? No, he's grateful because he trusts God wholeheartedly like his ancestors did. Paul is from the tribe of Benjamin, but he's probably referring to more than just his immediate family line.

45:09

It's likely he's referring also to the patriarchs of the faith, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All of these great ancestors who served the Lord with a clear conscience. Okay, so what does that mean exactly?

45:25

What does it mean to serve the Lord with a clear conscience? Paul actually explained this to us, but it was a long time ago in 1 Timothy. So let's turn back and look. 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 5. Paul wrote about this.

45:38

He said, the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good or clear conscience and a sincere faith. To serve God with a clear conscience means to love Him and serve Him with a pure heart full of genuine faith, no hypocrisy, nothing fake, nothing just for show, all real, real sincere faith.

46:03

To serve God with a clear conscience means no matter where God leads us, no matter what God asks us to do, no matter what God allows to happen in our lives, we trust Him completely. We trust Him completely and we know that He causes all things to work together for our good and His glory, no matter what it looks like to us on the surface.

46:30

To serve God with a clear conscience means our trust in God, our trust in God is the trust in God. Let's look at verse 3 one more time. I thank God whom I serve as did my ancestors with a clear conscience as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

46:56

What does Paul do all night and day inside that pit 12 feet underground in a sewer? What is he doing there? Have a pity party? No, he prays. For himself, right? No, praise for Timothy and we can imagine he prays for a whole lot of other people because Paul probably had a very long prayer list.

47:20

But here in this verse Paul is showing us exactly what serving God with a clear conscience looks like. It looks like this. Paul served the Lord however he could wherever he was. You know what? There is absolutely no better way to live our life than this for each and every one of us to serve the Lord however we can wherever we are.

47:58

Just be available. Paul trusted Jesus in every circumstance. He was a magnificent preacher. But if Paul could not preach, he would pray. Paul loved Timothy with all his heart but if Paul could not see Timothy in person, he would think about Timothy and then he would turn those thoughts into prayers.

48:19

There is something people say to comfort someone who has suffered a loss or was going through deep waters. You've probably heard this, maybe you've even said it, but people say, oh, oh dear, my thoughts and my prayers are with you.

48:33

Have you heard that? My thoughts and my prayers are with you. Thoughts are really nice. They are. But thoughts do not have the power of prayer. Thoughts, and look this up, thoughts are natural electrochemical reactions generated in our brains, but prayers are the supernatural power given to us by God.

48:56

Big, big difference. Paul turned his electrochemical thoughts of Timothy into supernatural prayers for Timothy. And we see here something wonderful. Prayers do not have to be long. A prayer can be as short and sweet as a thought.

49:17

Okay, if you're taking notes, I want you to write down a note, but I only want you to write this note if you want an adventure this week, okay? If you're not interested in having an adventure, then don't write this down.

49:28

But if you are, write this down. Here's our assignment for this week, okay? I'm gonna do it too, we're all gonna do it this week. Let's see how many thoughts we can turn into prayers this week, okay?

49:39

Everyone of us has to do this, even if you're not writing it down. That means you have a good memory and you're gonna remember to do it, but I have to write it down. Let's see how many thoughts we can turn into prayers.

49:48

Let's really try to ask God to bless or heal or strengthen or save every single person that comes to mind this week, even if it's a politician, even if it's a neighbor. Maybe you love him, maybe you don't, but it doesn't matter.

50:06

You're gonna be praying for God, bless that person, heal whoever comes to mind. Let's try it this week and see what kind of week we have in prayer, turning our thoughts, our little electrochemical reactions.

50:19

If you wanna understand more about it, then Peta-Gay will explain what goes on in the brain. Okay, verse four. Paul writes, as I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.

50:34

Memories, memories are these wonderful, powerful pictures we can carry with us and look anytime we want to. We don't even need a good internet connection. And Paul seems to be here picturing and remembering that a very emotional moment when he and Timothy said goodbye probably for the last time on earth.

50:52

And Paul is telling us something here I think we all know very well. That the dear, wonderful people, God gives us in our lives that in this church are gifts from God that bring us so much joy. Let's look at verse five.

51:13

He writes, I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and now I'm sure dwells in you as well. Again, please, let's try to picture Paul locked in that terrible dank dungeon, that sewer dungeon, described as disgusting and vile by reason of the filth, the darkness, and the stench.

51:41

Even in that disgusting situation, as Paul remembers and thinks about the sincere faith of Timothy and his family, can't we hear the delight in his words here as he's writing? Can't we imagine Paul sitting in that horrible place but the corners of his mouth are turning up into a warm smile and he's probably blinking back tears of joy?

52:08

There is no greater joy for Paul. There is no greater joy for a pastor, a church leader than to see and think about the genuine faith in the hearts of the people he loves and serves. So I need to tell you something.

52:26

You, I'm making eye contact with all of you because I've been picturing all of you. You have been on my heart and mind every time I studied this verse right here at home and when I was in Rome, you have been on my heart and mind because your sincere faith in Jesus, that is so clear and so obvious, encourages me and encourages all the leaders and pastors of this church more than you can possibly know.

52:58

I am so, so grateful for you. You are gifts from God. When Paul mentions Timothy's family, Timothy's faithful grandmother and mother, Paul is not saying that faith is hereditary, okay? Paul is not saying that faith is hereditary.

53:19

The Bible is clear that we do not inherit salvation from family members. That isn't how it works. The Bible is very clear that each one of us must make our own decision to trust in Jesus or not. However, Paul is marveling at the legacy of Timothy's family.

53:36

It's beautiful. A faithful grandmother who raised a faithful daughter, who raised a faithful son. Parents, grandparents can do a lot to encourage their children and grandchildren to come to know Jesus and grow in their faith.

53:54

They can do that in the home and they can do that in the church where the older generation can do so much to love and encourage the younger generation. Last two verses, verses six and seven. So for this reason, I remind you to fan and to flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying onto my hands.

54:14

For God gave us a spirit, not of fear, but of power, love and self-control. We could paraphrase the end of verse five in the beginning of verse six like this. Paul's saying, Timothy, you have deep, deep genuine faith, so you know, you know you can trust God no matter what.

54:36

So don't shrink back from any challenge. Don't give in to any fear. Instead, keep your eyes on Jesus. Keep your eyes on Jesus and fan and to flame the gift that God has given you. The Greek word that Paul uses for fan and to flame gives us a picture of someone using bellows, you know, those air pumping, those bellows to turn red-hot embers into a roaring fire.

55:02

Paul is urging Timothy not to let fear stop him from using God's gift to the fullest. What gift is Paul talking about? Well, he doesn't really say, but we get a really good clue at the end of verse six.

55:18

Let's look at verse six one more time. Paul writes, for this reason, I remind you to fan and to flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying onto my hands. Paul is probably referring to the time when he prayed and he laid hands on Timothy to ordain him for ministry.

55:34

So the gift likely would be the spiritual gift of preaching, teaching, and evangelism. Now, Paul, by talking about his hands, Paul is not taking credit for giving that gift to Timothy. Paul is just rebinding Timothy of that very specific wonderful moment of how that gift came from God to Timothy through the hands of Paul because only the apostles had power to impart spiritual gifts to others.

56:01

Another thing we need to understand, because this verse has been misunderstood sometimes. Paul is not telling Timothy, go out there and get all fired up on your own. Don't go do 20 pushups or go up onto a hilltop at a sunrise.

56:15

Don't get yourself all frothing at the mouth and all excited and come, no, he's not saying this is self effort. Paul is urging Timothy to do something very specific. Don't let fear slow you down. Don't let fear ruin and rob your joy in Christ.

56:29

Don't let fear stop you from trusting God in every situation you face and using the gifts that God has given you. Don't do it, stop. We give fear too much power. I gotta calm down. The New Testament tells us that every person that puts their faith in Christ receives the Holy Spirit as a seal of salvation.

56:55

And when the Holy Spirit comes to indwell us, to come to live inside of us, the Holy Spirit brings gifts with him called spiritual gifts that he gives to each one of us. All kinds of different gifts.

57:04

The spiritual gifts are like evangelism, leadership, teaching, administration, hospitality, giving and more. But these gifts, as we see in scripture, do not come fully developed. They are not fully developed gifts.

57:17

These gifts need to be strengthened and matured. How? How? By using them. We have to use them. A spiritual gift is much like a physical gift in that way. It's like being artistic or being athletic or being really good in math.

57:32

The more we use the gift, the stronger it becomes, right? And if we lack, for lack of use or neglect, that causes the gift to diminish. So we see here something very interesting. Timothy obviously has genuine faith because Paul's praised him for that.

57:50

And Paul is gifted for ministry because Paul laid hands on him and knows the gifts that Timothy has. But it seems Timothy has a timid personality that might be holding him back a little bit. And Paul's very concerned about that.

58:06

Maybe boldness. Maybe boldness does not come easily or naturally for Timothy. Do any of us ever lack confidence? Or am I the only one? Do you ever lack confidence? Do any of us ever struggle with insecurities and fear?

58:30

Let's look more closely at what Paul says about that fear. 2 Timothy 1:7. This, by the way, is one of the most life -changing verses I've ever read for my life. Verse seven, for God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self -control.

58:54

In some situations, a healthy fear helps us avoid danger, doesn't it? And the Bible also talks about a reverential fear of the Lord that leads us to repentance and obedience to God. Those are good things, but what is the spirit of fear?

59:12

What is that? The spirit of fear can be translated as the spirit of cowardice and timidity. It's allowing fear to stifle or muffle our joy in the Lord and it's a fear that hinders our ability to serve God and to use the gift he has given us to the fullest.

59:37

Let's think about Pastor Timothy's situation just for a moment. Timothy's living in Rome, so that means he's facing Roman persecution too. And Timothy's dear spiritual father, his mentor, Paul, is locked on death row.

59:54

In Timothy's church, Timothy's a young pastor, and guess what? There are old, hostile people in his church that don't like how young Timothy is, and they're giving him a lot of grief. And there are false teachers in his church that are causing division.

01:00:07

Paul is not downplaying the serious threats Timothy is facing. Paul's not downplaying anything. And Paul is not minimizing Timothy's weighty responsibilities. Paul is urging Timothy to realize, to realize the fear, the worries, the doubt, the anxiety, all those things that are getting in his way are not coming from God.

01:00:38

They're not. They're not. We all probably face challenges in our lives too, I imagine, probably quite a lot. And God's word for us today is telling us, you know those tormenting thoughts you get in the middle of the night?

01:01:03

You ever have those tormenting thought in the middle of the night? You know those nerve -wracking fears and insecurities that can grip us during the day? Do you ever have those in the middle of your day?

01:01:16

Those things do not come from God. They do not come from God. They don't. They don't. So here is something very helpful, very useful, very practical. I do and you can do. Every time you start to feel that spirit of fear coming on, regardless of the situation, we need to remember, we need to even say to ourselves, just say it to ourselves.

01:01:46

Out loud if you want to. People might think you're nuts, but it doesn't matter. You can say it out loud, you can do what I do. I have a post-it note on my computer where I've written this, but here's what we can say to ourselves.

01:01:54

Every time we start to feel that coming on, this is what I wrote on my paper. This gut punch of fear that just hit me, this stab of insecurity I just felt, or this wave of anxiousness that wants to just overwhelm me is not coming from God.

01:02:19

And because it's not coming from God, my brothers and sisters, we can reject it. Let's see how. Let's see how. Paul writes about it in Philipians chapter four, verses six to nine. Paul writes amazing words.

01:02:36

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, my prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests, your requests can include fears, mind do, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and guard your minds in Christ Jesus.

01:02:59

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

01:03:16

Think about these things. Whatever you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things. And what happens, the God of peace will be with you. In Christ, in Christ we can come to Almighty God, the God of the universe, with everything, including or especially including the things that scare us and make us nervous.

01:03:41

We can talk to God about whatever we're afraid of instead of talking to ourselves about it and just mulling it over and over and over again in our heads. Let's not do that. Let's talk to God about it.

01:03:52

Probably need to talk to him a lot. He's got a very big sofa you can lay on. Talk to him a lot. And instead of just trying to sort out all the what -ifs and uncertainties of all the situations we face instead of doing that, we can rest in the absolute certainty that God is completely, faithfully, and lovingly and all -powerfully in control of every situation and every outcome for our good and his glory.

01:04:19

Guarantee he's in charge of it. We do not need to think of it. God's supernatural peace restores us and his peace sustains us when we focus our thoughts on all the good things

God is, all the good things God does, and all the good things God provides instead of thinking about all the things that make us feel so tiny and afraid.

01:04:40

Tiny and afraid. This is not the power of positive thinking. This is not the power of positive thinking. This is the power of God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Big difference. Big difference. Philippians 4 a little bit later in this chapter.

01:05:02

I know how to be brought low, Paul writes, and I know how to abound in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance, and need. And now Paul is going to let the secret out.

01:05:17

Verse 13, I can do all things through him, through Christ who strengthens me. In Christ, do you know what we have? In Christ, we have real peace and real strength, not just in good circumstances, but we have peace regardless of the circumstances.

01:05:42

We're going to look at verse 7 one more time. I know I'm a little over, I owe you some minutes. I'll be shorter next time. I'll make up for it. Last time I made people late for breakfast and they were getting angry, but I'm almost done, I promise.

01:05:55

Look at verse 7, for God gave us a spirit, not a fear, but of power, love, and self-control. Do we understand what this is telling us? This is telling us the word of God is promising us for every situation we face, big or small, God gives us everything we need and nothing we don't need.

01:06:18

God gives us everything we need and nothing we don't need. He doesn't give us fear because we don't need that. Instead, what does he give us? Power, love, and self-control. What kind of power does God give us?

01:06:31

Willpower? No, it's too puny. God gives us his power. Well, is that a lot? How much power does God have? Well, in Paul's letter to the Ephesian, Paul declares that in Christ we can know, we can experience the immeasurable greatness of his power.

01:06:46

That means God's power has no limits whatsoever, and he provides that for us when we need it. God gives us love. The Bible tells us that love originates with God and that God is love. The love that God gives us is exactly what we need.

01:07:02

Why? Because the love God gives us stirs our hearts so that we can fully trust him, and we can love him, and we want to please him, and we can unselfishly look out for the needs of others instead of just focusing on our problems.

01:07:16

It's wonderful. Finally, God gives us self-control. This is probably my favorite part. The Greek word Paul uses here can be translated as a sound mind or a properly prioritized mind. Fear creates panic, confusion, and disorder, doesn't it?

01:07:37

Who needs that? Who needs that? Is that on your wish list? I want more panic, confusion, and disorder today, please. Who needs that? So instead of that, God gives us a properly prioritized mind, a disciplined mind where we can keep God's word always top of mind.

01:07:54

So instead of reacting to things, we can respond to everything through faith, not fear. One last passage to look at and we'll close. 2 Corinthians. You can't go without this. Can't go without this.

01:08:09

This is just... Well, I'll read it and you'll see what it is. Paul writes, But he, the Lord said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

01:08:29

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for when I am weak, then I am strong. When we trust Jesus with everything in our life, you know what happens?

01:08:53

We can actually be full of peace in all the situations where we used to be full of fear. Jesus makes that wonderful promise to us. So if you're superhuman and you have no weakness, then this promise is not for you.

01:09:07

But if you happen to be human, He has promised us that His grace is all we ever need because His power works best in weakness. I take that as really good news. Maybe you do too. God delights in accomplishing great things through weak people who may be weak, but they trust in God's strength and they obey His guidance.

01:09:33

In Christ, we can truly say, yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Why? For thou art with me. That was King James, Bruce. Don't you love Second Timothy? Is this amazing?

01:09:55

And we're just getting started. I cannot wait to do more. Our prayer team will be here to pray with you if you would like prayer. If you don't feel like coming up and talking with someone today or don't have time, we have a prayer wall.

01:10:07

You can just write your request. It can be totally anonymous. If you leave it at the prayer wall, our prayer team will take it and pray over it. I promise you. Let's pray together. Father, thank you.

01:10:21

Thank you so much for this passage today, your word of precious truth and love and encouragement. Thank you that you have given us victory over our three worst possible enemies in this world. You have given us victory over fear and over sin and over death.

01:10:39

And Lord, I'm sure for many of us, maybe all of us are struggling with some kind of fear today, let us turn our eyes to you. Help us trust you and not be afraid. Despite our weaknesses, despite our shortcomings and mistakes, let us just put our faith in hope and trust in you and experience your peace as we reject a spirit of fear.

01:11:01

It's in Jesus' all-powerful name. We trust and we pray. Amen.