
Words of Truth

“That Thou Stir Up The Gift Of God”

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When you open your Bible up and read the second letter, that we have access to, wherein Paul wrote to Timothy; you read a letter wherein the torch was passed (so to speak). What I mean by that is, Paul was ready to die (II Timothy 4:6-8). He was writing Timothy to get him to continue the work Paul was doing and to train others to do the same (II Timothy 2:1-4 and II Timothy 4:1-5). The challenges Timothy was going to face were going to be difficult. Times were only getting worse (II Timothy 3:1-13). Paul told Timothy that he was fully equipped though to handle the task (II Timothy 3:14-17).

I often think of what Paul was asking of Timothy. It was similar to Jesus leaving this world and passing the torch to the Apostles (Luke 24:44-53 and Acts 1:1-2:47). Without men to continue teaching the word of God, especially in the beginning, what would happen to the future hope of the spreading of the Gospel? Well, there would be no future hope, for the Gospel would not have been preached. The similarities didn't end with the task that was at hand and the consequences of failure. How would Timothy handle such a huge task without Paul's help? Well, the Lord had provided help for Timothy that would go beyond the life of Paul. The Lord had provided similar help that the Apostles had been given when they had the enormous charge ahead of them in spreading and protecting the truth.

The Apostles were given the Holy Spirit to guide them (John 16:1-13). Timothy, while not having the full measure of the Spirit of God, also had been given the Holy Spirit to help with the enormous work ahead of him (I Timothy 4:14 and II Timothy 1:14). The gift of the Holy Spirit had been given to the saints until the word of God was fully revealed (I Corinthians 12:1-13:13 and Ephesians 4:7-16). This gift, like we see had been given to Timothy, was given by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles (Acts 8:12-24, Acts 19:1-7, and Romans 1:8-11). So, Timothy was not “alone” in his work even if no man stood with him.

Our study requires us to understand all that is written above. For, from here forward we are going to examine some questions. Since Timothy had the gift of the Holy Spirit, did he really have a daunting task ahead of him? Would the Spirit of God simply take over his body and move him to say and do what needed done without effort on his part? Was Timothy simply a remote controlled preacher of the Gospel of Christ? In our study, we are going to see that Timothy, like the Apostle Paul before him, had to put forth effort even with the help of the Holy Spirit of God.

Timothy Wasn't Just On Cruise Control

Paul told Timothy this: *“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. 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. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”* (II Timothy 1:5-7). Timothy was not on autopilot. He had to “stir up” the gift of God that was in him. He had to allow the Spirit of God to work through him.

Whether it was Timothy or any other Christian in the first century that had the gift of the Holy Spirit, they had control over whether or not the Spirit worked through them. Notice: *“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness... And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets”* (Romans 12:3-8 and I Corinthians 14:32).

In addition to the allowing of the Spirit to work through them, even the Apostles had to seek help from the Spirit through prayer. Notice this: *“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak”* (Ephesians 6:17-20).

The Holy Spirit did not assume control over anyone. His guidance needed to be sought after and permitted before it occurred. Therefore, we ought not think the work of the Apostles or evangelists in the first century was simply an autopilot experience.

Conclusion

Today, we have the Spirit of God indirectly working in us through the written words of our Lord (John 6:63). Will you stir up that gift? Will you allow the word to work in and through you (Colossians 3:16)? The word of God will not pass away or be bound (Matthew 24:35 and II Timothy 2:9). Although, it can be hindered (Luke 11:52 and I Thessalonians 2:17-18). Get to stirring up the word in you so that you are not a hinderance to the Gospel!