

THE MBPC TEXTER

MOUNTAIN BROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH/ BIRMINGHAM AL

*Sunday, October 6th
27th Sunday in Ordinary Times*



Reading 1

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,² To Timothy, my dear son:³ Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.⁴ Thanksgiving³ I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors 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 am 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 Appeal for Loyalty to Paul and the Gospel⁶ 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 the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.⁸ So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.⁹ 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.¹¹ And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle

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and a teacher. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until 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.

ABOUT THE TEXT

The promise of eternal life to believers in Christ Jesus, is the leading subject of ministers who are employed according to the will of God. The blessings here named, are the best we can ask for our beloved friends, that they may have peace with God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Whatever good we do, God must have the glory. True believers have in every age the same religion as to substance. Their faith is unfeigned; it will stand the trial, and it dwells in them as a living principle. Thus pious women may take encouragement from the success of Lois and Eunice with Timothy, who proved so excellent and useful a minister. Some of the most worthy and valuable ministers the church of Christ has been favoured with, have had to bless God for early religious impressions made upon their minds by the teaching of their mothers or other female relatives.

God has not given us the spirit of fear, but the spirit of power, of courage and resolution, to meet difficulties and dangers; the spirit of love to him, which will carry us through opposition. And the spirit of a sound mind, quietness of mind. The Holy

Spirit is not the author of a timid or cowardly disposition, or of slavish fears. We are likely to bear afflictions well, when we have strength and power from God to enable us to bear them. As is usual with Paul, when he mentions Christ and his redemption, he enlarges upon them; so full was he of that which is all our salvation, and ought to be all our desire. The call of the gospel is a holy call, making holy. Salvation is of free grace. This is said to be given us before the world began, that is, in the purpose of God from all eternity; in Christ Jesus, for all the gifts that come from God to sinful man, come in and through Christ Jesus alone. And as there is so clear a prospect of eternal happiness by faith in Him, who is the Resurrection and the Life, let us give more diligence in making his salvation sure to our souls. Those who cleave to the gospel, need not be ashamed, the cause will bear them out; but those who oppose it, shall be ashamed. The apostle had trusted his life, his soul, and eternal interests, to the Lord Jesus. No one else could deliver and secure his soul through the trials of life and death. There is a day coming, when our souls will be inquired after. Thou hadst a soul committed to thee; how was it employed? in the service of sin, or in the service of Christ? The hope of the lowest real Christian rests on the same foundation as that of the great apostle. He also has learned the value and the danger of his soul; he also has believed in Christ; and the change wrought in his soul, convinces the believer that the Lord Jesus will keep him to his heavenly kingdom. Paul exhorts Timothy to hold fast the Holy Scriptures, the substance of solid

A Wisdom of Mr Rogers

""We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.""

gospel truth in them. It is not enough to assent to the sound words, but we must love them. The Christian doctrine is a trust committed to us; it is of unspeakable value in itself, and will be of unspeakable advantage to us. It is committed to us, to be preserved pure and entire, yet we must not think to keep it by our own strength, but by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us; and it will not be gained by those who trust in their own hearts, and lean to their own understandings.

Bear in mind, these statements about immortality and the end of death come to us as though from the pen of a man writing a confident testamentary farewell. Paul comes across as one modeling how to die. He does this by giving instructions about how to live confidently and in ways that instill in others confidence in God's promises. Human history teems with discussions about what it means to die well and what kind of life prepares a person for such a thing. We need real, flesh-and-blood examples of what good living and good dying look like. The memory of Paul offered one for an ancient audience and for us. What others can you think of?

READING 2

ACTS 9:36-43

In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. 37 About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. 38 Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!" 39 Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. 40 Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. 41 He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. 42 This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. 43 Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

ABOUT THE TEXT

Many are full of good words, who are empty and barren in good works; but Tabitha was a great doer, no great talker. Christians who have not property to give in charity, may yet be able to do acts of charity, working with their hands, or walking with their feet, for the good of others. Those are certainly best praised whose own



works praise them, whether the words of others do so or not. Here we see that the Lord can make up every loss; that he overrules every event for the good of those who trust in him, and for the glory of his name.

"Many believed in the Lord." However, belief does not emerge from a dazzling display of power. Belief is rooted in hope and in trust. So, when the residents of Joppa see Tabitha restored to life, they do not join this community of believers so much because they are stunned by this miraculous act of healing but because of what it might mean for them and for the world. If death is no longer a barrier between us, can we dare hope that the ills that plague us, our families, and our communities might also be healed by a God who cares so deeply for us? The last verse of our passage would be easy to miss as it seems like a simple aside that mentions Peter's next destination as Simon the tanner's home. But here once again, Luke's literary artistry creates a vibrant transition. After all, it is on the roof of Simon's house where Peter will see a vision that will lead him to welcome Cornelius and his retinue. This encounter will then lead to Peter's realization that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34), welcoming individuals and communities from every corner of the world. This life-giving gospel is truly and relentlessly expansive.

Are our ministries, our communities up to the call to be equally relentless in opening our doors to anyone who might join us? Are our ministries, our communities

equally willing to be relentless about leaving the safe confines of the church's walls and reach out to a dying world with words and deed of life and grace?

Think on this as our week progresses. How can we be like Tabatha in our lives, giving our good deeds and going beyond our time at church.



Reading 1

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-14

"2 Timothy 1:3-12," Commented Bible Passages from Taizé, 2003.

Commentary, 2 Timothy 1:1-14, Matt Skinner, at WorkingPreacher.org, Luther Seminary, 2013.

"Indebted Faith," Will Willimon, The Hardest Question, 2013.

"Faith in a Time of Triviality," Alan Brehm, The Waking Dreamer, 2013.

Commentary, 2 Timothy 1:1-14, A.K.M. Adam, at WorkingPreacher.org, Luther Seminary, 2010.

"First Thoughts on Year C Epistle Passages in the Lectionary," Pentecost 20, William Loader, Murdoch University, Uniting Church in Australia.

"Good Things Entrusted to Us," Rev. Bryan Findlayson, Lectionary Bible Studies and Sermons, Pumpkin Cottage Ministry Resources.

READING 2

ACTS 9:36-43

Commentary, Acts 9:36-43 (Easter 4C), Mitzi J. Smith, Preaching This Week, WorkingPreacher.org, 2016.

Commentary, Acts 9:36-43, Deanna Hayden, A Plain Account, 2016

The Truett Pulpit, Burt Burleson, University Chaplain and Dean of Spiritual Life, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 2016.

The Center for Excellence in Preaching, resources from Calvin Theological Seminary: Comments & Observations, Textual Points, Illustration Ideas, 2016.

"The Politics of Hearing and Response," Political Theology Today, 2016.

Pulpit Fiction, podcast. Reflections of lectionary text, pop culture, current events, etc. Robb Mc Coy and Eric Fistler, 2016.

