

TWO GODLY MOTHERS

2 Timothy 1:5

Intro: There are many wonderful ladies who are spoken of in the Bible.

The two about whom I have spoken the most often are Hannah in the OT, and Mary, the mother of our Lord, in the NT. Ladies had a large part in the ministry of our Lord. Only eternity will reveal how great that part was. Today, however, we are thinking about ladies who were mothers, and who are remembered in the Bible as mothers. And the two I have chosen were related to each other. And both were related to the man who is well-known in Scripture as the Apostle Paul's "son in the faith." And you know that I am speaking of Timothy. Paul was not related to them by blood, but he was related to them in the Lord.

The two ladies, **TWO GODLY MOTHERS**, are, of course, Lois and Eunice. Probably many of you would have had trouble giving me their names because they are only mentioned once in the Bible, and you have heard their names in our Scripture reading. Lois was Timothy's grandmother; Eunice was his mother.

We are not given the names of Timothy's grandfather, nor of his father. But we are told in Acts 16:1 that the family lived in Lystra, that Timothy's mother was a Jewess and his father was a Gentile. This probably means that Timothy's mother was also a Jewess. We can assume from what is said in Acts 16:1 that Timothy's father was not a believer – although we cannot be absolutely sure that he was not a believer. But it would seem that, if he had been a believer, Luke in writing the book of Acts surely would have said so. Anyway, whatever the situation was, it was Timothy's mother, not his father, and his grandmother, not his grandfather, who had had such a powerful influence upon him. This ought to be an encouragement to all ladies who are believers, but do not have the active support of their husbands in raising their children in the faith. We can only speculate as to why Eunice, who had a godly mother, would marry an unsaved Gentile. It may have been a case where Eunice herself was not saved until after she was married. It is often the case that children raised by godly parents do not come to the Lord until later in life.

But I don't want to spend a lot of time speculating about the situation, as interesting as that might be. We have certain facts given to us in Scripture that we can consider more profitably.

And let us begin with:

I. THE FAITH OF LOIS AND EUNICE (2 Tim. 1:5).

They were a mother and daughter team. Lois, the grandmother, had raised her daughter to know the Lord, and after Timothy was born you can be sure that Lois supported her daughter in every way as she taught her son Timothy about the Lord Jesus Christ.

But what did the Apostle Paul have to say about these two godly mothers, one the mother of Timothy, and the other Timothy's grandmother? He said that their faith was "unfeigned." What did he mean?

Let me pronounce the Greek word that Paul used here, and you will have your answer. The word for "unfeigned" is ἀνυπόκριτος. You can hear the word *hypocrite* in the last part of that word, and the prefix, the syllable at the beginning of the word, ἀν, is a negative, so we come up with the translation that "unfeigned" means *not a hypocrite!* This means that their faith was *real*. They were genuinely saved. They were true children of God.

Now because the Greek word for a hypocrite means *an actor*, we get the idea that every hypocrite knows that he is a hypocrite. But that is not true. There are countless people right here in this area in which we live, Portland, Vancouver, Gresham, Beaverton, and the rest, who sincerely believe that they are Christians, but who really do not understand what a Christian is. They believe that they are Christians because they try to do the right things, try to obey the laws, and so on, or because they go to church, but they have never been transformed in their hearts by the Gospel of Christ. There were many people like that even in Paul's day.

One of the verses that many of us have memorized recently acknowledged that. I am referring to 1 John 2:19:

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

One of the heartaches of the ministry is seeing people whom you thought were true believers in Christ turn away and walk no more with the Lord. Even our Lord Jesus had this in His ministry. In John 6 the Lord had been teaching the Jews as well as some of His disciples, and when He had finished some of His disciples objected to what He had been saying, calling it "a hard saying." And then the Apostle John recorded this:

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no

more with him (John 6:66).

This meant that they left Him, and never came back.

Timothy's grandmother and his mother were not like this. They had trusted the Lord, and would never depart from him. So the Apostle Paul was confirming their faith when he said it was "unfeigned." It was real. It was genuine.

But look at the text and you will see that the Apostle Paul added a word about Timothy. He said, "And I am persuaded that in thee also." He meant that he could see in Timothy's life the same evidence of a genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that he had seen in his mother and grandmother.

This apparently was the Apostle's impression of Timothy the first time that he met Timothy because we read in Acts 16 and verse 2, the chapter which I referred to earlier. There we read these words -- that Timothy "was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra [where he lived] and Iconium." So the believers had already seen evidence in Timothy's life that he belonged to the Lord.

I want this message today to be an encouragement and blessing to every mother here who knows the Lord, but also to those of you men who are fathers. If you know the Lord, and the Lord has given you children, I know that one of the greatest desires in your heart is that your children will be drawn to the Lord, and that they will live their lives glorifying Him. We are talking today about two godly ladies, a mother and a grandmother, who evidently did not have any help from their husbands, but who were faithful to the Lord themselves, and had the joy of seeing real spiritual fruit in the life of their son and grandson. It is wonderful when both parents are believers and can work together, and pray together, for the salvation of their children, but that is not always the case. And so if a mother has to go it alone, or if a father does, the story of Timothy shows how God used these two godly women to bring their son and grandson along in a faith in Christ which was real.

And how important this is in these evil days in which we live. Our children are surrounded by influences that tend to keep them away from the Lord, or to draw them away once they know Him. And so those of us who are parents and grandparents need to make sure that we are living day by day the way we want to see our children and grandchildren live. As Dawson Trotman of the Navigators used to say, "The life precedes the ministry." And so on this Mother's Day every mother and every grand-

father, and every father and every grandfather, who knows the Lord, needs to be reminded of how important it is for us to walk with the Lord.

But now I want to go on to another point in the life of Timothy. And for this I want you all to turn with me to the third chapter of this same epistle.

This was the last letter which Paul wrote which was written under the full direction of the Spirit of God. Paul knew that his ministry was coming to an end, and he was casting his mantle, so to speak, on Timothy. And in this third chapter we learn a little more about Lois and Eunice, the grandmother and mother of Timothy, and the ministry that they had with him.

II. THE MINISTRY OF THESE GODLY MOTHERS (2 Tim. 3: 10-17).

Look with me especially at verses 14 and 15. (Re-read.)

As I have read these verses through the years I have thought that the Apostle Paul was probably speaking of himself and possibly Barnabas, and maybe others who ministered with them, when he said that Timothy was to continue in what he had learned and “been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.” But in the light of what we have seen in chapter 1, I am now persuaded that the Apostle Paul was speaking of Grandmother Lois and Mother Eunice. Paul used the word “learned.” Who must have taught Timothy his first lessons in the great doctrines of Scripture. It had to have been his mother and his grandmother. They were the ones who poured the truth into their hearts. And as the Apostle Paul worked with Timothy, and gave him further teaching, he apparently did not find a single truth that those godly women had taught Timothy that he would in any way have changed! These dear women were well grounded in the truth themselves, and they had seen to it that Timothy learned about God, and about Christ, and about the Holy Spirit, and about salvation and his need of a Savior, as they taught him. That expression, “knowing of whom thou hast learned them,” was a phrase that Timothy probably never forgot.

You see, mothers and grandmothers, don't depend upon others to teach your children. You can be thankful for anyone who has a true ministry to your children, but let them remember that *they heard the Word of God from you!* When you are teaching them the Word, you are giving them the truth that will carry them through their lives. They may not be called to the ministry as Timothy was, but that makes no difference. However and wherever the Lord will lead our children, they will always need the Word

of God. And one of the great tragedies of our day is that many parents are more concerned about seeing that their children have “fun” instead of being concerned about what they know about God and His Word.

But let me add this.

I have been telling many of you that I have been reading *again* the life of George Mueller of Bristol, by Arthur T. Pierson. At the beginning of Chapter XII in the book, Dr. Pierson said this:

The teacher must also be a learner, and therefore one who continues to learn is competent to continue to teach. Nothing but new lessons, daily mastered, can keep our testimony fresh and vitalizing and enable us to give advance lessons. Instead of being always engaged in a sort of review, our teaching and testimony will thus be drawn each day from a new and higher level (p. 169).

It is wonderful that Lois and Eunice had taught Timothy as he was growing up, but their teaching also continued as long as they lived. And so they had to be like we all should be, always learning, and going daily deeper and deeper into the truth of the Word of God.

Many of you have kindly mentioned how our daughter, Carolyn James, has been a blessing to you in the messages she has brought. If you will pardon me for speaking about her this morning, I want to state again the burden that the Lord has placed on her heart. *It is that women would know theology.* And theology is simply a systematic arrangement of the teaching of the Word of God. These dear ladies we are thinking about today were *women of the Word.* They loved the Lord, and they loved His Word. And they sought to live according to the Word. And I can imagine that Timothy may have prayed many times as a young boy, “Lord, I want to be a Christian like my mother and my grandmother.” We may not all see the same kind of immediate results which these two ladies saw in the life of Timothy, but we need to remember what Solomon said so long ago about training our children:

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6).

The Lord works in different ways and on different time schedules, but He always blesses the teaching of His Word, and He always hears us when we pray for our children. But let us pray that we will be faithful to the Lord and to our children in teaching them and praying for them as long as we live.

I have one more point before I close. For this I will ask you to turn to

Paul's epistle to the Philippians. Here in chapter 2 we have:

III. THE APOSTLE PAUL'S COMMENDATION OF TIMOTHY (Phil. 2:19-24).

Any Christian mother or grandmother, of any Christian father or grandfather, would be delight to have someone like the Apostle Paul commend their son or grandson the way Paul commended Timothy. I see a threefold commendation here, and I trace these three things back into the home where Timothy grew up. Others may have made their contribution to Timothy's life, including the Apostle Paul himself, but it all got started with mother Eunice and grandmother Lois. Let me point out what these commendations were.

A. His concern for others (Phil. 2:20).

By Paul's own testimony he really had no co-worker comparable to Timothy, and he singled out a characteristic which I trace back to his mother and grandmother. And I see it in the word "naturally." It means *genuinely* or *sincerely*, and *faithfully*. You see, what Timothy's mother and grandmother had done for him spiritually, was from their hearts. They did what they did because they loved the Lord and because they loved Timothy. And so when the time came that he began to work with people, that was a part of his nature. Those godly ladies had not only poured the truth into his soul, but they had given themselves to him. He became like they were.

B. His devotion to Christ (Phil. 2:21).

Paul certainly was not condemning all of his other fellow workers, but he wanted the Philippian believers to know that here was a servant of the Lord who was out to see the purposes of His Lord fulfilled in his own ministry.

Too often men come to the work of the Lord with their own agenda. They know what they want to do, but may never have stopped to consider what the Lord wanted them to do. Timothy got this instilled in his heart as his mother and his grandmother taught him and lived before him as ladies who loved the Lord above all else. You can see that a mother and a grandmother can give training to a young servant of the Lord that he may never get in any seminary he could attend. At least, you don't find this very often in our schools today.

What was the third commendation?

C. Timothy's willingness to serve in the second place (Phil. 2:22).

You know, ladies -- mothers and grandmothers -- the Lord has given you the second place. That is never an easy place to fill. But fathers and grandfathers have the first place; they are at the head of the family even though they don't always accept that responsibility. But one thing that Timothy learned from his mother and grandmother was the value of humility in his walk with the Lord, and in the service that he rendered to the Lord. They taught their son and grandson not only doctrine, but how to be like the Lord Jesus. Isn't it in this very chapter that the Apostle Paul told us to have the mind of Christ as he described Him in verses 6 and 7 and 8?

When I get to heaven these are two ladies that I want to meet. What a great job they did with Timothy, but they would be the first to say that it was only possible because the Lord was working through them. I am sure that Timothy never ceased to thank the Lord for giving him such a wonderful mother and grandmother, two godly ladies who were concerned about his soul, who taught him about the Savior, who prayed for him faithfully, and who always an inspiration to him as long as he lived. And the humility they displayed before him became one of the chief ways in which Timothy became like his Lord.

Concl: I am sure that most of us have many reasons to give thanks to the Lord for mothers and grandmothers who have been a blessing to us. I never knew either of my grandmothers, but I had a godly mother who taught me and prayed for me and encouraged me to live for the Lord, and I am sure that the Lord is still answering her prayers for me and for my family. The Lord took her to heaven when she was just 58 years old. Tuesday of this week is her birthday, and she would be 103 years old if she were still living. But I am glad she is in heaven, and I know that I will see her again some day. Let us make this a day when we give thanks to the Lord for the ladies He has used in our lives, and let us not forget those dearest of all ladies, the mother of our children. They have had a ministry in our families which we could never have had, and we need to thank them and thank the Lord for them on this day when we are remembering all mothers. The Apostle Paul paid tribute to Lois and Eunice in 2 Timothy because they had been used by God to provide him with the special servant of the Lord he had in Timothy.