

BLESSED ASSURANCE

or

ABOUT SALVATION

2 Timothy 1:12

Intro: When the Apostle Paul wrote 2 Timothy he was not only a prisoner of Rome, but he knew that he was nearing the end of his ministry. He had known and served the Lord Jesus Christ for approximately thirty years. He was writing to his young son in the faith, although at that time Timothy himself was no longer what you would call a young man. In many respects Paul's relationship to Timothy was like Elijah's relationship with Elisha. And we can consider this epistle as Paul casting his mantle upon Timothy. In spite of all that the servants of the Lord suffer because of their faith, and whatever may be their end, the work of the Lord goes on, and will go on as long as time shall last. The Lord's servants come, and they go, but the ministry in which they have been involved continues on.

Actually, with the situation like it was when Paul wrote this epistle, Timothy should have been the one writing to Paul. But that is not the way it was; Paul was writing to encourage Timothy. And Paul realized that he could not promise Timothy that the ministry of the Gospel would be any easier for Timothy than it had been for him. Paul himself had in his early days been one of those enemies of the Gospel. He hated Christ, and he hated Christians. But one of the great turning points in the ministry of the Word of God in the first century, was when Saul of Tarsus was saved. For a time the church had rest. Paul became one of the greatest preachers and teachers of the Gospel that the world has ever known, but overnight he became an enemy of those who had formerly been his friends. But he did not, and could not, turn back. He had been instantaneously convinced of the truth of the Gospel and immediately began to preach that the Lord Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. Like every other child of God, he was a trophy of the grace of God.

Paul had been a prisoner of Rome before, and had been released. But he had no assurance that he would be released this time. In fact, read 2 Tim. 4:6-8. (Read.) So it was very important that Timothy know what was ahead of him. Earlier in that same chapter (4:1-5) the Apostle Paul recommissioned Timothy to the work that Timothy had been doing for many years, probably fourteen or fifteen years.

So Timothy was not a novice, but Paul's letter to Timothy shows that even the most faithful of the Lord's servants need their times when words of encouragement are most needed, especially from older servants of the Lord. The Lord has never promised His servants an easy time, but He has promised to be with them, and to keep them, and to blessing them.

In coming to verse 12 of chapter 1 which I have chosen as my text for this service, I want to read the first fourteen verses of the chapter so that we can see how Paul led up to these now well known verses which we find in verse 12. (Read 2 Tim. 1:1-14.)

It is clear from what the Apostle Paul said in these verses that he had not chosen the ministry, but that God had chosen him for the ministry. And it is clear from verses 13 and 14 that the same was true of Timothy. If we have things right in our own hearts, those of us who have given our lives, or are giving our lives, to the work of the Gospel, did not choose the ministry for ourselves, but we have realized that we have been called to the work the Lord has given us to do. Spurgeon used to tell the young men in his college, "Don't preach, if you can do anything else." He did not mean that if you couldn't do anything else, then you can always try the ministry. But he meant that a man who has been called to preach is not going to be happy doing anything else. Timothy's circumstances and background were altogether different from Paul's. In Acts 16 we learn that Timothy's mother was a Jewess who was married to a Gentile. She was a Christian; as far as we know, his father was not! So Timothy had been raised under the teaching of the Gospel which he had learned from both his grandmother and his mother, as we read in verse 5 of our chapter. Paul had lived under strict Jewish teaching, and at the time he was saved, he was one of the rising stars of Judaism. And then the Lord set his life in a completely different direction. He had had a very fruitful life, but it had been a hard life. And yet, in spite of the difficulties he had faced, and all that he had suffered as a servant of the Lord, he had nothing but encouragement for Timothy to press on in serving the Lord.

When we come down to verse 12 we see that Paul knew very well that all he had to do to stay out of jail was to quit preaching the Gospel. That was the reason he was suffering imprisonment. But in spite of that:

I. PAUL REMAINED UNASHAMED.

This was a word that Paul used repeatedly in his writings. Cf. Rom. 1:16;

5:5; 9:33; Phil. 1:20. And see verse 8 in our chapter. Paul had no regrets about preaching the Gospel. He had never been reluctant to tell people about the Lord and the Gospel. He had no question but that if people would trust in Christ, they would be saved. And he believed that it was the only way that people would be saved. He had full confidence in the message that he had been preaching and without hesitation would encourage people to trust in Christ. It made no difference how much he might be ridiculed, or how much he had to suffer, he was positive that his message was from God.

And he said this after thirty or so years, more or less, and having seen Jews and Gentiles, men and women, all of the Empire, turn to Christ for salvation. Regardless of who might be speaking to, he knew that the Gospel was the only message by which they could come to God, have their sins forgiven, and enjoy the blessings of eternal life.

But on what basis could he say this?

II. PAUL'S PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE SAVIOR.

My pastor at home used to get provoked with people who would misquote this verse by saying, "I know *in* Whom I have believed." He would remind us (and I heard him to it many times) that Paul did not say *in whom*, but "Whom." Paul's confidence grew out of a personal relationship with a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul knew the difference between being religious as compared with coming to know a Person. He had at this point lived with, and walked with, and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew that the Lord was "the truth," that His promises could be trusted. He knew how much the Lord loved him, and he had had many experiences with Him. He had been the Lord's instrument in giving to the church much of the New Testament. It was not just that Paul was unashamed of the message he had preached, but he was unashamed of and fully confident in the Lord. Paul did not look back to that place on the road to Damascus where he met the Lord, for his assurance; *he looked to the Lord Himself. Paul was assured that his salvation was eternal because of his personal acquaintance with the Savior.* What an amazing background he had to be able to make such a statement! I hope we can say the same, and for the same reason that Paul said it.

Please turn with me to Phil. 3 where we see Paul making the same kind of a statement.

Now notice:

III. PAUL'S STRONG PERSUASION.

Paul was fully confident, absolutely convinced, totally assured, not that he would be able to keep himself saved. That is the way a lot of people take it when we speak of having eternal life. It sounds to them like we are making strong claims for ourselves, and that we will always walk with the Lord like we should. But that is because they have not read this verses clearly. Paul was not persuaded anything about himself, but from his knowledge of Christ, his personal acquaintance with Him, he was totally convinced that the Lord was able to keep him.

Cf. the Lord's words in John 10:27-30.

What a word "keep" was for Paul to use in his then present circumstances. It means *to watch*, or *to guard*. Undoubtedly Paul had a Roman guard watching him, perhaps they were chained together, to make sure that he did not escape. Paul said in effect, "What this Roman guard is doing to me is the same the Lord is doing." It was like the Lord did for His people on the night when the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt on that first Passover. The Lord is always looking out for His people. He never lets us out of his sight. He never lets us get out of His hand. He saves us, and He keeps us.

But what did Paul say that the Lord was keeping? "That which I have committed unto Him." This is a word which describes what we do when we make a deposit at the bank. We commit our funds to the bank to keep for us. Most of the time that is a safe thing to do. But during the Great Depression of the early thirties the banks failed, and many people lost every penny they had deposited in their bank.

Paul said here I have made a deposit with the Lord. What was it? Some say it was his soul, and that is a good answer. But I like to say that what Paul deposited with the Lord, by faith, was Paul himself. Cf. Jude 24 and 25, "Now unto Him that is able ..." Also look with me at Peter's great statement about how the Lord keeps us. You will find it in 1 Peter 1:3-5.

"Against that day." That is how long Paul felt that he was safe. What day was he talking about? It is the day when we see the Lord, the day that we all should be looking for because it can come at any time. Ultimately it

means when the Lord comes, and we are all gathered together to meet Him in the air.

What the Lord gave His report to His Father in John 17, He said what He can still say today: “Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost” (John 17:12m).

Concl: Now I have chosen this verse because it belongs to those verses in which the writers of Scripture have said, “We know.” But this verse is slightly different because Paul did not say, “We know,” but he said, “I know.” Was he speaking as an apostle so that only an apostle has the right to say this, or was he speaking like the rest of us, as a child of God? Well, he was not just giving his own testimony, but he was giving it to Timothy to encourage him in the work that God had called him to do, and which he would soon be going on alone, at least with the Apostle Paul.

I have no doubt that Paul said this so that Timothy would know that he could say this, and it has been preserved in our Bibles so that we will realize that we can say it too. But remember, such confidence does not come by remembering where you were when you were saved, nor how old you were. But it comes by remembering *Who it was who saved you, and the way you have come to know Him more intimately through your daily fellowship with Him. That is where our assurance comes from, and it is truly a “blessed assurance.”*