# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“Timothy”**

**2 Timothy 1:5-8, 13-14**

 **April 18, 2021**

How do you feel about sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others? Two weeks ago we celebrated Easter, the resurrection of the Son of God who is, for those of us who believe in him, our living Lord and Savior. And, having been raised from the dead, our living Lord and Savior commissioned us, his followers, to tell others about him. How well are we doing what he asked?

The Apostle Paul wrote several letters to a young man named Timothy who was struggling with telling others about the Lord. Several years earlier, Paul had been traveling on a missionary journey when he came to the town of Lystra where Timothy lived. He and Timothy struck up a friendship, and soon Timothy was going with Paul and learning from him as together they shared the gospel. Now, however, Paul is in prison because of his bold proclamation of the gospel, and it is from prison that he writes the letter we know as Second Timothy. I’m reading from 2 Timothy 1:5-8, 13-14

I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don’t be ashamed of me, either, even though I’m in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News. Hold on to the pattern of wholesome teaching you learned from me—a pattern shaped by the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus. Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you.

Like Timothy, you and I have been given a precious truth, the truth about Jesus Christ. And, perhaps, like Timothy, we find ourselves intimidated by the world in which we live which tries to shame us into being quiet about our faith. To talk about Jesus as our Savior, to maintain that a man who lived two thousand years ago is still alive today and is the One with whom we have a personal relationship, is to expose ourselves to ridicule. To tell people that they need Jesus to forgive their sin is insulting to their pride. The world loves to imagine itself as able to solve its problems. They have a strong sense of self-sufficiency and independence, and refuse to admit that they are wrong and need someone else to make them right. They don’t want to hear from us that, like lost sheep, they are helpless to find their way home on their own. And so, rather than sharing the good news of a God who loves them and a Savior who invites their trust, we give in to our fear and keep silent about our faith. We allow them to shame us into silence.

So, what does Paul have to say to Timothy to help him overcome his tendency to shame? Realize that the gospel is the most powerful truth in the world. It is the gospel that has the power to save people from their sin and bring them into an eternal life with God in heaven. No other word, no other person, no other religion or philosophy or value system has the ability to do that. When we allow the world to shame us into silence, we are allowing it to remove from its hearing the most powerful, the most important reality to which it can ever be exposed. Instead, like Paul in his letter to the Romans, we need to say: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to all who believe.”

Instead of shameful silence, we share the power of the gospel with love, for we care about others and desire for them to be saved. We share the gospel with winsomeness, not using God’s truth as a way of bashing others and making them feel bad about themselves, but exploring with them the love and blessing of God which invites them into a new kind of life, what will become their very best life. And, we share the gospel with self-discipline, realizing that others are observing how we live our lives and whether what we say matches what we do.

 Remember your genuine faith, Timothy. Remember your genuine faith, all of you who are disciples of Jesus. Fan your faith into flames when your shame has allowed it to grow cold, when your timidity has kept you from sharing its light and warmth with others. Realize your faith is grounded in the power of God to save people from sin, practice your faith in the love of God for you and for every person you meet, and exercise the kind of self-discipline in your life that will force others to admit that whether or not they accept your faith, they can’t fault you for not living that faith. Do all this through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in you, and you will not be ashamed to tell others about Jesus.