*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

April 12 - 17

Timothy

**Monday, April 12 1 Timothy 1:12-20**

*“Fight the good fight”*

 Using a military metaphor, the Apostle Paul commands his young lieutenant, Timothy, to brace himself for a fight. The simple fact is that those who choose to take Christ seriously in the common give-and-take of daily living will quickly discover that there is an enemy, and there is a battle. In the small group I am a part of we read the C.S. Lewis classic *Screwtape Letters* which illustrates through creative dialogue between two devils the nature of the battle and the strategy of our enemy. While preoccupation with the works of Satan can lead to despair, to ignore his intentional opposition is to invite the disaster of a shipwrecked faith.

 And how is the battle waged? Not with physical might, but with “faith and a good conscience.” Ours is a spiritual battle and the weapons are spiritual. We go forth with faith in God’s grace, faith in God’s goodness, and faith in God’s saving love for the world. Living by that faith sets us free from the guilt of a troubled conscience, for by his grace we are forgiven of the sin that so easily entangles.

*Daily I live by faith in you, Lord, so I may stand strong against Satan’s attacks. Amen.*

**Tuesday, April 13 1 Timothy 4:9-16**

*“Be an example to the believers”*

 Many believe that Timothy was a timid and shy person. If so, confronting the problems he was facing as the pastor of the church in Ephesus would be difficult for him, and there was all the more reason for Paul’s continuing admonition to him to be strong, to take charge, and to lead. Here, Paul speaks as warmly and personally as possible with his young friend and colleague. Timothy is to assert the authority delegated to him, not only by Paul, but also by Christ himself. But that authority can only be exercised through his own integrity and example.

 Timothy’s authority is to be grounded in at least five areas. “Speech” and “conduct” have to do with the outward life, for what we do speaks every bit as loudly as what we say. “Faith” and “purity” focus on the inner life of attitudes and beliefs which are set upon seeking and doing the will of God. “Love” is the bond that ties the outer and inner life together. Outward expressions of love that are not rooted in inner love quickly wither and die as insincerities. Inner love that is not expressed by open giving and caring turns to self-adulation and decays.

*May I be an example to others, Lord, of the love you have for me. Amen.*

**Wednesday, April 14 1 Timothy 6:11-21**

*“Flee . . . pursue”*

 The verbs in verse 11 are dramatic: “flee” and “pursue.” Timothy is to flee from false teachings and the love of money, and he is to pursue “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.” Flight and pursuit is a vivid way of viewing the life of Christian discipleship. There are things that must be constantly avoided – and not just passively. To flee implies that something is after us. Paul viewed evil as an active power at work in the world, and sometimes we need to run away from its destructive influence.

 Pursuit is the other side of Christian discipleship. Here is the active and intentional quest for specific virtues. Righteousness has to do with doing what is right – both toward God and others. Godliness is patterning our lives after the nature of God as we see it revealed in Jesus himself. Faith is actively trusting that God will do what he has promised. Love is both our motivation and the essence of our behavior. Patience means to be slow to become angry with others. Gentleness is seen in our calm consideration for others.

*Give me wisdom, Lord, to know when to flee and what to pursue. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

April 12 - 17

 Timothy

**Thursday, April 15 2 Timothy 1:1-14**

*“Do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord”*

 Telling him not to be ashamed seems to imply that Paul had seen some tendency towards this in Timothy. Timidity and ministry do not blend, since God gives us the spirit “of power and of love and of self-discipline.” The power to overcome timidity grows out of an understanding and appreciation of the Gospel itself. First, God “saved us.” Sin can doom us to eternal separation from God, but faith in the Gospel message brings forgiveness and saves us from that separation.

 Second, God “called us.” He invited us into a relationship with him through the testimony of his Son, and he gave us the faith necessary to understand and accept the invitation. Third, God “graced us,” which means that he relates to us in ways that we do not deserve, simply because he loves us. Fourth, God “destroyed the power of death.” The power of death is its ability to keep us forever apart from God, but its destruction means that while we die physically, our physical death will not separate us spiritually from God. This Gospel is the power of God for salvation to all who believe. There is nothing here to be ashamed of.

*I will not be ashamed of you, Lord, or of sharing who you are with others. Amen.*

**Friday, April 16 2 Timothy 2:1-7**

*“Reflect on what I am saying”*

 These verses contain at least two important principles. (1) The sound teaching Timothy has learned from Paul is to be passed on to those capable of transmitting it to others. This is the lifeline of Christianity. It has been said that Christianity is only one generation away from extinction. While that is improbable, it is theoretically true in that unless the life, faith, and teachings of true Christianity are actively committed to the next generation, Christianity could become a footnote in history.

 (2) Serving Christ is hard work, requiring total commitment. That is the message of Paul’s military, athletic, and agricultural images. However great the power of the Holy Spirit, unless Christians are wholly dedicated to the Lord and personally committed to his work, the channels through which the Holy Spirit wants to work will be clogged and atrophied. Both the fact that Paul urges Timothy in verse 7 to “reflect on what I am saying” *and* that he needs God-given insight into it show that these teachings require more than superficial assent.

*I am committed to you, Lord, and to passing your teachings on to others. Amen.*

**Saturday, April 17 2 Timothy 4:1-5**

*“I give you this charge”*

 Life and ministry involve the daily working out of priorities. For each of us, there is more to do in a given day than can be done. There is more we would like to do with life than can be done in several lifetimes. Therefore, the establishing of clear priorities is a matter of extreme importance. In Paul’s closing appeal to Timothy, five priorities related to Scripture are given the highest place. (1) “Preach the word.” By this Paul means the Word of God written, the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and to us the New Testament as well.

 (2) “Be ready in season and out of season.” Always be ready to share the Word of God, whether there is an obvious opportunity to do so or not. (3) “Correct.” The Word must be shared in such a way that its truth is able to correct any misunderstanding that people may have about God. (4) “Rebuke.” The Bible is also to be used to show us the error of our ways, so that we may confess our sin and return to God’s right path. (5) “Encourage.” The use of God’s Word is at its best when it lifts us up and strengthens us to live according to God’s good will for us.

*May the richness of your Word, Lord, permeate my life. Amen.*