*DEVOTIONS*

August 28 – September 2

*The Inspired Word of God*

**Monday, August 28 2 Timothy 1:1-7**

*“I remember . . .”*

 Paul gives a pattern of words about remembrance. First, Paul remembers Timothy in his prayers. He does so constantly, and he does so night and day. In other words, during his frequent times of prayer he never fails to pray for the young pastor. Second, Paul remembers Timothy’s tears when they last parted. Clearly Timothy is not the only one who is sad because of their separation, for Paul longs to see Timothy so that he himself may be filled with joy.

 Third, Paul recalls Timothy’s sincere faith, a faith that was passed on to him by his grandmother and his mother. A home where there is earnest faith is a wonderful place of preparation for personal faith. While each generation must come to God freshly, for we are not saved by the faith of our parents, the foundation of Christian parents who pray for their children clearly has had an impact on those who believe. The fourth remembrance is actually a reminder Paul gives Timothy to fan God’s gift into flame. Every believer has received spiritual gifts from God, and we sometimes need to be reminded to put them to use in his service.

*Looking back, Lord, I am grateful for the ways you have blessed me. Amen.*

**Tuesday, August 29 2 Timothy 1:8-18**

*“Do not be ashamed”*

 Verses 8-12 form one long sentence in Greek. It is introduced by the word “so,” indicating that Timothy’s ability to resist being ashamed lies in the gifts of power, love, and self-discipline (verse 7). In this context being ashamed stands in contrast to joining with Paul in suffering for the gospel. Rather than renouncing Christ for the sake of one’s own comfort or social acceptance, we are called to share the good news of who Christ is and what he has done for each one of us, for the power of God’s good news is the salvation of all who believe.

 In verses 13-18, Paul blends sound teaching with godly living. Paul knew that he had an important message to proclaim, a message about Christ given to him by God which neither he nor Timothy (nor you or I) are at liberty to change. Equally important, he was a representative of the Christ of whom he spoke, and the way he lived the love of God before others was as much a witness to Christ as the words he spoke. Therefore, both message and lifestyle, empowered by the Holy Spirit, bring glory to God.

*May my life and my words, Lord, bring glory to you. Amen.*

**Wednesday, August 30 2 Timothy 2:1-26**

*“Correctly explain the word of truth”*

 The sound teaching Timothy has learned from Paul is to be passed on to those capable of transmitting it to other generations. This is the lifeline of Christianity. Unless the life, faith, and teaching of vital Christianity are actively committed to the next generation, Christianity could become a footnote of history. Additionally, serving Christ is hard work, requiring total commitment. That is the message of the military, athletic, and agricultural images.

 The chapter takes a turn at verse 14 in which Paul joins two different, yet related, themes. He combines a reference to what has preceded (“keep reminding them of these things”) with the command, “Warn them before God against quarreling about words.” Paul is more concerned in this letter with how to handle doctrinal controversy than in explaining the intricacies of the doctrinal disagreements themselves. Not that the content of heresy is unimportant. It is rather that Timothy needs to know how to keep these doctrinal controversies and their champions from tearing apart the church.

*Teach us your truth, Lord, and be our guide in times of disagreement. Amen.*

*DEVOTIONS*

August 28 – September 2

*The Inspired Word of God*

**Thursday, August 31 2 Timothy 3:1-9**

*“Terrible times”*

 The “last days” terminology of the Bible is chronologically flexible. That is, the phrase does not point to any one, specific time or period of time in human history. Rather, it is used biblically to indicate that the days described as “last days” are characterized by behaviors and beliefs that oppose God. Thus, Paul is here using “last days” as a way of emphasizing to Timothy that the days in which Timothy is ministering are evil.

 The reasons why the last days are so terrible are cited in verses 2-9. The list identifies perpetrators rather than the evil deeds themselves. It is, if effect, a lists of vicious characters. The amazing thing is that these people consumed by their own vices, have “a form of godliness.” That is, they act religious. This does not necessarily mean that they are in the church, but the fact that Paul counsels Timothy to “have nothing to do with them” may indicated that at least some of them are. Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11 that while believers are not to disassociate themselves from immoral people in the world, they are to do so from those in the church.

*Deliver us from evil, Lord, as found in the world and in the church. Amen.*

**Friday, September 1 2 Timothy 3:10-17**

*“All Scripture is inspired by God”*

 In verses 10-11 Paul encourages Timothy and counters the negative characters described in verses 2-9 by offering as evidence the example of his own life. Paul then moves to Timothy’s life and what influences have shaped him. In doing so, Paul refers to what the Scriptures are and what role they play in a person’s life.

 Verses 16-17 are the strongest statement in the Bible about itself. We understand that the word “Scripture” includes the New Testament from verses such as 2 Peter 3:16 which identifies the writings of Paul as “Scripture.” The word often translated “inspired” is literally “God-breathed” in the original Greek, giving Scripture a divine origin. Further, its usefulness is directly related to its origin. Paul here describes a four-fold purpose: (1) to teach us what is true; (2) thereby making us realize what is wrong; (3) to offer corrective measures for the wrong; (4) thus training us in right living before God. In this way, God uses Scripture to prepare and equip his people to do the good work to which he calls us.

*Scripture is uniquely inspired by you, Lord. May my life reflect its truth. Amen.*

**Saturday, September 2 2 Timothy 4:1-22**

*“Preach the Word of God”*

 Paul’s charge to Timothy contains five commands. The first (“preach the Word”) echoes the repeated instruction to Timothy in both this and his previous letter to Timothy. Next, “be prepared” contains the idea of being ready at any time to share the Gospel. The third, fourth, and fifth imperatives (“correct, rebuke and encourage”) reflect the necessity of a strong ministry in view of false teaching in the church. The modifying phrase “with great patience and careful instruction” denotes both attitude and content. The two belong together because the activity of teaching and the content of teaching are both important for the effectiveness of the message being conveyed.

 The Word must be preached effectively because sound doctrine is going to be rejected. People will gather teachers around them who suit their desires. They will listen eagerly because their ears are itching not for truth, but for whatever words will soothe them with agreeable pleasantries. They will prefer myths to God’s reality.

*May your Word be preached well, Lord, and may we hear it well. Amen.*