



2 TIMOTHY 1:6-18

Part 2 of 2 Timothy

Pastor Mark Driscoll | 2 Timothy 1:6-18 | April 18, 2004

Good morning. Welcome to Mars Hill. Did you have a bad week? Any bad weeks? If you didn't have a bad week, I got nothing for you. Should go have some breakfast. If you had a bad week, I'm your man. What a bad week. Praise the Lord. What a terrible week, my terrible week.

I'm doing a little therapy. I'm not feeling so good this morning. If I freak out, don't take it personal unless it's your fault. About six weeks, I started – it was March. March was awful. March I traveled too much. I was gone. I was gone 10 days or so in March. I got four little kids. I got grad school. I got this church. I got book writing. I got stuff to do. I'm traveling, traveling, traveling, trying to get stuff done. All kinds of nonsense, all kinds of chaos.

I start getting tired, freaked out, just frustrated where in the middle of it all, we go to three services, okay, which is good – pretty much. And we go to three services in the middle of it all, and we move our offices and we finish construction. So the last couple months all my books are in boxes. I don't have any books. I need books. You know, otherwise I'm like a guy with a butter knife trying to build a skyscraper. You can do it. It just takes awhile, and it's frustrating. I got no books. All my books are in boxes.

My office gets redone here while I'm out of state. I'm not even in the state when we move. My furniture – I don't have furniture. We've ordered furniture. It's coming. It's coming. It's coming. It's not coming. I have no furniture, so I got nowhere to sit. I'm sitting there in the lotus position on the floor for a month trying to get stuff done. I'm on the road away from time, tired, frustrated, not liking this at all. And I have my laptop, doing work on the laptop, which you think about it, what an evil thing that is. Now you can work anywhere, anytime like you want to, you know, like you wanna do that. Work, work, work, work, gone for a couple weeks, work, work, work, work, work, work.

I'm at church, another church, not our church, not a church that has normal drinking problems, another kind of church, and I drop something. I go to put my laptop down, and they have the watering fountain, and then they have a holding place in the back. So I set my laptop there, go to pick up the stuff. Then a sensor on the water fountain or a demon in the water fountain, and the water fountain shoots the water over the bowl – over the bowl – so some union guy put this fountain together, doesn't work right. And it just happens to go right in the crease of my laptop and fill it up with water.

So I'm looking at my laptop, been gone two weeks, got nothing backed up, nothing at all, and I'm sitting on my office on the floor in the lotus position with an Etch-a-Sketch trying to rule the world and get my life back together 'cause I don't have a laptop. I don't have an office. I don't have any books.

So a friend of mine says, "I'll help you build shelves at home. We'll put your books at home, and then you can have your books near you," 'cause that's great. That's what I want. I want the books near me so I can study and I can read. So we're every night, rrrr, rrrr, just cutting wood, building shelves. Wow, now I know why I'm not a carpenter like my dad.

And I'm just – I get frustrated 'cause it's been six weeks, no day off, 80, 100 hours a week. People keep having emergencies. Never Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 5:00 never. They always have emergency at another time, not during hours. If you're gonna have emergency Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 5:00. Schedule it, get it planned in advance. If you're gonna have a nervous breakdown, if you're gonna punch your husband in the mouth, Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 5:00. It's a new rule. We have it today. It's gonna be enforced strictly, okay?

So my days off keeping going, going, going, going, just freaking me out. I'm all freaked out, just stressed. Some people, they internalize their stress. They get depressed. I have no idea what that is. I have no idea what that is. I externalize. I don't hold onto anything, right? I feel bad. RRRR-ah, here you go.

So I'm freaked out, kind of stressed, got the shakes, a little tweaked, and you know, I think, "Okay, what I'm gonna do, on Monday, I'm gonna get up. I'm gonna go to the gym, so last Monday I go to the gym. And I'm sitting at the gym, I'm doing my 200 crunches at the gym. I fall asleep doing sit-ups. You know how tired you gotta be to fall asleep [snoring] here, here? I'm here. I dozed off doing sit-ups. I don't know how long I was there [snoring] in this position. I wake up like I think I need a day off. I think I'm freaked out.

So I get up, go to the office, sit in the lotus position on the laptop, deal with all my – I hate Monday anyways. Monday's a long, long day. I go home. I think fine, great. I'll help this guy, this good friend of mine, build the bookshelves so I can get the books home. Furniture's on the way. The guys are finally figuring out my laptop. They say it's jacked. I know. So they're gonna send me another one.

So I go home, and my lovely wife, my sweet wife – I got permission to share most of what I'm gonna share today. My sweet, lovely, dear wife, my high school sweetheart, she was the last one on the big pile, and it was just a bad day. I come home, and there were sawdust and kids and nonsense and mayhem. My wife looks at me and says, "But we have to go to a party." Her and my daughter, not me. I'm not going to any party. I'm taking a ball-

been hammer to my frontal lobe. They're going to a party.

They have one of those gift bags. Don't you love those? I said, "You can't go to the party. Look, we've got – I got work to do. I got the kids in the house. I got sawdust outside of the house. I got stuff going on. I'm freaking out. "But we have a gift bag." Well, I – okay, fine. So she takes my daughter and leaves, leaves me with the two boys. I'm like okay, I'll watch the boys, cut the wood, hmm.

So then she leaves. As soon as she leaves, my two-year-old son comes down the stairs, snot flowing like the River Jordan out of this kid. He sprung a leak in most holes in his body. Just stuff is flying out of this kid. "Daddy, I no feel good." Oh, no, no! "I no feel good. Daddy, hold me." Oh, I can't hold you. I gotta go work on the table saw. I can't hold you, buddy. "Oh, Daddy. I want Mommy." So I call my wife on the cell phone, and she never answers when I call her!

Does your wife have that cell phone? I got her a phone so we could talk. We can't talk. She doesn't answer the phone. "I didn't hear." Buy an amp to hook up to the phone. Answer the phone. Hello? It's your husband. Your son is leaking, and you need to come home. No.

Six weeks, no days off. Freaked out, stressed out. My son then – I go to him. I say, "Buddy, I'll hold you. I love you. Hopefully, Mommy'll get the message." Oh, Daddy, uuuuggghhhh! Pukes his guts up. Man, just [squeal] all over me. I'm like you gotta be kidding. You gotta be kidding.

Oh, so I clean my son. We go out with sawing wood, sawing wood. Keep running in the house. "Hold me, Daddy. Hold me, hold me." My other son is playing hockey. He's playing hockey out on the street with his friends in sandals. Knocks all his toenails off. He's just, "My Dad, my feet are..." No kidding, you been whacking them with sticks for an hour. Get shoes on.

Playing Mr. Mom. My wife comes home late. My wife comes home late. "How come the boys aren't in bed?" 'Cause we're busy throwing up on each other and removing parts of our body. We've been all tied up!

Tuck the kids in, go to bed, she's like, "Are you okay?" No, I got a twitch. I'm not fine. I'm not doing good. "You wanna talk about it?" No, no, I don't wanna talk about it. I don't wanna talk about it. I don't wanna talk about it.

So the next morning because they were out late, my daughter gets up, six years old. Love her, adore her, we're close, but she's tired, and she gets emotional. I don't understand that. She gets emotional. She's just crying. She's just bawling. "Daddy, I'm tired. I don't wanna go to school. [Whining and crying]" I'm like I need a Pentecostal to translate. I don't know what's wrong with this six-year-old. She's speaking in another language. I have no idea where we're going with this.

I looked at her. I said, "What do you need 'cause I'm a heterosexual guy looking for a problem to fix so we can move on," and she's just feeling things. I don't understand that. She says, "I don't know. I don't feel good. [Whining and crying]" I looked at her, I said, "Honey, why'd you do you go to the meeting?" She says, "What meeting?" I said, "The conspiracy where all the women in the world got together to ruin my life? Why did you go to that meeting?" She looks at me. She's six. She goes, "Daddy, what's a conspiracy?" That's it, that's it, that's it. I'm gone.

So I go to the office, sit on the floor in the lotus position with an Etch-a-Sketch cussing at the sky. Think that's okay 'cause on Friday – no, what happened then during the week. I didn't talk to my wife for a couple days. Okay, your pastor is a sinful jerk.

My wife is really, really nice. She's sweet. She's cute. She has no idea I'm like this. This is what she's stuck with, so I yell at my wife. One night we're laying in bed. She's like, "You wanna talk? We haven't talked in a couple days." Oh, yeah, I'll talk. Off I go, woo, just unload on my wife for my whole existence. I mean, I think I yelled at her 'cause I'm short. I mean, everything, she got everything, you know? Like everything I'm frustrated about I go off on my wife, and she looks at me and she says, "Well, I really love you, and I'm sorry, and you should've said something. Want me to pray for you?"

No! See, my wife doesn't know how to fight? My wife's broken. There's something wrong. She's nice. Just it – I don't – it's a tactic, I think. 'Cause I'm used to like launch and then volley and then war, and then I launch and she forgets, so I can't fight with her even though I'm a total jerk, go off, so now I just feel worse.

It's like that's okay. Friday night someone gave me tickets to the Mariners game. We go to the Mariners game. I go to the Mariners game. The Mariners are terrible. They're terrible. All the guys are like 98 years old. They all got diapers underneath their uniforms. I'm like, golly, can we pick anybody up in the draft who's not older than me? I mean, can we do that, you know, and they're just getting blown – we have great seats, eating nachos, thinking, you know, this should go better.

And I'm sitting next to this kid who's got – he's 18. He's got his hands all over his girlfriend. On my big night out, my first day off in six weeks, and I'm sitting – I looked at him. I finally said, "Is that your girlfriend?" He says why? I said, "You got your hands all over her. I feel like I'm sitting in on a dirty movie with you kids. I feel kind of dirty being here. Is that your girlfriend? Do you intend to marry?" He's like, "No, she's a friend." I look at her. I said, "What kind of friend are you?" I said, "What's wrong with you kids. You need to marry her. She's puts up with this in public. You gotta get her a ring and legitimize this." So I just start going off on this kid.

I just start going off on this poor 18-year-old kid who works at Abercrombie & Fitch, and he looks at me. He says, "What's wrong with you?" I said, "You don't wanna know." He says, "Well, are you stressed?" "Yeah, I'm stressed. I had a terrible life. I'm sitting next to a half-naked girl and a guy who's got his hands all over her. I'm trying to eat nachos, and nobody gets past first base. This is not my day off."

And the kid looks at me. He says, "What do you do for a living?" I said, "I'm a pastor." He says, "Well, I should've known." I said, "What are you?"

He said, "A Mormon." I said, "I should've known." He's a Mormon kid, so we're talking, talking, chatting with the Mormon kid. That's it. I got home. I got to bed. I'm freaked out. I'm done. Done! I'm done. I am done. I'm totally done

And I just – so yesterday I'm sitting there helping this friend of mine with the shelves, and he says, "What are you preaching on tomorrow?" I said, "You know, I have no idea. Something from 2 Timothy about Jesus. Other than that, I haven't filled in the details. I haven't even read it. I haven't even touched it this week. I've been so busy yelling at my wife and being angry at God and being a total imbecile and a jerk and getting thrown up on and cussing out the Mormon kid, I just been totally busy, totally busy."

So – and my Internet's down too. Have you had this? It's been down since Monday. They keep – here's another piece of equipment. Here's another one. Here's another one. Here's another one. Ugh, so I got all this. I can't get on the 'net. I can't do anything. I'm sitting there last night. I can't look online for resources. I don't have books, nothing. So I'm just sitting there thinking, "Okay, I'll just – I'll ready my Bible." I told Grace, I said, "Sweetheart, please, just let me have 10 minutes with the Lord Jesus and the Bible." And the text that we're going into today is an older pastor writing to a younger pastor who's freaked out and stressed and wants to give up. Thinking, "No! Not this text! Not this week! You know, no!"

So this my therapy today, right? I'm a little off. It could go just about anywhere, but we're gonna go through 2 Timothy, and it's Timothy who's just weary, burdened, stressed out, freaked out, just ready to give up. And Paul is in prison writing to him, saying, "Get your cup on. Get back in the game. Stop your whining. Do your job."

Duh! So this'll be my therapy. You're in on it, okay. We're in this together. I'm chief of sinners, chief of hypocrites. If you're sitting there today saying, "Why is this guy telling me to do this? He's a total hypocrite." Yes, yes.

Paul starts writing to Timothy. Here's what he says to this young guy who has a life that looks like my six weeks. "For this..." and here's the pattern. Here's the pattern. The pattern is he says, "Here's God. Here's what he's done. Here's how this should fix your life." Okay, it's true, and I've not obeyed this all week, so I'm here with you to hear what Paul has to say to us all. Here's what he says, "For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

First thing he tells Timothy, "You're gifted." Think Paul would tell each of us who are Christians, "You're gifted. You have a skill, a talent, an ability, a capacity that God has endowed to you supernaturally to serve him faithfully, to have a meaningful life of ministry service to God. You're here for a reason. There's things for you to do. You are put together in a way that what God aspires to have done will be done through you through the gift he has imparted you. You and I are here for a reason."

I'm reading that going, "Oh, no." Now, here's Timothy's problem. He's sick of it. He's totally sick of it. He doesn't wanna be an atheist. He doesn't wanna change religions. He's not depressed. He doesn't wanna kill himself. He's just fed up.

I'm assuming that some of you here today frustrated, burned out, tired, fed up, weary, whatever. You're at that place. You're at that place. And what he tells Timothy is this. You know, your flame is growing dim. You need to fan that. You need to rekindle your passion for God and live and ministry. You need to go back to that place of being hot.

And I'm reading that just sitting in my room last night thinking uuuggghh. I was hoping that we'd have a verse where you get to smite your enemies, and I get this one, which is God saying your life matters. You're here for a mission. Just because you're weary or frustrated doesn't mean that we failed or we're done or there's nothing for you to do. You need to reignite your passion. You gotta get going again.

Some of you are there. You're not atheists. You don't hate God. You don't wanna join another religion. You don't wanna kill yourself. You're just sick of it, just tired, just weary, just frustrated.

Timothy's been serving Jesus faithfully for 15 years. He's in the middle of a total hornet's nest. It's a mess, and he's just tired, and he's sick of it. Some of you are there. Just sick of it. And it's not that you haven't served God or you haven't walked with God. You've been doing that, and it still is a very, very, very hard, hard road that God's got you walking.

First thing is, though, God's given you a gift. You don't have to put this life together through your own talent, skill and ability. God has for your life given you the supernatural capacity to live that life. He has given you the skills that you need providing you work them. You have to cultivate those abilities. You have to cultivate those skills. You have to cultivate that passion. You and I both can't just take what God has given. We have to maximize the potential that God has given us for fruitful living.

He goes on. He continues with Timothy. He says here's what God didn't give us, the spirit of timidity. See, some of us, we're just so cowardly. Well, if I love that person, what if it doesn't work out. If I take that job, what if I don't get – well, if I obligate myself to that thing, what if, what if, what if. And it's just this continual, habitual series of timid what ifs, this fearfulness. Our life is not to be governed by fear, fear of failure or fear of success. Our life is to be governed solely by fear of God.

God is the only one we are to fear. Everyone, everything else we're not to be timid in regards to. God didn't give us a spirit of timidity. God didn't call us to live a life where we are always on the defensive in responding to that which comes to us. God has given us a life in which he intends for us to have courage, to have passion, to have conviction, to have clarity, to have purpose, to have mission, to have vision. Whatever words you wanna backlog in that, it's not timidity.

Some of you are so timid, afraid of conflict, afraid of failure, afraid of success, afraid of losing, afraid of winning, afraid of loneliness, just fearful. I

mean, and Paul says God didn't give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power. Power.

You're gonna need to take this on faith. I looked at it this week. I told my wife, I said, "Honey, God has created a church that is enormous, but the problem is everybody in that church wants something from me." See, you guys all look at me. You're all thinking "I'd like something from him." You don't look at each other. Since you're not looking at each other, you don't think of, you know, these sort of relationship. You think of just this relationship. That's what I told Grace. I said I don't think I have the power to meet all the needs of all the people and all the places in all the ways that are legitimately necessary. I don't have that kind of power.

I told her, I said, I feel like I've been running 100 miles an hour, and I can't do that for 60 years. I can't keep that pace. I don't have the strength. I just don't.

And then here I read that God does give me power. What that means that in and of myself, in and of yourself, you do not have the capacity to love your spouse for a lifetime. You do not have the capacity to raise your children for a lifetime. You do not have the capacity to serve God for a lifetime. Even if you're a highly motivated person who white-knuckles it well, you need more than just desire. You need power. And God gives power, and he also gives love and self-discipline.

See, when we hear power, many of us are afraid of power because we've seen it used in a way that was unloving. The parent who abuses a child, the father who walks out on the family, the husband who is mean-spirited with his wife as I was this week, the pastor who is unfaithful to the Lord and his church, whatever it might be.

But power needs to be tethered to love, needs to be tethered to love. You and I do not have the innate capacity to run this life and to do so with a loving attitude toward others. We don't have it. But the Lord will give us a spirit of power so that we can live and a spirit of love so that we can be loving as we live, not just enduring people but endearing people. And that's God's intention for us.

When you're lacking in power and you're motivated by fear and you're lacking in love, the issue truly is that you are working out of your own energies and strength, that you're not tapping into the spirit that God has given you. And he says that what happens then is self-discipline and this, quite frankly, this is the most convicting part of the whole text for me. I am a guy who will be very disciplined with his life and then continually add things to it without the discipline of subtracting anything out of it. Some of you are that way.

So life's in order, and then I throw this on and I throw this on and I throw this on and I throw this on and I throw this on, and next thing I know, it's been six weeks, and I haven't even taken a day off. Or it's Saturday night at 10:00, and I haven't even prayed through the sermon, haven't even picked up the text. Or it's Wednesday night and rather than praying I'm not operating in power. I'm operating in anger instead of love, and rather than operating out of self-discipline, I lose self-discipline and I start speaking things to my lovely wife that should never be spoken because there's no control. There's no discipline.

And I'll tell you what, the major problems in your life and my life, quite frankly, are our own doing. We lack self-discipline. The person who's obese didn't go to bed skinny and wake up big. The person who's flat broke didn't go to bed rich and wake up broke. The person who is far from God didn't go to bed close to God and wake up far from God. The marriage that ends in divorce, it's not that they went to bed happily ever after and woke up the next morning and filled out the paperwork to sever the deal.

You and I habitually pick a life course that lacks discipline, that lacks love, the lacks power, that's governed by timidity and be fear rather than faith. And subsequently, eventually the wheels come off and everything falls apart, and then we freak out. We throw our hands in the air. We cry, "Emergency, crisis, help, rally the troops! It's an emergency." And the issue is, no, it was an emergency every single day. It was a crisis every single day that we lacked discipline, love and the power of God. But we don't call it that until it is at the end of its tether and everything is fraying and coming to its end.

You know, and for me, I was thinking about it this week. My life is my life. I have a propensity to blame everyone and everything for my stress, for my work, for my stuff. I have a propensity to get angry at this church, angry at my wife, feeling like everyone's against me. At the end of the day, it's just a lack of self-discipline. I don't take the time off I'm supposed to take. I allow other things to come onto my plate and schedule that I just simply can't.

And it's not that I don't love people, I don't love doing things. It's just that as a human being there is only a certain number of hours in a day and a certain number of weeks in a month and a certain number of months in a year and a certain number of years in a life, and I can't be God. I'm not all present. I'm not all powerful.

Some of you, though, your time, your energy, your money, it's just it's not disciplined. It's not harnessed. It's not focused. It's not purposeful. It's not intentional. You don't think through how you spend your money. You just spend it. You don't think about how you're eating or why you're eating your food. You just eat it. You don't think about how you spend your time. You just waste it.

Those are timid people that get pushed around by the world crises and circumstance and happenstance, and all of the variables that surround them sort of just push them around because these are timid little people that take their shots and never direct their course. Paul says you know what? God didn't give us that life to where we're scared little people worried about the next day. God's given us power, love, discipline so that we can live a life that reflects his involvement.

Goes on to tell Timothy, "As a result of what God has done, do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord or ashamed of me as prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel by the power of God." Here's what happens. If you are living a life that is not marked by the power of God, the love of God and the discipline that God brings, you will not share your faith. You'll be ashamed to.

The reason why I'm convinced Seattle is the least church city in the United States of America is because the Christians who are here are pathetic. You are not going to tell another person Jesus loves you. Jesus forgives you. Jesus saves you. Jesus is God. Jesus makes a difference. Jesus is worth following if your life is a wreck, if your marriage is a wreck.

The whole reason that I tell you this week that I'm a hypocrite is because I think we need to cultivate an honesty when we're ashamed. Paul puts his finger on Timothy's problem. You're a coward and you're ashamed.

We each need to be honest. My problem is I'm not as ashamed as I just arrogant, quite frankly. That's my issue. If Paul was gonna write me a letter, he'd put his finger on that. Mark, you feel like the whole world exists so that you can accomplish things, but you forget that people are my mission, and you completely miss what I'm about. You're trying to get your life in order instead of focusing on people.

See, some of you, it's like me. It's pride. Some of you, it's lack of discipline. Some of you, it's lack of love for God. Some of you, like Timothy, you're ashamed because we live in a culture where it is not highly encouraged to say I love Jesus. I believe without Jesus you're going to hell. I believe that the Bible is God's Word and perfect and trustworthy and true.

We're not in a culture that esteems that or values that. If you identify yourself with Christ, even if you do so in a polite and gracious way, there'll be resistance for you, and so you become ashamed. Somebody's marriage is in trouble you don't say, "Well, have you guys read the Bible or thought about how Jesus could take away your sin and reconcile you?" You say things like, "Oh, I'm sorry. That's terrible." That's it. That's ashamed. That's ashamed.

The reason why oftentimes we are ashamed to testify is because we're hypocrites. And we don't want to articulate something knowing that another person will point it out in our life and say, "Well, you say that Jesus changes people, but you're the same person I've always known. You say that Jesus takes away sin, but you or your friend or your spouse, you're still divided and fighting and you're not getting along. I don't see it." There's not a congruence between what we proclaim and what we behave, and so we get ashamed to testify. We get ashamed to testify.

The other reason why we don't testify, why we don't talk about Jesus, why we don't share the goodness of Jesus with other people is because Paul says it here, you're gonna suffer. It's gonna cost you something. If you're already weak and timid and fearful and life has got you down and you don't have it together and you're not operating out of love and power but you're working instead out of anger or out of fear and you're not disciplined, but you're lacking control and order in your life. You're thinking, "I don't wanna suffer. I don't want any more problem. I don't want any difficulty. I've got enough. I've got enough."

And I'll you this. The vast majority of us, myself included, the reason why the Christian life for us is occasionally hard has nothing to do with suffering. A lot of you think when bad things happen, you're suffering. You're not. You're reaping what you're sowing. The reason why my six weeks was a total mess was 'cause I reaped what I sowed. The reason why I had a few days of tension with my wife this week is because I reaped what I sowed, not because I'm suffering.

Suffering is when you're a righteous person who walks with God, and like Paul, they beat you, throw you in prison, and as is going to happen to him in a few weeks after he finishes this letter, they chop your head off. None of us is that person. Maybe some of you, your family doesn't like you or friends don't like you. You experience a measure of suffering. But the vast majority of us, our wounds are self-inflicted.

And then we cuss God. "God, I thought you loved me." "Like I do, but why do you keep punching yourself in the mouth? Why do you yell at me? I love you. I gave you a spirit of power and love and self-discipline, and you don't access that. You don't use it. You don't operate on it. You go do your own thing. You do whatever you want. You work out of timidity and fear and anger and chaos. You don't have to, but that's what you've chosen."

That's what I chose for six weeks. That's what I chose this last week. And then call it suffering, "Oh, it's all for Jesus." Pffft. I'm convinced that I only know one person who's ever suffered for Jesus, and I'm not sure they suffered. Okay, I know a lot of people. I only know a handful of people that have truly suffered because they love Jesus. Most of us suffer 'cause we're jerks. We're disorganized. We're lazy. It's on us. It's on me.

I mean, Paul can legitimately say that he's going to suffer. Paul's agony has to do with his faithfulness. Timothy's mental agony has nothing to do with his faithfulness, has everything to do with his unfaithfulness. Paul continues with Timothy. Here's what he has to say. Here's what God has done. You see this pattern. Paul keeps coming back to here's what God has done. Here's who God is. Here's what God has done because when you're in the middle of your life, and you're in the middle of your strife, we're in the middle of our problems we can't see anything but our own rut.

That's me. I lose sight of everything. It's so easy to. It's so easy to overlook God's grace in its various forms. It's so easy to overlook everything. You don't even see God anymore. You don't see God's mission. You don't see your life. You don't see anything. All you see is that you're frustrated or weary or fed up or tired or sick of something or someone. You get all consumed by it. And what Paul doesn't tell Timothy is, "I understand. Let's talk about your problems. How do you feel? Who's driving you nuts. Oh, that's a weird church. I know that nut job. He's unbelievable. I understand. I feel your..." What he says is, "God. Timothy, you gotta go back to God."

You and I will never get our full measure of joy from people. That's where we go to serve. We have to get our joy from God so that we can serve people. And if we're going to our people, you know, be they friends, family, brothers and sisters in Christ, ministry, whatever it is, we have to go there with the attitude of Paul, saying, "I'm here to love and serve." And if we don't come with the attitude of love and service, we will end up like Timothy just being frustrated and burned out.

So Paul keeps bringing him off of his problems and bringing him back to his God. It's a reorientation of his focus. He says here's what happens. God

has saved us. Your Christian God has saved you, saved you from Satan and sin and death. He's also saved you from yourself. You and I are our own worse enemy. If we were left utterly to ourselves, what we would do to our own life is unconscionable. Some of you are trying. Saved us, rescued us. God has grabbed us and said, "Look at what you're doing. It's another perspective. Do you see from my angle what your life is? Do you see it?"

And he's called us then to live a holy life. This is where we participate with God. Now, holiness in the Bible means separate or distinct or different or other. It's a different life. What that means is the way this world operates is not built for faith and family and friendship and love and joy and grace. It's not. And you're gonna be swimming upstream against a very, very, very stiff current if you're gonna live a holy life. Now holy means different. Now holy means different. Not just the weird different, you know, just the peculiar person. Not that different. Distinct. It has the fingerprints of God's involvement throughout it. It's peculiar in an attractive way. That's a holy life.

"Not because of anything that we have done but because of his own purpose and grace." God saved us, called us to a holy life not so that we could achieve our purposes. Guys, this is the huge issue theologically in the church right now. You come up with your vision for your life, and then you come to Jesus and he gives the ability to execute. He's the means to another end.

This whole week that's what I'm thinking with my wife. I'm thinking that my wife's purpose is to help me and take care of me, and I was in a rut and having a hard time, and she wasn't helping me in the way that I was expecting, so I get all mad, angry, go off on my wife. God didn't give me a wife so that she could devote herself to me and make all my problems go away. God gave me a wife for what purpose? For me to love her. It has very little to do with my wife and has quite a bit to do with me.

You and have to continually come back our relationships, our work, our ministry, our family, our friends, our life. What is the point? The purpose of our life is to love God and love people. That's what Jesus said. Our goal is not to be happy. Our goal is not to be successful. Our purpose here is not to live an uncluttered life that is free of distraction and disturbance. The goal of our life is to love God and love – that's our purpose. All week I'm just thinking of my wife not achieving her purpose as a total hypocrite, not thinking through my inability to achieve my purpose, which is to love my wife.

Now, up to this point all the philosophers and the secular psychologists and the self-help coaches will agree this is important stuff, but they can't tell you how to accomplish this. The next little word is the most important. It's grace. You and I do not have the innate capacity within us to live a habitual life with and in and through and for Jesus, loving him and loving the people that he puts in our way. We don't have that capacity. We need grace. We need grace.

It's funny 'cause as I hit this word and I was thinking on it last night, what's my wife's name? Grace. See, God mocks me. He thinks it's funny, right? I mean, my wife is just this continual lesson. She embodies her name Grace. She's a very gracious woman.

The only way you and I are going to live a holy life is by grace. A lot of you think that you're saved by grace. God saves me by grace. Good. And now I become holy by working really, really hard. No, you become holy in the same way you become saved: by grace. It's grace that saves you, grace that empowers you to live a holy life, grace that enables you to live a life with and for and through and by and like Jesus. It's by grace.

And as I was thinking about it this week, it's like, you know, that's why I'm stressed out. That's why I'm tired. That's why I'm moody. That's why I'm edgy. I am running out of my own capacity, and I am near empty, and the work is not done. And now I'm working out of fear and not faith, and I'm working out of exhaustion and not power, and I'm working out of anger and not love, and I'm working a disorganized life instead of a self-disciplined life. It all comes back to the fact that I'm not leaning into the grace that God has for me.

Says, "This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time." The only time you can get grace – and grace is what you need – the only place that that is available to us, friends, is through Jesus. Can't get it anywhere else. You can get teaching, philosophy, speculation, ideology, good tips. There's a lot of wonderful information floating around the world, but grace that enables you to accomplish anything only comes from Jesus.

And it says that this grace was given before time began. It's beautiful. Before God made us, the eternal God, before he made us, he made grace. Isn't that great? Said, "Well, if I'm gonna make men and women, I have to create grace so that they have a place to dwell. They can dwell in grace. See, we need grace so bad that God made grace before he made us. We can't live without it. That's the point. That's the point. That's how desperately we need grace.

I'll tell you what. The only reason my wife forgave me this week is 'cause she's a gracious woman who belongs to a gracious God. The only reason Jesus forgives me this week is 'cause he's gracious. He's a God of grace. The only reason that I'm able to continue to breathe and live and do my thing is because of God's grace. God's grace that convicts me, empowers me, transforms me. God's grace that enables me, renews me, and it only comes from Jesus.

So the point is even not to pursue grace but to pursue Jesus, and when you pursue Jesus and you're tight with Jesus, grace is what is given to you. So don't even worry about the grace as much as Jesus. He's the one who give it, so you need to just walk intimately and stick close to him.

He says, "But this grace has now been revealed through the appearing of our savior Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, and of this gospel I was appointed a herald." That's a preacher, an apostle. He starts churches and a teacher. He then disciples Christians. That's the process. Preach, people get saved, make them a church, teach them the rest of the Bible so they can grow in faithfulness.

Grace comes through Jesus. That's his point. And here's what Jesus does. Jesus destroys death. You and I, because of sin, will die. Because of Jesus, we have the great gift of living forever if we trust in him.

Sin comes in. It kills a marriage. By Jesus' grace, that marriage has the possibility of living. Friendships die because of sin. Jesus died for sin, takes away sin. Because of that, friendships have a possibility of enduring. Everything dies because sin gets into it, and it just destroys it. It devastates it. But grace through the Lord Jesus is what takes it away and replaces the death that sin causes with life.

And this is eternal life in heaven with Jesus. It's also earthly life here with Jesus now. Some of you are just thinking, "Well, when I die, I'll go to heaven." Well, no. Heaven comes to you today. His name is Jesus, and you get to begin your new life that is in victory over sin and death with him the moment that you meet him. Heaven is less about a place that you're going and a person that you're going to meet. His name's Jesus.

Paul's reminding Timothy of all of this 'cause apparently in the middle of it all Timothy doesn't see it. He's just frustrated. He's fed up. People are driving him crazy. His friendships that were supposed to be faithful are not faithful. The church that he's devoted himself to is not responding. All the people and things that he's given himself to are not – they're not following in step, and he's just tired, and he's frustrated, and he's worn out, and he's looking at it all, and he's thinking, "You know, this is just dead."

Some of you are thinking that. The marriage is dead. The life is dead. The friendship is dead. This isn't working. It's not happening. It's not coming together. Paul said you need grace. It comes through Jesus. You need life. It comes through Jesus. The point is you'd better draw near to Jesus. Timothy, you've gotten off track here.

Paul continues with his admonition for his dear friend. The next section he says, "That is why I am suffering as I am." Who's got it worse, Timothy or Paul? Paul. Paul is sitting in a prison cell. He has been beaten and tortured and homeless and shipwrecked and almost drowned. The guy's had a brutal life. His body is covered in scars from his beatings. He's sitting in a jail cell, probably dark, sitting on the floor. He has no wife, no kids, no home. He has no fame. At this point, he is a despised and hated man. He's in prison and within a few weeks, they're gonna chop his head off.

This is what's so convicting for me regarding Paul. He's not thinking about Paul. All he says is, "I'm suffering. Yet I'm not ashamed." Paul is in prison thinking about Jesus and people, not Paul. Vast majority of your life is thinking about you. Vast majority of my life is thinking about me. That's the problem. How do I feel? What do I want? What do I need? How am I doing? Am I happy? Am I sad? Am I glad? How's my inner child? My outer child? How are their children? You know, how are we? How are we doing? How are we?

Paul says, you know what? Timothy, I'm thinking about Jesus. I'm thinking about you. Paul doesn't write a long letter to Timothy, "Buck up! They're gonna chop my head off, you know? What are you whining about? You know, you get to eat. I'm in jail. You get to walk around. I'm shackled up. You haven't been here. It stinks. You get to go change your clothes. I don't get to change my clothes. My life..." Paul's not a whiner like me, right? Paul's not a whiner.

I mean, my laptop goes down. I turn into Judas Iscariot, right? You know, Jesus I forsake you! How could you? It's a laptop! I mean, you know, Paul is so convicting, he's sitting there in prison, gonna chop his head off. He's like, "I'm not ashamed of Jesus. Timothy, what are you...?" He's not even going at Timothy the way that I would. If I was Paul, you would just hear self-righteousness bleeding off the page.

"Hey, boy, 15 years. I been taking my licking. Get your cup on. Get in the game, son! Get in the game, you coward! _____" I would've given him a half-time speech. You know, "They're gonna kill me, and if they don't, I'm gonna get out. I'm gonna kill you. Do your job!" You know, but he doesn't do that. Timothy, it's about Jesus.

You know, Paul kind of reminds me of my wife. I think that's why I always fight when I read the Bible. Just this consistent truth is incredibly painful. You know, it's just this loving, gracious thoughtfulness. That's who Paul is. He's thinking about his friend. He's not thinking about himself. He's not using his life to wallow in it. I got a book deal. How to Suffer for the Lord Jesus by the Apostle Paul. Nothing. And he says he's not ashamed.

Can you imagine how hard it would be for Paul at that point to proclaim Jesus. You know, the guard comes in. "Have you met Jesus? He forgives sin. He loves people. He gives power and love and discipline. He'll change your life. He'll make everything better. He'll transform you. You can have a life that looks just like mine!" What a sales pitch. The guard's sitting there sharpening his sword for chopping Paul's head off going, "Really? Oh yeah. I'll take two. That's such a great deal. That's what we all want. We want your life. Skinny little half-dead Jewish guy with the crooked nose. That's what we want, so we all sit around at night saying 'Oh, if I could only have that kind of wonderful existence.'"

You know, everything in Paul should make him ashamed. He doesn't. The guy goes out with his boots on, his head high, his mouth screaming the love of Jesus. He doesn't give up, and here's why. "Because I know whom I have believed." Paul says Jesus. Jesus. Paul's thinking about Jesus. I'll tell you what. If we could just do one thing and think about Jesus, a lot of other things would straighten out. If I could do one thing and think about Jesus, a lot of other things would straighten out.

Timothy is apparently thinking about Timothy, so Paul's gotta refocus his attention. I'm assuming that God has us here today – he definitely has me in this text because you and I are thinking about things other than Jesus. Paul says, "I'm not ashamed because I know I believe in Jesus. It's about Jesus, not about Paul." Do you know who you believe in? See, we live in a world that tells you to believe in yourself. Believe in yourself. Believe you can do it. Believe you're worthy. Believe you're able. Believe you're competent. Believe, believe, believe in yourself.

Paul says, "I know who I believe in." It's not Paul. Paul believes in Jesus. His life is altogether different. It's a holy life. The holy life is the one that's lived by power, love, self-discipline, grace. Say how does that happen? Well, the holy life is the one that happens to the person who's thinking about Jesus, factoring him into all of their life and their words and their deeds and their days.

He says, "I am convinced that he's able to guard what I have entrusted him for that day." He says, "Jesus isn't gonna let me down. Jesus, I trust Jesus.

He says he loves me, he loves me. He says he's good, he's good. He says that I'll be with him forever, I'll be with him forever. I trust Jesus. I have entrusted myself to him." What I love about Paul, he loves Jesus with no Plan B, no backdoor, no backup plan. I trust Jesus. That's my plan. I love Jesus. That's my plan. I live life talking about Jesus. That's my plan.

Says, "What you have heard, Timothy, from me keep as the pattern of sound or healthy teaching with faith and love in Christ Jesus." Your faith needs to be in Jesus, not yourself or your life. Your love needs to be for Jesus, not just yourself. Your faith and your love need to be in Jesus so that you can be a good teacher. "And therefore, you can guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you. Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in you."

You and I, friends, every single one of us who claims to be a Christian, we are teachers. We teach. We teach with our words. We teach with our actions, our lifestyle. We're teaching all the time. What Paul was telling Timothy is this. "Timothy, you get up on Sunday and you scream and you shout and you rant and you rave about the victory of Jesus, the grace of Jesus, the transforming power of Jesus, the truth of Jesus. But, Timothy, we both know you're sort of burned out. You're not very enthusiastic. You're kind of tired. You're in a bad mood. You're sort of grumpy and grouchy, and that's not good teaching. It's not good teaching."

Okay, I want this church to be a place of honesty. One of the things that I value more than anything is honesty. My dad told me growing up work hard, don't lie. Right? Those are the Driscoll guiding principles. Work hard, don't lie. Be an honest person.

I love the fact that Paul is honest with Timothy. Does Paul love Timothy? He calls him a son, right? This is not a mean boss yelling at a young kid who's not performing. This is a dad redirecting a man that he loves like a son. And what he's basically telling Timothy is this: "Timothy, you work a lot of hours. You're all burned out. You're all frustrated. You're all tired. You're all whining and complaining. But, Timothy, let me tell you the truth. You're not thinking about Jesus. Let me tell you the truth. You're acting timid, not courageous. You're acting weak, not powerful. You're acting angry, not loving. You're acting out of control. You're not self-disciplined. You're working out of your flesh, not out of God's grace. And all you're thinking about is yourself, not Jesus."

We need to be a people of honesty if we're to make any progress, okay? This week I sinned against my wife. Now, by God's grace, I didn't – I'm not committing adultery. I'm not an alcoholic. I didn't do drugs. I just got like Timothy. I didn't deny the faith. I didn't become an atheist. I didn't join another religion. I didn't do anything. I just started thinking about myself rather than Jesus and people and who's supposed to be first priority, him. Who's supposed to be loved? Everybody else, okay.

It's important for me to tell you that Jesus is what we all need. I don't give grace. I'm not Jesus. I don't give power, love and self-discipline. I'm not Jesus. I don't give new life, transformation. I don't give eternal life. I'm not Jesus. I am a guy who loves Jesus and, like Timothy, has a propensity to get sideways and needs people like Paul to be honest with me. I hope you let him be honest with you today, and I hope you're honest with him. Hope you don't walk out of here all self-righteous saying, "Well, my pastor's wicked. I guess that's okay. He yelled at his wife, so I don't have to tell my wife I'm sorry." No, we both need to apologize. We both need to repent. We both need to get down on our knees before the cross thanking Jesus for his work on our behalf together.

The only hero in the Bible is Jesus. The only one who is able to save us from ourselves is Jesus, and you and I need him together. Paul says, "You know what? To be a good teacher, you're gonna have to have faith in Jesus, love for Jesus and here's the key. You're gonna need the help of the Holy Spirit." This is very comforting news to me.

In the Old Testament, God dwelt in a temple. You wanted to see God, you had to go to a special place, make a big sacrifice. You couldn't get into the most holy place. You couldn't get near God.

When Jesus died, the curtain that separated the presence of God and the people of God was torn top to bottom from God to us. The spirit of God is released on the earth. Do you know where the Holy Spirit has decided to tabernacle or dwell? In us? Paul tells the Corinthians that we are the temple of God. We are the temple of God.

What that means is this. That the same God who raised Jesus from the dead is the same God who dwells in us who believe. Unbelievable. You say, "Well, I don't have power." He does. "I don't have love." He does. "I don't have discipline." He does. "I don't have grace." He does. "I don't have victory over sin and death." He does. "I don't think I can set a good example." He enables. "I don't think I could teach anybody else how to walk this walk." He permits. "I don't think that things can change." He redeems.

Our reliance has to be on the spirit of God. This first ministry of Jesus tells us in John's gospel is to bring us to repentance, bring us to repentance, convict us of sin. If when you read the Bible you feel terrible, the spirit of God is probably involved. That's why a lot of you don't pick up the Bible. You say, "It just – I can't handle that." No, that's Step 1. Step 1 is he convicts to propel us, to compel us toward repentance, saying, okay, like Paul is doing with Timothy. "Here's your sin. Here's where you're not trusting me. Here's where you're not being with and for and through and by Jesus. This is where you've strayed."

We repent. We come back to that place that God blesses. I'll tell you what, guys. God desperately wants to bless us all. He's a good God. He's a good God. He wants lives, churches, marriages, families to reflect the handprints and the fingerprints of his grace. He does.

That doesn't mean we'll be all successful and rich. You look at Paul. Paul is a wealthy man who owns nothing, but he has a clear conscience, a sincere faith. He has a love for the Lord Jesus, and he knows in whom he believes. His treasure is Jesus, an unbroken intimacy with his risen reward.

All of this is made possible by the Holy Spirit, and I just – I don't wanna guilt you guys into, "Okay, I'm a bad person. I feel bad. That's the

Christian..." No, I'm a bad person. I repent. The spirit of God takes over, births in me a love for Jesus, a thoughtfulness for Jesus, brings me the grace of Jesus, gives me the power of Jesus, gives me the heart of love of Jesus, gives me the ordered life that Jesus intends, gives me victory over Satan, sin and death. Jesus comes through the spirit's power, saves me from myself.

The spirit of God is intimately involved in your life. God is with you. Not only is he with you. He is for you. Not only is he for you. He's in you. You're not alone. You're not in this by yourself.

This week I was so convicted thinking, man, when I get frustrated, rather than yelling or sending off a flaming e-mail or picking up the phone or cursing at the sky or just getting all hot-headed, I should spend time with the spirit of God asking him to convict me of sin, birth in me a love for what he loves, a hate for what he hates, birth in me a desire to be close to Jesus. The spirit is the one who is with and for Jesus, and the spirit in us compels us, brings us into greater intimacy with Jesus so that the relationship can be built.

We need the spirit of God, and we have the spirit of God. It is incumbent upon you today. You and I together, we have to decide for ourselves how are we gonna go? What's it gonna be? My fear is this is another sermon of great principles. You feel bad. You sing a song. You go home, and nothing changes.

Okay, I've had a deeply convicting week, and here's where it ends. "You know that everyone in the Province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes." Apparently, two kids whose parents hated them for giving them those names. Can you imagine being in kindergarten? What's your name? "I don't know. I can't write it. I have no idea. My mom hates me."

These two guys, everybody deserts Paul. Apparently, life got hard. Apparently, things started going sideways. Apparently, it was a rough season. Everybody says, "Well, I'm out. "May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus" –he's the good guy – "because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day. You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus."

There's people. At the end of the day, here's what God cares about: people. At the end of the day, it really comes down to this. People. It comes down to you and me. In that church, there were a couple different kinds of people. There were a large number of people who says they were Christians or spiritual or believed in God or what have you. The sort of went with it for awhile and then stopped going to church, stopped reading their Bible, stopped devoting themselves to Jesus, stopped healing themselves with the Holy Spirit, stopped making progress in Christ.

All of the sudden next thing you know, they just disappeared. Some of you I'll never see again. Some of you will not walk with God. Some of you will die. Some of you will go to Hell. Some of you will claim to be Christians and you're not. Some of you will give up at the first hot boyfriend or girlfriend possibility, the first option for sex outside of your marriage, the first option for whatever it is that you wanna be doing. You will hit the eject button, and you will be gone. Some of you are back for your 3rd, 5th, 27th time. Your life is a yo-yo. No discipline at all. I don't know who that is. That really is incumbent upon you.

Some of you here are like Onesiphorus. This guy makes the Bible, right? He's a rock star. This guy loves Jesus. He loves Paul. He's not ashamed. He's not worried about going to jail. He's not being concerned about being thrown in jail. He hears that Paul's in jail. He goes to the jail to visit Paul. "Paul, how are you? I love you, brother. Can I pray for you? What do you need? I'm so sorry. Can I embrace you? What can I do? What can I do? Let me go back to the church with prayer requests. What do you want us to be praying for, Paul?"

Onesiphorus is thinking about Jesus and Paul. He's not thinking about himself. Everybody else is thinking about themselves. Everybody. He names one guy, this guy. "He's a good guy. He loves Jesus. He loves me. He encouraged me, refreshed me. He went from jail to jail to jail to jail jail to jail saying, "Is Paul here? No, okay, next jail. Is Paul here? Nope. I'm looking for Paul. Why? I love Paul. Jesus loves Paul. Jesus sent me here to tell Paul that he loves him. I gotta find Paul."

Some of you are gonna be Onesiphorus. Some of you are Onesiphorus. Some of you love Jesus. You're serving. The rest of us are blessed. We love you. We want you to be encouraged today. For everyone else, we want to compel you and we want you to encourage you to follow in the pattern of this guy who loves Jesus like Paul.

The majority of us sitting in the room today, myself included, are like Timothy. We're not as unfaithful as these guys. We're not as faithful as these guys. We're somewhere in the muddy middle saying, "Okay, I'm not gonna deny Christ. I'm not gonna be an atheist. I'm not gonna go follow another God. I'm not gonna just totally give up. But I'm also not gonna be burning bright and burning hot and taking risks and being, you know, courageous and walking faithfully and being devoted and being Jesus first. I'll put Jesus on my list but definitely not at the top."

And Paul's telling Timothy, "You have to decide, Timothy, who are you gonna be? You gonna join this guy or you gonna walk with these guys? You gonna go with the faithful or you gonna go with the faithless? Timothy, there's no room here for you to just sort of be burned out, frustrated, selfish and indifferent. You gotta pick your team, and you gotta run with it."

That's the word I leave with you today. You're gonna run with Paul and Onesiphorus. You're gonna run with these two other guys, and today, you're Timothy, sitting here receiving the words that Paul gave to us through Timothy saying, "Okay, how's it gonna go?" 'Cause if you're in the middle, friends, you're not gonna be there for long. You will go with or against God. You will not remain indifferent forever. And for some of you, you're like Timothy. Your flame's growing dim. Paul says you need to rekindle it.

I don't know what that means for you. Repentance, time in Scripture, prayer. I don't know what that means for you, but this is your time to ask the

spirit of God what that is, and then that's what you need to be about. So we're gonna give you time now with God for prayer, contemplation, repentance, searching your heart, where you are.

When you're ready, you're welcome to partake of communion, which is remembering Jesus' body and blood shed for our sin. Give your tithes and offerings unless you're not a Christian. Then we don't ask for your money. And then we're gonna sing and we're gonna celebrate because in the end we need to know in whom we believe. That's where our joy comes from. And then we'll walk out of here with the grace that God gives and the Holy Spirit that God gives to lead the life that God gives with the power and the love and the discipline that God enables us to have as a holy people by God's enablement.

So, Jesus, we love you. I thank you for a chance to study and teach today. Jesus, I thank you for the honesty of the Scriptures. I thank you that Paul has the love to speak so frankly with his friend Timothy. I thank you, God, that you have the love to speak honestly with me and with each of us.

Lord Jesus, please enable us by the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace that you have given to us to draw near to you, to be thinking about loving you and loving others. Please help us to overcome our addiction to being absolutely self-absorbed and fearful and weak and angry and disorganized.

Please help us to be courageous and powerful and loving and disciplined. God, please give us the grace and the spirit to achieve these things. We don't have it. God, we know you'll give it if we desire, if we yield ourselves, if we receive what you have for us.

God, I pray that you would send your Holy Spirit to speak to each of us today, shaping our hearts and our minds toward Jesus. And Jesus, thank you that you have given us life, life that begins here and continues forever. We long for the day when we shall taste it.

God, I pray for this church. God, I despise nothing more than vain religion that's just platitudes by hypocrites. I pray, God, we would be an honest people, that we would each be honest with you and honest with one another and that we wouldn't miss the opportunities that you give for us to make things right and to straighten things out but that instead we would lean into our savior and that by his grace, we would be like him. Amen.