

Timothy

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Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[0 : 0 0] now as we look at this passage in second timothy in chapter one um it occurred to me well that i discovered to my surprise we've never actually done any kind of series on the on timothy himself i thought we had but uh we haven't it seems and i don't know for sure whether or not we're uh going to but if we were uh going to then you might think the obvious place to start is first chapter one but in a sense it's not because that just opens with what paul is writing to timothy as his already well established assistant or tenant uh or helper who is already taking on responsibility by then in ephesus and this second timothy although it is almost certainly the last letter that paul writes that we have any record of it contains in it certain helpful information which enables us to look as it were back to the beginning of timothy's walk with the lord there are hints as i think i will mention in the past there are hints in this letter particularly less so in first timothy but certainly in second timothy that that all may not be entirely well with timothy's faith or perhaps with this relationship with paul there's just just a little hint that perhaps he is beginning to waver or to quake a wee bit you know verse seven there god hath not given us the spirit of fear but a power and love and a sound like why does he need to say that unless there's perhaps the suggestion uh that timothy is is is trembling a wee bit is uh is wavering a wee bit and he says you know start put in remembrance and stir up the gift of god which is in me why does he need to say that unless perhaps it's lying dormant a wee bit you know and don't be ashamed of the testimony of our lord not of me his prisoner does that imply that they've drifted apart a wee bit and timothy has gone quiet or gone dark we don't know of course all these things but reading between the lines there's just just a little hint that perhaps paul is seeking to renew and revive this acquaintance perhaps because it has drifted a bit into into indifference or separation or the distance between them now physically between ethesus on the one hand and rome where paul is writing from it's too great for timothy to to travel across at the moment we don't know all the details we do know this is almost certainly the last letter paul writes that we have a record of and it is not insignificant that it is to his faithful lieutenant timothy and who he hopes to see again greatly desiring verse 4 to see thee being mindful of thy tears that i may be filled with joy when i call to remembrance the unfained faith that is in thee which dwelt first in thy grandmother lois and thy mother eunice and i am persuaded that in thee also now this is helpful to us because the first first mention really we'd had of timothy as such was in act 16 where we read that when he came to to derby and lystra behold a certain disciple was there doesn't specify that it's a young disciple but he must have been young at this point that he's elsewhere written too many years later saying let no man despise thy youth and so he must have been young possibly only in his late teens at this point he was there named timotheus the son of a certain woman which was a jewess and believed but his father was a greek doesn't say and his father was a greek but but his father was a greek and the implication is there that his father is not only gentile but probably not a believer himself but his mother is and from second timothy we know that his mother is called eunice we wouldn't know that uh by any other means if it wasn't written here but his mother obviously although she has come to faith probably before timothy or perhaps at the same time uh as timothy um she probably almost certainly was not always a devout woman if she herself is jewish and her mother his grandmother lois would also then be jewish it would have been a great grief to a devout jewish family that one of their daughters would have married a gentile a greek and yet we are taught that timothy if you turn a couple of pages in second timothy we find in chapter 3 verses 14 and 15 continue thou in things which thou hast learned in this nashuro knowing of whom thou hast learned them and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in christ jesus so whether it was from his grandmother or whether it was from his mother and this was part of the compromise uh with his greek father that okay we won't circumcise him because obviously paul has to circumcise him later on a couple of

verses down in verse 3 but we'll bring him up with the knowledge of the hebrew scriptures remember that if the faith is going to be that deep in his family if his grandmother at least is a devout woman probably he is getting the scriptures at her knee perhaps also from his mother but obviously there must have been a certain falling out in the family we can again read between the lines at least in the first instance but if the boy is brought up at least with the knowledge of the faith then he must have been steeped in the old testament scriptures long before the gospel actually came to where he was in lystra this means that his grandmother is a devout woman it means that this woman eunice lois i think you're pardoned first of all has a deep faith in the god of abraham isaac and jacob people didn't have bibles on their bookshelf in those days if he has the knowledge of the scriptures then he from a child then it means he must have attended at the synagogue he was probably instructed by a rabbi even though he was not himself a circumcised full-blooded jew he would have had no doubt the benefit of that scriptural teaching perhaps they had one or two scrolls of the prophets at home but it would have been a lot more difficult in those days to be steeped in the scriptures the way that timothy obviously was so his grandmother lois is extremely devout his mother eunice becomes more devout and the reason we say this as we mentioned is that it is inconceivable that a devout believing jewish woman steeped in the in the love of the prophets and the scriptures and so on would then go and marry a gentile you just wouldn't do it under the gospel of course these distinctions begin to disappear and this is part of the uh the glory and the spreading out of the salvation uh of god's kingdom but it doesn't really matter then whether you're jew or greek or gentile or whatever nationality might be the gospel is for all but at that time when timothy is born and when his mother marries this gentile that would not have been the case and the only consolation consolation is you can see on the other side is just as her devout jewish family would have been sorely disappointed that she was marrying a greek probably his greek gentile family would have thought he was lured himself to marry a jewish woman so they probably got a bit of grief from both families and as would be the case in any mixed marriage there would have had to be compromises on both sides and probably from what we have in the text one of the compromises was he can be brought up with the scriptures he can go to the synagogue but he's not getting circumcised and that was probably the compromise that they make once timothy is sufficiently grown to accept and believe and profess for himself that's a decision he can take when he's older and which of course um paul does undertake with him and for him when he wants him to travel as his his companion in the faith which is ironic in a sense given that what they are delivering you know him would paul verse 3 of chapter 16 in the acts have to go forth with him and took and circumcised him because of the jews which were in those quarters for they knew all that his father was a greek and as they went through the cities they delivered them the decrees for to keep them were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at jerusalem now what is it that they're giving from acts 15 uh throughout uh what is now turkey and all the areas around about the paul is visiting it's the decision of the the council of jerusalem acts 15 that you don't need to be circumcised and that you don't need to become jewish before you can be a christian so why does he do this the only suggestion we can possibly make is that it is to ease the process of the message the message of the gospel is the thing that is paramount and if he was going with a traveling companion a fellow evangelist who was a total gentile then probably that might be accepted look here's a gentile their believers too if he was going with someone who's completely jewish well that would be fair enough but he's going with somebody as far as the jews are concerned he's you know a bit of a half breed he's neither one thing nor the other so you know how is he what's his status in all this is he just hoping to use the gospel to ride the back of the the law and the prophets and so on and it's not a discussion that paul wants to have it's not a distraction that he wants to to lead away from the central truths of the gospel so he's just going to completely take that out and we just just have timothy circumcised that's it so the jews say you're not really a jews yes he is he's circumcised he's learned the scriptures he's brought up in the synagogue he's as much jewish as as any one of you now he's a convert in all of that sense so it is almost certainly to eliminate distracting discussion or opposition so that the the message of the gospel and the message from the council of jerusalem can have an unfettered run nothing's to get in the way now this is something which paul himself in all fairness uh practices if we if we remember what he says to the corinthians you know he says to the you became i as a jew to those without the law as without the law i become all things to all men that by all means i might say some to smooth the process of the gospel the progress of it and the message so that nothing hinders the message he will accommodate himself as much as possible in those things that are not central and part of paul's

teaching is not oh you must never be circumcised but rather it's that it doesn't matter whether you are or whether you're not no circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing if that's the case then there'll be some situations where it may be a distraction other things where it may be a help this is one where clearly he considers it to be a help him would all have to go forth with him and to circumcise him because of the jews which were in those quarters for they all knew that his father was a greek so that being the case this indicates there's a part from anything else by this stage in act 16 timothy is sufficiently strong in his faith to be prepared to endure without anesthetic without antiseptic and a risk that you know an awful lot of blood an awful lot of pain an awful lot of suffering but he's prepared to do this in order to take part in the work of the gospel that's how strong his faith is at this young uh tender age but we might think well where does he hear the gospel this is act 16 paul has only made one previous visit uh to lystra and that's in acts 14 and that's where you know they heal the man who has been uh who has been impotent in his feet being crippled from his mother's womb and never had walked the same heard paul speak who steadfastly beholding him and perceiving that he had faith to be healed said with a loud voice stand up right on thy feet and he leaped up and walked and when the people saw what paul had done they lifted up their voices saying in the speech of life he only are that gods are come down to us in the likeness of men and they called barnabas jupiter and paul mercurius because he was the chief speaker and then the priests of jupiter come to the seats to offer them oxen and bring garlands and to sacrifice to them thinking that they're gods and paul and barnabas have an awful job to say no no no we're not gods and they must have stayed with them in lystra for quite a while we don't know exactly how long but clearly once it became news that the gospel was spreading in lystra we read verse 19 of acts 14 there came for their certain jews from antioch and iconium who persuaded the people and having stoned paul drew him out of the city supposing he had been dead how be it as the disciples stood round about him he rose up and came into the city so by this time by the time paul gets stoned at lystra there are already believing disciples in lystra so he must have been teaching there amongst them some considerable time it's not just like five minutes later these other jews turned up and then got paul stoned it some time must have been spent there but i would also suggest to you that at least in the case of his grandmother lois this woman who is who is you know deep in the scriptures um of the the old testament church and has brought up timothy in the same way and whose daughter then becomes reconciled to this faith and accepts the bringing up of her son in this way so that this faith dwells first in thy grandmother lois and thy mother eunice and i am persuaded in thee also timothy who has known the scriptures my child is now applying them but i would suggest to you that paul's appearance in lystra is not the first hint that they have had there of the existence of this message of jesus of nazareth and the reason for saying that is that if we go back to acts 2 and you see that uh when the apostles are busy speaking out the message of the gospel then all the crowd they were all amazed and marveled same one to another behold are not all these which speak galileans how here we every man in our own tongue when we were born parthians and medes and elamites that's roughly speaking peridium iran uh that sort of area and the dwellers in mesopotamia iraq that's sort of area and in judea which self explanatory palestine cappadocia is effectively east of what we would call the interior of galicia so it's eastern turkey uh what is now turkey cappadocia there's people from there in jerusalem at pentecost who are hearing the gospel in pontus which is the northern coast of what is now turkey and asia ephraim that area of western turkey phrygia again the interior of turkey and pamphylia southern turkey now in egypt in the parts of libya about south and strangers of rome group jews and proselytes and so on so basically although there's no mention of you know lystra and derby and galicia itself galicia was a large ill-defined area in the center the big central area of what is now turkey and whilst we don't read of any people directly galatians there in in acts chapter 2 at the day of pentecost we do read of people round about to the north on the coast

to the east in the interior to the south on the coast to the west in other words the four points of the compass there are people there who are in jerusalem at pentecost hearing the gospel see what's happening who will be there for the next little while while peter and john heal the man who's uh who's uh born lame and so on who's comes walking and leaping and praising god in the in the beautiful gate of the temple it will be having an impact on them as thousands begin to believe three thousand souls you know in one day and so converted so this is when they go back to their own homes this is something which is beginning to be gossiped as it were to be spoken about to the north to the east to the south to the west of the area where timothy lives and whilst it will not have impacted immediately it will have filtered in it will have filtered in through traders and travelers and

so on bringing this sort of news and this message and this sort of uh strange tale that's coming out of jerusalem and then it'll be reinforced by people coming from different places so the four points of the compass run about the interior of galatia have all heard the gospel long before paul actually gets converted so that by the time he and barnabas come i would suggest to you that perhaps the people like lois and possibly eurus maybe even timothy as it were primed and prepped with this what they're hearing about the gospel so that when apostles barnabas and paul actually come with it it's just sort of putting a match to all the sort of paper and kindling and logs that have been put in place everything has been made ready and now they come with a final light of blue touch paper and suddenly it bursts into life and bursts into flame and whilst obviously the grandmother is the one who lays his grandmother's the one who lays the foundation his mother enters into this despite her the the dubiety of her own marriage uh previously as we say there's always going to be compromise in any kind of mixed marriage but happily for timothy he's been brought up with the knowledge of the scriptures as we said from a child let us know in the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation and i am persuaded that in thee also when paul comes this family is ready they're ready to receive this good news and his grounding which is probably an advantage that he has over other believers in the area who are probably perhaps they've heard about it as well from the the news that's traveled but they're they're not they're not grounded in the way that he and his granny and his mom already are in the scriptures they are not that the soil isn't prepared in the way that it is in this family so that when the apostles come he is if you like streets ahead of everybody in the maturity and in the knowledge and in the growth and in the depth that he already has yes his mother and his grandmother already have it his grandmother is not really somebody who can be a traveling companion for paul on his evangelistic mission not as his mother probably with a husband and a home and so on but timothy is and paul wants to take him with him he is so impressed by the godliness and the commitment of this youth that he would have him to go forth with him and to circumcise him because of the jews now we shouldn't overlook as we say just what a test of timothy's faith that would be that is really being put to the test early on in his in his relationship with paul but he has been prepared he has been grounded the lord has been way ahead even of his own apostles laying the foundation in the generations that have gone before now although of course timothy is still

[20 : 20] a young man and probably continues to be thought of as a young man or a young christian even as he gets older and even as he continues to to minister around the different churches with paul sometimes in paul uh along the paul sometimes uh perhaps being sent by paul we shouldn't um underestimate the importance that timothy has he is the co-author of six of paul's letters second corinthians philippians colossians first and second thessalonians and philemon timothy is listed as joint author in all of these not romans or first corinthians or galatians or ephesians or titus obviously he's not co-author of the letters to himself but he is there with paul in almost all of his ministry subsequent to act 16 and this is not because he's only been a believer five minutes it's because he has taken as it were the first opportunity to seize upon the gospel and as it were to plug this in to all that he has already heard and all that he has already known the scriptures that means the old testament scriptures are indeed the foundation the bedrock of which all of this fits together and this of course is the attack that the apostles themselves used that when they went to any new place they went first to the synagogue and they spoke to the jewish population because they were the ones it's their god the god of abraham and isaac and james it's their messiah it's the messiah of israel want to say look good news the scriptures have been fulfilled all that the lord promised all that he prepared and the law and the prophets and the sounds it's all been leading up to the fulfillment in this person jesus of nazareth and god has testified to the truth of it by raising him from the dead and we're the witnesses of this and so on so this was a message got first to the jew timothy's not completely jew but he's half jew and he's got the knowledge and it all fits together and it all makes sense so he's almost like a ready-made mini apostle if we can put it that way but it didn't happen overnight all the work all the grounding all the gradual imbibing and learning of the scriptures would be the work of years years which the lord has been preparing him going ahead of him and if you think about it even if even if timothy is perhaps only like 19 or something like that it means that he would have been being brought up with those scriptures almost certainly before the lord jesus began his public ministry in galilee when timothy began to be taught these scriptures jesus would probably still have been working in the carpenters shop in nazareth he wouldn't have started yet john the baptist probably hadn't started in his ministry and there was the lord still preparing timothy as a boy working away through his grandmother lois through his mother eunice

and despite the the difficulties of his home life in that regard preparing this boy for what was to come now the good news in that regard is that the lord provides everything that will be needed he never fails to give his servants whether it's timothy whether it's paul everything that they will need all the tools all the equipment they will need for their particular task for their particular ministry um that's likely made reference in the past jacob you know uh you could say reference is this because when he's when he has his vision of jacob's ladder um at bethel there and he has his dream genesis 28 verses 20 and 21 jacob bowed a vow saying if god will be with me and will keep me in this way that i go and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on so that i come again to my father's house in peace then shall the lord be my god it's not a big request

is it you know food to eat and clothes to wear in other words give me what i need day by day by day one day at a time that's all he's asking for and at the end of his life he testifies remember that he lives to be was it 147 or something like that he lives to be uh and uh and he says at the end of his life genesis 48 and verses 15 and 16 he says he blessed joseph and said god before whom my fathers abraham and isaac did walk the god which fed me all my life long unto this day the angel which redeemed me from all evil bless the lads and let my name be named on them so in other words what's he saying about god i asked for god to feed me day by day the god which fed me all my life long unto this day you know if he had a string of days where he didn't get any food he would die but every single day god gave him what he needed when he was afraid of his brother esau the lord delivered him out of that trouble when he was being cheated by lamb and the lord delivered him out of that trouble every time a difficulty arose the lord brought him through now most of us all of us perhaps if we're honest if we had the choice we'd rather say well actually i'd rather just not have the problems at all lord i'd rather just not have the obstacle that you're going to get me around or get me over or the difficulty you're going to bring me through just make the difficulty go away that'll be fine just don't let it arise and just give me a nice smooth ride and that'll be fine and if we're honest also we don't really want you know give us this day our daily bread what we'd really rather have is like to be able to open the pantry and say oh it's a good big store there for the next six months that's fine i'd like to be able to go to my bank account and say that's plenty there even if disaster happens i've got plenty to fall back on we'd like to be able to say we've got abundance to say to our souls soul that was much good so you have for many days take thy need drink and be merry but the lord might say to us that a fool this night thy soul shall be required of thee so the lord gives us what we need each day each occasion that we need it and the lord has already gone before timothy giving him all that he is going to need if he's going to need courage to go with paul and to go under the knife for his circumcision and so on without any kind of aesthetic he's going to need that because the lord has given him that courage the lord has given him the head knowledge of the scriptures and the faith to apply them the lord has given him all these tools all this equipment and also all that he learned so paul as he goes along the way so when he comes to leave the church in emphasis as he has to do later on or when he goes on the journeys that paul will send them on he will have the equipping of everything that he needs you could say well that's the good news we might regard it as bad news well it's not bad news it's just really god's perfection is that god will give you everything you need but the other side of that coin is you're going to end up needing everything god gives you i'll say that again god will give you everything you need but you are going to end up needing everything god gives you he doesn't give you additional junk to have to carry even if you think of paul's own situation might think well he was brought up a pharisee he can use that that's fine he also had roman citizenship and i think that's not going to be much use to you if you're going to bring in a counter-cultural new spiritual kingdom and yet we find he uses his roman citizenship he ends up needing it it ends up being of benefit for the gospel he ends up being able to the fact that he can speak greek as well as latin as well as hebrew and all the rest of it that he's multilingual he uses that everything the lord has given him he gives him everything he needs but he's going to need everything that he has given and timothy no doubt would have been in situations where the fact that he had become circumcised would work to his advantage but at other times the fact that his father was a greek would give him an inroad to some places where a full-blooded jew might not have any access at all and the fact of his knowledge of the scriptures from a child will equip him to debate or to discuss with people who might think they were a bit cleverer than him because they were older than him but he's got the tools that he needs he has everything he needs but he's going to need everything that he has given it's not that the lord doesn't give us anything spare it's that if you have something spare you can guarantee you're going

to end up needing it david wilkerson uh the 20th century evangelist who began the the teen challenge work in new york uh to help drug addicts and gang members and so on and to come to know the lord there was one occasion when you know each time they needed money for the work they prayed and they prayed it in as it were and the money would always come in whether it was in dribs and drabs and maybe children or youngsters sending in their few dollars or others making big donations and every month he found it was incredible it was almost exactly right exactly what they needed but this particular month there was 200 more than usual he didn't like they didn't like to be quibbling saying why do you give this extra that well it's always nice to have a little extra but he thought it was strange because every month they'd almost always had just exactly what they needed almost nothing spare here was this 200 extra and uh he thought okay well we'll just hold on to this just now he had a meeting with his lawyer and uh the lawyer said look you realize that all the work i do for the team challenge for the charity i never charge you a bill you said and he thought okay we always thought you just kind of done it as a friend but i don't know anyway he says but um and i'm not charging a bill now but the thing is that because of some situations arising with some property or buying or whatever that that this other person we've had to employ they submitted a bill we're going to need more money this month and he said how much money he says well you know these costs can't be you know can't be contained how much money said two hundred dollars there was the extra money the lord knew he's going to need and supplied it without even knowing the situation of course everything in our life doesn't come down to exactly that neatness but it is an example both for timothy for paul for a modern example there of how when we live by faith the lord will give you everything that you need but you will need everything that the lord gives you so it was for timothy so we will find it to be also for us it's not a bad situation to be in you know we brought nothing into this world it's certain we'll take nothing out of it but in the meantime between the day of our birth and the day of our death the lord will as a gift for jacob he will feed us each day he will provide everything we need and if we are seeking to serve him with what he has given us then he will utilize everything he has given us and if we need more he will provide the more and if we ask for the more he will either get what we ask or he'll show us a way to be able to use what we already have but everything you need the lord will give or perhaps has already given and whatever else you need he'll supply but whatever you've been given it's because he wants you to use it it's because he intends you to use it and it's because you're going to need to use it if you're going to serve the lord in your life so it's something for each of us to think about and to recognize what is it the lord has given me how am i able to use it for his service if i think well he wants me to do this but i can't do that because i haven't got this this or this ask and he will give if you don't need it he'll enable you to do what he's asked without the thing that you think you need he will give whatever you need and you will need everything that he gives when i call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee which dwelt first in my grandmother lois and thy mother eunice the lord is way ahead of us and i am persuaded that in thee also wherefore i put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of god it is the gift of god which is in me by that was simply the instrument not the power of itself by the putting on of my hands for god hath not given us the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind everything you need god is given but everything god gives you will end up needing and using to his glory let's pray