

SERMON STUDY SUMMARY

Unshakeable Faith

INTRODUCTION

We live in challenging, unsettling and perilous times. But the Bible teaches us that our God is the same – yesterday, today and forever – and with His help we can have Unshakeable Faith. How do we remain true to God when we see the rise of radical pluralism, aggressive forms of secularism, polarization in the political world, divisions, disunity, revision in sexual ethics, etc., which may shake our faith? Ephesians 6:16 describes faith as a shield, countering the enemy's attacks and transforming us into Christians with genuine unshakeable faith.

In 2 Timothy 1:3-7, we learn that Timothy had three major influences which greatly motivated and strengthened his faith. These positive influences continue to shape us today.

Biological Family

Our biological family, especially our parents and grandparents, play a vital role in shaping our faith. When we observe unshakeable faith in action in our homes it is contagious and leaves a lasting impression. Timothy's mother and grandmother had powerful faith, and from his infancy they introduced Timothy to Scripture, prayerfully teaching him the Word of God and influencing him to dedicate his life to Jesus Christ.

When kids are raised in a Christian home where matters of faith are talked about, where they are taken to church, encouraged to participate in children's ministries, Bible studies, etc., they receive a solid foundation on which to build their faith. They are given the greatest gift they will ever receive – an unshakeable faith in God. Paul was so impressed by Timothy and his strong faith that he recruited him as his associate.

Spiritual Family

The other influence in Timothy's life was his spiritual family, especially the relationship he shared with Paul. Although we may or may not have a godly biological family, we still need support and fellowship from our spiritual family. God does not want us to live our lives in isolation. It is critical that Christian men and women play the role of spiritual parents, relatives and friends to those in our churches, communities and neighbourhoods, especially those who may not have Christian families to support them. We are called to disciple future generations, teaching them through example and love to build a strong faith in God.

Personal Disciplines

Just as one generation has to do everything in its power to pass the baton of the gospel, it is equally important for the next generation to be diligent in taking the baton. We are called to practice personal disciplines – which have a formative and enduring effect on our faith. Timothy was young, inexperienced and physically weak; his personality was timid and he was easily overwhelmed. Paul commissioned him to take on the crucial responsibility of carrying on the work of the gospel; Timothy could not undertake this without self-discipline.

The Spirit does not work alone, and we are required to co-operate with God as He calls us to serve Him by teaching others. In a day and age where everything happens instantly, we could be tempted to look for shortcuts. This does not work in the spiritual life, and self-discipline is essential if we are to consistently follow the Lord where He leads us. We need unshakeable faith in God, trusting Him to strengthen and guide us as we do His will.

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Have you ever gone camping? If so, what was your first camping experience like? Who started and maintained the campfire? What is involved in starting and maintaining a campfire?
2. Who have been the top 2 or 3 positive influencers of your faith? How did they influence your faith?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Acts 16:1-2; 2 Timothy 1:1-7, 3:14-15

3. How did Paul first meet Timothy? What did Paul see in Timothy that made him want to invite him to serve in the ministry?
4. What factors in Timothy's life led him to and helped him maintain a 'sincere faith' (2 Timothy 1:5)? How would you define a 'sincere' faith?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. How might you be more conscious, prayerful, and intentional about transferring your faith to others?
6. What spiritual disciplines have been core to your faith journey? Which spiritual discipline might you need to "fan" your faith into brighter "flame"? What could this look like?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Reflect on the legacy of faith that has been passed to you. How well have you received this legacy? How well are you growing in it and passing on this faith legacy to others? How can you increase your faith-influence in the lives of others?

THE WORD (NIV)

Acts 16:1-2

Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. 2 The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.

2 Timothy 1:1-7

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my dear son:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

6 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. 7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

2 Timothy 3:14-15

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.