

**Text:** 2 Timothy 1:9-12

**Title:** Completely Persuaded

**Truth:** To combat shame in Christ, trust God fully.

**Date/Location:** Sunday June 12, 2016 at FBC

## Introduction

The Christian must be bold in his faith. He must make use of God's gifts; remember he does not have a spirit of fear but one of power and love and sober-mindedness; face shame head on; be prepared to obey God even if it means suffering; recall what God has done in salvation and the power that it took to do it; and remember that salvation came from God in the first place. While these were Paul's instructions to pastor Timothy, they have a great deal of application to all of us today, pastor or not.

It was there that we left off last time in the middle of verse 9. So we pick up there with Roman numeral II.

## II. Remember that salvation is from God, not yourself, v. 9b

- A. The text says that God saves/calls people **not** according to works. Remember Revelation 20:11-15 before you think that you are going to trust in your works to save your soul. See Titus 3:4-6.
- B. Since God does not save Christians according to their works, on what basis does He save them? For every person who is saved, God saves according to His own purpose and grace. Note the words: God had a purpose, and God had grace. God **wanted** to save Paul and Timothy, and anyone who is a Christian, and He applied His **grace** to get it done.
  - 1. The basis and standard of salvation is not the works of man, but the purpose and grace of God. He purposed—decided, wanted, ordained, chose—each person who is a Christian. He planned in advance, resolved, and willed to save each one. He gave his unmerited favor to each and every one of them who are saved.
  - 2. Is what I just described talking about **you**? You ask, "How do I know?" How can you "get" that purpose and grace? Well, again, you cannot do so in or of yourself. There is no way to know apart from asking questions like this: "Are you a follower of Jesus Christ? Do you trust Him for your eternal life? Do you believe he died for your sins, and rose again?" If the answer to these questions is a wholehearted "yes," then you can thank God that He purposed to show you that truth and set His grace on you to accept that truth.

If you recognize your need for salvation because of your sin and call

out to God to save you through Jesus, He will apply His grace to you, and you will find out just what His purpose was for you.

I think those of us who are Christians can testify that when we really understood the gospel message, we intuitively knew that God wanted us personally to trust Him and commit our lives to Him. Some express that by saying, "God spoke to me." There was no audible voice, but an impression that we must trust in God, because there was no other thing we could do to be cleansed from sin and have a relationship with God. We understood that God's purpose and grace was in front of our eyes and all we had to do was ask for and receive it. The same thing is available today to anyone who has ears to hear what I'm saying!

- C. Theologically what we are saying is that salvation is God-originated and God-centered. It is not anthropocentric, that is, man-centered. Keeping this one theological principle at the forefront of our minds will help us to keep our Christian lives and Christian ministries on a sound, God-pleasing philosophical footing. As soon as our attention is drawn away from this emphasis to focus on people, their needs and wants, their preferences, etc., then we begin the downward journey to a man-centered ministry. This does not please God.

### **III. Know that God planned your salvation before time began, v. 9c-10a**

So we know that God planned to shower His favor upon Christians. But Paul adds that He planned to do that before we were alive...before time began.

- A. Of course, His grace could not be applied until we were alive, and even after that, at the moment we believed by His grace. But since this is a God thing, once He decided to do it, it was effectively "given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." The phrase "before time began" also occurs in Titus 1:2.
- B. God revealed the good news of His grace at the coming of Christ, v. 10a. To us, bound in time as we are, we cannot access the "before time began" stuff of God. But we can see, through the coming of Christ, God's plan being revealed. When we believe in Christ ourselves, then we see God's purpose unfold for ourselves in our own lives.
- C. The fact that God has set such favor upon you ought to give you great encouragement and power, even in the midst of a society that wants to

put you to shame for being a Christian. For your self-esteem, will you rely on God, or depend upon the evaluation of worldly people?

#### **IV. Realize that Christ abolished death and brought eternal life, v. 10b.**

- A. Abolishing death means to render it powerless to keep its victims. The resurrection of Jesus was the undoing of death. It cannot hold anyone permanently, not even unbelievers! They too will be raised and judged by God (1 Cor. 15:22). We "get it" that death is not absent. In other words, we do not teach a faith-healing-no-death theology. To do so would be ridiculous in the face of clear Biblical teaching and human experience. But the eternal power of death is gone for the Christian.
- B. Life and immortality has been sought by mankind forever. Reincarnation, the fountain of youth, and the modern technological striving for long life are ways that people try to avoid death. But the world hasn't figured out yet what Christians already know—that Christ has solved the immortality problem, and there is an easy way to participate. This is great news! It is something that should make you happy and "float on cloud 9" as the saying goes. But don't let the world "cloud" your vision of this fact: they try to say that the gospel is intolerant and awful and hateful and judgmental. We know it is the way to real freedom and life—and to God!

The gospel requires that you acknowledge your sin, your insufficiency, and your total dependence upon God. It requires you to acknowledge Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as coming in the flesh and dying on the cross for your sins and then rising from the dead. Then, calling out to the risen Christ for salvation, He promises you will have life and immortality.

#### **V. Notice the Example of Paul: Not Ashamed, v. 11-12**

- A. Paul was an appointed preacher of the gospel, v. 11.
1. Regarding the message that brings life, his assignment was to promote that message by preaching, teaching, and being an emissary of God for it. He was to make public proclamation of the good news as a delegate of God and to teach its truth systematically to all he could.
  2. He was the last person to be appointed as apostle, and although he did not live as long as John the apostle, there were no more people appointed to the office after Paul. No one after him could rightly call themselves an apostle because none qualifies as apostle in terms of direct appointment by Christ, having seen the resurrected Jesus and worked the signs of an apostle. Yet some churches claim to have the office of apostle or that their head man is an apostle today. Not so.

- B. Because of his appointment, he suffers persecution and imprisonment. As the herald of an unpopular message, people found a way to get rid of Paul. This all was in God's plan for Paul, according to Acts 9:15-16.
- C. Despite suffering for Christ, he is not ashamed, v. 12a. If he were a wrongdoer, he should be ashamed. But he did nothing wrong!
- D. Why is he not ashamed? Because He knows Jesus Christ, v. 12b.
1. He knows the One in Whom his faith has been placed. Paul's belief is a settled thing—"I believed, and still believe, and always will believe," he would say. Such is the nature of true faith—it is not an on-again-off-again thing, nor something you can deny and yet retain.
  2. Paul became totally persuaded that Christ is able to guard that which Paul has put on deposit with Him – his very life. Whether he dies or is raptured or whatever, Paul is persuaded Christ will take care of him all the way through judgment to eternal heavenly life.
  3. Christ has committed a charge to Paul and expects Him to be faithful in carrying out that charge. Paul in turn has committed something to Jesus, and that thing is his eternal future. Paul fully expects that God and Jesus and the Spirit will come through as They have promised.
- D. There is no place for Pascal's wager here. We are to be fully convinced.
1. Pascal's wager is the argument that it is in one's own best interest to behave as if God exists, since the possibility of eternal punishment in hell outweighs any advantage of believing otherwise (Google.com definition).
  2. The problem in this statement is behaving "as if God exists." It is not "as if." **He does.** If you know Him personally, then you know that.

## Conclusion

My invitation to you is to think right now about your life and what God would have you to do with it. I am not asking you to think about what **I** want you to do; or what **you** want to do with your life. I'm asking you to think about what **God** wants to do with your life. Adopt God's view as your own, and follow what God has said!

Back to the larger context, this is another way to be bold for God. When you have that grace, that power, that salvation, that holiness, that life and immortality, and that persuasion about Christ, then you can be confident as you walk through life and even through persecution for God.