

# (Keswick) 1959, Ministry From 2 Timothy - Part 1

by Paul S. Rees

---

*Paul S. Rees emphasizes the need for Christians to rekindle their spiritual fervor through remembrance, engagement, and anticipation of God's promises.*

**Duration:** 33:59

**Topics:** "Keswick Convention"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the second letter that Paul wrote to Timothy in the Bible. He encourages Timothy to rekindle the gift of God within him and to not let it die out. The speaker emphasizes the importance of looking back to the heritage of faith and the privilege of being entrusted with the gospel. He also urges Timothy to look up and see the demands of the gospel, letting it kindle him with solicitude. The sermon emphasizes the need for Timothy to discharge his trust in proclaiming the gospel and highlights the significance of the gospel in saving and calling believers.

---

## Transcript

...to you because there's hardly any way to introduce a man who is known all through the Christian world for his great and rich ministry. He's also known here at MidAmerica Keswick because this is not the first time he has been on the program at this meeting. But God has greatly used him and greatly blessed him, and it's a privilege indeed to announce him now and present him to you.

I might say that he's been on a plane for three nights, coming from Jakarta in Indonesia. And anybody who's been traveling for that length of time ought to look tireder than he looks. And as I met him just a little while ago, he had all the life and all the pep of a man who's been resting for a week.

Now I know that great things are in store for us as we hear his message and sit under his ministry each afternoon at this same hour through the week. Dr. Paul Reif. Thank you, my brother.

May we have just a moment of prayer. O God, our loving Father, we regard this as a gift from thee, this gift of worship, of opportunity, of fellowship, and of the ministry of thy word. This is all a very sacred trust for which one day thou wilt hold us accountable.

Help us then to make the finest and the most fruitful use of the trust. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

It's a delight to be here. I want, as the Spirit of God may lead you and me together, to discuss with you some aspects of our Christian truth as we have it in the second letter that Paul wrote to Timothy. This will be the field of our meditation and of our messages, please God, during these afternoons of the convention.

And in this first hour together, I want to single out as the focus of attention a very solemn word that Paul speaks to this young leader, Timothy, when he says in verse six of chapter one, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the angle of my hands. Now that last phrase does in a sense limit the significance of this text, but I want to remove the limitation as quickly as possible. That is to say, quite strictly, Paul is addressing Timothy as a fellow minister.

Paul a senior minister, Timothy a junior minister. And he says to this younger minister, there was a day when I laid my hands on you, and by the authority of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Word, I set you apart for the ministry. And in that day, your heart was on fire.

And now I discover the fire is going out, and something has to be done to light it afresh. Now that word is needed by many ministers. There have been times in my life when I'm sure it was needed by me.

And there are very few ministers who at one time or another do not need some such word as this to bring them up sharply to the realization that nothing is more certain than that an untended fire goes out. And again and again in the correspondence with Timothy, in both of the letters, Paul uses expressions that indicate this lack of attention, of concentration. He says, neglect not, neglect not, is there some minister, some Christian worker who has all of the other qualifications that under God you've ever possessed, for the carrying out of you a holy calling, but the fire has gone out.

Or if it hasn't gone out, it's burning low, but now let's remove the limitation. Beloved, here is a word for every Christian, minister or otherwise, separated under the gospel by ordination or not belonging, as we say, to the ranks of the laity. A discipleship without fire is not a New Testament discipleship.

A discipleship out of which the glow has gone is not a New Testament discipleship. Hence comes this word from the Holy Spirit, rekindle, rekindle the fire. Now, first of all, let's fix the failure.

And I use the word fix in this connection, not as we do usually in America, but as our friends in England use it, not in the sense of repairing something, but in the sense of determining something. A few weeks ago on the continent in Europe, I saw a sign in a shop that said, English spoken, American understood. Now, I'm using the word fix in the sense of determining.

It is the Holy Spirit's way of saying through Paul to this young leader in the church, let's be precise about this, Timothy, there is a kind of failure in your life that you need to recognize. Now, what is it? There are obviously failures that come into the lives of Christians that offend decency, ghastly things at times. If you want an Old Testament example, the kind of failure that you had in the life of King David in his sin with Bathsheba.

There are failures, I say, that offend against decency. There are other failures that come into the lives of Christians that offend orthodoxy. Paul had some of those with which to deal.

He speaks in the Timothy correspondence about persons like Hymenaeus and Philetus, who espoused a false and unchristian doctrine of the resurrection, who led astray themselves in their thinking and used their influence to lead others astray. There is a failure that offends against orthodoxy, but Timothy's failure

was in neither category. There was no offense against decency, not a hint of it.

Does Paul give in anything he says to this young man? There was no charge of heterodoxy, of false teaching, not a hint of it. No, there are other failures that offend against spirituality, and that was Timothy's failure. I use the word spirituality now, I hope not in any falsely pious sense, but rather in the New Testament sense of having the Holy Ghost in the realm of discernment, and of knowing the mind and mood of our Lord Jesus Christ, how to interpret it, and how to apply it in life.

That's real New Testament spirituality. And out of Paul's offended sense of spirituality, he writes as he does to Timothy, and he says, My dear friend and brother, you may be a leader in Ephesus, and you are. I set you there as a leader, and though I do not charge you for a moment with anything irregular or unrighteous in your life, and though I do not complain for a moment about anything false in your teaching, I do want you to know that whether you're aware of it or not, there is a glow that has gone out of your soul.

There is a passion that has been lost from your ministry. There is a vividness, there is a boldness that once marked your convictions, and correspondingly your practices, which now are gone. You need to light up the fire once more, rekindle this flame that once was in your heart.

Now that's the kind of failure that I think is God's great concern with masses of us who have upon our lips the name of his dear son Jesus Christ these days. It isn't that we go after false doctrine and help to circulate it or propagate it. That's not God's complaint.

But it is that we are pale, placid, passionless, complacent Christians, professing all that Calvary means, and set in the context of a world that is tottering toward doom and no fire in our disciples. Now that's the failure. Instead of there being in Timothy a blazing manliness, the whole thing was being reduced to a bland mediocrity.

That's just about where throngs of Christians are today, a kind of harmless mediocrity that the devil himself has no fear of. Secondly, having fixed the failure, let us fuel the fire. Now when Paul says, Timothy, I entreat you, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you, Paul implements that statement by suggesting to Timothy that there are certain things he can do, and if he'll do them, they are calculated to bring about this kindling of the fire that is now burning so low upon the inner altar.

For one thing, Paul says, Timothy, my suggestion to you is, dear man, that you look back to the heritage of faith that is yours. That should kindle within you the fire of gratitude, and when gratitude is all that it ought to be, it is a fire in one's breath. Thus, you have Paul saying to this young man, in verse five, I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and now, I am sure, dwells in you.

But where did it dwell first? It dwelt in his grandmother, it dwelt in his mother, it had become a heritage, passed on to him, which the Holy Spirit had used, the details are not given, but the facts are clear, had used to bring Timothy to the place where he had come into living union with Jesus Christ, where he had received the call to the Christian ministry, where he had come to know something of the ministry, and the power, and the working of the Holy Spirit in his life, where he had been ordained by hands, none other than Paul, for this ministry. Now, Paul says to Timothy, remember your heritage. I wonder if it is not true, I suggest to you that it is, that in moments when lights are burning low, and fires are banked in our individual lives and in our churches, I wonder if there is any more wholesome thing for us to do than to recapture some great memories.

Perhaps they are memories that go back into our own days, our own days of intimacy with God, our own days when the flame was hot within us, or if not our own in the sense of individual experience, the days that belong to our church or our communion, the days that belong to a movement. Always in our church life, in our group life, in the life or history of a movement, always there is this tendency to lose the momentum and the drive with which God launched us on our enterprise for his glory. And when the momentum is gone, and the fires have banked, and the acceleration has been slowed down to a snail's pace, we need to take a long look at the days that were, the days of God's right hand.

Again and again, in reading the Old Testament, one discovers how God reminded Israel of the past. He sends them right back to the Red Sea for the deliverance from Egypt, or the crossing of the Jordan, the days of his mighty wonders, his mighty movements in their midst. He says, you've forgotten this, or things could not come to such a path as they have come to now.

The Holy Ghost, Jesus said, will bring things to your remembrance. Maybe he is reminding some of us this afternoon of the days when the flame was burning within, when our hearts were hot with a love that was more than just enthusiasm for an organization, even your church or your denomination. Our hearts were hot with a devotion for Jesus Christ himself.

Look back. Look back, says Paul to Timothy, to the heritage of faith and of privilege that is yours, and let that fire you with gratitude. Or again, in the fueling of the flame that is dying out, Paul says to Timothy in effect, I suggest that you look up to see clearly the demands of this so great gospel with which you have been put in trust, and let that kindle you with solicitude, with real concern about your discharging, as you should, the trust that you have since this gospel has been committed to you.

Will you notice, please, and I pray these words will move you as they have moved my own spirit afresh in meditating upon this study this afternoon. Will you please notice these words beginning in verse nine? Or let us take the last clause of verse eight to get the connection. The gospel, the gospel, you notice, the gospel of our Lord who saved us and called us with an holy calling, Timothy, that's yours, not in virtue of our work, but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, or as Adam Clark has it, who counter-worked death, operated against all his operations, put him out of commission, has abolished death and brought life for the spirit and immortality for the body to an unveiling in his resurrection.

Now, this is the gospel, Timothy, that has been committed to you as a trust. And will you proclaim this gospel with lips that are not touched with fire? Will you peddle this gospel with a lackadaisical heart? God forgive you if you do. See how sublime a thing it is.

See how high and holy a thing it is to which you have been called. And let the flame of solicitude, real concern, let you fail your Lord, and fail to proclaim in all fervor and fidelity the gospel that he has committed to you to pass on to us. For again, Paul says, Timothy, not only look back to your heritage and let that kindle you with gratitude, look up to the gospel that has been given to you from above and let that kindle you with solicitude, but look out at the men around you whose hearts have not grown cold.

Now, Paul singles out, interestingly enough, in the course of this chapter, the first chapter of the second letter to Timothy, Paul singles out one of the very winsome and courageous characters of the New Testament, who must, nevertheless, because of what little we know about him, be set down as one of the lesser lights of the inspired record, namely, this man, Onesiphorus. Well, you notice the contrast between

verse 15 and verse 16. You are aware, says Paul to Timothy, you are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me.

Here, Paul was in prison. Timothy was yonder in Ephesus. Timothy was free.

Paul was in prison. And you are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelus and Hermogenes. Now, notice my contrast.

May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me. He was not ashamed of my chains. Have you taken that apart to grasp the implications of it? He was not ashamed of my chains.

Clearly implied is the fact that some of the brethren were. They were ashamed of Paul's chains. They evidently were among those of whom Paul spoke, you remember.

When he wrote him the Philippian letter, he said, I know that some of you think I'm mad beside myself, and some of you think that I'm sober, I'm clothed in my right mind. But he said, whatever you may think, whether you think I'm crazy or the most poised leader you ever saw, I simply want you to know that it's the love of Christ that constrains me. But now do you notice there were those who said Paul is an extremist.

There's no point in him going so far as this. This way he has of just absolutely standing, standing immovably against the right of circumcision, as belonging to Christian discipleship, and as being related to the gospel. Well, that's all foolishness.

Why should he have to be so uncompromising as this? And you know, Paul had to say on one occasion, even Peter wavered on this when he got to Antioch. And Paul said, I had to withstand him to his fate. There are times when a man has to take a costly stand even among his own brethren.

And so those who were in this camp, some of them, evidently were ashamed of Paul's case. But it's all uncalled for. When Martin Niemöller stood up and spoke out against Adolf Hitler and the attempt of Hitler to take the Christian Church over in Germany, in the pre-World War II days in Germany, and was imprisoned for it, a fellow pastor came to call him in his cell and said to him, Niemöller, why are you here? And Niemöller's answer was, my brother, why are you not here? That's exactly the thing that some of us have need of hearing.

Why are you not here? It's time that we were not ashamed of those who take their stand in the freedom and the fullness of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, it's quite true that the Holy Spirit himself has a dreadful time with some of us, getting us to distinguish between real essentials, as in Paul's case, on circumcision. Now, that was a real essential.

There was a principle there, the freedom and the complete sufficiency of the gospel, as distinguished in legalism and ceremonialism. But the Holy Ghost has a hard time getting some of us to distinguish between essential things like that and little taboos of our own. Now, blessed is the man who has discernment, and who, if he's going to prison, goes to prison for something real, something fundamental, something basic.

I have a friend who's a theologian out on the West Coast, and he's had very wide experience. He's a man now well along in years. But he said a thing some years ago that struck me, and I think I grasped the force of it.

He said, in my lifetime, I've had very little trouble with people's convictions. I've had a lot of trouble with their opinions. It's an interesting distinction.

I've had very little trouble with people's convictions, but I've had a lot of trouble with their opinions. And we mustn't get our little private opinions and taboos mixed up with great and basic convictions. But when these essential things are at stake, there is no price too great for us to pay.

And if we're not paying them ourselves, the very least we can do is to stand by those who are paying. So Paul says to Timothy, look out upon men like Onesiphorus, who are not ashamed of my shame, and let that fire your heart with fortitude. That's what you need, Timothy.

Timothy was inclined to soft-pedal his intimacy with Paul. He was inclined to be ashamed of this close identification that he had had with Paul in the past. I can read nothing less than that in these words of verse 8, for instance, where Paul says to him very pointedly, do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony of our Lord, nor, nor of me, his prisoner.

And then there is a fourth suggestion here, infueling the fire that was burning low on the inner altar of Timothy's soul. Paul says to him, there's another thing you can do, dear man. You can look ahead to the glory that God has laid up for you, and that will fire you with certitude.

Twice over in this opening chapter, used again later, but twice in this opening chapter of the second Timothy letter, Paul uses the phrase, that day. That day. In this extremely familiar verse 12, he says, you remember, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, or I am sure, is the revised adjective, that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

And then in the final verse of the chapter, again, this is part of his very tender and grateful reference to Olympus Ipharis, Paul says, may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. Now here is the day of rewards. For later, you remember, Paul says, concerning that day, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day.

What's this? The crown. Now ready to be offered, time of my departure is at hand, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day. And not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing.

Look ahead, Timothy. There's a day of reckoning. There's a judgment seat.

There's a day of rewards. There's a day of glory. Make no, have no doubt about it.

Make perfectly sure of it. And ask in the light of it. This will fire your heart.

God is not unfaithful, as we are reminded elsewhere, to forget our labor of love. God will never forget. You remember the words of Jesus in the twelfth of John? If any man serve me, him will my Father honor.

My Father will honor him. If you and I want to be stripped of these honors, then let us go on disregarding the admonitions of the Holy Spirit, living our pale, classic lives, living without this fire that kindles our convictions, this fire that lights up our eyes, this fire that has something about it that is convincing and contagious to other people. There was a very brilliant humanist in Spurgeon's day who would every now and again go and hear him preach at the Tabernacle in London, and one day a man said to him, why do you go and listen to that man? You don't believe what he says.

No, he said, I don't, but he does. Ah, people can tell it even though they may not always agree with us. Is this thing really a fire in our hearts? And then, finally, let's face the facts.

Now, what are the facts in the life of the Christian? Well, the facts are, first of all, that the Holy Spirit who is given to the Christian, the Holy Spirit is not the spirit of fear. Do you notice that in verse 7? God did not give up, and here I must reject, as far as I'm concerned, and many others as well, it isn't a personal matter at all, and I don't mean to suggest I'm an authority on it, but I must reject the way the Revised Standard Version has of giving the word spirit a small s here, because I'm persuaded, as many are, that this is a reference to the Holy Spirit, and some of our later translations indicated clearly by using the capital F. The Holy Spirit whom God has given to us is not the spirit of fear. On the contrary, he is the spirit who emancipates us from fear, sets us free from fear.

Now, are we prepared to reckon with that fact? Furthermore, it is a fact that the Holy Spirit emancipates us from fear, not merely by some sort of negative release, just getting rid of something, but he does it by the positive endowment of power and love and a sound mind. Power that activates us, love that motivates us, and a sound mind or self-control that regulates us. Sometimes when we talk about having fire in our discipleship, fire in our testimony, fire in our ministry, people get the idea that what we're really talking about is sheer excitement, sheer volubility, sheer effervescence.

That isn't it at all. You know, there are two very different kinds of explosions. There's the kind of explosion that you can have, the kind of Fourth of July thing, you light a fuse and wham, off it goes, it's all over.

Whatever's happened, it's happened either for sheer display or maybe it's more serious than that, it's damaged something. But there it is, one vast, more or less futile explosion. But what happens when you drive your car? Something is going on under the hood, or as our English friends say, under the bonnet.

Something is going on there that your eye never sees. What is it? It's a series of explosions, controlled explosions. That's what power is in a gasoline engine.

Power under control, and the result is your car is driven. It does what a car is supposed to do, it carries its load, it makes its grades, it keeps its appointments, a series of controlled explosions. And when you and I know what it means, not only to have the Holy Spirit, but to let the Holy Spirit have us, to really, deeply, drastically, and continuously be cleansed by and filled with the Holy Spirit, we live, we live a series of controlled explosions.

It is the power, it is the love of God under the control of the Holy Ghost, mastering and motivating and sanctifying our lives. O God, our Father, command thy blessing upon these meditations, upon thy holy word, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28057.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paul-s-rees/keswick-1959-ministry-from-2-timothy-part-1/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**