

# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY OCTOBER 6, 2019

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## "I Know Whom I Have Believed"

Based on 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Paul was nearing the end of his life. His "Onward Christian Soldiers" approach to ministry was finished, and Paul realized that his legacy to the world and to the faith would be from his memoirs and his letters. This is thought to be his last letter.

As he sat in prison that last time, waiting for the appointed day and time, one wonders if he suffered alone, or with his disciples (small D), scribes, and crowd chasers milling about. I mean, a prison death sentence often curtails a rise in popularity, does it not? And we know, that the Disciples (capital D) of Christ himself, struggled to be near and supportive when Jesus' death sentence was announced, and the situation dire. I wonder, if Timothy himself, a man dedicated to Paul and to the principals of the Christian faith, did not hesitate in these tense times surrounding Paul's imminent death:

*For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. So do not be ashamed of the*

*testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. (v7-8)*

Paul had some time to reflect on the gains made for the faith: disciples in many corners; organized churches in many cities, some thriving, some struggling, a new understanding of religion moving into the empty spaces between established traditions. He could see the thin thread of faith growing stronger in families as the younger generations took their lead from their mothers and grandmothers.

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~2 TIMOTHY 1:12

Looking back, much had been accomplished. Looking forward, Paul moved in quiet surety.

He had stood tall in the faith and his stand had changed the world.

He had suffered for the faith, yet

*"...This is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day." (v12)*

Paul's final instructions to Timothy, to the churches of the Mediterranean, and his final legacy to the world: Keep the faith.

Teach well and wisely.

*Guard the {good deposit} [treasure] that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. (v14)*

Guard the treasure entrusted to you.

We are privileged this day, to have the opportunity to share the cup and the bread together as brothers and sisters. It warms our hearts a little, to know that other churches in this city will do likewise today. And if we were to use our imaginations and board an invisible supersonic jet, we can imagine congregations in country churches in England, Byzantine chapels in Turkey,

ornate cathedrals in France,  
windowless huts in Africa,  
and in jungle canopies of Asia,  
all lifting the cup and blessing  
the bread this day; with gold  
and silver chalices, wooden  
cups and bowls, wafers and  
wine.

- It is a little more difficult for us to consider those churches, where yes, a guard is at the door to ensure the safety of those who worship, or where guns are visible to make sure families get home safely.
- It is difficult to consider dictatorships where even today, the whisper of the word Christian, can result in a firing squad or the refusal of food and medical care.
- It is difficult for us to consider those places where people go hungry, so there are some small scraps of flour and clean water to make elements to bless. Yet, these believers in these difficult places take the words of Paul, just as seriously as you and I.

Guard the treasure entrusted to you.  
Let its beauty shine where it can.  
Let it glow warmly, hidden in your pocket if needed, to ensure the safety of those you care about.  
Feel its weight.  
Dream upon its possibilities.  
Be resilient and determined to not lose the treasure we have.  
Someway.  
Somehow.

Approach the table today,  
• With the confidence of Paul who knew the value of the spiritual treasure he held  
• With the awareness of grace gifted to you  
• Approach the table, just as you are  
• Recognize the privilege we have to share the feast in freedom  
• And with a humility that remembers others this day, who strive to lift their treasures high in difficult places of the world.

Men, women, children, around the world,  
Come to the table,  
For the feast is ready.