

Worship Material
A treasured story
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 5th October

Begin with an opening prayer

Dear Lord, some of us come today
in need of nourishment and refreshment,
some of us in need of company and friendship.
Some come with joy and hope to share.
Help us to all to join as one family, supporting each other,
and praising and worshipping you.

Amen.

Read 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Bible notes

2 Timothy reads like a last will and testament. Paul (see p.x on the authorship of this letter) expects to die soon for his faith, and entrusts his legacy to his 'beloved child' Timothy. The language is affectionate and intimate, with its mention of tears of sadness alongside joy (v.4). Its unifying thread is the call to fight for the truth of the gospel against false teachers who deceive and disturb believers in Christ (see 2:14-19). Timothy is also unsettled by the prospect of Paul's death. Martyrdom brings shame rather than honour, both to martyrs and their sympathisers. So where will Timothy find the strength he needs to fulfil his calling?

Paul reminds Timothy of the human and divine strands of a treasured story of faith. Like Paul's, the faith of his mother and grandmother has strong Jewish roots, which provide stability under stress (v.5). Paul's suffering can also bring strength rather than shame, because it reveals the grace and calling of God (vv.9-12), which Paul has extended to Timothy by commissioning him to his ministry (v.6). Paul's brief reminder of Timothy's human resources leads him quite naturally to invoke the divine resources that sustain his faith and ministry, summed up by one of Paul's favourite words, 'grace' (vv.2, 9).

Notice how God's grace is revealed in Timothy's story: as a reason for gratitude (v.3); as the call to share in Paul's ministry (vv.6, 9); as a source of divine strength that turns shame into honour (vv.7, 8); as the expression of God's

eternal purpose rather than a reward for Timothy's abilities or ambitions (v.9); as the divine trust that will guard him in the face of opposition (v.12); as the Holy Spirit, which like faith is 'living in us' (vv.5, 14).

God's grace is embodied in 'the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus' (v.10). The italicised words, borrowed from the worship of pagan gods and the Roman emperor, highlight the unique power of Christ Jesus over death by refusing to give it the last word, not least in the face of martyrdom (vv.10,12). This is good news worth proclaiming and teaching, as the treasured story of 'the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus' (v.13).

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for your Word.
As we read it, give us a deeper understanding of it.
Open our eyes to the treasures within your Word
and help us to see opportunities where we could share
it with others.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Heavenly Father, thank you that we have been able
to gather as your family here today.
As we leave this place,
may what we have learnt and shared remain with us.
Help us to treasure your story.
May our actions reflect your story and guide our lives,
until we meet again.
In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.