**OUR MOMENT IN HISTORY**

***A Spirit of Fear or Power?***

Paul sure missed Timothy. They had been long separated by choice, not accident. Whenever Paul started a church he would plant the seed, then encourage others to remain behind and water, allowing God to give the increase (I Corinth. 3:6). He left Titus in Crete (Tit. 1:5) and Timothy in Thessalonica (I Thess. 3:1) and Ephesus (I Tim. 1:3). Now Paul was in a dark prison awaiting trial and certain death before Caesar (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Paul’s last words to his beloved son in the faith were these:

*Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*.” (2 Timothy 1:6-7)

We relate to Timothy, don’t we? We sympathize with him. Too often we are indicted for the same spirit of fear. So we also must be challenged that “*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of a sound mind*.”

This was no time for timidity. Cowering in fear was not to be the lot of the Christian. Disciples of Christ knew from the get-go what they had signed up for, as Jesus had made it crystal clear in this thought-provoking challenge in Luke 14: 25-33. Let’s read it together in order to remind each other of what our confession of Christ meant on the day we were baptized:

“Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, **he cannot be My disciple**. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me **cannot be My disciple**. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’? 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has **cannot be My disciple**.”

That final verse summed it up well: *“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”*

All around us we hear the fearmongering chants of the world. This Coronavirus (Covid-19) has paralyzed many into thinking only of self and family. While it is certainly prudent to take precautions to protect ourselves and loved ones, we have a higher calling, like Timothy, to display the “*spirit of power, love and sound mind*.” We must think outside our own safety to the needs of a world that is scared and lost.

As soldiers of Christ, this is our time, our moment in history, to shine our light (Matt. 5:16). In fact, in my humble opinion, this is the greatest moment in our life to show a terrified world what a Christian really is. Thank God, Timothy did. In Hebrews 13:23 we read of his response to Paul’s challenge when the writer says: *“Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly.”* He overcame his spirit of fear and displayed his spirit of power, love and a sound mind, likely being arrested for boldly preaching the gospel.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, may the God who rules in the kingdoms of men and who controls the progress of history, grant each of us the “*spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*.” I pray with all my heart that you are not paralyzed by a “*spirit of fear.*” The world, including our own country, is becoming more and more antagonistic toward Christians. Our faith is under assault. When we speak up for our moral values and doctrinal beliefs we are criticized and sometimes threatened with censorship. This has caused so many to be silenced in order to avoid criticism.

But this is our moment. This is our time in history to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). More and more I read and meditate on Paul’s words to the suffering saints at Philippi and think to myself, do I have a spirit of fear, or a spirit of power? Listen to Paul and ask yourself the same question:

27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you **stand fast** in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, 28 and **not in any way terrified by your adversaries**, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. 29 For to **you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake**, 30 having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

Paul challenged Timothy to step up his faith. He challenged the Philippians to do the same. In doing so he has now challenged each of us to not cower during hard times, but to “*stand fast*” – believing God has granted us this moment in history “*to suffer for His sake*.” Just as John reminded the Christians in Smyrna, so now we are reminded

*“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

This is your moment. Stand up, stand up for Jesus. – Rick