

# GUARDING THE GOOD DEPOSIT

## *An Intergenerational Call to Gospel Faithfulness*

From 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Pastor Nick Wilson

05/13/2018

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- a. Opening Illustration: Ancestry.com, admiration for paternal grandparents, David and Carol Wilson.
- b. Transition: There's something deeply ingrained in each of us that longs to know where we came from, to discover the life and legacies of those who have gone before us. There's also something deeply ingrained in each of us that longs to leave a legacy for the generation to come. For Christians, that legacy is their own but that of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As Paul was facing death in a Roman prison, his last recorded words were exactly what you'd expect: continue to advance the gospel. "Guard the good deposit." It's this phrase that captures the theme of this morning's message and it's this phrase that captures the theme of the whole letter.

Where "guarding the good deposit" takes center stage in this letter, in this passage we also see ancestry playing an important background role as well. For this reason, I can summarize this morning's message with a simple statement:

- c. **Proposition:** *Because God's grace has been passed down through our spiritual ancestors, persevere in guarding the good deposit for the glory of God and the good of the next generation.*
2. GUARDING THE GOOD DEPOSIT: 2 questions: (1) What is this good deposit? (2) How is it guarded?
- a. (1) What is the "Good Deposit?" - THE GOSPEL. We know this since Paul says he was appointed a preacher and teacher of the gospel and encourages Timothy in verse 13 to "follow the pattern of the sound words (i.e. the gospel) that you have heard from me" (more on this later).

We find at least 5 aspects of the gospel in this passage.

### i. **God in Christ: The Headwaters of the Gospel (1:1-2)**

Paul is an apostle (authorized messenger of the gospel) of Christ, ordained by God for the proclamation of God's gospel. Paul must be ordained by God to preach *His* gospel because the gospel message is God's message. God in Christ is the source of the gospel.

[Lake Itasca: Headwaters of the Mississippi] Like a mighty river whose headwaters is its place of origin, so it is with the gospel whose origin is God, himself.

### ii. **Our Spiritual Ancestry: The Channel for the Gospel (3-5)**

To continue the river analogy, the banks of a river serve to channel the water downstream. So too our spiritual ancestors are who God uses to channel the gospel to us. Let me clarify a few things before I unpack that last statement.

1. Paul (1:3) and Timothy both had ancestors to whom they were indebted for their faith. Paul mentions Timothy's grandmother and mother by name, crediting them for Timothy's faith. These women likely came to faith in Christ during Paul's first visit to Lystra in Acts 14:8-23.
2. Not all of our biological ancestors are "spiritual." We know Paul understands this because Timothy's father was a Gentile (Acts 16:1-2) and an unbeliever.
3. Not all of those who've had the greatest spiritual impact on us have been our biological ancestors. Of course, Paul knows this too which is why he refers to Timothy as his "beloved child"
4. In this way, a "spiritual ancestor" is anyone whom God has used to prepare or produce genuine faith in your life (5, cf. 3:15a). They serve as channels of God's grace to us through the generations.

### iii. **Suffering: The Voice of the Gospel (8, 11-12)**

Remember, Paul is in a Roman prison facing death. This letter was likely his final recorded words before

being beheaded. Being a Christian is costly! Preaching the gospel is costly! Instead of wishing Timothy a happy, peaceful, successful life, he encourages him to, "Not be ashamed... share in suffering for the gospel."

Like rocks in a river that disrupt its flow but give it voice, suffering disrupts our lives but it gives voice to the gospel. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church" (Tertullian). Christian suffering authenticates the Christian gospel.

It does so because it shows Christ as excellent rather than useful. You may toss a tool when it hurts you as your assembling a crib for a child, but you don't toss a child when they hurt you as you assemble their crib.

**iv. Grace: The Riverbed of the Gospel (9)**

What do you find beneath the water of a river or stream? The riverbed. What do you find beneath the gospel? Grace. God's grace alone.

Why is the good news "good" for us? Why do we benefit? Why are you saved? If you begin an answer with, "I...", you'd be incorrect! Notice it's *the power of God* that is responsible for our being saved. How'd he do it? *According to his own purpose and grace. When did he do it? Before the ages began!*

Grace. Undeserved, de-merited favor is the bedrock reason why the good news is good for you today.

**v. The Promise of Life: The Substance of the Gospel (1, 10)**

But what *is* the gospel? According to verse ten it's the (a) abolishment of death, and (b) the bringing of life and immortality, and (c) both through Jesus Christ.

- b. How is it guarded? Three ways:
  - i. Fan into flame the gift of God
    - 1. Gift of God: Timothy's spirit-empowered anointing for public ministry. Not everyone

has that exact anointing or that gifting – that's ok! What's your gifting?

- 2. Fan into flame: continuous activity of using and growing our spiritual gift competency.
- ii. Share in suffering, the voice of the gospel
  - 1. Don't curse the rocks, embrace them *by God's power*
  - 2. Don't pick out the rocks for your kids; prepare them for it by modeling what it is to embrace suffering for the sake of Christ.
  - 3. No suffering? No faith (John 15:18; 2 Tim. 3:12)
- iii. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me
  - 1. You can't guard the words if you don't know the words and you can't know the words if you don't read the words!
  - 2. Know what God says because you can't guard or maintain what which you don't know. *That's why I have such a difficult time with home ownership!*

**3. SUMMARY & APPLICATION**

- a. Summary: (1) The gospel is the good deposit to which we have been entrusted. (2) This gospel is guarded by the exercising of our gifting for its advancement, even through suffering.
- b. Application:
  - i. Thank God for your spiritual ancestors, moms and grandmothers included!
  - ii. Continue the legacy of your spiritual ancestor by being a spiritual "ancestor" for someone else.
    - 1. Do you have the good deposit? Is the good news of Jesus Christ *yours* this morning?
    - 2. How well are you guarding it? Are you fanning into flame your gifting? Are you ashamed of the gospel or do you chose to embrace suffering for the gospel?
    - 3. How are you equipping the next generation to guard it well?