LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

2 Timothy 1 (Part 2) :13–18

Holding fast, guarding and refreshing

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · September 10, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Open your Bible to 2nd Timothy. That's where we are continuing here on Sunday morning as we're studying through the New Testament on Sunday morning and the Old Testament on Wednesday evening. So, here, Sunday morning, it's 2nd Timothy. We are in the first chapter and we're just going to be completing the last six verses of the chapter. It's not terribly long, but there's some really good stuff here as the Apostle Paul continues to exhort young Timothy.

We're picking it up in verse 13. Follow along as I read. It says, follow the pattern of the sound words that you've heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. You are aware that all who are in Asia, turned away from me, among whom are Phagellus and Hermogenes.

May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. But when he arrived in Rome, he searched for me earnestly and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the ministry of your word. Just these last six verses here of the chapter. We pray that you would help us to lay hold of what the Apostle is saying to Timothy and more generally to all of us about our faith and how we walk it out on a day-to-day basis. We pray that you would speak to each heart for you, Lord, know each and every person. You know what's going on in the deepest recesses of their heart and mind.

You know them better than they know themselves. And we, Lord, need you to speak to us through your scriptures. We believe, God, that you have something to say. And so we ask you, Lord God, to help us to really tune our hearts to your voice. We ask this, Father, in the name of Jesus, our Savior.

Amen. Amen. You'll notice in verse 13 that we first started reading, Paul tells Timothy to follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me. The New American Standard Bible has something fairly similar. It says, retain the pattern of sound words.

But if you have a New King James that you're looking at here today, it's a little bit more forceful. The New King James actually says, hold fast the pattern of sound words. And I like that translation the best, I'll be honest with you. Because I looked up the Greek and the Greek word actually suggests an action that Timothy needs to take in order to hold on to sound words. And he's talking about basically the gospel, the message of truth that he's conveyed.

He needs to take action or he's going to lose it. That's the idea behind the Greek word. You must hold on or it's going to be gone. Or it's going to just kind of, you'll lose your grip, I guess. Maybe that's a good way of saying it.

And so this is an important word for us to hear today. It's, that something, that important, follow the pattern of sound words that you've heard from me. What he's talking about there, obviously, is the very word of God. And so here's the question. How have we done?

How have we done holding on? I mean, we've got 2000 years of history to kind of look at in terms of how we've done as a, as a church. Holding fast to the pattern, you know, that is given to us here in the word of God, in the, in the Bible. How, how, how have we done? Well, the sad reality, as you well know, is that many churches throughout the years and even today have not held fast to the sound instruction of God's word.

And so it is, they've lost it. And that's what Paul is saying here. Hold fast. Otherwise, you're going to, you're going to lose it. It's going to slip out of your hands.

And, you know, there's a lot of, a lot of churches where you just, you just know that it has slipped away. I, I hear from people all over the world, but one of the, one of the continents that where it seems to have slipped badly is the continent of Africa. And I don't know why that is, but I hear from a lot of people who are saying that they really have no churches to attend that really go through and just teach the simple scriptures that go through the Bible. All the churches that they attend there are dominated with the prosperity message of personal blessing. You know, it's just all about you being prosperous and being blessed and, and which is an easy thing to preach because that's exactly what people want to hear.

You know, I mean, I personally, it's a fun message, you know, it's just that it's just, it's just not the, it's not the essence of the sound teaching that was passed along to us. In fact, we, we, we learn later on in this

very letter that that is something Paul warned about in later times. Let me skip ahead on the screen here with you with second Timothy chapter four, where he says, the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth. So he says, this is going to kind of characterize later days. People are going to gather around them, people to tell them what they want to hear because their passions make them, you know, motivate them to, to want to have this or have that.

And so I'm just going to gather people around me to tell me what I want to hear. That is just in line with what I, my flesh wants, the lusts of my flesh, you know, and he says that will dominate. And, and frankly, in many churches it is today. And, you know, I don't know if you've ever had been going, go to a new church and you want to read the statement of faith to kind of find out where they're at. Have you ever done that?

Ask the church to give you a statement of faith so you can kind of get a sense of where they're at. By the way, isn't finding a new church a bummer? Isn't it a drag? You know, I think that's one of the reasons God called me into the pastorate is just so I'd never have to find a church because I hate it. I hate it.

When Sue and I moved up to Washington, the Seattle area where I went to college, we had to look for a fellowship to kind of go to for a while. And I just, I hated it. You know, you don't know anybody. And we had this brand new little baby and we weren't really sure we wanted to put her in a nursery full of strangers. And it was just, it was just awful, you know.

But sometimes when you're going to find a new fellowship, you want to kind of get a sense of what they're about. And now today, of course, you know, we have the ability to get online in most churches and you can read their statement of faith and that sort of thing. But sometimes it, even though a statement of faith may be excellent in terms of how it is put together, it may not reflect what they're actually conveying over the pulpit. And the reason I say that is because of experience. I was raised, my family attended a very liberal mainline denomination while I was growing up, but it had a great statement of faith and we recited it every Sunday.

In fact, by the time I was like in the fourth or fifth grade, I had it memorized. We recited it every single Sunday. Can you imagine getting up and reciting a statement of faith? And of course we had to, they would say, now stand for the reciting of the statement of faith. Well, stand up because it said in the bulletin, that's when you stand up.

And so we all stood up and we said, and now we're going to recite statement of faith. We believe, and then when everybody do it, kind of, you know, and there's kind of this very droning kind of voice thing as everybody's saying, I believe, I believe. And I remember that it was, it was good from the standpoint of being, you know, pretty, I didn't realize it until I got saved, of course. And I went back and I read that, you know, statement of faith again, and I thought, you know, that's really good, but that's not what came across the pulpit. It's interesting.

As I was putting my notes together, I got on, I figured, you know, they probably still have something online. I went to their online website. They still have the same statement of faith I memorized when I was in grade school. And yet they brag on that same webpage that they were the first denomination to ordain an openly gay pastor. So there's issues, you see.

They haven't held fast. They haven't held fast to the word of God. And so, you know, that can be kind of a problem, you know, when you're trying to figure out exactly. Honestly, I think that's, if you're looking for a new church, you know, I hope you're not. I hope you're, it's kind of a weird thing to say to people, you know, are you looking for a new church?

Let's just assume the Lord moves you somewhere. And you have to do that. Really, the first thing you ought to ask yourself is, is this fellowship holding to the pure? sound teaching of the Bible, or have they veered off? Have they strayed away from it?

I want you to notice now as we go on to verse 13, Paul tells Timothy how to hold fast to the word. He says, first of all, verse 13, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here, we're at the end of that verse. So he's saying here, this is how you walk out that connecting and holding fast to the word. You do it in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

So the first thing he says is we're to hold on to the word of God in faith or by faith. And what that means is we embrace every word, everything that the Bible says, and we embrace it as trustworthy because it is God's word. And the reason that is important is because there are many things in God's word that are frankly beyond human comprehension. And if you don't hang on to them in faith, then you're not gonna hang on to them at all because they're impossible to understand. People ask me all the time, Pastor Paul, can you explain to me the Trinity?

I'm like, no, I can't, and neither can you. That is a revelation of God's word that extends beyond our human comprehension. It's just one of those things, you know? So are you gonna believe it even if you can't humanly comprehend it? Do you know that there are people, and maybe you were one of them or

maybe you still are, one of those people who just struggles embracing things in the Bible when you can't understand them when you can't wrap your mind around it, as we like to say.

I've had people tell me, you know, I've been looking into this issue of the Trinity, I just cannot wrap my mind around it, so I don't know. And so what they're basically saying is, is because it doesn't appeal to my own sense of something that's comprehendable, you know, I don't think I'm gonna believe this. But what you're essentially saying is, is that it has to make sense to me personally or it can't be true. And I always like to tell people, we're talking about God here. And we're talking about the nature of God.

And personally, I find it very comforting to know that the nature of God is beyond my human comprehension. Because as I've told you many times before, if I was able to comprehend everything about the nature of God, that would mean my brain is equal to the nature of God. And that would be a very sad scenario, right? So you deal with, you know, the Trinity, you deal with a lot of other biblical truths that are revealed in God's word. And you're gonna have to decide at some particular point if you're going to surrender those things to your own level of comprehension and embrace them simply on the basis of the fact that God has revealed them in his word.

Or if you're gonna say, no, no, no, no, it's gotta make sense. See, that's the thing, we hold on to the word of God in faith, by faith, you know. We choose faith. Sometimes even over that ability to comprehend. And there are a lot of other, I mean, I've mentioned the Trinity, but there are several other, you know, biblical truths that are revealed in the scripture that are beyond our ability to understand.

So we have to make that decision. Next, we're to hold on to the word and to the sound teaching of the Bible by love. Did you notice that? He says, in the faith and love. And the reason for that, of course, is because without love, we're nothing, you know.

It is absolutely useless to know the truth of God's word, but not care about people, not love people, you know. You have the truth, big deal. Because, you know, the word of God is an interesting sort of thing. You know, it defines itself as a double-edged sword. You guys remember that, right?

The word of God is like a double-edged sword and it cuts and it has the ability to cut deeply. But when it's used in love, and God, of course, always uses it in love, but when it's used in love, it brings a cut that ultimately brings healing, okay? Have you ever been sitting in church or reading your Bible or listening to something, maybe even a Christian song or whatever, and just the Lord just convicts you? And it's kind of painful, isn't it? Sometimes that conviction can be really painful.

Oh, wow, that one cut. But, you know, it's a good thing. You realize that this is the scalpel of the master surgeon. And yeah, it was painful, but I needed to hear that. And there's healing that ultimately comes from that cut, you know, of the word of God.

But guess what happens when the sharp edge of the word of God is used without love? It cuts for no other reason but to draw blood. Because I'm gonna be right and I'm gonna prove that you are wrong. You know, without that love, without that compassion, we're not holding on to what's really important about holding on to the word of God. Notice in verse 14, as we move through here, Paul repeats an exhortation that he actually gave to Timothy at the very end of his first letter.

But here he says in verse 14, by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted in you. Those of you who went through our first Timothy study, you'll remember when we talked about this. It was at the very tail end of Paul's first letter. So he says, guard, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. To guard means to protect, to defend, to secure, what he calls the good deposit that was entrusted in Timothy.

We all, you know, we know what guarding means. We have a basic understanding of that. It's interesting to me that what Paul doesn't explain in either first Timothy or here in second Timothy is what he means by the good deposit. He doesn't say. It's one of those interesting sort of things that Paul knew that Timothy knew.

And so he just said, guard the good deposit without getting into any real specific detail. But you know, it's really not that tough when you think about the good deposit. What has God deposited in your life? You know, since you came to know Christ as your savior, what has he deposited in you? Peace?

Guard it, you know. Joy? Guard it. Purpose? A sense of purpose to life more than just getting up in the morning, going to work, making money and buying things?

Has he given you spiritual gifts? Has he deposited spiritual gifts in you? Guard them. And that's the point of what he's saying. Guard the good deposit.

And so what we see here in these first couple of verses that we're looking at is that Paul is exhorting Timothy to hold fast and to guard because it was necessary to do that. Why would Paul say to Timothy, hold fast to the word of God and guard what God has given you unless there was some potential danger of losing, you know, sight of all of these great blessings that have come into our lives and the wisdom that God has given us through his word. You know, the fact of the matter is we can stray from the word of God.

We've seen people do it all the time. We've seen people let go of the wonderful blessings that they've been given.

We've seen, I'm sure you've experienced the peace of God and then you've experienced losing it too. And perhaps even other things too. And so they need to be guarded because there's a potential to move away from what we've been given. Paul describes a rather sad example of this as he goes on in verse 15 to write about the fact that he says to Timothy, you know, he says, I know that you're aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. And so he says, everybody in the area of Asia, and he's talking about believers here.

He's essentially saying that once I was arrested, once I became an enemy of Rome, they all just kind of got scarce. And you know, fear can do that. I'm sure there was a huge stigma that went along with the whole idea of Paul being arrested. And then, you know, if you're considered to be a friend of a criminal, a friend of an enemy of Rome, I mean, that has some implications to it that could be dangerous for you. And so it's very possible, you know, that these people felt shame or fear or whatever, and they kind of just decided to back away and become scarce as it relates to, you know, being close to Paul and connecting with him.

And that sort of thing. And you know, that's what fear can do, can it? Boy, have we learned what fear can do in the last year and a half? Good grief, have we learned about fear? Some of us were absolutely oblivious to what fear could do in terms of its controlling influence in our lives.

And man, have we had an up-close and personal lesson about how many things fear can cause us to do that we wouldn't have done otherwise. And I don't think probably any of these people who had abandoned Paul, if they'd been asked. So if Paul gets in trouble or if he kind of, you know, starts having. some issues with the government, are you the kind of person that's going to kind of back away from him? They would all go, oh, no, never.

I mean, you remember Peter at the Last Supper, Jesus announces tonight, this night, all of you are going to desert me. And Peter, you know, was horrified at the thought and he's like, no way am I going to desert you. Absolutely no way. I am here no matter what. You guys know what happened.

They all deserted him. So, you know, it's one thing to say or to have intentions, good intentions, but then when fear and difficult circumstances come into play, it can cause us to do and to say things that we wouldn't do or say normally. And that's what's going on here. Paul says, you guys know, you know that

these fellows that had been really pretty close to me, they've all abandoned me. And yet there's one man who he talks about here who didn't.

By the way, isn't it interesting that we think about the Apostle Paul as this great biblical figure? And, yeah, I would agree with that. I mean, here's a man who wrote a lot of letters, most of which became the majority of the New Testament. I mean, they're like in our Bible. And I think there's probably a lot of people who are thinking, gee, you know, when I go to be with the Lord, I'm going to look up the Apostle Paul, sit down and have a little talk, you know, because I'd like to know more about this guy.

He's a pretty incredible guy. And yet, isn't it interesting at this particular place in his life where he's in prison awaiting execution, he's not a popular man. People aren't running to go see Paul or talk to Paul. They're keeping their distance right now. Whatever they may think of him or whatever they may think about what's going on, they're holding back and they're keeping their distance.

Interesting, isn't it? So he talks about this one guy, verse 16. Look with me in your Bible. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus. And then he explains why.

For he often refreshed me. And, you know, we've talked many, many times about the fact that the Roman government did not feel obligated to feed prisoners or clothe them if they were in prison. That was up to family or friends to take care of that sort of thing. And obviously, Onesiphorus did that very thing. He brought food and fresh clothing to Paul and whatever else we don't know.

So here we are, we're introduced to this man, this interesting man that we really know nothing about. Onesiphorus, strange name, but a great guy. Oh, by the way, his name means bringing advantage. Isn't that interesting? You might want to name one of your kids Onesiphorus.

Oni for short. It's got a ring to it. It literally means help bringer. Isn't that something? Help bringer.

And this is a man who didn't just help Paul, but he did it at some personal cost. And that's what's significant about what Onesiphorus did. Because again, that stigma of connecting yourself with an enemy of Rome produced the potential threat that you're going to be guilty by association. And you're going to be looked at as a friend of an enemy of Rome. And somebody might even ask a few questions of you.

So you believe the same stupid stuff he does? So it got him in trouble, you know, you one of those followers, one of those Christians. I mean, the potential is there. And Onesiphorus moved through all of that and did not allow fear to dictate his actions. And that's what I like about this man.

Because like I've said, we give into fear way too often. And we do allow it to dictate our actions far too often. This man didn't. And that's what Paul says concerning Onesiphorus in verse 16. There he says, he was not ashamed of my chains.

He wasn't ashamed. He wasn't afraid of being identified with an enemy of Rome, even though it presented a potential threat to his own safety. Paul says, look in verse 17, he says, when he arrived in Rome, he searched for me earnestly, or the New Living Translation says, he searched everywhere until he found me. We don't know how many prisons there were in Rome at that time. Undoubtedly a good number of them.

So Onesiphorus had to press through. He had to keep looking and keep looking and keep looking until he finally found Paul. And once he did, he poured out to him. Like I said, we don't know very much about this man. We think that he probably lived in Ephesus because at the end of this letter, Paul is going to say, greet the household of Onesiphorus.

And that's where Timothy was at the time. He was in Ephesus. So we think that Onesiphorus and his family lived in Ephesus. But for whatever reason, he was in Rome and we don't know why. Maybe he was a businessman that had to travel, I suppose.

I don't know. But for whatever reason, he was in Rome at the same time when Paul was awaiting execution and he sought him out. And you know, it's interesting as we're reading through this book, I find it kind of fascinating that of all the things the apostle Paul could talk about, as he's writing this letter to Timothy, is he's spending time in this letter singling out a man who we know so little about, a man who was faithful and selfless in his actions toward another. And here it is 2,000 years later. We don't really, we still don't know really anything about this guy, except his name was Onesiphorus.

And he refreshed the apostle Paul, even though there was a danger at doing that sort of thing. You know, you kind of think to yourself, I wonder how many names of people over the last 2,000 years have fallen into oblivion. Nobody remembers. Nobody remembers. And yet here's this man who is forever enshrined for us in the history of the Bible as a man who simply refreshed others.

And Paul offered up a prayer, you'll notice in verse 18, concerning Onesiphorus. And he said in verse 18, may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And the reason Paul's saying that is because Onesiphorus was a man who gave mercy. He was a man who refreshed others. And so he's saying, may Onesiphorus find all of that back that he gave so plentifully.

And I have no doubt, I have no doubt that God has given that man Onesiphorus all of that mercy and grace and refreshing and will even do more so on the day of the Lord. Because there's a beautiful proverb that I want to kind of end with here this morning. Chapter 11, verse 25. I like this out of the NIV. It simply says, he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

Isn't that beautiful? We forget. We forget that there's these biblical principles that are in play that simply say, what a man sows, so also shall he reap. We think of that always in negative terms, but it doesn't have to be negative. It can be positive.

What you sow beautifully, what you sow as a blessing in other's lives, you can receive back. And that's what the proverb is saying. And that's what Paul is praying for. And that's what I have no doubt took place. So here's my question to you.

Who can you refresh this week? Who is it that's just kind of under it this week that you know of? Somebody that's just going through a difficult time, a dark season, just a challenging set of circumstances. And how can you be an Onesiphorus for that person this week? Because a real true refresher, like we see here in this particular account, is a man who pressed through to refresh.

He didn't just, it wasn't just a quick sort of a, if it's convenient for me, I'll do it. It was very inconvenient for Onesiphorus to do what he did and to give what he gave. But he pressed through because he knew that Paul needed it. And he wanted to bless this man. And I, no doubt, this man was an answer to prayer.

So you can be an answer to prayer for somebody. There might be somebody here this week that's really just looking for a quick phone call or maybe a stopover or a note or something that just lets them know that you're thinking about them. You care. You're praying for them. You love them.

You know what's going on and you just, maybe they just needed to be refreshed. We need people like Onesiphorus in the body of Christ today. People who are going to refresh others, right? Let's stand together. So hold fast.

guard the good deposit, and refresh others. Boy, how much we need that in the body of Christ. We're gonna have people down front here to pray for you as we're dismissing, so if you need prayer, feel free to come on up front. We'd love to pray with you. Father, thank you so much for your word.

Thank you for the beauty of the scriptures that exhort us. Lord, I pray in Jesus' name that we would be the kind of people who hold fast to the eternal truths, the wonderful truths that are given to us and revealed

for us in the word of God. I pray, my Father God, that you would strengthen us to stick to the word and to do it in faith and love. Heavenly Father, and I pray that you would help us to refresh others today who are just really needing some help, needing to be shown the love of God and the ministry of the Spirit. Help us, Lord.

Lord, bring to our minds someone who could really use that refreshing. We're so captivated by this man, Onesiphorus, and what he did for Paul, and I pray, my Father, that you would help us to do that same thing and to be that beautiful, sweet aroma of life to someone this week. Thank you, Father, for the reminders that you give us in your word, and we pray that we would continue to walk them out through the power of the Spirit. For we ask this in the name of Jesus Christ and all God's people said together, amen. God bless you.

Have a good rest of your Sunday.