

2 Timothy 1:12

Introduction

Paul makes it plain to Timothy that he is not asking him to do anything which he was not prepared to do himself. Paul did not issue orders in perfect safety, like some modern generals 6 miles behind the front line. Paul was on the front line. He was in the front row of the trenches. He was leading from the front. **That is why** (because he was an apostle, preacher and teacher). **I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day** (2 Timothy 1:12).

One preliminary point. Translations differ in the rendering of this verse: “Able to guard what I have entrusted to Him” (A.V., N.I.V.), or “Able to guard what has been entrusted to me” (R.S.V.). Both can be right. The Greek την παραδοθη κην μου means “my deposit” – this could be what I have deposited with Him (my self, my soul), or it could mean what He has entrusted to me (the Gospel). It is certainly true that, having entrusted the Gospel to us, He will take care of it and not allow the light of the Gospel to be extinguished. This is stated in v14 - **Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you.** But we are going to take the “traditional” rendering of v.12, as in the A.V. and N.I.V. – what I have entrusted to Him – my self, and my soul. There are good reasons for this, but note that the commentators are divided.

This verse gives Paul’s attitude to suffering and yet states at the same time that he is not ashamed and gives two reasons why he is not ashamed.

Paul’s life of suffering

Paul had been appointed as a preacher, apostle and teacher, and that was why he was suffering – and yet he was not ashamed. It was not just that Paul had suffered from hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, shipwreck and robbery – though he told the Corinthians he had gone through all of those (2 Corinthians 11:25ff). But he had also suffered the physical punishment and mental anguish of beatings, prisons, murder plots, death threats, stoning, mob violence, and heartbreaks because of the behaviour of Christians – their mistakes and immorality.

Paul knew right from the moment of his conversion that this would be his lot. When Ananias visited him in Damascus, the message he brought from the Lord was, **I will show him how much he must suffer for my name** (Acts 9:16). And the Lord kept his word to Paul. Repeatedly, both Greeks who thought the message of the Cross was foolishness, and Jews who saw it as a stumbling block, made it plain they did not want to know.

This was not just Paul’s experience, but also the experience of all the early church, and down through the ages, as Jesus had foretold: **All men will hate you because of me** (Matthew 10:22). And as Paul wrote, **Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted** (2 Timothy 3:12). Persecution still exists. In other

countries, it is still violent and physical – prisons, beatings and death. But even in this country it is present though less visible – sneering, smirking, cutting remarks, ostracism, boycotting. It makes it hard for young people to come to Christ; they hesitate to believe because of the cost.

It is not just our lifestyle that is different, but our message is not popular. It does not flatter men. It does not speak about virtue but about sin. It does not flatter men's strengths, but exposes their helplessness. It is not about men's merits, but about their indebtedness to someone who died for them. It is not their good works, but God's grace, that brings salvation. Other religions flatter men, but the Gospel strips men naked. They face the final humiliation that they need a mediator to bear their punishment instead of them.

Many preachers succumb to the temptation to mute this message. They prefer to preach man and his merit, instead of Christ and His Cross. **But we preach Christ crucified** (1 Corinthians 1:23) – there's the difference between Paul and those who try to avoid persecution. Despite his suffering, Paul was not ashamed of Christ, His Gospel or His people. Two reasons are given.

I know whom I have believed

Paul was very sure of Christ and his relationship to Him. Note that he wasn't sure of "what", but of "whom" – not just a doctrine, but a person. This was not just intellectual knowledge, but a personal knowledge. He knew, and he was sure of, Christ, and of Christ's love. There could be no greater love – Christ died for him, and nothing could separate him from that love.

Christ had given Paul new life, not just a set of rules to live by. Paul had become a new person in himself, and he could be certain of Christ's strength displayed in his weakness. He could be certain of God's promises to be with him, to support him, to uphold him, to never let him down. He could be certain of God's will for his life – even if it led to suffering and death – God's plan would be perfect. He could be certain that God would completely satisfy him – Christ had promised that any who came to Him would never hunger or thirst again.

Paul could say, "I am nothing apart from Him. He is all in all to me. My world centres on Him. I cling to Him without reserve. He is the anchor of my soul. I would rather die than deny Him." When a man is suffering and in great danger, when Christ means everything to him, all is changed. There is a calmness, serenity, and unshakable confidence. The world's opinion and treatment are unimportant. He knows Christ; he knows he is beloved of God, and that is all that matters. **For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain** (Philippians 1:21) – summarises the whole issue. That has been the testimony of men down the ages.

*"Finding, following, keeping, struggling,
Is He sure to bless?
Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs
Answer 'Yes!'"*

One of the most noteworthy examples in Church history is Hudson Taylor, pioneer missionary to China. His experience was innumerable journeys, threats, dangers, separation from loved ones, perils to life, bereavements and losses. His diary records how he endured these difficulties and rose above each situation. His heart was at rest, and he had quiet confidence as he faced life. He was ever conscious of two things – his own total helplessness, and God’s almighty strength. He simply depended on the Lord for every blessing, temporal as well as spiritual. He claimed he rejoiced seven days a week. When work permitted, he was in the habit of turning to the harmonium and singing hymns, and the one he kept coming back to:

*“Jesus, I am resting, resting
In the joy of what Thou art.
I am finding out the greatness
Of Thy loving heart.”*

Day and night he had one secret, as he told a friend when he criticized him for whistling when missionaries were in danger. He said, “There is no point in being anxious and troubled – that would not help them and would incapacitate me from my work. I just roll the burden on to the Lord.” So with Paul, he suffered but was not ashamed, because he knew the Lord, and knew he could roll every burden on to Him.

He is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day

Having expressed his confidence in the person of Christ – His love, power, and presence – Paul moves on to the future as he looks at death and at eternity beyond. All he was and all he had, he placed unreservedly in God’s hands.

He placed his work in God’s hands. Paul had faithfully sown the seed of the Word. Now he left the result and the full harvest to the Lord. Paul placed his character and reputation into God’s hands. He had suffered much abuse, reproach and misrepresentation – but he left all that in God’s hands knowing that one day the truth would be revealed. In the eyes of the world, Paul must have appeared mad – he could have been a much respected Jewish Rabbi, but instead he chose to belong to a group of deluded fanatics. But one day God would vindicate his decision to serve beneath the banner of His Son.

Paul had placed his family and all family issues in God’s hands. He left his body in God’s hands. It was soon to be taken from him by Emperor Nero, but one day he would receive a new resurrection body, whose germ was his present body. Paul left his soul and eternal welfare in God’s hands. He was sure he would be with Christ in Paradise, in an existence where there would be no more sorrow, sin, death or tears, only joy and glory.

Past, present and future – all were placed in God’s hands. He held nothing back. He knew God would keep it all safe. God was totally reliable, so he could cast himself on the arm of omnipotence, on Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, who had brought life and immortality to light.

Spurgeon was attracted to Christ by the doctrine of the perfect safety of God's people. "I have since had no regrets that I committed my soul to Him." How important that young people, early in life, should entrust their future to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Old Testament and New Testament people of God saw the whole picture and future glory in prospect. This ensured that they were not overwhelmed by their present suffering and distress. They did not live a hand-to-mouth existence. They never lived looking no further than the end of their nose. They always had that day in their sights – the Return of Christ in glory, to judge and to reign as King of Kings, with all subdued by Him. They looked forward to the day of the new heavens and new earth, when God's glory will be revealed. This sight helped them through suffering, persecution and death with courage and without fear. The anticipation kept them going in a hard tough world. So they became masters of life and death. God was the guarantor of their final triumph.

Conclusion

Paul had committed himself and his eternal welfare into Christ's hands. He had transferred all to the King eternal, immortal and invisible, to **God, who alone is wise** (1 Timothy 1:17).

Have you placed your case entirely in His hands? It may not necessarily mean you will be rich and prosperous, but it will make you happy in the best sense, confident, at peace, without fear of death and judgment. If you are a Christian: commit yourself daily, renew your vow daily to your Lord and Master.