

2 Timothy 1:3-5 A Mother's Faith 5/13/18

I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.⁴ As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

(Pastor prays)

If Paul is the foremost apostle in the New Testament, then I think it's fair to say that his protégé, Timothy, is the foremost pastor. But he didn't start off like that. From the beginning, the odds of Timothy becoming a leader in the church were pretty slim.

We first meet the young man Timothy in Acts 6 where we are told that his mother was a believer, but his father—if he was still around—was not. So, Timothy, the future leader and pastor, would come up without the love, discipline and guidance of a Christian father. He didn't have the privilege of a Godly man teaching him by word and example what it means to love Christ with your life and treat a woman with profound respect.

Timothy wouldn't have anyone to consistently model Christian manhood for him.

Timothy could have been a statistic. So often fatherless boys, or those without Christian fathers, get lost in the cultural tide because there was no Christian man there to love them and point them in the right direction. This was not the case for young Timothy. Although he lacked the strong love of a Christian father, he had the steely resolve of a sold-out Christian mother named Eunice and a Christ-like Christian grandmother named Lois. These two women were used by God in such a profound way in Timothy's life that the Apostle Paul chose Timothy to be his missionary traveling companion. Not only that, Timothy co-authored six of Paul's letters that became a part of the Bible... (And he did) All of this even though he lacked a Christian father.

Timothy developed into a great man, leader and pastor in large part because of the undying faith of his devout Christian mother. Today is Mother's Day, an American celebration that rightly honors the immediate and lasting influence a mother has on a child. Let me use the Bible to speak to mothers. Mom: your faith can be used by God to set the course for your child's future.

God Uses a Mother's Faith to Mold a Child's Future

What does a mother's faith look like? Let's let the text tell us.

A Sincere Faith's start in verse 3 and come forward:

To get the full punch, let's start in verse 3 and come forward: *I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.*

I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.⁴ As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

The English word "sincere" is from a compound word that means "not a hypocrite," completely genuine and without pretense or deceit. In fact, Timothy's mother Eunice and grandmother Lois had faith so real that even the Apostle Paul commented on it.

A sincere faith is a faith that penetrates your heart so that everything is touched by it and every word is flavored by it. Timothy witnessed that faith in his mother, and God used it to bring him to Christ. Truth is, a shallow faith doesn't hand off well. Just think with me about Timothy's mother. Some of you are her. She was at a distinct disadvantage because her husband, if he was there, wasn't a believer, didn't go to church, and yet God used her to point her child to Jesus.

This is true in the lives of so many great men. Charles Spurgeon's father and grandfather were both pastors, but in his autobiography (four volumes), Spurgeon tells how every Sunday evening his mother would stay home with the children and would read and explain the scriptures to them. He tells how she would kneel in her room and audibly plead with the Lord, especially for her strong-willed child named Charles. John Newton (who wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace") had a father who was a sea captain and his mother died when he was a small child. He went to sea very young, eventually becoming a slave trader, living a terrible life. One night in a storm when he knew he was going to die, he remembered the catechism his mother taught him when he was six. He pleaded to God for the Christ his mother taught him about to save him.

These examples are given to remind us: moms, your faith must be displayed at home. Your faith in Jesus is your greatest gift to your child. Some of you can look at your life and you wonder if you have messed it up *too* bad. You wonder "Have I destroyed it?" Look, a sincere faith is not a *perfect* faith, but it is a *lasting* faith. It's a faith that clings

to three things, three things that form the bedrock of Christianity and Christian motherhood specifically:

A sincere faith in **the power of the cross for you specifically**. *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.* The greatest act of motherhood begins at the cross of Jesus so that your Christianity is not just praying that God will help you. You trust that your sins are paid for and forgiven at the Cross and you live in grace. That grace removes guilt and confusion and despair. A sincere faith in the cross of Jesus.

A **sincere faith in God's word**. II Timothy 3:14-15. *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

Timothy had a mom and grandmother who trusted the Bible and knew the Bible. Paul mentions this in II Timothy 3:14-15. *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

It was Timothy's mother who taught him the Bible, and she did that because she trusted God's word. This is a tall order in today's world because everywhere around us, every cultural movement, every ethical curiosity, everything you face is against what the Bible says. Biblical principle is going to cost you popularity but you're not in a beauty contest. You're in a war for the souls of your children, trusting that a word implanted will one day take root and bear fruit. A sincere faith in the Bible is you reading and praying it. I see (my wife) Connie do it every morning as I go out the door. Yesterday my devotion included Psalm 69. I read and prayed for myself and then for Connie and for my boys. As a mother, if you are spending more time on Pinterest or Facebook than in God's word, do you actually have a sincere faith? A sincere faith for the cross of Jesus. A sincere faith in God's word. This third one is the kicker.

A sincere faith in the Sovereignty of our Good God

I say this because Eunice brought her son up in a Christian home without the help of a Christian father, and in Acts 16, when Timothy was still a young man, not yet ready for the world, Paul convinced Eunice to let Timothy travel with him. There is no indication in the Bible that Timothy ever went home again. Eunice raised him virtually as a single mom, poured her faith into Timothy the best she knew how, and then she had to trust

God to do what He saw fit to do. That's what a Christian mother, one who has a sincere faith, does.

A Confidence-Building Faith

The context of these verses is important to understand. How vital is a mother's faith? At the writing of this letter, Timothy is a new (probably inexperienced) pastor at Ephesus. It can be a lonely job. Paul, who is writing this, is in prison in Rome and that's where he will die at the hand of Nero. Paul writes letting us know there's a back story. He seems to be trying to stiffen Timothy's resolve.

Let's read verse 3 and part of 4. *I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.*⁴

"As I remember your tears." Something happened that would make a grown man cry. And Paul is sort of encouraging Timothy. And notice how he reminds Timothy of his heritage in verse 5. *I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.* I know the faith that dwelt in your mother and grandmother and now Timothy, I'm sure that same faith is in you. And if they made it through – so will you. Remember the faith they had. Stand strong by remembering your mother and grandmother. Remember her strength and resolve. Remember her prayers. Timothy, your Dad wasn't a believer and, by God's grace, she single-handedly broke the cycle of paganism in your family. And by God's grace, she passed on the liberating faith of Jesus Christ to you, Timothy.

Do you see what Paul is doing in this passage? He's calling Timothy to remember his mother's faith. You don't appreciate it as a kid, but you'll never forget it as an adult. A sincere faith in the **life of Jesus**, in the **death of Jesus for sinners**. Jesus died for moms. A sincere faith in the **resurrection of Jesus**. The resurrection of Jesus gives hope to moms. A confidence-building faith. A mother's love for Jesus becomes something God uses to call wayward children to Himself. Do you have a sincere faith? Do you have a confidence-building faith?