

JESUS CHRIST OUR CONFIDANT

2 Timothy 1:6-14

Introduction:

Plagues, diseases, and pandemic challenges can be found also in Scriptures. We are aware of the Ten Plagues during the time of Moses, the suffering of Job, even in the New Testament the prominence of the Leprosy that made those people who have it as outcasts. Still at the same time, we can find followers of Christ, His disciples to find assurance and comfort amidst this sufferings and trials. Indeed, faith is like that, to believe Christ even if we have not fully comprehended the things surrounding us. Just as a daughter joyfully holds the hand of her father knowing that he will never let go even through the valley of death. As we explore today's sermon, may we draw closer to Christ, embrace Him more.

In today's passage, Paul wrote this letter to Timothy while he was imprisoned in Rome. This imprisonment of Paul is quite different from the previous ones that he experienced. Why? Because this time, he was expecting to be executed—simply saying, to die. However, as you read through the passages written by Paul, it seems like he has this kind of confidence despite his dire situation.

I specifically chose this passage because of verse 7, *“for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”* The Greek form here is “deilia,” quite different from the terms we learned before, when we speak about the Fear of the Lord, or God's Fear both in OT and NT. This fear is the kind of feeling that we need to throw away and welcome in our heart. It “refers to one who flees from battle, and has a strong pejorative sense referring to cowardice... [compared to] Boldness, not cowardice, is a mark of the Spirit (see Prov. 28:1; Acts 4:31).” Explain the bulletin essay. *

If you are familiar with Paul's letters, even in the epistle of Philippians, despite being chained, he was proclaiming joy, to rejoice with thanksgiving to these people. Last week we talked about sharing Hope to others by bringing Jesus to them. Well, Paul greatly exemplified this even inside his prison cell to the point that the prison guards, wardens were also converted to the Christian faith.

Whatever the reason of what we feel right now, I may not know you all well, but it may come the fear of Covid Omicron, of losing someone you love, or failing the from the university or college you want, or being anxious of what tomorrow will bring. Remember the favorite song that we sing every time we feel down, “I will be still and know You are God.” As David said in Psalm 23:4, *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”*

Moreover, John 14:27, *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”* Other than the comfort that came from David's poetic song, Jesus calls us to not let our hearts be troubled and to not be afraid.

Background:

Plagues in Church History

- The Ten Plagues before the Israelite's Exodus from Egypt
- Ancient Plagues (Athens [429 BC]; Antonine [165-180]; Cyprian [250-266]; Roman [590]).
- The Black Death (1348-9); London (1563-4; 1592-3); Great Plague (1665-6)
- Spanish Flu (1918); AIDS (1981-);
- SARS (2002-2004); Swine Flu; MERS; Zika; and Ebola (2018)

Even Martin Luther, during the deadly plague that struck Wittenberg in 1527, continued to minister even though the government official left them already. On his letter to a certain pastor, Luther exemplified the balance of fight and flight responses.

He said, "I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I will fumigate, purify the air, administer medicine, and take medicine. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order to not become contaminated, and thus perchance inflict and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me. But, I have done what he was expected of me, and so I am not responsible for either my own death or death of others. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person, but will go freely. This is a God-fearing faith because neither brash foolhardy, and God does not tempt." (Luther to Ptr Johann Hess, 1527)

Main Idea:

Again, is this worldly fear coming from God? Let us read 2 Timothy 1:7, *"for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."* We were expected that despite of trials and sufferings we will still come to Christ instead of fleeing from His presence. During these days, instead of being anxious—well anxiety is a secondary emotion grounded in fear—and death as the "king of terror," we ought to bend our knees more, pray more not less, read His Word more, not less.

During our isolation, or your quarantine time, try to recall how many percentages did you spent time reading the Bible? In those five to ten days staying at home, how many times did we do personal devotion, or family devotion? Why aren't we so concerned about our spirituality? Have we been isolating from the Word of God for more than 2 years now?

The response and resolution to this "sinful fear"—the one that retreats or flee from God—is found in the following verses. Verses 8-10 can be a summary of the Gospel. And verses 11-14 as something that we ought to endure while living on earth. Read these verses.

Again, Christ suffered so he can be one with us. At the same time, we share this suffering so we can be like Christ. 2 Timothy 2, *"11 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; 13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself."*

It is true that what is happening in our society causes us to fear and tremble. It creates anxieties and leads to melancholic state of mind. Many times, it distracts us. But we should not see this world as if something permanent, I mean, we should celebrate life and be concerned about our lives. But we are just travelers of this world, the end of our journey is not yet here. Do not fear.

Isaiah 41:10, *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (13,14) "for I myself will help you," declares the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."*

Hebrews 13:6, *"So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" Grounded in the prior verse. "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

Practical Directions:

As said a while ago, if we are travelers, it would be better if we have someone journeying with us. Sojourning through this world we live in. We need someone whom we can trust. Other than walking around your local park, or meeting your friends over a cup of coffee, or calling them. We need a stronger ground as our confidant. When, others left already, there's one thing for sure, Jesus is our confidant. This is Paul's confidence in Christ.

Christ as our Confidant produces three things:

It brings us Comfort because:

- Listens, 1 John 5:15 - "And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him."
 - o Psalm 66:17-20 - "I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!"
 - o John 9:31 - "We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will."
- Sympathizes
 - o 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

It draws us to Assurance

- Eternal
 - o 11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:11-13)
- The Spirit's Indwelling
 - o 2 Tim 1:14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

Conclusion:

Prudence is necessary as we navigate through this pandemic. Yet, it still necessary to understand if we are truly fearing God or running away from Him. Is this moment, or your moment that you experience is drawing you closer to God or not? It is not limited to the Covid situation, but in each aspect of our life that causes us fear. Rest assured that in any point of this matter, Jesus Christ is the only solid, unchangeable, unshakeable reality that He is our very confidant.

Ptr. John Paul Arceno

UCBC New Jersey

January 9, 2022