

2 Timothy 6:20-21

Introduction

1. FedEx losing the scanner we shipped to Kansas
 - a. We entrusted them with a \$5000 scanner—a valuable treasure
 - b. We packed it in special boxes and dropped it off right at the shipping center (not a store)
 - c. They had one job to do—deliver the scanner to Kansas in one piece
 - d. They failed miserably!
2. In the final two verses of 1 Timothy, Paul calls on Timothy to guard the sacred treasure with which he has been entrusted, and as you might expect there is much we can learn from his final words to his young disciple

A. We have been entrusted with and called to guard a sacred treasure (6:20a)

1. It would be easy to overlook the first two words of v 20 but they tell us something about the final charge that Paul was about to give Timothy: **“Oh, Timothy”** (20a)
 - a. The word **“oh”** is what is referred to grammatically as an emotional interjection
 - b. Interjections are words or phrases which express sudden bursts of emotion and convey things like anger, shock, fear, joy, pain, disappointment, confusion, or even urgency
 - c. We use them all the time: “Yay!”, “Oh my gosh!”, “Goodness!”, “Ouch!”, “Yikes”, “Really?”
 - d. Paul also appeals to Timothy by name here which is a bit unusual:
 - 1) Normally, when we write or talk to others we begin by addressing them by name, but we don’t normally repeat their name during the rest of the conversation
 - 2) But, Paul did it twice in this letter (1:18 and here)
 - e. What Paul’s emotional interject and use of Timothy’s name tells us here is that what he was about to charge Timothy with was extremely important—there was an emotional and serious nature to it and he wanted to impress that upon his young disciple
2. That charge is found in the next phrase: **“Guard what has been entrusted to you”** (20b):
 - a. The phrase **“what has been entrusted to you”** is a single Greek word which refers to something that has been entrusted to someone for safe keeping
 - 1) It was used to refer to financial deposits
 - 2) In the 1st century, this word was often combined with the word for guard—just as Paul does here—to refer to the obligation and responsibility of caring for someone else’s treasured possessions, keeping them safe, and then returning them to the owner
 - 3) Paul is using it that way here; Timothy had been entrusted with something of immense value and Paul was charging him to protect it
 - b. The obvious question is, With what was Timothy entrusted?
 - 1) The simple answer is the truth of the Gospel and all that he had been taught by his mother, grandmother, and Paul from the Scriptures
 - 2) Look at what Paul had to say in this regard when it came to himself and Timothy (READ Galatians 2:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 Timothy 1:11, 18; 2 Timothy 1:14; 2:2; Titus 1:1)

3. Takeaway:
 - a. These words don't just apply to Timothy; every believer has been entrusted with a sacred treasure—the Truth of the Gospel and the Word of God
 - b. Unfortunately, not all believers take this seriously

B. There will be challenges and dangers when guarding this sacred treasure (20c-21-b)

1. We find the challenge in the next phrase, **“avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’”** (20c):
 - a. Three times in this letter Paul warned Timothy about the threats the church would face against the Truth of the Gospel and the Word of God:
 - 1) The first served as a warning to false teachers (READ 1:3-4)
 - 2) The second served as a warning for the Church as a whole and Timothy as a pastor (READ 4:1-8)
 - 3) This third warning is Paul's personal plea to Timothy to avoid getting sucked into false teaching
 - b. He has already warned Timothy about the danger of Jewish myths and endless genealogies, a form of Old Testament legalism, and the influence of deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons
 - c. Here Paul summarizes all of that in two phrases (6:20):
 - 1) **“avoiding worldly and empty chatter”**:
 - a) Other translations use words and phrases like **“godless”**, **“profane”**, and **“irreverent”** chatter or speech
 - b) Essentially, this refers to concepts, ideas, philosophy, teaching, that are godless and empty/worthless because they originate from the world, not from God or His Word
 - c) Paul uses this same phrase in 2 Timothy 2:16 and adds that it will lead to further ungodliness and will spread like gangrene
 - d) Think about this word picture: gangrene refers to the dying and rotting of flesh resulting from the loss of blood flow
 - 2) **“and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’”**:
 - a) There was all kinds of stuff in Paul's and Timothy's day that was peddled as knowledge, but actually opposed the Gospel and the Word of God
 - b) False teaching wasn't just a problem at Ephesus; it was also prevalent in the Galatian and Colossian churches; listen to what Paul wrote to the Colossians (READ Colossians 2:6-8, 16-23)
 - c) All of these false teachings were being peddled within the Church as truth, revelation from God, etc. but it ALL opposed—stood against—the Gospel and the Word of God
2. So, that's the challenge Timothy would face when guarding the treasure that had been entrusted to him; Paul now moves on to the danger in 21: **“which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.”**
 - a. Do you remember the names Hymenaeus, Alexander and Philetus? Paul called out these false teachers by name here in 1 Timothy and in 2nd Timothy

- b. Hymenaeus and Philetus had gone astray from the truth by saying that the resurrection had already happened (2 Timothy 2:18) and their teaching undermined the faith of some; as a result, Paul handed them over to Satan so they would learn not to blaspheme
 - c. Alexander continually opposed Paul's teaching and did him much harm (2 Timothy 4:15), so Paul warned Timothy to be on guard against him and said that the Lord would repay him for his evil deeds
 - d. As a result of not guarding the Truth and falling prey to false teaching, all of these men face two serious dangers:
 - 1) The first is that it brings their own salvation into question; were they really saved? (see 1 John 2:19)
 - 2) The second danger is that they will ultimately face God's judgment for leading others astray and upsetting their faith
3. Takeaway: we face the same challenges and dangers today as we guard what has been entrusted to us:
- a. The church is under constant assault from false teachers and there are more avenues available for false teaching than ever before: TV and radio, music, books and magazines, the internet, social media, even so-called Christian schools, colleges and universities that are more worldly than Biblical
 - b. All of this poses a grave danger to the professing Church and we can clearly see the damage that has occurred to once great Christian institutions, fellowships and denominations, and churches which failed to guard what was entrusted to them

<p>C. We must rely on God's grace to guard this sacred treasure (6:21c): "Grace be with you"</p>

- 1. From high-level view or overhead perspective, there are two things that stand out in Paul's two letters to Timothy when it comes to guarding what had been entrusted to him; one was defensive and the other offensive:
 - a. On the defensive side, Timothy would have to prevent the teaching of false doctrine
 - b. On the offensive side, Timothy would not only have to teach sound doctrine to the church as a whole, but would have to train other men to do the same (READ 2 Timothy 2:2):
 - 1) Many churches fail on both of these fronts which is why the evangelical Church in America is where it's currently at
 - 2) Its why false teaching is so rampant, and why so many who profess to know Jesus know so little about the Bible and live no differently than the world
- 2. Paul clearly believed that Timothy was up to the task and could...and would...guard what had been entrusted to him; otherwise, he wouldn't have left him at Ephesus
- 3. Even so, you will notice that the last thing Paul writes to Timothy here is, **"Grace be to you."**
 - a. While I've always known that it was common for Paul to begin his letters with a benediction of grace, I never noticed that he ended his letters in the same way:
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:3; 16:23
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 1:2; 13:14
 - 3) Galatians 1:3; 6:18
 - 4) Ephesians 1:2; 6:24
 - 5) Philippians 1:2; 4:23
 - 6) Colossians 1:2; 4:18
 - 7) The same is true for 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon

- 8) In other words, aside from Romans, EVERY ONE of Paul's letters begins and ends with a benediction of God's grace!
- b. What does this tell us about our need for God's grace?
- 1) Grace is God's unmerited or unearned favor toward us and we all know that we need His grace in order to be saved, right?
 - a) Ephesians 2:5: **"...even when we were dead in our transgressions, [He] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)..."**
 - b) Ephesians 2:8: **"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;"**
 - c) 2 Timothy 1:9: God **"...has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity."**
 - 2) However, we not only need God's grace to be saved, we need His grace each and every day to grow, mature, and carry out the purpose for which He called us!
 - a) The Apostles needed it (Acts 4:33): **"And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all."**
 - b) Stephen needed it (Acts 6:8): **"And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people."**
 - c) Paul needed it (1 Corinthians 15:10): **"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."**
 - d) In fact, all of the spiritual gifts are given as acts of God's grace (Romans 12:6): **"Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly..."**
 - e) Listen to what Paul wrote to the Corinthians regarding their need for grace in order to do good deeds (2 Corinthians 9:8): **"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance [of grace] for every good deed."**
4. Takeaway: if we are to guard what God has entrusted to us, we desperately need to rely upon God's grace!
- a. We often speak of relying on the power of the Holy Spirit and that is absolutely true; Jesus sent the Holy Spirit as our helper for a reason—we need Him!
 - b. However, we also need God's grace...each and every day
 - c. Paul recognized this which is why he began and ended every one of his epistles with a benediction of grace
 - d. Peter understood this as well:
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:2: **"...May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure"**
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:2: **"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord"**