

Series	Gamma 17 – Study 11 (Guarding the Gospel)
Reference	2 Tim 1
Date	30 June 2021
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Good evening. Welcome back to Gamma pastoral epistles. This is a study on second letter of Paul to Timothy. 2-Timothy chapter 1, Study 11. Title is guarding the gospel.

Here we actually have a last letter written by Paul and it is very important because when you put the last letter, it's like the will and testament of someone who is going to pass on and what he has got to say is very, very important. And if you look at the life of Paul, this is an amazing gentleman who wrote 13 out of the 27 books of the New Testament. And much of what he writes and thinks becomes the cornerstone of our New Testament theology. Significant contribution to our understanding of what salvation is. And he's the gentleman who did three missionary journeys and planted most of the churches around that particular area. What has this fellow got to say to us? This giant of a theologian Christian disciple of Jesus, what is he going to say to Timothy that will actually encourage him to live on and carry on the ministry in Ephesus and this applies to us as well.

So there are about four issues I want to address with this particular passage:

1. We need to be following our calling.
2. Mentoring for the gospel.
3. Glorifying in our shame.
4. Our responsibility to guard the gospel, what does that entail?

A. Our Calling to Life

What drives Paul to do such things to have written most or a significant portion of the New Testament, to be able to offer his life in sacrifice and hard work for the glory of gospel.

2 Tim 1: 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

The calling to life is very important. Paul is that unique apostle. He is that unique servant who is that unique believer who has changed much of the landscape of a New Testament in the Christian world, simply because he recognizes when he lives his life that he actually lives his life according to a particular calling. And he is an apostle by the will of God and the promise of life that is in Christ. Jesus. If we look on in chapter 1 verse eight,

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling,

So here you actually have, he sees his life as a holy calling, a calling to be holy is a calling called directly by God for God's purpose, not because of our own works, but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began. Now, this is key to the life of Paul. Why was Paul that dedicated believer? Why was Paul that effective? Simply because he recognized a calling, he recognised his purpose and the first calling is to eternal life and eternal life is not just a long life. Eternal life is the quality of life that you live which actually starts right now and transcends our death and goes into

eternity. A life that is full of fulfillment of joy, of life, because of the transformation of the Holy Spirit. So, we're all called to this life, to this abundant life. See a calling "a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action especially when accompanied by conviction of divine influence"

So calling is something that you feel that guides an impulse towards a particular action and a purpose is something set up as an object or end to be attained. And this is so important in our lives, whether we are starting off a young folk, looking for a calling, looking for a purpose, or even at the end of your life when you actually review. At the end of your life, you are not going to review how much money you have got in your bank account. Most of us are going to review what was your purpose of your life in which you live and what did you spend it on and what have you actually achieved? And we have a situation where lots of people in the world today, much of the suffering is because of lack of clear purpose. If you have a lack of clear purpose in our lives, often when we are confronted with problems we feel overwhelmed, confused and painful will be unable to resolve internal and external conflict, unable to plan, unable to make sense. When suffering hits us, because we lack a clear purpose, we won't be able to understand why we have this suffering and what has this suffering got to contribute to our clear purpose in the end.

There are plenty of studies. Here is a study of 669 young people in 2014 and it showed that purpose of life is correlated with wellbeing during emerging adulthood, positive self-image and less juvenile delinquency.

Purpose of life is also correlated in adults, here is a study of 3,500 adults between the age of 32 and 84. In 2016, they found that the greater purpose of life that you actually have you have got higher memory scores, which means they remembered more, better at executive functioning and better overall cognition with thinking.

Elderly people, study of 189 elderly age of 85 to 103, 2009 publication showed that the higher purpose of life is you have got less depression and better physical health.

Here is another study looking at 4,500 almost elderly gentlemen, age 50 years and above. They looked at the population at 2006 and 2010 and found that those with a better, a stronger purpose in life had better physical health, which was actually measured by the hand grip and the risk of slow walking. So we know the purpose of life is extremely important, not only physically, mentally, but also spiritually. Otherwise you could gather a lot of rubbish in life like this old woman at the end nothing much to recall what your life is made up of.

Imagine if you collected all the things in life and the end they were actually useless for your eternal purpose. It's going to be like this. It is going to be a lack of purpose. Sometimes we just settle. You make your life matter anyway we want, even if it lacks purpose and direction, it's just something to do and this is very deceptive. What we need to do is to recognize it as Christian whatever happens most importantly we are called to eternal life and the quality of life to live.

Now power of the calling will cause us not to be ashamed in the testimony of God, allow us to share in his suffering. Why? Because we have a holy calling and this is according to his purpose and his grace.

B. Out Duty to Disciple

Paul, here you have a relationship with Timothy, a young disciple who he actually mentored. He says, **Timothy, my beloved child**, very rarely would he speak of somebody in such endearing terms? Beloved child. Timothy is about in his thirties and yet according to Paul he is like his child, someone who is very, very dear to him,

2 To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 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. 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

See he described Timothy with such tender terms, rarely would you speak of another Christian where I remember your tears and how you longs to see you that I may be filled, he doesn't want anything other than to renew fellowship so that he would be filled with joy, he is really treating Timothy as if he is his own child. Imagine having your child live overseas and you so long to just see him, hold him, hug him and be filled with joy when that happens. And he prays for his spiritual son daily, constantly, night and day with a clear conscience and he remembers how beautiful this child is. A young minister was because of a sincere faith that was passed on by the women in his family, grandmother Lois, mother Eunice.

6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

So mentoring allows him to basically fan into flame the gift of God. So he's there to remind Timothy that he's got a gift, mentoring releases power and this is a metaphor. Fan into flame is like smoldering hot charcoal, right? No flame yet and all you have to do is just add a bit of wind and the whole thing explosive and explosiveness is power, love, and self-control. This is not a power to do miracles, but a power to transform. Love to touch and self-control to live lives that are ethical and according to God's will so that your testimony and witness is not destroyed by lack of self-control, a power not to jump up and down and do miracles or power to minister in such a way to transform people's lives and love to have give you the love to be able to care for people, to be able to overlook many of their faults and to be able to reach past those false and to be able to touch people's lives.

I remember my mentor when I was a young student in Sydney, I was way back when I was about 18 or 19 years old. This is Reverend Christopher Chua, he is still the senior pastor of Chinese Milson's Point church at Sydney Luna Park, just right next to it first train station when you come out of Sydney. I remember as a young student in my doing high school, he would actually drive an hour out of his way in Sydney traffic just to pick me up for my suburb called Abbotsford and send me all the way down south to Kempsey where we had a Bible study and I can still remember the times that we had when he would drive me back at home at night, the hour another way and I spent so much time talking to him, him being my mentor and he actually opened up my eyes to the beauty of scripture and from that year I spent with him I was never the same. At the end of my high school year, I took the holiday a vacation time going to Bible College for a course in Romans and in more theological college and that was the college where Chris Chua was actually studying and that one man so changed my life and I am so thankful that even today he is still ministering the word of God.

See mentoring, even if you spend a little time, an hour of your way, half an hour, spending time talking about a Bible, witnessing my life, it actually changes people's life and all of us should be looking forward to people who we can mentor or people who we can come under, whom we actually look up to in the gospel and that smoldering potential is basically the power to explode, the power to put up with suffering.

C. Glorify in our Shame

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling

You know, shame is a matter of perspective, you know, imagine you got two opportunities here. One, you wear a diamond studded ring bracelet and you walk around and you are really proud and the other one is basically wearing the chains of a prisoner and you are really proud. Which one would you think actually glorifies God? I would imagine in Jesus Christ's eyes how you feel reflects what you believe, if you walk around and you really feel proud because this bracelet is full of diamonds. If you really walk around and feel my chains, I'm so proud of them because I've managed to be able to suffer for Jesus Christ and really feel proud of that. How you feel reflects what you believe. If you wear the chains and you are ashamed, it is a reflection of that which you believe, which means you don't believe that the gospel of God, you don't believe that Christ is worthy of your glory. If you only wear the diamond and you feel proud of that and you have shame when you wear the chains it reflects what you believe. So shame is a matter of perspective.

Look at two Corinthians chapter 11 verses 22 onwards, here is Paul speaking,

2 Cor 11: 22 But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—

Paul casts himself as just as good as other people. He is not just a useless person who basically worth nothing, so therefore he becomes a Christian, he is actually well-qualified. He is a Hebrew of Hebrews. He is Israelite. He is offspring of Abraham. He is a chosen race and yet,

I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death

Floggings, beatings, stoning, imprisonment, shipwrecks, hunger, cold, sleeplessness. If were talking about what is going to be proud of, he is actually proud of all these things and the reason why he is proud of all these things is because he realized all these things are evidence of his faith in Jesus Christ. So therefore the power of God allows him not to feel shame. In fact, he feels proud because his faith is real. That's what you believe.

See there will always be a clash between our calling, which is a holy calling to God and his purposes and his grace or idolatry; my purposes, my strength. There will always be a clash and because there is a clash, there will be persecution and shame.

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling

The only way we can actually have the ability to suffer and to you have a transition in a perspective in which we view our suffering is by the power of God who saved us and called us to a holy calling. It tells us we have a holy calling.

2 Timothy 1:12 which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

Here is his personal testimony. He knows who I believe it and I'm convinced he is able to guard. He is able to suffer shame. He is able to suffer floggings. He is able to suffer deprivation, simply because there is a belief and a conviction. There is a difference between having knowledge but the knowledge needs to lead to conviction and conviction therefore translates to endurance and suffering and be able to do ministry for God. Simply there is a link between knowledge and conviction, how do we actually have a transition between knowledge to produce conviction?

Well, I remember years ago there was a TV program called Ripley's Believe it or Not. And we have a woman standing up in a really tall towers, it is about four storey or three storey up in an apartment building and what she did while she was doing bungee jumping, and you asked me what's the big deal? Why would we have a woman doing bungee jumping on Ripley's Believe It or Not. Well, two things, one at the bottom of the building, there was a basin of water, not very much water, just a small basin of water, which means if you splashed down there, it's not going to break your force, it is going to break your neck. On the other hand, right at the top is where the bungee rope was attached to it. It wasn't attached to a steel iron bar. It was actually attached to the waist of her husband and it was shocking, isn't it. And what she did was she stepped out of the building in faith and she threw herself off, not knowing whether the husband is going to have the strength to hold her when she goes hurtling down at 50 miles per hour whether she is going to dash and have herself smashed on the concrete floor or was he going to be able to pull her up or was the momentum so great that both of them will be pulled down to earth and both die together. And as she fell right down she could feel nothing, just the air coursing through her hair and finally towards the end you can feel the bungee jumping rope tightened. As he tightened, you can see the strain on the husband's face as he held onto that rope really tightly and he shuddered and he shifted a few inches forward and we held our breath. We didn't know whether he was going to make it and she felt coming down she felt his strength stronger and stronger until right at the bottom just before she hit the bottom, he had enough strength to pull her back up. That is a picture of how knowledge transforms into conviction.

If you never step out in faith, you would never feel the power of God saving you, bringing you from the brink of destruction in all the trials that you actually have you isolate, you protect yourself, you put all sorts of guard rails, but in our faith we need to be able to step out in faith and once you step out of your faith and you see how God comes in and saves us and works miraculously in our lives, knowledge therefore translates into conviction.

Second of all is how we look at life, our lives and the incidents surrounds us through the gospel glasses. All right and learn to see the fingerprints of God in all areas of our lives whether it be good things, trials, tribulations, learning to see where God's finger is. There are no coincidences in life where he is working in our lives. Here is Romans chapter 5 verse 3, a new perspective on suffering.

Romans 5: 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Here's a new perspective in suffering, suffering is not something to avoid, suffering is not that negative thing to wipe out of our memory but suffering serves to produce endurance, endurance produces character, characters shows us hey we have got hope, we actually have eternal life. This faith that we have is real. It is real. Our salvation is real because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. So therefore suffering is something that actually reassures us when we actually overcome it that we are saved.

I remember that famous British author, David Watson and his take on two fathers, two fathers at almost identical age, teenage sons, almost about 10 or 12 years old. One of them actually died because he went into the swimming pool and he drowned and he was a non-Christian father, another one who was a Christian father and his son similar age died of cancer. You got the tale of two fathers, one is a Christian and one was a non-Christian and when you actually look at the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Christian actually walked away from God, same catastrophe, same suffering and a non-Christian actually saw the grace of God in this situation actually came to know Jesus Christ as his Lord and saviour.

It's your perspective, learning how to see the world as how the gospel paints the world and so therefore, how else can we actually move from knowledge into conviction, by training in godliness

1 Tim 4: 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

As we train in Godliness, as we learn to ask God for the many things that changes our character. As we look into his word, we are able, physical training is only useful for this part of life, Godliness training, Godliness in prayer and reading God's word and stepping out in faith is going to be our views this life and the life beyond. Training Godliness allows us to translate knowledge into conviction. So you can say with Paul, I know whom I believe and I am convinced that he is able to guard us until that day. Unless you step out you will never be convinced.

Brothers and sisters will you be able to say, I know whom I believed and I'm convinced he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to be.

D. Our Responsibility to Guard

13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

So we asked here to guard the good deposit.

9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10 and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Here is the gospel, we are supposed to guard the gospel. The features of the gospel of the Lord are God's calling to holy living and purpose. That is the number one message of the gospel. God's grace. It's not done by our works, but his grace and is achieved through Christ Jesus alone and nobody else. And this is about eternal life and this is the part that's really been messed up and we have to guard this. The gospel is about God's call to us to have holy living. I remember this book, very life-transforming book by Bob Shogun that actually cast this in a very humorous way. His book is entitled The Cat and Dog Theology, rethinking our relationship with Master. Bob Shogun actually said of a dog. A dog looks at his master and says, you feed me, you pet me, you shelter me, you must love me, you must be God. The cat looks at his master in exactly the same way and says, you feed me, you pet me, you shelter me, you love me, I must be God. All right. And we can look at the same story of salvation and both of us can come up with two different takes. One of that comes out and says, oh God serving me and the other one come up and say, I'm serving God, same gospel, same cross, same sinless prayer. Why? And this is the common disease that's actually in much of the faith. We say we live our life for God, but actually we are living it for ourselves. We pray, we spend much of our time and much of our time telling God what we actually want

rather than asking God what he wants. So we're actually cats rather than dogs.

We look at our Bible verses and we underline and you notice that we notice we underline the parts of how he will bless us, watch over us, protect us and save us, we would hardly underline the parts about the things that he wants us to do instead. Are we dogs or are we cats. We look at life through the lens, the lens has a ME at the middle of it. Our needs, our desires, our anxieties, our family, our friends and God is only a means to that particular end. If that's the case then we are cats and we actually have a false religion.

Parable of two sons by Matthew chapter 21 verses 28 to 32 tells of two sons. The first son, the man says, look, you go to the farm and can you take care of the chores and the son says, yeah, father I'm going but he doesn't go. Another one he says to the son, you go to the farm and take care of business and the son says, I don't want to go but he actually goes, and Jesus asked the question, which one of them actually did the father's will. It doesn't matter what you say, it matters what you do with your life, whether you actually see your life as the one like Paul, calling to eternal life, calling to God's holy purposes or do you see your life basically it is about yourself and how Jesus Christ is basically a ticket to heaven. If that's the case then you will be obsessed with all the things that God can give you rather what you can do in terms to follow the holy calling for God's purposes not your own purpose.

So therefore those people would be obsessed with science and wonders. Why? Because science and wonders benefit you, we are looking at a true disciples who want to benefit God that looks for the glory of God. How do you guard the gospel?

13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

So the Holy Spirit is involved in guarding because he lives within us and we can be assured the Holy Spirit empowers us to be able to guard the gospel and basically we are supposed to guard it with the truth, in faith and love that is in Christ Jesus. How this works is that we are given the truth of the gospel, but we have to take the truth of gospel and really believe in it. So we respond to the truth by faith. No point having the truth that you actually have head knowledge and you never apply it, you never respond to it, you never act on it. Right? You've got to act on it, you have got to respond by faith and when you respond by faith truth and faith combine and you actually express it in love and the love is for God and love for neighbour and the more you love God and the more you love your neighbour the more you are convinced that the truth really makes a difference and then that results in you loving the truth, more reading the truth more and responding by more faith and this goes round and round and round, and that's how actually guard the gospel. Faith in the truths results in love for God and neighbour.

Exercise the ministry of gospel, well Paul recognized that he had a ministry from God and he was appointed as a preacher, an apostle and a teacher. Are you actually having a ministry? It didn't have to be full time. We are all asked to live up to our calling. Our calling is to eternal life and for each of us we have been given different gifts. Some of them will be in the secular world, some in the full-time world, but whatever gifts you have we use it for the glory of God.

Be aware. This is a dangerous game.

15 You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

Here's the end of Paul's life. You thought end of Paul's life, he has got a lot of friends, lot of benefactors,

but in the end it is a pretty lonely life because at the end of Paul's life, he says all in Asia turned away from me. If you look

Philemon 1: 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, 24 and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

You see Demas is counted as this close confidant, by Timothy chapter 4 verse 10

2 Tim 4:10 For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica

It is sad, it would seem that the end of one's most illustrious career as God's servant, he is left alone and this can happen to people, many people with you who have been walking with you from Alpha and Beta and from church life, you can find at the end of life a lot of people are fallen away. Look at history. Look at David, how he fell into adultery, Judas how he betrayed God. This is a real danger. That's why 1-Timothy chapter 4, let us be a reminder of the previous study,

1 Timothy 4:16 (ESV) Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

So guard to gospel, follow your calling. Why are you living? What are you doing? God has called us to eternal life. God has called us to his purposes not our purposes. He has called us by his grace not our works. He called us not because we are good but because he is good, because he gave his son for us. Learn to mentor someone or be mentor so that the power of the gospel is multiplied. Look at the things that causes shame and look at it from a different perspective. The chains, the shame of the gospel can be our glory for him and remember our responsibility to guard his truths in faith and love. You can have all the truth in the world, but if you don't have love in the way you treat each other then we will have lost the plot. May God add a blessing to all of us as we discuss the truth tonight.