

## October 6, 2013 – WW Communion

*On previous Sundays we have been reading through the first letter to Timothy. It is full of instruction about Christian doctrine and its practice. The second letter to Timothy is very different in tone and content. It is much more personal. We are told the author is Paul and that he is in prison in Rome awaiting his execution. Obviously he is lonely and isolated.*

*In this letter, Paul desperately wants to know that Timothy will carry on his work. In many ways it is a thankless job but Paul insists that it is worth every sacrifice and risk to carry on the work of Jesus in the world.*

*Paul appeals to Timothy through friendship and through family ties to compel him to take on the mantle of leadership. Would we take this risk with our lives?*

### **2 Timothy 1: 1-14**

<sup>1</sup>I, Paul, am on special assignment for Christ, carrying out God's plan laid out in the Message of Life by Jesus. <sup>2</sup>I write this to you, Timothy, the son I love so much. All the best from our God and Christ be yours!

<sup>3</sup>Every time I say your name in prayer—which is practically all the time—I thank God for you, the God I worship with my whole life in the tradition of my ancestors. <sup>4</sup>I miss you a lot, especially when I remember that last tearful good-bye, and I look forward to a joy-packed reunion.

<sup>5</sup>That precious memory triggers another: your honest faith—and what a rich faith it is, handed down from your grandmother Lois to your mother Eunice, and now to you! <sup>6</sup>And the special gift of ministry you received when I laid hands on you and prayed—keep that ablaze! <sup>7</sup>God doesn't want us to be shy with his gifts, but bold and loving and sensible.

<sup>8</sup>So don't be embarrassed to speak up for our Master or for me, his prisoner. Take your share of suffering for the Message along with the rest of us. We can only keep on going, after all, by the power of God, <sup>9</sup>who first saved us and then called us to this holy work. We had nothing to do with it. It was all *his* idea, a gift prepared for us in Jesus long before we knew anything about it. <sup>10</sup>But we know it now. Since the appearance of our Savior, nothing could be plainer: death defeated, life vindicated in a steady blaze of light, all through the work of Jesus.

<sup>11</sup>This is the Message I've been set apart to proclaim as preacher, emissary, and teacher. <sup>12</sup>It's also the cause of all this trouble I'm in. But I have no regrets. I couldn't be more sure of my ground—the One I've trusted in can take care of what he's trusted me to do right to the end.

<sup>13</sup>So keep at your work, this faith and love rooted in Christ, exactly as I set it out for you. It's as sound as the day you first heard it from me. <sup>14</sup>Guard this precious thing placed in your custody by the Holy Spirit who works in us.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

**THANKS BE TO GOD!**

## Sermon – “Your mission if you choose to accept it”

(Mission Impossible TV – theme music)

This was the music in the background of my life – it was a show my brothers watched and a tag line they often used when Mom was handing out chores for the 5 of us!

Imagine Tim getting this letter...

Sent by Paul from prison in Rome just before he is executed for his religious beliefs and actions.

Paul invites Tim to “join the mission,” to be part of “living chain of believers” and the “custodian of the tradition”

You can just feel the “battering up.”

Paul wanted Tim to succeed him as leader of the Christian movement in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AND Paul knew that the risks were great.

In selling the job to Tim, he rationalized that we take risks as Christians because Jesus took risks AND that risk-taking changed the course of human history.

This is all well and good for people in the Bible but when it comes to our own lives most of us are pretty much risk-averse.

Pastor, author and broadcaster, Charles Stanley:

Too many Christians have a commitment of convenience. They’ll stay faithful as long as it’s safe and doesn’t involve risk, rejection, or criticism. Instead of standing alone in the face of challenge or temptation, they check to see which way their friends are going.

What are the risks of a life of Christian observance/action?

Coming to worship on Sundays when your friends/neighbours don’t.

Giving \$ to Christian causes when you might spend it on new clothes/vacation like others do.

Volunteering your time to care for the poor/oppressed when others are golfing, going out for coffee, playing bridge.

Writing letters, going to informational events, attending public rallies, calling for justice, when you could quietly keep your opinion to yourself and nothing changes.

The biggest risk most of us take is letting others know we are Christians!

- we expose our belief
- a little like walking naked down Fermor!!

Tim hesitated just like each of us does every time we make a choice for faith.

We measure the risks just like any risks manager at a bank or insurance company does.

We assess the personal costs versus the benefits.

A.K. Adam (workingpreacher.org) suggests that the distance between discipleship and cowardice (inaction) is not very long.

But if we focus on risk and ignore the potential reward, we rob ourselves of the greatest blessings of life.

A life of faith is about grace, contentment, meaning, salvation -> living with the limitless love of God which is forgiveness, presence, trust, assurance.

These are the rewards we don't ever want to live without, no matter what the risk.

- "You'll always miss 100% of the shots you don't take." Wayne Gretzky
- "Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore." Andre Gide quotes (French writer, humanist, moralist, 1947 Nobel prize for literature, 1869-1951)
- "Why not go out on a limb? That's where the fruit is." Will Rogers

Faith, knowing we are God's -> our mission is to live with courage.