

mp3/31/2 TIMch1 JOHN TINDALL.MP3

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Preacher: Arron Cook

[0 : 00] Well, last time I was here, I preached a message from 2 Timothy chapter 1. I don't expect anybody to remember it, but I'm continuing in that short series this morning. I'd like you to look back at 2 Timothy chapter 1, if you will, in your Bible, if you're following me in the Bible. Some years ago, I read a story, I don't know that it's true, it was presented as true, about an American seminary professor who was quite versed in the Greek, and he was dying.

And his dear wife wanted to give him a bit of comfort as he was passing through the valley of the shadow of death, and so she sought to quote from 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 12.

And she began her quote in this way, I know in whom I have believed, and I'm convinced the story goes that the professor interrupted her because he could not suffer as much as a preposition to come between himself and the Lord Jesus Christ. And he said, no, it's I know whom I have believed, and I'm persuaded. The difference, I'm not sure how the Greek stands in that because there are one or two modern versions that do say, I know in whom I have believed. But the difference in terms of our concept of these things is that to know your faith in something and to know the person in whom you are trusting is slightly different.

So he corrected her. But interestingly, the Apostle Paul is a dying man. As he's writing 2 Timothy chapter 1, it's very probably his second imprisonment. The first one, he was under house arrest and could pretty well have visitors and pretty well enjoy a normal life, although he was guarded by soldiers. But now he's in probably what the scholars think was the Mamertine prison in Rome, which was reserved for the worst enemies of the Roman Empire, people who'd brought disgrace upon themselves and were regarded as traitors and betrayers of the cause. And they were shackled in prison in an underground dungeon, which was at least 20 feet below the surface of the ground.

It was a dark, smelly, horrible place. The Apostle Paul is chained up and he says in chapter 4, the day of my departure is at hand. It was quite common for prisoners just to be taken out and strangled to death in the public square. So he's a dying man. As he writes, he's enduring dishonor and disgrace for being a gospel preacher and for refusing to compromise his gospel. And his valued status as a Roman citizen is now no longer bringing the benefits and privileges that once he'd had. He's waiting for the day when he will die. But he says in this first chapter, I'm not ashamed of suffering for this gospel. And he's unwilling, you see, to allow the massive weight of Greek philosophy and the massive weight of Roman power to determine his relationship to the gospel. Gospel is everything to this man. His culture thinks he's an idiot, that he's a fool. Romans regard him now as a blasphemer, as an atheist. That's what they called people who only had one God. They were atheists. They regarded him as an ignorant man, but he refuses to let the culture around him shame him or rob him of gospel joy.

[3 : 47] Now the gospel is guarded and the church is built by men and women like this, by men and women of this kind of caliber. And we're going to take a little closer look at this. This morning, when I preached last time a few months ago, it was talking about the willingness to endure hardship for the sake of the gospel. Now this morning, I want to look first of all at this apostle that he trusts the guardian of his treasure. He trusts the guardian of his treasure. He says in verse 12, he's been appointed as an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed because I know whom I have believed and I'm convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day. Now there's some debate amongst the scholars about whether Paul wrote what I have entrusted to him or that he is able to guard what he has entrusted to me. The Greek simply says, I am convinced that he is able to guard my deposit. So the scholars argue about whether it means the deposit that Paul has handed over to God or whether it's the deposit that God has handed over to Paul. And if you pick a translation, you can pick a different version of this verse.

Of course, I'm sticking with the new international version this morning because I think it makes better sense that Paul is trusting the God to whom he has entrusted everything. Paul has deposited with God his soul, his spirit, and his body. And there are verses in 1 Thessalonians and other passages that speak of God safeguarding us body, soul, and spirit until the final day. So that's where I'm going. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on the Greek because I don't know much about it. You'll have to ask my son about that. But Hugo Grotius responded to this in this way,

God deposits with us his word and we deposit with him our spirit. Now I'm going with that this morning. So I'm thinking about this apostle who has given everything to the gospel and to the God of the gospel and he is trusting the guardian of his treasure. See, when you become a Christian, you surrender yourself lock, stock, and barrel to the Lord Jesus and his father. He becomes the king of your time. He becomes the king of your possessions and your energies and your money. Your body, soul, and spirit are, as it were, handed back to the God who gave them to you. You begin a life of discipleship in which you increasingly learn not to hold anything back from your service of this God and your submission to his word. And the law of the Lord, the mind of God in scripture begins to shape everything. The way you think, the decisions you make, the person you marry, the person you don't marry, the things you read, the way you spend your holidays, it begins to shape everything. Now in one sense,

I hope you won't mind my using this kind of image, in one sense it's a massive gamble. It's a massive gamble. You are trusting that when you take all that you are and have on the proposition that the gospel is true, that you won't be made to look a fool, that it will turn out right in the end. Imagine, this is the illustration I like to use at this point, imagine taking all the money you've ever had, all the money that you presently have, such as it is, and all the money you ever will have, in fact if you could do that, and investing it in a new product. Because a friend has introduced you to one of his friends, who has invented a window that repairs itself. Every time it's broken, it fixes itself. Not only that, but it's a self-cleaning window. All the window cleaners will be put out of business, because this is a self-repairing, self-cleansing window.

And you are being invited to invest everything you've got in this new product, and you are going to make a killing. You're going to be richer than Bill Gates, or Steve Jobs, to whom I have given most of my money by buying these gadgets. So you invest all your money. You hand it over into the hands of a bloke you trust. The next you hear is in South America, spending a fortune, and spending it all on money, and booze, and women, and Manchester United kit. All that money, all gone to waste. And would you go around boasting about that? You know, I made this great investment, but it's all rubbish. I've lost home. Would you go around boasting, or would you be ashamed? We've got a sweet lady who used to come to our church, one of the godliest, sweetest women I've known. And her husband died just before he retired, and he left her with significant monies, and she handed it over to a Christian man who was an independent financial advisor. And she lost it all to a man she trusted.

[9 : 44] He went to jail, but she didn't get her money back. The question is, the Bible comes and says, if you surrender all that you are and all you have to Jesus Christ, then you will enjoy a self-sustaining, God-sustaining, eternal relationship with him that will never be broken.

And that your sinful heart can be cleansed over and over and over again. A relationship that will last eternally in a new creation. So you hand over all your heart, all you are, and all you have to Christ. Is he able to guard what you've deposited with him? I think that's what's going on here.

Will you end up being vindicated or ashamed? How well do you know him? I know I'm not ashamed because I know whom I have believed. He's trustworthy. I've handed everything. I've deposited my life, body, soul, and spirit in his hands, invested it in the gospel. I bear the scars of hardship for trusting in this Christ. I'm not ashamed because I know him and he is able to keep what I've entrusted to him against that day. So my friend, I want to ask you this morning, are you, are you similarly convinced of his trustworthiness? If you're not, you see, you will hold back in discipleship. You will keep the gospel as some kind of spiritual insurance policy, but you will hang on to stuff that you were a bit nervous about letting go of, just in case. There are some elements that you think you need to make your life work and you'll hang on to those things as a kind of selfish, grasping spirit, rather than surrendering to the kingship of Jesus Christ. You might have a role to play in the life of the church, but you'll make sure perhaps that your money stays pretty well under your control. After all, I'm not so sure that Jesus

Christ can be trusted as fully as that. I remember when I was, when we were planting a church up in the northeast of England, one of our young men was a fireman and he had unbelieving parents. And one day, I don't know why, his mother was rifling through his checkbook stubs. And she saw the amount of money he was giving to the Tied Mouth Free Church with that strange pastor that they had. And she questioned him, why are you giving all your money to that man? Me. That's how she viewed it. Because he was committed to the life of the church in such a way that his mother thought it was undeniably idiotic.

After all, she thought Jesus Christ and his church and his ministers are not to be trusted in that way. Well, perhaps you'll be committed to all sorts of areas of Christian life, but you maybe will keep something to yourself that perhaps is unclean or a little compartment sealed off from the Lord Jesus Christ. Apostle Paul was wholehearted, gave himself body, soul and spirit on anything that wasn't committed to Christ and the kingdom. C.T. Studd, you will remember, you've all heard this story. C.T. Studd played cricket for Cambridge in England. We were in one of the streets of Whitby the other day and one of the men said to a lady at the shop door, he said, yeah, we had a great day of cricket yesterday in Scarborough. And he was so enthusiastic about this day of cricket. C.T. Studd was a great cricketer. Played for Cambridge and played for England against Australia in that first series in which the Australians won in this country and they burned some wickets, I think it was, and created a small urn of ashes and said, here is the death of English cricket and they made the ashes.

[14:10] And then the following year, C.T. Studd and others went back to Australia and won it back again. Bless them. Well, this man was a wealthy young man. He inherited from his father 29,000 pounds, which is in today's money, as we say, two million pounds. And he was a man who was converted, became a Christian. He felt called to be a missionary in China. And if you look at the little urn of the ashes, it's got C.T. Studd's name on it. His name's gone down on that little urn.

Became a Christian. It was one of a generation of young men who went out to China as volunteer missionaries. They set off not knowing whether they would ever come back. And he and his wife decided to give away every last penny of his two million pounds worth of fortune because they wanted to begin married life in a state of dependence on Jesus Christ and his father.

They gave it all away. They gave it to George Muller. They gave it to the Salvation Army. They gave it here, there and everywhere to Christian work. They wanted to start married life trusting only in Christ. They lived a life of surrender. They lived a life of gospel ministry. And they died. And C.T. Studd's last spoken word on earth was a Hebrew word.

Hallelujah. That's all he said as he was dying. They invested everything they were and had into Christ and his gospel. And on the last day will they be ashamed that they invested unwisely?

Is he able to keep hold of that deposit that they gave into his hands, to his glory, that treasure, until the final day? And Paul says in his letter near the day of his departure in chapter 4 that henceforth he says, I have kept the faith. I've run the race. I've fought the fight.

[16:03] I've done it absolutely, committedly and without any ounce of devotion left untouched by the gospel of Christ. But henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me in that day, not only to me but to all who've loved his appearing.

He was convinced that Christ could be the guardian of his treasure. We have a lovely older couple in our church in the Midlands called Ron and Irene Tamplin.

They're in their 80s now. And they sailed out in 1956 to Bolivia. There they were, engaged, on board ship, like in the old days.

There were no jet lag in those days. It took them six months to get anywhere on the ship. But there they were on the ship, sailing past the coast of Ecuador on, I think it was January the 26th, 1956.

They were sailing past the coast of Ecuador when news came over the radio, the ship's radio, that five young men had been speared to death on the banks of a river by the Auka Indians.

[17:16] One of them was a young man called Jim Elliott, and he was 29 years of age. And our friend Ron, on his way to Bolivia, was 29 years of age.

Jim Elliott, you remember his famous principle, he is no fool who loses what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. He was 29 years old, dying on a river bank with a few mates, convinced that Jesus is able to guard what I have committed to him against that day.

Left behind a wife, a young wife, and a tiny baby. What kind of Christian are you? Half-hearted, full-hearted, whole-hearted.

See, so much depends on your view of the reliability of the gospel past and future. Do you firmly trust, as Paul does here in this first chapter, do you firmly trust that Jesus Christ appeared and abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel?

Do you believe that? He died so that death might die. He brought life and immortality to light. That's trusting what the gospel says about the past is really true.

[18 : 41] Are you utterly convinced, my friend, this morning that the future God promises is really, really going to come about? Did the resurrection of Jesus Christ secure for you an eternal crown of righteousness in a future world that will be a new creation?

Is it really true that there awaits for you a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will place on your head in that day? I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep my deposit until the final day.

If you really live with that faith environment, if that's the environment of your heart and spirit, then you'll be able to live a life of surrender, a life of devotion, a life of commitment, a life of whole-hearted following of Jesus in his kingdom.

And such people, people who can trust the guardian of their treasure, who know that if it's hard and difficult and painful and they suffer loss of the gospel in this life, they know it's all right, it's all right. He's guarding it. It's an investment, and he's guarding it. He trusts the guardian of his treasure. And then secondly, he guards the treasure entrusted to him.

[20 : 00] He guards the treasure entrusted to him. Verse 13, hold on to the pattern of sound words that you have heard from me. Hold on to the pattern of sound words in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

Guard the good deposit entrusted to you. I think there's a little bit of what the scholars call Hebrew parallelism going on here. It's saying the same thing but in a slightly different way.

Hold on to the pattern of sound words that you heard from me. It's the same way, it's the same thing as saying, guard by the Holy Spirit the good deposit that's been entrusted to you.

It's saying the same thing in two slightly different ways. Now there's a standard to be preserved here. Verse 13, a standard to be preserved.

What you heard from me, keep as a pattern of sound teaching. He's being told to hold on to a pattern of healthy words. In verse 14, he's told to guard a treasure, a good deposit.

[21 : 07] At the end of the letter, he's solemnly charged in chapter 4 in the most terrifying and solemn of oaths to preach the word in season and out of season.

God is watching. The return of Christ is approaching. Preach the word in season and out of season. Even if people don't want to put up with your sound doctrine sermons, keep on preaching the word of God.

He's solemnly charged to keep on preaching the word. In chapter 3, he's encouraged to continue searching the scriptures because these inspired scriptures are the only thing that will equip the man of God for every good work.

In chapter 2, he's told to present himself as a good workman who does not need to be ashamed, who rightly handles the word of truth. And here in chapter 1, he's told to guard this deposit of sound words.

The whole epistle is full of the importance of maintaining the purity of the apostolic gospel. I think this is how this works. All scripture, he says in chapter 3, are breathed out by God.

[22 : 17] They're inspired. Every word, every sentence, every phrase is breathed out by God, by this dynamic eternal whisper net that brought the inspired words to the minds and hearts of apostles and prophets.

But out of that inspired word, there is crafted by the inspiration of the spirit something called the gospel. It's composed of those great fundamental truths of salvation, the nature of God, the nature of man, the nature of sin, the nature of Christ, the nature of salvation, the nature of conversion, the nature of the church, the nature of the return of Christ and the future glory.

Out of this great body of inspired words is crafted a gospel. The concept referred here to is common in the New Testament.

Paul is one of those who was crafted by the power of the spirit, crafted this gospel. And he's handed it on to Timothy. It's that concept that's common in the New Testament of the master preparing to go away and handing over to his servant that which is the most precious thing that he has.

Not only that the servant will take care of it, but the servant will employ it to his master's profit so that when the master returns, this great thing that the master has handed over to the servant will have increased and will have multiplied and will have brought him great fruit.

[23 : 53] That's the concept. So here is this great apostle and he loves the scriptures. He knows Timothy loves the scriptures.

He knows Timothy's man loved the scriptures. He knows Timothy's nanny loved the scriptures and that they shared these Hebrew scriptures with him when he was but a bear and at his mother's knee. But he's also handed on to him this pattern of sound words, this gospel.

And he's telling him to take care of it. Listen to John Wesley. I am a spirit come from God and returning to God, just hovering over the great gulf.

Till a few moments hence, I am no more seen. I want to know one thing, the way to heaven. How to land safe on that happy shore. God hath condescended to teach me the way.

For this very end, he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. Oh, give me that book.

At any price, give me the book of God. I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me.

[24 : 54] Let me be a man of one book. Oh, my friends, God has given to us something incredibly precious to God.

It's the scriptures. But it's this pattern of sound words that constitute the gospel. And our business is to take care of it.

And to love it. And to appreciate it. And to adore the God who gave it to us. And then to use it for the master's honor. It's our privilege and our duty to so handle and love the gospel.

There's a standard to be preserved. The gospel. And secondly, there's a spirit in a preserver.

There's a spirit. He speaks of the spirit of the preserver.

The person who does the preserving. There are loads of examples in church history of a kind of grim orthodoxy. They seem mostly to find themselves into the way of the works of Charles Dickens. But the kind of grim orthodox people who hold to the gospel standards.

[26 : 00] But are graceless and grim. And they hold to the truth. But they seem to be more like theological rattlesnakes. Than warm hearted lovers of Jesus Christ. You know the kind of person.

You come a little bit too close to them. And this thing rattles. And you better back off a little bit in case you get bitten. There are people who know the gospel who are like that. There are other examples of Christians who use the truth of scripture like an axe.

And they're going through the forest of this world. Or through the forest of the church. And if they see one tree and it's got a slightly diseased branch. They take out the axe and they chop it down and ask questions later. You know the kind of.

There are churches like that. You go to them. You say one word out of turn. You do one little thing in the order of service out of turn. And somebody comes afterwards with an axe. And buries it in your pastoral pallet.

Plate. I know it began with P. They seem to be more passionate about chopping down every tree in the forest that doesn't look particularly healthy.

[27 : 04] Than in building and encouraging and strengthening and loving. And being warm hearted lovers of Christ. John Wesley said if your heart is right as I am.

As my heart is right. Give me your hand. We need broad hearted. We need people who are warm and loving. And Paul commands Timothy here to guard the treasure of the biblical gospel in faith and love.

There's a breed of men and women. Who love the Bible. And want to live and to breathe its contents. But there's a sweetness about them. That invites people to draw near.

They're not like these theological rattlesnakes. Or porcupines. As soon as you get near they put out the spikes. You know they're not like that. Jesus was ruthlessly and passionately devoted to the truth.

There wasn't a theological error in his divine body. But he was such an approachable man. The common people heard him gladly. The mothers wanted to bring their little kids and put them in his arms so that he could lay his hands on them.

[28 : 08] You wouldn't do that. Someone you didn't trust. You thought was a great guy. Would you? Vulnerable and needy thronged around him just to get a touch from his hand and a smile from his tender face.

And of course the hard-nosed, hard-hearted biblicists of his day. The Pharisees and the scribes. They felt the thunder and lightning of his anger. But the common people heard him gladly. They just loved to be near him. Even the bad people. The crooks and the prostitutes. They just loved to be at the same dining table as this man.

Sure, the truth of the gospel. The infallibility of the scriptures must be championed by people of faith who want to preserve this gospel for the next generation. But all let's be people of faith and love. The sweetness of Christ might show through. There's a spirit. There's a standard to be preserved, this gospel. There's a spirit in which we preserve it, faith and love.

[29 : 15] And I close with this today. There's a spirit in the preserver. The spirit in the preserver. So you can only guard this gospel and you can only share this gospel and pass on this gospel if you're dependent on the spirit of God.

And you are rekindling that relationship with the spirit of God on a daily basis. We've got to be like trees planted by streams of water.

To use the imagery of Sam 1. Here's a tree. It's planted by streams of water. Where were we walking the other day? Pauline, we're looking at the roots of the trees on the banks of the river Esk. Yes, we're on the banks of the river Esk where the stepping stones are. Near where Mrs. Brumby teaches at St. Hedder's. I always thought a header was something that a footballer did.

But apparently they named schools after it today. St. Hedder's. And we were looking at the trees standing right on the banks of the river Esk. And the roots have come down through the soil.

[30 : 37] And there's a kind of a network of roots that are running right along the river bank. Where these great trees are sucking up life and power and health from that lovely river.

So, you see, this is the kind of person we've got to try and be if we want to safeguard the gospel. It's not just the kind of grim, I am going to learn the 39 articles of the Church of England.

Or the Westminster Confession of Faith or the Savoy Declaration. Or even the basis of faith of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches. So that we know it off by heart. This is in the inward world.

In the world that's out of sight. In the place that nobody sees. Beneath the ground. Our roots are down. Into the Word of God. And we're sucking up through meditation and reading.

We're sucking up the things of the Word of God. That glorify our Lord Jesus Christ. But we are finding Christ in the Scriptures. And nourishing ourselves on this good stuff that we're sucking up out of the Bible.

[31 : 40] Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. Says Paul in Colossians chapter 3. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.

And incidentally if you are a very busy mother. With young children who are running about. Then this book that Melissa is reading is a must for you.

It's written by the daughter of a well-known American evangelical. And I've downloaded it onto my Kindle. And I'm going to read it. So that I can tell other mothers with busy children.

Busy mothers with children. Mothers with busy children. I can tell them about it. But this is in the unseen place. Where the roots of our thoughts are down as best we can.

Into the richness of Christ in Scripture. And then the leaves that people see are evergreen. And the fruit that's growing is the fruit that betrays something of the character of Jesus.

[32 : 46] We, all of us this morning, feel a long way from that. But this is, I think, what Paul is alluding to. We can only guard the Gospel if we do so in the Holy Spirit.

And to be in the Holy Spirit is to be letting the Holy Spirit touch every area of who we are and what we do and what we think. By the rich stuff that we suck out of God's Word.

Read, meditated upon, listened to him preaching, sung in the great songs of the faith. So, dear brothers and sisters, are you a person here this morning who is convinced that God is able to guard what you've deposited to him in his hands against the last day?

On the last day, will you be joyful or ashamed? And are you the kind of person who is keeping an eye and watching out and using and honoring what God has entrusted to you?

The precious Scripture and the Gospel that's crafted out of those precious pages. Jesus.