

TRINITY NEWS

Pentecost XX II Timothy Early Church Reflections

II Timothy is written, as are all the Pastorals (I and II Timothy, Titus), about “the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus” (1:1). This “promise of life” is contained in the apostolic pattern of preaching, which undergirds these writings as much as the more evangelistic epistles. If we presume Pauline authorship, as the Pastoral Epistles do, then the Pauline adaptation of this pattern is also presumed. That is, with Paul’s characteristic emphasis on justification of the believer by faith in Christ who in himself is the righteousness of God.

The opening section is marked by a series of exhortations to Timothy, supported by Paul’s reflections and assertions about his own life (1:3 – 2:13).

“I am grateful to God - whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did, when I remember you constantly in my prayers day and night” (1:3).

The note of constancy in prayer resounds in the Pauline epistles, e.g., “Constantly remembering you before our God and Father” and “Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances” (I Thessalonians 1:2-3; 5:17-18). Paul says that his “ancestors” also prayed with a “clear conscience”. He therefore does not set aside the effectiveness of their prayers. He also accepts the principle, set out in the Lord’s Prayer, that we cannot come before our heavenly Father without seeking to cleanse our conscience.

“Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy” (1:4) We are not told what the “tears” were about, so they may have reflected Timothy’s joy in his Christian convictions and his experience of Jesus through the Spirit. They may also indicate some sadness or hurt, or tears when he parted from Paul. Paul’s expression that he “may be filled with joy” is conditional on Timothy’s return, but his “joy” as an underlying facet of life is dependent on the joy of knowing Christ.

Timothy’s “sincere faith” had also “dwelt first” in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (1:5). Lois is not mentioned and Eunice is not named at Acts 16:1, where it is said that his mother was a Jewish woman and his father was a Greek. But there is no reason to doubt that the names are correct, especially when it is clear that Timothy was well known, both to Paul and in the Christian circles associated with these

writings. There is a trace of “inherited faith” here through family connections. This is in keeping with the development of the missionary work of the early Church and the consolidation of the faith in families. Luis Palau has said that the Christian faith “cannot be inherited”. This is true in that we all have to make it our own. But the influence of parents and grandparents who are dedicated to Christ is very influential at times. Paul reminds Timothy that he has like-minded people in his family who are models to him of faith in Christ. **Naming our models is crucial to naming ourselves.**

The beauty of life is in acting as if it will continue forever, but living every moment as an opportunity to be complete in itself and in oneself. Those who walk with Christ may have accidents in motor cars, or fall on a slippery surface, but in our relationships there are no accidents if we are conscious of our Companion. Holy people are recognised wherever they are, and whoever they are, for themselves. They communicate all the time without the need to say anything. When they respond the words come from another place. The only authority worth having occurs when it is self-authenticating in deed and word. The higher the percentage of such occurrences, the greater the revealed integrity and the more effective the person.

Bishop Arthur Jones



We are seeking the favorite hymns of the people. Please advise the office.

THIS WEEK:

Oct. 9 (Wednesday). Bible Study, 10:00am.

Oct. 10 (Thursday). Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Ruth 1:8-19a; Psalm 113; 2 Timothy 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19

COMING UP:

- **October 20.** Harvest Sunday.
- **November 10.** Remembrance Sunday (9:30 service)
- **November 17.** NCCP Sunday (9:30 service)
- **November 24.** Christ the King. Stewardship Sunday