GUARD WHAT WAS ENTRUSTED TO YOU

2 Timothy 1:12b-14(NASB) For I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

Review

Last week I talked at length about “retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me.” Using words to mean what they mean in the Scripture is very important. We are to do that with the “faith and love which are in Christ Jesus,” with an absolute confidence that what Jesus said is true but being careful to be loving in how we speak the truth.

Understanding Verse 14

In Greek, the word “guard” is the same in verses 12&14 and the phrase “what I have entrusted” uses the same Greek words as the phrase, “the treasure which has been entrusted” in verse 14. Paul had entrusted his future to God and was convinced his future was safe with God, because God would guard it well. He then tells Timothy to guard the treasure (literally, the good thing) that has been entrusted to him, the truth about who God is and how we can come to know Him and serve Him well.

Jude 3&4 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people. For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Galatians 2:4&5 This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on our freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give into them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

We guard what has been entrusted to us “through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.” John 16:13a “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.” John 17:17 “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”

2 Timothy 3:16&17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Those Who Deserted Paul

2 Timothy 1:15 You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.

The Roman province of Asia was the western tip of what in now Turkey and included the seven churches addressed in the Book of Revelation (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea) as well as several other cities mentioned in the Book of Acts.

Acts 19:9b&10 So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

Paul’s first trial in Rome came about because of complaints from Jewish leaders and was probably dismissed as an internal Jewish problem. (Acts 18:12-17; 26:31&32) His second arrest probably came about because of Gentile complaints; by this time there were more Gentile than Jewish believers and Christianity was beginning to be perceived by the Roman Empire as an existential threat. Everyone, except Jews, had to burn incense to the ruler and say, “Caesar is Lord.”

Hebrews 10:32-34 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

This is the only reference to Phygelus and Hermogenes. They are mentioned by name perhaps because they were well-known leaders or were leaders in the movement to distance themselves from Paul.

The Faithful Onesiphorus

2 Timothy 1:16-18 May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.

2 Timothy 4:19&20 Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.

Since Priscilla and Aquila, Erastus and Trophimus were fellow workers with Paul, it is likely that Onesiphorus was counted as one also. Verse 18 says, “You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.” His actions stand in stark contrast to Phygelus and Hermogenes.

“He often refreshed me.” When Onesiphorus was in Rome, he visited Paul often.

“He…was not ashamed of my chains.” 2 Timothy 2:8c&9, “This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not chained.”

Onesiphorus, when he was in Rome, searched hard for Paul until he found him. This stands in stark contrast to Phygelus and Hermogenes who had distanced themselves from Paul. His searching for Paul was probably noticed by the Roman authorities.

“May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus” and “May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day.” All of us sin, all of us need God’s mercy. It seems likely that Phygelus and Hermogenes justified their distancing themselves from Paul by claiming if he was in chains it was somehow his fault, likely for not obeying his own teaching on obeying those in authority.

James 2:8,12&13 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right…Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgement.

Some Things to Remember

Some will secretly slip into the church, infiltrate the ranks of the church, for the purpose of distorting the truth of the message that was “once for all entrusted to God’s holy people.”

Jude and Galatians mention three things they will do: They will try to put us back under the law; they will “pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality” and they will “deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

We need to guard what has been entrusted to us, to contend for the faith.

Some, like Paul, will suffer for being true to the faith.

We need to be like Onesiphorus, doing all we can to encourage them, rather than like Phygelus and Hermogenes who distanced themselves from Paul lest they be persecuted also.