

Fan into flame

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[0 : 0 0] There is a sermon outline, and due to the nature of today's sermon, the PowerPoint will be utilized quite a lot this morning, so a lot of the things you will also be able to find on the PowerPoint, so hopefully you can see it.

But we are starting this morning, as I've just said, in this short letter of 2 Timothy. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I just pray once again that you'll be at work through your word. I pray that as we look at 2 Timothy this morning, and the first seven verses later on, I pray that you would already be working by your spirit, indeed, to kindle the flame of our faith in our hearts, that we might hang on to you, and remember you, and know who you are.

So be at work this morning. Please achieve your purpose. All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Now, have you ever felt like giving up on living for Jesus?

Have you ever felt like giving up on serving Christ faithfully? Well, let me begin by introducing you to someone who had every reason to give up.

[1 : 3 3] He's called Charles Simeon. And as I tell you a little bit about his ministry, I want you to imagine being in his shoes and think about how you would feel.

Simeon was the pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge for 54 years. He preached his first sermon there in 1782 and his last sermon in 1836.

Now, Simeon came from a non-Christian family. As far as we can tell, his parents were unbelievers. But when he first came as a student to Cambridge University, he ended up reading a book on the Lord's Supper.

He discovered the true meaning of the gospel, and he was amazingly converted. His life was dramatically changed. And despite not meeting another believer for another three years on campus, Cambridge was a spiritually barren place then.

He was disciplined in his devotions. He gave away some money he inherited for the gospel, and he would become a great promoter of world missions.

[2 : 4 5] Now, after graduating, he entered full-time ministry and eventually became an Anglican pastor at Holy Trinity Church. I think it still exists today.

But not everyone was pleased to have him as their pastor. Many in the church wanted the previous assistant pastor.

Now, Simeon said that he was happy to go away if they didn't want him. But the bishop told him that the assistant wouldn't be appointed anyway, so it would be better if he stayed, which he did.

But the church members made life hard for him. At that church, they had a regular Saturday afternoon session, but the church didn't allow him to take the pulpit, asking that assistant pastor I just mentioned to give the talks instead.

Now, after that assistant pastor left the church, they still barred their own pastor from giving the talks, instead asking another outside pastor to do so.

[3 : 50] This went on for 12 years. Now, the regulars also used to lock the peels. Now, this is hard for us to imagine, because number one, we don't have peels in our church.

Peels are those long benches that you often see in more traditional churches. And even if we were to go to an Anglican church today, you can't lock the peels, can you?

But back then, in many English churches, the peels look like this on the screen. So they have, it's like in a box with doors. And so the families at that time can buy peels, and you could lock them so that no one else can sit in them.

And that's what the regulars did. They didn't bother to show up on a Sunday, but they still locked the peels so that no one else could sit in them. Now, anybody who wanted to come and hear Simeon preach probably had to sit in the aisles or stand.

Now, Simeon did actually try to buy some extra seats, extra chairs. But the church wardens, that's like the elders, came in and threw them away. They also tried complaining about him to the bishop and prevented people from coming to an evening service he started.

[5 : 08] At the same time, don't forget his ministering in Cambridge. And so many in the university held Simeon in low regard. They insulted him, they slandered him.

Sometimes the students even came in to disrupt the services. As late as 1810, 28 years into his ministry there, he was still facing opposition.

There was a guy criticizing his preaching for stressing holiness too much and circulating pamphlets against him. Today, it would probably be WhatsApp messages.

So, if you're Simeon, how would you feel? Would you feel like giving up on ministry? I certainly 100% would.

That's normal. I think that would be a normal reaction. And you know what? If you're a Christian this morning, you might not face what Simeon did.

[6 : 14] You're not a pastor. But if you have been genuinely living for Jesus and trying to put the gospel first wherever you are, then you too will know something of the pressures and the difficulties of serving Jesus faithfully.

Perhaps you've tried for many years now to share Jesus with your non-Christian family. But until today, they've yet to show an inch of interest. Perhaps you've tried to care for others, to love them with words of encouragement and correction from Scripture.

But your efforts are unappreciated and even opposed. And perhaps, what has been most discouraging of all is when you realize other Christians don't have the same gospel-centered priorities and mindset as you do.

They're the ones, not the non-Christians, who think that you're a bit extreme, who think that we should all go easy on all this talk about Jesus and the gospel and the Bible.

And so you feel like giving up. Well, if so, then the letter of 2 Timothy is for you. This morning, we're going to begin a series in this short letter.

[7 : 38] It's a familiar letter to many of you, I believe. And the danger is, that familiarity might blind us to what this letter is really all about.

You see, many people think of 2 Timothy as essentially like a hand-over document. You know, when you leave a job or you're retiring from a job, what you often do is you try to write something up so that it's easy for your successor to take over.

So you might mention some details about your day-to-day work. You might list the essential files and deadlines for him to look at. You might give a clear outline of its role and expectations, things like that.

And many of you likely know that this is Paul's final letter. And so it can be easy to simply read to Timothy as Paul handing over his ministry responsibilities to Timothy.

He's the experienced guy, but now that he's going to be gone soon, he's simply laying down instructions for the less experienced guy. Now that is not completely off the mark because there is a hand-over of sorts going on.

[9 : 02] The Apostle Paul is indeed thinking about the future when he will no longer be there and Timothy has to take over. But if we simply think of 2 Timothy as a hand-over document the way I just described it, then I think we'll miss the punch of the letter.

Because 2 Timothy is not simply a hand-over document. It is a letter of encouragement. It is a letter of exhortation from one pastor to another not to give up.

And so it is a letter applied first of all to pastors and church leaders, but with wider relevance to church congregations everywhere.

And so you'll notice that in this series, I will often first apply this letter to leaders and then the congregations who support these leaders because that's how it's to be applied.

Paul is writing to Timothy. And I went back and forth on this over this week. But what I finally decided to do this morning is to briefly help you gain an overall orientation to this letter rather than plunge straight into the first seven verses so that you can see the big picture and therefore feel the urgency of this letter more, feel its cutting edge.

[10 : 34] And so that's what we'll do first and then we'll finish by paying some attention to the opening words of this letter. So let's do some orientation. And I'm going to do it by looking at the situation and then looking at the recipient, Timothy.

So let's begin with the situation. What is going on? Well, let's run through two Timothy to get a feel for what Timothy might be going through and all the verses I'm going to say should appear on the screen.

So if you come with me to chapter 1 verse 7 to 8 you see there Paul in verse 8 calls Timothy not to be ashamed of the gospel.

And indeed in verse 7 he seems worried that timidity will take hold of Timothy. So clearly there is something going on which might cause Timothy to shrink back and be ashamed.

But what could that be? Well, let's keep looking through this letter to see why he might be tempted to be ashamed. Well, for one thing his mentor is in chains.

[11 : 45] You can see in 1 verse 16 and 2 verse 9 I think there's a mistake in your sermon outline. It should be verse 9 not verse 8. And Paul says that he's being chained like a criminal.

He's in prison. But this isn't like his previous imprisonments because if we were to go down to the first half of chapter 4 we will see that Paul thinks that this time he is likely to die.

He's not going to be released. So in 4 verse 6 he talks about being poured out like a drink offering and he thinks that it is soon time for him to depart this world.

And that's not good news because we'll see that the church is not in the best situation. So look for instance at the second half of chapter 2.

In verses 17 and 18 we discover that there are two people whom Paul knows who have departed from the truth.

[12 : 49] So these two guys Hymenaeus and Philetus have been with Paul. They used to teach the same thing as Paul. They used to hold on to the truth.

But now Paul tells us they have wandered from it. And indeed again and again such talk keeps coming up in this letter we find talk about false teachers and desertion.

So in chapter 1 verse 15 Paul laments the fact that even Phygelus and Hermogenus have abandoned him. Now we don't know who they are but the fact that they are named suggests that it was a surprise and it was a big blow that they have not stuck with Paul.

He thinks that these are the people who should have stuck with him and yet in 1 verse 15 he says you know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me including Phygellus and Hermogenus.

It's probably like me saying today oh you know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me including Dr. Hong Park and Dr. Kenny. That's the kind of impact it is.

[14 : 02] And in the first half of chapter 3 we read again about false teachers. Here's verse 8 just as Yannes and Yambres oppose Moses so also these teachers oppose the truth.

And this false teaching is having an impact because it's finding a ready made audience immature churchgoers.

Notice in 3 verse 6 who are listening to these teachers. They are the gullible women who are loaded down with sins and swayed by all kinds of evil desires always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

And so they like listening to the latest teachers and whatever their hearts incline them to. But they are not that interested in letting biblical truth challenge and shape them.

This is repeated in chapter 4 verse 3 where we find people who will not put up with sound doctrine but who only want to listen to things that would suit their own desires.

[15 : 19] And indeed earlier in chapter 2 verse 14 and 16 there's mention about quarreling about words and godless chatter and then down in verse 23 there's talk about foolish and stupid arguments so clearly that's in the background the false teaching seems to have made a negative impact on people's godliness leading them to infighting.

So it's clear Timothy is facing an extremely difficult situation. There's imprisonment of a mentor there's mess in the church and there's suffering and persecution other verses that we'll look at in future weeks we'll mention that also I haven't put them up today and the gospel he believes in.

The gospel he's been serving. The gospel that's been the hallmark of his ministry. Well it doesn't seem to be leading to success and easy living and prosperity in fact is quite the opposite.

And so perhaps it's no surprise to find people abandoning the gospel and deserting its messenger Paul if that is its effect.

And that is sobering because Paul is writing this letter in the mid AD 60s. In other words he's writing only a good 33 to 35 years after Jesus has died and risen again.

[17 : 07] And Ephesus which is where Timothy is currently at was a place where Paul had laboured long and hard in.

In Acts chapter 19 verse 10 we're told that Paul while Paul was in Ephesus all the Jews and the Greeks in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

and it was a place verse 11 where God through Paul performed extraordinary miracles. Paul exercised a long ministry there and many people said they believe.

But now he tells us again back in 1 verse 15 of 2 Timothy everyone in the province of Asia that same province has deserted me.

how sobering. People who have heard his gospel, people who said they accepted it, people who have laboured for it even, have now chosen no longer to be associated with Paul and his message.

[18 : 22] And that's a warning for us. As one preacher I know used to say often, the gospel is always only one generation away from extinction.

Jesus had risen only three decades ago. Paul had left Ephesus probably only about ten years before. And from Acts chapter 20, we even know that he had taught the Ephesian church the whole counsel of God.

He had left elders in charge and he had warned them in Acts chapter 20, verse 29 to 31. He had told them that savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

Even from your own number, man will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard.

And sure enough, ten plus years later, this is exactly what's happening. And the church is a mess because the leaders have not been on guard.

[19 : 36] They have not properly stewarded the gospel they've been entrusted with. And this isn't just a fact of history. It's something that has happened throughout church history again and again and again.

and it's something that can happen and has happened today in many places in our country. The gospel is always only one generation away from extinction.

And so the unspoken question of Paul is, Timothy, will you desert too? Will you give up?

And so now we look at the recipient of this letter, Timothy. Now for those of you who have read this letter before or heard sermons on 2 Timothy before, what word comes to mind when you hear about Timothy?

Anybody? What's the first word that comes to mind? Okay, I heard young man. Timid, yeah, I heard timid, that's right.

[20 : 50] Timid, Timothy. And that's probably how many sermons have painted him in the past. You see, many people look at 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 7 and they see it as implying that Timothy must be a naturally timid guy who is a bit of a feeble weakling whom Paul just needs to push a little.

And so our idea of Timothy has been shaped by this image. We imagine that he's a very young guy who's naturally very shy and nervous and very inexperienced.

But is this an accurate picture? Well, let's have a think. Let me just take you away from Ephesus for a moment to another church, Corinth.

And if you were ever to read 1 Corinthians, you would know that this is a church with huge pastoral problems. There was division and factions.

There was disciplinary issues and sexual immorality. People were suing one another and trivializing public worship. And so who does Paul send to sort things out?

[22 : 02] Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 17. For this reason, I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord.

He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in the church. Paul sends Timothy to be his troubleshooter.

Is he likely to send an inexperienced and timid guy to face these things head on? Very unlikely. Or how about the Thessalonian church?

Now this was a church that was indeed following Christ, but that was suffering severe persecution. And so what does Paul do? 1 Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 2 to 3.

We send Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service, in spreading the gospel of Christ to strengthen and encourage you in the faith so that no one would be unsettled by these trials.

[23 : 10] Again, would Paul send someone who would normally shrink back from every trial to encourage the Thessalonians? Very unlikely.

And that's just two examples, there's more. And don't forget, by the time Paul writes to Timothy, in 2 Timothy, Paul and Timothy have been working closely together for roughly 15 years.

Timothy is hardly an inexperienced pastor. At this stage, he is likely to be in his late 30s, a little older than me.

So why does Paul encourage Timothy with the words of 2 Timothy 1, verse 7? Well, the answer is simple.

It's not because Timothy is naturally a very timid person, but because he's typical. Remember the difficult situation he's facing that I've just described to you?

[24 : 18] And so like any normal guy, he might have thought, is this really worth it? Everyone is leaving. Maybe I should too.

I'm tired. So it's time to let gospel ministry go. He would have felt the strong temptation to give up. He's behaving typically.

And so this is why Paul is writing to him to say, don't give up on gospel ministry. Keep going. Hold on to what you're doing. Follow my example, Timothy.

After all, 3, verse 10, you know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, and endurance.

And you know, Timothy, that as I lay right now on death row for verse 7, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race.

[25 : 22] I have kept the faith. I have not given up. will you not give up to Timothy? Don't give up, Timothy, even though gospel ministry is tough.

Instead, for verse 5, keep your head in all situations and deal hardship. Do the work of an evangelist and above all, discharge the duties of your ministry.

ministry. That's Paul's main purpose in writing this letter. And that's why as you look at the letter over the next few weeks, you'll see that Paul keeps giving Timothy exhortation after exhortation to keep going in ministry.

1 verse 6, we'll look at this later, fan into flame. 1 verse 8, which we'll look at next week, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. chapter 2, verse 1, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Chapter 2, verse 14, keep reminding God's people about these things and so on and so forth. This is no handover document. This is a strong letter of encouragement.

[26 : 37] Timothy, don't ever give up. And so if this is your first time reading this letter, well I hope that gives you the overall framework as we work through the different sections in the coming weeks.

And if this isn't your first time, well I hope this helps you to see 2 Timothy through fresh eyes. And so let's now turn to the first seven verses of this letter.

And even in his opening words, Paul is already urging Timothy not to give up. we might be forgiven scanning these verses for thinking that when he talks about Timothy's mother and grandmother and being able to see Timothy again, he's just an old man reminiscing about the good old days.

But that's not post-purpose. He's not just indulging in some misty-eyed nostalgia. He has a larger design in mind.

From the very first word, by way of reminder and appeal, he is helping Timothy to keep going. And so for the remainder of our time, let's just quickly look at these opening verses.

[27 : 59] Firstly, the reminder. Remember the faith of the people of God. Remember the faith of the people of God.

Paul begins by formally stating who he is. Verse 1, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. He does so not because he's like a YP who insists on being caught by his full tansri title at every turn.

Eh, Timothy, don't forget now, I'm apostle now. No, it's not because he wants to lord his position over Timothy. That would be out of step with the very affectionate and familiar way in which he addresses Timothy in verse 2.

My dear son. No. In calling himself from the beginning as an apostle of Jesus by the will of God, he simply wants to remind Timothy.

Son, you know what? What we're involved is bigger than just the two of us. I'm not doing what I'm doing simply because this was my cita-cita since young.

[29 : 18] No, I've been caught by Jesus Christ and I've been sent by him. That's what an apostle is, someone who is sent. The race I'm running, Timothy, the fight I'm fighting, the ministry I'm doing is because it's been divinely ordained by God.

It's his will. And guess what, Timothy? God hasn't just called you and I alone in service of him.

You and I are not the only ones who have been called to trust him. No, before us, there has already been a long line of people who have endured faithfully, who have persevered, joyfully.

Just look at verse 3. Paul writes, I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did.

With a clear conscience, as night and day, I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. Paul remembers the faith of his ancestors.

[30 : 29] Jesus, he looks back at his heritage and recalls all those men and women in Israel's history who have also run the race with great faith, who trusted God and his promises even as they endured the ups and downs of life.

Perhaps he thinks of Noah, who with great faith built an ark when warned about the future judgment that God will bring, even when others might have mocked him for doing so.

Almost certainly he thinks of Abraham, who had no children for the longest, despite God's promise to give him descendants as numerous as the stars.

And when Abraham was finally given a son, he was actually asked to sacrifice him. Well, Abraham needed to have faith. And perhaps he thought of David, who knew that the Lord would rescue him and his people from the hands of the Philistine that everyone was afraid of, Goliath, and who knew that the battle belonged to the Lord.

Paul knows that he is not the first in line. He is not some lone ranger. Rather, he stands in a long line of believers who all have exercised great faith.

[31 : 57] With a clear conscience, Paul knows that he has clung on steadfastly to the Lord as they did. It's not that he never sinned, but it's that he has kept turning to the Lord as a sinner.

Night and day he turns to the Lord in prayer. And as he remembers his spiritual forefathers, he remembers Timothy too.

And as he remembers Timothy, he is convinced. Timothy, you two stand in line with me. Your faith is sincere.

And the reason you stand in line with me is because your immediate ancestors, your biological ancestors, also exercise faith. Look at verse 5.

I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded now lives in you also.

[33 : 00] Now, from the book of Acts, we know that Timothy's father is a Gentile, almost certainly an unbeliever. But his mother and grandmother have come to faith. And without a doubt, they were a positive influence on Timothy himself coming to faith, perhaps through their instruction, and almost certainly through their example.

And so, even with these opening words, Paul is encouraging Timothy, remember. Remember the faith of the people of God.

Remember the faith of the people closest to you, your own mom and grandma. And Timothy, let that help you not to give up.

and let that help us not to give up either. For when we too come to faith, we didn't come as the first in line, but we join a long queue of people before us who have all endured faithfully and served the Lord joyfully all the way to the end.

And that is what those in pastoral ministry and church leadership are to especially remember. Don't forget, this letter is written from Paul to Timothy, and so its first application is actually to people like me.

[34 : 22] Paul is saying, gospel ministry is war, it's a battle, it's hardship, and there will be times when you feel like you're all alone. And there will be times when you feel like the prophet Elijah who lamented to God, I think I'm the only one left, God, who truly follows you.

And the Lord reminded Elijah, but that's not true, there are others in the city who still belong to me. And the initial application to the congregation is to keep encouraging your pastors, now not just me, but any pastor and full-time worker that you know.

We all need reminding too that we have God's grace, mercy, and peace with us. We need reminding to hold on to Jesus in whom there is promise of life even when it feels like death.

And keep reminding them also by your own example of faithful endurance. And I thank God that there are many of you here who by your decades of faithfulness in remaining Christian indeed an encouragement.

And of course, there are some extended applications here too. For this same call to remember and to endure is true if you are in any sort of ministry that holds the gospel to others, whether that's as a Bible study leader or as a Sunday school teacher or perhaps especially as parents.

[35 : 59] What a blessing it was for Lois and Eunice to be such a positive influence on Timothy. And so parents, don't waste this opportunity God has given you.

Wouldn't it be great if 20 years down the line, somebody could write about your son or your daughter and say, oh, wasn't it amazing that his mother and grandma and papa and grandpa brought the seed of faith to life in him by God's grace?

parents. And even if you're not a biological parent, well, here's a challenge to our older folk in particular. Well, could you spiritually parent someone younger?

Could you be that positive influence? Why not impact someone younger by being a role model worthy of imitation? Well, we better move on, so let's get to verses 6 to 7.

Secondly, fan into flame the gift of God. Fan into flame the gift of God. Verse 6. For this reason, Paul writes, I remind you, Timothy, to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

[37 : 22] Paul is saying, Timothy, you know what? I know you're a Christian. You have faith. You have the Holy Spirit. So you know what that means?

God has gifted you. And now Paul doesn't specify what Timothy's gift is here. And so this has led the commentators to a bit of excited discussion about it.

And there are basically a couple of possibilities what this gift is, but in my view, the right cross reference is 1 Timothy chapter 4 verses 13 to 14. Let me read it on the screen.

Paul writes to Timothy in an earlier letter, Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

So notice in those verses we also have mention of a gift and the laying on of hands. So it seems like the two are connected. And here it seems as if this gift is more specifically the gift of preaching and teaching scripture.

[38 : 39] And that would also fit with Paul's exhortation to Timothy later on in chapter 4 to preach the word. But Paul says it's not enough to have the gift.

gift. You need to keep the fire burning. You need to not let the flame go out. In other words, you have to keep exercising this gift.

Even in the face of opposition, even in view of the fact that preaching the gospel seems to bring you more difficulty, not ease, well Timothy, you have to keep doing it.

And that's why you need to be reminded of who lives within you. verse 7. For the spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self discipline.

Now some of you might have the older NIV and it doesn't capitalize the word spirit there, so it seems as if Paul is referring to our human spirit. But I think it's more likely that a reference to the Holy Spirit is in view here, which is why the newer NIV capitalizes the S, and I'm following the NIV 2011.

[39 : 56] For it is only in reliance on the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who bestows on us power and love and self discipline who can help Timothy and us to press on.

And that's exactly what Charles Simeon did. He fanned the flame. You see, Simeon was a man utterly committed to preaching the Bible.

As he once said, I only want to bring out the scripture what is there, and not to impose on scripture what I think might be there. And although he saw opposition throughout his ministry, he also saw fruit as student after student sat under his preaching and were converted and were well-grounded in the faith.

And you could never foresee what fruit might be born. For instance, Simeon actually helped fan the flame of another preacher named Mr.

Stewart, who wanted to give up on his own ministry, but he received encouragement from Simeon. And so Mr. Stewart continued in his own ministry and impacted the lives of a couple in his congregation.

[41 : 19] And that same couple went on to bring up their own son zealously in the faith. And that same son, Alexander Duff, became one of the greatest missionaries to India, serving there for 50 years.

When the flame is fanned, you never know how God will spread the fire. And so how does this apply to us?

Again, the first application is to those who exercise a ministry of the word. Keep fanning the flame. Put in the hours to study scripture, put in the hard work to connect scripture with lives.

Don't despise this ministry despite its apparent weakness. For you never know what God will do with what just seems to be weak words.

Pastors must have the gift of teaching and to steward it well. And for the congregation, again, the application is to encourage your pastors and full-time workers to keep working hard at the word.

[42 : 32] Give them the time and the space to be equipped and to deepen their understanding. And in turn, you will be blessed. Don't just turn over the ministry of the word to anyone, but if there are indeed people with the right gifts, fan it into flame.

But there is also an extended application for all of us. most of us here are not pastors, but all of us here, if we trust and follow Jesus, have been given gifts of some sort.

But the question is, are you exercising those God-given gifts? Or are you neglecting them and letting them go to waste?

gifts? Whether it's the gift of one-to-one encouragement, or the gift of communicating to kids, or the gift of pulling a team together and leading them, well, keep it burning.

Use it for the good of his people, so that the faith may indeed keep dwelling in them.

[43 : 49] And so you build up your brothers and sisters in that way. So my friends, I hope this gets you a little bit excited about 2 Timothy in the weeks ahead.

But for now, just remember, don't give up. Remember the faith of the people of God and fan into flame the gift of God.

Be a Simeon and encourage the present and next generation of Simeons. Remain true to the rich gospel heritage that you have inherited from others.

Let's pray. Father, thanks once again for the promise of life that is found in Christ Jesus.

And we pray that same promise of life will keep us enduring to the end. Thank you for all those who have gone before us, whether people in church history, the Giants, Martin Luther, Hudson Southwell, and so on, whether people we know personally, our own parents and our own grandparents.

[45 : 11] Thank you for the example and help us to endure like they did. And will you help us to keep going, not to neglect our gifts, but to rely on the Spirit of God who gives us power, love, and self discipline.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Thank you.