

October 6th, 2019
2 Timothy 1:1-14



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“Guard the Good Treasure”

Could you guess what the best treasure is in the world?

What kind of image does come to your mind when you hear the word, “the best treasure?”

You may think about a big pile of money; you may think about a treasure island, (filled with a lot of gold); or, you may think about a diamond ring.

What is the best treasure among what you have? If you should pass away very soon, what would you like to inherit your children, grandchildren, or your family members left behind you? Korea had a custom that ancestors left their inheritance for their descendants. They worked hard in their life long so that they could leave their property for their children. They have used to leave their wealth to their children as if the only goal of their lives to inherit wealth to their children.

Nowadays, we have new classism, which is economical. We do not call anyone as a slave or a master anymore, but we name people as a sort of alpha family and beta family. In other words, we sort people out in a wealthy family or in a poor family. It means that we live in the material world. The young generation has new words of new classism; a royal family, a golden family, or a diamond family depending on how their parents are wealthy. Korean young generation call wealthy parents’ children as golden spoons.

My parents passed away about twenty years ago. However, I didn’t receive any materials from my parents. Do you know why I did not receive any material inheritance from my parents?

Do you think because my parents were poor? No, it is not a reason. The reason is that my mother inherited me the best treasure already. I cannot compare it with any other materials in the world. I did not need to receive any materials from my parents because I already received the best treasure from my mother.

I was a strong-willed person from early on, with opinions and a voice of my own. My mother saw that I had a view of my own. She encouraged the development of my will and my voice. She even helped me to get educated, which was against my family religion, Confucianism of not allowing girls and women to receive an education. My mother always told me women have to learn so they can lift their voice up as their own opinions.

Twenty years ago, when I visited my mother in the hospital because she suffered a stroke, her last wish to me was, “go to America to study and become a great pastor who can transform the unjust world.” My mother believed that America is the best country in the world, where respect women.

After my mother has passed away, I met a pastor who was in the church my mother attended. He said to me, “Your mother always prayed for you in the sanctuary. She prayed to God for her children in the sanctuary every night, whether it is raining or snowing.” After hearing that, whenever I got a hard time, I remember my mother's prayer and her last wish. I believe that the prayer of parents has the power to encourage their children.

In the text, the Apostle Paul encourages his beloved son, Timothy, in Jesus Christ. Timothy was depressed because many believers scattered with fear after Paul was arrested in prison. Timothy was also afraid of persecution because of being a Christian. Paul sent him a letter to encourage him. Actually, the message of 2 Timothy is the last letter of Paul. Paul knew he will be killed soon. In other words, this letter is Paul's last wish to Timothy.

Paul says, “For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but rather a spirit of power and of love and self-discipline.”(2 Tim1:7) He added, “Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God” (v.8).

Paul experienced all kinds of suffering and hardships. In 2 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul cited an impressive list of horrendous things that had happened to him. I do not think that Paul really wanted Timothy would experience as he did. It is not likely that any of us will ever suffer comparably because of our Christian witness. Instead, Paul might want Timothy’s life goes well without any persecution. However, Paul’s last wish for Timothy was that keep his faith in Jesus Christ. Paul knew that many Christians get difficulties to keep their faith without persecution at that time.

Nevertheless, Paul had confidence that God protects him if Timothy keeps his faith in Jesus Christ. Paul says, “Join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace.” Paul believed that God called Timothy by the grace of God for God’s holy purpose, as did God to Paul. Therefore, until God achieves his aim with Timothy, Paul believed that God may guide Timothy.

Please think about how your children, grandchildren, and your family members can survive in a chaotic world, which is filled with injustice. Our society is strongly oriented to the accumulation and selfish use of wealth. You do not find much support for that from Jesus. If we take Jesus seriously, there is required an entirely different attitude to wealth and possessions. Trust your children and grandchildren will follow whatever the ways you walk through. If you follow Jesus keeping your faith in Jesus Christ, your children and grandchildren will follow on your way.

I trust that only faith in God makes them stand firmly in the world. God works through you, your children, your grandchildren, and your family members to transform this world because God saved us, called us with the Holy Spirit, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace (2Tim 1:9). This grace was given to us in Jesus Christ.

Paul says to Timothy, “Guard the good treasure entrusted to you with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us” (2 Tim 1:14). Paul says that he entrusted to Timothy the good treasure, and Holy Spirit helps him to keep it.

What does “the good treasure” mean?

The Apostle Paul says, in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 7, “we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.” Yes, the good treasure in clay jar is the gospel of Jesus Christ who saved us. The gospel has extraordinary power to transform into the world. We are the clay jar, but we are not just clay jars. We have the power of the Holy Spirit in us because we are saved in the faith of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, we are only clay jar, which goes to dusty.

My mother could not give me a material inheritance in the world, but she gave me the best treasure, which I cannot compare with anything else. It is faith in Jesus Christ. My mother prayed to God every night in the sanctuary, whether it is raining or snowing to inherit me her faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, instead of any material treasures in the world.

As she did pray, I am preaching in the United States. As she did pray, I became a pastor in the United States.

My dear family, I ask you again.

What is the best treasure in your life?

What kind of treasure would you inherit your beloved children and family members?

Let us guard the Good treasure which Our Lord entrusted us!

Thanks be to God, Amen!