Affirming Our Christianity

2 Timothy 1:6-14

Objective: Encourage each to eagerly share their Christian testimony with people.
Reading: 2 Timothy 1:7-12.
Introduction:

1. Do you ever hesitate to share your Christianity or do you live it openly?
2. Do you ever hesitate to proclaim it boldly and take a confident stand on it?
3. There are forces – embarrassment, peers and fears – that would squelch the manifestation of our Christianity, but we should know that we can trust Christ and live Christianity with open confidence.

We need to boldly affirm our Christianity at every opportunity. (WHY?)

As Paul writes the second letter to Timothy, the young man is facing a lot of struggles that are tempting him to shrink in his Christianity. (Like you and me.) He is being criticized, slandered and oppressed for his convictions and his efforts (even by other by Christians!). In such a situation it is very tempting to refrain from stepping out and giving a bold and adequate testimony as to what you really believe. Paul tells him in 2 Timothy 1:8, ***"...do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord..."***. That is exactly what we may need to hear at times; "Don't b e ashamed of it!"

In today's reading, (2 Timothy 1:6-14), the Divinely inspired Apostle gives the young Christian several reasons why we ought to courageously, faithfully and openly endorse our Christianity.

The first reason is because of the

I. The nature of the Spirit we have been given.

A. We have been given a *Spirit* by God.
   1. 2 Timothy 1:7, ***"For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."***
   2. At your baptism, when you made the appeal to God for a clean conscience, He forgave your sins, by the power and the blood of Christ, and bestowed the gift of the Holy Spirit.
      a. Acts 2:38, ***"...Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."***
      b. A promise. To you from God.
      c. Once you have been made pure and holy, God can dwell within you.
      d. You have been made into a dwelling place for the very Spirit of God!
   3. Ephesians 1:13-14, ***"…you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, [14] who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, …"***
      a. A mark. A down payment of what is to come. The very presence of God himself within you!
      b. This is to be the spirit we are to LIVE by from day to day, no matter what we face in life!

B. It is a bold, courageous, confident Spirit.
   1. NOT a "timid" spirit. What have we to fear if God, Himself is with us?
   2. When we are bashful, when we fear failure, when we are hesitate to try, it is because we are leaning on our *own* spirit, not the Spirit God gave us as Christians!
   3. Temptation is there for us to fall back on ourselves - to forget our trust in Him Who indwells us.
   4. It was obviously there for early Christians in Thessalonica as they are urged; 1 Thessalonians 5:19, ***"Do not quench the Spirit."***
   5. It was there for Timothy; 2 Timothy 1:6, he says to ***"…kindle afresh the gift of God…"***
      a. How can one receive great gifts from God and forget or neglect them?
      b. It must be possible - Timothy had. I think we forget also. Have you let the eagerness, the joy, the zeal that you once has slip?
   6. It is time to renew your *trust* that God can and is at work in and through us!

C. It is a Spirit of power.

1. Trust in His power to change lives.
   a. Think how that power changed Paul's life and worked through Him.
   b. Has it already changed yours? Have you seen it at work?
   c. It can change other people's lives too - as God works through you, as they see the Gospel lived in you and hear it related in your words and witness.
2. Here is power to enable you to endure sufferings, dangers, inconveniences.
   a. Here is a positive, powerful, hopeful Spirit that says, "I think I can, I think I can ..."
   b. In fact, through Christ, I KNOW I can!
   c. I can overcome sin. I can live holy and pure. I can withstand temptations. I can be Christian in the presence of my friends who would squelch it. I can talk to people!!
3. Power to accomplish God's purposes.
   a. Isaiah 55:11, ***"So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."*** If you put the Word out, It WILL be effective. God will see to it.
   b. Hebrews 4:12, ***"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."*** You don't even have to plan it or know HOW it will affect people - it is not your plan or your wisdom, it is God's spirit and power!

D. It is also a Spirit of love.
1. Nothing harsh in the proclamation. Or in confrontations. Here is a spirit that proclaims Truth, even to those who don't care to hear it, because we love our neighbor.
2. Love is the Great Prompter, the great motivator; the great enabler! Leading us to do amazing things; To suffer for sake of others, to spread Gospel to those we would normally avoid, to sidestep anger and go to them out of love.
3. 2 Timothy 2:23-25, ***"But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. [24] The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, [25] with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth…"*** Only sincere, genuine love can behave like this and accomplish this.

E. It is also a Spirit of discipline.
1. Self control; to use sound judgment; make wise decisions, endure when necessary.
2. To abstain from evil and do what is right.

In addition to the nature of the spirit we have received, and in conjunction with it,

II. We can rely on God's power!

A. You can trust God in any situation.
1. Paul says; 2 Timothy 1:12, ***"For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; 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."***
2. He went through sufferings, imprisonments, scorn, hardships, but knows that life is bigger than any of those things. They are all temporary. The life of the soul is what matters.
3. God is able to keep my soul safe no matter what! Come Judgment day, I want to know that my souls is safe in Christ's hands!

B. The Word-become-flesh is ALL powerful.
1. He even abolished death and defeated Satan. Hebrews 2:14-15, ***"Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."***
2. I God is with us, we can handle it, we can do it!
3. Philippians 4:11-13, ***"Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. [12] I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of***

being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. [13] I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." With Christ's Presence, Paul could be content and be used for God's purpose and glory - so can we.

C. He provides the power to accomplish all His purpose.
   1. Separating people for Christ. (Gospel of John depicts people constantly dividing over Christ.)
   2. Changing people. Giving victory where it seems impossible. You are to have a part in this!

Finally, we should always bear a bold and open Christian witness because...

III. We share a commitment to His purpose.

A. Our personal testimony is part of that commitment.
   1. Paul; 2 Timothy 1:11, ***"for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher."***
   2. Timothy; 2 Timothy 1:13-14, ***"Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. [14] Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you."***
   3. You and I have also been entrusted with that treasure!

B. Our own sharing role is also spelled out.
   1. Matthew 28:19-20, ***"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."***
   2. This is part of the "good works" we were created for; Ephesians 2:10, ***"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."***
   3. As the body of Christ, the fullness of Him who fills all in all, we are to be about whatever He would be about - that is living and speaking so as to declare the presence of the Kingdom of God.

C. Such bold, willing testimony is a response of FAITH.
   1. This is what Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 4:12-13, ***"So death works in us, but life in you. [13]But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak…"***
   2. Good News must be shared! You cannot suppress it if you really believe it.
      a. Imagine not telling others that the War is Over!
      b. He freed us from Death and Slavery to sin. A gift worth more than money.
      c. We have found the Fountain of Youth; Secret of Immortality!

So What?

Do you really believe the Good News?! Do you really believe that you have the message of salvation, of eternal life? That it is available ONLY through Jesus? Do you really believe that others need to hear and see as well? Do you possess a spirit like Christ's; one that is determined to let the world know that you love God and will abide by all of His instructions? Do you really trust God to bless you, keep you and work through you in all situations? If you do, you will openly endorse and affirm your Christianity. Stand strong and guard the treasure entrusted to you, and glorify God by sharing it openly.

Closing Prayer:

Affirming Our Christianity

2 Timothy 1:6-14

Reading: 2 Timothy 1:8-12.

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Why we ought to faithfully and openly affirm our Christianity.

I. The nature of the Spirit we have been given.

A. We have been given a *Spirit* by God.
2 Timothy 1:7 Acts 2:38 Ephesians 1:13-14

B. It is a bold, courageous, confident Spirit.
1 Thessalonians 5:19 2 Timothy 1:6

C. It is a Spirit of power.
Isaiah 55:11 Hebrews 4:12

D. It is also a Spirit of love.
2 Timothy 2:23-25

E. It is also a Spirit of discipline.

II. We can rely on God's power!

A. You can trust God in any situation.
2 Timothy 1:12

B. The Word-become-flesh is ALL powerful.
Hebrews 2:14-15 Philippians 4:11-13

C. He provides the power to accomplish all His purpose.

III. We share a commitment to His purpose.

A. Our personal testimony is part of that commitment.
2 Timothy 1:11 2 Timothy 1:13-14

B. Our own sharing role is also spelled out.
Matthew 28:19-20 Ephesians 2:10

C. Such bold, willing testimony is a response of FAITH.
2 Corinthians 4:12-13

So What?

Guard the treasure entrusted to you. Glorify God by sharing it openly.