### That is why I am suffering as I am

2 Timothy 1:1-14,

Key verse 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

 We are living in more uncertain world than ever before in history. So people are worry about what will happen tomorrow. Out of fear people invest their lives in something else which seems tangible. It may be career. It may be building a marriage and bringing up children well. Or people pursue pleasures, possessions, or worldly prosperity. But we all have a limited number of years. Recently a 29-yr-old M.D. Brandon Rogers performed a beautiful song at “America’s Got Talent” show. \*\*But sadly he died in a car crash the next day. Gone too young! No matter how promising or gifted he was, he didn’t know what will happen next. So we better reason about how to spend wisely our few short years God gave us. In this regard through today’s passage we may learn lessons from Paul. This letter was written by him for Timothy in about A.D. 66. At that time Paul was in Roman prison because he preached the gospel boldly. He was waiting to be martyred. Nero, the insane emperor, persecuted Christians mercilessly. He let hungry lions kill the innocent Christians. As such persecution continued, many Christians in Asia left the church. Satan must have attacked Paul too. But he did not yield to the situation. Instead, he wrote this letter with full confidence, encouraging Timothy to be bold.

 Let’s read V1,2. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul identified himself as an apostle of Christ.The phrase “By the will of God” shows his trust in God despite his situation. Paul was sure that his past and his present are all in God’s hands because of the promise of life in Jesus Christ. The promise of life is eternal life that God has promised to us when we put faith in Jesus Christ. He prayed earnestly that his spiritual son, Timothy put trust in God and have peace. God, the creator, leads the world and its history in his good hands. By the will of God, we were called to serve campus discipleship ministry. In God’s grace and mercy, we have peace in any troubled time and continue to serve Him boldly.

 Let’s read v3-5, 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. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5I 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. Paul expresses his thanks to God regarding the life of sincere faith of Timothy. Paul always remembered him in his prayer. He dearly loved him who dedicated his life in his young age to take the heavy responsibility of serving the Ephesian church. Paul thanked God for his companionship in God. Many people followed Paul when he was successful. When he was in prison they left the church. But Timothy was faithful to God and God given mission, and loyal to Paul. Paul knew that such sincere faith was inherited from his mom. He was convinced about his personal faith at such a difficult time.

 \*Now Paul helped Timothy with 3 advices in the Lord. First, fan into flame the gift of God. Look at v6. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. As the persecution gets intense, a young pastor Timothy must have become fearful. In such time Paul encouraged him to rekindle the gift of God into flame. It means to positively use and develop his gift. In 1Ti 4:13-14, God gave him a gift of preaching and teaching of the scripture. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift. Some people may think they do not have such gift. But it is not true. When we were called to be a Bible teacher here in UBF by God’s will, I believe that we are given the gift of teaching the Bible. We do not rely on someone else all the time, but we grow and grow to be independent and reliable Bible teachers to serve God’s flocks. So there is no one without this god-given gift. Right? By faith we have to develop, and fan into flame this gift.

 Let’s read v 7. “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” Paul says that timidity does not come from God. Paul knew that Timothy was timid and easily discouraged. But it is not natural thing but a spirit that Satan plants. But the spirit God gave to us is a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. The spirit God gave us makes us wise and strong in all circumstances. God also gave us the spirit of love that we can bear and love people sacrificially like Jesus. God gave us the spirit of self discipline. KJV shows that it is a sound mind. Sound mind is the healthy state of mind of a competent person which is sufficient to reason and reach a sober judgment. The Spirit does not want us to be afraid of people, but to be strong in faith, and to love them selflessly and to have sound mind to think right. Through the Spirit we live a life of victory with God’s power, love and self disciplined, sound mind at any times.

 Second, “But join with me in suffering for the gospel” (8-12) Paul’s 2nd advice was to suffer for the gospel. Look at v8. “So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.” The Romans considered the followers of Jesus who was crucified on a cross as foolish people. The Jews were ashamed of them. As the Christians were persecuted harshly, many believers began to think twice, and be ashamed of Paul who was imprisoned. Of course nobody wants suffering. So is Paul out of his mind? No, he is in sound mind. What then is the suffering for the gospel he really meant? This is the suffering that we get when we live by faith in all situations. This is the suffering that we get in the course of preaching the gospel to all campus students. Many young people think those who depend on God are weak people. They don’t want to listen to the gospel. They think believers are annoying. Then it is easy for us to feel ashamed. When we are rejected again and again, we feel that going to campus seems to be useless anticipating rejections only. When we have personal problems or family issues, we tend to excuse about not being able to go to campus. But I am personally thankful for our several coworkers who have joined in fishing on LBCC every Tuesday regardless of the outcome. Msn Priscilla took bus from Downey to LBCC to participate in fishing. \*23 yrs ago when I came as a missionary, I had no car. I had to take bus to join in fishing in CSULB. But I was joyful. When I offered her a ride back to Downey, she wanted to stay more on campus. I believe that God has been pleased with her and our faithful coworkers. Paul says, “Join in the suffering for the gospel.” Paul himself not only joined in the suffering of Jesus, but he also encouraged Timothy to love suffering for the gospel. So we also encourage our children and Bible students to join in our suffering for the gospel. Paul did not say about tangible fruit of suffering. It is because the sufferings we received in the course of preaching the gospel will be surely remembered when Jesus comes again. How can we join in the suffering for the gospel? Paul says we can do it by the power of God, not by ours.

 So let’s read v9,10. “He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” Here Paul further explained why we boldly suffer for the gospel. It’s because God has saved us and called us to a holy life according to God’s purpose and grace. This grace is given us in Christ Jesus before the creation. But the point is “now”. it is now revealed through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Through the gospel, we know that Jesus has power to destroy our ultimate enemy, death, giving us life and immortality. Whoever hears and accepts the gospel message, will know this power and have eternal life. The gospel is the ultimate answer for all problems for all men.

 So Paul, who was in the line of execution, was also eager to share his personal confidence. Look at v11,12 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. Paul boldly said that “of this gospel” he was appointed a herald, an apostle, and a teacher. Although he was in prison, he was clear about his identity to serve the gospel message. He knew the greatness of this gospel, for it is “Good News!” It is good news that God called and saved him. It is good news that God gave him a holy calling as a herald, an apostle, and a teacher for all the gentiles. It is good news that God gives him life and immortality in and through Jesus’ victory of resurrection. Paul was willing to go to jail and die for this great gospel.“That is why I am suffering as I am.” Paul stressed that he knew whom he had believed. Here Paul did not say, “I know what I have believed”, rather, “I know whom I have believed.” It means that Paul put trust in Jesus who he believed. Let’s think about this way. Just as trust is at the heart of the banking industry, we don’t take our hard earned money to any place. We rather go to a bank, with an established name with FDIC. So trust is the issue. Likewise Paul takes trust to deposit his life with Jesus. Paul trusted in Christ to lead him so far. Now he entrusted his destiny to Jesus. He is basically saying here, “That is why I am suffering here in jail, and I am certainly not ashamed of it, for I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to safely guard all that I have given him until the day of his return.” Until he had deposited his life with God, he used to waste his life in persecuting Christians. But after he met Jesus in person, he had invested his life on preaching the gospel as a missionary. He went through many hardships all the way. He was now waiting for execution instead of comfortable retirement. But he was not sentimental, but full of his trust & assurance in Jesus whom he had believed. In fact Paul knew he could not keep his own life. He knew that only God could do that. So Paul’s assurance rested on his personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. He knew that Christ is completely trustworthy and is fully capable of fulfilling His promises. “He is able!” Jesus never fails anyone like Paul who has entrusted one’s soul to Him. “He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.” At that day all accounts will be squared away before Jesus. Here is a godly servant Paul in a prison, while a perverted rebel, Nero in luxury and debauchery in a palace. Paul was executed while Nero kept on partying. That’s unfair. We live in an unfair world. But that day is coming. Nothing is more secure and wise investment than to deposit our life with Jesus. Have you made that same deposit with your life yet? That’s where we begin our life, our true life!

 Third, guard the gospel. This is Paul’s last advice for Timothy. Let’s read v13,14. “What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.” Here Paul refers the gospel as the sound teaching. It is because the gospel gives right answers and leads all people into right way. The gospel truth gives man life, makes him sound and healthy, and leads him to wholesome life in Jesus. Paul also says of the gospel as the good deposit. It is not one of many good things we might have. It is THE good deposit. No doubt in this context, the gospel of God was entrusted to Paul, Timothy and ALL believers. We need to guard that good deposit. We live in a time where people are faithful as long as it serves their own interests. When it does not serve their interests, they feel just fine to give up their responsibility. But this is not honoring to God. We better be faithful to God even when it hurts to do so without changing our mind, direction or sound teaching to our need. We must keep and guard the truth of the gospel with the help of the Spirit residing in us. Like Paul, we have to keep planting the healthy and safe gospel in the hearts of others including our children, so that it may be inherited as the pattern of sound teaching. So the words, “Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you” is not just for Timothy. It is also for all gospel workers including you and me and those who hear from us as well.

 I am personally thankful to God who called me as a Bible teacher by God’s will. Had I not been saved by God, I would have perished without meaning and purpose. When I had hard time in getting a green card, I was tempted to give up my mission, but thanks to m. Esther’s prayer, I could have sound mind to keep God’s promise and His world mission command. Now I am thankful to join in the suffering for the gospel like Paul, “That is why I am suffering as I am.” May the Lord help me to continue to keep my faith and God given mission, for my Lord, Jesus is able to guard what I have entrusted to him. Above all I may guard the good deposit entrusted to me. May the Lord help me to pass on this gospel to others boldly.

 Let us read key v12. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. Today we learned that in light of eternity joining in suffering for the gospel turned out to be the best investment of all. Right! We will continue to join in the suffering in the course of evangelism, for our risen Jesus is trustworthy and able to keep all His promises.

 One word: That is why I am suffering as I am.