

Made for this Moment
2 Timothy 1:3-7, Esther 4:14
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This past week, Connie and I got the news that a dear friend had finally succumbed to his cancer and graduated from this life into the next. Flan was important to both us; I first met him 35 years ago when he spoke at a retreat at which I gave my life to Christ. As he developed a single adult ministry at First Pres, I was its first leader; one of my seminary summers, I was the single adult intern working on staff alongside Flan in Colorado Springs. We went on several mission trips together, and it would be fair to say that if I was Timothy, he would have been my Paul.

Scripture describes the Apostle Paul meeting the teen-aged Timothy during his first missionary journey through Lystra, where he took him under his wing. Timothy grew up quickly under Paul's tutelage, and his faith matured alongside Paul as they served Christ in a variety of places; eventually, Paul began sending Timothy back to some of the churches they'd helped establish. Imprisoned in Rome, Paul wrote some of his last letters to his protégé, giving us some insight into the young man who was to carry on in his absence. Chained in a cold dungeon, Paul's touching second letter to Timothy tells us that Paul knows that he's near the end of his life journey- yet he remains concerned about Timothy's welfare... let's take a look at some of what he has to say:

(read 2 Tim 1:3-7)

On this Mother's Day, I think it's good to note the importance of Timothy's mother Eunice and his grandmother, Lois in the development of Timothy's faith. Acts 16

suggests that Timothy's Greek father was not a believer, and so the women in Timothy's life saw to it that Timothy had a godly heritage. For every mother here who pushed or pulled a child to Sunday school or youth group...Paul's words are a tip of his cap to you... clearly, it made a difference. A spark was lit... not unlike what was celebrated in Sophia's baptism... a spark which Nick and Marissa- and all of us- have promised to carefully tend... a reality the Apostle Paul saw in Timothy, and helped fan into flame.

He called it "a gift of God," reminding Timothy that God gives us not a spirit of timidity, but rather one of power, love and self-discipline. Confirmands- this suggests to me that you carry within yourself something very special... something God-given... something Christ died on a cross for. You've not only been saved from your sin, your failings, your shortcomings- we've all got them...you've been saved for something very special. The challenge now for Timothy, for you, and for us all... is to grow into what has already given, and invested in you. So... don't wimp out on it....

According to an American Indian legend, there was an Indian brave who came upon an eagle's egg which had somehow fallen unbroken from an eagle's nest. Unable to find the nest, the brave tucked the egg into the nest of a prairie chicken, where it was hatched by the brooding mother hen.

The little eaglet, with its proverbial strong eyes, saw the world for the first time from down low. Looking at the other prairie chickens, he did what they did. He crawled and scratched at the earth, pecked here and there for stray grains and husks, now and then rising in a flutter a few feet above the earth and then descending again. He accepted and imitated the daily routine of the earthbound prairie chicken, and he spent most of his life this way.

Then, as the legend continues, one day an eagle flew over the brood of prairie chickens. The now aging eagle, who still thought he was a prairie chicken, looked up in awed admiration as the great bird soared through the skies. “What is that?” he gasped in astonishment. One of the old prairie chickens replied, “I have seen one before. That is the eagle, one of the proudest, strongest and most magnificent of all the birds, but don’t you ever dream that you could be like that. You like the rest of us, and we are prairie chickens.” And so, shackled by this belief, legend has it that the eagle lived and died- thinking he was a prairie chicken.

Don’t let that happen to you. As Paul told Timothy- don’t live out of a spirit of timidity... fan the flame of faith instilled in you by your parents, and live into what God has made you for. One of your theme verses comes from the Old Testament: “I know the plan I have for you,” says the Lord; “plans for good, and not for evil- to give you a future and a hope.” Look around you; our world needs people of conviction, people of faith, people with vision, people like you; God has made you for a time such as this.

Esther was strikingly beautiful- so beautiful, in fact, that the king of Persia married her and made her his favorite. Unfortunately, one of the king’s advisors didn’t like Jews, and manipulated the king into passing a decree that all the Jews should be killed- and Esther was Jewish, although the king didn’t know it. Esther’s Uncle Mordecai, one of the Jewish leaders living with a death sentence hanging over his head, suggested that Esther was the one person who might encourage the king to change his mind... in fact, she was likely the only one who could do it. (put Esther 4:14 up) “Who knows,” Mordecai said, “but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” And some personal risk, Esther went to the king, and saved the Hebrew people of

extinction- something Jewish people celebrate every March in the holiday of Purim.

(remove Esther 4:14)

What has God made you for? He gave Jesus on a cross for you; your parents have invested a lot of prayer, and sacrifice and hope and love in your life. Between them, a spark as been lit and people like Nick and Jim and Russ and Dave and many more have been busy fanning the flame. God has a plan for your life, and you've been made for something special; in fact, someday- sometime, some place, someone will say to you that you have been made for a time "such as this." Don't let anyone tell you that you're just a prairie chicken like everyone else... Jesus has set you free to "mount up with wings like an eagle," so go and fly high!