

FANNING THE PENTECOSTAL FIRE TO IMPACT GENERATIONS

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0. INTRODUCTION

Our concern for the next five years is to fan the Holy Spirit fire in us to impact generations now and for the future. This concern is similar to the concern of Paul when he wrote the second book of Timothy. He was then a prisoner in Rome and was possibly facing death (2 Tim 4:6). Some of his followers had deserted him. Paul's great concern was not for himself. It was for the successful continuation of the work he was doing, of which he had been imprisoned. For some reasons, with the exception of Luke, all of Paul's associates in ministry had left him. He wanted someone who could faithfully continue the job. It was not difficult for him to get one; he had disciplined many people. He could trust Timothy to continue the work. Paul's concern was for Timothy to take up the leadership role he was playing in order to give spiritual direction to the churches. It would not be an easy task, but Timothy could succeed with the Lord's help. This is supposed to be the last book that Paul wrote. He wrote it as the words of a dying hero; thus, the book is very important for leaders. How Paul prepared Timothy for this task can be helpful to us as we prepare younger ministers to take over from us. I shall therefore glean some mentorship lessons from Paul's second letter to Timothy. I shall oscillate between this letter and Paul's other epistles, especially 1 Timothy, to emphasise some points as and when necessary. However my main lessons will be drawn from 2 Timothy. What I am trying to do is to read and explain Paul's second letter to Timothy with the present-day understanding.

For a clearer understanding, I have divided the lessons into four main headings.

- First, we shall find out the challenges Paul encountered in his final days.
- Second, we shall identify the gift and the faith that Paul spoke about.
- Third, we shall find out how to fan into flame the gift of God in us.
- And finally we shall examine the role of the mentor.

1. THREE CHALLENGES PAUL ENCOUNTERED IN HIS FINAL DAYS

Foremost, I will like us to identify three challenges Paul encountered that stand out in the book. These will help us identify our challenges as we attempt to prepare leaders for generations.

1.1 Imprisonment and Persecution

Paul was in prison and was limited in his freedom (2 Tim 4:16); he was also suffering (2Tim 1:12). He could not do what he wanted to do. It was certainly a difficult period for Paul. His other associates had been sent to distant places of ministry. False doctrines

were spreading in the church (2 Tim 2:17-18). How Paul would have loved to be free to preach the word and defend the faith, but he was limited in a Roman prison.

Life is such that sometimes we cannot do what we want to do. With Paul, his immediate challenge was imprisonment. He was also going through lots of suffering and persecution. We may not go through the same suffering as Paul did. However, we may face difficulties from different angles that will hinder us from doing what we shall want to do. Besides, a time will come that our physical bodies will be fragile to the point that we cannot walk and run as we used to do. We shall then have to leave the scene for others to take over. We need to train people to do what we used to do. Any leader who fails to foresee this and prepare accordingly is myopic or narrow-minded.

1.2 Feeling of Desertions

Many of Paul's friends or associates were deserting him (2 Tim 1:15; 4:16). For example, Demas, he said, had forsaken him. Then, all in Asia including Phygelus and Hermogenes, who appeared to be people he trusted (2Tim 1:15) had deserted him. It appears that Crescens who left for Galatia and Titus who left for Dalmatia (2 Tim 4:10-12) were running their own agenda. They might not have necessarily deserted Paul as such. This is apparent when Paul said that he had sent Tychicus to Ephesus. But whatever the case was, Paul had a real concern; he wanted to follow up the good work that he had done in Timothy and some of his trainees. At least there were three to whom he wanted to be closer—Timothy, Luke and Mark.

As we train people, there will be desertions and betrayals but these must not discourage us. We must carry on with those who are willing to get on board with us. We must however forgive those who desert us but come back later. Mark was requested to come to join the team (2 Tim 4:11). Paul realised it was not a time to major on divisions. Thus Timothy and Mark were to join Paul and Luke.

1.3 False Teaching

The greatest opposition that Paul faced was false teaching (2 Tim 1:20; 2:16; 3:1-9; 4:9-13; cf. 1 Tim 1:3-10; Tit 1:10-16). It is surprising that even during the times of the first apostles, false teaching was such a challenge. These false teachings were coming from three groups of people. The first group was made up of Jews who had become Christians. They believed that a number of the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament were still binding on Christians. This attitude of the Jewish Christians might have come about as an attempt to avoid persecution of the fanatic Jews who objected to their association with the Gentile Christians. These Jewish Christians defended their stand by arguing that Paul was not an authentic apostle; he was not among the twelve. They also claimed that he had removed from the gospel certain important aspects of the Law because of his desire to make the message become more appealing to the Gentiles. This was one of the reasons why Paul had to keep on telling Timothy (and in fact his hearers) in his books that he was an apostle called by Christ (e.g. 2 Tim 1:1, 11; 1Cor 1:1; 1 Cor 9; Gal 1:11-24; 2:1-11). It is apparent that some of the people in this first group were

real Jewish Christians who had not understood the Gospel message well. They gave Paul a lot of trouble and followed him to many of the places he went (cf Acts 14:19-20; 15:1-2; 17:5-9; Gal. 3:11-21; 3:1-10; Tit 1:10). Often it is some Christians who might not have understood certain aspects of God's revelation who cause trouble for other Christians.

The second group was coming from the Gentiles who had accepted Christ and were influenced by these Jewish teaching. These Gentiles were also teaching a similar message like the legalistic Jewish Christians. Their sort of teaching was getting people confused and causing division among the Gentile Christians (Gal 3:1-5; 5:7-12).

The third group of people were the Gentiles who had not only accepted the Mosaic Law but had added the Jewish myths to it. Beside the Law, the Pharisees and the Scribes had added their own interpretation. These Gentile Christians had not only bought into the message of these Jewish Christians, but also the Jewish myths. They expanded it and taught on it. Their message had gotten out of the Christian domain. Some members of this group (both from the Gentiles and Jews who held on to this) were making business out of it; they were making money. Others also taught some strange teachings leading many people astray. Hymenaeus and Philetus might be among this group of people (2 Tim 2:17-18).

Paul therefore had to make it clear to Timothy over and over again that the Gospel message was a continuation from what they had received from their forefathers. Jesus Christ who was raised from the dead was a descendant of David (2 Tim 2:8). The salvation that Jesus brought was the centre of his message.

There were others who really taught false doctrines and opposed Paul's ministry. For example, Alexander did him much evil and opposed his ministry (2Tim. 4:14). This man appeared to have been handed over to Satan, but he was still active (1 Tim 1:20). 2 Timothy 3 lists some of the vices that such teachers might teach to oppose the messengers of God, just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses.

These teachers keep on arguing without letting it go. They fail to understand any explanation given to them. Sometimes when there are issues of complexities, the leader may explain to people for clarity, but once a person feels he/she is right, no matter the amount of explanation given, the person may refuse to understand. Paul advised Timothy to get away from such opinionated people, since they were refusing to accept the gospel and were only engaging people in ungodly chatter. In 1Timothy 4:7, Paul calls such teachings "profane" and "silly myths". It appears from Paul's constant admonition to Timothy that the teachers of those false doctrines were so powerful that they often led others astray (2 Tim 2:16-18; cf 1Tim 6:20-21).

For these reasons, Paul needed to gather his strongest team members to entrust to them the ministry of the Gospel again and again, for them to catch it well in order for them to be able to entrust same to others, who could also impact others. The leader of the team as we could deduce was Timothy. He was his first target.

Paul's personal letters to Timothy shows how serious Paul was in his mentorship. In this second letter, he pours out his heart and shows Timothy how he wanted him to discharge the responsibility that the Lord had placed on him (Timothy), through him Paul, his mentor. A key for us to tap into Paul's principle of encouraging and impacting leaders is his statement in 2 Timothy 1: 5-7, "I have been 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.⁶ 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. ⁷ For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (NIV).

Paul is certain that Timothy has received the gift of God. But the whole thing began in his infancy through the training of his mother and grandmother, who imparted to him "sincere faith". What is the gift of God and what is the faith?

2. IDENTIFYING THE GIFT AND THE FAITH

2.1 The Pentecostal Fire: The Gospel and the Holy Spirit

The gift is what we have described here as Pentecostal fire. Paul begins his encouragement by saying he served the God whom his forefathers served (2Tim 1:3). The God of the living, the God of our fathers, is my God today. Paul continued that he served him with good conscience. Here, Paul is trying to say that even by the time he was not a Christian, when he was a Pharisee, following Judaism, he was serving the Lord with a good conscience. This tells us many things. For example, it shows us that having a good conscience does not necessarily mean that you are right. You can do something with a good conscience and still get it wrong. While Paul was still serving God with a good conscience, he was told that he was also persecuting the Lord Jesus Christ (Ac 9:4-5). Sometimes I wonder how many fanatic Christians persecute the Lord Jesus Christ by persecuting some leaders and members.

Paul continued his encouragement by recognising that Timothy's grandmother and mother also had the same faith that he (Timothy) had. They were Jews. His father was a Greek. Paul realises that the faith that was in the grandmother and the mother was in Timothy. Based upon this, Paul tells Timothy that he should fan into flame the gift of God that was imparted onto him through the laying on of his hands.

Paul was trying to establish the fact that the faith of the Jews, which he had, which Timothy's Jewish relatives also had, was in Timothy. It was this same faith that was climaxed in the giving of the Holy Spirit gift which was imparted onto him, when he laid his hands. The faith had been progressive. Since many people were teaching false doctrines and causing confusion among the believers, Timothy must fan into flame the gift which was imparted onto him.

Simply put, the faith Paul mentioned here would be the faith of the true God given to Abraham and his descendants (the Israelites), which has been fulfilled in the coming of

Christ. In other words, the faith is the message of the Gospel; the Gospel includes the entire message given to the prophets and the Law. The gift here is the charismata. The charismata include the gift of the Holy Spirit and all other spiritual gifts imparted onto him through the laying on of Paul's hand when he prayed for him to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul says in 1Timothy 4:14 that it was the body of elders who laid hands on him during, what appears like, his ordination into ministry. This shows that there have been two special laying on of hands on Timothy. These are the one which led him to receive the Holy Spirit, and the one which commissioned him into ministry. The first one was done by Paul alone and the second one was done by the body of elders. When Paul said that Timothy should fan the gift of God in him into flame, he was trying to say that it is the gift of the Spirit that makes the faith effective or practical. The two things which I see here are the faith (the belief in the God of Israel) which was passed on by the mother from the grandmother, and the gift of the Holy Spirit which was imparted onto him through the laying on of Paul's hand. It is the Holy Spirit who makes the faith practicable. This is what Paul explains in verse 7. There is a direct link between verses 6 and 7. Now we turn our attention to verse 7.

2.2 The type of Spirit God has given to believers

2.2.1 Spirit of Power

The Holy Spirit is the spirit of power. God did not give us the spirit of timidity but of power. The Spirit given to us is to enable us proclaim the faith in power. The faith is about the Lord Jesus Christ who has come to fulfil the Law. He gives liberty to people who come to him. Many of the Jewish leaders did not understand this. To proclaim the truth about Christ was fearful. Paul had been bold in declaring the truth about the Gospel. Some of the believers, including the leaders had not been able to do this. Timothy was reminded that the Spirit which he had received offers him boldness. This spirit of power is the human spirit that has been empowered by the Holy Spirit.

2.2.2 Spirit of Love

The Holy Spirit also gives us love. The virtue that moves the spirit of boldness is love. It is love that moves the Spirit-empowered believer to speak the truth with care, when he/she is witnessing about Christ. People rise up against Christ because they do not know him. Speaking to such people in love will mean a lot.

Furthermore, if indeed we love God and have love for lost souls, we will manage to endure hardship and suffering to do the work of the Lord. Loving a person helps to endure hardship. The way Jacob was able to work for Rachael for fourteen years shows the enduring nature of love. If we are self-centred, or selfish, we shall be fearful. We will be interested mainly in what we shall get out of serving God, and not what we can do for God. We shall be concerned with losing popularity, reputation, power, or money. The love that the Spirit gives enables us to make sacrifices for generations yet to come and not be afraid of what we shall lose.

2.2.3 Spirit of Self-Control

The Spirit that is given to us is also self-disciplined. The King James Version uses the term "sound mind". The term depicts a person who is self-disciplined, well-balanced or self-controlled. When the Spirit is in control, Christians must not be easily influenced by our feelings or circumstances. We will experience peace and be well-balanced.

Paul made Timothy aware that he did not need to go for any power aside what he had. He did not need any special spiritual directions secretly. He only needed to fan up what he had received. When some Christians are encountering difficulties they think they must go for special prayers or power elsewhere. No, this is not the answer; the answer is to fan the fire in them. The Holy Spirit does not leave believers when we fail or falter (Jn 14:16). However, by so doing we grieve him (Eph 4:30) and quench him (1 Thess 5:19). In this case, he cannot fill us, empower us and use us as he wants. Thus, we must not weaken our spiritual lives and allow the gifts to lie dormant.

Paul, therefore, needed to encourage Timothy to quicken up his ministry. He assured him of his prayers, but Timothy could help himself more than any other person could. The Holy Spirit within Timothy would give all the power needed for ministry. Timothy was to fan the fire in him. How?

3. HOW TO FAN INTO FLAME THE GIFT OF GOD

By saying that Timothy must fan into flame the gift of God, Paul was saying that:

3.1 He must remember that the gifts are there

They are not gone. Self awareness of the presence of God and his gifts in us makes a difference. I still think that many Christians do not know this. Our behaviour and attitudes do not portray that we are aware that the Lord is with us. We need to keep on reminding people about this.

3.2 He must exercise the gifts

The gifts must be put into use and so increase them. Putting them into use is the way to increase gifts and keep them burning, otherwise, they will die.

3.3 He must work on the gifts

In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul says Timothy must study to show himself approved, a workman who needs not to be ashamed but rightly handling the word of truth. This means that despite the fact that the gift is there if Timothy does not fan it by studying he can be put to shame. Every leader must study. He must not think that having the gift of God alone is the answer. He must work at it to keep it ablaze.

3.4 He must not be fearful

The great hindrance to the use of spiritual gift is fear. Paul cautions Timothy against this. It was through fear that the man who received one talent in Matthew 25:25 did not use it. Fear causes many people to abandon their spiritual gifts, to their own detriment.

3.5 Prayer must be included

I wonder why Paul did not tell Timothy to pray. May be he knew Timothy was a man of prayer, and he did not need to remind him again. In his first letter to Timothy, he said prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone (1 Tim 2:1-8). Prayer might not have been one of his weaknesses. In any case, Paul would agree with me that prayer is another ingredient that would help fan the fire in a person (Eph 6:18). However, take note of the type of prayer that Paul speaks about (Eph 1:15-22; 3:14-19; 5:15-20; 6:8).

4. THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR

Throughout the letter, one can see the heart of Paul to impact generations. He realised that Timothy was impacted by his maternal religious faith. He (Paul) was serving God with a clear conscience as the forefathers served. He wanted Timothy to entrust the things he heard him say to reliable men who would be able to pass it on to others. Paul's concern was passing on what he had to others. In this section, we shall attempt to find out how Paul did this through Timothy.

4.1 Share affection, emotions and physical presence with mentees

The concern Paul shows for Timothy is very important and great. Timothy is so important to him that he writes a letter to pour out his feelings, concerns, joy and sadness to him. Paul calls Timothy "my true son in the faith". He tells him that he prays for him. He remembers the tears that Timothy shared; he misses him. He later tells him those who had deserted him and requests that he visits him.

These are all virtues that mentors must endeavour to demonstrate naturally in our mentoring. We must write, send email and text messages to mentees. We must also make phone calls, when physical contacts are not possible. Through these, the mentee is likely to catch the spirit of his mentor, know him and understand him.

We must also let the trainees know that we are human beings. I like what Apostle Gyesi-Addo, the International Mission Director, said about Mama Eunice Addison. According to him, whenever they commented about the old age of Mama Addison, she would tell them that they did not know the number of tablets she had taken to sustain the body. The implication was that she was a human being, only being sustained by God's grace through medication. It is not wrong for a Christian to take medicine. Neither is it wrong for a Christian to weep or laugh.

In fact, Paul tells Timothy that he left Trophimus sick in Miletus. He had earlier told Timothy to stop taking only water, and use a little wine because of his stomach illness (1Tim 5:23). Paul told the Galatians that he ministered to them in illness, and that his illness was a trial to them (Gal 4:13-16). Those leaders who try to preach a triumphant past as if there were no illnesses must stop. Human beings are all the same. It is only God's grace that takes people through life's traumas. Mentors should let their mentees know that they are human beings who go through the emotions of life, but they are able to carry on because of their confidence and dependence on the Lord.

The physical presence of the mentee is important. Paul needed Timothy physically to be there to share with him. Being with the mentee is a key to the success of the training.

4.2 Show confidence in mentees

Paul tells Timothy that he already knows that the faith of his ancestors is in him. He knows that he had known the Scriptures from infancy (2 Tim 1: 5, 3:15). He (Paul) had been called by God, as a preacher, apostle and teacher. So has Timothy been called (2 Tim 1:8-9). In other places, he calls him our brother, and also writes letters with him (2 Cor 1:1, Phm 1). He tells the Philippians that he has no one who would be genuinely concerned for their welfare as Timothy. The rest were seeking their own interests (Php 2:19-23). By this Paul shows great confidence in him, and as well respects him.

Showing confidence in your mentees is very important. I knew one student, whose mother killed his confidence. He performed poorly in exams. He came to the dormitory, tore the exam paper, and confessed that he could do nothing good, because his mother often told him so. That was quite unfortunate. Bring out the strength in your trainees and encourage them to excel. Let them know you trust them; you believe they can make it; they have the ability to achieve their goals; their weaknesses are symptoms of human frailties which can be overcome; and then tell them that the Lord is with them.

4.3 Demonstrate that you are building on previous foundation

Paul shows Timothy that he was building on the foundation he already had. What he has taught him or was teaching him was the continuation of the Scripture or of the foundation that had already been laid. The grace he had been preaching was given to Christ Jesus before the foundation of time, only it was now being revealed (2Tim 1:8). All scripture is useful (2 Tim 3:16).

It was quite difficult for the people at the time to believe that what Paul was teaching was from the Lord and that he was really building on the foundation. Now, it seems easier when we read it, but at that time, it appeared Paul was destroying the whole of the Scripture and the glorious treasure bequeathed to the Jews. He needed to remind Timothy that he was only continuing the revelation of God given to their ancestors.

Leaders must let those they lead know that they are building upon the foundations of their forefathers.

4.4 Encourage mentees to endure suffering

Paul encourages Timothy to endure hardship. This is the aspect of Christian training that is very difficult. Despite the fact that the Lord was with Paul, he was still in prison suffering. He felt he would soon be poured out, or executed. Why is it that Paul loves the Lord but the Lord had allowed him to be in prison and was going to be killed? Why should the Lord allow some good Christians to die early? Why should he allow Christians to go through suffering? Paul tells Timothy several times in this book that he must endure suffering as a good soldier of Christ (e.g. 2 Tim 1:8; 2:3, 12). Every godly person will incur suffering (2 Tim 3:13).

We must let Christians know that so far as we live on earth here, we shall go through suffering. These are not necessarily the works of demons and witches which can easily be shaken off. We shall go through them, but trust that the sovereign God will take us through. Oh, how I wish ministers of God and other Christians would understand this.

4.5 Demand loyalty and trust from mentees

Paul wanted Timothy to be loyal to God and to him. The Lord had greatly endowed Paul with grace—deposits of spiritual truths (1 Tim 1:11)—and he (Paul) had transmitted these to Timothy (2 Tim 1:13-14; cf. 1 Tim 6:20). It was now Timothy's solemn responsibility to "keep as the pattern" (2 Tim 1:13, NIV) and "guard" (2 Tim 1:14, NIV) the precious deposit of the Gospel truth, and pass it on to others (2 Tim 2:2). Mentors must demand loyalty from their mentees. What Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:13 is very important, "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus". Paul repeated this in another form in 2 Timothy 3:10-14, "You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings ... But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it" (NIV).

Timothy must trust Paul in order to hold on and present the right doctrine. He must not seem to doubt what his trainer holds. He must be convinced about the hand of God and the message the Lord has endowed Paul with. Because of false teachings that were going on, Paul was setting an outline for sound teaching. Timothy would have to keep it, otherwise he would have nothing by which to test other teachers and preachers.

Whatever the case is, we need leaders and mentors, we need people whom we must follow, and use as examples or precedents. We follow the Lord through people whom we trust as servants of God for generations. We shall all not agree completely on everything that comes across in meetings. However, we must accept and hold fast to these biblical principles, when applied and used in the determination of issues concerning doctrines and practices by various church councils.

4.6 The minister of God must be a disciplined person

Pauls warns Timothy that the man of God must be disciplined and live an exemplary life.

4.6.1 He must not use godliness as a means of financial gain (1Tim 6:5)

Paul, for example, had been accused for refusing to accept money for preaching. Those who said this used it to justify their corrupt character of demanding payment for their service among the people (cf. 2Cor 11:7). Paul's method was to cut the ground under such people (2Cor 11:12). Many ministers use the church as a means of amassing wealth. The Lord will judge the rational of organising all such programmes. We must not mock the Lord; we shall reap whatever we sow. We cannot tell church members to sacrifice while we feast on the money they give. It can't work this way. We need to take the lead. The ministry must not be used for financial gain.

4.6.2 He must avoid worldliness (2Tim 2:4; cf. 1Tim 6:10-11)

The minister must not be worldly. He must flee from worldly pleasures. Worldliness includes seeking and taking much interest and delight in the things of this world. These include wanting the newest vehicle in town, changing of clothes and styles and putting up special types of buildings.

4.6.3 He must run away from youthful passion (2 Tim 2:22)

The minister must run away from all fleshly desires. The flesh continues to fight against the Spirit in everything that the Christian does. Paul's best remedy is to run away from it. In other words, it must not be entertained and nursed; we must get out of its domain.

4.6.4 He must avoid argument (2 Tim 2:14, 23-24)

One of the means the devil was using during the time of Paul is unnecessary argument. Paul saw that it was a way of distracting the attention of Christians. He advised that Christians must avoid such arguments. Once you are certain about issues, you must not waste time in unnecessary argument which will yield to nothing.

4.6.5 He must be a godly person (2 Tim 3:12; cf 1Tim 4:8; 1 Tim 6:5-10)

The minister of God must live a life of contentment. He must accept whatever the Lord gives him. Paul stresses that we brought nothing to the world and we shall go with nothing.

4.6.6 He must be a vessel of honour (2 Tim 2:20)

He must decide to be used in the secret chambers of God, where only trustworthy people will be welcome. When there are many people in a house, there are some who can be trusted to care for the most important things, because the master of the house knows they are trustworthy. Being a vessel of honour is like God entrusting you with his most important things. He allows you into his chamber and confide in you. You become his embassy. He comes to accept you as someone who will not betray him. May he have

mercy on us all! And may we cleanse ourselves to be found worthy in Christ to serve in the inner chambers of the Almighty!

4.7 The minister must make full proof of his ministry

Paul tells Timothy that he has been called (2Tim 1:9), and endowed with grace (2Tim 1:6, cf. 1 Tim 4:14), yet he must discharge his ministry fully. When God calls, it is the responsibility of the called out person to walk the call. In other words, he must work hard to prove his call.

4.7.1 Live in such a way that no one looks down upon him

Paul tells Timothy that he should let no one look down upon him but set an example in everything: in speech, in life, in love, in faith and purity (cf. 1Tim 4:12). Many people look down upon young ministers. One of the things that stops such people from proving their stand is for such ministers to live exemplary lives.

4.7.2 Study to show himself as one approved

The minister must study to show himself to God as one approved, a workman who needs not to be ashamed (2 Tim 2:15). This means a workman of God can be ashamed if he does not study. More importantly the emphasis is on the willingness to study. The ability to study, understand and teach the word of God is a gift of God. Yet, the ability to teach is one of the qualifications of a pastor; in fact it is a requirement (2 Tim 2:24; 1 Tim 3:2). "Able to teach" also implies the readiness to learn. Thus, the servant of the Lord must be a diligent student of his word.

Paul places much emphasis in knowing the word of God. Paul tells Timothy again that he must devote himself to the reading of Scripture (2Tim 3:14-17; cf 1 Tim 4:13). He must know the Scripture "so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2Tim 3:17, NIV). As I studied, prayed and prepared this message, I was tempted to think that we have made the ministry too cheap for charlatans to take advantage of.

4.7.3 Do the work of other ministries

Timothy was told to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4:5). It could imply that he was not an evangelist, but as a minister, he was to do that work. The minister has been equipped to do all the works of the ministry as the time or situation may demand.

4.7.4 The faithful steward must teach the true doctrine

Timothy must teach the true doctrine (2 Tim 4:2-3; 4:5). He was to teach the true doctrine of God. True teaching during Paul's time was just preaching the gospel message. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God; he is the Christ, who came to die to save humanity. Believing in him and accepting him as your Lord and saviour grants you forgiveness of sin and salvation. Timothy must keep his head in all situations, and teach the true word. Faithful ministers' aim is to glorify God by teaching his word, and not to be celebrities.

4.7.5 The faithful steward must be aware of false teachers

Timothy was to be aware of false teachers, in order not to be attracted by their so-called claims. False teachers try to do more than what the Bible says; they claim to have the ability to reveal the so-called secret things of God. Timothy was advised to have nothing to do with them (2 Tim 3:5). Why should Paul concern himself too much like this in speaking to a mature Christian leader, an apostle who is supposed to take over from him? False teaching spread faster than true teaching. Paul says it spreads like gangrene, that is, like infectious diseases, which spread so fast to destroy people. The forms of false teaching include superstition, psychology (arousing the emotion), traditional magico-religiosity, and divinatory consultation. They claim power and often their messages are easily assimilated (2Tim 4:4).

What are some contemporary false teaching—things which are not biblical but gaining root in churches? Why?

4.7.6 Faithful stewards must be able to correct those who go wrong

Timothy was to correct those who go wrong, and rebuke those who needed to be rebuked. The ability to correct, command, and rebuke was expected from the faithful minister of God.

4.8 The minister stands always before God and the Lord Jesus Christ

The minister of God must remember that he always stands before God and the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Tim 4:1-2; cf 1 Tim 5:21) in ministry. This is something that many ministers of God often forget and play in their duties. In the Old Testament, the priests who were to minister were given lots of detailed instructions in order for them not to contravene and die. We stand before the Almighty One in our ministration and, therefore, must be careful in the discharge of our duties.

We were sinners saved by grace. Once we were far off, but brought nigh by the blood of Christ. As servants, we enter the Holy of Holiest (God's inner chamber) to worship the Almighty God on daily basis. We bow to worship at his footstool, without the veil. We enjoy saying this; we must live it. We must respect the Lord who has brought us to his throne to serve him.

The faithful minister does not only stand before the presence of the Lord God, but he gazes at the glory of the Lord Jesus. As he looks at him, he must be transformed into his image. It is this sort of transformation that causes the minister to minister according to the will of God. This is preaching and teaching the word of God in truth.

4.9 The steward must be able to pass on the treasure from his generation to another generation

Paul makes Timothy aware that the ministry is not something we receive and keep to ourselves. The faithful steward must pass on to the next generation (2 Tim 1:13; 2:2:

3:10, 14). Paul had already made him aware that the process had begun long before them. For Timothy, it was passed on from his grandmother Lois to his mother Eunice and then to him. It was that which their forefathers received. Paul was made a preacher, an apostle and a teacher to throw more light on the fulfilment of this inheritance in Christ. Timothy had heard Paul several times. He must follow his examples and pass on this treasure to others.

The mentor must be able to tell his mentees to follow his example in everything. For example, he must be able to tell them follow him in his prayer life, his way of handling money, the way he leads church services, his teaching, his studying, his love for the Lord, and his loyalty to the Lord, to the church and to the people of God in general.

Ministers are stewards of the spiritual treasure God has given us. It is our responsibility to guard the deposit and then invest it in the lives of others, who will, in turn, share with the next generation. Paul tells Timothy that he must find reliable people, trust worthy people or faithful people, who will be able to keep it and pass it on. The choosing of officers is very important here. Paul warned Timothy in his first letter that he must not be hasty in laying hands on people (cf 1 Tim 5:21-22). I appeal to all leaders to be very spiritual here, and be faithful to the Lord who has called them. We must not just call people who want to come to the ministry just to make money for themselves. Neither should we call officers who only interested in titles to lord it over the members. We must pray, identify and recognise people who are really called by the Lord.

4.10 There is reward for being faithful in doing God's work

Pauls make it clear that there is a reward for those who minister faithfully for the Lord. There is a crown of righteousness for Paul's faithful service. Not only him, but for all who will do the work that the Lord has assigned to them faithfully (2Tim 4:7-8).

5.0 CONCLUSION

We have identified the Pentecostal fire as the Gospel and the Holy Spirit. We must hold on to this treasure that has been bequeathed to us by the Lord through our forefathers. The Lord has personally touched our souls by granting us the Holy Spirit and his gifts. We have personally encountered him.

We must be concerned about the church of tomorrow. However, we must not be afraid for the church of tomorrow. The simple reason is that we hold the key of tomorrow's church today. What we sell to the church today is what the youth will apply in various forms in the future. There can be some who will depart from us or our teachings like Demas who deserted Paul, yet there will be some faithful ones like Timothy who will carry on the treasures that we have passed on to them.

Against this backdrop, we must fan the Pentecostal fire in us in order to impact this generation. We must follow Christ closely so as to be able to give birth to our likeness of Christ, without much humanness.

The apostle Paul boldly declared to his true son in the faith, Timothy, "You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings... continue in what you have learned of and become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it" (2 Tim 3:10-14, NIV). Paul, indeed, spiritually gave birth to Timothy, despite the faith that Timothy received from his ancestors which dwelt in him. Paul did this by following the Lord and living his word as Timothy teamed up with him in ministry. It is my desire that everyone reading this will be touched by the Holy Spirit to impact some people who will also impact others. If we are able to do this, the Pentecostal fire set in us will never die.