

## Timothy's Unfeigned Faith

*"... having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded, in thee also" (2 Tim. 1:5)*

The word "*unfeigned*" means unpretended and Timothy's faith was -- in Paul's estimation -- something real, not pretended, not feigned. While the word "feign" does mean "pretense," it does not always mean something wrong. On Jesus' resurrection day, toward evening time, He met and engaged in earnest conversation two disciples who did not recognize Him because their eyes were holden. He opened to them the scriptures and when "*they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going, he made as though (feigned, in some translations) he would go further*" (Lk. 24:13-28). He acted as though He would go on beyond the point they were to stop at; to get their reaction to the revelation He had made to them. In this instance "*feigned*" is used in a good sense, but such is the exception.

Timothy's tears when he and Paul had parted at some unspecified time in the past, had made an inelible mark on Paul's heart and quickened in him a great desire to see the young man again and to be refreshed by his presence. Remembering those tears likewise reminded Paul of Timothy's unfeigned faith.

Timothy's faith was part of the reason for the high regard Paul had for him. He was "one of a kind" and of him Paul wrote the Philippians, "*I have no man likeminded who will care truly for your state*" (Phil. 2:20). Yet what Timothy was when Paul knew him, was not the result of accident; he was the end result of many years of training, teaching, and nurturing. Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother and Greek father. However, whatever influence his father might have had upon him (if such had been his desire) was more than offset by the influence of two godly women: his grandmother, Lois; and his mother, Eunice, for their unfeigned faith also is recorded. Timothy was reared (born ?) in a region submerged in Greek culture. Paganism was rampant and its strong appeal to sensualness and immorality could not have helped but been noticed by Timothy. But the steadfast faith of these two "daughters of Sarah" more than offset the appeal of paganism. Timothy rejected that culture and cherished the long time promise God had made to Abraham. Later in the epistle Paul wrote, "*... and that from a babe thou has known the sacred scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus*" (2 Tim. 3:15). What a remarkable young man Timothy came to be, and this "against all odds"!

Our world is little different from Timothy's. We also live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Still, our children and grandchildren can have imbedded in them an unfeigned faith akin to that which was in Timothy, if we will not fail to do as Lois and Eunice did. They were in a small minority but that did not dispel their faith. They had the same kind of faith as Joshua and Caleb, Daniel, and the three Hebrew children. Like them, we too can "*subdue kingdoms, work righteousness,*" etc. (Heb. 11:33).

Where are the temples of Diana, Jupiter or Zeus today, which once dotted the ancient countrysides and rose majestically in cities to awe the eye of beholders? They are gone; fallen into decay and ruin through the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ! The boldness of Peter, Paul, John, Stephen, Philip, yes, and younger men like Timothy wrested the adoration of the ancient world from "*those which be no gods*" and changed the religion of a world. There is still power in the gospel; power to alter our world if we will rise above petty quarreling and wranglings and have an unfeigned faith in the existence and power of an Eternal God. We must imitate both the gospel Timothy preached and the unfeigned faith which resided in him if we would have the impact on our society that would measure their success in their day. Do we have faith? Is it unfeigned?

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