

FAITH OF OUR MOTHERS

TEXT: 2 Tim. 1:5

Introduction: Someone said years ago, "As went the mothers of France, so went France. As go the mothers of the world, so goes the world. As goes the mother in the home, so goes the home. As goes the mother, so goes the daughter and to a great degree the son." This was certainly true for Timothy.

Writing of Timothy, his son in the faith, Paul could say, with genuine honesty, "I have no man likeminded (Philippians 2:20), or, as another said, "There is no one like Timothy." What in Timothy justified this commendation? Part of the answer is given in our text; recalling Timothy's authentic qualities,

Paul singles out his "unfeigned faith" for special mention (2 Timothy 1:5), and then immediately affirms that this faith dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and in his mother Eunice. Paul implies that but for the faith found in Lois and Eunice it is unlikely that there would have been any faith found in Timothy! We have here, then, **the faith of three generations**—Lois, Eunice and Timothy. What a commentary this is on the faith of our mothers!

I. A Mother's Faith Is Convictional

"The unfeigned faith... which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice" (1:5). A careful study of Acts 16:1, together with 2 Timothy 1 and 2 Timothy 3:14, makes it plain that both of these women enjoyed a faith in God through our Lord Jesus Christ which was both Scriptural and Saving, a good example of the nature of convictional faith.

1) It Is a Faith Which Is Scripturally Sound

Both these mothers knew "the holy Scriptures, which are able to make... wise unto salvation" (2 Timothy 3:15). They could have never taught Timothy these sacred writings if they had not been acquainted with them personally. Such study of the Holy Scriptures had begotten in them a God-centered faith. And this is how it always is, for the Bible says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Above tradition and secular literature, they prized most highly the final authority in all matters of faith and practice, namely, the Holy Scriptures.

An African chief wanted to know the secret of Britain's greatness. Queen Victoria, holding a Bible in her hand, said, "Tell the chief that this book, the Bible, is the secret of our greatness."

2) It Is a Faith Which Is Savingly Sure

They taught Timothy "the holy Scriptures which are able to make... wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). From Acts 16:1 it appears that both Timothy's mother and grandmother were introduced to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ on Paul's second missionary journey. Eunice is there described as a Jewish woman who "believed." Their background of scriptural knowledge had wonderfully prepared them for the message of salvation through Paul the Apostle.

Here, then, were two mothers who had a convictional faith, grounded in the Word of God and related to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Nothing is needed more in our land today than women who have this quality of faith.

Lord Shaftesbury once said: "Give me a generation of Christian mothers and I will undertake to change the whole face of society in twelve months."

II. A Mother's Faith Is Communicable

"Call to remembrance the unfeigned faith... which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice... But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (1:5; 3:14). There is no one who can communicate the deep things of life on a daily basis like a godly mother. The father certainly has a responsibility of leadership, both by way of example and instruction, but invariably it is the mother who makes the deepest impression on a child, especially in the years of life.

1) Faith Is Communicated by Personal Education

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (3:14). From his earliest days, Timothy was taught the Holy Scriptures. This sense of duty to communicate the Word of God was rooted in God's instruction to His ancient people. In other words, the devout Israelite taught his children because Jehovah commanded him to do so. This religious education is not only the privilege, but the responsibility of every godly home (Deut. 4:9-10; 6:6-15; 11:15-21; Prov. 6:20, 21; 7:1-3; 22:6).

2) Faith Is Communicated by Practical Demonstration

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (3:14). While Paul undoubtedly includes himself in that expression, "knowing of whom thou hast learned them," his primary thought is that of Lois and Eunice. Timothy had seen something in their lives that demonstrated the reality of the faith they taught.

John Newton, in his most profligate days, could never forget his mother at whose knees he had learned to pray, but who was, taken to heaven when he was only eight years old. My mother's God, the God of mercy, have mercy upon me!" was often his agonizing prayer when in danger or in trouble. That prayer was gloriously answered—not only in Newton's life, but also in his subsequent ministry.

In another family, such was the impression that Susannah Wesley made on her son, John, that she has been called "*The mother of Methodism.*"

III. A Mother's Faith Is Commendable

Paul says, "I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith... which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice" (1:5). Some have suggested that Paul actually stayed in Timothy's home during the second missionary journey. If so, then quite obviously he was impressed with what he saw in the lives of both Lois and Eunice. While it was his privilege to bring to consummation their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Master, he could never forget the religious faith and piety which were already evident in their lives.

1) The Lasting Influence About a Mother's Faith

"I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith... which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother, Eunice" (1:5). Has it ever occurred to you that the most priceless treasure a man or woman can have is faith?

The world may cry, "What is a man without money?" but the Christian replies, "What is a man without faith?" Remember, the only thing by which all the heroes of the Old Testament are remembered, in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, is their faith. Like a refrain, we read it in verse after verse: "By faith Abel" (Hebrews 11:4), "By faith Enoch" (11:5), "Through faith... Sara" (11:11), "By faith ...Rahab" (11:31), and so on.

F. B. Meyer once said: "It is not the quantity of faith, but the quality of faith, that is important. A grain of mustard seed and a pellet of dust are similar in appearance, but the difference is immense. The one has no life burning at the heart of it, while the other contains life as God kindled it. Faith that has in it the principle of life is a faith with God in it."

2) The Living Relevance About a Mother's Faith

"I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that... dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice" (2 Timothy 1:5). Times may change and fashions may alter, but mothers are never out of date! There is a living relevance about a mother's faith because no one in all the world adapts herself to the day in which she lives like a mother with her little children. Someone has said that "a space-age mother needs to keep her feet on ground and her heart in the heavens. The man on the moon will never replace the man in the home with a dedicated mother working with him to raise a Christian family."

William McKinley, as a lawyer, congressman, Governor of Ohio, and President of the United States, kept in touch with his mother every day.

When he didn't see her, he wrote or telegraphed. In mid-October of 1897, he quietly left the White House and took a train to Canton just so he could walk to church with her again. When she became ill, he arranged to have a special train standing by at full steam, ready to take him to her bedside.

Then one night she did call for him. Immediately he wired, 'Tell Mother I'll be there.' Mrs. McKinley died December 12, 1897, in the arms of her 54-year-old son.

Her gentle, Christian virtues helped mold the President's character, for when he was gunned down in Buffalo, New York, about 4 years later, he showed no bitterness toward his assassin.

With Christian courage he said, 'God's will be done.' Before he died, he asked to hear once again the hymn, 'Nearer, My God, to Thee,' which his mother had taught him. ODB-(DeHaan)

Conclusion: Let's pray that the mothers of our generation know a faith in God's Word and in His Son Jesus Christ which is **Convictional**, **Communicable** and **Commendable**.

Illustration: One of the mothers in our church put her son to bed on the eve of his fifth birthday. She was trying to communicate that birthday idea to him. "Kevin," she said, "this is the last night of your fourth night. Do you understand that?" Kevin was ready to communicate with his hands. For a full year, he had shown people four fingers for his four years, and now he was ready to add a thumb. Seeing his four fingers, his mother nodded, and said: "When you go to sleep tonight, you'll still be 4-years-old. But do you know how old you'll be in the morning, when you wake up?" Kevin nodded enthusiastically, added his thumb to his four little fingers and said, "Tomorrow, I'll be a handful!"