

# MAXIMISE YOUR POTENTIAL – Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017

## 1: THE POTENTIAL OF A SINCERE FAITH

We are in a new series in **2 Timothy**. In a few weeks' time, we will have a four week series '**Just Walk Across the Room**' and then we will return to continue our studies in 2 Timothy.

What comes to mind when you think of a title like 'Maximise Your Potential'? Perhaps you might think that it does not fit with the kind of discipleship that is spoken of in the New Testament.

I hope that we can see beyond the self-help motivational books of the airport lounge bookshop to the powerful encouragement that comes through aged Paul sharing with the younger Timothy.

Alan asked on Sunday – Do you ever dream about the church?

*My dream for the church is...* How would you complete the sentence?

How about pausing and praying about the areas that were shared in your group.

Paul was suffering in a dark and dank Roman dungeon. It was perhaps the final months before his execution but his heart is full of encouragement and support as he continued to mentor Timothy.

Have you had any experience of a spiritual mentor having input into your life?

### **Read the first five verses of 2 Timothy 1**

The potential of a sincere faith is highlighted in v.5 *I have been reminded of your sincere faith.*

The word SINCERE is linked to the word HYPOCRITE, meaning *not being a hypocrite.*

What comes to mind of Jesus' teaching when we hear the word 'hypocrite'?

The word was also used to describe a Greek actor in the theatre who would wear a number of masks in order to express a different personality or emotion.

In what way does 'mask wearing' challenge our own Christian faith and its expression?

### **1. PAUL'S OWN TESTIMONY TO A SINCERE FAITH, v.1**

Paul's testimony was of the powerful encounter that he had with the risen Lord that changed his life and gave him a whole new future. He is one who maximised his potential.

His testimony was that of a Pharisee, he was the mask wearer of self-righteousness and it was performance religion that characterised his life as a Pharisee.

Read Philippians 3. 7-11 and observe how the mask was stripped away and how he was no longer dependant on ritual, race, religion or respectability but the righteousness of Christ.

Whatever he once thought was profit was now considered loss – for the sake of Christ.

Paul in prison was revelling in the *promise of life.*

### **2. PAUL ENCOURAGES A SINCERE FAITH IN TIMOTHY, v.2-4**

It is a 'sincere faith' that unites the family of God. Paul is able to speak of Timothy with great affection as *my dear son.*

What do we know of Paul ministering in Timothy's home town of Lystra (Acts 14.8-21)?

18 months later Paul returned, Acts 16.1-6, and found Timothy to be a faithful disciple.

Timothy, having a Greek Father and Jewish mother, meant that he would not have been seen as a pure Greek nor a pure Jew...but in Christ he was perfectly accepted. It was all a result of

grace, mercy and peace. For over 15 years Timothy had travelled and ministered with Paul in his 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journeys.

In Philippians 2.20 & 22 there is a fine commendation of Timothy from Paul.

Paul assures Timothy that he constantly prayed for him. We should be so grateful for those who faithfully pray for us. Again, this is the bond of Christian fellowship that is birthed through a sincere faith.

What do you see of Paul's emotional life being expressed in v.4 as he mentions tears in Timothy and joy in his own heart and spirit?

Are you up for a challenge this week: How can I bring joy into the heart of another person this week?

### **3. PAUL CELEBRATES THE SINCERE FAITH OF TIMOTHY, v.5**

There was a huge spiritual influence in Timothy's life through his grandmother and mother. Yet, a sincere faith comes through a personal response to the claims of Christ for we cannot depend on the family inheritance of faith for as it has been said *God has no grandsons, only sons*.

The sincere faith was, faith without a mask – it was real, genuine and without pretence.

We shall see more of how Paul's concern is that Timothy does not hide behind a mask that would limit him maximising his potential.

Alan spoke of the masks of youth, temperament, health that could so easily dominate the life of Timothy if he did not deal with them.

Paul celebrates Timothy and the sincere faith defined by who he is in Christ.

How can we help one another, even within our group to feel secure in being real and open?

**FOR YOUR OWN NOTES:**