

“Shaped With Courage”

Transcribed using turboscribe.ai

Sermon Preached: Sunday 5th October 2025

Preacher: Pastor Jason Sander

Location: St Peter's Lutheran Church, Loxton

Sermon Text: [2 Timothy 1:1-14](#)

Well, my friends, grace, mercy and peace to you in the name of our Lord and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Today we continue our sermon series on Shaped with Courage, as I said at the start of the service. In April 1521, a long time ago, Martin Luther, the namesake of our denomination, Martin Luther stood before the Holy Roman Emperor with a room full of powerful church officials at a meeting called the Diet of Worms.

He had been summoned because of his recent teachings and they wanted him to take back everything he had written down about salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. It was a very pressure-filled meeting and Luther's very life was at stake. There was the threat of him being executed if he didn't recant, didn't say, I don't believe in this, I'm going to get rid of it.

But Luther asked for time to think and pray during this meeting and so he came back the next day and when pressed again, he gave this famous response, unless I'm convinced by the testimony of the scriptures or by clear reason, for I do not trust either in the Pope or in the councils alone, I am bound by the scriptures. I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.

This is where he said, here I stand, I can do no other. God help me. Amen.

It's one of those big defining moments in the history of the church and for us being gathered here this morning as well. But this moment of Luther standing before the heavies of the church and the Emperor himself, it wasn't a moment of bravado and trying to get this acknowledgement for who he was. It wasn't about his own self-confidence, it was about courage shaped by the gospel.

See, Luther's boldness came from knowing that God's word was true, that Christ is alive, that Christ is the centre of all scripture and him alone. That knowledge that the spirit empowers us to stand firm when everything in us might want to shrink back. You know, in our own way, each of us faces moments where courage is needed too.

It might not be a trial before emperors or bishops, but it may be standing up for your faith in your workplace, in your own families even. Living differently from those around you, your peers, or holding onto Christ when it would be easier just to drift away and to stay quiet. This is what Paul writes to Timothy.

That's what it's about in that reading that we heard, 2 Timothy 1-14. Timothy, this young and possibly timid pastor, he's in this challenging context. Paul's in prison, facing death for the gospel, and yet he writes not to discourage Timothy but to call him to courage, courage that is shaped by the gospel.

So courage comes from God's spirit, not our fear. And so Paul, he reminds Timothy to fan into flame the gift of God. That was given when Paul laid his hands on him, when he anointed him, set him aside for this ministry in Ephesus.

And so Timothy has been given the gift of the spirit for this specific task. But the spirit, he says, is not one of fear or timidity. Instead, the spirit is one of power, love, and self-discipline.

You see that contrast there? Fear makes us shrink back, avoid risk, keep quiet. The spirit of God gives us power to speak, to act, to care for others, to love others, even at the cost to ourselves, and self-discipline to stay faithful when it would be easier to give up. I think of the movie Wizard of Oz and the lion character in there and his whole story is one of courage and how he is full of fear and he's timid and he displays not what we'd expect from the animal, a one having courage.

And what the movie does throughout is it displays a character who needs to try and find this courage from within, or he needs to overcome his fears, or to simply realize that there is this bravery within him that he needs to unlock. But that's not how we understand courage as Paul writes here. See, courage is not the absence of fear.

Courage is the presence of God's spirit within us. And see, left to ourselves, most of us would hesitate, we would stay silent or compromise. But courage comes from fanning into flame what God has already given us.

It's like what Ben was demonstrating here just earlier. Because we know that when you go camping and you've had this beautiful fire at night and then you wake up in the morning and it's really cold and all you've got is just this pile of coals. But if you put a bit of kindling or some dry grass on there and you get down and you blow it, the flame will reappear again.

Stir the embers around a bit maybe, add a bit more wood. And so Paul says to Timothy, don't let your gift fade into embers, fan it into flames again. What might you be letting fear or timidity dampen the flame of faith in your life? Perhaps it's being, sharing the gospel or sharing your faith, being there for them with a friend.

Maybe it's standing up for the truth, the gospel in a tough conversation or simply living openly as a Christian. Where is God growing you to blow on an ember? Remember the spirit of God within you, it's stronger than fear and that's the source of our courage, the spirit of God living within us. Paul continues, so do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me, his prisoner, rather join with me in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.

So here we're reminded that courage in the Christian life is not just about bold speech, it's about a willingness to suffer, to bear shame or loss for the sake of Christ. How challenging is that? And it's really important to remember that the gospel is not a self-help guide to succeed in life, but it provides hope when our faith is struggling. When we're attacked for our faith in Jesus, courage is standing firm in what Jesus has done in his victory.

And so Paul himself embodies this in prison, chains, but unashamed. Why is he unashamed? Because he knows the gospel is worth it, because Christ has destroyed death and brought

life and immortality to light through the gospel. And so the key is that courage is rooted not in our ability to endure, but in the victory of Christ.

Courage is rooted not in our ability to endure, but in the victory of Christ. So that means that even when we feel we're not courageous or we have not stood up in a way that we should, and all of us here would have examples of that, including me. Courage rooted in the victory of Christ is rooted in his grace and in us striving to grow through his Holy Spirit.

Jesus has abolished death. What can truly harm us if our lives are hidden with him? Too many Christians throughout history have endured hardship for the gospel. The early church faced lions in the arena.

Missionaries overseas faced risks to their lives to reach unreached people. There's one guy, Jim Elliot, I came across, a saying that says, He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose. He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

And Paul himself says, that is why I'm suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed. Courage doesn't come from never doubting or never hurting.

It comes from knowing the one in whom we trust. Courage comes from the one in whom we trust. And so for most of us, suffering won't look like prison or persecution.

It may look like being mocked for your faith. Or missing out on opportunities because of your convictions. Or being misunderstood by families or friends.

And the challenge that Paul gives Timothy and the church is that when you face suffering, will you be ashamed of Christ? Or will you bear the small share of his suffering, knowing he bore everything for you? That's the challenge. Not as words of legalism, but words from the gospel. And Paul goes on to tell Timothy, keep us the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you. Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. It's another angle on courage, really.

It's not only standing against fear or enduring suffering. It's also about holding firmly to the truth. He describes the gospel as a deposit.

Something precious, entrusted to Timothy. His role is to guard it faithfully. Not to distort it.

Not to water down. Not to abandon it. Notice again the encouragement he gives.

He says, we don't guard the gospel in our own strength. We guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. Have you ever been given something important to look after? Maybe a family treasure that's been passed down the line to you.

You're told this is important. Look after it. If not, imagine you're a guard looking after the royal jewels in London.

They're infinitely valuable. Your job is to guard them carefully. They're priceless.

How would you act? How would you work in that situation? And that's how Paul describes the gospel. That kind of treasure. And you know, we live in a culture where the truth of the gospel is constantly questioned, redefined, and challenged.

And so courage means not twisting the gospel to make it more pleasant, but holding firmly to what God has revealed. It means teaching it clearly to our children. Speaking it in love to our neighbours.

Refusing it to be diluted. Let it be diluted. When we speak with courage, we do so with the likeness of Christ.

With that sacrificial love, forgiveness, humility, and peace. We don't go guns blazing and shoot people down. We take on a Christ-like position to share the gospel and to be willing to suffer for the gospel.

It also involves having that courage to pray for these people too, as we explored a couple weeks ago. So let's bring this all together. How does the gospel shape us with courage? The spirit within us overcomes fear.

Courage isn't about personality. It's about God's spirit empowering us. Christ's victory over death gives us confidence.

If death is defeated, what do we have to fear? And the gospel itself is a treasure to God. And courage means faithfully keeping hold of what matters most. Martin Luther's words echo down through the centuries.

Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me.

The same courage is not reserved for reformers or apostles. It's for the ordinary believers. For you and me.

Not because we're naturally brave, but because the gospel shapes us with courage. The power of the spirit of the living God within us. So when fears whisper, when pressure mounts, when the world tempts us to compromise, we remember the spirit of God gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. And the gospel entrusted to us is worth guarding with our lives. So here we stand.

Not in our own strength, but in Christ. And like Paul, like Timothy, like Luther, we pray. God help us.

Amen. So my friends, may the peace of God which passes our understanding, may it guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Amen.

Transcribed by [TurboScribe.ai](https://turbo.scribe.ai).