

## **2 Timothy 1:3-12: FAN INTO FLAME GODS GIFTS**

Matt Ooi – RICE Melbourne, 4 Mar 2018

Thank-you so much for this opportunity to bring God's word to you. My name is Matt, and I'm the pastor of at Anglican Church in Melbourne, Australia. Before becoming a minister, I was a physiotherapist for 10 years. I'm married to Rebecca (who is present) and have two children, aged 8 and 5 (PRAY). I am also the Melbourne Director of the RICE Movement, which was founded by Steve Chong. RICE is an acronym which stands for 'Renewal' & 'Inter-Church' 'Evangelism'.

I'm here to share and encourage you about the way that God is helping renew his church in Melbourne. (SEE VIDEO)

It's been amazing to see the young adults of Melbourne using their gifts as one 'big-C' Church to rally together, and see so many youth make a commitment to follow Jesus. God has really fired them up for Jesus, but it wasn't always this way. In order to understand what's happening in the church, I need to tell you something about Australia.

We actually admire the way the settlers in New Zealand were able to live together in harmony with the indigenous people when they first came. We have a bad track record for the way we've treated marginalised groups. When the first settlers came, there were many aboriginal massacres. In 1901, they passed something call the 'White Australia Policy', which meant that all migrants had to have a European background. This wasn't abolished until 1973. What that meant was there were many migrants who came to Australia from the Asia pacific in the late 1970's. It was an Asian invasion. Some were Christians, and they had children.

As the children grew, the English speaking, Australian Born-Chinese churches grew. But because there was a generation gap and a cultural gap between the children and their parents, many left the church. I'm from that older generation.

Often in our Christian lives, we'll face difficult times. It helps so much to have God's word, because we can follow the example of others who have gone before us (Hebrews 13:7), to be inspired by their faith, so we can carry on.

Timothy was the Apostle Paul's protégé. He travelled with Paul, starting so many churches, and was an amazing man. As Paul says, 'I have no-one like him' (Phil 2:20). But he wasn't always this way. Perhaps, like many of us, he started well, but hit a rough patch in his faith. What this looked like, we're not really sure. Perhaps it had something to do with his mentor being in prison; the separation or the shame of it all. There are so many reasons we struggle in our faith.

Timothy was facing serious doubts (2 Tim 1:7). What we know is that this is most likely one of the last letters Timothy received from his mentor. Paul knew Timothy was struggling, and he encouraged him. Eventually, Timothy went on to become the bishop of Ephesus, and continued to be an incredible example of faith, dying as a martyr in protest against the worldly idols that the people of Ephesus were worshipping. What helped Timothy in his faith?

**Firstly, Paul PRAYS.** Verse three: Paul prayed. He prayed continuously. It's not just any prayer. It's the prayer of his mentor, someone who knows him. It's such an encouragement knowing that someone older, who knows us and loves us, is praying for us.

Here's the first practical point. Pray. Pray continuously. Sometimes we might find it hard to pray. What I suggest to all of those I've mentored is that we compose a prayer for ourselves, and pray it regularly. Make it specific, and short, and pray it everyday. What we find is that as we pray it every day, different parts of the prayer stand out.

**Secondly, Paul reminds Timothy of his PATTERN of faith.** Having examples of faith are so important. It's important to know that there's been someone before you, who's struggled the same way, but you've been able to see how their faith has carried them through.

It's something I'm very passionate about, because you see, I almost didn't make it. Being the older amongst a generation of this unique subculture of ABC's (remember there were no Asians before in Australia, and then there were many, of which I was among the first), I really struggled. I struggled in my faith, and almost walked away from the church.

By God's grace, he put good people, good mentors, to help me on this journey. It's one of the things I believe to be so crucial in nurturing our faith. It's helpful if a mentor is not within your church. It's why I'm so passionate about being a mentor for this next generation, and am serving through RICE. It's also why I love to see churches co-operating with one another - so we know people outside our own church. Having patterns of faith are important. Verse 6. It is for this reason (having patterns of faith to follow), that we might use the gifts God's given us.

The second practical point. Find a mentor. You may only journey with one for a season, a year or two, or maybe longer, but find a mentor who's pattern of faith you'd like to follow.

**Thirdly, PRACTICE THE GOSPEL.** Often when we try to practice following Jesus, and do what he asks us to do, it's hard. There's suffering and sacrifice involved. Sometimes we can be ashamed. But in knowing that we're being **prayed** for, and in following the **patterns of faith**, and remembering that we don't have a spirit of cowardice, but power, love, self-discipline, we boldly proclaim the gospel.

Verse 8-9. If we rely on our own strength rather than the power of God, we fail. If we remember God's spirit is in us, we remember we are called according to *HIS* purpose and grace, and instead of living for ourselves, we live for the gospel.

The third practical point: preach the gospel.

Pray for others, follow their pattern of faith, and practice the gospel.