

Go Week 2023, 5/7/23, 2 Timothy 1:7

Pastor Nate Keeler

This Little Light of Mine activity, 80% of evangelical Christians believe they have a personal responsibility to share their faith, and pray for the spiritual status of others. 39% have shared their faith at least once in the last six months. Less than half shared the gospel and invited someone to believe.¹ For those 20% who do not believe it is our responsibility personally to share our faith: Every Christian is a Great Commission Christian. Matthew 28:18-20 Make disciples of all nations, every Christian is an ambassador of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20) To “Shine our little lights” as the song goes and at minimum what that means is that we all share the personal responsibility to **demonstrate the gospel through loving deeds** (mercy, grace, service, forgiveness, reconciliation) **and to declare the gospel through truthful words** (the message of salvation through Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection).

The biggest deterrent to a lifestyle of missional engagement is fear - manifest in being rejected, made fun of, offending someone, cancelled, despised, or to look like a fool. If we want to see lives changed, our community changed, our country changed- Christ’s messengers must risk looking like a fool. And that won’t be hard for some of you already...not because I think you are a fool but because we already look foolish to the world in many ways. Giving your money away? Forgiving people who hurt you instead of getting revenge, our moral views increasingly look foolish to the world. Go Week- Bob Watson is taking a week of vacation during Go Week to help the homeless at Sunday Breakfast Mission. That looks foolish. Cleaning toilets, picking up trash in parks- and you might run into people that you work with and they are doing fun things and you are picking up garbage...and they are going to be like “Is this part of a punishment?” “No, I’m volunteering because I love Jesus.” It’s interesting that God isn’t more concerned about your social status.

And so if we are going to see God work through us to do something miraculous, to see lives changed, not only during Go Week, throughout our lives, we must overcome this fear and risk looking like a fool. But I want to encourage you today with a truth from Scripture that has the ability to unlock the ultimate fear killer. **[Title Slide]** 2 Timothy 1. The Apostle Paul writes this letter to a young man in need of some courage, and his name was Timothy. But Timothy was given the daunting task of pastoring a church and being the light of Christ in the pluralistic, morally dark Roman city of Ephesus where there were very few Christians, they were the only church, and where sharing your faith would cost you something, at least your reputation, maybe your life. That would be daunting for even the Billy Graham’s of the world but the thing is- Timothy wasn’t some extraordinarily gifted super-Christian. He was very ordinary. He struggled with fear, what people thought and anxiety just like us. And he had to struggle with inadequacy- Do you know who the last pastor and evangelist in Ephesus was before him? The Apostle Paul...arguably the greatest evangelist in the history of the world. Imagine having to compare yourself to Paul? I mean have you read the Book of Romans? Do you know how many people he led to Christ? And so this letter is like one big pep talk for Paul to Timothy...and to you and me

¹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/study-most-churchgoers-never-share-the-gospel/>

today. Because we are all like Timothy and we are living in time and place that is increasingly post-Christian and hostile to the faith. And in his opening words to Timothy he and to us- he says that while we aren't super-Christians, we do have a superpower that can kill fear.

*⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us **power, love and self-discipline**. ⁸ 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.*

We aren't super-Christians, but we do have a superpower- We have the Spirit of the living God in us! The same Holy Spirit that was given to Timothy is given to every Christian at the moment of our conversion. Ephesians 1 ¹³ *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.* Holy Spirit gives us three things to overcome our fear to share our faith:

Power[2 Timothy text]- dynamis...What this power is not: This is not the power of personality, it's not the power of persuasive speech, it's not the power of human boldness. Have you noticed YouTubers love to make videos of how so-and-so "owns this person in an argument" "crushes this snowflake college kid in the audience who asked this question." This isn't the kind of power and boldness he's talking about. **Power: Humble courage.**

2 Corinthians 4:7, *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the glorious power might be seen to be from God and not from us.* And then he says, who is competent for these things? The answer? No one. St. Augustine- Gospel impact: "This way is first humility, second humility, third humility, and however often you should ask me I would say the same...if humility does not precede and accompany and follow every good work we do, and if it is not set before us to look upon, and beside us to lean upon, and behind us to fence us in, pride will wrest from our hand any good deed we do while we are in the very act of taking pleasure in it." Humble Courage: means that we recognize it's not us, we aren't even worthy of it, and we certainly can't make anyone a Christian- it's all God from beginning to end, and we just get the distinct privilege of being a part of his kingdom work. And so when we go with the Spirit, he gives us the humble courage to openly share Jesus with others. The Spirit changes us from "We have to" to "We get to share our faith." He gives us the desire and courage for one poor beggar to tell another poor beggar where to find bread.²

Love [2 Timothy text]: I believe Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit infuses our hearts with a love of God and a love of people. If you love Jesus, it's only because the Spirit of the living God came into your heart and replaced your heart of stone with a heart of flesh. If you love people, it's only because the Spirit has replaced self-centeredness with compassion. And what has always been true is that we share what we love. I saw Top Gun Maverick- I told everyone I knew- I have got to see Top Gun Maverick. Some of you, every time I talk to you, you tell me about your kids and your grandkids. Why? Because you love them! We share what we love. And so if the Spirit

² Attributed to D.T. Niles, 1986

has given you a love for Jesus, you want other people to know him too, because you love them and you want them to experience a relationship with Jesus. And so as we go out this week to serve our community and share the message of Jesus with our community- it's not motivated by, look at how amazing we are...if it's from the Spirit, it is motivated by love. And people can tell the difference, even if they don't agree with your message they will see your motives. The Spirit gives us a humble courage to share the love of Jesus with others with pure motives...and here's the trifacta...

Self-discipline[2 Timothy text]: Self-discipline gets us over the hump...that moment when you consider turning back...The Spirit gives us the will, the grit when it gets tough, and when you don't see much fruit. You know, we won't get very far with impact in our community for Christ, we won't get very far in sharing our faith without self-discipline. Because the road to hell is paved with "good intentions". Some of us have thought...I want to share my faith but I just haven't gotten around to it yet. That's the flesh, because the flesh isn't particularly self-disciplined often times at least not when it comes to living for God. But when we Go with the Spirit- we invite him to live through us, gives us not only the power to share the love of Jesus, but the grit and determination to follow through.

The Holy Spirit wants to do something in and through you this **Go Week**. And you might be afraid, you say I'm just an ordinary person, I don't want to look like a fool. Yes, but you have an extraordinary God. And he has given you a superpower, the Spirit in you...so Go with the Spirit. I'm grateful that Pastor Bob, went with the Spirit and was willing to look like a fool and helped me trust Jesus. I'm so thankful that Steve Anderson went with the Spirit was willing to look like a fool to share the gospel a DE prison so that Chip SantaBarbara could come to know the power of the Gospel and have his entire life transformed. I'm so thankful that several of you were willing to go with the Spirit and overcome your fear of looking like a fool to invite your friends to Alpha...

Remember I shared those statistics... here's the good news, we have an opportunity during Go Week to dramatically shift these statistics at Brandywine Valley Church. Tonight we are gathering to pray **[Prayer Gathering slide]**. Some details...And this **Go Week** we are challenging you to personally have a spiritual conversation with a neighbor, friend, loved one or stranger, AND to serve in a community partnership opportunity. Terry will be sharing more details later in the service.

We've made a 5 min video for you of some ordinary people like you that are part of our church. These are super-gifted, off the charts orators...but what they have in common is they know who is in them- the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Terry Foester

Last year we did GO Sunday — as a one-day all-in day!

Tweaks for this year:

(1) keep Sunday services

(2) spread it out so people are around

—- But I'm watching ...we'll have to see how it works this year!

Last year's theme verse *The world will know you are my disciples by your love for one another.* John 13:35

This year's theme verse builds on that idea...that we Go out, not in our own strength...

GO PERSONALLY to your neighbor

Egg Casserole Example: *if we all deliver an egg casserole this week...I believe more egg casseroles would get delivered this year than any other year in the history of our church. Write a note to your neighbor and invite them to church with you!*

On the Move Card

POWER>>> *talk to God about your neighbors before you talk to your neighbors about God.*

LOVE>>> *one of the most concrete ways to love well is to listen well*

Conversation Starters: "What was the high and low for you this week or this month?"

SELF-DISCIPLINE>>> *We don't need to dress the Gospel up to make it cool...we need to break it down in order to make it clear.*

3 Circles Guide - I've used it 3 times since February and each time I grow in my ability to communicate the simplicity of the Gospel.

We GO COLLECTIVELY to our community

TUTORIAL

GO WEEK PROJECTS

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

Weeding/Yard Work

FOSTER WELL

Furniture painting refinishing

House cleaning for a Foster Family

URBAN PROMISE

After School Camp Helpers

Elementary School tutoring

Grounds Projects on Saturday

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

Sorting Clothes in the Clothing Bank

SUNDAY BREAKFAST MISSION

Serving Meals throughout the week, lunch and dinner hours

Construction Project daily and on Saturday

Men's & Women's Chapel on Wednesday evening

COMMUNITY PARK PROJECTS

Brown-Burton Winchester Park

Brandywine Park by the ZOO

Can-Do Playground

Judy Johnson Park

GO IN CHURCH PROJECTS

We're also provide some projects for those who otherwise couldn't go...

Cards Ministry

No-Sew LAP Blankets

DORCUS Sewn Blankets

Vacation Bible School Decor Projects

ONE 4 WILMINGTON PRAYER MEETING (slide)

4 PM at City Church Wilmington

Closing: God is Sending us Out!

Will you go personally & collectively this week?

In your brokenness & your business, the enemy wants you to think that you don't have time, and that your problems are too big (capital P Problems)...the enemy wants you to think that you have too much going on to take the message of Jesus to someone personally.

It's in your exact current situation no matter how broken or busy you are ... *it's this exact place* ... that he wants you to speak up!

What we have here is so special. *Will you go personally?*