

Scripture Readings and Sermon

October 6, 2019 by Rev. Mark Brechin

Commentary on 2 Timothy 1:1-14 (*Youtube [Lectionary Study Video](#)*)

The phrase "Christ Jesus" is only found together in the letters of Paul (Titus:1, 2 Corinthians:1, 1 Thessalonians:2, Philemon:3, Colossians:4, 1 Corinthians:8, Galatians:8, Ephesians:10, 1 Timothy:10, 2 Timothy:11, Philippians:11, Romans:12). When Paul uses this phrase it is often as "in Christ Jesus" or "of Christ Jesus". In Galatians, Paul gives us a hint as to why he uses the phrase when he writes about those, "who belong to Christ Jesus" (5:24). For Paul, Christ Jesus is the heavenly Bride and the celestial Church. In Romans 6:3, he writes, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus". Paul's use of Christ Jesus in his letters to Timothy indicate that the focus is on the spiritual Body of Christ. This is reinforced by his use of key terms like the "will of God", "sincere faith", "spirit of power", and "holy calling". The focus is not on practical church matters but on the work of grace, faith, and love through the Holy Spirit which binds us to Christ Jesus. This is the "good treasure" which should be guarded until we are all united in Christ.

Commentary on Luke 17:5-10 (*Youtube [Lectionary Study Video](#)*)

This is at the end of a series of teachings which began in 13:22. When the magnitude of Jesus' teachings begin to sink in, the disciples cry out "Increase our faith!". Jesus' response is most likely not anything what these chosen "apostles" were expecting. Rather than encouraging them to have faith, Jesus compares them to slaves who should do as their master commands. A slave is in no need of faith. They simply do as they are commanded. If they had faith that they were masters over the mulberry tree, it would do as any slave would and obey. The time for learning is coming to an end and the time for doing is at hand. Jesus can no longer give their faith training wheels. If they call him Lord, then they should obey with complete faith that their Lord knows best. In the words of the character Yoda in Star Wars, "No! Try not. Do or do not. There is no try!" The time is drawing near when the apostles will have faith or will not - there is no try. They are, as verse 11 states, on their way to Jerusalem.

Sermon "Is Jesus Your Lord" (*Youtube [Sermon Video](#)*)

How much faith is enough faith? When the apostles ask Jesus to increase their faith, his response is dismissive. A little faith is enough to command nature and besides a servant does not tell their master when they eat or sleep. While the response at first glance appears harsh, both the context and the actors need to be considered. The ones who asked for an increase of faith were not the Pharisees or the disciples but the apostles. These were the chosen ones to carry on Jesus' message after he ascended. The time was fast approaching when Jesus' teachings would end and Gethsemane would be experienced. Jesus could not afford to baby the apostles any longer. It was time they either committed in faith or leave in fear. "Do or do not. There is no try" as Yoda told Skywalker in Star Wars.

Paul tells Timothy that Timothy was not given a spirit of fear but of power and of self discipline. Timothy needs to rekindle his faith and guard the precious treasure of grace he has been given. Just as Paul knows whom he believes in, Timothy need to also embrace the message and trust in Jesus. Both of these scriptures urge us to make the "leap of faith" and trust Jesus to be our Savior. Jesus is either our Lord or he is not. It is time to profess our faith and accept Jesus as the Lord of all of our lives. Is Jesus your Lord?