

“The Authentic life”

Online service sheet during the coronavirus.

Reading Isaiah 43:1-13

Reading 2 Tim 3:10-14

Sermon Title: “The Authentic life”

Listen to today’s sermon by clicking on the link at www.knbc.org.

The audio file is **20_05_14_authentic.mp3** in the sermons directory

Reflective prayer what does this mean for me Lord.....

Close -----

Welcome

Welcome again to you as you join with us this Sunday morning at KNBC. Last week we considered those Jesus met, and looked at Jesus welcoming little children. Now we are back in our series in the pastoral letters today 2nd Timothy ch 3:10-14 Now let us pray.

- Sharing a house with my mother the living room has a number of pieces collected over many years, even centuries. They enhance the room. They do so because I know that they are genuine, valuable, authentic, and not sham.

So too people play a role either in helping and enhancing, or hindering, our lives. Can you think who has influenced you? Whose left a mark on you?

- Years ago in Daytona Beach, I shared a flat for a time with another guy. He was a really nice and I took to him as a friend. A long way from home it made all the difference. I held him in high regard so it was a shock when I discovered that he was regularly drawing money out of my bank account. To cut a long story short this nice guy turned out to be a sham. Instead of being authentic, he was a fake.

We are all influenced by others for good or for bad. You can probably think of those in both categories - and what a difference they made!

- Here’s a very different example; Read the life of Wellington and you will soon discover he was an outstanding General. The more his troops got to know him and his inspiring leadership the more they were willing to serve him faithful, giving their best whatever the cost. It was tough to be a soldier in those days, it still is. The troops in the Peninsula wars endured great hardships and stuck with it.

We too can be influenced for good in just the same way, although as Christians we are in a different army.

- Hudson Taylor spurred many to sacrificial service in China. He spoke much about the lost heathen millions of that country. However, what caused men and women to forsake all and take on that perilous journey and life, many of whom did not return, was Hudson Taylor himself.
- Hudson Taylor travelled widely making the need know. I quote: “In Sweden as elsewhere it was the spirit of the man that added weight to what he said. Seen through the eyes of the those with him, this was if anything the more eloquent message”. Everywhere the people were drawn to Mr. Taylor," recalled this helpful friend. "He seemed to be full in love and affection, he talked in such a kind way to me my heart was completely taken”

Timothy is having a tough time of it. Church leaders often do. You think your church has problems! Here at Ephesus Timothy is really up against it!

Remember there were those mentioned in 2 Tim 3:1-9, they were the charlatans and tricksters trying to undermine everything that was godly in the church. Then there was another group spoken of in 2:23-26. These are carnally minded Christians who are causing all sorts of arguments and upsets in the church. Satan was having a field day. His purpose?, as always to cause as much disruption, division and discouragement as possible.

Discouragement is a big deal. Hezekiah faced Sennacherib king of Assyria's vast army coming against him to oppose him and attack Him. With Jerusalem surrounded he shouts all sorts of threatenings and insults so much so that it made Hezekiah fall before the Lord in great distress of heart.

So too Timothy is feeling surrounded on all sides by those who oppose him or are trying to supplant him. All the opposition he is facing adds up to a tough time at church. You can imagine him becoming distraught and overwhelmed, I'm sure Timothy was much on his knees.

Leadership is by nature a lonely place, one can imagine him in the valley of despair. The one thing that can make all the difference - is a solid friend.

- What sort of person are you? I am slightly melancholic by nature, but I'm not prone to deep or lasting lows. However, when a bit down I am quickly lifted out of it by an encouraging word, or a sign from a friend, or one phone call can do it.

The Lord knows all this. He knows what you are struggling with and has already put in place means of comfort and help. For Timothy it was Paul.

Timothy had his weaknesses, so Paul says to him **10 You, know all about my ... life** remember, don't you remember? Yes how could he forget.

Timothy was from Lystra and had come to faith through the preaching of Paul during his 1st visit there in AD 48. Following his conversion Timothy joined Paul on his missionary journeys giving him ample time to get to know Paul, and to know him well.

✚ How key those early times are in our young faith.

Did not the Lord bring to you encouragement in the form of other more mature Christians? That early care and nurture where the Lord provided good role models for you to follow. As you looked around for those to emulate, when you said to yourself "*how should I now live*" there they

were, giants of the faith living out their Christian life before you. There you could see authentic Christianity lived out.

- For me when within a few weeks of my conversion on my return to England the Lord, through a godly lady at the church I had just joined gave me a Job as a maintenance man in a large hostel in Central London. (sash cord on your window come and see me) It was a Christian hostel with Christian staff. There we had morning devotions together, by the presence and help of others I learned to pray in public, I was amazed to see others quoting scripture and learned the value of it, I observed how they related, I observed humility, the giving of extra time to help others, I could see care over the tongue, I could see a resistance to the world's ways etc. I still thank the Lord for that time.

Then the growing up comes, the hardships don't diminish but increase, the responsibilities grow, and part of you longs for those simple, early days.

God pushes the boat out, but He has not left you (or if I can mix metaphors) - He wants you to learn to walk, stand on your feet, to grow in grace and take up the baton for what he has for you. When Paul says to Timothy "**train yourself to be godly**" he means to stamp it into your character, **stamp a coin**.

"But in this will I have what I need?" Yes you will. And one of those things are the memories. Holding in mind the example of that godly life that so helped you. Keeping in mind those mature Christians who have traveled before you and stand with you in the faith. Your own cloud of witness.

Now years later Timothy is in the thick of a troubled church life. Those early days after conversion must have felt very far off. Those long talks with Paul as they journeyed on foot were sweet memories indeed.

So now in difficult times Paul says to Timothy "remember my life". If fact you do, **you know all about my life** - it x2, then recall it, it will help you. It will help you because this is what you need to keep you steady and going on.

- When I first came to KNBC there was a sisterhood that used to meet on Wed afternoons. Of this group of ladies some were noticeably godly. I remember visiting one of them and she said the pastor (previous pastor) used to come round and visit and she sensed it was less for her than for him. She said she could tell when he was under pressure because he would come to visit her!

So is Paul to Timothy. Saying "remember me/re-visit me in your mind"

- ✚ He knows that what Timothy needs is to gain resolve from his steady, godly life.

10 You know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance,

You might at this point be thinking a couple of things here:

1. Paul is doing a little boasting isn't he? I couldn't say "look at me!" If it's to puff himself up as some are want to do then he is, but he is not self-centered but motivated by love to help another brother.
2. Or you may be thinking "he's an Apostle it's alright for him". And indeed one can put a case to say that there were certain marks that more readily enabled an apostle to point to themselves.

Yet Peter said of the scattered Christians he was writing to that they had **received a faith as precious as ours.**

Just as it is a level playing field before you come to Christ – and are saved through Him alone – so afterwards too it is the same Christ who enables you by His Spirit to live the godly life to which you are called.

✚ So Paul does point to his life – for it's a new life in Christ, "Timothy how I am now is all Christ's work in me" – Paul boasted not in himself but in the Lord.

After all it is really Christ we are observing, living out his life in Paul. So too with all of his peoples let us say with Paul **follow me as I follow Christ!** – the greatest example off all!

Paul and Timothy lived and worked together for months and years. They were close, and when close things can't be hidden, at least not for long, it will come out. Paul could still say **10 You know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance,**

Yes well his teaching, his doctrine was known, he had made it known, Timothy knew it, he also knew it because he could see it, his manner of life fitted like a hand in a glove with his doctrine.

my purpose, faith, here comes a list of qualities you can expect, what was it that Timothy remembered? That Paul taught them? he certainly did – more so that he lived them. The lasting impression on Timothy is seeing them lived out in action. He had witnessed the sufferings of Paul, Timothy had shared in the gospel labour, and been selected by Paul as his chosen companion in his journeys, even sharing for a time his imprisonment at Rome, Heb 13:23.

There is no better place than trouble to display **patience**, no better place than hatred to display **love**, as Paul said **when we are slandered, we answer kindly**

1 cor 4:13. There's nothing like ongoing wearying oppression to display your **endurance** to all those around?

Is that not one of the reasons our God gives these things to his children?, that the world may see Christ in you?

✚ **Do you run from adversity and hardship? – If you do then you fail to grow in godliness - and you fail to present Christ to others.**

He goes on in **11 persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured.**

You were there - you know all about it. You too can expect suffering – and it is in the suffering that you will see the authentic Christian life.

Hear the account in Acts 14 **Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. 20 But after the disciples had gathered round him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe. They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.**" (Ac 14:19-22)
This is Timothy's home turf, "Timothy you know all about these"

✚ **I repeat - it is through the suffering the authentic Christian life is seen!**

So Timothy you have seen this in my life - so too it will be in yours

12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, Timothy this is what you can expect

That applies to you and I here today..... this is what you can expect.

✚ **When you become a follower of Christ trouble is the "new normal"**

13 while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. Those impostors won't suffer, they'll run! And becoming worse

How does Paul show his life is the authentic one? Hear his answer : **Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; etc, etc, in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonour, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always**

rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything. 2 Cor 6:4-10

Timothy, often with Paul had SEEN these qualities every day.

✚ Now “Hold it in mind, it will help you stand against the unauthentic sham lives of those who oppose you”.

And he could testify of rescue and God’s ever present help **Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. or** perhaps better translated **but out of them all the lord delivered me**” The rubber stamp of the Lord’s *presence* and *promise*

- My father left a great impression on me, my mother who resists the things of God much less so. My father who stood by me was faithful when I turned my back on the family, he continued to show love to me when it wasn’t reciprocated. I still have all his letters.

I remember his ‘other centeredness’, his thoughtfulness and patient love.

Timothy could look to Paul as a father like that – and he was his father - in the faith. Paul addresses his letters **to Timothy my true son in the faith** 1st Tim 1:2 and 2nd Tim 1:2 **To Timothy, my dear son.**

Did you have parents who modelled that for you? Maybe not. But who has God given you at church?, in your minds eyes can you pick out Jesus in your brothers and sisters – and in your mind copy ‘his reliability, her grace in conversation, his generosity, her humility, her modesty, his steadiness under pressure, and so on’, gaining strength as you overcome the troubles, obstacles and opposition you are, and will be, facing.

When everything or everyone seems against you, remember not everyone, remember there is such a thing as an authentic Christian life and use what you see to make sure you don’t give up and fall away.

Remember young king Joash was kept steady in his life. How? through the influence of the priest Jehoiada. But when Jehoiada died Joash’s life collapsed - he had forgotten what he should have remembered. 2K 11,12

Paul concludes to Timothy **14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it.** The message is clear, use the examples God gives and make the most of them - don’t forget that good deposit, and carry on.

Well there’s another great help and that is scripture, the word of God, that is coming up, - *the word and the testimony*, - but it’s for another day.

Peroration

So we’ve been in Timothy’s shoes but can you be a Paul? Not who has influenced you and who can you draw on? - but will your life help others?

- Vanessa joins me for the morning run three times a week. When there’s some flagging I adjust the pace so we can jog alongside each other. “No” she said to me “It helps me more when you are ahead”

If you live an authentic life you will be ahead – and so a good spur to others. If not, then you will not be helping, but hindering your brothers and sisters.

We can be a spur to others through the tasks they face.

- I am part the way through Peter Hopkirk’s book on the secret political maneuverings in central Asia. It’s a monumental work of more than 500 pages. It took a significant chunk out of his life to research and produce. (It has a fifteen page bibliography!) Why did he write it? What spurred him on? The influence of another man, another book; FitzRoy Maclean’s ‘*Eastern approaches*’ portraying his experiences there years before. It’s on my shelf, and it left quite an impression on me when I read it years ago.

Yes during ‘lockdown’ I’m having, a feast in the books I’ve read.

- Some have been Christian biographies, the last one being the life of D.L.Moody. His influence in the US and also in the UK was enormous. What a spur he was to so many, what a solid legacy of encouragement to me more than a century later.

✚ **Your and my life should be like books for those to come.**

To encourage Timothy Paul reminds him of a what an authentic Christian life looks like. The Lord gave Timothy all he needed as he fought his battles

The Lord gives you all you need too. And He will do that for every Christian, - may it be YOUR authentic Christian life that he uses to help others!

A sheet of well-worn notepaper bearing a few lines in Hudson Taylor's writing reveals, perhaps, more than anything else the secret of his inward life, moved on in his journal from day to day, what does it not reveal?

LORD Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living, bright Reality
More present to faith's vision keen
Than any outward object seen;
More dear, more intimately nigh
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie.

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