

# Talk It Over

## FAN INTO FLAME (Week 2) Be On Guard

### SMALL TALK

1. What teacher, coach, or other person, had a knack for bringing out the best in you?

### VIEWPOINT

2. **READ 2 Timothy 1:8-18.** Find the use of the term “gospel.” What is “the gospel”, and what does Paul have to say about it in these paragraphs?
3. What pressures and responsibilities were Paul and Timothy feeling in relationship to the gospel?
4. How does this relate to Paul’s circumstance and conviction in 1:12?
5. What has caused the widespread desertion that Paul felt (1:15)?

### GETTING PERSONAL

6. When you first decided to follow Jesus, did you assume it would be a “bed of roses” or a “bed of nails”? Why?
7. What have you learned about the cost of following him since then?

### MAKING PROGRESS (THIS WEEK)

8. How do VVCC’s 5 core statements, related to the concept of guarding the gospel (Baton) which was entrusted to you? Do any of the five statements poke you right now? What step will you take this week to fan into flame your faithfulness to the gospel baton entrusted to you, to guard, live by, and entrust to others?

May 1, 2022

## Fan Into Flame – (week 2) Be On Guard

There is an old hymn I grew up with, the chorus of which is a direct quote of part of 2 Timothy 1:12.

### VIDEO (30 seconds) “I know whom I have believed”

Today, I want to show you a little known puzzle about this verse!

*2 Timothy 1:12 (KJV) ... he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*  
*2 Timothy 1:12 (ESV) ... he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.*

What accounts for such a difference in translation? A very literal rendering of the Greek goes like this: *“able, he is, my deposit to guard.”*

I know, I know, sometimes literal Greek word order sounds like Yoda!

Here’s the problem:

- Is *“my deposit”* the deposit I received?
- Or, is *“my deposit”* the deposit I made?

The way you translate it matters!

1. (KJV) God is able to guard my soul, even if they execute me!
2. (ESV) God is able to guard what he has entrusted to me to guard (the gospel) even if everything seems like it is falling apart, and I am no longer available to guard it.

Both are true statements but which did Paul have in mind? Only context can tell. I never knew about this puzzle until preparing for this message. Are you ready to FAN INTO FLAME your faith and courage? This study did that for me.

### I. What’s the CONTEXT?

SUMMARY HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

- **2 Timothy was written during PAUL’s SECOND ROMAN IMPRISONMENT: AD 64 or 65 (just before his martyrdom)**
  - **The FIRST imprisonment was AD 62 (as recorded in ACTS),** and Paul wrote Philippians, Colossians, Philemon during that one, but was released as he expected to be.

BACKGROUND:

- **NERO, Lived AD 37–68.** (Emperor from **52-68**, **Caesar** is the title Roman Emperors used)

## HOW DID NERO BECAME Emperor AT 17 YEARS OLD?

- **HIS MOTHER!**
- **Agrippina's Treachery is what led to Nero's Rise to Power**
  - **Agrippina the Younger**, was Nero's mother. She was also the sister of Emperor Caligula.
  - It was her constant ambition to rule the empire through her son.
  - Agrippina was characterized by vengeance, and constant maneuvering for political power.
  - Her brother Caligula grew fearful of Agrippina's plots, and had her exiled, stripped her of her wealth, and separated her from son.
  - However, some time later, **Caligula was assassinated**, and **her uncle Claudius became Caesar**.
  - Her uncle obviously did not know **Agrippina** like her brother did, and Emperor Claudius brought her back, restored her property, and reunited her with her young son Nero.
- **Once reinstated, Agrippina redoubled her efforts to grasp imperial power and prestige.**
  - First, she **exposed the indiscretions of Claudius' wife**
    - Claudius had her **executed**.
  - Then, she **persuaded Claudius to marry her!**
    - Yup, her uncle.
  - She persuaded Claudius to officially **adopt Nero**.
    - **ONLY 2 Barriers remained.** Claudius himself, and his biological son Britannicus.
    - Long story short: She poisoned Claudius...then tutored her son in the art of assassination, and he poisoned Britannicus.

**SIDE NOTE [HOLD BATON]** : Last week Doug Freeman did a great job showing us how we are to pass the Baton (what we believe life is all about, the Gospel Good News. Please note the contrast here in how this mother also passed a BATON, but it was the BAD NEWS BATON.

Nero took the BATON she passed, and became just as evil as his Mother. **NERO BECAME one of the most brutal dictators of all time!** In fact, later on, he believed his Mother was a threat to his independent power, so he had his own Mother murdered .

### **What does this have to do with 2 Timothy? We are almost there.**

- Nero's savagery was matched by his fiscal irresponsibility.
- Nero brought Rome to the brink of bankruptcy building his golden city Palace.
- As he was running out of room to expand it, his plans to burn the city to make room for expanding it leaked out. It's hard to keep a secret like this when many arsons are organized to simultaneously start a fire from many locations.
- **In AD 64** The City of Rome burned out of control for 6 days. While Nero was seen playing music and singing verse enjoying what he saw.
- However, as Accusations **were pointed in Nero's direction**, he did two things. He poured money into repair to cover his tracks, while at the same time, casting the blame for the fire on a hated class of people who were as a group preaching a lifestyle contrary to Roman lifestyle. These so-called CHRISTIANS were named as the culprits.

- Nero arrested and convicted Christians, not so much on the count of arson as for what he called “hatred of the human race”. Christians were persecuted for his interpretation of a “hate crime”.
- Christians were sewn up in skins and torn to death by dogs, thrown in the arena with lions, crucified, but with a cruel twist. They were tarred and lit on fire as human torches.
- And derision accompanied their end: They were covered with wild beasts’ skins and torn to death by dogs; or they were fastened on crosses, and when daylight failed were burned to serve as lamps by night

**The Apostle Paul was among the many who were arrested in AD 64.**

Let’s now look at the LITERARY CONTEXT, AND connect it with the HISTORICAL CONTEXT, and relate it now to OUR CURRENT CONTEXT.

First, for literary context, we will look at the verses before, and after our puzzling verse in question. Please take note of how frequently Paul makes reference to “the Gospel”. Before we read the text. Let’s be clear on this phrase: “The Gospel”.

The Gospel” means “GOOD NEWS” and Paul means the unstoppable good news message about Jesus who is our sin and death conquering Savior and LORD!

The highlighted text on the screen are all references to “the Gospel”

*2 Timothy 1:8–14 (ESV) Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel. . . .<sup>10</sup> which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,<sup>11</sup> for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher,<sup>12</sup> which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.<sup>13</sup> Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.<sup>14</sup> By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.*

## II. Guard the good DEPOSIT

[HOLD BATON] Doug Freeman showed us last week how Paul was passing the baton of the Gospel.

The Gospel (entrusted like a baton to be passed) is the good deposit, entrusted to Paul by God, and entrusted to Timothy by Paul, and now Timothy is to entrust it to other reliable followers to entrust to others (2 Timothy 2:2).

This “good deposit” is the Gospel baton to be passed and guarded. The Gospel is the center of God’s Word, the Sword of the Spirit. Grasp it, run with it, and pass it. Good News is our weapon (our sword). On Guard!

We saw how Agrippina passed the BAD NEWS BATON.  
We are hearing how Paul passed the GOSPEL BATON.  
This pass was urgent and mission critical (then and now)!

#### **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**

- Fear was ravaging the churches (it no longer seemed like GOOD NEWS).
- Fear was troubling Timothy.
- It seemed the foundations Paul had laid were crumbling.
- People were abandoning Christ and his church in droves!

2 Timothy 1:15 (ESV) *You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me...*

**It felt like everything he worked for and suffered for was falling apart.**

#### **ON HIS MIND:**

- *Who will guard and keep the gospel charge now?! It seems everyone is fearing for their lives!*
- *Where are the followers now? Where are the leaders now? (they were not present for his first defense (chapter 4))*
- *Would all his labor and suffering be wasted?*
- *What will come of the church and the good news of Jesus now?*

Although what Paul and the early church went through **THEN** was much darker **than for US NOW, do you see the parallels?** It should sound familiar.

- People turning away from their community, and their commitments.
- Many people no longer assembled together with the rest.
- Far fewer people openly proclaiming the good news.
- Many on the brink of turning away from the Gospel!

**It is happening all across America.** Paul urges us to be unafraid and unashamed!

### **III. God guards THE GOSPEL**

2 Timothy 1:12 (ESV) *...I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.*

And he did. The Gospel did not crumble in 64 AD. Nor will it crumble now!

**What was entrusted to us?** The Gospel!

**What is the Gospel?** The unstoppable “GOOD NEWS” that Jesus is the sin and death conquering Savior and LORD!

**Who entrusted the Gospel to us?** The Lord Jesus Christ himself!

**Why are we not ashamed?** The good news is not crumbling! **JESUS is able** to guard THE GOOD NEWS entrusted to us.

We guard it and keep it, even as he guards it and keeps it!

*Guard it faithfully. Spread it actively. Suffer for it bravely. This is our commitment! Be on guard! No fear; no shame, no compromise! Let's honor Jesus who said, "...I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

[Standing: Read it aloud together]

next week: **Fan Into Flame** week 3: **Be Strong!**