

Preaching Resource by Rosa Miranda

2 Timothy 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." RVR 95

"For the Spirit God gave us is not of fear but of power, love and self-control." Pilgrim's Bible

"Because we the Lord gave us a spirit not of timidity, but of power and love and self-control." Jerusalem Bible

Throughout the Bible we see that at the end of their lives, many leaders leave a legacy of final instructions. And in the Epistles to Timothy, the apostle Paul from prison in Rome (or someone writing in his name) directs final words of encouragement and challenge about the complex situation "his beloved son Timothy" will face; and with him, men and women of his time, followers of Jesus Christ.

And although it is clear that the situation faced by Timothy in his ministry is different from the issue of bullying faced by our young people today, both situations have in common that they require certain values for personal and community life, as well as the construction of one's own resources to face adversity and injustice that inevitably will be part of life experience. (2:22)

And this exercise is done in the pastoral epistles to contextualize the teachings of Jesus to the reality of life in the community of faith, so that they bear meaning and relevance in the lives of believers in their own time and circumstances; we have done the same for young men and women faced with the reality of being young and a disciple of Jesus Christ here and now, in times of globalization and post modernity.



Because it takes the courage that comes from commitment to the living Savior to accept the tension between faith and daily life, to have the strength not to give in to peer pressure, to leave behind the fear of not belonging or being isolated, while choosing to be a positive influence.

Timothy had the influence and example of people who left positive imprints in the early years of his life, like his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. (3:14-15) And this brings us to the subject of the family - a concept very diverse and complex, but still the core where human beings learn and internalize their values, and their faith, through their experiences. (Deut. 6:4 to 9) It's important to note that values are observed and mimicked, and this is how we learn. What is our influence as parents? How do we prepare our kids for life?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches us the values of the Kingdom. Each of them involves responsibility and initiative and the realization that our actions have consequences, such as: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Matt. 7:12)

The Kingdom values he teaches- justice, equality, dignity, solidarity and inclusion, among others - calls us to be a community of faith that is a safe and welcoming space in which it is possible to recognize and acknowledge the other as a person of value and dignity in Christ Jesus, with responsibility and respect.

He calls us to be a community of belonging in which it is possible to dialogue and discover that everyone can be part of the solution, to learn to listen and observe, to empathize but also, when necessary, to confront and resolve conflicts with wisdom, love and self-control that the Holy Spirit gives us. (2:25)

Self-control is possible from youth, through identity in Jesus Christ. (1 Tim. 4: 12; 2 Tim 2:22) One is learning to be an example - not a perfect one - but growing and building toward a full life - without bending, honestly before God and one's faith community. A mistake is an opportunity to learn and grow. What is our influence as a faith community? How do we support the participation of youth in the work for justice?

We do not like to talk about adversity and suffering - but even though we don't, both take place in our lives. We are sent by Jesus Christ to the world with the truth of His Word and His protection (John 17: 13 to 19). In his own context, Timothy is again and again alerted and challenged to focus his faith and hope in Christ Jesus in times of suffering, while being encouraged to choose and fight his battles wisely (2:15 -17; 3: 1 to 5). Following the parallel, let's open spaces at home and in the community of faith to raise awareness of what harassment (bullying) is and to explore how we can confront together. Let's affirm that it is unacceptable and share resources to learn to "fight the battles with wisdom and trust" if the situation arises.

Finally, Paul had Timothy, his ministry partner, but also a mentor and maybe even a father figure who had great influence in his life. He was someone Timothy respected and trusted. He was someone who in his most vulnerable moments was present with Timothy sharing

meaningful experiences to encourage him to continue living in the tension between faith and the reality of his life and ministry. How many of our young men and women need leaders that give them affection and trust, who will listen and pray for them? How are we preparing our leaders to identify and address bullying behaviors?