

Lois and Eunice - unfeigned faith

2Tim 1:1-5 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2To Timothy, *my* dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

2. Lois and Eunice were a family that came with human frailties.

Acts 16:1-3 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek:

2Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

Lois and Eunice did not necessarily do everything right. At the very least, Timothy's mother had married outside the culture if not outside the faith. We do not know if her husband was actually a believer or just not Jewish. The fact that he was Greek would at least bring a clash of philosophical perspectives. Before we judge Timothy's mother too quickly, we

must recognize that we do not know if she became a believer after she was married. We do not know if his father had run out on the family or if Eunice was a widow. We do know that life is rough and that we are not excused from exercising faith.

No matter what start they had, they obviously did a lot of things right. People with a weak faith are too easily stopped short in their spiritual life. That they were not stopped is evidenced by the fact that they had unfeigned faith.

3. Lois and Eunice had unfeigned faith.

It is interesting that Paul adds on the word *unfeigned* when describing her faith. Feign means pretend. Unfeigned would then mean that Lois and Eunice had a genuine, authentic, or real faith. It would seem that Paul probably had the same problem back then that we have today. There has always been a problem with people meaning the same thing when they use a word. When it comes to the word *faith*, we recognize that even the devil has faith. When someone says they have faith, we have to find out just what they think that means. Just like Paul qualified Lois and Eunice's faith as *unfeigned* faith, today we speak of *genuine* faith, or *authentic* faith. At some point, those words will become so common that they become meaningless and new words will be used to get people to do some self-examining about their faith.

- Unfeigned faith is authentic, genuine, real faith

Unfeigned faith has high expectations *of* self, not high hopes *for* self. In this sense, high hopes allow for the idea of self-fulfillment. When the world tries to encourage you by saying you have to believe, what they really mean is that you have to hope that your *wishes* come true for what you want. When the Bible uses the stronger word for faith it implies a sense of submission and willingness to obey God as you believe in Him as sovereign God. Having high expectations *of* self demands

something *from* self. Whether or not Timothy's family was impeccable, their unfeigned faith spoke of their high expectations of themselves as much as their attitude of faith in God.

Along with the sense of high expectations that accompany faith comes a potential problem with beating yourself up for failing to meet those high expectations. We have to be sure to temper our expectations with a sense of reality. It is cringe-worthy to assume that all you have to do is x, y, and z and you will have the perfect family. Of course we can probably do better, but there is an obligation on the part of those we are raising to respond to what we are giving them. There are no guarantees in life. However, the righteousness that comes by faith *is* an expectation that we can ask of ourselves. We can provide the best opportunities which obligate our children to respond to them. After they have been so richly provided for, if they do not use those righteous opportunities, *they* have failed in *their* obligation.

Rom 2:2-9 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

3And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

4Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

5But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

6Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

8But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the

truth, but obey unrighteousness,
indignation and wrath,
9Tribulation and anguish, upon
every soul of man that doeth evil,
of the Jew first, and also of the
Gentile;

What is most interesting about this passage is that the word *obey* in vs. 8 is most often translated as *persuaded*. By using its translation as *obey*, we get the sense that there is some kind of obligation that is associated with saying that you believe.

The kind of faith Lois and Eunice had is often shown in their conversation, their teaching the young ones, such as Timothy, in their lives. They would have taken him to synagogue. He would have heard about the Messiah. He would have studied the Word of God. They would have prayed with him and talked with him. How certain can we be about this? Very, because that is what unfeigned means. The fact that Timothy didn't take off as a teenager but was still following the example of his mother and grandmother.

- Unfeigned faith is saving faith -

Unfeigned faith is what is necessary for salvation.

1John 3:19-21 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.

The word *assure* is that same word for faith as *obey*. This is the kind of faith that Agrippa missed out on when he was confronted by Paul.

Acts 26:27-28 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28Then Agrippa said unto Paul,

Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

Unfeigned faith comes from being fully persuaded and gives us the assurance of salvation. Some wish that they had that kind of faith, but it is not far from us at all.

Rom 10:17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Rom 10:8-10 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- Unfeigned faith has no personal agenda -

Unfeigned faith is not fake, hiding some personal agenda. It comes to God with open arms waiting to received whatever God has for us. It is not like Simon Magus who thought that the Holy Spirit was some power that could be bought and used for personal gain.

Acts 8:13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

Acts 8:18-21 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy

Ghost.

20But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

Fortunately for Simon, he repented.

4. Lois and Eunice provided Timothy for Paul.

2Tim 2:1-7 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

3Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

5And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

7Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

Paul received in Timothy a man who had enough of what it took to succeed in ministry. All he had to do was exhort him to follow through with that strong calling. Of course, when we say "succeed," we are not referring to "doing great things for God," but being able to faithfully stay the course and pass on the knowledge of God to those who follow after us.

This is the legacy of Lois and Eunice. Mothers of children and mothers of the church know that you might not go down in history like Deborah who led as a judge in Israel, but you can all go down

in history as a Lois or Eunice who produced Timothies.

Are you a mother? Are you a woman of faith, supporting the children of our church? Are you a grandmother or aunt? Would you pray for strength for the journey?