

2 Timothy 1:9b-12

150th Anniversary Grace 4; October 11 & 12, 2015

^{9b} This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹ And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹² That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

What does a "Lifetime Warranty" mean? I found this definition online this past week: "Think about it - the term is frequently used by companies and individuals, but there is no standard definition for the term. Therefore, the concept means something different to everyone. The net result - consumer confusion. That works for the marketers exploiting the term, but against you, the consumer. A good place to start the definition is whose lifetime does the warranty cover? The purchaser's? The manufacturer's? The product's? The answer is (here is the big surprise!).....it depends. The duration and applicability of a lifetime warranty depends solely upon the person or company who is implying the warranty. A consumer's expectations of that warranty is completely irrelevant." What does a "lifetime warranty mean to you?"

This morning, the Apostle reminds us of not just the *lifetime guaranty* that God gives us, but also of the *eternal lifetime guaranty found in Christ*. Therefore, as we continue to celebrate St. Paul's 150th Anniversary, let us **"Celebrate God's Grace... It Guaranties Heaven."**

God's Grace removes the uncertainty of heaven. If you have ever flown somewhere, what is the one thing that is needed to get on that flight? A *boarding pass*. Usually, it is no problem to get one if you have purchased a ticket on that flight. However, if the flight gets cancelled, then life becomes a little more uncertain. They need to find a seat on another flight that may already be full. What happens? You get put on the *standby list*. Then, the wait begins. The *standby list* is about *possibility* not *guarantee*. It is about *uncertainty*. Maybe I'll get on that flight, or maybe not. All I want to do at that point is to go home or start the vacation.

What if God put people on a *standby list* to get into heaven? Yet, there are times that we think that he does, even if we don't want to admit it. "I hope I get to heaven." "I hope I'm good enough." There are times that our behavior gives us reason to wonder. One day we are strong in our faith. The next day we have all kinds of doubts. We live our lives on this up and down rollercoaster.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that God wants to remove all those doubts and uncertainties in our lives. As Paul is writing to Timothy the words of our text, he is sitting in prison. He has little hope of getting out. Even if Paul was to die, he was certain where he would be spending eternal life. **"This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."** Our salvation does not depend on our works. God's grace moved him to love us and save us. It is God's grace and the work of the Holy Spirit that moves us to trust in that salvation. Through faith *In Christ Alone*, heaven is mine. It is yours.

God stakes his claim on us. We put our name on all kinds of different things, don't we? We write it in books. We engrave it on tools. We register it with stores and manufacturers. Ranchers brand their cattle. In Christ, God puts his name on us. If we are his, then we can trust that he will take us to heaven someday. Then we can join with the Apostle Paul in saying: **"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."** (Romans 8:38-39)

God's Grace brings peace into our lives. Where there is no assurance of salvation, there is no peace. If there is no peace, then life can only have fear. Yet, God wants us to have the assurance that through faith in Jesus, we have peace. Listen to the Apostle speak about the peace he has in Christ: **"I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day."** God had placed this wonderful message of the Gospel in the heart

of Paul. He guaranteed it with his Son. He has moved us to trust it by the work of the Holy Spirit. He is going to guard it as well within us.

Think of all the different things that we use to protect us: security systems, dead bolts, locked doors, cell phone and that little button that promises that when we have fallen and can't get help that help will soon be not far away. Yet, all of those things can fail at times in this world. Innocent people are still being killed on school campuses and in stores. Property is still getting stolen. People still live in fear. Bad things still happen to good people. The Apostle Paul speaks about himself: **"Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers."** (2 Cor. 11:24-27)

In the verses right after our text, Paul encourages: **"What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us."** (2 Timothy 1:13-14) God has entrusted the Gospel of Jesus in us. He guards it. He keeps doing it again and again in people's life. Even after we die, God will continue to do that.

I wondered how many people he has done that with over 150 years here at St. Paul's? How many people have sat in the pews of St. Paul's and have heard that same message we proclaim today. God's Word is our great heritage. Why wouldn't God continue to do that for another 150 years at St. Paul's? The goal is the same. We work together so that so that God can removed all the uncertainties of eternal; so that he can give us true peace; so that he can guard that deposit of the Gospel that he has placed in our hearts. A lifetime guarantee may not always be what it sounds like. In Christ, we have an eternal lifetime guarantee in heaven. May we trust that all the days of our lives. Amen.