

Cindy Cottone

The Bible Corner



The mark of Timothy

Timothy watched as the setting sun disappeared behind the temple, leaving a few rosy brushstrokes of color in its wake. There was hardly a place in all of Lystra where this temple dedicated to Zeus was not visible. It cast a long shadow over the lives of all those who dwelt there. And yet, this huge monument had little meaning in Timothy's life, except perhaps as a reminder of his own Greek origin. His father had been Greek, but Timothy had scarcely known him. Instead, Timothy's faith had taken shape firmly under the guidance of both his grandmother and mother, whose beliefs were rooted strongly in Jewish tradition.

Timothy remembered little about his father, since he had died when he was still a young boy. But he had painted a certain description of him in his own mind as a kind of tribute to this man. When people asked him about his father, Timothy would proudly say, "My father, Nikos, was the son of an important Greek family. He made his mark in government service." In his own mind, however, Timothy would add a silent thought. Unfortunately, this strong sense of duty caused him to be absent from his home most of the time.

As Timothy passed directly in front of the temple, he suddenly thought, "How will I

leave my mark on the world?" What description will someone write of me when I am gone?" Then in deference to the one true God his grandmother had taught him about, he turned his head away from Zeus and said, "Oh, Lord, you alone are my hope; I've trusted you from childhood."

Timothy's mind raced as he thought back to all that his grandmother had tried to instill in him. Together, they had painstakingly memorized scripture verses as if to prepare him for these unsettled moments in his life. "Timothy," his grandmother had said, "you'll never have any trouble in your life that you can't handle if you learn to trust God. That's the most important lesson I can ever teach you." So, even living among people who worshipped so many false gods, there could be peace.

Timothy had a decision to make in his life. It had all begun several weeks ago in Lystra. He had not seen the miracle occur, but his mother and grandmother had both been there.

"Timothy," his mother cried, "do you remember the old crippled man that used to sit on the temple steps? Right before my eyes, he was healed!"

"And how can you be so certain?" Timo-

thy asked. "Lystra is full of magicians with their tricks."

"Because it was through the power of Jesus that the man was cured," his grandmother replied. "Two men, Paul and Barnabas, told us today all about Jesus. He is the Messiah, and all who choose to believe in Him will be saved!"

"Where is Jesus now?" Timothy asked. "Timothy, do you remember all that you learned in the scriptures?" his grandmother questioned. "As it was foretold, Jesus was sent by the Father to die for our sins. But He rose triumphantly from the dead and has now gone back to His Father in heaven."

His mother glanced at Timothy. He was still not convinced. "Those of us who believe in Jesus will have eternal life, too," she added. "It sounds too good to be true," Timothy answered.

"Eunice," his grandmother said, addressing his mother, "Timothy has always been faithful to what I've taught him of the scriptures. This is a very important decision for him to make, and he must do it alone."

"Yes, you're right, mother," Eunice answered. And then she turned to Timothy. "Will you come with us sometime to a meeting of the followers?" she asked.

"Yes, I will," Timothy decided. Timothy went to several meetings and listened carefully to everything the leaders said about Jesus. "The Son of man was promised long ago by Samuel and all of the prophets," they said. "It was Jesus whom King David was speaking about when he said that one of his own descendants would rise from the dead."

Someone else stood up and said, "There is salvation in no one else but Jesus. In Him

there is forgiveness for all of our sins. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is freed from all guilt."

Besides everything he learned from the followers at the meetings, Timothy also noticed something different about his mother and grandmother. They seemed to have found a peace in their lives which he had never seen before. One night, Timothy stayed at home alone after his mother and grandmother had gone to the meeting. He prayed about his decision and later that night, when the new believers came forward to be baptized, Timothy was among them.

Timothy became a Christian that night, and he left a special mark on the new Church. When Paul and Silas came back to Lystra, Paul asked Timothy to be his helper. Together with both of them, Timothy traveled to many cities to preach about Jesus, and the new Church grew in faith and numbers. Timothy is remembered today as a faithful witness and servant of the Lord.

For discussion:

1. What decision did Timothy have to make?
2. What was Timothy's religious background?
3. What mark did Timothy leave?

For further reading:

1. Timothy said a prayer while passing the temple in Lystra. This prayer is contained in Psalm 71.
2. Timothy's grandmother taught him the Hebrew scriptures. Most of these scriptures are contained in the Old Testament of the Bible. The Old Testament refers to the coming of Jesus in Isaiah 11:1-10 and in Jeremiah 23:5-6, to name just a couple of times.

Cultural exchange program needs homes to host teens

Nacel Cultural Exchanges, a non-profit organization founded in Rochester 18 years ago, is looking for area families interested in hosting French, German or Spanish teenagers, as well as a French Roman Catholic religious brother, for one month in either July or August. The students are individually matched with families according to interests and activities.

The program provides comprehensive medical, accident and liability insurance, and the students bring their own spending money. The dates for the two sessions are from June 29 to July 27 and July 24 to August 21. "The involvement of families in cultural exchanges is an educational experience for them," according to Nacel coordinators Steve and

Alice Murphy of Webster. "It is in keeping with the recent changes by the Board of Regents which is now insisting that all New York State students who wish to have a regents diploma take a language. Hosting a student could be of great help to students who are taking a language."

Families need not speak a foreign language or have teenagers to host a foreign student. Hosting students involves accepting them as members of the family. All of the students have

studied English for at least four years and are hoping to improve their proficiency in English while learning about American family life.

Among the students coming to the United States this summer is the great-grandson of Bartholdi, the sculptor who created the Statue of Liberty.

Interested families are asked to contact Stephen and Alice Murphy, 1224 Hardwood Lane, Webster, 14580, or call (716) 872-4670.

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