

Saturday - March 29

I am grateful to God-whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did-when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1: 3-7 NRSV

As a former pastor of PUMC, I resonate with the writer of 2 Timothy, grateful for the memories I have of serving God alongside so many faithful people. Fortunately, I don't have to "long to see you" because my wife, Kelly, and I have entered back into the life of the congregation, worshipping regularly and participating in the church's ministries. Pastors Justin and Carrie have helped to make this possible and we are deeply grateful.

This scripture celebrates how faith is obtained as a gift, not as something we do because of good choices or ethical living, but through relationships with those who have gone before us. Our parents and grandparents, our friends and Christian teachers, have surrounded us with an environment that allows us to claim faith for ourselves. This is the key to understanding faithfulness. It's not something we achieve, but something we become because of who we love and who loves us. Isn't that why we count on God's faithfulness? God's love never fails and this creates the reality for us to live the way Jesus teaches.

So, when you think about the depth of your own faith, don't focus too much on whether you read the bible enough, or go to church enough, or observe enough spiritual disciplines. Instead, give thanks to God for the way God loves you and how others have encouraged you in your Christian walk. Faithfulness is a gift and we have already received everything we need to live as faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

Larry Brown

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for blessing my life with those who guide and encourage me to trust your love. Amen.