

**October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025**  
**World Communion Sunday**

## **2 Timothy 1:1-14 “What Disciples Do: Take Their Faith Home**

I found out something a couple of years ago – I came very close to being baptized into the Catholic faith when I was an infant. My dad was Irish Catholic by upbringing, but not by practice. That’s not unusual though. In the same way that there are secular Jewish folks who lay claim to their Jewish heritage but rarely set foot in a synagogue, there are people raised Catholic who would say, “Yes, I’m Catholic,” but that doesn’t mean that they went to confession or to Mass other than Christmas or maybe Easter. Mary, however, had a deep connection to Catholicism. I mean, think about it, her name is Mary and her sister is Catherine. Those are some rock-solid Catholic names right there! They were both baptized as infants, they went to Parochial school as children where you learn a *lot* about the ins and outs of what it means to be Catholic. She chose another path when she got older, but she got her “basic training” in the Catholic Church.

As I’ve mentioned before, my introduction to organized religion was in kindergarten, and in my little town of around 2,000, Christ Lutheran Church was the only place that offered a kindergarten program. While I was there, I

received 20 minutes of religious education a day from the Rev. John Lutthans, but our family wasn't really connected to the church. I went to some Vacation Bible Schools here and there for a few years when I was in grade school, but it wasn't until I was a junior in high school that I became a follower of Jesus and started my path to finding a church. I was baptized in November of 1984 at the Veneta Missionary Alliance Church. Their baptismal service wasn't much different than the way we do it here at First Christian Church. Same scriptures, same method -- baptism by immersion -- same focus on Jesus' baptism marking the beginning of his public ministry and all that. Baptism was our promise to model our lives after Jesus and do what Jesus did.

When I discovered the Disciples, though, I noticed something different about the way they baptized people. Like other churches, the one who was being baptized made vows to follow Jesus, but the Disciples invited the whole congregation to renew *their* vows and promised to support and nurture that person. I appreciate this, because it implies that being a part of a church is like being part of a family. We promise to help each other and to pass down our collective wisdom to one who is new to the faith. Ideally, that's what families do too. We take opportunities to influence and support others' faith so that it might be passed on.

Today's scripture shows us a great example of a family that passed on the example of their faith to their children - in this case a young man named Timothy. Timothy played a key leadership role in the life of the early church. The Apostle Paul acknowledged that Timothy was a person of strong and sincere faith. How did he get that way, though? Where did that faith come from? Verse 5 says that he received it from his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. Now, I've got to be careful here when I say, "He received his faith" from his mom and grandma. Faith is not a commodity that we can just hand down to another person. Timothy's faith was his own. I came to faith when I was in high school. It wasn't passed down to me through my family like the gene for male pattern baldness got passed down to my sons. However, I did have a church community that helped me grow in faith. The example of how to live out our faith *is* something that can be passed along.

Paul wrote to Timothy, "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." Timothy's mother and grandmother lived out sincere faith in front of Timothy, and that deeply impacted his faith. Faith like that is caught more than it's taught. And when I say that, I mean that when parents or teachers or mentors or church leaders or church members live out their

Christian faith, values, and standards in front of others, part of it is absorbed.

If we read further in 2 Timothy, you discover that Timothy's family not only lived out their faith in front of Timothy, they directly taught him. In 2 Timothy 3:15 Paul writes, "From childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." Although it's critical that we live out our faith in front of our family, we must also teach them about what it means to be a follower of Christ.

Today is World Communion Sunday. This is a time where we express our faith by remembering the last supper that Jesus had with his twelve closest disciples. First Corinthians 11:23-26 is one of the foundational scriptures we use in our observation of the Lord's Supper. Paul writes -

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as

often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

The key phrase here is, "For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you." This goes back to what we've been saying about passing along aspects of our faith. This is a ritual that we've handed down for generations so that we can remember Jesus and the love he showed to his disciples, including us. "Ritual? Did you just say 'ritual?'"

We 21<sup>st</sup> century Protestants don't always appreciate that word. Same goes for the word "tradition" or "ritual." We roll our eyes when someone talks about how those things can help develop and grow our faith. "Oh, come on. That's boring. It's someone else's words. If you want it to be authentic, you've got to be spontaneous! You've got to let it "flow from the heart. Otherwise, it's all just empty words that have no meaning. Then we turn to scriptures like Amos 5:21-23 where God says, "I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps." And we say, "See? See? God doesn't even like our rituals." Or we'll go to Isaiah 1:11 where the prophet says, "What to

me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.” See? See? More proof that God doesn’t like boring old rituals. We do the same old things week after week in worship. We need to mix it up a bit. Get rid of all these things that we recite and sing over and over every week. Time to give them up!

But folks, it isn’t the *ritual* that’s not pleasing to God. Our *attitude* is the problem. In each one of these passages, God makes it very clear that there’s an expectation that goes along with the ritual. In Amos 5:24 God says, “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” In Isaiah 1:16 God says, “Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.” Oh, and there’s my favorite passage from Micah 6:6-8 where Micah tells the people exactly what kind of offering they are to make -- “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

So here we are on World Communion Sunday preparing to gather at this table that is sacred to us as Disciples of Christ, but also sacred to Christians in most of the world.

This is where we get to “receive that which the Lord has handed down to us” and pass it on to others. We join not just with one another in this room, but with believers around the world — people speaking every language, worshiping in every way, breaking bread and sharing the cup in remembrance of Christ. What began in an upper room in Jerusalem has been handed down through centuries, across continents, through persecution and peace, through joy and sorrow.

And now it comes to us — here, today — this bread, this cup, this story. We receive what Christ has given, and in doing so, we join the long line of those who have carried the faith forward. So come — take, eat, drink, remember — and then go from this table ready to live and share what you have received.