

1 Timothy 2:1-13 – “Strength to Endure”

Summary Statement:

Paul encourages Timothy to continue with perseverance regardless of the challenges that may lay in front of him. Endurance is necessary but the outcome is glorious. It's a word for us to be strong, sustained, secure and steadfast in the things of God and the things we do for God.

Outline:

1. Be Strong in Grace – 2:1-2
2. Be Sustained in the Grind – 2:3-7
3. Be Secure in the Gospel – 2:8-10
4. Be Steadfast in the Hope of Glory – 2:11-13

1. Be Strong in Grace – 2:1-2

2:1-2 - *You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

² And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

As Paul is nearing the end of his life, you can see the heart and concern he has for Timothy. He's his son in the faith. Paul has witnessed this man coming to faith in the Lord and growing in the Lord. And Paul wants nothing more than for Timothy himself to finish his race well as Paul has been faithful to do.

One thing that's going to aid Timothy in finishing well is being ***strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.***

There's lots of things Paul could have encouraged Timothy to be strong in. Be strong in the Word; be strong in your teaching; be strong in leadership; be strong in guarding the truth. All of these are applicable and needed. But Paul at the end of his life seemed to really focus in on the grace that is in Christ Jesus. It's the grace of Jesus that supplies the things that we need. It's the grace of Jesus that allows us to overcome the deficiencies that we might feel we have in our own lives. We need to rely on the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

- God's grace not only saves us, but it enables us to live this life for the Lord by His strength and power.
- **1 Corinthians 15:10**, *"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*

- **2 Corinthians 12:9**, *"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*

You see, God's grace says, *I'm going to use you and work through you despite you!* That's a work of grace. Paul tells Timothy to not dwell on his shortcomings, but focus on the goodness and grace in Christ Jesus.

We need the grace of our God every day. Thankfully He is a gracious God who, by His grace, gives us the very things we need.

And Paul didn't have a long list of things Timothy had to do or excel in, he simply encouraged Timothy to repeat the things he's heard from Paul himself. Timothy didn't have to worry about trying to get overly creative or come up with something new to share or use a different style in teaching.

- I think sometimes it can be a temptation in churches today where we feel we need to change things up, or we gotta be original. We don't need new or novel ideas to try and sound impressive. Paul's like just share the things that I've been passing on to you. There's nothing original under the sun. These are all things that have been passed on and passed down.
- We know the word of God never changes and so we need to be faithful to commit it to faithful men who will continue to pass it on to others.

That's another great thing, Timothy doesn't need to look for the most gifted men and commit these things to them. He just needs to find faithful men. That's what God is interested in. People that are going to be faithful and uphold the things of the Faith.

It's been said that within this verse we see 4 generations that the gospel is impacting:

1. The Apostle Paul
2. Timothy and many witnesses
3. Faithful men
4. Others

Paul now reminds Timothy that there is a need for this grace of God because there's going to be hardship. Living as a follower of Jesus in a world that's in opposition to the things of God is not going to be easy. That's why we remind ourselves that this world is not our home. We're just sojourners; pilgrims, passing through.

So Paul gives three analogies of what the Christian life is to be like...

2. Be Sustained in the Grind – 2:3-7

2:3-4 - *You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*

Now think about what Paul says here: ***you must endure hardship***... He didn't say you ***may*** endure hardship. I would have preferred that. But hardship is something that's inevitable as a believer.

This is why he likens it to being a soldier. Nobody enlists in the army to have a break. Nobody is thinking, I'm going to get involved in the military because I'm tired of being pushed around, I just want some peace.

You know when you sign up there's going to be some enduring needed. It's not always going to be easy.

- Interestingly this word endure in the Greek [*kakopatheō*] is the same word used for *suffer* in vs. 9. This is what Paul is implying when he talks about enduring. The other 2 times the word 'endure' is used in this passage it uses the Greek word *hypomenō* (vs. 10+12) which means enduring patiently; maintaining your ground.

And when you get engaged in warfare you're not really worried about what else is going on. You're not getting distracted or entangled with the things of this life. You're not out on the battle lines wondering how the new Spider man movie is going to end. You're laser focused on what's going on in front of you. Your survival depends on it.

In fact, everything you do is to please the one who enlisted you.

A soldier must listen to his commanding officer. And there's times you may not like what they're telling you to do. But you can't just sit there and say, '*Yea, I'll think about that.*' Or, '*I don't really feel like doing that right now. I woke up today feeling a little bloated, I think I'll just take it easy today.*'

That's not gonna fly! You've got to endure hardship. Timothy is given this picture to show that he must give it his all even when he may be discouraged or feel pulled in other directions.

So don't lose focus and don't lose heart. You've been enlisted by Jesus Himself! He's worth serving to the end. We have a good commander in Jesus and He gives us the grace to continue on.

Secondly, Paul brings us to another of his favorite analogies: athletics...

2:5 - *And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.*

Athletics was a favorite metaphor for Paul to describe the Christian life – referencing a running race often (1 Corinthians 9:24-25), boxing (1 Corinthians 9:26), and wrestling (Ephesians 6:12).

An athlete must follow the strict guidelines laid out by their particular sport if they are going to win or be rewarded. Now let's think about an Olympic athlete. They train hard. They completely dedicate themselves to training and sacrifice everything just for that chance to win the gold. Now those athletes are not going to be stupid enough to risk throwing away all that training and hard work they put in by trying to win through cheating. You're not going to see a marathon runner hop in a taxi and get driven within a few hundred yards of the finish line. No way. They're going to compete according to the rules and they're going to be sure that they know the rules lest they be disqualified.

- For the Christian, our rule book is the Word of God. We don't go outside of that in order to finish the race. Too many people have started out well in the race only to peter out as they cut corners and stopped letting the Word of God be the final authority in their lives.
- This was so much of Paul's plea to Timothy. Hold fast the Word of God. Don't stray from it. You're only going to lose a greater blessing and reward if you do.

2:6-7 - *The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.* ⁷ *Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.*

Notice Paul immediately identifies the farmer as hardworking. It kind of just goes with the territory. A farmer can't afford to be lazy, he's going to pay the price if so.

And ***the hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.*** This speaks of how the farmer should receive a blessing from his labour. And in fact, he needs to be partaking of it so that he can be nourished to continue in the work.

- There's a principle at work here for us too. Any servant of the Lord must be receiving from the Lord if he is going to be an effective minister of the Lord. *Doing for God* and *drawing from God* go hand in hand.
- A Christian must be taking in if he is going to be effectively giving out.

But the planting season can be laborious with nothing to show for it. But the harvest comes. Keep enduring and you will reap what you sow.

So consider what I'm saying and may the Lord give you understanding in these things.

Paul wants Timothy to see the examples and applications beyond these analogies. Each of these three hold a very interesting comparison to our own Christian life that speak of our responsibilities but also rewards.

Next, Paul takes Timothy to the ultimate example of endurance... Jesus Christ.

3. Be Secure in the Gospel – 2:8-9

2:8-9 - *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, ⁹ for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.*

Remember. That's key. It's something that is getting harder and harder to do. It's not just attributed to brain fog, but to distractions. And we need to remember what Jesus Himself endured and what He went through for us.

Paul points out 3 important truths for us:

- 1) Jesus was ***of the seed of David***... This means that He came in the flesh. He took on humanity and became like one of us. He wasn't some spiritual being that was impervious to pain and suffering. He endured the things we have to deal with, in fact, He suffered a great deal more than any of us will have to deal with. Yet He endured because there was a wonderful purpose for it all.
- 2) Jesus ***was raised from the dead***... He may have been crucified and killed, but He was raised back to life. This validated His work and was the Father's stamp of approval that now death and sin are defeated, and eternal life is a surety for the believer. This is to bring confidence in the midst of our suffering. This life – and all of its difficulties – are temporal. There is greater life awaiting you. So endure – it's more than worth it.
- 3) ***according to my gospel***... This was the very heart of the gospel that Paul preached. That Jesus came as fully God, yet fully man, died on the cross for our sin, and rose again where He is seated at the right hand of the Father. And because of this, we can put our trust in Him and be saved; reconciled to the Father. This is the gospel – the Good News!!

What is good news for you today? Bigger house, better job, deeper bank account? The thing that should captivate us as Good News is simply Jesus Christ! It's not *what* you are living for, but *Who* you are living for?

Paul not only reminds Timothy of Jesus, but he also reminds him of himself. Though Paul lived and breathed the gospel, it did not keep him free from trials and hardship. Those things were no reason to pack up running. Rather they were opportunities for God to do His thing in even greater measures.

Though Paul was in chains (and was chained to a Roman guard) this provided huge opportunities. Paul had someone to share the gospel with, and he couldn't just get up and walk away, because he'd be bringing Paul with him! Perfect!

And Paul knew that God was not dependent on Paul being free from prison. God wasn't sitting there thinking, *'Now Paul, why did you have to get caught?! I had great plans, and now you've went and ruined them all!!'* God is sovereign and He does all things for His purposes and glory. And though Paul was in prison and in chains, ***the word of God is not chained.***

- Remember when Paul experienced his first Roman imprisonment. He was actually excited that the gospel was being preached more so through it.
- **Philippians 1:12–18**, *"But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; ¹⁴ and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. ¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: ¹⁶ The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; ¹⁷ but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice."*

2:10 - *Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

You would think he would say, *I endure all things for God*. Yet, Paul speaks of his heart for the lost, which actually parallels the heart of God and showed Paul's love for God as well. In fact, Paul wanted his own people Israel to get saved so bad that he was willing to be accursed, or in a sense, take their guilt upon himself (Acts 9:3).

Paul's drive to endure all things was so he could see the gospel transform lives and lead others to salvation – just as it had done for him.

4. Be Steadfast in the Hope of Glory – 2:11-13

2:11-13 - *This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. ¹² If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. ¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*

Paul gives another faithful saying here that was most likely quoted from an early Christian hymn or statement of faith.

The first two couplets refer again to the blessing and eternal rewards of enduring for the Lord.

The second two couplets take on a different tone and reflect the eternal consequences of those who do not endure for the Lord.

If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him... This could speak of any of the following 3 tenses:

- It could mean when we first came to acknowledge Jesus as our Savior. We were born again, given a new life in Him.
- It could speak of how we are to be dying to self in an ongoing way. And what a key this is for the believer. Jesus said in **John 12:24–25**, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵ He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*" And the reason so often that life seems to really stink, is because we're holding on to ourselves (our lives, our wants, our desires). If we let it go, we find it to be such a freeing thing where we truly experience the life – the life that God intended.
- And lastly, we know this speaks of how when the believer dies, they will be in heaven with Jesus, living forever with Him.

This is what we've been called to do from the beginning when we commit to Christ. Our baptism is an identification with His death but also of His resurrection.

- **Colossians 3:3–4**, "*For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*"

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him...

Enduring for the Lord has eternal blessings associated with it. Jesus is going to be faithful to reward those who have been faithful to Him. If we endure, understand that we're going to be rewarded, we're going to reign with Him.

- Sadly, too often we're looking for those rewards in this life. And we can become disillusioned when things don't seem to go better for us in this lifetime when we're serving God. But we must remember that God hasn't promised us those things now per se, He's promised them for eternal life. And eternal life is going to be amazing as we reign with the Lord.
- Regarding reigning with Him, see Luke 22:29,30; Matthew 19:28; Romans 5:17; 8:17; Revelation 3:21; 4:4; 11:16; 20:4.
- Regarding the reward of the righteous, see Matthew 5:10-12; 25:46; 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 5:9,10; 1 Peter 1:3,4; Philippians 3:20; Revelation 21:3-5; 22:3,4; Romans 2:5-11; Luke 16:19-31; 1 John 5:11,12.

The last two couplets get a little more somber:

If we deny Him, He also will deny us...

Some have attempted to tie these last two warnings to the believer, softening the severity of what's before us. It has been interpreted to mean that the Lord will deny the believer rewards if the believer has not been faithful or has denied the Lord in their service. They will receive eternal life, but will miss out on rewards.

Reading this at face value it seems to reveal the life that does not endure and it echoes the very words of Jesus in **Matthew 10:32–33**, *"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven."*

This is an awful possibility that should give us pause. The potential to try and protect our lives by denying Jesus will actually cost us our life. To be denied by Jesus is to lose out on salvation.

- Now please don't be worried about whether or not you will bear up under temptation or persecution. Remember, be strong in the grace of God. I believe God gives His children the strength and grace to endure suffering, even to the point of dying for your faith.
- In 1555, two men – Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley – were tied to stakes in Oxford, condemned to die for their faith in Christ.

The fire was lit. The flames began to rise. The pain would have been unbearable, the fear overwhelming. And yet, instead of panic, instead of regret, instead of trying to escape, Latimer turned to his friend Ridley and said: “Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.”

- That’s not natural strength. That’s not human courage. That is exactly what Paul is talking about when he says: *“Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”*

Denying Christ has far greater and damning repercussions than anything we can face in standing faithfully for Him.

If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself...

This last couplet can be taken along with the previous one to speak of the consequences of not having faith in Jesus.

- John MacArthur says this “refers to a lack of saving faith... Unbelievers will ultimately deny Christ because their faith was not genuine (cf. James 2:14–26).”¹

And Jesus will be faithful to Who He is and to His Word. And His word reveals that those who do not have saving faith will not enter into His kingdom. He cannot go back on His Word or deny Himself.

But this statement has also been understood by others to show that even when believers mess up (like Peter did) Jesus is faithful to forgive and restore. Make no mistake about it, those who deny Jesus will be judged forever, but those who are truly His, though they may stumble, Jesus will be faithful to keep (John 10:27-30; Hebrews 10:23).

“Let us then take the warning to heart and remain faithful to Christ, for no price is too great to pay for the hope that one day we shall reign with Him in heaven.”²

The Christian life isn’t about avoiding hardship – it’s about enduring it with grace. And the same grace that saves you is the grace that will sustain you, strengthen you, and carry you all the way home.

cf. corroborative text

¹ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (2 Ti 2:13). Thomas Nelson.

² Williams, P. (2007). *Opening up 2 Timothy* (pp. 52–53). Day One Publications.

Points to Ponder:

1. Am I relying on God's grace, or trying to live the Christian life in my own strength?
 - It's His grace that not only saves us but enables us to live victorious in Him.
2. Am I surprised when hardship comes, or do I see it as part of being a follower of Jesus?
 - This world is not our home, let us not be entangled with it.
3. Have I become distracted by the pressures around me, or am I focussed on Jesus who has gone before me?
 - He suffered in my stead so I can live and reign with Him. What glory awaits!