

Remind Them of These Things **2 Timothy 2:1-14**

Ya know, I gotta level with ya: it's tough preparing a sermon. I mean, there is so much I could choose from, so many passages I could choose to speak on. Yet at the same time, every passage seems to be connected in some way or another. Then, there's that little fact that there are all these people here who are at different places, some up some down and there is no way I could choose the "right" passage to speak on so I must wait and wait and wait until the Spirit reveals to me what to say. That is the most stress-causing part about preparing a sermon. I have no clue what the "right" message would be, but God does. And it's neat how God oftentimes prepares me in advance for what I am going to speak on. IE when I speak on a given subject, typically God has just finished teaching me that lesson and the product is a message to be shared with others. And as I prepared to speak today, for the past couple of weeks, since Pastor Herbert asked me to speak today, I have seen 2 Timothy 2 around in different places. I go one place and there's a verse from 2 Timothy 2, go someplace else, and bam, there it is again. So as I prepared to write and gather ideas and as I began this oftentimes stressful time of "picking a passage", I opened the Bible to 2 Timothy 2. The first verse I read was verse 14. It reads, "Remind them of these things..." (Remind {them} of these things, and solemnly charge {them} in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless {and leads} to the ruin of the hearers.) Now, I don't know if me reading that to you makes you say to yourself, "What follows that statement?" or if it makes you think, "What precedes that statement?" The first time I read it, the first thought I had was, "guess this wont be as stressful as usual." But then it pulled me to wonder what had previously been told to Timothy. So I then read verses 11-13 and we realize the focus is on, surprise surprise, reigning with Christ.

So then I quit reading backwards and went to the beginning of the chapter and began reading from there. What we find in Chapter two seems to be Paul's advice concerning what one must do in order to reign with Christ.

There are five charges, five main points which Paul gives to Timothy. Now, I am going to combine two of them with other points so really, there are three key points which Paul in essence commands Timothy to obey.

Now Paul senses his time on earth is coming to an end. He is in Rome writing this letter and two chapters later we read 4:6-8 which reads, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Furthermore, this letter to Timothy is often viewed as a book for Pastors.

Paul is viewed as passing the torch onto Timothy in a sense and encouraging him to persevere and teach the truth despite those who are ashamed of the gospel.

And just a sidenote but I think it is interesting the way we view pastors and those in the ministry. I was on my email the other day and there are ads targeted to specific groups so with me having graduated from moody, there was this ad that said something to the affect of "are you called to a life of ministry?" and then it said join such and such organization. But the thing that made me sadly chuckle about that as well as the way we view pastors,

it's like we have this high standard for them, a certain way that they must live but for the rest of us "ordinary" lay folk, we don't have to be as holy because we aren't in the "ministry."

I mean, that is a complete misunderstanding.

We are all called to be holy as God is holy,

we are all called to be ministers of the gospel and we do that by the way in which we live our daily lives.

Just because we don't have a title doesn't give us an excuse to slack off.

And so as we study 2 Timothy 2 today, while yes, Paul wrote this to encourage Timothy as he taught the truth and wrote to encourage him in that endeavor, it is just as applicable to us as it was him.

So today, I want to look at what Paul exhorts to Timothy and if you will allow me, I would like to "remind you of these things" because it is always good to be reminded of the truth. They are: 1) Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; 2) Endure/suffer hardship; and then I am combining the third and fourth point because they go hand in hand but they are to 3) Remember Jesus Christ according to the Gospel

But before we get into these three points, I need to share with you what God has been teaching me and why I believe each of us needs to hear this message today.

You see, I wrestle with the application of the truth. I read through a passage and the truth contained seems pretty clear to me, very cut and dry. But it's the making a change part that I find difficult. So for me, I used to rather have a message about how to successfully apply the truth to my life than a message about that which we had already studied.

But you see, God has been teaching me that in order to be successful in the practical day-to-day, we must have a firm foundation of the truth inside us. That way, when the lies come, and believe me, they will come and it is these lies which stand in our way from being obedient (Eve with the apple and satan "did He really say this? You will know all that he knows"), we will not entertain those thoughts but instead we will renew our mind with the truth and take hold of truthful thoughts, trustworthy statements.

So there really is no better message than to remind ourselves of the truth because I do not believe it is possible to have too much of a foundation. Plus, in a setting such as this, we can all use more foundation.

And over the course of the past months as He has been teaching me this lesson, I have seen that the way to succeed in changing and maturing in our faith is to recall the truth when I am in a bad situation. You see, it is because I am working on building my foundation of the truth that when I am in a situation I shouldn't be in, or I am tempted to sin, the gray areas that I used to have, I don't really have any more. I can no longer make excuses when I am tempted as to why it would be "acceptable" for me to sin. By building the foundation, I know the truth better and when I am in the practical daily acting out this faith, I am much better prepared to succeed.

And I believe that is why Paul reminds Timothy of these things. Sure Paul could go through tons of scenarios and how a faithful follower of Christ would react but he realizes that a disciple with a firm foundation who considers what he has said and who God then grants understanding, that person will succeed in the daily living out of one's faith.

But before we get into the reminding, I'd like to revisit a story that I have shared with you before. You've heard me tell the story about Florence Chadwick who gave up half-a-mile short when swimming the 20-some miles from Catalina Island to the coast of California due to a lack of focus. She blamed her failure on not being able to see the land ahead of her, not able to see the goal. Well, today, I want to tell you the second part of that story. You see, two months after failing, Chadwick tried again. This time was different. The same thick fog set in and the Pacific was just as cold, but she made it because she said that she kept a mental image of the shoreline in her mind while she swam and not only did she achieve her goal, she completed the feat in 2 less hours than it took her the first time-this woman had a picture in mind and was determined to finish. She had once failed and was now determined to not fail again because she wanted to reach her goal.

You see, when you know the foundation, when you have that in view, in the forefront of your mind, when faced with the temptations this world has to offer, I believe you are less likely to fail because you are certain of what lays out ahead. So with that picture in mind, I'd like to get into our message today and I'd like to begin by reading 2 Timothy 2.

2:1a "You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus..." well, seems like we need to take a look at chapter one to see why Paul is telling what he is about to tell Timothy. So, bear with me and let's begin in 2 Timothy 1:7ff And I want to make sure we have the context of these verses because it is important in distinguishing what Paul is writing about, which gospel he is proclaiming.

And today's message is kinda unusual for me in the respect that it isn't like my usual messages, we are kinda camping out here, we'll branch out of course but we will be coming back to this passage so I really want to make sure we have the context.

READ 2 Timothy 1:7-18

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you. You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my

chains; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me--the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day--and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus.

Alright, so here we see Paul describes how God has saved them and given them a holy calling, not because of their works but because of His grace.

Paul then says he suffers as a teacher of the gospel because he is convinced that God is faithful and that God has an inheritance that He will give to him on “that day” if he is faithful.

Paul then tells of some followers of his who were ashamed of the gospel and turned away from it and also Onesiphorus who was not ashamed but refreshed Paul.

By telling Timothy of these examples he is telling him that he will be like one of them. He will either turn away and be ashamed of the gospel or he will guard the treasure which has been entrusted to him and keep that future inheritance in view as he suffers because of the gospel.

We then go into chapter two which is basically Paul telling Timothy if he is to be faithful and not ashamed of the gospel, if he will join Paul in suffering for the gospel, he will do that which Paul lays out in chapter two.

So, NOW let us read the first 14 verses of chapter two. And I know it's a lot of reading but bear with me cause it really is beneficial to have the whole passage in view as we go through the four points.

READ 2 Timothy 2:1-14

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

It is a trustworthy statement:

For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

If we endure, we will also reign with Him;

If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

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

Remind them of these things...

So, after reading through our passage, we see that the main point Paul is trying to get across to Timothy is in verse 10.

He endures all things so the chosen may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

We won't get into studying it but the word eternal needs to be studied for reasons such as this. I'm not confident that our word properly captures the essence of what the original word meant.

Nevertheless, Paul also assures Timothy of the future inheritance for those who endure. It is for this reason that the salvation referred here must be of our souls. This passage reveals to us some of the necessary steps that are part of enduring hardship, part of the process of sanctification.

And those who are successful in doing that which we are told, they will obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus; they will obtain with it eternal glory and this describes when the faithful will reign with Christ.

They will overcome, not be overcome.

So let's take a look at the three points Paul gives to Timothy.

1) Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. V 1-2

What in the world does it mean to be strong in grace???

Well, there's a story of a pastor who was traveling on a bus down a bumpy road. Seated next to him was a college student who noticed that the minister was reading his Bible. The minister asked, "Are you spiritually ready for the temptations that you will face in college?"

"I don't have a problem with temptation," the young man told the minister. "I have strong willpower."

The minister took a pencil from his pocket and said, "I can make this pencil stand up on the cover of this Bible even though the bus ride is bumpy."

The young man said, "I'll believe it when I see it. I don't think you can do it."

"Look, I'm doing it," he replied as the young man watched.

"Yeah, but you didn't tell me you would hold the pencil up with your hand."

"I didn't have to tell you," the pastor remarked. "Have you ever seen a pencil stand up on its own without someone holding it?"

The minister then let go of the pencil, which instantly fell over. "The only reason you stand," he continued, "is because God is holding you up with His hand."

If God were to remove His hand of protecting grace, we would immediately fall into sin. Humility is depending completely on God, realizing that He upholds us by His grace.

You see, we are a prideful people. We like to think that we are the end-all be-all and nothing is greater than us. The fact of the matter is, that is a bunch of malarkey.

I want to take a look at some scriptures that will help us understand how we can be strong in the grace that is in Christ.

Let's turn to Ephesians 6:10, something that should be fresh in all our minds as Pastor Herbert just touched on this. It reads, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might." Paul continues in the very next verse with the armor of God. So, with both of this verse as well as our original verse 2 Timothy 2:1 in mind, we see this truth.

You see, you cannot be strong in yourself as well as being strong in the Lord.

It just doesn't work. I

t's a see-saw. When one is up, the other must be down, when the other is up, the other is down.

Obviously, you know which end should be higher than the other.

And being weak in self does not mean you are timid but remember 1:7 which said "God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."

Ephesians 3:16 and then the second half of 19, Paul is praying and he writes, "that He (God) would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man...that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God."

In this verse we see what part of us needs strength and needs to be strengthened by the grace of God and that is our inner man.

Romans 7:22-25, Paul is describing the war going on inside him. We read, "For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin."

The inner man is referring to that part of us which is saved, our spirit which delights itself in the Lord.

It is this part of us that needs strengthened if we are to have success in obtaining our future salvation, if we are to reign with Christ.

You see, it's the inner man that is in the midst of a war daily with the members of our body which are prisoners of the law, corrupted by sin.

So, how do we become strong in the grace of Christ?

Let's take a look at Proverbs 3:34.

It reads, "He (God) mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble."

We are strong in grace when we humble ourselves and are not proud.

Wow, there's a thought. God gives grace to the humble. We go around praying, "Oh God, fill me with your grace that I may do mighty things for you."

Humble yourself and God WILL give you grace, that's what He promises.

1 Peter 5:5b-10 This is a neat passage as it is very similar to our passage in 2 Timothy 2.

All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Therefore humble

yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

Take note of a couple things here.

First, we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God-that would seem to imply to not be proud and try to live in our own strength, rather, seek strength from God.

Well, we do that by casting all our anxiety on Him. That's tough to do, is it not?

That hits the core of our pride.

For us to do that, we must recognize that we are not strong enough to do it on our own.

I mean, to be anxious in nothing.

You have to be humble to release all your fears and thoughts over to Him and you have to trust and have faith that He does care for you.

Next, we are told to be of sober spirit. 1 Peter 1:13 tells us "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

You see the only way to be calm and collected in spirit, temperate as the greek word nepho implies, we must not be anxious and filled with fear.

And as our passage in 1 Peter 1:13 tells us, we are sober in spirit when we fix our hope entirely on the grace of Christ.

We then see it is when we are sober in spirit that we can be alert and resist our adversary.

And after we suffer while on this earth, because that is what we just read isn't it?

But after we suffer here, the God of grace will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish us.

But in order for us to be strengthened and established, we must suffer for a little while.

Last point I want to make concerning being in the grace of God is that we cannot bear fruit apart from Him (we need His grace)

John 15:4-5

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

So be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. If we aren't, then we are proud, attempting to "live for God" while feeding our own egos and we cannot bear fruit as it is by God's grace that we are able to bear much fruit.

We must humble ourselves and place ourselves under the hand of God so that we are abiding in Christ, not some branch on our own tree.

That is the first thing Paul exhorts to Timothy and for good reason.

For if he does not start by humbling himself, he will not be able to do anything else that Paul charges him to do;

he will be unfit for teaching the gospel.

Likewise, in whatever role we find that God has given to us, we must rely on Him to give us the grace to fulfill that role because otherwise we will fail if we try to lean on our own understanding.

So, #1 be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2) Suffer/Endure Hardships v 3-6

Read verses 3-6

You know, that's quite an unpopular message, particularly in the church today.

To tell a Christian to prepare to suffer and endure hardships, that's unheard of. However, you know where I'm going with this one: suffering precedes glory.

We see it time and time again in the Scriptures and that is what Paul is describing here.

Here we see three analogies given by Paul. Did you notice anything about them? He describes a "good" soldier; an "honest" athlete and a "hard-working" farmer, not an evil, lazy cheat although there is the possibility that those types of soldiers/athletes or farmers exist as well. But Paul is dealing with those who have made up their mind to persevere.

Not everyone who has been saved will endure hardships, unfortunately.

Hence why Paul uses the adjectives he does.

So, we read that a good soldier of Christ does not entangle himself in the affairs of everyday life. Why? Because he desires to please the one who enlisted him.

2 Peter 2:20 Peter is describing false teachers. He writes, "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first."

So, what are the defilements of the world?

You don't need me to tell you that.

And to be honest, you know better which parts of this defiled world you struggle with more than I can tell you.

But to boil it down to one passage, I would have to turn to 1 John 2:16-17.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Those who entangle themselves in the affairs of the world get caught up in one of those three: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes or the pride of life.

Paul's second analogy is that of an athlete who does not win unless he competes according to the rules.

In this day and age, this should be obvious to us, with steroid use in baseball, blood doping in cycling and track and field, improper use of video equipment by nfl teams.

If one had to cheat in order to win, well, he really didn't win.

The final analogy is that of a hard-working farmer who ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. A farmer's life is hard work.

To be successful you have to give up a lot in order to produce. Persevere through bad weather, tough soil and all sorts of other issues that come up.

But the common thread with all three, the soldier, the athlete and the farmer is that they must endure hardship in order to acquire the prize. They all must humble themselves and endure hardship.

If they want to obtain their goal, there is no easy way about it.

This is like Christ being tempted by Satan. Satan offered Christ to rule over the world if He would bow down and worship Satan. And we know that Satan could legitimately offer that as he is the ruler of this world in this age.

But the point is that Satan was attempting to appeal to Christ by giving him the kingdom without having to endure the suffering that he would have to go through in order to obtain it the proper way.

Christ knew he would be disqualified if he took the easy way out.

We too, will be disqualified if we take the easy way out.

So be strong in the grace and endure hardship.

3) Remember Jesus Christ according to Paul's Gospel v8-10

In the previous verse, there is another charge that kinda goes hand-in-hand with this and that is Paul tells Timothy to "Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything."

This is such a great statement, I just didn't have time to make these separate points. But we are to study the Scriptures and as we meditate on them, pray for wisdom, God will give us understanding.

He will open our eyes to understand the mystery of the kingdom.

He will remove the scales and he will open our ears so that we may know the truth and no longer be blinded or deaf to the truth.

But, in order to reach this point, we must first humble ourselves and then be patient as we earnestly seek the truth.

That is part of enduring hardship.

If you do those two things, God will reveal to you the truth of His word.

God desires to reveal to you the truth but you must seek it as a rare jewel.

He won't give it to swine who go back to the mud. And if that is what you would do with it, as we read earlier, it's better that you never understand.

Now, concerning the charge to remember Jesus Christ, Paul says remember Him risen from the dead and that He is a descendant of David.

Just a couple things I want to look at here.

First, it is essential to remember Christ risen from the dead because if He had not been resurrected, there would be no hope of salvation, there would be no guarantee of an inheritance. Acts 2:24-28

But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

For David says of Him,

'I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE;
FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.
THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED;
MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE;
BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES,
NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.
YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE;
YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.'

Here we see David expressing the hope his soul has because of the resurrection of Christ.

His soul will not be abandoned to Hades, but has the hope of salvation.

If you do not remember the resurrection, you will be overcome for lack of hope.

Second, why remember that He is a descendant of David?

Well, back to the foundation.

2 Samuel 7:12-14a, God tells David:

When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me.

Christ is the descendant of David. We can look at many other scriptures which show this but it is Christ whose throne will be established forever.

It is Christ whose kingdom will be established.

I know we went through a lot today and may have been kinda cut and dry but I hope you realize the importance of remembering that which Paul exhorts Timothy to remember. If we aren't strong in the grace that is in Christ; if we don't endure hardship; if we don't consider the Word of God and remember the resurrection of Christ, I can guarantee you that you will not be anywhere near as successful in applying this in your daily activities.

You know, we must remember these points and not forget because each point points to our piece of California coastline that we are to keep in mind when we swim.

To wrap things up, I want to read the remainder of our passage as it is a great conclusion on its own.

2 Timothy 2:11-13

It is a trustworthy statement:

For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

If we endure, we will also reign with Him;

If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

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

I encourage each of us here to memorize this statement. Because if in times of temptation, in any circumstance, if you train yourself to recall these verses, I think you'll be surprised at how much of a difference it makes and you will find yourself being more obedient to the Word of God.