

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 17TH-18TH, 2019 // 2 TIMOTHY

FOCUS (2 TIMOTHY 2:1-7)

LIFE IS HARD, WE NEED GOD'S HELP

Paul was in prison for his faith and he knew that Tim would suffer hard times as well.

- To “be strong in the grace that is Christ Jesus” means that **all of us will suffer on some level in this life** (Jn. 16:33) and **the only way to make it is to trust in God's grace and guidance.**

WE FILL UP SO WE CAN ALSO POUR OUT

Paul also encourages Tim to not just be filled up with God, but to train and teach others to build a relationship with Jesus who will then do the same for others. This is called **discipleship** and all Christians are called to do it on some level. **We are to be constantly getting filled up in order to pour out.**

NOT EVERYONE WANTS TO BE POURED INTO

Paul tells Tim to “commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” This means that we are to use wisdom and **prioritize our time for people that want to change and help others.**

- We're to “knock the dust off our feet” (Mt. 10:14) while still praying for people unwilling to change.

“...AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF CHRIST JESUS”

Paul often used military terms in his letters and he attributes the endurance of a soldier to that of a follower of Jesus. Like soldiers, **Christians must expect hardships, trivial complaints, warfare (ours is spiritual), and a denial of comforts for the greater good of the Kingdom we serve.** Soldiers are not alone in their fight. They have their “commanding officer” (God) and each other (the church). They also don't get caught up in “civilian life.” In other words, they **stay focused and don't wander off into enemy territory** (false teaching and pointless philosophies).

“...IF ANYONE COMPETES AS AN ATHLETE”

Sports during the Roman era were as big of a deal as they are today. In Paul's time, money wasn't the driver of the athlete, but the prestige of the award for winning.

- **Christians must complete their “race” and do it within the “rules,” the teachings of the Bible. This means that there are absolutes.**

“THE HARDWORKING FARMER...”

This metaphor shows that Christians need to pay attention in order to reap a harvest at the proper time (Gal. 6:9). If we neglect the field, we cannot expect growth around us. **Growth and change take time.**

- **Remember, we can plant and water, but God gives the growth and change.**

WE ARE CALLED, AND IT WILL BE DIFFICULT

Paul says, “Consider what I say.” This means that we're to meditate and think about the calling on all Christians to do God's work: Praying, learning, loving and teaching others.

- **“Fighting the good fight” is hard! We'll be tempted, ridiculed, make mistakes, exhausted, and misunderstood, but we can make it because God's with us!**

ENDURANCE (2 TIMOTHY 2:8-13)

REMEMBER WHO WE ARE SERVING

Paul encourages Tim to remember that Jesus has “risen from the dead,” showing He is fully God, and that he “descended from David,” showing He was fully human.

- **Sometimes we lose perspective of Who we should be living for. Jesus is the Creator God that lived as a humble servant for our salvation!**

AND HE IS WORTH SUFFERING FOR

Paul was “bound like a criminal” for his faith, but the “word of God is not bound.”

- We will be tested on some level for our faith, but even if we are “bound” in this life, **the truths and power of the Word of God and His Holy Spirit cannot be contained.**

“...ENDURE ALL THINGS FOR THE ELECT”

Election (those who are saved) is a difficult subject, but we know that God has direct involvement in salvation (predestination). Though God calls us, we must also respond to that call (free will). **Are we predestined or do we have free will? Yes. The better question is “Are you living for Christ?”**

“THIS SAYING IS TRUSTWORTHY...”

Paul says that if we have died to our ways and live His ways, we will live forever with Him. If we endure this life, we will help Him reign in a new heaven and earth in the next life. But, if we deny Him in this life, He will deny us in the next.

- **There are eternal consequences or rewards for our temporal decisions.**

GOD IS GRACIOUS IF WE DON'T GIVE UP

To deny Him is to consciously turn our backs on the truth, basically forfeiting our salvation. But, even though we will fall short and be “faithless,” God “remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.”

- Though we fall, **if we keep repenting and not giving up our hope in Christ, He's faithful and will carry us through.**

ACTION (2 TIMOTHY 2:14-21)

FIGHTING OVER WORDS

Paul warns Christians not to get caught up in minor issues that will only lead to “the ruin of those who listen.” He was referring to people that spoke insider talk and talked down to others. This is a warning to **pick our battles wisely and to avoid the “Christian bubble.”**

BEING A GOOD REPRESENTATIVE

Instead of “useless” arguments, we should devote ourselves to truth, love, godliness in our daily lives, and “correctly teaching the word of truth.” **To pursue good things, we must walk away from bad things like gossip and slander that “produce even more godlessness.”**

“...THEIR TEACHING WILL SPREAD LIKE GANGRENE.”

1 Cor. 15:33 says, “Bad company corrupts good morals.” This means **what we hang around will eventually change us.** Paul gives 2 examples of people that strayed from the faith because they lent their ears to teaching outside of the Word.

THE RESURRECTION ALREADY TOOK PLACE?

The false teaching Paul refers to taught the resurrection of Christians is purely spiritual and has already taken place, making daily obligations and holy living irrelevant. **Our negligence of the Word today has led many to believe that how we live doesn't matter as long as we believe in Jesus.**

TRUE FAITH ACTS ON THAT BELIEF

Regardless of negligence or blatant falsehoods “God's solid foundation stands firm” and **“The Lord knows those who are His.”** Not only does the truth always win in the end (Mt. 16:18), **but those who truly follow Christ will show their faith by how they live their lives** (Js. 2:18). **True faith has action!**

BECOMING A “SPECIAL INSTRUMENT”

Paul uses an odd analogy about the more common utensils in a home (wood and clay) vs. the more “honorable” utensils made of gold and silver.

- Paul is basically saying that we should want to be used for the most honorable and “good work” of the household by the Homeowner.

THE TRAP (2 TIMOTHY 2:22-26)

THERE IS NO NEUTRAL

We are always moving in one direction or another. Paul tells Tim to run from evil “youthful passions” and run towards “righteousness, faith, love, and peace.”

- **Righteousness** is living by the Bible's teachings, **faith** is depending on and trusting God, **love** is self-sacrifice for others, and **peace** is harmony with others.

“...REJECT FOOLISH AND IGNORANT DISPUTES”

In other words, don't get distracted by the shallow debates of this world. How much time do Christians waste arguing about things that are not salvific?

- This doesn't mean we can't converse, **but sacrificing our integrity for the sake of winning an argument is not how the Christian should live.**

CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO BE GENTLE

Paul says that “the Lord's servant...must be gentle to everyone.” Though this is talking specifically about leaders, it really applies to all people that represent Jesus.

- “To everyone” means exactly that. **We're not to condone actions contrary to the Word, but we're to love, respect, and be kind to all people!**

INSTRUCTING OUR “OPPONENTS”

Though not everyone will accept Christ and His teachings, if we are loving to people, “perhaps God will grant them repentance leading them to the knowledge of truth.”

- **The only chance we have of people “coming to their senses” is to love them and show them the truth that will set them free.**

WE HAVE TO CHOOSE TO BE FREE

Though we can love people and present truth that will save them, every individual must make a conscious decision to follow Jesus and be set free.

- **Freedom, salvation, a close walk with God, knowledge, and being a loving person don't happen on accident. We have to choose to be better.**

THE TRAP

We often minimize the reality that there is a spiritual war around us all the time. If we are not careful, all of us can fall into Satan's traps: **arguments** and **distractions**, **fear**, appeals to **selfishness** and **pride**. **These traps cause us to lose our ability to think clearly and live clean.** We must remember that **Jesus is faithfully warring for humanity**, but we must choose to be on His side. If individuals, families, relationships, work places, schools, cities, nations, etc. are going to change, it is going to have to be **intentional**. For our sake, we must be **learning God's truth, living it** in our homes, jobs, and places we go, and **praying** and **asking the Holy Spirit for help**. For your neighbor's sake, we must be **praying for others, properly loving all people, and looking for opportunities to share the truth with them.**