

Faithfulness to the Gospel

2 Timothy 2: 7-13

The benefits of experience and familiarity are difficult to fully appreciate or value. Each of these aid in individual pursuits, providing confidence, while enhancing particular abilities. We have all heard the old adage – practice makes perfect. While these attributes have the ability to enhance performance and quality, they can also serve to create complacency and lack of passion. Those who remain successful keep a proper focus. They never lose sight of the basics – continually engaging in the fundamentals.

Remember, this is the last letter Paul would write. He is writing to his son in the faith, the young pastor, Timothy. While Paul shared much with Timothy in this final letter of exhortation, he did not fail to challenge Timothy regarding the fundamentals of the faith. He wanted Timothy to remember the basics, being faithful to proclaim the Gospel. While other aspects of ministry were important and essential, none exceeded the need for proclaiming the Gospel.

Modern ministry has become quite complex. Denominational leaders are constantly seeking to improve the ministry model, while striving to provide tools and techniques believed to enhance the furtherance of the Gospel. While these are great, we must not lose sight of the fundamentals. Having the latest data, and implementing the latest approaches are great, but we must ensure we are engaging people in the process. Like Timothy, we too must embrace the Gospel, while faithfully proclaiming it to those who have yet to respond.

In our text, Paul deals with the fundamental aspects of the Gospel. He sought to remind Timothy of their importance and the need to share what he had received. As we discuss these [aspects](#), I want to consider: [Faithfulness to the Gospel](#).

I. The Preeminence of the Gospel (7-8) – [Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.](#) ^[8] [Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.](#) Paul emphasized the preeminence of the Gospel in regard to ministry. He urged Timothy to faithfully build his ministry on the Gospel. Consider:

A. The Foundation (8) – Paul urged young Timothy to be mindful of the Person and preeminence of the Gospel. The foundational truth of the Gospel is the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Having fully atoned for sin, as He offered Himself upon the cross, Christ the Lord then conquered sin, death, and hell as He rose triumphant from the grave. Had there been no resurrection, Jesus would have been no different than others who came before Him. He willingly laid down His life, having power to lay it down; and He rose again in victory, having power to raise life up again.

While Timothy could rejoice in the humanity of Christ, being the seed of David, and the great sacrifice He made to redeem us from sin, Timothy must never forget the resurrection!

- As we examine the underlying text, we discover the significance of the resurrection. Paul did not refer to a “once and done” act of resurrection. The Lord did rise triumphant over death, and He continues to live! He forever conquered death, and did not merely rise from the dead only to succumb to it at another moment in time. Consider the thoughts of William Barclay: *"The tense of the Greek verb which Paul uses does not imply one definite act in time, but a continued state which lasts for ever. Paul is not so much saying to Timothy: 'Remember the actual resurrection of Jesus'; rather he is saying: 'Remember Jesus for ever risen and for ever present; remember your risen and your ever-present Lord.' Here is the great Christian inspiration. We do not depend on the inspiration of a memory, however great. We enjoy the power of a presence. When a Christian is summoned to a great task, a task that he cannot but feel is beyond him, he must go to it in the certainty that he does not go to it alone, but that there is with him for ever and for ever the presence and the power of his risen Lord. When fears threaten, when doubts assail, when inadequacy depresses, remember the presence of the risen Lord"*ⁱ

B. The Focus (7-8) – Paul challenged Timothy to consider his words, praying the Lord would provide wisdom and understanding. Timothy was urged to remember the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This was not merely a detail of importance – it was the foundation of the Gospel and the cornerstone of his ministry. The death, burial, and glorious resurrection of Christ had the power to transform lives. It was of utmost importance. Timothy must never neglect the Gospel in favor of any other aspect of ministry. He must abide faithful, remembering the Gospel of Christ!

- This truth is much needed in our day as well. There is much that we are engaged in through the efforts of modern ministry. While these are beneficial, and much needed, we must never elevate any aspect of ministry above the Gospel. If we accomplish nothing else, we must be faithful to proclaim the crucified, buried, and risen Lord to a lost and dying world!

II. The Power of the Gospel (9) – *Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.* Paul well understood the transforming power of the Gospel, and yet he wanted Timothy realize the Gospel’s power was not limited to the conversion experience. Notice:

A. The Encouragement (9a) – *Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds.* While most would abhor being locked away in a Roman prison, Paul had learned to view his bonds from a spiritual perspective. He was confined in prison because of his commitment to the Gospel. He was not seeking sympathy, or in any way conveying a desire to abandon the Gospel. In fact, Paul

rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer for the Lord and the advancement of the Gospel. He was willing to endure any situation in order to share the Gospel, knowing it had the power to change lives. (This attitude toward reproach and adversity is not consistent with human nature. It is only obtained through an intimate relationship with Christ.)

B. The Advancement (9b) – *but the word of God is not bound*. Paul realized that although he was bound in prison, the Word of God, and the Gospel in particular, were not bound. Whomever Paul met, wherever life took him, was viewed as an opportunity to share truth and advance the Gospel. The Word of God could not be limited by the incarceration of those who preached its truth. Paul knew he would not depart from this prison, but he had full confidence in the power and ability of the Word.

- Too often we underestimate the power and ability of the Word. While the Lord does use human instruments to advance the Gospel, His Word cannot be bound. We may lack the opportunities and abilities we desire, but the Word will accomplish that which it pleases. We don't have the ability to save, and the Word works in places and situations that are beyond our ability to reach. *Heb.4:12 – For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

III. The Purpose of the Gospel (10) – *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory*. Paul revealed his commitment to sharing the Gospel, knowing the divine purpose it held. He declared:

A. It fosters Conversion – Paul knew the power of the Gospel, and the need of men to respond to the Gospel. Once presented, and believed by faith, the result is salvation in Christ Jesus. Men did not need one to share the latest philosophy or plans for success in this life. They stood in need of salvation from the wrath of God, brought about by sin and condemnation. The Gospel would lead men to a personal relationship with Christ. This was not about the predetermined goals Paul had set for himself; he had been called to proclaim the Gospel to those who needed salvation! He knew the power of the Gospel, experiencing salvation on the Damascus Road, and he longed to share this transforming Gospel with as many as he could before he left this world.

B. It nurtures Commitment (10) – Paul was willing to endure the hardships he faced because he believed in the power of the Gospel. He wanted to see people saved by grace. His life had been given to proclaiming the Gospel, and being confined in prison had not detracted from his

commitment to the Gospel. Paul was determined to remain faithful, as long as he lived, where ever that may be! (Are we willing to embrace the difficulties and adversities of life in order to reach the unsaved? Do we possess that type of commitment? A life truly changed and in tune with the Gospel will result in devoted commitment to the Lord and proclaiming His saving grace!)

IV. The Promises in the Gospel (11-13) – Finally, Paul reminded Timothy of the eternal promises revealed through faith in the Gospel. He spoke of:

A. The Resurrection (11) – *It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.* Some may view this as a morbid statement, but Paul revealed an eternal, spiritual truth and reminder to Timothy. Those who have died to self, crucifying the old man and his fleshly desires, have been delivered from the penalty of death due to sin, and promised eternal life in Christ. With that assurance, what could one possibly face that would hinder our faith? Those in Christ are promised triumphant, resurrection life throughout eternity.

B. The Responsibility (12) – *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.* While the Gospel is available, promising salvation to all who believe, we must embrace the Gospel by faith unto salvation if we expect to be delivered from sin and condemnation. Those whose lives are transformed in Christ, being willing to identify with His sufferings, are promised life with Him in eternity. Those who deny the Lord, and the truth of the Gospel, will be denied by Him, and cast out of His presence, forced to face the wrath of God for their sin. Salvation is available to all, but it must be received by faith!

C. The Reliability (13) – *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.* Paul wanted Timothy to be deeply settled in his faith. All would not respond favorably to the Gospel. In fact, many would reject it and persecute Timothy because of his faithfulness to the Gospel. However, the eternal truth of the Gospel, and the deity of Christ did not rest in the acceptance or rejection of men. Jesus will remain the Sovereign Lord and King whether men believe in Him or not. The truth of the Gospel will abide, even if the majority rejected its truth. The Lord's deity and eternal character would not be altered by the decisions of men.

- That ought to comfort believers today. We rest in the Sovereign Lord. His finished work on the cross and the provision received in salvation are eternal. Our salvation is not limited or annulled due to the social and spiritual climate of our day. The Lord abides faithful; His promises are sure. We can rest in the grace of our Lord that secured our eternal salvation!

Conclusion: This has been an informative and challenging passage of Scripture. The Gospel is foundational to our faith. It is to be central in our lives and the ministry of the church. Are we focused on the Gospel and its proclamation? Do we genuinely desire others to experience salvation in Christ by sharing the truth of the Gospel? His Word and the Gospel will endure. I want to be faithful to the work I have received, being focused on the Gospel and committed to sharing it with all who need to hear.

Have you responded to the Gospel, believing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for our salvation? If not, I urge you to do so today. There is no other hope or means of salvation and eternal life.

ⁱ Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.