

2Timothy 24-09-08a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 8th of September 2024. We're continuing our study in 2 Timothy.

We're picking up this morning in verse 12. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study, and we'll dive right in. Father, we're grateful for this time of fellowship and the opportunity to study your word together to try to come to a better understanding of your plan and purpose for us to gain clarity in our souls so that as we invest our time, as we prosecute our goals and our priorities and reflect our values in our lives, that it will be done in a way that reflects your glory and properly represents your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior.

We pray that as we look at these things together, that the Holy Spirit will help us to understand them and see their pertinence and their application in our lives, and we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. If we read our passage, beginning in 2 Timothy 1, verse 10, Paul is talking about not being ashamed of the gospel.

We saw that up in verse 8, and his sufferings, which we see at the end of that same verse, I do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, share with me in the sufferings, in bearing the testimony of the Lord, whether you're an apostle, a prophet, a pastor, a teacher, whatever your spiritual gift may be, there will be seasons where it involves suffering. Sometimes it's directly persecution. Sometimes it is simply the opposition that comes from wrestling against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age.

So there is a struggle that can be ongoing. Sometimes it is relieved by periods of prosperity and blessing. Other times it is not anything we have a choice over.

These are in the providences of God. But if suffering does come, it should not deter us. To be ashamed is to be slowed down, to be discouraged, to be deflected, to be distracted, to become subjective, to start thinking about the situation in terms of its hardship and its challenge instead of its opportunities and its potential in God's plan and purpose.

So this shame, do not be ashamed, but share with me in the sufferings on account of, for the gospel, according to the power of God. It isn't enough to just suffer. And the most dismal thing in the world is to suffer and you're kind of doing it on your own.

There is power from God that is reserved, that is dedicated, that is available. If you went out to your car and left your lights on in the old days and your battery went flat, it's great to have something you can jumpstart your car with. There is power available that's outside the car.

If the car's power fails, you have another source. When we are suffering, a lot of times our power is inadequate to get through it in a God-glorifying way, but there is power available. So Paul says, share in the sufferings for the gospel according to, connected to, the power of God.

It's the only way we can enjoy cursing turned to blessing, have our sufferings be an investment, both in time and in eternity. So that last phrase is essential. If it was just gutted out, you know, shake it off, walk it off.

You've got a broken leg, but just shake it off, walk it off. You're suffering, but just do it in your own strength. But it's according to the power of God.

And this is a key that is going to permeate the rest of the chapter. Where does that power come from? And I think you know the answer, but God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace. Circle the word grace because it is God's grace that makes his power available to us.

He doesn't leave us orphans. Jesus told his disciples, I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.

I'm not going to abandon you and expect you to just figure it out on your own. I will send you a comforter. He will bring to mind everything I have told you.

The truth that I have communicated will come to your minds by the power of the spirit and he will enable you. He will give you the words to say when you're under pressure and you stand before Kings and you're being persecuted. The spirit will minister the word to your soul.

And that is God's power. Even when you're suffering, you're suffering according to the power of God. According, notice it's the same word, according to his own purpose and grace.

This is a by means of God has a purpose for us and he's not interested in us failing or falling short or just being miserable for no good reason. If we endure suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, it is according to the purpose of God and according to his power, that same according to that links us to God's power, links us to his grace. And it is such a privilege to not be occupied with the suffering, but be occupied with the power and the grace that are occasioned in and through that suffering, no suffering, you don't need the grace, no suffering, you don't really need the power.

It's these times of testing, times of challenge, times of hardship, where this is most evident. You find out how deep someone's love is when it is tested. Anybody can love anybody when everything is best foot forward and you're out on a date and there's plenty of money and it's a stimulating time and you know, there's all kinds of support for two people who may or may not actually be compatible to have a good time because their focus is all on exterior things.

You go to an event, you attend a concert, you watch a movie, you go to a fancy restaurant and it's all about the food and the service and the atmosphere and the surroundings. And it's two people looking at the outside and not really looking at each other all that closely. As long as someone's not a complete clot, you'll probably have a good time.

But that connection that will sustain a relationship through months and years and decades isn't built on exterior experiences. When it is, it doesn't last. And that's why the 50% divorce rate they always quote.

I was also talking to a pastor this past week and actually it was a deacon in a church talking about their new pastor because they lost their last pastor and the last three or four churches I've been to are all experiencing pastor turnover. And they told us in seminary decades ago that the average lifespan for a pastor with a congregation in the Southern Baptist Convention and churches in general of a similar theological bent is three years. That's the average.

Think about the average. That means that roughly half of pastors don't last three years. And the guys that stay for 10, 20, and 30 years are pulling the number up to three.

Most pastors don't make it to three. There's just a few who are extremely longevity blessed and they pull the number up to three, but there's just a huge turnover. Why? Well, would you marry someone after two or three dates without spending quality time in conversation, in plumbing the depths of one another's soul, of finding out what you have in common? Most importantly for believers, do you have a shared enthusiasm for God, a love for Jesus Christ, and an appreciation for God's grace and God's power? When you find that out, you have a connection that is durable.

But if it's all about going out and having a good time, well, you come home and start consolidating your stuff and trying to live a conjoined life. Now you find out where that love is being tested. So to appreciate someone when you're married to them, you see them function under pressure.

You see them in times of stress and you appreciate their character and their personality and their continued love in spite of friction and pressure. This is what we find out about God. How can you love God if he's just an abstraction, if he's an essence box? Oh, I love sovereignty.

I sure love omnipotence. I just think that's great. We come to know God in times of stress, under pressure, just like we come to know people.

And when people are of quality, when they have character, when they are durable and they persevere and they have a good attitude, when most people wouldn't, we appreciate that and our love for them grows and develops. That's exactly what happens with God. So when Paul tells Timothy the sufferings, share with me in the sufferings, why would you tell somebody, I'm going through a real hard time? I've got a lot of pain right now and a lot of reversal and a lot of hardship.

It's very discouraging. Come share that with me. Let's, let's both have a bad time.

Why would Paul say, share with me this, you know, horrifically depressing situation? Paul says, share it with me because when you do it according to the power of God and when you do it, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, this is a whole nother realm. We just have to remember that it's there. And this is why our resort to God in prayer, a minimum

of three times a day in some detail and at some length is so essential to not forget who we are and why we're here, because it is so easy to be sucked into a worldly view, a subjective view, eyes on people, eyes on self, eyes on circumstances.

And we forget that we are here according to the power of God, according to his purpose and according to his grace. Circle according to, this is what links us to heaven and to eternity and to eternal life, to Jesus Christ himself, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. You remember the next phrase? Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.

And he is now seated at the right hand of the father. Why is that little phrase included? Despising the shame. Paul returns to this idea of shame several times in this chapter and the next.

Timothy, do not be ashamed. We're suffering according to the power of God, according to his purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. This has been the plan from the beginning.

We are not the first. We are not the last. God's got it.

God foresaw it before he ever cranked up the universe and the earth and Adam and Eve and Israel and the history that culminates with the appearance of the Lord Jesus. We're going to see the appearance, both the first and second referenced here. But this purpose and grace were established.

It is a foundation preceding the creation of the world before time began. But it has now been revealed by what? By the appearing of our savior, Jesus Christ. Remember this? This is the epiphany, the appearance, the revelation in a meaningful and almost startling way.

This purpose and grace are revealed in Jesus Christ in a unique way for us. It wasn't revealed this way for Israel, but it is for us. Israel got lightning and thunder and a cloud of smoke on the top of Mount Sinai, a pillar of fire, pillar of cloud.

We have God's grace and God's presence revealed in Jesus Christ. And he has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. Put a star by life and immortality.

This is going to inform what we're looking at this morning. Paul, as I mentioned, is in his final Roman imprisonment. This is years after the end of Acts.

Paul is released from that house arrest and he goes on to do other things. He is re-arrested and his death is imminent. His execution is perhaps only days or weeks away.

And Paul is aware of his mortality, that he is coming to the end of his time on this earth and he is passing the torch. He has run his lap of the relay race and he is ready to pass what has been committed to him to Timothy. And he's hoping that Timothy will pass it on from there.

So Paul is aware and he is thinking about mortality and he says this short momentary light affliction, as he calls it in Romans 8, this momentary light affliction that is working for us an eternal weight of glory. When he's thinking about life and looking at it backward from close to its end and he's looking ahead to the future appearance of the Lord Jesus, he says, I was appointed a preacher, an apostle and a teacher for this reason I suffer these things. He's back to the concept of suffering.

Does my suffering have a purpose or is it just slings and arrows of outrage and outrageous fortune? Like Shakespeare says, does it have a purpose? We can often think, well, I don't see a purpose. I'm not having fun. What's the purpose? What's the point? Why am I grinding through this terrible situation? I've got physical hardship.

I've got financial hardship. I've got employment hardship. I've got education hardship.

I've got relationship hardship. I've got people mad at me for no good reason. I've got people that don't seem to be paying any attention.

And nobody knows the trouble I've seen and I'm in the ditch here and there's no Samaritan coming by. But he says, I have a mission. I have an appointment.

God assigned me a purpose. All of us have a purpose. If you're in a family, you have a purpose.

Any family connection you can think of, that connection has a purpose. Up, down, past, future, sideways, extended family, family in Christ, brothers and sisters in Christ, if you know a single other believer, that relationship has a purpose, God did not bring you together by accident. Those of us in grace and truth, we're not here by accident.

God has connected us in his grace and for his purpose. And to recognize instead of thinking, man, I'm having a hard time. Paul says, I know my purpose.

I was appointed a preacher, an apostle and a teacher. This is why I suffer. Look at the next verse.

I am suffering according to God's purpose. This is the reason I suffer these things because of my divinely assigned purpose. And this suffering itself has a purpose in accomplishing the larger purpose.

There's multiple factors that make up almost anything, that make up relationships, make up jobs, that make up responsibilities or tasks. There's multiple things. Did you ever make a plan for a Saturday and say, you know, when Saturday comes, I'm going to do this.

And so you get up Saturday morning and you do your first things and you say, all right, I've got my plan. And you go out there and you begin to do it. Oh, but I can't do that yet because this, I've got to go get one of these.

I've got to run to the store because I don't have this supply or this part or this tool that I need. I better run to the store. Well, you get ready to run to the store and oh, the car needs gas.

I've got to stop and get gas. And you know, as long as I'm stopping, my lawnmower gas is almost empty. I better throw that in.

And well, you know, as long as I'm in town, I better go to this other store because that'll save me a trip. And one thing leads to another. And your plan is just like Mr. Trump quoted Mike Tyson and does so frequently.

And it's, it's a wonderful observation. Everybody has a plan until you get punched in the face. Uh, you start with a plan, but stuff comes up and it's friction.

It's slowed down and it's, there's frustration. And you start looking at the obstacles and the days three quarters gone. And you didn't even begin your thing because 15 other dominoes had to fall and get be swept up before you could get to that thing that you had this wonderful plan for.

We all have this experience, right? Well, remember ultimately there is a purpose. And if you fight through the obstacles, you spend the time, you get things done. You set aside other things and you say, you know what? I don't have to get that lawnmower gas today.

And I don't have to go to that second store. I've got a plan and by golly, I'm going to accomplish this purpose or die trying. And I'm not going to be deflected.

I'm not going to be distracted. I'm not going to be discouraged. I'm not just going to give up and sit in a chair and grab another cup of coffee and say, boy, you know, I sure wish I had some help.

I'm going to get this done. I know my purpose. There is a plan and I will move the obstacles by force of will and force of character, I will get it done.

It's got to be done. And I've just got to think my way through it. I've got to remember the purpose and not be deflected and distracted.

And, uh, you know, here's a squirrel chirping in the tree and suddenly I've forgotten who I am and why I'm here. So these verses are meaningful. Paul is not just chatting Timothy up here.

He's not just trying to find fodder to put into a letter. Have you ever tried to write a letter and couldn't really think of much to say? And so you sort of ramble and, uh, you know what, I'm wool gathering here and I'll put a little bit of it down so I can fill a page and look a stamp and send it on its way. Of course, people don't lick that many stamps anymore and you've got to type it in an email or put it in a text, but to focus, to be clear, and these words are meaningful.

Paul is about to leave the earth. He is handing off his purpose and his message and the content of what he has borne witness to and has communicated and taught and stressed as an apostle

across many years, time he has spent with Timothy, investing in him what he knows. And this is the last push.

It's Timothy's graduation. Paul's not going to be here to educate him anymore. He says everything that I've taught you in the past.

He doesn't say, I got a third letter of Timothy that's going to be coming. Watch for that one. I got a whole bunch of new truth for you.

He, there's not a whole lot of new teaching in this letter. Have you noticed? Paul doesn't broach new subjects. Let me give you a new facet of redemption.

Let me tell you a new thing about atonement or reconciliation. Paul says, I've told you all of this. It is up to you to remember it, to hold onto it, to stand fast, to not abandon it, to not be discouraged and to not be ashamed.

All of that is summed up in a shame. Don't let suffering or hardship, reversal, setback, opposition, make you ashamed. So you back off and you no longer seek out and employ the power of God.

It's not you having to fight back here. It's the, it's according to the power of God. It's according to God's grace.

Go to the well. Go to the source. Let God's power jumpstart your car and get you going and keep that power.

So this is why he says, I was appointed. This is my, I know my purpose. And Timothy, you remember yours.

He reviews this in both letters, tells Timothy, you remember the gift that was recognized in you and laying on of hands and many witnesses, you know your purpose. You know why you're here. You're here as a pastor.

Most people aren't pastors, but you've got an assignment. You've got connections. You've got touch points with believers and every believer's gift is designed primarily to bless other believers.

We are blessed by other believers. And if we are functioning, if we are outward looking, we are a blessing to other believers because it is according to God's purpose and according to his grace in verse nine. So verse 12, for this reason, do you see how Paul is reasoning from divine truth about his situation of suffering? And instead of waiting for comfort to come from Timothy, why isn't this, you know, first Paul or second Paul or third Paul, and it's a letter from Timothy saying, Paul, I know you're locked up there in Rome.

I know you're facing death. I know, you know, a lot of people have gone astray and have distorted and perverted and persecuted you. But let me just tell you, you know, as your son in the faith, I'm

rooting for you, you know, keep on trucking, Paul.

It's okay. Paul is the locked up one. Timothy's free.

Paul is the persecuted facing execution one. Timothy has a church. He's got a town.

He's in Ephesus. He's doing what he's done. He's got all kinds of potential, all kinds of options.

Paul's options are limited to writing a couple of letters before his head leaves his body, but who is comforting whom? Paul is plugged into the power of God, the grace of God and the purpose of God. And he is exhorting and encouraging, even though he's the guy that's down. We've all had this experience as well.

You hear somebody has a health setback, maybe a severe one, you go to visit him in the hospital and you come away, the encouraged one, you come away impressed and, and marveling at what the power of God can do in someone's heart and soul. They're the suffering one. They're the one whose options are almost gone, but they encouraged me when I spent time with them.

This is exactly what Paul is doing. And that's not because the person is so wonderful. That's the power of God.

That's the grace of God and the purpose of God. According to, circle it, power, grace, purpose. That's where we resort in times of stress, in times of hardship, times of setback.

For this reason, I suffer these things. Paul knows why he is suffering. God is working it together for good because Paul says, you know what? I am the called according to his purpose.

Romans 8, 28, all things are working together for good. And I am not ashamed. Timothy, don't be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me, his prisoner.

It is well-known that Timothy is Paul's protege and Paul is persona non grata in a lot of circles, not just the Romans, but even in the Christian community, as he is about to tell us. I suffer these things. I'm not ashamed.

You should not be ashamed. Why am I not ashamed? I know whom I have believed and I'm proud of it. I know whom Paul has persuaded.

. There is no to Him. It ought to be in italics, and I don't know why it's not. There is no to Him.

You can scratch it out. It's not there. I had to look like three times.

I memorized this verse as a child. I've always thought, you know, I've committed something to God. It's not there.

What are you left with? I am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed. Then you have eis. You have the word into, unto, or with a view toward.

E-I-S. Eis Erechimai, go into the house. Erechimai, come out of the house.

Eis means into. But when you use it in a non-concrete sense, it means unto, or with a view toward. So Paul has committed something to God with a view toward that day.

What they do now, and this is the consensus view of what this verse means. Because Paul uses this word committed in several different places. And he says, Timothy, be aware of that which was committed to you.

Look at verse 14 of this same chapter. Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you've heard from me. That good thing which was committed to you.

It's the very same word. That must have been a really good thought. I got a little musical confirmation there.

So the word is committed. And it's the very same word. Very same word.

So it's used this way a couple of other places. And so the thinking is, what Paul really means is, God is going to guard what God committed to me until that day. God is going to keep what he has committed to me.

This word God committed to me, I'm committing it to Timothy against that day. You don't have to really understand how they arrive at that except that. You remember the Daffy Duck cartoon where he ends up saying, pronoun trouble.

Shoot me, no shoot me, no shoot me, no shoot me, shoot him. And Elmer Fudd winds up blowing Daffy's beak off. And after this happens three or four times, he snaps his beak back on and he looks at Bugs and he says, pronoun trouble.

Well, this is preposition trouble. Ace does not mean until. It means unto with a view toward.

We've got a perfectly good word for until. It's in Acts 1.8. You will be witness to me both in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, until the end of the age. Not unto.

They take heos, H-E-O-S, and they want to make that unto the uttermost parts of the world instead of until the end of the world, until the end of the age. Heos means until and it ought to be translated until pretty much everywhere you find it. Ace means unto.

Well, they've just swapped it. They mess up Acts 1.8 by saying, you know, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel. They go to Mark, the bogus thing in chapter 16 of Mark, preach the gospel of every creature.

Well, you've got to go unto the uttermost parts of the world. No, it is until the end of the geis. Heos, teis, geis.

Until the telos, tastes, geis, the end of the world. Heos, until. He will keep that which I have committed to him.

He will keep what he has entrusted to me until that day, which is how they translate it. It's just wrong. That's not it.

This is unto. You can use a word in more than one way. Soteria, soterios, salvation, deliverance, doesn't always mean eternal salvation from the lake of fire.

It is a simple word for deliverance and you can commit one thing to someone else and it's not always the message of the gospel being committed. Paul uses it that way in verse 14. This good thing, this gospel message, this good news of Jesus Christ, the power of God, the grace of God, the purpose of God has been committed to you and it was committed to Paul and he is committing it to Timothy, but it doesn't mean every time you see the word committed that it's got to be that same thing.

It's just two dimensional thinking and you have to disrupt the simple, plain meaning of the text. Paul says, I have entrusted, I have committed something to God with a view toward the day. What has Paul committed to God? This word actually means deposit.

It was used in secular Greek for a bank deposit. I've entrusted, I've made this deposit. And this is the noun for deposit.

He, God, is able to keep my deposit. That's literal Greek. The deposit is a noun.

It's not what I have committed like it was a verb. God can keep, he can guard, kareo, my deposit with a view toward that day. I am entrusting something to God and he is going to be faithful to guard it until the day of redemption.

What is Paul entrusting to God? Himself. Everything that he doesn't have because he is suffering for the gospel. His freedom.

His ability to lead about a wife. His ability to not be constantly hounded and bad mouthed and persecuted and chased and stoned and left for dead and let down out of baskets and shipwrecked and all of his hardships. The 40 lashes minus one, three different times.

Paul says, I am depositing this with God. I don't see the fruit and the benefit of it right now. Why did I have to be shipwrecked? Why did I have to be beaten? Why do I have to be hounded and persecuted? Why are there so many opponents? Why doesn't God just silence them? Why don't they have a heart attack and keel over? Why isn't their ship delayed and they never get there to create a riot in Ephesus and Diana of the Ephesians? Why doesn't God stop those people? Why

do I get beaten and imprisoned? Well, sometimes you see the reason.

When Paul and his companions are beaten and imprisoned in Philippi, what's the outcome of that in Acts 16? Do you remember a verse, Acts 16.31? Do you remember the Philippian jailer? Who because Paul is in prison and because even when there is an earthquake and the gates open, Paul and his companions stay put because their confidence is in God. God has a reason for us to be here. There isn't an angel leading us out.

If I need to leave, I'll be Peter and the angel will kick Peter in the ribs and say, Peter, get up and come with me. Right? They stay there. And because of that, the Philippian jailer and his whole household and witnesses beyond, a whole cluster of people come to faith in Christ in Philippi because of Paul's suffering.

Sometimes you see the vindication. Other times you don't in this life. And Paul says, I don't know why God put me through it.

That's my deposit. I can't see around the corner. I don't know what the eternal repercussions will be.

Do you think the Apostle Paul had any notion that there would be 2,000 years of church age history and millions upon millions upon millions of people would be blessed through these letters that he was writing from prison with a guttering lamp for light and an amanuensis because he couldn't see anymore from his beatings and his sufferings. And he's dictating these letters and at the end he's scribbling large letters with his own hand. This is how you know it's from me.

Here's my signature. But he can barely see at this point. Why? Paul didn't know that you and I would be sitting here today being blessed by this letter, being encouraged by a message from the Holy Spirit that was entrusted to Paul.

Paul entrusted it, committed it to faithful men who could teach others also. And that line of trust and commitment has continued. People who have preserved the text, worked on the text, improved it, compared manuscript with manuscript so that we could have a trustworthy Bible.

And even if our translation is a little off, we've got resources to find out exactly what he said. Going back 2,000 years we know exactly what the Holy Spirit intended. Paul says, I have entrusted this.

This is my deposit with God. And I am persuaded that he's going to guard it with a view toward that day. I don't know how it's all going to turn out.

I'll find out on that day. I don't have to know. That's what faith is.

I have faith that God has a purpose. He has grace and he has power for me. And we'll understand it all by and by.

So this is Paul's perspective and he is endeavoring to encourage Timothy to adopt the same view. I'm not ashamed. You shouldn't be ashamed.

We have this wonderful testimony. You should preach it, be faithful to it, hold fast to it, and pass it on to others. You don't have to know why everything is happening.

You just have to know who holds. This is a great line from a gospel song. Jake Hess sings it very well.

I know not what the future holds, but I know who holds the future. It's a secret known only to him. It's a beautiful song, but that's a great line from it.

I know not what the future holds, but I know who holds the future. That's what Paul is saying here. And this is faith in action.

This is the power of God, the grace of God, and the purpose of God manifest in our lives when we remember who we are, why we're here, and what God has granted to us through Christ. We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to come back to verse 13.

And Paul is going to return to that day before this chapter is over.