

2Timothy 24-10-13a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services here at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 13th of October 2024. We're in 2 Timothy chapter 2. We are entering into a section that gives us a little bit of lyrics from a hymn that was sung in the early church, which always serves as both an inspiration and a memory aid for important concepts.

We have the same service provided by hymns that we sing and play and review in our hearts today. So as we get ready to look at this section and see a culmination of the exhortation that Paul is giving Timothy, let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study and we'll begin. Father, what a privilege it is to spend this time together in study of your Word, in fellowship and receiving the blessings that come from the encouragement that our contact provides, the power of your Holy Spirit to energize us and to unite us in the common cause of representing the Lord Jesus Christ and preparing ourselves for the works of service and the expressions of love that are our privilege to undertake.

We pray that as we look at this part of 2 Timothy this morning, that your Holy Spirit will help us to understand it and see what it means to us as we tackle the challenges and negotiate the obstacles of our lives in the days to come. We pray that in all things the Lord Jesus will be lifted up and that the light of your glory will reflect in us and through us. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's read our passage. We have seen the inception here of 2 Timothy 2 to be strengthened and it is a theme that runs through this entire exhortation that there is strength available and it comes from outside ourselves.

It is easy to be distracted and forget and to begin to try to do things in our own strength. So Paul begins this section by saying, you therefore my son, be strengthened in, by and with the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And having given that, he provided these three illustrations, these three examples that provide principles.

There is the soldier and this is a reminder that it's a team effort. We are not alone. We are part of something larger than ourselves and there is provision, there is direction, there is leadership and a requirement to be faithful and to endure and to persist and to focus and do a good job even in conditions of hardship.

And the focus in that first illustration was enduring hardship. And the word there can mean to share hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. And that of Christ Jesus leads into the second observation, realizing that you're engaged in warfare, you want to please the one who recruited you.

And in our special case of service, this is the Lord Jesus who calls us the model, the prototype or archetype of that is when he called his own disciples by name. He was

circulating with them. He was in towns and villages.

He was by the Jordan. He was in Cana. He was in Capernaum and in Nazareth.

And yet when it was time to call his disciples, he left and ascended a mountain and then called them and commissioned them. In order to receive that commission, they had to climb the mountain. And I've always been impressed by that, that if you want to respond to the call of Jesus Christ for service, for opportunity, for fellowship, for learning from him the truth and the realities of the word of God, it involves climbing the mountain and arriving at that place where the Lord Jesus can fulfill these promises of love and presence and enablement and empowerment there is some hardship to be tackled.

And as long as we do so in the strength that God provides, that's not a real hardship. It's just an opportunity to learn how to negotiate things that many people would sink and fail and fall short in because it seems to be hard. And in our own strength, it certainly would be.

So to please the one who enlisted us, who commissioned us, who called us, this is uniquely in our case, the Lord Jesus. And to stand at the judgment seat and be approved. This is where we're headed in verse 15 of this chapter, approved unto God, a workman, not ashamed.

And whatever our gift, whatever our calling, whatever our function and the nature of our relationships with other believers, this is the means by which we can be approved and not ashamed. This is the acronym I believe for AWANA, a workman approved, not ashamed. That's a youth program that you encounter a lot in Baptist churches and other places, but a workman approved, not ashamed, AWANA.

That's our goal. So if anyone competes in athletics, this was the second illustration. And you remember there are a total of seven in this passage.

And if we want to give ourselves a quick examination to see if we are in the faith, we can think in terms of these seven illustrations, these seven metaphorical presentations and get the perspective, look at ourselves from different angles and make sure that we are not slipping a stitch. We're not missing something that we should pay attention to. So it reminds me of the other day I was getting ready to go to town and accomplish some tasks and chores.

And I thought, well, I need to take this because it's a return. I need to remember a list of two or three things to pick up and you get all ready. And I know you have done this as I have.

Get all ready and go out and get in the car. And I don't have my keys and I've got to go all the way back in and get the key and go back out. And to have a list where we don't forget, we don't omit, we don't fail to consider something.

If you're going to do a return, you need the receipt. It's a lot easier if you have the receipt. And if you go off and leave the receipt laying on a desk, I'm not saying how I know this, but it takes longer.

It's got to be looked up in other ways. So what are the seven metaphors that we have here? Do you remember the first one is my son? This is our spiritual connection to those who have been beneficial in both teaching us and being used by God to communicate the truth of the word to our relationship to God, the father as his children. So we have a familial relationship, the family of God, brothers and sisters in Christ.

That's first. You have the soldier, you have the athlete, and then you have the farmer. And the farmer is presented as necessarily being the first to partake of the crop.

And as he labors, he is looking forward. All of these have a hope aspect. The soldier labors and endures hardship and is faithful and obedient because he wants to win the approval of the one who enlisted him.

The athlete wants to win the approval of the crown, of having succeeded and having achieved the goal and hit the mark and finished the race. The farmer looks forward to the time when the crops mature and he can gather them and partake of them. And so he is plowing in hope.

He is laboring and working with the expectation that the fruit of that labor is going to be a bountiful crop from which he will be the first to partake. So there is this looking forward. And why does Paul do this? What is the best way to endure hardship? What is the nature of the power of God? How does it work to enable us and to sustain us and to energize us when things are difficult? This is the role of hope.

In the triad of Christian virtues, we have faithfulness and obedience. We trust in the word. We recognize its power in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

We have love, which is the measure of our ability to be objective, to look out and beyond ourselves, to appreciate God and the Lord Jesus, and to appreciate and be a blessing to one another, neighbors, those who are outside, and even our enemies. Those four concentric spheres, if you will, or rings of the expression of love. And if we're healthy, we are going to find that these opportunities are plentiful, that we are able to exploit them and convert them into reflections of the glory of God, because it is God's love that is shed abroad in our hearts.

But hope is the motivation. And you can see it here, the motivation to persist and endure and keep on keeping on when things are discouraging and things are painful, and we have regrets, we have sorrows, we have setbacks, we have disappointments, both on our own account and on account of others. What gets us through? How does the power of God enable us? How does the grace that is in Christ Jesus move us in a supernatural

way through the friction and the pushback and the drag of the world, the flesh, and the devil? Hope is a primary element.

It is the knowledge that it will be worth it, that there will be a harvest of which we partake, there will be a crown that we will wear, which represents the approval of the one who enlisted us. And what more could you want out of life than to be crowned by the Lord Jesus, to be approved unto God and not ashamed? Things were tough, but I held steady, I stayed the course, I persisted, I didn't quit, I didn't faint, I didn't divert, I didn't get distracted, I held fast by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. That's what he's emphasizing here, and we've seen it all the way down to verse 10, and Paul says, this is why I endure all things for the sake of the called ones, the called out ones, the chosen, the elect.

Elect is just a re-pronunciation of eclectoise, which are the called out ones, the designated ones. I was thinking about this, it's always hazardous when you start talking about the elect. There's been such an influence of those who believe that God sovereignly chooses, for inscrutable reasons that can't be known, who is going to be saved and who is not.

And by extension, you can't help but think, well, if he's going to choose who's going to be saved, he's also going to determine who's going to excel and who's going to be advanced and be worthy and stand out as faithful. If God sovereignly grants saving faith, it is easy to assume he's going to also sovereignly grant living faith. And if I'm not particularly faithful, well, God just didn't sovereignly elect me to be faithful today.

And they have to try to explain that, well, once you've been sovereignly dragged across the line, now you have to make choices about being faithful. It is contrary to everything the Bible teaches when you observe it carefully. But when you come to a reference to the elect here, I do it for the sake of the elect.

When you were a child, when I was a child, when we were all younger and had playmates, and occasionally there would be pick up basketball or volleyball or some other team sport, touch football or whatever. And you've got several kids and you need to divide up into teams. There's usually a captain, somebody will be a captain on one side, somebody will be a captain.

And the kids are standing around at the edge of the playground or whatever, and you pick, each one picks to try to even out. And there are commercials even today where they show a scene such as this, and there's a professional basketball player standing there in the middle of the kids. And they're talking about, there are some really obvious choices.

And then they go on to say, our product is an obvious choice. But here's Charles Barkley or some other NBA athlete standing in the middle of the kids. And it's your turn to

choose who are you going to pick? And this sticks in my mind as a good way to remember what elect means.

When God is looking at us, who is he going to choose? You don't just throw a dart at the phone book and say, okay, I'm going to save that one. Why does God elect? Why does God call? Why did God call the apostle Paul? He is a chosen apostle. Jesus chose 12 men originally to climb the and 11 of them would become apostles.

Why did he choose them? Did he just randomly select a few fishermen and a few tax collectors, zealot happened by individuals? Well, you're that guy's brother, so you can come too. Why did Jesus choose whom he chose? Why does God elect? It is on the basis of recognition of attitude, of desire, of the propensity for faithfulness of past expressions of faithfulness. These men who were the first disciples chosen by Jesus that accompany him to Cana of Galilee.

Why did he choose Andrew and John and James and Peter and Philip and Nathaniel? Why did he choose them? They have traveled all the way from Galilee or Cana, Philip is down there. They come down from Cana all the way to the Jordan because they have heard that there is a prophet of God and something unusual is stirring in the spiritual realm. And these men care enough to leave their businesses, to leave their relatives, to leave whatever they have going on and travel down to see what is being preached, to hear it, to be baptized by John.

And they stay day after day. And when John says, behold, the Lamb of God, they are there to see it. That's why they are chosen.

They are chosen because they have an attitude. They have a cast of mind. They are seeking.

They are searching. And there is a sense in which God chooses those who are seeking him. You will seek me and find me when I elect you with all my heart.

That's not how the verse goes. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. So this is the basis of election.

And it's important if you run into someone who misunderstands by faulty training, faulty and artificial mashing together of passages of Scripture and think that sovereign election determines who is saved and who is not, remember the playground. Remember the choosing of the team. The captain is going to choose those who are going to work hard and do a good job because that's their track record.

That's their propensity. You know the kid standing there. And to say that God would randomly choose, you would have to believe that he doesn't really know anyone and it doesn't matter who he chooses.

If it still depends on our decisions after we are sovereignly elected, how does that work? Did God not know that we were going to be really faithful and progress in our Christian service? He randomly selected us and he arbitrarily dragged us into salvation, but after that we suddenly catch fire and we're growing and maturing and any other person would have done the same if they had been sovereignly elected. It just really doesn't even make common sense, much less biblical sense. But why does Paul endure all things? For the sake of those that God has entered into his family, that God has recognized as having potential for faithfulness and obedience and to reflect his glory and to vindicate the work of the Lord Jesus and to represent him as his body on this earth and to do a positive, influential work in the world, to be present and to be a means by which those who are drawn to light can be drawn to God.

And so he endures these things and notice it is an outward looking hope. Paul is enduring it because he has an expectation in the future that God is going to use his work of service, his expressions of love and faithfulness to bless. It's like the athlete.

It's like the soldier. It's like the farmer looking ahead to what God will bring forth. I plant Apollos waters.

God gives the increase. God will bless our faithfulness. God will bless our dedication.

God will bless our desire to please him with opportunities to do so. So I endure all things for the sake of the family. Those have been chosen by God because they love him and they love one another to obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

This isn't to obtain initial salvation. This is that looking forward harvest, that approval, that crown that is at the end to lay hold of the fruit and the victory and the promises of blessing and reward in the future. So I endure all things so that they also may obtain this salvation, this deliverance out of this present evil age, out of sinfulness and fallenness, out of pain and hardship and suffering with eternal glory.

That deliverance in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. You remember that there is grace that is in Christ Jesus for strength. That's how we began this chapter.

And in verse 10, you now have the deliverance. There is strength and there is deliverance with eternal glory in Christ Jesus. This is what redeems the time and converts the temporal into the eternal.

Then you come to verse 11 and you have a faithful saying. If you notice the italics here, it says this is and it isn't there. Paul just dives right in.

A faithful saying, colon. There's been some, and we've talked about this, remember the five faithful sayings. We reviewed those some months back that are in Paul's pastoral epistles.

And you have the decision to make when he says, this is a faithful saying or a faithful saying. Is it the preceding thing that he just said, or is it what follows? And it is fairly obvious from context, because if what preceded was the faithful saying, I endure all things for the sake of the elect. This is a faithful saying.

Let's write a hymn about my faithfulness in enduring for the sake of the elect. That, of course, is not it. And the remainder of verse 11 and verse 12 is metrically lyrical.

These evidently were the words to a song. It's very poetic and it has the brevity and the beauty that comes from a careful composition. And the translation you have before you and almost all of the commentaries just assume the pronouns that are in italics there, which is safe, but that's not what it says.

So in verse 11, here's the faithful saying. For if we died with, and this is a perfect, if we have died with completed action in the past with results that continue into the present. This is the perfect, the notion of the perfect.

If we have shared death or shared in death, the closest you can get in English is if we have if we have shared dying, there is no with him. Do you see the italics? The pronoun is not there in Greek. And it's just natural.

This reminds me of for me to live as Christ and to die as gain. Once you see it, you can't unsee it. And well, for me to live as Christ and to go back and realize the text actually says in context, I don't know whether to stay or to go.

To live is good. To die is better because I'll be with the Lord face to face. But nobody wants to change it back here.

The in him is not there. And they have faithfully put the italics to tell you the the pronouns are not there. So let's try to understand this the way it's actually written.

Not to say that the the presence, the idea, the example of the Lord Jesus isn't well established in this passage. But what does it actually say? For if we have shared dying, have shared, that's the perfect it's in the past. We have shared dying.

We shall share living. If we have shared dying, we shall share living. That's what it literally says.

Verse 12, if we endure, we shall also share reigning. That's the first half. How does Paul lead into this? He adds, and it sticks out a little bit in Greek, the word for there in verse 11.

The symmetrical idea would be if we shared dying, if we have shared dying, we shall share living. The for sticks out a little bit and Paul adds the for because he is tying it back to the previous verse, tying it back to the previous verse. What does what does this

actually mean? What did Paul say in verse 10 context? What is Paul talking about? Therefore, I endure all things for the sake of the elect, so that they also may obtain the deliverance.

Who is in view here to share? Paul says, I'm enduring hardship. He tells Timothy earlier on in verse three, you therefore must share hardship, share your Bible says endure, but you've got a text note there and it's a good one. The better text says, if we share hardship and of course, endurance is implied.

It's not wrong to read it as endure, but it actually says share. Now, Paul is going to return to this sharing idea and remember we share hardship as a soldier. There's an army of soldiers.

There's a unit of soldiers. It's a battalion. It's a regiment or it's a company or it's a squad, but this is looking to the right and to the left and knowing that no suffering overtakes us, no temptation overtakes us, no testing, but such as is common and God will be with us and provide for us in it.

I would submit to you taking nothing away from the Lord Jesus. He is coming up in the last half of this little poetic section, but in the first half, Paul uses the word for, which metrically sticks out. They say, well, we can't, we don't know why Paul put this in here because the meter works better.

If he had left it out and it just said, if we have shared dying, we shall share living. The four unbalances it. This is an addition.

Paul is tying this back to the elect for whom he is enduring all things. Timothy, you've got to endure for the sake of your fellow soldiers, for the sake of those that you are teaching, for the sake of those faithful men that you're going to pass these truths on to. And we have all died together.

This is, we have died to self. We have died with Christ. This is the representation of baptism, dying to the old life, being resurrected to new life.

Of course, the Lord Jesus is in view here, but the sharing isn't so much with him as this is a shared experience for the family, for the elect, for the body. And if you say we are all one body, of course, Christ is the head. And so that assumption is certainly present and valid, but it changes the application of this a bit because instead of looking at our salvation as an individual matter, we are looking at it as it has entered us into this group, this fellowship, this family.

And we are not our own. We have been bought with a price and Paul uses a plural language when he wants to emphasize this shared idea. So we have shared dying.

We, plural, have shared. We shall share living. The hardship that we endure, the

sufferings, the testings, the fellowship of suffering that we go through together here, we are going to celebrate.

We are going to live and be blessed. And we are going to share in the harvest. We are going to share in the victory.

We're going to share in the rewards and the opportunities in the future together. There's an emphasis on fellowship here. And if we endure, we endure individually, but we endure together.

We endeavor to intercede, to put a shoulder under the load, to bear one another's burdens. If we endure, we shall also share reigning, not just sharing with Christ, but we will be the government. We'll be millennial government employees and we'll have that shared opportunity and that kind of fellowship and that camaraderie and working together and esprit de corps and the common goal and the wonderful leadership and the fantastic policies and the elimination of crime and criminality and the promotion of that which is good and righteousness will be at home and you'll have the peaceable kingdom with all of its blessings and we will share in the governance.

Certainly Christ is on the throne, but the idea is there will be many of us serving him in a ruling capacity to sit with him on his throne. It isn't just an individual opportunity. It is we sharing in that reign and having a say.

People are big on democracy and I want to have a say. My vote counts. Wait till you're in the government that is overseen by the Lord Jesus himself.

Now you can really throw yourself in 110% and your efforts and your experiences and your understanding of truth and God's plans and purposes will kick in and it will be effective and it will redound to the glory of God. It will reflect and bring praise to the glory of the name of God the Father and God the Son and the power of God's Holy Spirit. If we endure, if we bear up under, if we persist, if we don't get distracted, if we pay attention to these earlier words.

Remember Paul said in verse 7 and it's kind of in the middle of this, he gives the examples and then he's going to give the future outcome of paying attention. But right in the middle in verse 7 he says, consider carefully what I say. And the word may, you also have a text note on that in verse 7, you can just scratch it out.

Consider what I say and the Lord will give you understanding. If you consider it, if you chew on it, if you reflect on it, if you look at how it affects the living of life today in my current circumstances, current opportunities, challenges, provisions, deficits, relationships, whatever it may be, consider what I say. Consider sonship, consider soldier identity, athlete identity, farmer identity, these different aspects of faithfulness and looking ahead to hope.

God will give you understanding. The Lord will give you understanding in all things. You will see the application.

It will make sense. Well this is the first half of this little short lyrical poem it's sometimes called. I think it's, I think this was probably set to a tune and there may be more words to this.

There is a little extended version in one of the early church fathers that seems to add a little bit to this same song. But this is the part that is inspired. This is the part that Paul sends to Timothy as an inspiration and a reminder.

And it starts with this for the sake of the elect. I endure because I'm not alone in this. It's not just me and what God decides to to bless or judge in my life.

I am connected. I am related. I have opportunities in the body and I endure because it makes a difference to a lot of other people.

And if we have shared in dying with our fellow family members, we are going to share in living with our fellow body of Christ members. If we endure, we are going to share in future opportunities to serve and to be a part of the ruling function of the Lord Jesus in ages to come. What a privilege.

And we can do it together. That brings us to the second part of verse 12 and verse 13. This is where we now get the personal pronoun.

Now is the time to focus on the Lord Jesus. And the emphasis changes because there is no longer the shared idea. We had the shared idea in the first half.

Now we have the judgment, the reward or discipline that comes from Jesus Christ. So that's what we'll see when we return from our break.