

2Timothy 24-10-13b

We are ready to resume looking at this very important and interesting section of 2 Timothy. You remember that Paul is writing this from prison. He is chained to a Roman soldier.

He is most likely dictating this letter to an amanuensis who is taking down his words. And he's sitting in a Roman prison with the imminent prospect of execution before him. He'll allude to this toward the end of the letter in more detail.

But it is fascinating to me that the soldier imagery comes readily to his mind here since he's chained to one as he organizes and presents these thoughts. And Paul is writing this letter in his head and in his heart under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the symmetry and the beauty that you see in it. The resonance of the examples, the pungency of the metaphors, and the urgency of the call and the exhortation.

Paul is dictating this. His eyes are shot. He probably can't even see the manuscript as it is being written.

He might ask whoever it is, read back what we've said so far. But there's a reason that the Lord Jesus chose Paul to be an apostle. Steeped in the Old Testament, trained as a Pharisee, with this heart of dedication, willing to endure all things for the sake of the elect to include us.

And when he says endure hardship as a soldier, he's also thinking about the soldier he's chained to. This isn't fun duty to sit there being chained to a prisoner. I don't know what the hygiene conditions are.

I don't know what the... But basically, the soldier is as much a prisoner of Paul as Paul is a prisoner of the Romans. They have a shared hardship. They have a shared fate.

The soldiers probably rotate out and do shifts. But still, when Paul is thinking about a soldier, he's got one right next to him that lends an air of reality to the truth of what he's saying. We've seen here in this faithful saying, if we have shared in dying, we will share in living.

We share. We share in this present life, both in our initial salvation, in our hardships and struggles, in our opportunities, in our endeavoring to focus and be pleasing in God's sight. And then we have a shared expectation of the future.

There's nothing that is more enjoyable than getting with believers that have a positive sense of the reality of the impending return of the Lord Jesus. And our gathering to him and moving forward into the next phase of God's overarching plan and purpose. When you find fellow believers that are excited about that, this lifts us out of the doldrums.

It prevents apathy. It prevents the sort of ingrown subjectivity that we can fall prey to. It gets us away from our heart that's deceitful and desperately wicked.

It gets us away from self-pity. It gets us away from distraction and deflection. There's nothing our enemy, the roaring lion, likes better than to find somebody he can devour, he can take out of the conflict, render fruitless and ineffective and essentially off the board, out of action.

I've wounded them. Now they're just a burden to everyone else. This is one of the sad truths of warfare is in many cases, there have been weapons that are designed to wound and not to kill.

This goes back even to the Revolutionary War, or as we like to say, the first war for independence, where Washington was trying to get his soldiers inoculated and the British were sending infected troops in with smallpox to get them infected, to burden them down with sick and ailing and wounded. To use that as a lever to try to defeat the enemy is to burden them with wounded. And if we allow ourselves to become a drag and a hardship and a burden, instead of walking wounded, you see these guys.

Remember the fife and drum thing? You don't see it anymore, but there used to be those guys from the Revolution, the guy playing the fife and the little kid with the drum. The guy's got a bandage on his head, but he's still going to provide the music that inspires the troops to go and do what needs to be done. And to carry on and carry forward as we are able, despite whatever setbacks or hardships, isn't just good for us.

It is a benefit to the body. And that's why this shared idea is so important. This dying with, living with, enduring so that we can reign with.

And the interesting thing to me is in this first set of lines, 11 and the first half of 12, having died with and shall live with, but endure. You notice it doesn't say endure with. Endurance inevitably is something that is a personal challenge.

Most of our suffering ends up being personal and individual. There may be others that have a similar suffering, but the endurance is something we have to tackle individually by looking at those around us and to be inspired to endure hardship. And there is a shared hardship up in verse 3. There's shared hardship, but there's personal endurance of that shared hardship.

And this is similar to what Paul says when he talks about bear one another's burdens. And then a verse and a half later, he says each one must carry his own load. There is a sense in which we recognize that there is a corporate sense of facing difficulty, but there is also that individual.

So the hardship can oppress many of us, but the endurance has to be founded on something that is within us individually. So if we endure, we will share together with.

Now we come to the second part of verse 12.

If we deny, and notice him is still in italics. If we deny. Now this isn't so much Peter at the campfire on the night of Jesus arrest.

This is contrasted with enduring. There is hardship and I'm enduring it. I'm not quitting to deny is to say it's not worth it.

This isn't working for me. I don't find this to be something I want to pursue or participate in. I want out.

I want to leave. I want to desert the army. I'm not going to compete in the race.

I'm tired of battling weeds and drought in this field as a farmer. I don't care about the family. Let me out of here.

This means to flake off, to desist, to move away from a thing. It isn't just some sort of verbal denial. It's opting out.

I want to opt out. I'm going to find my own solution. I'm going to follow my own path.

I don't like the gender I was born with, so I'm going to change it. I don't like the family members I've got, so I'm going to leave them. I'm going to look out for number one.

And notice that the shared idea disappears to recognize that we're a group that, having died together with Christ, but we have that in common. And we have this future hope of life together in common. And the opportunity to be of service and of use and to participate in the coming kingdoms, the kingdom of the son and the kingdom of the father, in a fruitful and beneficial and helpful way.

This is something we can do together. There is an element of that esprit and that camaraderie that we recognize. And we're all in this together.

Let's pull together. We're not unequally yoked with the faithless. We are yoked with fellow believers that have that same hope and that same motivation.

But if we deny, if we fall back onto perdition, remember Paul says in another place, we are not of those who fall back to loss, to *apolia*, to there is no opportunity, no blessing, no reward. You're going to be in the darkness outside waiting for the squeaky cart to reach you. That's got some healing leaves.

If you opt out, you don't want to participate. You think God's unfair to work hardship into the mix and to make it a part of his plan for us. You deny.

And if we deny, if we opt out from God's plan and purpose and this shared opportunity, he will deny us. This is the first third person singular pronoun in this set of lines. The first

time you see the Lord Jesus actually explicitly referred to here with a pronoun is in this, he also will deny us.

Once again, notice that this is still plural pronouns and those who wish to deconstruct, who wish to depart, to go some other way, to say, I don't like this. Therefore, I don't think it's right. And I'm not going to pursue it or follow it or support it anymore.

You will find company. There will be others willing to bring strange fire before the Lord, willing to call for returning to Egypt, missing the leeks and garlics. People seldom leave alone.

When a church splits, there's usually a group that departs. There will be fellow travelers who say, I'm not going anymore down this road. When the spies went into the land, you had two that were ready to go in by God's grace and in God's strength and take it, slay the giants, eat of the milk and honey and the large bunches of grapes and figs and other things that were in the land.

But there were 10 that said, we were like grasshoppers in their sight. We've got to turn back. We can't go in.

If we deny, and when you see that line, just remember the 10 spies. If we deny, he will deny us. What is the nature of the denial? This is not loss of salvation.

What is it? Well, what happened on that occasion where Caleb and Joshua were the faithful spies and the other 10 gave a bad report and recommended against trusting God for victory, trusting God for provision, trusting God for the blessings and the benefits of the land. How did God deny? What did God deny? That fulfillment of promise of blessing and opportunity was denied. They are still believers.

They will rise in the resurrection of old Testament saints. They will rise from the dust of the wilderness where they dropped over the next 40 years. But they will not be qualified to dwell in the millennial kingdom because they were faithless.

They were disobedient. They went home and cried all night. And wept.

And like Esau, once God says, okay, you're not going in. Well, then they had sort of a false rally when, well, let's try it anyway. And God said, sorry, no.

There is a time of opportunity and we've got to step up by God's grace. Be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. As long as you remember where the strength is, this is just nothing but positive opportunity.

Yes, it's hardship to be endured. But if we deny, He will deny us the fruits, the benefits. If the farmer denies the field and doesn't go out and do his work, God's not going to, you know, when Paul says, I planted, Apollos watered, God gave the increase.

If Paul had not planted and Apollos had not watered, would there have been increase? Not in that way, not on that score. He will deny us. If we're not willing to endure hardship as a good soldier, he is not willing to reward us as he will reward those who are motivated, who do look around and say, it's not just me.

We're an army. We're a body. We're a fellowship.

We're a family. Starting out with the son, my son, you've got to know where the strength is. He will deny us.

Verse 13, if we are faithless, if we are faithless, He remains faithful. If we fall away, He remains faithful. This has been taken in different ways.

If you weren't looking at this passage and you were looking contextually at the broader New Testament, what is the fate of the faithless believer? Apathetic, indifferent, doesn't trust the promises, isn't motivated by hope, isn't operating in the love of God, doesn't really love God enough to follow Him, doesn't have that Job attitude, though He slay me, yet will I trust Him? I've received good things from God. I not also accept hardship when He puts it in my path. What a wonderful example Job is.

His three friends struggle for 37 chapters trying to get it. But Job understands. And in the end, Job is blessed.

The friends are in need of a sacrifice. If we are faithless, He remains faithful. What does this mean? Can we be faithless? And well, He's still going to bless and He's still going to reward and everybody will be happy over there.

That is not what this is saying. If we are faithless, He is going to be faithful. He is going to be faithful to reward those who are faithful and He is faithful to deny those who deny the faith, who deny the opportunity, who push away the purposes of God and the necessary preparation and training of God.

If you push it away, He's going to remain faithful. When He denies us, He denies those of us who fall away. He's being faithful.

God was faithful to the Israelites for the 40 years in the wilderness. He was faithful to sustain them and their sandals didn't wear out, but He was also faithful to not let them into the land. When He said, you will not enter, He was faithful.

God is faithful to the positive side of His promises. He is also faithful to honor the conditions of those promises. And if we do not meet the condition, if we do not exercise faith and patience, who is it that inherits the promises? We are not of those who fall back unto perdition, but of those who by faith and patience inherit.

And God is faithful to choose, to elect, to promote, to bless with inheritance those who

are faithful. And if we are faithless, He is going to be faithful. He's not gonna say, oh, come on in anyway, I feel sorry for you.

And it's all about love and acceptance and this idea of negativity. And I don't want you to feel bad about yourself and don't be ashamed. I blame and shame, that's not my forte.

I'm a loving God. So just come on in. Paul says, look, if we're faithless, He's going to be faithful.

His standards are not going to change. He's not going to lower the bar. He's not going to compromise His truth.

He's not going to abrogate His promises, both for blessing and to honor those. You think about the immigration situation and the illegal immigration that is happening in our country. And the idea of amnesty and benefits, and here's a voting card, here's a Medicare card, here's a hotel to stay in, here's transportation, we'll take you far inland, we'll take you to a sanctuary city.

Here are all these benefits. People who have followed the rules and have spent years going through the proper immigration process, who have learned the constitution and its amendments, who can tell you more about the government than people that grew up in our crummy schools. To honor those who illegally enter the country is to denigrate and to shame and belittle those who put in the effort to do it right.

It dishonors those who should be honored and it honors those who should be dishonored and disallowed. And our government should be faithful to its own laws and its own principles. And we will decide who is going to come in.

We will elect our citizens. You come and apply. And if you're not a terrorist, and if you're not a criminal, and if you have skills and you're going to add to the country, and you want to be here for the right reasons, you're not part of a drug cartel, you're not doing human trafficking, you're not engaged in other illicit and illegal activities, you're coming here because you're a quality person and you share the original patriotic American ethos and you want to pursue the American dream, we choose you.

That's election. You can endure all things for the sake of the elect because they've got the attitude that you want in the eternal future from God's perspective. But if we deny the whole program, it's not just him, it's everything associated.

It's God's plan and purpose. If we deny all of the above, don't want to be an athlete, don't want to be a farmer, don't want to be a soldier, don't want to endure hardship, don't want to look for the grace that is in Christ Jesus, you're opting out. He will deny us.

And if we are faithless, he's going to remain faithful. You're not going to get a mulligan. You're not going to get a pass.

You're not going to, well, as long as you're here, here's amnesty. Here's your green card into the millennial kingdom. Here's a hotel room in the new Jerusalem.

God is faithful. He remains faithful. Why? He can deny us when we are faithless, but he cannot deny himself.

God's promises and God's program, God's purpose, God's grace, God's provision, God's love is grounded in and flows out from his divine eternal character. And it does not change. He can deny us, but he cannot deny himself.

And if we deny, or we are faithless, we will be denied. And he is going to stick with his program. That's what this is saying.

This is not, well, if you're faithless, don't worry about it. He'll still carry you in on a stretcher. No, he won't.

You will be in the darkness which is outside and deservedly so. Did Jesus go to the tomb of Judas and raise him and say, all is forgiven. I know you were grieving when you hung yourself and your bowels spilled out into the Akkeldama field of blood.

So I raised Lazarus. I'll raise you. Come on.

And I still need a 12th apostle. What was the difference between Judas and Peter? Peter had momentum and had an episode of failure. He didn't have a pattern of failure.

He didn't regularly raid the treasury box. He didn't complain about alabaster boxes being broken to honor the Lord Jesus and to anticipate his death episodically. Judas was this way all the time.

And he ended up truly denying the Lord. And went to his grave unrepentant. He was sorry, but sorrow was not repentance.

Peter was repentant. Just as he was when he saw the Lord Jesus on his boat and got the miraculous draft of fish. And he said, Lord, depart from me.

I'm a sinful man. Peter recognized his failures and acknowledged them, homologued them. And was in line for forgiveness and restoration and the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

That's the difference. So watch this carefully. It has been called the martyr's prayer.

And even if we crack under the hardship, he'll still bring us in. That is not what is in view here. We may flake.

God is never going to flake. So Paul says in verse 14, remind them of these things and charge them. Remember how we looked at the farmer and noticed there are two things

about it.

One is the farmer plants and plows and cultivates in hope of a crop. But he is also the first to partake. And whatever it is he is cultivating, he's got to sustain himself before he sends it out to the community.

And in the same way, we have to ensure that we tend to our own spiritual health and care and feeding and that we nourish ourselves in God's word and through God's spirit, and that we avail ourselves of the grace that is in Christ Jesus. You see here, Paul says, remind of these things. And them is in italics.

He says, call to remembrance these things. And the group is in view, but notice them is in italics twice. Recall to mind these things, charging before the Lord, not to strive about words.

It doesn't say charging them. It says, this is an encouragement for the group, including you. You need to remember and you need to have this exhortation.

If you have any doubt of this, go back to verse seven. Paul says, consider what I say. You, Timothy, you consider it.

Look at verse eight. Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David. He partook of our flesh.

He has endured hardship with his eye on the prize and desiring to please the one who sent him, his heavenly father. For the love of the father, the Lord Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame. Now he is seated at the father's right hand.

The father has highly exalted him and given him a name above every name. But of the seed of David is a reminder that the Lord Jesus himself has engineered and has been the archetype, the prototype for this way of living. Seed of David and having been raised from the dead, this is another perfect.

It says that he was raised as though it's the episode. This is a perfect. Having been raised, consider the Lord Jesus.

He's of the seed of David. He lived an earthly life with human progenitors, a human family. But remember the Lord Jesus Christ, having been raised from the dead, according to my good news, having been raised.

This is the idea of here's where you came from. Here's where you're going. The Lord Jesus is of the seed of David.

He's got historical human roots and human incarnation and tested in all points like as we are. But having been raised from the dead, according to my gospel, what does the gospel say about the Lord Jesus? Remember, we saw that in first Timothy when manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit back in chapter three, of first Timothy, seen by angels,

preached among Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory. That's Christ having been raised from the dead.

Everything that followed his resurrection and his ascension and the hope of his future return and his kingdom and sharing with him and reigning with him. Remember Jesus Christ, having been raised from the dead, it's in the past and it's got results that are gonna go into the eternal future. So consider and remember Timothy, you yourself, now you can remind and you can challenge and exhort the entire group because you've done it first.

And anytime we feel the opportunity arise to endeavor to be a blessing or a benefit or to express Christian love for someone else, we always have to ensure that we have first tended to ourselves. When the masks drop, I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago on the airplane, they always tell you, the stewardess up in the front after she uses the fake seatbelt, she says, if the cabin loses pressure, oxygen masks will descend. If you have children, put your mask on first so that you can breathe.

If your child struggles or panics or you've got to pick them up off the floor to get their mask on, you don't pass out before you help them. You've got to look to yourself first. Rescuing a drowning person, you've got to ensure that you come up from behind and do the swimmer's tow where they don't grab you and take you both down.

And many highly qualified, experienced swimmers have drowned because they were grabbed by someone in a panic and could no longer swim. We have to look to ourselves first, keeping in mind that we have an effect on others. And by looking to ourselves, we are a blessing and a benefit to others.

By staying as healthy as we can, by availing ourselves of the grace that is in Christ Jesus and being strengthened individually first, we can now endeavor to bear one another's burdens because we have shouldered our own load first. So notice the order here. Consider in verse seven, remember in verse eight, be strengthened in verse one.

Now remind the group of these things. You keep remembering it. Paul includes Timothy in this.

That's why them is not the pronoun. Call to memory these things. Charge before the Lord.

Who is standing before the Lord? Just Timothy or the whole group? The whole group is before the Lord. And so we together need to remember, we want to endure. We want to be found faithful.

And this we idea continues from the little lyric poem there. And notice this group idea. It takes two to tango.

You know, there's always two sides to an argument. And so he continues here and says, charge them before the Lord. Charge us before the Lord.

The group needs to be reminded and exhorted not to strive about words to no profit. And words here, this is logos in the plural. This is also ideas or concepts.

Do you really want to waste breath wrangling about politics, social issues, international happenings, policies, wars and rumors of wars, disasters? How well were they met? Did the government do the right thing? Did the people who stayed do the wrong thing? Should they have left? And coming into conflict, there's nothing wrong with having an opinion and having a point of view. But if you realize that you are creating discord, you're sparking division and strife, there is a rising temperature. It's no longer a polite conversation.

Now it's turning into a debate or an argument or a conflict. There is no profit striving about issues. Words here, logos, this is an issue.

Striving about these to no profit and to the ruin of the hearers. Now there is distraction. Now there is deflection.

Now there is focus on the wrong things. You're no longer where the Holy Spirit can bless the word to the hearts of fellow believers. You're no longer speaking the truth in love.

Now you're speaking opinions in bitterness, in acrimony, in impatience, in denigration. And how can you believe that? How can you support that? How can you vote for that person? How could you possibly even consider? How can you call yourself a Christian and espouse this view? When a conversation takes that turn, we have to exit stage left, change the subject, ask somebody a personal question. The quickest way to divert the direction of a conversation is ask a question so that someone can talk about something that is important to them that isn't a divisive social or political piece of bombware.

If you find yourself in the minefield, backtrack and go a different direction. If you see tripwires and booby traps, get out of that area quickly. There is no profit.

There is ruin in that argument. Some people think, it's a part of my Christian witness to debate and to decry and to point out all of the errors and the bad policies. We're being prophetic.

We're calling out the empire. We're calling out evil. It is ruinous to the hearers.

Go back to whatsoever things are pure, noble, lovely, honorable, of good report. Think on these things. The peace of God ensues, passes all understanding.

It preserves our hearts and minds. This has the opposite effect. And you can quickly tell that conversation takes a bad turn.

People think they're on a holy crusade to defend a candidate or defend a policy or defend a principle. We can express our understanding based on the word of God and then let it go. If people want to believe, say, think, vote differently, go be warm, be fed.

I am not going to debate. I'm not going to argue. I am not going to wrangle and strive about words to no profit to the ruin of the hearers.

Once again, all of this is in the group context. Isn't it? You see this throughout. Am I having a beneficial effect on those around me? Or am I striving to no profit and ending up ruining the hearers? What is my effect on others? Be diligent.

Bend every effort is a good colloquial translation. Bend every effort. To present yourself, beautiful translation here in the old King James, it was show, but it's present.

This is to make a presentation, to show something to someone in sort of a formal way. And this is different than let your moderation be known to all. The Lord is at hand.

The Lord is nearby observing all the time. This is you're going to come before the Lord. And the idea is at the judgment.

And you want to bend every effort so that you can present yourself when you come before the throne in prayer or when you come before the throne at the judgment seat. Bend every effort to present yourself to God. The approved should come after to God.

You need to just circle approved and put it after. Because you're presenting yourself to God. You're standing on the painted yellow footprints in God's presence.

Bend every effort to present yourself to God approved. It isn't like, well, I don't feel like I'm really qualified. So I'm not going to come before God.

We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So when you make your presentation, that's why I think it's important to preserve the Greek word order here. Be diligent.

Bend every effort to present yourself to God approved, not ashamed. We are all going to present ourselves. How is that going to go? You want to ensure.

And now we're back. Notice we're back to the singular. Present yourself.

Yourself. Approved. The judgment is not corporate.

You can't just join a good group and say, well, you know, I'm part of that group and they do great things. Bend every effort to present yourself to God approved. A workman, not ashamed.

Rightly dividing the word of truth. Straightforward. Handling.

Of the word of truth. Notice you have word here, just as we did in the preceding verse. Striving about words to no profit.

You want to rightly handle the word of truth. If you're going to assemble the bricks, be sure they go together. If you're laying a course, each stone should align and sit squarely.

In relation to its neighbors. And it is the word of truth that we focus on. A word fitly spoken.

Rightly dividing. We've visited 215 many, many times. Now what's on the outside? We have a bracket here around 15.

Shun. This is to put distance between yourself and something. Profane.

This is mundane. This is just ordinary. This is not profanity in the sense that we use it for bad words.

This is things that are of the world. They're not spiritual. They don't have a spiritual angle.

People that want to discuss at length the fantasy world of some extended series on television or, you know, the Marvel universe or what did this comic book character do or not do? And there are people who live in Star Trek, the original series or Star Trek, the next generation. And they expand and they extend and they interpret and they read into various characters. And they have heroes and villains.

And that's profane. That has nothing to do with real life or the word of God. You can create artifices of social policy or of political expediency or of international dealings that are just, there's no profit in them in the spiritual realm.

Why waste your time? Does God not have enough? Remember the Philistine king in Gath when David goes and lets the spit run down his beard to escape being executed? And the king says, have I need of fools that you bring this madman before me? Do I need another nutcase? Am I in short supply for nuts that you're bringing me this one? There is no shortage of people to engage in profane and idle babblings. This word babblings is the word kenos, which means empty and phonay, which means sounds. It's just empty sounds.

Think of Charlie Brown's teacher. Wah, wah, wah, wah, wah. That's keno phonay.

There's no advance. There's nothing the Holy Spirit can bless to the heart of a fellow believer or shine the light of the glory of Jesus Christ for salvation when it's just politics. It's just current events.

It's just celebrities and babblings. And what is the problem? They increase to more ungodliness. So now we have three effects.

There is no profit, ruin, and ungodliness that comes from poorly considered conversation. Ask of God, consider these things. The Lord will give us wisdom.

God is searching the earth. He has no need of more fools. God does need those of us who will wake up, pay attention, and endure hardship as a good soldier, looking at the seed of David, having been raised from the dead, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

You can't find a better example or a better inspiration. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for preserving this passage for us across the centuries, across years of persecution and Bible burnings and suppression and opposition and persecution of every kind.

We are privileged to have unlimited access to your word. We have unlimited resort to your Holy Spirit who dwells with us. We can enjoy your presence and the presence of your Son, the Lord Jesus, when we have these words and we guard them and keep them and preserve them.

We pray that as we do so, the Holy Spirit will bless us with understanding and insight so that we can see clearly how best to put into practice these exhortations to be living examples of the wonderful relationship that is to be had and enjoyed in Christ with you. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.