

Text: 2 Timothy 2:11-13

Title: Future Reward

Truth: Look to the outcome of your faith to be strengthened in ministry now.

Date/Location: July 24, 2016 at FBC

Introduction

From our last study, we learned that two motivations for Timothy to press on in gospel ministry included that he is to remember the resurrected Christ, and that he is to take note of the example of Paul who endured suffering for the sake of God's chosen ones. Paul preached, and taught, and went to jail, with the express purpose that God's elect could obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

This phrase "with eternal glory" foreshadows two great statements in the upcoming verses which form the third motivation for Timothy to continue in ministry: you are ultimately going to live with Christ and reign with Him if you remain faithful...so keep living for Jesus.

III. Future Reward, v. 11-13

A. The faithful saying refers to what is about to come next. A *faithful saying* refers to something particularly noteworthy. It is not "more" God-breathed than any other part of Scripture, but it calls attention to it and helps us to focus our minds on it. This phrase is used exclusively by Paul to Timothy and Titus:

1. 1 Timothy 1:15 – that Christ Jesus came into the world sinners to save (Greek word order).
2. 1 Timothy 3:1 – If a man desires the office of pastor, he desires a good work.
3. 1 Timothy 4:9 – (from verse 8) Godliness is valuable in all things, holding promise in the present life *and* in the future life.
4. 2 Timothy 2:11 – This passage, which reminds us about rewards for faithfulness and remuneration for unfaithfulness.
5. Titus 3:8 – those who believe in God must maintain good works.

B. Paul either composed or reproduced a hymn-like verse that may have been used in Christian worship.

1. If he reproduced it, he did so "with approval" and its penning into Scripture entails its inspiration (God-breathing) at that time. It was not

"God-breathed" per se before it was written into the text of 2 Timothy.

2. This could be a hymn or spiritual song like what Paul mentions in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 as expressions of being filled with the Spirit.
 3. This faithful saying is also notable for its content. We do well to compare this to modern hymnody, and those of prior generations too, to ensure that our hymns are of proper doctrinal quality. Our hymnal has some real bombs in it, but it has a lot of nice stuff. Then there are some real lightweight, repetitive songs in the modern genre that are a waste, and even flat-out doctrinally wrong to sing or "perform" in a church. Look at the hymns of today and ask yourself, "Do they speak about dying with Christ, enduring suffering, denying him, being faithless, etc.?" Those themes are too negative for the modern man, it seems.
- C. The first two lines of the hymn or poem are positive in nature; the last two are negative. The first two lines, if their conditions are met, speak about believers; the second set of lines refers to those who are not believers. As with much of the Bible, there is a binary divide in humanity. There are those who are inside the family of God and those outside; those who are in the kingdom and those who are in the outer darkness; there are those who are indwelt by the Spirit of God and those who are not (Romans 8:9).
- D. Died with Christ → Will Live with Christ.
1. The context of suffering is thought by some commentators to indicate martyrdom, but I believe "dying with Christ" should be correlated with similar words in Romans 6:1-5, and is quite parallel with verse 5 there. This is for two reasons: 1) the aorist tense of the verb; and 2) the vocabulary of "dying *with*" Christ. This evokes Romans 6:5's having been united with Christ in death. At salvation, we "died with Christ," indicating that we were so identified that we died with Him. The result includes resurrection and life with Christ. This does not mean that we have to be a martyr to live with Christ. It just says that, if we died with Christ (assumed true), we look forward to living forever with Him.
 2. Others give this a different nuance, making it into a baptismal formula and suggesting that "dying with Christ" occurs in water baptism. I respond by saying that in actuality, dying with Christ is *pictured* in water baptism, but it doesn't actually happen in the waters of

baptism. Water baptism does not denote, as one commentator wrongly says, "the decisive past-event which marked the end of the old life and the beginning of the new." Water baptism is a public profession; the private profession in the heart and mind of the person was the point at which they were united with Christ and saved from their sin.

3. Now in saying this, I do *not* intend to diminish water baptism, as if to make it "unnecessary." It is necessary to be sure, but just not necessary to *obtain* salvation. It is necessary *after* salvation. There are some in our midst who have not thought through this issue. My own personal testimony about water baptism may be instructive at this point.
4. It seems to me that too many of us focus our thoughts on living with God and our pre-deceased loved ones in heaven. We need to make sure we really focus our attention on living *with Christ*. And beyond that, we need to remember that we will do more than just *live*. We will reign with him and serve Him. We see that next.

E. Endure → Reign with Christ. Those who are truly saved will endure to the end of their lives, continuing in personal faith, sound doctrine, and good works. They will then share in the regnal majesty of Jesus Christ in His kingdom. See Revelation 20:4-6 and 22:3. The promise of the Word of God is that Christians will be co-regents with Christ. 1 Cor. 6:3 indicates we will even judge angels. See also Revelation 1:6, 3:21, 5:10.

1. We all died **with** Christ; but we may not all die **for** Christ.
2. We all must endure for Christ; but some of us are lagging in that area.
3. The danger of not enduring is that it puts us closer and closer to denying Christ. Remember the message of the book of Hebrews which we studied some time back: it is a persevering faith that is a saving faith. Those who don't endure ultimately quit and unmask themselves as not part of God's family in the first place.

F. Deny Christ → He Will Deny Us. Spend some time reading Mathew 10:32-33 and let this idea sink in. See also Mark 8:38. Don't take it lightly. Don't try to override it by saying to yourself, "Well, I've privately professed faith in Christ." Are you unwilling to make a public testimony for Christ in baptism? Ashamed to testify to him at work or school? What does that mean about your faith? Are you kidding yourself, or are you really disowning him?

1. The point here is not about denying some abstract thing, but denying *Christ* personally.
 2. "Denying" does not mean denying Jesus momentarily and then repenting of it. Although Peter denied Jesus, he did not permanently do so (Luke 22:61-62). Paul is talking here about a permanent state of denial, a total apostasy from Christ.
- G. Faithless → He Remains Faithful. This is similar to the prior statement. Denial may have a stronger "public" nuance to it, while "faithlessness" is easier to exercise in private or without as much notice. Peter was momentarily faithless and denied Christ; people can be faithless in the longer term and permanently deny Christ. Just be sure to know that God notices everything! This is because He cannot deny Himself. The Lord cannot refuse to agree to the truth or claim no association with Himself. He cannot break His promises or fail to perform His word. Peter might disown Jesus temporarily, as we might sinfully do the same. But the Lord cannot disown Himself or His Father.

God's constancy saves us from our own momentary lapses into faithlessness. And this, for the believer, is the power of the hymn Paul has recorded. God is providing life and co-regency and help for us in our weakness. Yes, He will deny those who deny Him, but if you wish His help to remain faithful, He will give it!

Conclusion

- A. We should be motivated to endure in Christian ministry despite its difficulties by truths we find by looking back, looking presently, and looking to the future. For Timothy, that looked like this: (1) In the past, Christ has been raised; (2) Presently, Paul's suffering for the gospel is worth it for the salvation of others; (3) In the future, you will receive a reward of eternal life and co-reigning with Christ.
- B. Paul reminds Timothy of the example of suffering that is found in Christ and in Paul himself. These will hopefully help Timothy to press forward despite problems.
- C. Another big principle in this text is that suffering comes before glory. As it was with Christ (1 Peter 1:11), so it is for His followers (John 15:20, 1 Peter 5:10). Don't be surprised when you suffer for being a Christian or propagating its message!

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