

Text: 2 Timothy 2:8-13

Title: Why Continue Ministry?

Truth: Because of Christ's resurrection, eternal salvation, and heavenly reward.

Date/Location: July 17, 2016 at FBC

Introduction

Remember that we are in a chapter which uses several illustrations that demonstrate how to properly conduct Christian ministry.

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| 1. A child | 4. A farmer | 7. A servant |
| 2. A soldier | 5. A workman | |
| 3. An athlete | 6. A vessel | |

Last time we examined the first four on the list. I was reminded in my study this week that several of these illustrations contain an implicit idea that Christian ministry is hard work! It is likened to being a soldier—not easy. It is similar to being an athlete—very strenuous. It is like farming—hard work. Pastors, missionaries, and YOU, the Christian believer who is an ambassador for Christ in everyday life, must work hard at not only being a Christian, but at passing on the gospel and sound doctrine to others.

Now, before we get to the workman in number 5, we will study verses 8-13. These verses contain a motivation for continuing in Christian ministry despite the difficulties that arise in it.

I. Do Not Forget the Resurrected Christ, v. 8

- A. The verse starts with a command to remember two key things. This command is needed because it is easy to overlook or assume the truths that follow. Some churches have so forgotten the truths about Christ that they have become apostate. Continual applying of the mind to Jesus will prevent this.
- B. Human lineage of Jesus. The first thing we are told to remember is the identity of Jesus. This Jesus is the one who came through the seed of King David. He came in the flesh. His lineage proves He is a man in addition to being God. See 1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 7.
- C. Resurrection. The key point to remember is that Jesus was raised from the dead. Notice that this assumes the death of Christ, and His death for sin, and His burial. But Paul keys in on the resurrection. Do NOT forget the resurrection when you are telling others about the gospel. Yes, Christ did die for sin. But if you leave it at that, you are not sharing the full truth of the GOOD NEWS!

D. This truth is according to Paul's gospel. The "my" should not be overemphasized. It is the message that God gave to Paul to preach, and Paul personally identified with it. The "my" does not mean that Paul's gospel was different than Peter's, for instance. Theirs are the same message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ—alone!

II. Suffering with a Purpose, v. 9-10

- A. Persecution came to Paul because of the gospel. Had he remained in Jewish circles, or been an idolater of the sort that existed throughout the empire, he would have little to no trouble at all. But as it was, He suffered for preaching a new and different idea.
- B. The extent of his persecution was to chains and criminal status. It may seem hard to swallow, but Paul was treated as a "malefactor."
1. There is only one other passage that uses this word, and that is Luke 23 (v. 32, 33, 39). Paul is equated, in the Roman view, with two criminals who deserved to hang for their crimes. One of the criminals in Luke 23:41 admitted that they had received a just reward for their wrongdoing. So, preaching Christ was, in the eyes of some, as bad as murder or treason or rape.
 2. Paul is not a criminal by God's law or any righteous law, but he was treated as one. Today, one person commits an abortion-murder and does NOT go to jail; another person refuses to issue a same-sex marriage certificate and DOES go to jail. Criminal is right and righteous is wrong. How backwards.
- C. The Word of God is a power that cannot be chained. It is the power of God for salvation. It is living and powerful. It is sharper than a sword. It cuts to the heart of a person. The more you repress it, the wider it spreads. When you make something illegal, there is something that draws people to it. Still, communists and Islamists and atheists want to get rid of the Bible and its followers. Try as they might, the Word of God abides forever. It is settled in Heaven because its Author sits there and rules the world from there. Even if heaven and earth pass away, it cannot do so. The Word of God has been likened to a full-grown adult lion. It needs no defense. It is an uncontainable power.
- D. Paul endured to bring salvation to the elect.
1. Christ's resurrection and the power of the gospel motivate Paul to endure all his suffering. He says that he does this "for the sake of the elect." Quickly we get into some deep theology here with the doctrine of election and the teaching of the means of salvation.

2. Who are the elect? They are "chosen" by God. They are a subset of humanity. More specifically, they are a "proper subset" of all human beings who ever lived. Not all will be saved. Some will, some will not. God has chosen some individuals according to His infinite wisdom and good pleasure (Eph. 1:3-9). Who are they? No one can know in advance. This lack of knowledge makes it imperative to preach the gospel to *every* person. Why did God choose them? We can affirm on the basis of Scripture that it was not because of any merit in them nor their foreseen faith (Romans 9:11-13). The positive reason is "because God wanted to," which may leave something to be desired, but it humbly accepts that God is God, and I am not, and I cannot understand all His ways and reasons. I simply thank Him that He opened my eyes to the gospel.
 3. Let me put a question to you: If someone is elect, why should Paul have to endure suffering for that person? He is suffering for preaching the gospel. Why should Paul have to endure suffering because of preaching the gospel? Why doesn't he just hang it up, and let God save the people if they are elect? The simplest answer is that God commanded Paul, by His appointment to preach the gospel. God's will was that Paul be a special emissary of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 4. A longer answer is that God has ordained the ends of salvation for the elect as well as the means to it: the preaching of the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13). By His knowledge and will, He has decreed and knows that it will be effective for the propagation of the gospel if His people suffer for it (for example: Acts 8:4). Furthermore, Paul sees the outcome – eternal salvation for others – as worth the suffering that he undergoes. By comparison, most of our persecutions are far less than those of our Lord Jesus Christ. If He would die to save others, why should we not endure persecution to get them the message?
- E. The purpose of suffering for the gospel is that others may obtain salvation in Christ with eternal glory. Salvation from sin comes with glory in the future kingdom and the eternal state (John 17:22; 2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Peter 5:10). This everlasting and marvelous outcome is worth all suffering.
- F. Humanly speaking, the consequences of Paul *not* enduring would be far reaching and devastating. The gospel would be stuck at the mouth of the messenger who should be speaking it out. We must realize that what we choose to do with our lives has an effect on potentially many other people. We can ruin other people's lives or restore them. We can hurt them or help them.

III. Future Reward, v. 11-13

Paul either composes or reproduces a hymn-like verse that may have been used in Christian worship. The first two lines are positive in nature; the last two are negative.

- A. Died with Christ → Will Live with Christ. The context of suffering may indicate martyrdom, but I believe "dying with Christ" should be correlated with similar words in Romans 6:1-5. 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.
- B. Endure → Reign with Christ See Revelation 20:4. 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. Those who are truly saved will endure to the end of their lives, continuing in personal faith, sound doctrine, and good works.
- C. Deny Christ → He Will Deny Us. Spend some time reading Mathew 10:32-33 and let this idea sink it. 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?
- D. Faithless → He Remains Faithful. This is because He cannot deny Himself. Although Peter denied Jesus, the Lord cannot refuse to agree to the truth or claim no association with Himself. Peter might disown Jesus temporarily, as we might sinfully do the same. But the Lord cannot disown Himself or His Father.

Conclusion

We should be motivated to endure in Christian ministry despite its difficulties by three truths: (1) Christ is risen; (2) Suffering for the gospel is worth the salvation of others; (3) We will receive a reward of eternal life and co-reigning with Christ. 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.

Another big principle in this text is that suffering comes before glory. As with Christ (1 Peter 1:11), so with his followers (John 15:20, 1 Peter 5:10). Don't be surprised when you suffer for the gospel! MAP