



2 TIMOTHY 2:8-13

Knowledge is Power

8TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY – FEBRUARY 26, 2017 (AM)

ENROLL

- ✓ My Bad Dream
 - As a child, I had a reoccurring dream where I found myself trapped in a long hallway with something approaching me from the other end. If I recall correctly, the thing that approached was a large but lovable character from the television show "Sesame Street," which, if we're all honest with ourselves, I think we'd admit we'd be terrified to meet most of those characters if we met them in a dark alley.
 - I would look for somewhere to hide and the only available hiding place was a small table in the hallway. I would crawl under the table and hope that I would go unseen. My fear would grow as the creature approached, but the funny thing is, it would always walk on past me, never taking notice of me or my hiding place.
 - Despite the fact that nothing bad ever happened to me in this dream, I would have it often, and it would always scare me, and I'd wake up in a cold sweat.
 - Until one night something changed. The dream began the same as it always did, I found my way under the table and began to tremble, but then, in my dream, I remembered something. I remembered that nothing bad ever happened to me, and that there was nothing to be afraid of. So I relaxed, watched the creature pass on by, and from that day on, I never had the dream again.
- ✓ Have you ever heard the saying, "Knowledge is Power"
 - It is a saying that has been attributed to many people and been used to convey many things.
 - Some use it to tout the value of education
 - Others to claim that intellectual strength is more valuable than physical strength
 - I'd like to use it this morning to refer to the power that can be gained by recalling what you know to be true in the midst of suffering.
- ✓ Today's Passage

- For my six year old self, it was the knowledge that ultimately I was safe from harm that gave me the power to over come this particular trial.
- In our passage today, Paul has knowledge he wants to pass along to Timothy in order to help him overcome his own suffering, a suffering which is for the sake of the gospel.

MAIN POINTS

- ✓ So let's turn now to our passage if you're not already there (2 Timothy 2:8 – 13) PAGE 995 in the pew Bible and read our passage.
- ✓ Our text begins with the word "Remember"
 - It is the 5th imperative or command that Paul gives to Timothy since the beginning of the second chapter
 - Following be strengthened, entrust, share in suffering, and think over
 - Our entire passage falls under this command, it is the central idea, which is why I've begun each of the five points (found in the bulletin) with the word "remember"
- ✓ Not new to Timothy
 - The knowledge Paul is passing along to Timothy is not new knowledge for Timothy, in fact, as we will see, they are some of the most foundational truths of his faith . . .
 - But they are truths that Timothy needs to be reminded of if he is to endure the hardships of the Christian life.
- ✓ Not new to us
 - Perhaps you will find that these truths are not new to you either.
 - But they are truths we need to be reminded of too.
 - Primarily, because we are a short-sighted people.
 - Often so consumed by the reality of what lies right in front of us, especially when that reality involves fear or pain or suffering, that we fail to recall the power of the gospel for our present situation.
- ✓ Let's hear from Paul -- 5 reminders for Christians in times of suffering for the gospel.

MAIN POINTS

⁸ *Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel . . .*

1. Remember Jesus risen and reigning (v. 8)
 - a. PERSON
 - i. Notice first, that in his fear and suffering, Paul first reminds Timothy of a person, rather than an idea, or a truth.
 - ii. Rather than pointing Timothy to some-thing that will help or some-where he can go, he points Timothy to some-one.
 - iii. But not just anyone.
 - iv. He points him to Jesus Christ, the Savior of all mankind as preached in Paul's gospel, and he reminds Timothy that this Jesus is risen and reigning.
 - b. Risen from the dead
 - i. Recalling once again that this faith for which Timothy suffers is a faith that leads to LIFE
 1. 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus
 2. 1:10 which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel
 - ii. For Timothy there is a promise of life, for Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light, we know this by his own conquering of death at his resurrection.
 - iii. Power
 1. 2 Corinthians 13:3-4 He is not weak in dealing with you, but powerful among you. For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God.

2. 2 Tim 1:7 For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self control
 3. Resurrection points to POWER, and it is a power that is in us if we have God's Spirit
- c. The offspring of David
- i. Reference to the fact that Jesus was born in the line of the great king David
 - ii. Not only has he risen from the dead, but he now reigns.
 - iii. His resurrection was his coronation and his enthronement
 - iv. Reminder of WHO IS IN CHARGE
 - v. Though Timothy suffers at the hands of men, and sees kings and rulers fighting against the gospel, imprisoning his Spiritual father Paul, he can rest assured that Jesus sits on the only throne that matters, and that he who conquered death will be able to conquer all things, in their proper time.
- d. Friends, are you suffering today for the sake of the gospel?
- i. In your schools, in your workplace, in your neighborhood, in your families.
 - ii. How sweet is it to be reminded that this gospel leads to LIFE, that the Power that raised Jesus from the dead is within us and will raise us, and until that day, JESUS will always BE IN CHARGE
- e. Paul goes on

⁹ . . . *for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal.*

Change in tone. From POWER to WEAKNESS. Although the Christian's future is very bright, Paul wants to remind Timothy that the cross comes before the crown

2. Remember that the cross comes before the crown
 - a. Prior to being enthroned in heaven, Jesus suffered on a cross and died.
 - i. His cross came before His crown.
 - b. Now Paul points out, by way of his own life, that the same is true for all Christians
 - i. Paul is suffering much like Christ – bound and as a criminal

- ii. Not surprising
- iii. Jesus said in John 15:20, "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you."
- c. Reminding Timothy
 - i. The suffering he is going through is normal
 - ii. Suffering for the sake of the gospel is a normal part of the Christian life
 - iii. Not a sign of God's displeasure, or that God is no longer in control
 - iv. Rather, it is further evidence that Jesus is risen and reigning, for what he said would happen is happening
- d. When we suffer for the gospel
 - i. We shouldn't be caught off guard
 - ii. It shouldn't cause us to backtrack in our faith or doubt God's goodness
 - iii. It should be expected as a normal part of the Christian life
 - iv. Which may lead us to ask, if we aren't experiencing any suffering for the gospel, are we really living the normal Christian life?
- e. Paul uses the fact that he is bound with chains to remind Timothy of yet another truth. . .

But the Word of God is not bound!

- a. Drastic contrast to Paul's being bound in chains (Word of God is not bound) in order to teach this:
3. Remember the difference between the message and the messenger
- a. I can only imagine Timothy was discouraged by the fact that the greatest messenger of the Christian faith was bound up in a prison somewhere in Rome
 - b. Paul however, wasn't discouraged, at least not in this letter, for though the messenger had been chained up, Paul knew that the message wasn't
 - c. Albania
 - i. On my first missions trip with Grace Church I went to Albania with just my wife, Dan Montgomery, and a college student named Ariel.

- ii. We took the students camping in the Albanian mountains only to be recruited to help fight forest fires that threatened the camp
 - iii. If I'd been asked the question "How do you fight forest fires on a windy day" prior to this experience, I wouldn't have known how to answer,
 - iv. After this experience, the answer is easy, "you don't"
 - v. It doesn't matter what you do on a windy day, you can cut trees down, you can dig a line in the dirt, you can even try dumping water or fire retardant on the flames, but nothing will stop the sparks from being carried by the wind and igniting still more trees and brush.
- d. This is what Paul wants Timothy to remember about the word of God
- i. It is like a forest fire on a windy day – it doesn't matter what people do to the messenger, the message will continue to spread.
 - ii. Perhaps Timothy had seen what happened to Paul and he was wary of ending up in the same place.
 - iii. Perhaps he was tempted to tone down his message or to tone down how public he was with the message, lest he end up in chains himself.
- e. Perhaps we are like Timothy
- i. Perhaps we are tempted to keep quiet when living for the gospel leads to suffering for the gospel.
 - ii. Perhaps we are concerned when we hear of countries where gospel proclamation leads to prison time.
 - iii. Perhaps we are fearful when we hear that people from those countries are moving to our own.
 - iv. Perhaps we have stopped sharing the gospel in our schools or our workplaces because the consequences have gotten too high.
 - v. Perhaps we voted a certain way in this last election because we were afraid of what the other side would do to those who live out the gospel.
- f. To us and to Timothy Paul says
- i. Don't fear what they can do to the messenger

- ii. It is the message that matters, and that message is not bound.
- iii. The implication being that we ought to do everything to share this message, which is exactly what Paul goes on to say . . .

¹⁰ Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

4. Remember that gospel advancement takes gospel action.
 - a. What Paul is doing
 - i. In this verse we see that Paul has not been putting Timothy through a mere cerebral exercise
 - ii. He is not reminding him of this knowledge so that Timothy can get a good grade on his religion test at the end of the semester.
 - iii. His reminder that Jesus is risen and reigning, that the cross comes before the crown, and that there is a difference between the message and the messenger is for the purpose of giving Timothy power, and that is the power endure.
 1. I'm assuming here that Paul references his own endurance in order to encourage Timothy, and us, to do the same.
 - b. Paul's is an important example to follow because of what suffering does to us
 - i. Suffering can have a cooling effect on our gospel ambition.
 - ii. It can cause us to lose speed, to lose motivation, to cool our zeal, and quiet our tongues.
 - c. But this is exactly what we can't do.
 - i. We can't slow down or allow our tongues to stop spreading the message.
 - ii. Why? Because God's elect are out there! And how will they obtain salvation if their witnesses, if those who are destined to bring them the gospel, don't endure their own suffering?
 - iii. That may cause you to scratch your head. Let me say it again
 - iv. Paul is telling Timothy: God's elect are out there! And how will they obtain salvation if their teachers, if those who are destined to bring them the gospel, don't endure?

1. While we can't explain the doctrine of election in it's entirety here I will say is this
 2. Notice Paul doesn't say, "The elect are out there! And because they're the elect Timothy, you can stay home and turn on the tele and be done with this pastoring that keeps getting you in trouble."
 3. Nor does he say, "there are lost people out there who may or may not accept Christ if you go and sacrifice your life to share the gospel with them."
 4. Instead he is saying, "The elect are out there, those who when they hear the gospel will most assuredly accept it are out there, and you need to endure everything to get the gospel to them"
- d. So Timothy, don't get lazy
- i. Don't slow down
 - ii. Don't let your preaching be quieted because of the suffering it brings upon you
 - iii. For their eternal souls depend on your willingness to endure
- e. Consider for a moment how many elect souls are now in the kingdom because of your own endurance
- i. How many people you have led to Jesus
 - ii. How many wouldn't know Jesus if you'd stayed in that night to get some extra rest or watch the game
 - iii. Consider how many more are still out there, chosen by God to know and love and treasure the gospel, but they can only do so if you share it with them.
 - iv. Consider how your slowing down or quieting your tongue might jeopardize their eternal salvation.
- f. Paul follows his encouragement to Timothy to endure with one last truth that Timothy must remember, that is what is at stake in this mission.

¹¹ *The saying is trustworthy, for:*

If we have died with him, we will also live with him;

¹² *if we endure, we will also reign with him;*

if we deny him, he also will deny us;

¹³ *if we are faithless, he remains faithful—*

for he cannot deny himself.

5. Remember the stakes

a. Two types of stakes here

i. The stakes for those who are loyal to Christ

1. who when faced with suffering for the gospel they choose death to self and endurance for Christ

ii. The stakes of those who are disloyal to Christ

1. Those who when faced with suffering for the gospel choose safety and comfort for themselves and who deny Christ

iii. To the first group is promised life, resurrection and reigning

1. Should remind us of who our passage began
2. Ties the whole passage together
3. Those who endure suffering will rise and reign with Christ

iv. To the second group is promised separation from God

1. Last stanza should not be taken to mean that when we struggle with unbelief that God remains faithful to us
2. Not saying that though we deny Jesus, he will remain faithful to us.
3. He will remain faithful to himself, to the exclusion of us.
4. Though true – it is not what is being said here.
5. Rather, it is saying that if you deny Christ in the face of suffering for the gospel, he will deny you
6. Just as he said he would - Matt 10:33 whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father in heaven

v. Remember, this is a trustworthy saying

1. 13b – all of the harshest warnings are indications of God's goodness (Dan B)
2. It is for Timothy's and our good that we hear this warning – so that we might endure.

So concludes Paul's 5 reminders to Timothy, 5 pieces of knowledge that are to give Timothy the power to endure suffering for the sake of the gospel

Let's conclude with a few questions of our own

APPLICATION

1. Has the Christian life caught you off guard?
2. Have you found yourself surprised by the amount of pushback you've received from your friends, your family, your school, your work, or your culture?
3. Have you begun to wonder if God really is in control?
4. Have you begun wondering whether or not there is purpose to all that you are going through?
5. Have hardships caused you to slow down in the race for your faith?
6. Have you stopped sharing your faith with others, stopped talking about Christ in public, stopped doing things that bring attention to the fact that you are a Christian?
7. Have you begun to question whether or not your suffering is worth it?
8. Have you started to hide your faith from your friends?
9. Have you begun toying with the idea of leaving it altogether?
10. Of choosing a different, easier path. One that doesn't cause you to stick out from the crowd. One that doesn't invite opposition.
11. If that describes you, I want to remind you of two things.
 - a. First, remember Jesus Christ
 - i. When given with the task of leaving heaven and becoming a man, he didn't falter
 - ii. When opposed by the leaders of his day, he didn't back down
 - iii. When faced with suffering on a cross for your sin, he didn't walk away
 - iv. And because he didn't, he is now risen and reigning in heaven for all eternity
 - b. Second, remember the person who shared the gospel with you
 - i. If a parent, remember how they faithfully prayed for you and taught you about Christ

day after day

- ii. If a friend, remember how they faithfully pursued you and loved you and endured your initial rejection of the faith to make sure you understood the gospel
 - iii. If a pastor, remember how they faithfully taught Sunday after Sunday with the hope that God would save those in their congregation
 - iv. It is because these people endured that you now have faith.
- c. Let this knowledge give you the power to follow in their example
- i. May it give you the power to endure in your own faith, that you might rise and reign with Christ
 - ii. May it give you the power to endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they might rise and reign with you on that day.

LET'S PRAY

- ✓ Jesus, it is to your example that we now turn. You have done what we could not do. Enduring all evil and suffering and death, that we might have life. Because of it, you now reign in heaven above. Help us to follow your example. Give us the strength to endure our own suffering. May we do it for the sake of our souls and the sake of the souls you would use us to reach.

Amen

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