

2 Timothy 2:1-14

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[0 : 0 0] Now, as we look at the first half of this chapter 2 in 2 Timothy, we see that it opens with these words, Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Now, the therefore obviously means there is a reference to that which has already come. And we could take two or three different sections of chapter 1 to which this would apply. First of all, I would suggest verse 4 here in chapter 1.

Paul wants to see Timothy. But he doesn't want to see him come as a shadow of his former self.

He doesn't want to see him have him come as one who's fallen away. When he sees him, he wants to know that he's been faithful. So thou therefore, my son, because I desire to see thee, because I have a longing for thee.

But not only that, but also, as he says, verses 12 and 13, For which cause I also suffer these things. Nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I believed, and am persuaded that he's able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

[1 : 0 5] Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Therefore, my son, be strong in the grace. And finally, we've got the example that he gives of the house of Onesiphorus.

And how they are held up as an example of faithfulness and love to Paul. And how they diligently sought out Onesiphorus. Came seeking him in robe. He didn't just sort of idly inquire.

No, nobody knows. Okay, never mind. And just pass on. He sought him out diligently and found thee. Thou therefore, my son, be strong. Just as he was.

You be as he was. These are the examples I am looking to you, Timothy, to follow. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Now, the word that we have translated as strong means, literally, it means to be invested with power.

Be invested with power in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. That's on the be strong, be invested with power. Remember verse 7 of chapter 1. God had not given us this fit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

[2 : 1 1] Now, that power doesn't come from us. It's not in terms of, oh, look, I've done my exercises. Look at my biceps. Look at how strong and athletic I am. It's nothing to do with physical strength or power. The power is from the Lord.

Be invested with power. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Because God has not given us the spirit of fear, timidity, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

To be able to recognize and address these issues. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same cometh thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

So, the emphasis here, we could divide up this section of the chapter into basically four headings. Basically, stay faithful, stay focused. And we'll counter that in a couple of verses time.

Keep it real and keep it in remembrance. Now, these two to an extent overlap. In one sense, they're partly saying the same thing in different ways. But stay faithful, stay focused.

[3 : 13] Keep it real and keep it in remembrance. And the staying faithful, Paul is wanting to emphasize again. Remembering that other than what Timothy is now receiving here by way of written correspondence.

And what he will have received already in 1 Timothy. And what the other various churches will have received by way of letters from Paul. Remember that the New Testament scriptures are not in circulation at this stage.

It's possible Mark's account of the gospel might have begun to be written. But the others almost certainly haven't been. So, Paul's letters are the earliest that we have of the New Testament.

So, what they receive, they have to, as we said last week, we have to memorize. It has to be memorized. It has to become part of their identity, their DNA.

So, you push the right button, as it were. And out it comes. Just as people used to be able to be catechized, of course, in the olden days. Ask a certain question. And out will come the answer. Ask a different one.

[4 : 15] And out will come the different answer. For example, when if you just started people off saying, Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have no charity, I become a sounding brass and a thinking symbol.

They could complete the entire chapter. And various chapters and passages of scripture. Because it would have been memorized. And in the absence of the written word, it is all the more vital that that which is memorized be exactly sound.

It is required that it be that, the truth which has been revealed. And Paul says, you know, it's not just, I didn't just say one thing to you, and a different thing to somebody else, and a different version to somebody else.

I didn't cut my coat differently according to the different cloths of different people. I didn't sort of spit it so that it would appeal more to these people or that people or whatever.

And although, yes, he says elsewhere, he's become all things to all men. That simply means that there's a different, perhaps, view in which it is seen. But it's the same truth.

[5 : 15] It's just, as one minister put it many years ago, if you look at the Clesium from Loxton, it looks rounded. You look at it from Scalp, it looks pointy. But the Clesium hasn't changed. It's just you're seeing it from a different perspective.

And Paul might indeed present the same truth in a different perspective, maybe, to a Jewish audience in the synagogue, whereby he'll go straight to the Old Testament scriptures.

And to the Greeks who have no background in the Old Testament scriptures, he might go to nature and to what they know of their own poets and so on, and how it's all pointing ultimately to the living God.

He may take a different angle, but it will be the same truth. It will be the same reality. The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, they will all bear the same thing.

The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. So the point is here that he is to be staying faithful, staying faithful because there's an awful lot of, for want of a better word, heresy out there in the early church.

[6 : 21] An awful lot of perverted and twisted teaching, which is not the gospel truth. And Paul says, look, you know that what you got from me was the truth. I received it from the risen Christ himself.

It is confirmed by the other apostles. And likewise, I am now transmitting it to you. You can trust that truth. And you know that I believe in that truth because I'm prepared to be bound in prison and even go to my death, if need be, for this truth.

This is something which is so imperative that not only do I transmit it to as many people as will receive it, but I'm prepared to be bound and to die for it. So stay faithful.

The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Now, this is a point which, of course, we might say, well, it doesn't really matter so much now, does it?

Because now we've got the written word. Now we've got the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. We've got the written scripture. So it's not so important to be focused upon keeping it right and keeping the doctrines.

[7 : 26] Well, of course it is. We can cross reference against scripture again and again. But the more we know scripture, the more our own personal understanding of the gospel will be kept in line with the tramlines of what scripture sets down.

And it's perfectly possible, even with the Bible in front of you, to go astray. Lots of people do. Or what the modern tendency nowadays tends to be is, yes, of course, that's what the Bible says.

But I mean, we don't go by that anymore, do we? Come on. I mean, we've got that. That's 2,000 years. We know better than that now, don't we? So the fact that it is written down and that God has breathed and inspired these particular words to be written is no guarantee that heretics and others will necessarily adhere to them now.

So it is vital that what we receive, we imbibe, we take it in, and we also, in our own, whether quietly or conversationally or gossiping the gospel or whoever it is that we do, transmit it to others.

But in terms of the leadership, which Timothy is being addressed as, it is vital that each generation transmits to the next that which is the core doctrine according to the word of God.

[8 : 48] You don't have long to do it. When we are young, we think, oh, ages. Even if we are spared for a long, long life, it's gone in the blink of an eye.

It's gone in a flash. It's a very few years in which we are given in which to have the opportunity to receive, to digest, to pass on to others.

So that whatever else happens in future generations, if they fall away, if they go astray, please God let it not be because we transmitted something that was dodgy or imperfect or in some way twisted or insincere.

That what must be transmitted to others must be the faithful, true word of God. The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

And so the story and the witness and the living work will continue and spread out, which, of course, it did. Paul, of course, within a very short time of this letter being written, would himself be martyred.

[9 : 58] A great many Christians throughout the Roman Empire for the first 300 or so years of the New Testament church would continue to be martyred in their thousands.

But the thing was that the word and the gospel was continuing to grow and be received and transmitted and accepted faster than the Roman authorities could kill them.

They kept on slaughtering Christians and they just kept on multiplying until eventually you got the Emperor Constantine who came along in the 300s and decided, well, if you can't beat them, join them.

And made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. But that's far in the future. And all sorts of problems came with that too. For now, this is a doctrine which is being persecuted to death.

Currently, of course, in our own day and age, it's a doctrine which is being hounded out of the public square, even out of our schools and out of every sort of public arena. So those who will adhere to Christ faithfully according to his word will find all manner of obstacles put in their path.

[11 : 06] Now, therefore, he says, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Now, that isn't a reference to, you know, slogging on and enduring suffering and so on because that's what a soldier does.

But rather, the sense is that some manuscripts in the original Greek don't have the words thou therefore. So it's simply endure hardness. And what is translated as, as, is by some translated as with.

So you've got endure hardness with a good soldier of Jesus Christ. In other words, me. Don't be ashamed of my chain. That's what he has said earlier. You know, that an Esiphorus, you know, was not ashamed of my chain.

Verse 16. And it said previously to Timothy, you know, don't be ashamed of me and of my bonds. Verse 8. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, not of me, his prisoner.

So here we've got endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. You could take as endure hardness with a good soldier of Jesus Christ. But Paul's not saying, listen, I'm the real man.

[12 : 10] You're just, you're just the soldier of the breakfast. You know, you, you, you stick with me. I'll look after you. What he's saying, brother, is, look, this is what I'm going through. Come and share this with me.

Not in the sense, you know, why should I do it all by myself? But rather, come on, be part of it. You know, get your, get your hands dirty. Roll up your sleeves. Get dug in here.

Get stuck into this. Endure this hardness. Because this is part of it. And part of what Paul is saying to Timothy is not simply, you know, you should be suffering too. But rather, this is part of the privilege, Timothy.

You don't know what you're missing out on if you try to avoid this. You've got to get your sleeves rolled up. You've got to get in there with a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Be part of this.

Endure hardness. And part of, of course, the message is that there's no escaping it whichever way you do it. Even if you try and say, oh, you know what? No, of course, I'm not really a Christian or whatever.

[13 : 06] You know, oh, no, no, don't persecute me because, no, no, I renounced all that years ago. So, you may escape a little bit of physical persecution. But the spiritual turmoil and suffering of having denied the Lord or renounced Christ or whatever is going to eat you up from the inside.

In other words, there is no escape. The turmoil or the suffering or the difficulties. You're either going to have it because you belong to Christ or you're going to have it because you denied Christ.

Which is better? It's a bit of a no-brainer. So, thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ or with a good soldier of Christ. He said, well, if you are going to be a soldier, no man that wareth entanglet himself with the affairs of this life.

So, stay faithful but also stay focused. Now, Paul cannot mean, therefore, shut yourself away in a cave and be a hermit. Nor does he mean simply do the work of the ministry and nothing else.

That's a possibility. But you've got to remember that Paul himself was content to work as a tentmaker by day and in order to preach the gospel in the evenings or by night and as other times.

[14 : 16] But why was he working as a tentmaker there in the Acts of the Apostles? He was doing that to earn his keep. And he earned his keep. And he says this to the Corinthians as well.

You know, he did that so that nobody would have to bail him out. So that nobody could say, oh, see that Paul? He's just a freeloader. He's just sort of, you know, living off the charity of other people. No, he said he worked with his own hands.

My own hands ministered to my needs so that he could supply his needs. And so that that would free him to preach the gospel without charge.

But that's not the same as being entangled in the affairs of this world. It's one thing to have to work for a living so you can keep body and soul together so that you can carry on the ministry.

As many branches of the church, that's what they do. They don't have any paid ministry. The minister works an ordinary job. And he does the pastorate in his spare time. Now, obviously, our own branch of the church believes that the Bible gives sufficient grounds for a full-time ministry supported by the church.

[15 : 20] You can give yourself more to the work of the gospel if that's all that you're doing. That's true, of course. But what he means is, you know, don't get sidetracked by it. The equivalent of what he's talking about here would be, say, if Timothy became a tent maker and then he says, oh, I've just seen an opportunity.

You know, if I can supply ten tents to them, then I'll get a good rain. Then I'll buy more from me. Build up a nice little business. And then less and less time for the Lord. More and more time now going to do the business because the business is really taking off.

Getting entangled in the affairs of this world. Now, it's a great temptation. For example, some ministers of the gospel, respectable men and so on, have seen fit in their day and in their time, for example, to become local counsellors.

But it seems unavoidable that if you involve yourself even at the local level, local politics, you cannot, arithmetically, mathematically, you can't have the same amount of time to give to the Lord and to the gospel and to the world.

It's not just about earning your keep, whatever. It's then becoming, it sucks you in in a certain way. Politics has a certain fascination. There's no doubt about it. And when people become involved in it, they will become, to an extent, fascinated by it.

[16 : 37] And you will find that more and more of the time gets sucked into that. This is one sense in which I would suggest to you the entanglement is not, oh, don't touch any of these things at all.

Or don't ever do a day job or don't ever do anything to do with the world. It's fine to do that if the purpose is for the furtherance of the gospel.

Some people would say, oh, yeah, I can help people. I can be a Christian witness by doing these other things. Okay, perhaps. But the warning is against entanglement, against the being drawn away from the things to which Timothy and the other Christian leaders had been called.

An example of that would be in Acts chapter 6. Where, you know, you've got the Hebrews and the Grecians, the widows, sort of at odds with each other. Because some are saying their widows are being neglected.

And the Greek ones aren't getting any of the food distribution or the money distribution. So the apostles say, look, look, we could get involved in this and we could resolve every dispute and we could distribute the bread and the money ourselves.

[17 : 39] But, you know, it's not reason that we should wait on tables. Appoint somebody to deal with this and we will give ourselves completely to the word of God and to prayer. You see, the danger of them becoming entangled in something which is perfectly respectable, perfectly right and good and God-honoring and so on.

But it wasn't what they were called to do. So it's not just to stay faithful but to stay focused. Stay focused on what the Lord has called you to do.

No man that were entangled himself to the affairs of his life that he may please him with choosing him to be a soldier. If you're in the army, then you're not sort of running a business on the side as well and heading off into City Street to sort of do that some of the time and then come back to do a wee bit of soldiering part-time.

No, you're there in the army camp. You're focused on it. You're doing your job. You're campaigning. You're obeying your orders the whole time. No general can rely on a soldier who might be swanning off to do his own little line of sideline business here, there or everywhere.

He's got to be there. He's got to be focused and not entangled with the affairs of his life. So that's the first example about the soldier not being distracted by civilian life.

[18 : 53] And if a man also strives for mastery, and the imagery here is of an athlete. An athlete giving himself to his particular subject in the games or in the ancient equivalent of the Olympics or the Corinthian games or whatever, he is not crowned except he strived lawfully.

Now, in the original context, that wouldn't just mean, you know, you've got to keep within the lines of the track as you run. You've got to obey the rules. But also, an athlete in those days would be expected to give themselves completely to the training regimes which were very closely supervised.

We had to abstain from certain foods. They often, perhaps, fasted to stay fit or to just eat particular kinds of foods. They had to be anointed in particular ways.

They had to undertake vigorous training. They were expected to be keep completely chaste and celibate during that time whilst they were in training. So it was all part of the rules that were set down for them.

And if an athlete wasn't prepared to compete according to those rules, then he would not be allowed to take part, let alone would he ever be crowned. So if you're going to focus on the prize, you have to stay within the required rules.

[20 : 07] That's what he's saying. If a man strived for mastery, yet is he not crowned, except he strived lawfully, you've got to stay focused. And Timothy, if you're going to have the crown of Christ, you're going to stay focused upon it.

The husbandman that laboreth, whether the farmer or the vineyard dresser, must be first partaker of the fruits. Now, this is, some have taken this to say, well, whoever gets to eat the food of whatever's grown, the guy who laboured for it should do it first.

Paul isn't saying, oh, yes, you deserve so much here, Timothy. It's almost meant to be an incentive that Timothy should pull out all the stocks in, because it's an incentive.

But whatever benefit there is, whatever fruitfulness there is of it, it's going to benefit you at the end of the day, Timothy. It's worth your while pulling out all the stocks.

And it is true also for us, the more, generally speaking, in life, the more you put into something, the more you will get out of it. If you're playing a musical instrument and you only practice for five minutes a week, you're not going to get very good at it.

[21 : 13] You're not going to enjoy it. You're not going to get much out of it. But if you diligently slog away for a couple of hours every day, it may take over your life, but you will really see the improvement. And you will come on and you will begin to excel.

Then you might begin to enjoy it, too. The more you put into something, the more you'll get out. And Paul is saying, look, the husband that I labour with must be first partaking of the fruits.

You're going to benefit from this, Timothy. So you can't wander off like a soldier from the army camp and then do a little sideline business. You can't pretend you're a competing athlete but just swan off for anything you like and just not stay focused and within the rules.

Nor can you expect that there's going to be fruitfulness if you're not going to work with it. So it's not just stay faithful, but stay focused. Consider what I say.

And the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Now, this is not really talking about sufficient intellect or his academic ability.

[22 : 16] It's rather talking, he says, consider what I say. Look at these three previous examples. Verse 4, verse 5, verse 6. Consider them. Ponder them. And the Lord give thee understanding.

Enable you to see what I'm saying here, Timothy. To focus upon these things. And, of course, what is applicable for Timothy as a church leader is applicable. And it's not on the hour level, you might say, for every Christian, every way.

We're not first generation, you know, apostolic either Christians. We may not all be in leadership positions. But it applies to each of us. The more we put in, the more we will get out.

The more focused we are, the better is going to be our actual achievement in the faith. Consider what I say. The Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.

Now, notice what he says here, of the seed of David. This is almost like, if you might see, a formula that was quoted by the early Christians to sort of state Christ's messiahship.

[23 : 25] Romans chapter 1, verse 3, you've got similar. Concerning his son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. Now, at this point, made of the seed of David, this is basically a claim to messiahship.

It is stating that, you know, this is what makes Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah. Provably he was descended from David according to the flesh. And not only was he descended from David, in other words, this is the only genealogy that actually matters.

You know, in chapter 1 of 1 Timothy, we have there at verse 4, talking about, now they give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than God he edified.

Nobody really cares who's descended from whom and how many generations back. Your great-grandfather might have been a priest in the temple or one of the tribes of Israel or whatever. The genealogy that matters is that of Jesus Christ.

And what really matters is, yes, he's of the seed of David. He is the messiah of the messianic descent. He's the son of David. He's the fulfillment of the scriptures. That's the genealogy that matters.

[24 : 30] Don't get sidetracked. Keep it real. Keep it real and focused on Christ. He was raised from the dead according to my gospel.

In other words, we might say, if we look at verse 11 here, the faithful say, if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. In other words, it's like you need to recognize that if you're going to be raised, if you're going to share in his glory, Timothy, you have to be prepared to die to self in one sense.

Now, this is perhaps what Paul's meaning when he writes to the Colossians, where he says about rejoicing in the sufferings, the afflictions of Christ, and so on. But also when he writes to the Romans in chapter 6, verse 3, where he says, Know ye not that so many of us, as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?

Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Again, at verse 8, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. And this is the point, you see. Christ, yes, he was raised from the dead, but in order to be raised from the dead, he had to first die.

[25 : 47] And if we are baptized into Christ, it means that the old self is being declared dead. We have our new life, our new identity in Christ.

Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David, in other words, the Messiah, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel. Verse 11, if we be dead with him, which if we're in Christ, we are, we're dead to the old self, we shall also live with him.

His resurrection and glory is as sure as his death in the first place. And likewise, by extension, our resurrection and glory in Christ is only as sure as the extent to which we be dead in Christ, and dead with Christ in the first place.

Our old life, our old self, has to die. Now, it will not necessarily die all at once. There's a sense in which, yes, we are justified in the blink of an eye, but the process of sanctification on the one hand, and the mortifying, the putting to death of the old self, is a long lingering business.

Crucifixion was a long lingering death. Our death to the old self will effectively take our lifetime. Because the gradual putting to death, bit by bit, of the old flesh and the old self that wants to keep us away from Christ, and the sanctifying, the making new of our soul and all the desires and direction of our body, that continues the ripening process for heaven.

[27 : 18] And so we've to stay focused, stay faithful, stay focused, and keep it real on what is real. Christ is dead, his resurrection. It is a faithful saying, if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us. If we believe not, yet he abideth faith, but he cannot deny himself. Now, notice in verses 11 to 13 here, these are almost like couplets.

There is a symmetry here in the writing. There is a rhythm. It's almost like a metre as it runs through. It's thought by many commentators that this will be, if you like, the nutshell of an ancient church hymn.

And the first hymns in church would simply be Christian doctrine put into rhyme, which may be sung or may be recited. It may simply be, you know, a recitation or a, what's the word, a creed that might have been stated, or it could have been put into song as an ancient hymn.

Whichever way you describe it, the rhythm and the metre here of these couplets, 11, 12, 13, the symmetry of them implies that these are intended to be rhymed, to be remembered, perhaps to be sung, certainly to be recited.

[28 : 38] A faithful saying. Now, this use of faithful saying implies, again, it's intended for use throughout the church. It has been learned in order to be trotted out, you might say.

You know, chapter 1 of 1 Timothy, verse 15, this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation. Chapter 3, this is a true saying. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

Likewise, in chapter 4, verse 9, this is a faithful saying worthy of all acceptation. In Titus, chapter 3, verse 8, this is a faithful saying. These things I will affirm constantly.

So the faithful sayings, we might say, are those which have been put into this set form. Which, if they are recited, if they are trotted out, as it were, then you know that that much is solid.

That much has not been interfered with by the heretics or by those twisting the truth or whatever. It's a faithful saying. If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.

[29 : 43] If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us. Now, again, this is back to basically the teaching of Jesus saying, you know, do unto others as you have them do unto you.

How you do to God if you're happy to deny him. And why if you're happy for him to deny you? In Matthew, chapter 10, verse 33, Jesus says. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

One of the ancient church fathers said, you know, there were three things which God cannot do. It's impossible for God to die. Impossible for him to lie. And impossible for him to be deceived.

Now, obviously, impossible for God to die. We need to sort of put in brackets and sort of explain and unpack a little bit. Because obviously God, the Son, died upon the cross.

But it was his humanity which died there. His humanity but with divine potency, we might say. With a divine quality.

[30 : 49] God at no time died. The divine part of Christ did not die. God cannot die. He is life itself. But he took on human flesh.

So that as the living Son of God in the flesh, he could die. His body died. But that body was infused, if you like, and equipped with divine potency.

So that the price that was paid wasn't just the price of the death of a mere human being. It was of a divine human being. It had that potency, that power of the Sonship of God.

Although only the body actually would die. Likewise, in Deuteronomy chapter 7, we read verses 9 and 10. Know therefore that the Lord thy glory is God, the faithful God.

Keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him. And keep his commandments to a thousand generations. And repaith them that hate him to their face. To destroy them. He will not be slack to him that hate him.

[31 : 49] He will repay him to his face. In other words, you'll see it done. You'll see it fulfilled. If we want to be, have nothing to do with God, God will take us at our word.

He will say, oh, you want nothing to do? That's okay. That's your prerogary. You'll have nothing to do with me in time. You'll have nothing to do with me in eternity. The only thing is, you know, that's like saying to your life belt, I don't want you.

It's okay. I'll tread water here. I don't want the life belt. No, it's okay. I don't want the safety net. That's okay. I'll just do my own thing. And you'll perish. If we want nothing to do with the only means of salvation, we have effectively condemned ourselves to damnation.

And God will take us at our word. We will have from the Lord exactly what we desire. If we deny him, he also will deny us. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful.

He cannot deny himself. He can't say, oh, you're right. Actually, I'm not real. There isn't a God after all. He can't say that because it isn't true. God cannot lie. He cannot do that which is untrue.

[32 : 52] Of these things, put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the heroes.

Paul is saying he endures, verse 10, all these things. All these things for the faithful to say that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory to the elect.

Because they are to be encouraged to stay faithful. They are to be encouraged to this mantra, if you like, this creed, verses 11 to 13. And why is he suffering?

He says he's suffering that they may also obtain the salvation. The word endure, in verse 10, doesn't mean just, oh, well, I passively suffer it if I have to. It's like when he said to Timothy, come on, get on board.

Come in with this suffering. Take part in this suffering because it is part of the privilege, part of the witness, part of not only the cost, but part of the prize.

[33 : 53] Is that you're showing how important this is to you. It's part of your witness and testimony. It's not unlike what he says in Colossians 1.24. You know, I rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.

Now, there's nothing deficient in the sufferings of Christ that they need to be topped up by men. But rather, his body is the church. And his body, in that sense, the church, still has a lot of suffering to do.

And when Paul says he's suffering for the elect's sake, it's not just so that if he takes up some of the slack, they won't have to suffer so much. There is part of that in it too.

But it is also saying, look, this truth that I have given you, that I have told you, this is how important it is. It is all the way through life unto death.

This is how seriously you're meant to take it. It is for the elect's sake that he witnesses to imprisonment, to bonds, and ultimately to death for their sakes. Also, however, by his staying faithful, it is the example that they are set to follow.

[35 : 07] In those days, an awful lot of people, still nowadays to some extent, will take their lead, not simply from what the scriptures say, sadly, but they will also take it from what they see men do, what they see people whom they respect, people whom they have taken as their leaders or whatever.

And if they see them caving in with five minutes to go, if they see them say, well, it's not worth this, actually. No, I'm just going to recant and get released to prison and go and live a quiet life.

If they see them giving it up, they'll say, well, it's okay for him. It's okay for us too. But if they likewise see them being faithful unto death, they'll say, that's what we've got to do. That's what Paul has done.

That's what we've got to do. He's set it, blazed the trail. We have to follow what he leads. This is how seriously we have to take the gospel. If we deny Christ, he will deny us.

If we believe not that he abides faithful, he cannot deny himself. Therefore, of these things, put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord. They strive not about words to no prophet, but the subverting of the ears.

[36 : 11] Don't get sidetracked with the lesser things that don't matter. Never mind who's descended from whom or whatever. Keep it real and keep it in remembrance.

And so preserve it throughout your life, Timothy, as you in your life pass it on to others, that whatever else they may do, you will have stayed faithful.

Amen.