

(Through the Bible) 2 Timothy 1-2

by Chuck Smith

Paul emphasizes the importance of faith and trust in God, as well as the gift of eternal life and the abolition of death, in his final letter to Timothy.

Duration: 1:26:39

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:2-26

Topics: "Discipleship Training", "Eternal Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of spreading the gospel and investing in the discipleship of others. He shares how he and his ministry team dedicated themselves to teaching and mentoring a group of men and their wives for two years, studying the Bible together. The speaker warns about the dangers of being consumed by the cares of this life, which can hinder the fruitfulness of the gospel in one's life. He encourages believers to have a soldier-like mentality, being ready to serve and please God who has called them. The central message is that through Jesus, death has been abolished and believers have eternal life.

Transcript

So we turn now to 2nd Timothy. This is the last epistle that Paul wrote. He is again in prison in Rome.

It would seem that he was released from the first imprisonment and allowed a little more time of liberty to preach the gospel. And putting together from the various epistles and from the Book of Acts, it would seem that he went to Miletus and then on over to Corinth and to Troas, probably to Ephesus, and then on back where he was arrested and taken back to Rome. Paul realizes that the situation is now changed in Rome.

And he realizes that the sentence of death is upon him. He knows that his time is very short. That he will soon be executed by Nero for his faith in Jesus Christ.

And so, realizing that his execution is only a matter of time, Paul writes his final letter to Timothy, his son in the faith. This young man that Paul had discipled and spent so much time with to invest in Timothy's life so that he could carry on the work of Paul once he was gone. So, Paul now is writing his final epistle.

This is the last of Paul's epistles. Shortly after this, he was beheaded there on the Appian Way just outside of Rome. So, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus.

You see, the sentence of death is now hanging on it. So, what's he talk about? Life in Christ Jesus. That eternal life.

Jesus said, don't be afraid of those who can kill your body and after that they don't have any power. And so, as Paul is writing with the sentence of death upon him, knowing that his execution is only a matter of time, it is interesting how he writes about life. I'm an apostle by the will of God, according to the promise of life, not of death, but of life, which is in Christ Jesus.

John tells us, this is the record. God has given to us eternal life. And that life is in the Son.

And he who has the Son has life. According to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus. Oh, thank God, even with the sentence of death hanging over us, we can talk about life.

That eternal life. That age-abiding life that we have in Christ Jesus. When the rich young ruler came to Jesus and fell there at his feet, he said, good Master, what good thing must I do to inherit this age-abiding life? He saw in Christ that quality of life.

And he desired it. That quality of life that is ours through our faith in Jesus Christ. He who has the Son has life.

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son. Notice the endearing terms of Paul now towards Timothy as he realizes this is probably the last time I'm going to be able to write to him, my dearly beloved son. And so there's a lot of emotion, a lot of pathos in this second letter to Timothy because of the background of this whole epistle.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. These beautiful gifts of God. His grace, His mercy, His peace.

I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers with a pure conscience that without ceasing I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day. The men that God uses are men of prayer. Paul is constantly in his epistles referring to his prayer life.

He was a man who lived and slept and breathed prayer. He lived in close relationship with God and with Jesus Christ. And so is the case with those men that God uses.

They are men of prayer. Here Paul speaks about his praying for Timothy without ceasing night and day. Because Paul realized that if the ministry of the Word was to be carried on in truth, really the heavy burden was going to be upon Timothy once Paul left.

When Paul sent Timothy to the church in Philippi, he said, I have sent unto you my beloved son Timothy because I don't have anyone else who is like-minded as I am who really has you at his heart. Timothy was one that had really modeled his life after Paul. Paul could see, hey, this young man has caught the vision.

This young man knows my heart. And so he realized that Timothy was going to be the natural one to carry on that same ministry of the grace of God to the people. And that is no doubt why Paul invested so much time in prayer for Timothy.

Night and day, oh Lord, he's a young man. Lord, he doesn't have the background and the experience, but God use him, help him, bless him, Lord. Oh, wouldn't you love to have Paul praying for you night and day? Paul said, I greatly desire to see you because I remember your tears.

No doubt the last time Paul had seen Timothy there at Ephesus and had to leave him, Timothy was crying, probably wanted to go with Paul. Paul, they believe, was arrested in Ephesus at this time when the Roman government began to persecute the church again. And probably as they bound Paul to take him back to Rome, as he said his farewell to Timothy, Timothy was just weeping and sobbing.

And yet it was necessary that he say and establish those brethren in the church of Ephesus which were being harassed by the false teachers that had come in. And so Timothy weeping, and Paul had vividly in his mind this beloved co-labor, his son in the Lord. He had in his mind the tears as they were coming down Timothy's face.

And he said, oh, I greatly desire to see you. I remember your tears. And I'd love to see you that I might be filled with joy.

What a beautiful bond is created through Jesus Christ and among women. This family of God, it exceeds even our natural families. The bond that God creates in our hearts and in our lives for each other, that love that is there.

Paul said, I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith, or the pure faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I'm persuaded is also in you. So he came from a good line. You know, a godly heritage, what a blessing it is.

What a blessing to have a godly grandmother. What a blessing to have a godly mother. The faith that was in my grandmother, the faith that was in my mother, the faith that God has planted in my heart.

You know, it's an interesting thing. My grandmother was a very special woman. She lived in Santa Barbara.

And the pastor that came to the church there was just a young man. He wasn't married yet. And so she used to go with him on his calls so that there would be no questions in the minds of people to be called on some of the young wives or whatever.

My grandmother was always with him and made his calls with him. She lived a life dedicated to the Lord, to serve the Lord. That was the whole passion of her life was to serve the Lord.

When she was in the hospital dying of cancer, they were short of nurses. And so she would get up and go around and take bedpans to people and took care of them and waited on people there in the hospital because that was her life, just service. It was a life of service to God and a trust in God.

I recently found out that inscribed on her tombstone are the words, Jesus never fails. And that was just the story of her life. It was a life of faith in the Lord.

And so the family members, because that was just sort of the hallmark of her life, Jesus never fails, they put that on her tombstone. I didn't know that. But over in Fairhaven here in Santa Ana, on my mother's tombstone, we have placed Jesus never fails.

Because the faith that was in my grandmother was passed on to my mother. And I can remember from a child, my younger brother had asthma. And when he would have his attacks and start wheezing, couldn't sleep, we had an old rocking chair that creaked.

And as a little child I can remember lying in bed hearing my brother wheeze, you know, that asthmatic wheeze. You know, it has a unique sound to it. And I could hear that.

I could hear the creaking rocking chair out in the other room. And I could hear my mother singing, Jesus never fails. Jesus never fails.

Heaven and earth may pass away, but Jesus never fails. And I would go to sleep hearing her rock my brother during his asthmatic attacks, singing of the unfailing grace of Jesus Christ. Whenever we were sick, she would come in and sing to us, Jesus never fails.

My brother was healed of asthma. The Lord didn't fail. And all through our life, the Lord has taken care of us.

The Lord didn't fail. And so because this was so much a part of her life, without knowing it was on my grandmother's tombstone, we had it put on her tombstone over here in Santa Ana. And so there in the cemetery in Montecito, you'll find the gravestone of my grandmother that says Jesus never fails.

Over here in Fairhaven, you'll find my mother's gravestone that says Jesus never fails. The faith that came from my grandmother to my mother now passed on to us. And we, of course, passing it on to our sons.

And now they to their sons and grandchildren and all. Oh, how glorious it is. The heritage that is ours in the Lord and in the things of the Spirit.

And it's just a beautiful thing. Paul said, I know the faith that was in your grandmother Lois and also in your mother. And I know that it's in you.

Oh, the greatest thing that we can offer and give to our children is this heritage of trusting God and faith. How important that we pass it on. Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance that you stir up the gift of God that is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

Now, Paul has a couple of times already made reference to this. When Timothy was a young man and began to join Paul in the ministry there in Lystra, the elders laid hands on Timothy and prayed for him. And as they did, the Lord gave to Paul a word of prophecy in which the Lord spoke to Timothy telling him the gifts that the Lord was giving to him and outlining somewhat the ministry that Timothy was to fulfill.

And Paul has made mention before of this experience that Timothy had when the elders laid hands on him and he received the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit and the word of prophecy directing his life and his ministry. And so, Paul said, remember and stir up the gift that is in you that you received when the hands were laid upon you and the gift of prophecy exercised. It is possible for us to neglect the gifts of God within our lives.

But God did not give us these gifts to be neglected. He gave us these gifts to be used. And so, Paul's exhortation to Timothy, stir up that gift that is in you.

Begin to exercise it again by faith. Begin to exercise again that gift of the Spirit that God has given unto you. For God has not given us the spirit of fear.

Now, evidently, Timothy became a little fearful in the exercise of this gift. And I think that that is a tool that Satan often uses to discourage our exercises of the gifts of the Spirit. Fear.

I don't know what people are going to think, you know, if I say that to them. And we have this fear that many times restricts us from the exercise of this. But God hasn't given us the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.

The spirit of power, oh thank God. The spirit of love, how important. And a sound mind.

So, be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner. But be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. Now, there are a lot of situations where we can just keep our mouths shut and stay out of trouble.

When we really ought to be opening our mouths and getting into trouble. You know, when people are saying blasphemous things, we can just keep our mouths shut and sort of shrug and say, oh, you know, poor stupid soul. Or we can say to them, do you realize what you are saying? What a filthy mouth you have.

Doesn't it bother you to have such a filthy mind and mouth? I've often said to people when they're using the name of Jesus in a blasphemous way, hey, that hurts me. You're talking about a man who I love more than anyone else who died to save me from my sins. And it hurts me to hear you talk about it in that way.

Hey, you know, they sometimes get upset and they, you know, look like who do you think you are, you know, and all that kind of stuff. But yet, Paul tells Timothy that God has given us the power of, the spirit of power, of love and of a sound mind. Therefore, don't be ashamed of our Lord, but be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.

We'll get to it a little bit. They who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. The promise in the Bible that I hate the most.

The power of God who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. So, God who called us and saved us, but it wasn't according to our works. We are not saved according to our works, but according to the purposes of God.

Now this was the message that Paul was proclaiming and the message that was being perverted by the legalism that was creeping into the church. Now remember, that Timothy was ministering there in Ephesus, to the church in Ephesus. And already, there were those seeds of legalism that had taken root and were beginning to turn the people away from the glorious gospel of grace that Paul had proclaimed.

And Paul speaks to Timothy of his concern that they were turning away from the grace of God. And for him to establish them in the grace of God. A few years later, Jesus wrote a letter to Ephesus.

And all was not well within the church. In fact, Jesus called the church of Ephesus to repentance. And He said, unless you repent, I will remove My presence from you.

They had come to the place where their whole religion was a works thing. Because the Lord said, I know thy works, thy labor, and so forth, and thy works. They had come to a legal relationship with the Lord.

They had come to a salvation based upon works. Who saved us and called us, Paul said, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Now the result of a legal relationship to the Lord is really the loss of relationship because

Jesus doesn't want a legal relationship with you.

He desires a loving relationship with you. He wants you to relate to Him in love. And so He said to Ephesus, you've left your first love.

You've got all these works, man, you've got this whole thing going, all kinds of works, but I have this against you because you've left your first love. I don't want a legal relationship with you. I want a loving relationship with you.

And tonight Jesus is looking for a loving relationship with you. He's not interested in all of these little rules and regulations and keeping your works up. He's interested in your just loving Him supremely.

This loving relationship. I have this against you. You've left your first love.

Now remember from whence you are fallen and repent and do the first works over. That is the works that were motivated and prompted by love or else I will move the candlestick out of His place. Where was the place of the candlestick? Jesus was walking in the midst.

So Jesus is saying, I'll take my presence from your midst if you try to have a legal relationship with me. That's not what I want. I want love relationship.

And so Paul is encouraging Him in the grace. God has called us with His holy calling. But God didn't call you because of your works or because you were deserving or worthy of it but just to accomplish His purposes of love and of grace which was given us in Christ before the world began.

But it is now made manifest. God has always loved us. But the love was manifested by the appearing of Jesus Christ.

You see, heavens declare the glory of God. The earth shows its handiwork. Day in today they utter their speech.

I have no argument with the man who says, God speaks to me in nature. God speaks to me in nature. And how I love for God to speak to me through nature.

How I love to walk along the beach. How I love to get into the surf. How I love to watch a beautiful sunset.

How I love to sit under the stars out in the desert and just look up into the heavens and the vastness of the galaxies and all. How I love to see the raging streams. I love Yosemite.

I love nature. God speaks to me through nature. I have no argument.

The Bible says that God speaks to you through nature. Day in today they utter their speech. Night in tonight their voice goes forth.

There isn't a speech or a language where their voice isn't heard. Yes, I believe that God can speak to you when you go out to the desert, when you go up to the mountains. When you take a Sunday off and just go out among nature and just enjoy the beauty of God's creation.

I believe that God speaks to you there. I have no argument with that. But what nature cannot and does not tell you is how much God loves you.

It took more than nature to reveal that. It took Jesus Christ. It is interesting that whenever God wants to show you His love or to prove His love to you, He always points to the cross.

And so God who loved us before the world ever existed but has manifested it by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ who has abolished death. Now here Paul has got the death sentence. Nero says, you know, death sentence is upon Him.

But Paul says God's abolished death. Oh, thank God for the life that is ours and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. The Christian does not die.

It is wrong to say of a child of God he died. The Christian does not die. Paul the Apostle said we know that when the earthly tent of our body is dissolved, when my body goes back to dust, decomposes and goes back to dust, I have a building of God not made with hands that's eternal in the heavens.

So then we who are in these bodies, in these tents, do often groan earnestly desiring to move out of this old tent. Not to be an unembodied spirit, but to be clothed upon with the new body which is from heaven for we know that as long as we are living in these bodies, we are absent from the Lord. But we would choose rather to be absent from these bodies, to be present with the Lord.

So when a Christian dies, rather than saying, oh he died last week, we should say, oh he moved last week. Have you seen John lately? Oh, didn't you know he moved into a beautiful mansion. He's no longer living in that old tent.

Who has abolished death and brought us life and immortality. Jesus said to Martha, I am the resurrection and the life. Yes Lord, I know on the last day he's going to rise.

No, Jesus said, I'm the resurrection and the life. I'm here now. And he that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live.

And if you live and believe in me, you'll never die. He said, do you believe this? That's the gospel. That's the good news that we have to proclaim.

The Lord has abolished death. He who lives and believes shall never die. Oh, move, yes, that's important and that's desirable.

I wouldn't want to live in this dumb old tent forever. Every day I live, the Lord is making it just a little bit easier, more desirable to move. I'm getting aches and creaks that I've never had before.

I have the most difficult time walking across the floor the first thing in the morning. I mean, it takes a while now to get warmed up. My feet just kill me in the morning.

Especially after a few sets of tennis. It's not a funny thing, it's miserable. Growing old.

The old tent, slowly dissolving. But I have a building of God, for God has abolished death. And brought us life and immortality.

Whereunto, he said, I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. The three things that Paul was called to do. He was a preacher, he was an apostle, he was a teacher.

Preaching is ordained by God to bring the unbeliever to a faith in Jesus Christ. Preaching is not for the Christian or the saint or the church. Preaching is for the unregenerate.

For in the preaching I am proclaiming to the unregenerate God's good news to man. You don't have to go on in sin and die in your sin and trespasses. You can have eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Repent. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That's preaching.

Teaching is what the church needs. Now, the weakness of the church today is that there is too much preaching and not enough teaching in the church. The church has been preached almost to death.

And what the church needs is teaching. Teaching is how to walk. Teaching is how to grow.

Teaching is how to develop in our relationship with God. That's what the church needs. The teaching of the Lord.

And that's where the church is failing. In a real teaching ministry. So Paul had a combination of a preaching and a teaching ministry.

Called as an apostle. For the witch cause, he said, I also suffer these things. Nevertheless, these things, you know, I'm in prison and I'm sentenced to death.

It's because of my teaching and preaching that I'm here in prison. Nevertheless, he said, I'm not ashamed. For I know whom I have believed.

Now, notice. He didn't say, I know what I believe. Now, there's a lot of people today say, well, I know what I believe.

You know, I believe in the orthodoxy. I believe in the Apostles Creed. I believe.

And they know what they believe, but it's not what you believe. Or in what you believe. But it's in whom you believe that's important.

I know in whom I have believed. And I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. I have committed my life to Him.

I'm persuaded He's able to keep it. I know in whom I have believed. Correct orthodoxy is important.

But a creed can't save you. Only Jesus Christ can save you. It's not belief in a system.

It's not belief in a religion. It's not belief in a doctrinal position. It's belief in a person that brings salvation.

It's the belief in Jesus Christ. And so we know, we need to know in whom we have believed. Paul said, I'm persuaded He's able to keep that which I've committed.

That word I've committed in the Greek is an interesting word. It's the word that is used for making a bank deposit. I've entrusted it.

So I've entrusted my life to Him. He's able to keep it. Nero may take my head off, but He's going to keep my life.

Because I know in whom I have believed. I'm persuaded He's able to keep me. Hold fast that form of sound words which you have heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

As these false teachers were beginning to come along. And you remember Paul in his last recorded visit in the book of Acts with the elders of Ephesus as he had come to Miletus. And he had sent a message to the elders in Ephesus to meet him at Miletus.

Because he was in a hurry to get back to Jerusalem. Wanting to get back there before the feast. That he might take the offering back to the church in Jerusalem that he had collected among the Gentile churches.

And so they met him on the beach. The ship was offshore waiting for Paul. And he was talking with the elders of the church of Ephesus.

He said I'm going to Jerusalem. I don't know what's going to happen. All I know is everywhere I'm going the Spirit's warning me I'm going to be bound and so forth.

Beyond that I really don't know. The Lord hasn't shown me. But I want you to bear record.

That night and day I bore faithful witness of Jesus Christ as I lived among you. And I told you and I showed you the things of the Lord. Now he said I know that after I depart grievous wolves are going to come in.

Not really with pure motives. They're not going to spare the flock of God. They're going to bring in these pernicious doctrines.

And even from your own midst men are going to rise up. And trying to draw men after themselves. Trying to create little factious groups.

And Paul was weeping. He said I know that this is going to happen. I can't stop it.

But he encouraged them to the faithfulness of the Word. And the faithfulness of the teaching that he had given to them. Well it was true after Paul left these men did come in.

And so as Timothy is there and trying to buck these doctrines that are raising up their ugly heads within the church of Ephesus. And these men who are trying to create these little divisions by getting these weird doctrines and espousing some strange thing. And Paul says hold fast.

That form of sound doctrine or words which you have heard of me. That good thing which was committed unto you. That is the truth.

The Word of God. Keep by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us. For this you know.

That all of they which are in Asia have turned away from me. Of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. Those in Asia had now turned their backs upon Paul.

He was no longer able to be a strong influence there. They didn't have to fear him come in apostolic power to correct their false doctrines anymore. And they were becoming emboldened in their heresies.

And in the drawing of people after themselves. Paul names a couple of them. They turned away from me.

What a sad thing. Paul was really pretty much forsaken now. With the sentence of death upon him even Demas who had been a companion for so long had forsaken him.

Others have fled. Luke only was remaining with him there in Rome. But there was one faithful brother Onesiphorus.

The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus. For he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. Paul was chained there in a dungeon in Rome.

And Onesiphorus went to Rome and searched through dungeon after dungeon until he finally found Paul. And there ministered to him and encouraged him. For when he was in Rome he sought me out very diligently.

And he found me. And the Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus you know very well.

So Onesiphorus had been just a blessed man. And had ministered to Paul while Paul was in Ephesus. And then came to Rome and searched until he found him.

And there ministered to him. And Paul praised God's mercy and blessing upon him for it. Thou therefore my son, be strong in the grace.

You see it is legalism that is threatening the church. This idea that you can work yourself into divine favor. So be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

And the things that you have heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. And so this is how the gospel is spread. As Paul said, now you remember the things that I said and I was teaching among many of the brethren.

Now you take these same things and commit them to faithful brethren who will be able to teach others. The discipling of men in the truths of God. Investing your lives in others.

As we have grown older we have sought to invest our lives into younger ministers. Sharing with them. Spending time with them.

Teaching them. Committing to them. The Word of God in order that they might then go out and give the same thing to faithful men who will then be able to go out and teach others.

When we started our ministry here at Calvary Chapel, we met with a group of men and many times their wives. Five nights a week. For two years.

The first two years. Five nights a week we gathered together. Entrusting to these men the teaching of the Word of God.

Studying several books. Going through the entire Bible with them. After two years with these men I said, Alright, the time has come.

You fellows start teaching your own home Bible studies. And so they started teaching their Bible studies in their homes. I would every week get calls from them.

When they were going to have a Bible study that night, they'd have a list of questions that they'd go over before they went to their Bible study or had their Bible studies in their homes. After two years, many people who were saved in their Bible studies then started their own home Bible studies. And it was passed on and on and on.

From spiritual generation to spiritual generation. People who were saved in a Bible study began to teach a Bible study in which men were saved who went out and later on began to teach their own Bible studies. And so it goes on and on as it is passed.

You teach faithful men who are able then to teach others. You disciple others so that they in turn can disciple others. And so the progression goes.

Paul said, Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We're in a real battle. A tough battle.

It's a battle of the eternal destiny of human souls. It's a fierce battle. The enemy is relentless.

He attacks night and day. He never eases. The pressure is great.

Endure hardness, Paul said, as a good soldier. Hang in there. And no man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life.

And that's our problem. So often, as Jesus said in the last days, Be careful, lest you at any time be overcharged with gluttony, surfeiting, or with drunkenness, or the cares of this life, so that the day of the coming of the Lord will catch you by surprise, catch you unaware. Jesus, in talking about how that the thorns grew up with the wheat, identifying the thorns, He said, the desire for riches, the cares of this life, and the desires of other things, choked out the fruitfulness of the gospel within their lives.

So the cares of this life can choke out the fruitfulness. No man who is in war, no man who has signed up for the army, gets all involved in the little mundane things of life. Hey, I'm in a battle.

And I can't get bogged down with the cares of this life. My desire is that I might please Him who has chosen me to be a soldier. You see, I have made a commitment unto the commanding general that I will serve, that I will go into battle, that I am on call.

Anytime He can give an order for me to move out, must be ready to go. I want to please Him who has called me to be a soldier. That's the whole desire of my life.

To please God who has called me into this warfare. Also, if any man strive for the masteries, now Paul was referring here to the Olympics and the wrestling competition within the Olympics. And the wrestling competition in those days was called striving for the masteries.

Striving to master over another one. Throw him out of the ring. Pin him on his back.

He who strives for the masteries is not crowned unless he strives lawfully. You see, the referee can blow the whistle on you and say, Hey, that was not right, you know. You hit him after I called break.

You're not crowned unless you strive lawfully. There are the rules by which you must wrestle. The husbandman, that laborer, the man who is out there in the field laboring, gets the first fruit of harvest.

You were able to eat while you were in the field working, picking the fruit. You could eat the fruit. He's the first partaker of the fruits.

Consider what I say. And may the Lord give you understanding in all of these things. Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.

This is the heart of the gospel. The resurrection of Jesus Christ. Don't forget that.

Remember the resurrection. Without that we have no gospel. And so he's encouraging him to come back to the heart of the gospel and you find that everywhere they went, the center message, the thing that made Christianity different from Buddhism or Confucianism or any other religious system, is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

And so he's reminding him of that unique difference in Christianity. Wherein he said, I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto these bonds, these chains. But thank God the Word of God isn't bound.

They can bind me, they can bind my arms to this soldier next to me, to this guard, but they can't bind the Word of God. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. So I endure these things because God has elected certain people to be saved.

And if by my sacrifice, by my commitment, I can bring them the knowledge of Jesus Christ, great. My desire is to see the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, that they might share the eternal glory of a child of God. So, in another place he said, I know that the present suffering isn't worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed when Christ comes.

Oh yeah, it's hard now. Yeah, it's tough. Yeah.

It's not easy. There's suffering. But it can't be compared with the glory, the eternal glory.

So he said, our light affliction. Light affliction, Paul? Let's see, you say once you were stoned. Three times you were beaten with rods.

Three times you received 39 strikes. You were shipwrecked. You were beat up.

You were in prison. How many times? Light affliction, Paul? Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh an exceeding eternal weight of glory. Interesting contrast.

Light affliction for a moment, eternal weight of glory. So endure hardness as a good soldier. Don't get all entangled in worldly things.

Seek to please the one who has called you to be a good soldier. It's a faithful saying. It's a true saying.

If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. They're going to take my life pretty soon. That is, this physical life, but I'm going to be living with him.

If we suffer, we shall also reign. If we deny, he also will deny. If we believe not, he abides faithful.

He cannot deny himself. Now, there are some people who say rather pompously, well, I just don't believe in Jesus Christ. So what? You see, your believing or not believing doesn't alter the facts one iota.

You may deny him, but he can't deny himself. You know, that would be impossible to deny your own existence. So you're saying I don't believe that Jesus was the Son of God is like saying I don't believe that two and two equals four.

I just look at you and think you're a little nuts, but that's alright. You have your right to be. But you don't change the facts.

Your believing or not believing doesn't alter the fact at all. The fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he did die for our sins, is a fact that remains whether you believe it or not. You see, your believing or not doesn't affect him at all.

It does affect you seriously and for eternity. And so it is rather ridiculous to say, well, I don't believe it, and to think that it doesn't exist just because you don't believe it. You can deny the truth, but he can't deny it.

He can't deny himself, what he is and what he has done. So if we don't believe, it's still true. He can't deny himself.

So of these things, put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit. All they do is subvert the hearers. There are those that get all involved in words and in little concepts and twists and all of the Scripture, and they are really totally unprofitable.

Do you know that the church was divided once over an argument on how many angels could stand on the head of a pen? People used to argue over that. And people have all these concepts. Oh, that's stupid.

That's not going to help anybody. And you look at a lot of these things that people bring up and a lot of divisions that are created. How were you baptized, brother? You know, and they... Well, you weren't really baptized then, you know, and you better be baptized the right way.

You were baptized backwards? Oh, no. Face down, man, that's the only way. You know, and they get in these silly little things and all it does is subvert people, subvert the hearers.

Study to show yourself approved unto God. A workman that doesn't need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. This particular Scripture was the inspiration to Scofield in setting up the dispensations in the Scofield Bible.

Rightly dividing the word of truth. I think he went a little far with it. But it's interesting that this is the verse that inspired him to make the divisions, especially within the Scofield Bible, as he shows you the dispensation of innocence, the dispensation of government, the dispensation of law, the dispensation of grace, and the dispensation of, you know, the future reign of Christ and all.

The dispensations. Rightly dividing. But it is important that we rightly divide the word of truth.

Study. It's important that we study. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

There are those who turn the grace of God into a cloak to cover their own lasciviousness. Well, if God is so ready to forgive and so full of grace, it really doesn't matter if we do it because we can just ask Him immediately to forgive us then and it will, you know, He's graceful and it's all over. So, let's go ahead and do it and then we'll seek the grace of God to forgive us.

No. These kind of vain and profane babblings only increase ungodliness. Paul himself said, Shall we go out and sin freely then that grace may abound? Perish the thought! How can we who are dead to sin live any longer therein? The grace of God is not an excuse or a cloak or a reason to go out and just to live recklessly saying, Well, the grace of God will cover me.

Profane, vain babbling. Be careful of it. Their words will eat like a canker worm of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus.

I mean, Paul doesn't mind naming these fellows, does he? Oh, Paul, shame on you. I'm going to write you a letter. Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already and the overthrow of the faith of the Son.

Now, the Jehovah Witnesses say, you know, the resurrection is already passed, really. I mean, Jesus came again in 1914, didn't you know? Oh, but I thought every eye was going to see Him. Oh, no, only those with the spiritual eyes, those who were living in the headquarters, and they saw Him in New York.

Spiritually, with the spiritual eye. And He set up His reign in a secret chamber. And He is ruling now from the secret chamber through these men in New York.

But we're in the Kingdom Age. Satan is bound. Glory to God.

Hey, if this is the Kingdom Age, I'm greatly disappointed. I was hoping for much better than this. I wish the Lord had not put such a long chain on Him.

He still has enough rope to give me a bad time. Who have erred concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they subvert the faith of many people. They're turning a lot of people away to this weird little doctrine of theirs.

Drawing a lot of people after this. Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands. It stands sure.

It has this seal. The Lord knows those that are His. The Lord knows those that are His.

And let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. If you take the name of Christian, if you take the name of Christ, then depart from iniquity. The Lord knows those who are His.

But in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of clay. Some to honor, some to dishonor. Paul here refers to the church as a great house.

Jesus in the Kingdom parables indicated that the church was going to become something God didn't intend it to be. Those seven parables in Matthew's Gospel, 12th and 13th chapter, that deal with the Kingdom Age, talking about the church. It's like unto a mustard seed that's very small.

But it was planted, and it grew up into a great tree. Wait a minute! Mustard... They don't have mustard trees. They have mustard bushes.

If you've got a tree, you've got abnormal growth. And the birds, or the fowls of the air, came and lodged in it. The birds in the Scripture are always used in an evil sense.

You remember the parable of the seed that fell by the wayside? And the birds came and plucked it up. Now the birds were Satan who plucked the word out that it couldn't take root. What's he saying? Satan's

going to lodge in the branches of the church? Oh yes.

He is found lodging within the branches of the church. More junk comes out of the World Council of Church Proclamations and the National Council of Church Proclamations than you can believe. Concerning Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have erred concerning the truth.

Corrupt men of corrupt minds putting on a clerical garb, taking the title of reverend and espousing every rotten cause that comes along. Every damning issue that would demoralize and destroy our society. And these men are ready to take it up and champion it.

And they're ready to fight against anything that is good. A group of ministers filed a suit against President Reagan for proclaiming the year of the Bible in 1983. Hey, wearing a backward collar doesn't make a minister out of anybody.

Only God ordains. A lot of men have the title of reverend. I would fear anybody taking that title.

Sometimes people call me Reverend Smith and I cringe. They write that on a letter or something and I cringe. I know that they don't know me when I get these letters Reverend Charles Smith or the Reverend Charles Smith or the Most Reverend Charles Smith.

I know, hey, they don't know me because I don't consider myself reverend at all. There's nothing reverend about Chuck Smith. The Bible says we are to reverence God's holy name.

That I do. But I don't want anybody reverencing my name or me. God help me.

I'm a sinner just like you. I need the grace of God just like you. In a great house, though, many vessels, some gold, some silver, some wood, some clay.

Some for honor, some for dishonor. Kingdom of Heaven is like a woman hiding leaven in three measures of meal until it permeates the whole lump. Leaven is always used in an evil sense in the Scriptures.

The leaven of sin, the leaven of hypocrisy. It's a type of sin because it multiplies by putrefaction. Thus it makes an excellent type of sin which multiplies by putrefaction.

And so the church, the leaven within it, until it leavens the whole lump, the evil influences that have their way of permeating through the whole church. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man who planted wheat in his field and at night the enemy came and sowed the tares so that the servants, as it began to grow, said, Lord, there are tares growing among the wheat. Shall we go out and pull them up? No.

He said, let them grow together until the end. And then at harvest, gather the tares together and put them in bundles and cast them into the fire. But bring the wheat into my barn.

Jesus taught that these evil influences would exist within the church. That they would grow together until the time of the great harvest. The church is not a perfect organization.

The church is made up of all kinds of people. And it's wise for you to recognize that because you can get skinned by people calling themselves Christians almost more readily than anybody else. Not all who say Lord, Lord are going to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

And let's not be blind or foolish about this. The church is not a perfect organization. It's made up of all kinds of people.

Thank God there is the good. Thank God for the faithful. Thank God for those who are really seeking after God with all of their hearts.

And it's because of those we continue to exist. If it weren't for those, the Lord would have brought judgment on the church a long time ago and it would have been wiped out. But the time will come when judgment will begin where? At the house of God.

And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where will the sinner and the ungodly appear? I mean, if the judgment begins at the house of God, what are you going to do when you get to San Francisco? So the church is not a perfect organization. And those that are spending their lives in ministries to perfect the church so that the Lord can come again are due for a great disappointment because in a great house there are all kinds of vessels. Some are for honorable purposes, some for dishonorable purposes.

Those of gold and silver were for the master of the house that he might eat and drink out of these vessels of gold and silver. These were those that you loved to use and entertain with when company comes. You bring out your best silver and your best golden cups and bowls and all.

Vessels of honor. I want to display them. But in the same house, big house, you've got so much garbage that's got to go out.

So you've got a clay pot over there in which you dump all the garbage. Vessel of dishonor. You throw the trash in it and you carry the trash out with that.

All kinds of vessels. Some of honor, some of dishonor. We are in this great house.

We are a vessel. What kind of a vessel am I? Am I a vessel of honor that is fit for the master's use? How can I be? First of all, I've got to separate myself from those impure doctrines and men who are espousing the impure doctrines. If a man will purge himself from these, these what I often call sterile doctrines.

You say, well, there's nothing so wrong with that. It sounds a little weird, but it doesn't hurt anybody. Oh yes, it does.

So often there are doctrines that are being promulgated that the effect of the doctrine is sterilization. When you start to embrace it, it sterilizes you so that you are no longer fruitful. Doctrines that get the people all introspective, all into themselves.

Demon, demon, who's got the demon? You know, and they have these parlor games where they cast the demons out of each other. Lust and gluttony and lethargy and all of these demons that are hovering around and possessing the believers. You know, so we're going to have a casting out party tonight.

You know, come on over. We're going to cast demons out. And so a person yawns.

Oh, did you see him yawn? We better cast the demon of sleepiness out of him. And if you burp, man, hands are laid on you and the gluttony demon has to go. Purge yourself from these things.

You're not profitable. Purge yourself from these things and you will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified. That is, God will set you apart.

God will anoint you and you will be fit for the Master's use. Then God will begin to use you. And that really is what it's all about, isn't it? To be used of God.

To touch some light. To be used of God. To share His love.

To be used of God as an instrument. That's what life is all about. Fit for the Master's use.

As He prepares us unto every good work. God begins to prepare you. Through the Word, through prayer, through your experiences, they're all a part of God's necessary preparation.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians and said, You are His workmanship. God's working in you. Created together in Christ Jesus unto the good works that God has before ordained that you should accomplish.

God has already foreordained that service that He wants you to accomplish for His glory. But He has to, first of all, work in you. Preparing you.

So, the experiences that I go through, the hardships, the difficulties, the testings, the trials, the sorrows, they're all a part of God's necessary preparation as He is seeking to prepare the vessel to be used by the Master. As He empties me of myself that He might fill me with His fullness that I no longer live for my own glory but I live now for His glory. That I serve Him in such a way that it brings glory to Him.

Let your light so shine before men that when they see your good works they glorify your Father which is in Heaven. Prepared unto every good work. Flee also, Timothy, youthful lusts.

How many have been injured, destroyed because of youthful lusts. Flee them. Great example is that of Joseph as he was serving in the house of Potiphar.

And the wife of Potiphar fell in love with him. Sought to entice him to come into her bed chamber. Daily was flirting, enticing until finally one day when the rest of the servants were out she grabbed hold of him.

Going to force him into the bed. And he wriggled free leaving his coat in her hand and he ran out naked fleeing youthful lusts. Smartest thing he could do.

There are sometimes when the wisest thing you can do is run. Flee youthful lusts. But follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

And so those that are calling from a pure heart what are the things, what are the characteristics? Righteousness, faith, love, peace. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid. Knowing that they are only designed to create strife.

There are a lot of lead questions that are only designed to create an argument. A person has a position that they want to espouse. And so they come to you with a question.

Why don't you baptize people immediately when they're saved? You see, they believe that a person really isn't saved until he's baptized. They want to get into an argument with you over baptism. Now, he said avoid these questions.

All they are intended to do is create strife. They're not really wanting to learn. They're only wanting an argument.

They want to get in a fight. The servant of the Lord must not strive. Mustn't get into these arguments.

But be gentle unto all men and apt to teach and patient. Ready to teach, but you got to be patient because in a great house there are all kinds of vessels. In meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves if God perventure will give them repentance unto the acknowledging of the truth.

So you hope that God will work. You take your time. You're patient.

You teach. Teaching in meekness and just hoping that perventure their hearts will be open. That they might turn to the truth.

And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him at his will. Oh, what an important verse. This verse teaches us that there are certain people who have been taken captive by Satan.

They are bound by Satan. They are his captives. Now, we have the power, the authority through Jesus Christ to deliver them from the captivity of the enemy.

Those who Satan holds, he holds by usurped power. You see, Jesus died for all men. He died for the sins of the world.

That work of redemption was complete for all mankind. It covered every man's sin. Jesus redeemed the world back to God.

However, Satan is still holding captive many people. But that hold that he has is a usurped authority that he has taken. But as long as the people are consenting to it, they remain his captives.

And they consent to it because he has blinded their eyes to the truth of their own condition. Paul said, the God of this world having blinded their eyes that they cannot see the truth. So what a sad predicament the unbeliever is in as he is bound by Satan, a captive of Satan, but his eyes are blind so that he doesn't even realize the truth of his own condition.

He doesn't know how precarious is his position for Satan has blinded his eyes. He is prejudiced against the Lord. Satan has blinded his eyes concerning the truth in Christ Jesus.

Oh, I don't believe the Bible. All kinds of contradictions are in it. You hear that all the time.

I always say, show me one. Oh, well, there are lots of them. Well, then show me one.

Well, let's fill with them. Let's follow them, you know. Well, tell me one.

I heard someone say that one time. The God of this world has blinded their eyes. They can't see the truth.

Sad place to be that we might take them from the captivity. Is it possible that we can take them from the captivity? Jesus said, And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. We can, in love, teaching them, instructing them, bring them the truth which can set them free.

We can, through prayer, open their eyes to see the truth. We can bind that work of Satan that is blinding their eyes, that is keeping them from knowing the truth. And we can deliver them from this captivity.

Surely, we ought to be engaged in this warfare, enduring hardness as a good soldier, getting out in the trenches, fighting against the enemy, delivering these who He has taken captive, setting them free through the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Vessels of honor used by the Master to bring His love and grace to

a needy world around us. God help us.

Jesus, we thank You tonight for Your Word, for Your help, for Your strength. And now, Lord, let the Word of God dwell in our hearts richly through faith that we, being rooted and grounded, may be able to comprehend more fully what is the length and the breadth and the depth and the height of the love of Jesus Christ for us. And Lord, we wish tonight to present our bodies to You as living sacrifices, yielding to You our hands, our mouths, our nose, our feet, that You might use them, Lord, as instruments of righteousness to bring Your love to a dying world.

In Jesus' name, Amen. May the Lord richly bless you, fill you with His love and with His Word and with His truth. Guide you in all things.

Make this a glorious week as we begin it in the Word, founded on the truth. May you grow up in Christ, maturing and growing and developing until your life is being used by the Master in a great way, bringing glory and pleasure to Him. In Jesus' name.

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