

The Grace That Is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 2

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the importance of relying on God's strength and provision, following godliness in our walk and profession, and maintaining corporate unity with other believers.

Scripture: Romans 1:3-4, Ephesians 4:11-13, 2 Timothy 2:1-3, Hebrews 10:25

Topics: "Endurance in Faith", "Grace"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the importance of strength in grace for Timothy's service, urging him to endure hardships and focus on spiritual labor rather than worldly affairs. He discusses the dual nature of the gospel, highlighting God's promises and the necessity of personal purity amidst the challenges of false teachings and infidelity within the Church. Darby warns against entanglement in foolish disputes and encourages a commitment to righteousness and faith, while recognizing the need for discernment in fellowship. He reassures that despite the Church's decline, God's grace remains active and sufficient for believers, and the Scriptures provide enduring guidance. Ultimately, he calls for a steadfast pursuit of godliness and unity among those who genuinely seek the Lord.

Transcript

Paul begins by encouraging Timothy in his own service: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." He was to endure hardness, and not to entangle himself in the affairs of this life. "The husbandman labouring first, shall be partaker of the fruits;" that is, he must labour before he gets the fruit. He is speaking of the ruin of the Church in chap. 1; but a person is to go on working, through grace, in all the circumstances in which he finds himself.

Verse 8. Two characters of the gospel - the accomplishment of the promises, and Christ raised from the dead. You get the same thing in Rom. 1:3, 4: He was the accomplishment of all the promises; the Jew has lost all title to them, and must come in in mercy like any other poor sinner. The promises to Moses were conditional, to Abraham unconditional.

Then he shows at the end of the chapter the state of things: "Foolish and unlearned questions avoid." (v. 23.) How from the beginning Satan wrought, or sought to work, by all these notions! Verse 19: Both sides of the seal, God's sovereign grace, and the responsibility side. You get the different stages of evil; in Jude they had "crept in," in the epistle of John they had "gone out." The "last days" (3:1) have come to a head now, and this is a warning how to act when that is the case. God has always trusted the blessing He has sent to man, and he has always failed. God's grace has gone on working all the time, and " He knoweth

them that are His." He "added to the Church daily such as should be saved" - made them manifest. While Paul was alive there was spiritual energy to detect these false brethren. False notions are learnt much more easily than the truth. The truth meets with the opposition of the flesh in us, whereas error meets with no resistance. You can learn Irvingism in a week, but it takes years to learn the truth; for the truth sanctifies, and if a person does not bow to that he does not get on. Verse 19: Two sides - godliness of walk in those who say they are Christians, that should accompany profession; and, on the other hand, they may be hidden among all these foolish people, but the Lord, knows them.

Then you get the great house, and he calls upon Timothy to purge himself from the vessels to dishonour. It is not here the exercise of discipline (you get that elsewhere); but here a man is to purge himself, then he will be a vessel unto honour. Then he takes up another thing. It is not now all who profess as at the beginning; now open infidelity has come in; but then what he says is, "Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." You must get this following godliness in every way, and do it with those who call on the Lord. When the Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved, there was no need to pick and choose; but here evil has come in, and you have to try people. It may be very plain in some: "Some men's sins are open beforehand," &c. Sometimes it requires a good deal of grace to discover only a little grace in another. "Out of a pure heart" is the motives that govern a man; "a sound mind" is that he does not go after wild fanaticism, but is sober in his judgment about divine truth. Till the disorder had come in I could not follow this order, for I should have nothing to purge myself from. All that God has established remains, and we must go on with it. The Church is still "the pillar and ground of the truth." Christendom is not, though in a certain sense it is; for it maintains outwardly the profession of Christ's name, and while it does that the Holy Ghost has not left it. Philadelphians are those who keep the word of Christ's patience, and are looking for Him. The thing is to keep fast hold of what does remain, though we have lost a good deal. Here "calling on the name of the Lord " is not sufficient. I have to see who is trying to walk "out of a pure heart." The directions of God are as distinct in this ruin as when there was no ruin at all.

Chap. 3:14: "Knowing of whom thou hast learned them." I know whom I have learned them from - Paul, or Peter, or John, &c.; that is, when the nominal church is all gone into confusion, then I get the word of God which remains. In chap. 2 I find directions for personal conduct, in chap. 3 what they are based upon - the Scriptures. People talk about "the fathers." Were they from "the beginning"? I ask. No; but from near it. Very well then, I can't have anything that did not come from "the beginning." Christ never can be unfaithful to His saints, and He is just as sufficient for these times as for those times. All that is in the Word remains; it is not that organization remains as it ought; that may go, but none of this can go. And there is another thing connected with it - it is never promised that miraculous works should continue. But in Eph. 4 gifts are not spoken of as coming from the Holy Ghost, but you get what are edification-gifts there, and they will endure "till we all come," &c., and that is never said of miraculous gifts such as tongues and healing. You never find the apostles healing any of their own friends who were sick: "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." This very Timothy was to use a little wine for his often infirmities. But when it was a testimony to the Lord, you get all these miracles wrought; but where it was not for that, you do not find them at all. In Eph. 4 the gifts are spoken of as coming from Christ, because it was not merely power; for a person, as to the gifts that are lost, might have power and not exercise it at all, not speaking with tongues for example. There was positive action of the Holy Ghost, and not allowed to be used. But where Christ gives; He gives what will endure "till we all come," &c. He cannot desert His Church. It is of all moment to have the conviction that Christ, because of His holy, blessed nature, cannot fail the saints to give all that is needed for their blessing in walking down here. You never find the "us" dropped in Scripture: "They went out from

us, but they were not of us." You still get the saints corporately. The "us" are people walking in faith, charity, peace, out of a pure heart, walking together. If there was not the corporate unity, there could not be anything from which to apostatize. There are special blessings attached to the fellowship of the saints which cannot apply to an individual.

"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake." (v. 10.) Paul was saying there almost what Christ did; he was a witness, but it was a great deal to say. He must live for himself with Christ, to be able thus to live for the saints. Chap. 3:17: "That the man of God may be perfect;" that is, full-grown. I am not a full-grown man in Christ till I realize what Christ is.

Well, with a little patience in trusting Christ, all goes on very simply; I do not mean to say without trial. Things are very much more moral than people think; seeing clearly, and all that, depends on the state of the soul.

J. N. D.

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