

# 2 Timothy - Part 3

by William MacDonald

---

*William MacDonald emphasizes the importance of perseverance in faith, the reality of suffering in ministry, and the call to disciple others in Christ.*

**Duration:** 48:43

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 1:12-14, 2 Timothy 2:2-6, 2 Timothy 2:8

**Topics:** "Expositional"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the expansion of Christianity through personal witnessing. He uses three similes to illustrate Christian service: the soldier, the athlete, and the hardworking farmer. The speaker emphasizes the importance of endurance and patience in serving the Lord. He also highlights the need for service to be in accordance with the Word of God. The sermon concludes with a reminder to remember Jesus Christ as the ultimate role model for Christian service.

---

## Transcript

We're still in chapter one, making great progress. One night to go. Second Timothy, chapter one, and I'd like to begin reading in verse twelve.

For this reason I also suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him until that day. Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

This you know that all of those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains. But when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day, and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus. I think we'll just read into chapter two a little. You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

And the things you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You, therefore, must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who enlisted him

as a soldier.

And also, if anyone competes in athletics, he's not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the cross. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffered trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains, but the word of God is not changed. Therefore, I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. This is a faithful saying, for if we died with him we shall also live with him.

If we endure, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us. If we are faithless, he remains faithful, he cannot deny himself.

Paul says, for this reason I also suffer these things. Verse 12 of chapter 1. For this reason. For what reason? In carrying out the ministry that the Lord had committed to him.

For this reason I suffer these things. Paul realized that in carrying out an effective ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ, there would inevitably be suffering, and he was ready for it. There were different degrees of suffering.

Some of God's service suffer more than others. Some pay the ultimate price, sealing their testimony with their blood. When God saved Paul, he not only saved his soul, he saved his spine as well.

Wouldn't you say? He was a man of spine. A man that would rather go to heaven with a good conscience than stay on earth with a bad conscience. He was good martyr material.

I sometimes think that we today would make very poor fuel for martyr fires. A person disagrees with me. He says we would make good fuel for martyr fires were so dry.

So you'll have to take your choice. For this reason I suffer these things. Nevertheless, I am not ashamed.

A few verses above he has said to Timothy, therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. I suffer these things, but I am not ashamed. It's a wonderful thing to me how the Apostle Paul, going through the fires and the floods, could glorify God in them all, couldn't he? He could extract honey from the carcass of the lion.

He could see the rainbow through his tears. He was a triumphant man. He was a real prophet of God, and we need more men like him today.

The trouble is, the only kind of a prophet the world likes is a dead prophet, isn't it? They like them dead, and then they'll come and put wreaths upon their graves. That's what the Lord Jesus said, garnish the sepulchers of the prophets, and saying as we had lived in their day that they haven't changed a bit. Notice the assurance in the life of the Apostle Paul.

I know whom I have believed. His confidence was not in himself. His confidence was not in the people of God.

His confidence was in the Lord Jesus himself. I know whom I have believed, and I'm persuaded that he's able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day. That may refer to the salvation of his

soul.

It's certainly true in connection with that. He committed himself to the Lord Jesus for salvation, and a great contract took place, and he is persuaded that the Lord is able to keep him. It may also mean to the committal of his life for service for the Lord as well, and when it may mean both, I think it's good to take both.

And then this strong exhortation to the younger man, Timothy, hold fast the pattern of sound words. You know, all of these expressions are pregnant with meaning for us today. When there's a tendency to allow things to slide, when there's a tremendous latitudinarianism in the things of God today, and people have become soft and flabby on many, many subjects, he says, you hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me.

I think it not only means the great truths of the Christian faith, but the way in which they're presented in the Word of God. In some circles today, there's kind of a reluctance to use some of the expressions of the Bible, you know, a reluctance to speak about redemption by blood, a reluctance to speak about being born again, kind of a hesitation to speak about the inspiration of the Scriptures by God, better to say the authority of the Scriptures. And so, we have a way of toning down, we, at least people today, have a way of toning down some of the great truths of the Word of God.

And I think when Paul expressed that, it meant not only holding the truth, but holding the pattern of sound words as well. You hold them fast in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Doesn't it thrill your soul to come across young men and young women who have their convictions as to the Word of God, and they stick to their convictions? I like it.

When I was a young man, Alfred Mace, with his rabble voice, said to me, El, when you get divine principles, stick to them. Never forgot it. When you get divine principles, stick to them.

He said something else which I will put in at no extra cost. He said, he said, no man's gift is too big for God's principles. What does that mean? Well, it may mean that I might think that small churches and small assemblies are really too trivial for my type of ministry, and I've got to go into broader areas where I can preach to bigger audiences.

He said, no man's gift is too big for divine principles. Don't sacrifice for that reason. Then Paul says, that good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

In a day of declension, in a day of turning away, in a day of spiritual weakness, hold fast Timothy. Can't you hear the pleading voice of the apostle Paul as he writes these words to the young man Timothy? And I think these next verses are very, very interesting. He's really preparing Timothy for what lies ahead from him.

He says, this you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me. Just think of it. Among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

What is he saying here? He's saying, Timothy, in the execution of your commission from the Lord Jesus, you're very apt to know desertion and loneliness, because that's what it speaks about. There were these men, Phygelus and Hermogenes among others, and they had been with Paul, and apparently accompanied with him in happy service for the Lord, and all of a sudden they take a powder and off they go. And I know that many of you have experienced that.

It's one of the heartaches of Christian service, isn't it? To see the fallout along the way. Many aspire, few attain. A lot start off well, but so many fall out by the wayside.

The highway of the Christian life and service is littered, in that sense, with corpses, and that's what Paul is speaking about. It really hurts. It really hurts when people you've invested your life in, you poured out your soul for them, and then they turn away.

But it also means loneliness. I know the hymn says, No Longer Lonely, but the fact of life is that oftentimes in Christian service there is loneliness, in spite of the fact that the Lord is with us always. There's a loneliness of lack of human companionship that I think Paul experienced it as he wrote this epistle.

Come on, Timothy, come quickly, come to be with me. You are experiencing loneliness? Well, there's a way you can extract the honey from the carcass of a lion, exalt the loneliness as one way in which you can share the sufferings of Christ, because he knew what it was to be lonely. You say, Jesus knew what it was? Yeah, Jesus knew what it was.

He so surpassed his disciples in zeal for God that even when they were going up to Jerusalem, he was out in front, and they were lagging behind with leaden feet. We have an expression today, it's lonely at the top. The Lord Jesus was certainly at the top when it came to deal for God, and accomplishing the will of God during his ministry down here.

This know that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermodotus. We hear a lot about love today, you know, and love covers a multitude of sins, but how did Paul dare to mention people by name? Isn't that forbidden nowadays? You don't mention people by name like Paul did. How do you account for that? Well, I account for it because it is love for the people of God, and he felt they had to be warned about this sort of thing.

So it's not always wrong to single out people by name, and Paul does it plenty of times in his epistles, doesn't he? But it's sad to think of your name immortalized in this way, isn't it? Guy King said these men couldn't help their ugly names, but they could help their ugly characters, and that's really the way they go down in the scriptures, isn't it? As men who had ugly characters. Well, the next man we read about, he doesn't have the most beautiful name either, and I don't think any of you have named your children Onesiphorus, have you? But it would be wonderful if your children exhibited the same lineaments of character that Onesiphorus did. What a beautiful description of him.

The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my change. Here's Paul in prison, and it really is not the part of wisdom, of human wisdom, to be associated with him. That would be guilt by association, wouldn't it? And it was not helpful exactly to be found with the Apostle Paul, but Onesiphorus didn't care, and he went through tremendous pain, tremendous pain to search out and find the Apostle Paul.

He couldn't stay content until he had found him. When he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very diligently and found me. The Lord grant to him that he might find mercy from the Lord in that day, and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me in Ephesus.

And you say, well, I know that none of my friends are in jail today, none of my friends are handcuffed today, what does it have to say to me? Well, I want to tell you, it speaks very loudly to me, because sometimes when our friends are in pain, in sorrow, in sickness, and when the sign of tragedy is on the

front door of their house, it's very easy to stay away, isn't it? And sometimes in our heart of hearts, we rather fear going into that sort of a situation. There's a human reluctance to go into that sort of a situation. We feel our legs will turn to India rubber sometimes if we do.

A good thing for us to remember Onesiphorus. You say, well, I wouldn't know what to say if I went to that house that's wracked by sorrow. That's good, don't say anything.

Just go. All you have to do is go with a warm embrace, huh? Go with a hearty handshake, or best of all, go with a tear in your eyes. You know, sometimes people go and visit in a situation like that with some glib phrase, or even some glib verse of scripture.

It really might not be the right thing, that sometimes it is. I've known so many hearts to be lifted by Psalm 30, verse 5. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. But honestly, you have to be guided by the Spirit of God.

It has to be the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, the right word spoken at the right time. Makes me think of a soldier out there on the front lines, and he's shot down, and he's lying out there in no man's land. And his friend looks out from the potholes and sees him there lying mortally wounded, and he starts to prepare to go out after him, to bring him back on his shoulders.

And the officer says, look, you shouldn't go out there. Cost you your life to go out there. But he went, and he went to his smitten comrade, and he leaned over.

That dying soldier said, thanks, Jim. I knew you'd come. And you know, that's a wonderful thing.

If friends can say to us, thanks a lot. I knew you'd come. If I could just use a personal illustration that doesn't put me in a very good light.

When Dr. McCulley died, his wife called me, I think it must have been about four o'clock in the morning, and she said, Bill C. has gone home to be with the Lord. It was a terrible shock, really. I mean, he had had a heart attack.

I didn't know it. The night before, he had had a heart attack, and she rushed him to the DuPage Hospital, and she called her daughter right away in Seattle to come. And she said to me, C. has gone home to be with the Lord.

Well, I really didn't know it. I said, where are you now, Lois? And she said, I'm out at O'Hare Airport waiting for Peg to arrive. What do you do? Well, I didn't say I'll be right out, although I did go right out.

She should have said, well, I'll be right out. But anyway, I did get in the car, and I went out to the airport, and you can hardly imagine what a morgue-like airport is at 430 in the morning. I mean, she was sitting alone in one of these departure areas.

Her daughter was coming in. Her daughter didn't know yet that the father had died, because she had been called while he was still breathing. So, I waited with Lois there, and whenever Peg got off the plane, she knew right away that C. had died, that her father had gone.

Anyway, we went to the luggage, and we got to the car, and they said to me, they said, are you coming out with us for the weekend? My mind was confused right then, and I said, I thought, well, they'll want to be alone, didn't they? The mother and daughter will want to be alone, and I said, well, I think I'd better get

back to my work. They sat there all day, alone in the house, waiting for their son to come from Oklahoma. They said to me, Peg said to me later, it was the longest day in our lives.

You can imagine how that made me feel. Instead of saying, thanks Bill, we knew you'd come. This really speaks to me loudly when I read this about Honest Zippers.

He was a great man, wasn't he? Willing to expose himself to danger. He had to be there with the apostle, and the apostle Paul says, you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus. I think that's beautiful.

And, you know, one of the thrills of the Christian life to me is that Honest Zippers never dreamed in his wildest imagination that by doing that thing which he considered ordinary duty, we would be reading about him in 1990. Isn't that marvelous? The Christian life is really an exciting life, isn't it? A life lived in the center of the will of God. How very exciting and thrilling it is.

Paul isn't through with Timothy yet. He says, you therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. This is good.

He's pouring metal into Timothy's character, isn't he? Not be strong in yourself, not go forth in arrogance and self-confidence, be strong in the grace, the strength that is in Christ Jesus. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, and really that's the only strength that counts. And then he gives us this well-known expression of discipleship, the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

And I believe we're justified in taking this verse as an exhortation to Christian disciples. What do we mean by that? Well, we mean largely what the pattern that the Lord Jesus followed, how he called twelve disciples. He lived with them.

He taught them the great truths of the of God. He took them out on on-the-job training. He gave them the example of his own life, and then he sent them forth on the mission glorious.

That's discipleship. And I think we all acknowledge that, and it really has to be the best method, doesn't it? Because the Lord Jesus used it. We acknowledge it, but we don't always practice it, do we? I wonder how many of us here, how many brothers here tonight have some young community that they're just pouring their lives into? I wonder how many sisters are following the biblical expectations to take younger women and teach them.

You see, the usual emphasis is, when a person gets saved, um, now just attend the meeting faithfully, and as you attend the meeting, you will hear the teaching of the word of God, and you will go. And it's true, it's true, they will, and they should attend the meeting faithfully. But there's something better, too, in addition to that, to teach them step by step, and to take them out on the work.

A couple of years ago now, a young woman was saved at our assembly, and, um, I think it was the Lord's Day she was saved, and Wednesday night, to my amazement, she walked into the meeting with a head covering on. She couldn't believe it. And I said to Don Robertson, who's here, I said, what does Charlemar know about a head covering? All he said, Sandra is discipling her.

Our elders never had to say a word about it. They never had to say a word. It was all done between Sunday and Wednesday night.

And you know, dear Charlema, she thinks it's like that in every church. She's never known anything different. These are some of the benefits, you know, of one-on-one discipling, uh, as carried on by the Lord Jesus.

Unfortunately, the word discipling has acquired a bad connotation, because there are some gurus who have really exercised dominion over the people of God. They dominate the life of the discipler. They make decisions for him, and generally require a strict legal submission.

The shepherding movement in the United States is an example of that. But that doesn't mean that there isn't a true discipling, a godly discipling, something according to the word of God. But there are problems, too.

When we work with young people, we put ourselves in a very vulnerable position. You know why? Because they learn very soon that we have feet of clay. They see us warts and all.

You can't hide from the one you're helping. Your life really is an open book. And the one you're helping will see you as you are.

He'll know your weaknesses, because, um, on an eyeball-to-eyeball basis, there's no place to hide. And I think that holds us back sometimes from entering into this ministry, the fact that discipling makes you vulnerable. And as if that isn't bad enough, sometimes you'll work with people much younger than yourself than yourself who are better Christians than you are, who pray more than you pray, who fast more than you fast, who are more faithful in reading the word of God and in witnessing.

So this is pretty humiliating. Draws you up short, is this whole thing. But there's the exhortation, anyway, the things that you've heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

This is the expansion of Christianity through personal witnessing. And then Paul uses these three wonderful similes of Christian service. You have, of course, the soldier in verses three and four.

You have the athlete in verse five, and you have the hard-working farmer in verse six. First of all, you have the soldier endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Out of the throng of young people who respond to a missionary challenge in Bible school, Bible colleges, missionary meetings, Bible conferences and camps, only 12 percent ever apply for training.

Five percent complete their Bible training, three percent qualify for service, and only one percent return to the field after their first term. These are U.S. statistics. In that connection, I can't help thinking of one of Amy Carmichael's lovely poems.

From subtle love of softening things,  
From easy choices, weakenings,  
Not thus are spirits fortified,  
Not this way went the crucified.  
From all that dims thy calvary,  
O Lamb of God, deliver me.  
From all that dims thy calvary,  
O Lamb of God, deliver me.

Somebody has said, Some faint at the sight of blood. A young man came to Jesus and said, I will follow you wherever you go. But when Jesus showed him a picture of a cross with some crimson on it, he who was all eagerness fell into a dead faint.

He yearned for the goods, but the price was greater than he was willing to pay. It's as if he said, but for these vile guns, I would be a soldier. Leslie Newbigin said, Christians are meant to be a task force rather than a study group or a holy club.

Christians are meant to be a task force rather than a study group or a holy club. That's what Paul is trying to get across here to Timothy. You, therefore, must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

And then continuing on the theme of the good soldier, he says, no one engaged in warfare, etc. The two emphatic words here, I think, are entangled and pleased, entangled and pleased, entangled. You and I know about that.

How many diversions and detours present themselves to us all the time? Foods, fashion, fitness, and family. And how social causes come up and want to become a prominent thing in our lives. Abortions, environments, politics, fighting the media that ridicules religion and undermines traditional values and uses foul language.

Shouldn't we do something about it? Child abuse, racism, and police brutality. There's no end to the list of things that we could be engaging in. Paul says, no soldier on active duty entangles himself.

These things are good. I'm speaking about them. There's something better.

Those things never change men's character. Only the new birth changes men. And that's why the new birth is central, and it's God's program for the world and for his people.

And I feel if I'm going to be serving with Christ, I want to be doing what he's doing. And his will is not really to make the world a better place to live in, but to call out from the nation a people for his name. Vance Havner said, we drown in mud puddles of insignificant issues and have no time for great concerns.

We need to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and not let what we eat and wear and all life's lesser interests take up our time. So this is a big problem in life, isn't it? The whole problem of priority. What is going to be first in my life? Do I have that vision, and am I going for it with a straight but I think there are a lot of other lessons here.

As soldiers, we have to constantly remember that one battle is not the whole war. And I think there may be some here, I don't know, but I think there may be some here, and you're discouraged because you've lost the battle. Is that right? Things have not, you've gone through a rough patch, things have not been going well.

Over my desk, back to the shelving, I have this little poem, and I read it all the time, and it really has been a blessing to me. O changeless sea, thy message in changing spray is cast. Within God's plan of progress, it matters not at last how wide the shores of evil, how strong the wreaths of sin.

The wave may be defeated, but the tide is sure to win. But that may be your circumstance right now. The wave may be defeated.

And you feel that, you feel defeated, and disconsolate, and discouraged, and depressed. Listen, the tide is sure to win. I like it.

Somebody said to Billy Graham, are you an optimist or a pessimist? He said, I'm an optimist. Why are you an optimist? He said, I read the last chapter of Revelation, and God's going to win. And we are on the

winning side.

I mean, I know it. Muslim countries, you think of the difficulties of working among those people? Never mind. The wave may be defeated, but the tide is sure to win.

And then in verse 5, don't forget, our service must be according to the Word of God. Otherwise it is fleshly, carnal, and of no eternal value. Paul says, if anyone competes in athletics, he's not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

I mentioned the word pleased, but I didn't elaborate on it. But I should go back to that. He may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

How do you please him who has enlisted you as a soldier by not becoming entangled with the affairs of this life? What it says, the hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crop. I emphasize here, hard-working. The poet has said, we're not here to play, to dream, to drift.

We have hard work to do and loads to lift. Shun not the struggle, face it, it's God's gift. Say not the days are evil, who's to blame? And hold the hands and acquiesce, oh shame.

Stand up, speak out, act bravely in God's name. It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong, how hard the battle goes, the day how long. Fight on, fight on, tomorrow comes the song.

The Virgin said, kill yourself with hard work, then pray yourself alive again. But I'm serious when I say, really, we should be working harder for the Lord Jesus than we would for any earthly enterprise. I saw a dear brother Ned out there, I think it was 6.30, he was out putting dirt along by the flowers there.

I said, you're not following union rules at all. He's just glad, apparently, just to pour out his life day and night for the Lord Jesus, that it's all going to be rewarded in that coming day, that he may please him who has called him. You know, the Lord Jesus himself is our supreme example of this, of hard work, the supreme model and example.

What days of toil were his, what night of prayer he spent on the side of the hill. Three years in the ministry made an old man of him. They said to him, you are not yet 50 years old, guessing at his age.

50 years, he was only 30. You don't catch that in Christian art, do you? I hesitate to give you the following statistics, they kind of discourage me, but here they are. John Wesley traveled 250,000 miles on horseback, averaging 20 miles a day for 40 years.

Makes me wonder if I'm a Christian. He preached 40,000 sermons, produced hundreds of books, knew 10 languages. At 83, he was annoyed that he could not write more than 15 hours a day without hurting his eyes, and at 86, he was ashamed he could not preach more than twice a day.

He complained in his journal that there was an increasing tendency to lie in bed until 5 30 in the morning. And I often think of Darby, John Nelson Darby, you know, brought up in a luxurious home, went over to Dublin, Ireland, studied at Trinity there, studied for law first, and then became a cleric in the Church of Ireland, and then God called him out of that establishment, and he traveled for months and ends over the Wicklow Mountains of Ireland and saw hundreds of Roman Catholics come to the Lord Jesus. And then he went over to the continent, he traveled for 26 years without unpacking his suitcase, and everywhere he went, New Testament assemblies were founded.

One day he sat in the chief Italian boarding house, and he cupped his chin in his hand and sang, Jesus, I my cross have taken all to leave and follow thee. And it was true. Translated the Bible from Greek and Hebrew into English, and had parts in several other versions of the Bible, French, German, Italian, I'm not sure of the exact details.

And when he left, when he left this earth, he left behind 34 volumes of his collective writings. Hard-working farmer, really tremendous. So you have the soldier, you have the athlete competing in the game, and you have the hard-working farmer first to partake of the crops.

Reward ahead. But he doesn't get his harvest the day he plants it, and that means patience too, doesn't it? Sometimes we're impatient, we want to see results right away. This isn't the way God usually works.

You don't reap the day you sow, or a few days afterwards. There's a process involved, and there is in dealing with souls too. And Paul said, consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

I think that means, look, I haven't exhausted, I've given you three similes, now you explore them. And you, you get the meat out of them. Consider what I say, and you apply it to your own life in your service for the Lord Jesus, dear Timothy.

And then he says, and I think it reads, remember Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, raised from the dead, according to my gospel. Some people think that Paul is starting a new subject here, maybe a new paragraph, I don't think so. I think Paul is just giving the conclusion of the preceding paragraph, rather than the beginning of a new one.

He's pressing home his lesson, and he passes from the figures of speech to the concrete example of the Lord Jesus. If you want a role model, may I introduce you to the Lord Jesus. He exemplifies all I'm trying to say in the picture of the soldier, and the athlete, and the farm laborer.

He can be an example to us. And then Paul again says, according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer. I think of the rest of that verse, even to the point of change, but the word of God is not changed.

The word of God is not changed. That's good. We may be changed and chained in different ways than Paul was.

We may be obstructed and hindered in ways, but the word of God is not changed. I think of the Eastern European countries, and I think of how the Bible was a prohibited book in those countries. But I also think of the underground river of Bibles and Testaments that was flowing into those countries all the time.

And sometimes God's servants were languishing in jail, just like Paul was. The word of God wasn't found. Now that's a glorious thing, and that's why many of us engaged in propagating the word of God are engaged in a work that can never fail.

You can't say that of earthly occupations, of earthly professions, but you can say it of this one. Distribute the word of God. Distribute Bibles, and New Testaments, and gospel portions, and the word of God in every form, and you're engaged in a ministry that doesn't be blessed by God.

He said, my word will not return unto me void. It will accomplish that which I have sent it forth to do. And just as all the armies of the world cannot stop the snow from falling to the ground, or the rain, so all the armies of the world are powerless to stop the going forth of God's precious holy word.

What an encouragement for us. Not only are we on the winning side, but God has promised to bless his words. Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus unto eternal glory.

This man knew what he was after. He was determined to carve his name, not in marble, but in human lives, and he was willing to suffer for that. Am I willing to? I faint at the sight.

The last two, of course, refer to God himself. I suggest that to you. The first four lines refer to true believers, and the word of God sees all true believers as having died with him.

When he died on the cross, we died on the cross. When he was buried, we were buried. When he rose again from the dead, we rose again in him.

And so it says here, if we died with him, we shall also live with him. And then the word of God here sees all Christians as enduring. There are degrees of endurance, aren't there? A lot of people have to endure a lot more than others.

Most of us ride to heaven in flowery beds of ease, but others are going through severe trials, fires and floods. But all believers are seen here as enduring. If we endure, we shall also reign with him.

Once again, there will be degrees of reigning with him, too. Rule thou over ten cities, rule thou over five cities. But all Christians are seen here as enduring.

But then it says if we deny him, he also will deny us. I don't think this is the denial of Peter, because Peter was a true believer who had gotten away from the Lord for that sin. But this is the denial, I will not have him to reign over me, that type of thing.

Denying him as Lord and Savior of the life. And Paul says if we deny him, he also will deny us. If we are faithful, I think it means unbelievers, it says he remains faithful, he cannot deny himself.

A lot of people take those last two lines as a word of comfort, you know, that no matter what people do, God is still a beneficent monarch, and he will overlook it, and everything will be all right. I don't think it means that. I think that refers back to everything that's gone before, and God is going to be faithful to his promise, whether to bless or to punish, whether to bless his own people or deal differently with those who are faithless and who deny the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ himself said, whoever denies me will be denied before the Father which is in heaven. So don't take this as a comfort that the Lord will keep his loving promise to me, no matter how much I may go against him. It really doesn't say that.

He's just as faithful in his threatenings as he is in his promises. That's what the passage says to me. And the will of God will go on from this point tomorrow night, and certainly we will not finish the book, but at least extract some further lessons for Christian life and service from it.

Shall we pray? Father, we do thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ, first of all, who embodies all the characteristics of the soldier, the athlete, the hard-working farmer. We thank you, too, for the way this was

lived out in the life of the Apostle Paul, that he could say these things without shame. He could say them boldly to the young man Timothy.

Now, Father, we pray that, having told out the message, that we might make it real in our own lives. Deliver us from the grave of satisfaction, Lord, and help us to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. We ask in his worthy name.

Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7799.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/2-timothy-part-3/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**