

The Goal of the Christian Life

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[0:00] 2 Timothy chapter 2. You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,! And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses,! Entrust to reliable men, who will also be qualified to teach others.

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs. He wants to please his commanding officer.

Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David.

This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may attain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

[1:15] Here is a trustworthy saying. If we died with him, we will also live with him. If we endure, we will also reign with him.

If we disown him, he will also disown us. If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself. Many of you, as we gather here tonight, profess faith in Christ.

You are Christians, believers. And so I have a question for you. And that is, what is your goal as a Christian? To what end are you living the Christian life?

What's the point? What are you aiming for? Or maybe you haven't taken a step back to look at your life for some time and to say, why am I living this Christian life?

Maybe you don't know what the goal of your Christian life is or should be. What you should be aiming for. And so tonight, whether you've never thought about it, and I hope that's not the case.

[2:20] Or you haven't given it serious consideration for some time. Or you haven't made a focused effort to attain what you already know is the goal of the Christian life. We want to consider it tonight.

And think on it. And bring it to the forefront of our minds. The thing that we should be aiming for every day in everything that we do. As followers of Christ. So that when we go from here tonight, we'll be clear.

This is why I am living my life as a follower of Christ. And be encouraged to go and do it in the strength of the Lord. Very simply, three things tonight. We want to see the resources that we have for Christian life and ministry.

Remember, this is written first to Timothy. Who is a minister? And so we want to see the resources that God gives us for life and for ministry. Secondly, the thing that we've just spoken of. The goal of our Christian life and ministry.

And then lastly, given these things, how then should we live? If these are the resources we have, this is our aim. What should we do? How should we live? So first, the resources for Christian life and ministry.

[3:21] We're just looking at verses 8-10 tonight. The resources for life and ministry as a Christian. As Paul encourages Timothy to work and to do the work of the ministry that God has called him to do.

He takes them back to the foundation. And that is Christ. Who is the gospel. This is the foundation from which Timothy can build his life.

The firm foundation which he can base his life on. Christ is the one thing needful if we are to live as Christians in this world. And that Christ, as our brother Jason has already pointed out, is alive.

He's risen. The first resource for the Christian life is the risen Savior. He says, remember Jesus Christ who has been and who is still raised from the dead.

From the seed of David. According to my gospel. Christ, the cornerstone of our faith. Some foolishly reject him. Some stumble over him. But those who have been given eyes to see know that he is all that we have.

[4:21] Our only hope. And so we must cling to him. Timothy, you haven't rejected Christ. That's good. People of God, you haven't rejected him. Now don't forget him. Remember him who is your life.

And he is not just Christ crucified, but he is risen. I think we often think of Christ as crucified. And that is good. For the reasons that we heard of this morning.

He died on the cross to save us from our sins. And that's the best news there could be. But if he only died, then the message of his death means nothing. If he didn't rise from the dead, he's not the Savior of mankind.

If he's not the risen Lord, he's not who he said he was. And so Paul doesn't say, remember Christ crucified to struggling Timothy. He says, remember Jesus Christ risen.

And what an encouragement to somebody like Timothy or to somebody like us who's struggling, who's facing various trials, pressures, enduring many things for the cause of Christ.

[5:24] What a blessed thing to remember this Jesus who is risen. He suffered like we did. He suffered worse than we do. He suffered worse than you did, Timothy.

Worse injustice, worse disgrace, worse shame than any of us ever will. And you know what? That Jesus who suffered all those things, he made it. He's alive today.

He rose from the dead. Death couldn't contain him. It couldn't hold him. And you, verse 11, will live with him one day. If we died with him, we will also live with him. You're going to suffer, Timothy.

People of God, you're going to endure many things in this life. But don't forget Christ who suffered those things too and who is alive today. The resurrection of Christ is a glorious truth. It has many implications for us.

Wonderful things. It means that death has been conquered. It holds no more sting for us. We don't have to fear death any longer. The resurrection is the demonstration that Jesus is who he said he was.

[6:21] It means that we'll rise from the dead too in that day. But Paul doesn't say, remember the resurrection. He says, remember Jesus. Remember the person who was resurrected from the dead.

The suffering Savior is now the reigning king. He's living. He's powerful. He's working on behalf of his church, which should be a great comfort to a minister in the church like Timothy. And to the whole church.

Christ is ruling right now over all things for the church. So remember the Savior. He's our first resource this evening. The first resource for the Christian life.

But something else about this Christ. He's risen, but he's also the seed of David. And that should bring to mind two things. Jason pointed out one of them. That it's the fulfillment of the promise.

More on that in a second. But it should also remind us that he's a man. He descended from David. He's a man like you are. He had a mom like you did.

[7:18] He endured hardship for the sake of the gospel like you're called to do. He faithfully ministered the truth, Timothy, like you're called to do. He was tempted like you are, yet was without sin. He can sympathize with your weakness because he was a man like you.

All the things that going all the way back to the last sermon of the year that Jason preached from Hebrews 4. He is all of those things. But he's more than that.

He is the fulfillment of the promise. He's descended from David. The birth of Jesus from the house of David was the subject of various prophecies. I'll just give you one of them.

Jeremiah 23.5 The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up to David a righteous branch, a king who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

And the fact that Jesus came, descended from David, born of a virgin is a sign that God keeps his promises. God is faithful to his word.

[8:19] He is the fulfillment of all of those prophecies. And God is good to keep his word. And if he kept that most important of promises, Timothy, people of God tonight, if he kept that most important of promises, that Jesus would come and come from the line of David, will he not keep his other

promises as well?

Has he promised to never leave you or forsake you? You can believe him. Has he promised to be with you when you go through the deep waters? Then you can believe him. Has he promised to never let you go?

Then you can believe him. And that's a comfort. You see, Christ in his coming to earth is a demonstration of God's faithfulness. Faithfulness to keep his promises.

Christ in his resurrection is a demonstration of God's power. Christ in his current status is risen, living, reigning Lord over all things is a demonstration of God's love for his church.

That he hasn't left us to ourselves. This is Paul's gospel. This is the gospel. The only gospel that can save. That there is a Savior who is not dead, but who is alive.

[9:27] He was a man like we are, but was without sin. And so he can be the perfect mediator between God and men. And so Jesus Christ is one of the resources for our Christian life.

We need to remember him. We'll talk more about the remembering later. But he is our strength. He is our strength. And if he endured this world, we can too in his strength. But the second resource we want to consider for the Christian life is the word of God.

It's in verse 10 there. Or excuse me, verse 9. For which I'm suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. The other resource that we have goes hand in hand with the first.

The risen Savior. And also the unchained word of God. Paul was suffering. He was bound in chains. But the word of God can't be bound with chains like that.

And who better to tell us this than the Apostle Paul? I think this is such a vivid picture that he paints for us. He's sitting there in chains. But think even further back into the book of Acts.

[10:25] You know what Paul had tried to do before he was a believer? Before he was a follower of Christ? He had tried to use chains to restrict the spread of the gospel. He had gone about from house to house throwing people in prison.

And that's the word here. You could say bound or chained or in prison. That's what Paul did. He tried to stop the word of God. He didn't want it to be proclaimed. He didn't want people to believe in this Jesus.

And so you know what? He used chains. He threw people in jail to try to stop it. But what do we read in the book of Acts? Was Paul successful in stopping it? And not just Paul. Other people. Others were opposed to the spread of the gospel.

The Roman Empire against him. But what do we find in the book of Acts? Acts 6 and verse 7. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly.

All that opposition couldn't stop the spread of the truth. Acts 12. 24. The word of God continued to increase and spread. So Paul says, listen, I know.

[11:23] I tried to stop the gospel with chains. You can't contain the word of God. You can hold me down with chains. You can hold down a minister of the gospel. You can imprison him. But you can't stop his message.

You can't stop the word of God. And so Paul's not so concerned for his chains. He had told his brothers in Christ that he was ready to be bound or chained and even to die. Why? In Acts 21. Because he knows the progress of God's word cannot be stopped. And so even though he's in prison, others are out proclaiming that word. And the word that Paul had proclaimed was still working in the hearts of those who had heard it.

Matthew Henry says, persecuting powers may silence ministers and restrain them. But they cannot hinder the operation of the word of God upon men's hearts and consciences.

That cannot be bound by any human force. You see, it's a powerful word, Hebrews 4.12. The word of God is living and active. It's sharper than any two-edged sword. Penetrating even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow.

[12:20] It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. You can't stop that word. Spurgeon has a delightful little section and a message on this verse about the word of God being unchanged.

He says, the minister might be sick one day. And he's weak. And he comes into his pulpit and he's weak and he's ill. But the word of God isn't ill. It's not weak.

It's not sick. The word he proclaims is strong and powerful. It can't be stopped. The word of God. And hear me out to the end.

The word of God is like the Gerasene demoniac. Remember him. Remember, he was possessed by a legion of demons. And he couldn't be bound with chains.

They had tried to chain him. But he threw off the chains. He was so powerful that people were afraid now to come near him. Well, you can try to stop God's word. You can chain it. But it's futile.

[13:15] And it's a greater power. It's not a demonic power. It's divine power. See, God could chain those demons. He could control that power. But nothing can control the power of God.

Only God and His infinite power can do these things. God could stop men. But men cannot stop Him and His word. I was reminded of this in the last week on Tuesday.

A massive winter storm spread across our country. And where my parents live in Kentucky, it was all ice. Very tail end they got a few inches of snow. But it was all ice.

And maybe you've read some stories out of Kentucky about how there's still over 500,000 people that don't have power. And my parents have been without power since Tuesday night. It came on last night for half an hour.

And they lost it again. And got it back this morning. It's been on all day. But anyway, I was talking to my dad. I've talked to my parents about every day this week to see how they're doing. And my dad said he'd been running around.

[14:16] He was checking on widows in the church with another deacon. Working, working. He finally had a moment. He said, I sat down and I wrote down some thoughts. And he said, with all of our technological advances, with all of our power, with all of our precision forecasts, there was nothing that we could do to stop that ice storm.

There was not one thing that we could do to stop an act of God that brought our entire state to a halt. Most of the state anyway. I mean, things shut down. There was no power.

Some parts of the state, no water, no food. And you know what? God did that. And men and all their might couldn't stop Him. And that's the power that's behind the Word of God. The power of God that can't be thwarted by the plans of men, by all the efforts to persecute and stop and cease the spread of the gospel.

The Word of God cannot be chained. It cannot be stopped. And so, Timothy, don't be ashamed of that Word. Proclaim away. Paul might be in prison, but you're not. Not yet anyway.

So preach while you can. And may God raise up more Timothys to proclaim that Word. Here we are. Well, remarkably, 2,000 years later, and God's Word is still being proclaimed. You know what that's a sign of?

[15:29] A sign that this Word can't be chained. Can't be held back. Can't be restrained. Its influence is divine. It's an unstoppable force. Isaiah 40 and verse 8, The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God stands forever.

I'm struck with how similar these two resources for the Christian life are. There's the risen, living Christ. And there's the living, unchained Word of God. And Christ is called in the Scriptures the Word of God.

And if we didn't have, in Christ, the Word of God continues to bless His church through that Word that He's given us. If we didn't have a living Christ, if we didn't have His unchained Word, we wouldn't have Christianity, we wouldn't have any resources by which to live this life.

And you know what? If we didn't have the risen Christ and we didn't have His Word, then I would despair. I would give up. I would be discouraged all the time. And Timothy's starting to face that. He's starting to feel overwhelmed. And you may feel that.

Overwhelmed. You say, how am I going to do this? But it's not as though God has left us alone. He's given us what we need. He's given us Christ. He's given us a Savior.

[16:39] Not just to save us, but then to walk every step of the way with us. And He's given us His Word. A light to our feet. A lamp to our path. I hope you read it.

I hope you listen to that adult Sunday school class. What a remarkable thing. He's given us the resources that we need. And so, Timothy, so, Church of God, don't be afraid.

Don't be discouraged. There's going to be trouble. There's going to be suffering. You're going to have to endure all things, but you're not alone. You've got the risen Christ, and you've got the Word of God to help you on your hand.

Every resource that you need. And so, with those resources, then, what is the goal of the Christian life? What are we aiming for? What should we be using those resources for? How should we be living?

The goal, the aim, very simply, is the salvation of God's elect. Having this risen Jesus, this unchained Word of God, what do we do?

[17:36] It's in verse 10. Paul says, Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

The aim of Christian ministry and of our Christian lives is the salvation of God's elect. Well, who are the elect? I'm not going to give a full-fledged doctrine of election tonight.

We simply don't have time, and that's not Paul's point. He simply assumes here that there are elect. From the rest of the Scriptures, we know, as William Hendrickson says, These elect are those on whom God has set His peculiar love from eternity.

They are the object of His sovereign good pleasure, chosen not because of their foreseen goodness or faith, but because God so will. It's a great summary of what it means to be elect.

No one deserves to be saved from their sins, but God has chosen a people who will be saved. A people who will receive forgiveness of sins. And that choice is of nothing good in those He chooses.

[18:41] Nothing in them at all. If there's anything good in them, it's because He chose them for that purpose and prepared those good works in advance for them. It's not like us going and choosing a puppy and there's all these puppies and there's one that loves us and licks us and, Oh, we love this one because it's so cute and so we choose this one.

There's nothing lovable about us. We're not chosen for anything in ourselves, but rather according to the good pleasure of God. So, that's fine, but which elect people is Paul talking about?

Is he talking about those he already knows are elect by their profession of faith and by the way they live? They have deeds that back up their faith. They've professed Christ and they're in the church and so he knows so far as he can tell from a human perspective that these are God's elect.

These are His children. We can look around the church and see the members of the church and can be confident that they are elect because their deeds demonstrate their faith.

Is he talking about those or is he talking about those who are not yet known? because they haven't yet made a profession of faith. You can look around the church tonight and there are those that haven't made a profession of faith and say, are they elect or are they not?

[19:52] Well, we don't know. But God knows. I think He's talking about that latter group. Those who have not already obtained salvation. Who have not yet made a profession of faith and Paul's goal for them is that they be saved.

I endure everything for the sake of the elect that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. And so for those not yet professing faith in Christ, Paul's goal for them, our goal for them should be that they might be saved.

One commentator says they have to be one. And every ounce of effort must be put into the present conflict in which both Paul and Timothy are engaged. In which you all are engaged. Enduring everything, even suffering that they might be saved.

They say, I don't know who the elect are. Right. So you work all the harder. You make sure that each one knows the truth. That they might hear it and that they might be drawn to Christ.

The idea that the doctrine of election should cause us to sit back and see who God will save is foreign to Paul and it should be foreign to us. Paul is going to endure all things.

[21:01] He's going to suffer. He's going to work hard that the elect might be saved. He's not going to sit back to wait and see who they are. He's going to take the gospel to them. That's why he's so glad that though he's in prison, the word of God is not chained.

It will go forth. And God's people will hear and respond to it. And we too, we don't know who they are. So we work the harder to get the truth to all men that they might obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

You can only be saved through faith in Christ. And so we present Christ to men. And along with that, there's eternal glory. Instead of the punishment we deserve, God chooses some people to enjoy glory with Him forever.

And we want people to know that message. We want them to believe it. And as Christians, we must make it our aim to see to it that the elect obtain salvation. That's our goal.

That's what we're living for. That's why we minister. It's why we preach. We want people to be saved. Now, lest we promote an imbalanced sort of ministry that is only evangelistic and neglects those who have already been brought into the fold, understand that Paul was also concerned to shepherd the sheep that were already in the church.

[22:08] Paul didn't just go around planting churches. Now, he was a remarkable evangelist and missionary, but he didn't just plant the churches and then leave them to themselves and say, oh, we got you into the kingdom and now you can go on living however you want.

What did he do? He went back to those churches. He went back and visited them, encouraging them. And when he hears of problems, a lot of our New Testament is what? It's letters from Paul to those churches so that they might stay on the straight and narrow path.

He's concerned that those who have obtained salvation keep it. That they not turn away, that they not apostatize, but that they persevere to the end. He'll even send a representative like Timothy to a church that's really struggling like Ephesus to make sure that they not turn away from the faith.

He wants them to persevere to the end. So, it's especially true for ministers. They give their life to this work of bringing in the lost and shepherding them safely home.

We want the elect to obtain salvation and once they're in the fold, we don't want them to stray and wander away. And so that they were never truly believers in the first place. And so pray for us.

[23:17] It's hard work. That's why Timothy's been encouraged to be strong in the grace that's in Christ Jesus because you need strength for that work of the ministry, Timothy. Those examples, we need focused, law-keeping, hard-working strength.

We need to be like soldiers and athletes and farmers. And who is sufficient for these things? Pray for us. But it's not just for ministers. It's true of all Christians.

You might have a different job, different sort of employment, but as kingdom citizens, you should have the same goal that Paul did. And that is that the elect might obtain salvation. And that's going to mean several things for you all if you're not a minister tonight.

It's going to be one, that you make sure you get to glory. You're one of God's elect. 2 Timothy 1.10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure.

The goal for you is to get to heaven. And once you're on that path, to stay on it. And if you haven't known what you're living for as a Christian, aim for this. Aim for faithfulness.

[24:18] Aim that you might obtain salvation and the glory, the eternal glory that's with it in Christ Jesus. That should be your goal, to get to glory. Make your calling and election.

Sure, live a life worthy of your calling and do it. This is all, of course, in the strength of Christ. You can't do it on your own. That's why we need these resources, why we need the risen Christ. But then encourage others along the way that they too might persevere.

Look around at your brothers and sisters in Christ. Here's a worthy goal for the Christian life. You're not called to travel alone. And so be a blessing to others who are walking that journey with you. That they might reach eternal glory with you.

That they might not turn astray. Encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ. I saw something remarkable that I had never seen before and it was foreign to me. And I've been an athlete and I've competed before and everything about that says that you do everything so that you can win and everything so that the other guy can't win within the rules.

The athlete's got to compete according to the rules. I was watching a marathon and it must have been in the Olympics. I don't know when else I would watch a marathon. But I was watching a marathon and there was a runner and he grabbed one of those bottles of water as he's running from one of the stands.

[25:24] And he took a drink and he dumped some on his head and you know what he did after that? He took it and he handed it to the guy next to him. And everything in me says, Chuck the bottle as far as you can.

Don't help the other guy. Don't help him. But he helped the guy that was going for the same goal that he was in his Christians. We should be helping one another. Handing him a bottle of water. It's not a competition. I get there before you do. We help one another along the way. We encourage them. Because we want them to obtain the salvation that's in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

We want them to persevere. But then, again, I think that Paul's main focus is here is the elect that haven't yet made a profession of faith. The ones that we don't know about.

And so that means that as Christians we also aim to see others brought in. It's not just for ministers. When we studied evangelism, not just pastors that proclaim the gospel, but all of God's people that share it with those around them.

[26:22] And so, Paul's goal should be yours to see others drawn into the kingdom that they might be saved. Even if it's not your job, every aspect of your life should be so totally centered on God so

that in the job that you do have or at your school or at your homes, your goal is to honor God and to see that others honor Him as well.

Salvation of God's elect is the goal of our Christian life. And if you're here tonight and you haven't yet made a profession of faith in Christ, you're not trusting in Him.

This is our goal for you. This is what we want for you. We want you to be saved. If you're not following Christ tonight, not living for Him, not trusting in Him, you can't sit back and wait to find out if I'm one of God's elect.

I don't know, so I can't do anything about it. Just as this doctrine shouldn't make believers passive and say, we'll just wait and see who God saves, neither should it make seekers passive. I'll wait and see if God saves me.

Not at all. You need to obtain salvation. You need to repent. You need to believe. You need to come to Christ. And if you don't, you'll have no one to blame in that day, the day of judgment, but yourself.

[27 : 47] You won't be able to say, but I wasn't chosen. No, you chose not to come. Your judgment will be on your own head. So come and trust in Christ tonight. Find Him to be a living Savior who promises and provides eternal glory and help to get you there.

a friend every step of the way with you. Not like your friends that you have now that are sometimes faithful and sometimes aren't. Sometimes let you down. Sometimes don't.

One who never will let you down. One who is always faithful. One who will be with you to the end.

Do you know what? Do you know what I want tonight?

This is why I'm a minister of the gospel. It's because I want you to be saved. It's what I live for. It's what I work for. It's what I labor for.

If that doesn't show through in my life and preaching, then forgive me for that. Because it is what I want. It's my goal that the elect might obtain salvation in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

[28 : 51] That's what I want for you tonight. It's what these people sitting around you want for you tonight. That's what we're living for. If we fall short of that goal, forgive us, but it's what we want. So come.

It's far better than what you're living for now. Come and taste and see that the Lord is good. So we have resources for the Christian life. We have Christ Himself and the unchained Word of God. We have a name and that's the salvation of God's elect. If that's the case, then how should we live? What should we do? There's three things tonight and the first one is remember.

Remember. Remember. Remember the man, Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. In the New Testament, when we're told to remember, there's usually a lesson to be learned.

Jesus asked His disciples if they didn't, or don't you remember the multiplying of the fish and loaves to the 5,000? Now there's 4,000 before them. They say, we don't have enough food. Or He says, don't you remember?

[29 : 54] He's implying that they should have learned a lesson about His power and His provision the first time around. And here the lesson is, don't just remember your weakness and the circumstances that surround you and the great difficulty because if that's all that you remember, then you will be overwhelmed.

We heard about all the bad news this morning. And there's a lot of bad news. There's a lot of things to discourage us. And you could add to the bad news personal things that aren't affecting the rest of the world. Things that are unique to you.

Lots of bad things where you're just overwhelmed and you can't bear up. But if that's all you remember, then you're missing it. You will be overcome. Instead, the lesson is, remember Jesus. Remember His power. I don't know how I'll endure. Remember His power. I don't know how that person over there will ever be saved. They couldn't be one of God's elect. They're too far gone. I'm not even going to bother sharing the Gospel with them.

I just don't see it. You're not remembering the right thing. You're not remembering the risen Savior, Christ, who tells us that He has all power and authority in heaven and on earth.

[30 : 57] And so, go and you tell them. You proclaim the Gospel to them. And Christ will do the work of drawing them in. Remember this Christ.

Remembering Christ will do us good as we live for Him. Remember His humanity like ours.

Remember His death in our place. But more than that, remember that He's risen alive and well.

He's ruling for us. Right now, He's at the right hand of God, advocating for us before the Father when you're discouraged, when you're suffering, when you're despairing, even of life itself. Hebrews 7.25.

Remember, therefore, He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him because He always lives to intercede for them. Jesus is living now interceding for His people.

Remember Him. You remember Him as you read of Him in His Word. Read the Gospels and see that glorious Savior. You remember Him as you hear the Word preached.

[31:54] And instead of only remembering your radically difficult circumstances, you think about your radically powerful risen Jesus. The danger comes when we forget. And sadly, the Ephesians over whom Paul and Timothy labored so hard, they would forget.

And so John has to write to them. Revelation 2.4-5, Yet I hold this against you. You've forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen.

Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come and remove your lampstand. The church at Ephesus was in danger of not being a church anymore because they forgot and had left their first love who was Jesus.

Remember Him. Don't forget Him. It's when we forget that we don't benefit from the lesson that we should have learned. Israel did it so often. They forgot. God delivers them. They rejoice.

But then the next trouble comes and they've forgotten again. They don't remember. Instead of forgetting, remember Jesus. But secondly, be willing to suffer and endure any and everything.

[33:01] Verses 9 and 10. Paul is suffering for the Gospel even to the point of being chained like a criminal. Like one of those men that died on either side of Jesus on the cross.

Therefore, I endure everything. Verse 10. For the sake of the elect. We must be willing in this Christian life as we make it our aim to make it to glory, to bring others with us.

As we live for that, we must remember that we're going to have to suffer and endure all things. Just be ready for it. Don't be surprised when it happens. Now naturally, we love comfort and pleasure and ease.

And so when we talk about suffering and enduring all things, that begins to make us squirm a little bit. I don't want to suffer. I don't like to suffer. I like to be comfortable. You live without power for a week and you begin to learn how much you love your comfort and how used to it you are.

And you endure some things that you wouldn't endure otherwise. We love comfort. It's our nature. And then society makes it even more desirable to us. And so the sound of suffering, well that's something we want to avoid at all cost.

[34:12] I'd rather not suffer. I'd rather not sacrifice. I'd rather spend my hard-earned money on me and my enjoyment and my comfort rather than giving it to the church and throwing it away.

I'd rather not suffer the discomfort of a funny look when I pray in public before a meal. I'd just rather not. And so I'm not going to have that sort of testimony or witness.

and we're forgetting our goal in life. I'd rather not suffer the discomfort of leaving the country and leaving family and friends and living in a different culture.

I know there's elect over there, but I'd rather not suffer that discomfort. If they're elect, God will save them anyway and He doesn't need me to do it. I'd rather be comfortable here at home. I said that for a lot of years.

I argued against a call to the mission field because I wanted comfort, pleasure. But if we really, really want to see the elect saved, then we'll be willing to suffer.

[35:20] Willing to endure discomfort. See, I'd rather not suffer the discomfort of having my children think that I'm one of those crazy religious people. I'd rather them just be buddies with me and if they don't want God, then I'm not going to talk about it with them because I don't want to offend my children.

I don't like that discomfort. I don't like conflict. We might never say such things out loud, but often it seems as though our actions are driven by a fear of suffering and unwillingness to not be comfortable in our lives.

Dear people, if our goal is to see people saved, and it should be, then it's going to require getting a whole new mindset. Not one that seeks our comfort and ease, but one that seeks first the kingdom of God.

And if there's some discomfort and suffering that comes because of it, then so be it. Christ is living and He will carry you through. He'll give you the strength that you need to endure it. And so we

must do everything possible and lawful to gain their salvation.

Preaching, evangelism, living a holy life, missions, even if it means suffering. Far from shirking such and avoiding it, we should have the attitude of the apostles.

[36 : 29] You remember Acts 5, verse 41, the apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering and disgrace for the name. They were glad that they had the chance to do whatever it takes to avoid suffering for the name, but they were glad that they had the opportunity.

Now you imagine a church full of people so clear as to their purpose in life that they don't take their own comfort into account when thinking of ways to serve Christ. I'll serve Christ as long as it doesn't cost me too much time or money or effort.

I'll do some little things that show I'm a servant of Christ, but imagine a church full of people that don't take into account their comfort when they think of ways to serve Christ.

That'd be a powerful body of believers, wouldn't it? May God make us increasingly thankful for people here that are willing to give their time, their resources. God has blessed us with that, but that doesn't mean we should be complacent.

We excel still more seeking to serve Him. And how can we be encouraged in this? You say, how can we not lose heart in this?

[37 : 39] Well, remember the first thing that we're supposed to do? Remember Jesus. Remember Jesus and He will be an encouragement to us to be willing to suffer. Hebrews 12.

Verses 2 and 3. Let us fix our eyes on who? Jesus. The author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Jesus, in calling us to endure all things that men might be saved, isn't calling us to anything that He didn't do Himself.

And more so. He endured these things. And as we think on Him, let us fix our eyes on Jesus so that when we endure these things, we won't lose heart, but rather press on.

Strength. Strengthened by Him. He did it for us. Can we not, in His strength, do it for Him? And so remember Jesus. Be willing to suffer and endure all things.

[38 : 47] And then, finally, let's be proclaiming the powerful, unchained Word of God. If we believe in the power of God's Word, direct it again to ministers first, to preachers, towards Timothy, and then other ministers of the Gospel, knowing what we know about the power of God's Word, we must proclaim it.

This is the means that God has promised to bless. Preaching the Word. Pray that your pastors would be faithful messengers of God's Word. and stand with us against a cultural tide that doesn't want to hear substantive preaching, but would rather just come to church, feel good, hear something that tickles their ears, and go on their way happy, but not having been changed.

Stand with us, brothers and sisters in Christ, against a culture that militates against hearing God's Word proclaimed. It was happening in Timothy's day. And it's happening in our day.

And later, as we get further into the letter, we're going to see more about this Word of God and just how blessed it is, how useful it is, how powerful it is, and how it must be preached. Preach the Word, Paul says in chapter 4 and verse 2.

If the Word of God is unchained, powerful, and it contains the Gospel whereby men can be saved, and it tells us how to live, then this is the Word that must be proclaimed. And Paul later is going to explicitly connect the Word of God with salvation.

[40 : 11] And if our goal is the salvation of God's elect, then what do we need? We need the Word. 2 Timothy 3.15, How from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

If this Word is able to make you wise into salvation in Christ Jesus, and we want people to be saved, then what should we do? Preach the Word. Proclaim the truth. We proclaim that unchained Word so that people may hear it and find salvation in Christ.

It's going to require diligent labors to proclaim this Word, to proclaim the glorious risen Christ. So you pray that we be faithful to proclaim it.

But you know what? That doesn't get everyone else off the hook that there are men specially set apart for the work of proclaiming the truth. Every Christian's goal should be to see the elect saved.

So wait. You know what we want you to do? We want you to bring people in. We want you to go out into the highways and bring the people in to hear the Word as it's preached. We want to go out and get them too, but we need you to help.

[41:19] We need you to go and bring them in to invite them to a service like we had this morning. The Gospel's being proclaimed. If you really want to see the elect saved and you don't know who they are, shouldn't you be bringing them in?

Shouldn't you be speaking to them yourself as God gives opportunity? Take advantage of those opportunities. Tell them what God has done for you, how He's changed your life and how He could do it for them too.

Give them a tract containing the Gospel. Concentrate your energy and resources on living for Christ in such a way that others will look at you and go, I would like to have a life like that.

So that they'll come and ask you, why are you different? And then speak the Word of God to them. The Word that's unchained. Make sure your own children are hearing about Christ from you.

You can proclaim the Word to them. You say, I don't know if they're elect. Exactly. So tell them. Tell them the truth. Do whatever you can. Make it your goal for them to obtain salvation in Christ.

[42:16] And be encouraged that the Word of God that you have proclaimed to your children is not bound. God can still use it. He can use the words that you've taught them years later.

He can bring them back to mind and use them in the life of your children because that Word is not bound. It's not chained. You be encouraged tonight. God can use it when you least expect it. Pray that He will.

We must then be about the business of proclaiming the Word. And so tonight, our goal is to see the elect saved. God's given us resources for it.

We have the risen Christ, the unchained Word of God. And so may He give us grace to remember Christ, to be willing to suffer and endure all things, and to proclaim the Gospel.

And may we do it in His strength so that the elect might obtain salvation, the salvation that's in Christ Jesus, and that they might attain with it eternal glory. Let's pray together.

[43:16] Our Father, we thank You for our risen Jesus. We thank You that Your Word is unchained. We thank You that You have given us everything that we need for life and godliness.

and so we pray that as we make it our aim to see the elect come to faith in Christ, that You would strengthen us. Strengthen us to endure difficulty, to endure all things, to even be willing to suffer, that sinners might be saved, that You might receive the praise and glory that is due to Your name.

We thank You that You've chosen a people for Yourself. Had You not chose us, where would we be? We would be lost for eternity, and so we thank You that You've seen fit to choose a people.

May we rejoice in Your salvation in Christ and may we make it our aim that others might come and obtain that same salvation. Do a great work in our hearts.

Strengthen us for the work to which You've called us. Give us grace for each moment, for each day, we pray. Through Jesus, our risen Savior. Amen. Amen.