

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Heartbeat of A Servant of Christ

2 Timothy 2:8-10

Keywords: Paul, Timothy, Suffering, Endurance, Example

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: What is the heartbeat of a true servant of Jesus Christ? We find the answer here in these three verses. And the answer is not what you often see portrayed in America. It furnishes a basic outline for the people of God to pray for those who labor in the ministry of the Word and it informs those who desire to commit their lives in such a manner to enter with their eyes wide open.

I. Introduction.

- A. I gave two weeks to the task of godly remembering.
 - 1. A discipline, not something you do casually.
 - 2. It is a willful act where you call to mind what you must and ought.
 - 3. The two key points I made last week were that we must remember there is but one God, YHWH. And we must remember the gospel and its effects.
 - a. Lose sight of either of these and you will falter.
 - b. Hold these close and near to your mind and they will help define what and why you do anything.
 - c. Frankly, seldom will you go wrong if your motivation is born out of a careful consideration and remembering of these two points.
- B. We now turn our minds back to the book of 2 Timothy. **Read 2 Timothy 2:8-10.**
- C. These books are known as the “pastoral epistles.”
 - 1. Personal in nature and specific in the content.
 - 2. Primary focus will be on those in church leadership (not merely pastors), with a secondary application to the whole of the church.
 - 3. What we have here is a bit of a revelation of the heart of Paul.
- D. This passage, like this small letter, is something special.
 - 1. Paul was a unique man who carried in his mind the truth of the gospel and considered it in every possible way in his life.

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2. He was a man who was a great theologian and faithful pastor. He was an evangelist and a true apostle.
 3. And so when we come to these three little verses we are seeing, in a sense, a distillation of some of what Paul values in the end.
 4. There is no shaking of a fist or a burst of bitter words. There is no complaint or whining about unfairness. You see no clinging to rights nor do you find him walking away from all that he said he believed. No declaration that God has failed him.
 5. Now, at the end of his life we are blessed to be given a glimpse into what drives him, what he remembers and dwells on even in the midst of great adversity.
- E. Beloved, these words are not easy to write, in fact they are almost impossible to write, if there is not something beyond the here and now.
1. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5 these simple and powerful words:
“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2Co 4:16-18)
 2. Here we see how Paul chooses (note that word) to view his various situations. The afflictions he suffers are not heavy, they are light.
 3. Why? Because he is not expecting to find lasting joy or hope here. This is all passing away so he sets his mind upon eternity and that informs him of how to interpret life.
 4. You would be wise to think hard on this for I could argue rather boldly that the way a person who claims to be a Christian deals with affliction and trouble in his life is one of the clearest evidences of being a true Christian.
- F. Let us turn our attention to this man as he gives wisdom to his younger protégé. What must Timothy focus on? What must grip the heart and life of this man? Vss 8-10 is one sentence in actuality. This means that the command to “remember” is not just what is said in verse 8, but in fact all of what he writes in the three vss.

II. He is to remember Jesus (8).

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- A. No surprise here. What Paul is doing is putting everything into the right perspective.
 - 1. The simplicity of this is very powerful for me. Short and to the point.
 - 2. I can see in my mind's eye that something like this likely was on his lips as he was led to his death. "Remember Jesus, remember Jesus."
 - 3. Something we can forget in all the "stuff" of life. We get caught up with family problems, child rearing and job issues. We become sick and we become bored. Life as it really is.
 - 4. And somehow we find that we forget Jesus. This cannot be for us.
- B. Notice how he speaks of this as "his" gospel. He owns it. It is not merely good news in general, it is his good news.
 - 1. His good news is Jesus Christ. Why?
 - 2. First, because He is risen from the dead.
 - a. The way this is put together is emphasizing less the facts of the resurrection and more the results of the resurrection.
 - b. I spoke on this last week for Easter. It vindicated his claims to be the Son of God, it showed that His work on the Cross as payment for sin had been accepted by God the Father.
 - c. And it takes little effort in reading the New Testament to see that the resurrection is the motivation for everything Paul does.
 - d. He knows that there is no loss that he will encounter that will not be undone because of the resurrection.
 - e. He knows that there is no power that is upon this earth or even in the spiritual places that can overcome the authority and power of the resurrected Lord.
 - f. He just needs to remember that—and so does Timothy. And so do you and I.
 - 3. Second, perhaps strangely to us, He is descended from King David of the nation of Israel.
 - a. Why?
 - b. Because the Old Testament consistently spoke of a ruler who would arise out of the line of David. This ruler was the Messiah,

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one who would overcome all of Israel's enemies and set all things right.

- c. That was a central part of the gospel in the Old Testament.
 - (1) 2 Samuel 7:12-16.
 - (2) Isaiah 11:1-5, 10.
 - (3) Jeremiah 23:5-6.
- d. And this was picked right back up in the NT.
 - (1) Matthew 1.1; 20:30-31.
 - (2) Luke 1.27, 32-33, 67-76.
- e. Romans 1:3 where there is a very similar statement: Notice also that Paul says that Jesus was “born of a descendant of David according to the flesh. . .”
 - (1) I want to merely point out a small addition here that Paul makes that helps explain what is going on in our passage.
 - (2) This word “flesh” is the Greek word ($\sigma\alpha\rho\acute{\xi}$ *sarx*). Normally, speaking of the physical body, the word *soma* would be used. But there is a good reason for using ($\sigma\alpha\rho\acute{\xi}$ *sarx*) here.
 - (a) There are two key ways that ($\sigma\alpha\rho\acute{\xi}$ *sarx*) is used in the New Testament. The first speaks of our sin nature.
 - i) “Flesh is, then, the whole nature of man, turned away from God, in the supreme interest of self, devoted to the creature. . . . The ruling principle of the flesh is undoubtedly selfishness” (Lange, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans” Lange’s Commentary, p. 236).
 - ii) “The self-reliant attitude of the man who puts his trust in his own strength, and in that which is controllable by him.” (Bultmann, Theology of the NT” 1:240)

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- iii) The believer still lives ‘in’ the flesh (en sarki) although not ‘according to’ the flesh (2 Cor. 10:3). . . . A quite different use of sarx appears in the major theological passages in Paul such as Rom. 8:5-8 In this passage the mental outlook of the flesh . . . is hostile to God. ‘Flesh’ here evaluates man as a sinner before God. **The outlook of the flesh is the outlook oriented towards the self, that which pursues its own ends in self-sufficient independence of God”**
- (b) The second key way ($\sigma\alpha\rho\acute{\xi}$ *sarx*) is used is how Paul is using it here in Romans .
 - i) As a connotation of creaturely weakness.
 - ii) Romans 8 speaks of Jesus coming in the likeness of sinful flesh.
 - iii) When Paul says that Christ was born according to the flesh, it is not a statement of a physical birth. It was that Jesus entered into the fallen realm. This kingdom or age that is fallen. Not sin itself, but a world and existence that is fallen due to sin.
 - iv) And in this realm He came and lived, and fulfilled all that was required of the true Messiah.
- C. So Paul’s gospel, his good news was Jesus.
 - 1. The Jesus who is the Messiah, the One who alone shall put all things right.
 - 2. It is this Jesus who conquered the enemy of death and invites all who desire to come and live.
 - 3. He is our King and our Lord. He alone has all authority over all things.
 - 4. He, who participated in the fullest of ways, in our weakness and our fallen condition. He who was without sin, but became sin for our sakes.

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5. He our High priest who is sympathetic to our weaknesses and temptations. He who goes before us before our God and Father, having been tempted in every way but without sin.
6. This good news is Paul's and it is why he can sit chained in a filthy prison facing certain death and give words of blessing to Timothy and to us.

D. And this naturally leads to the next point:

III. What is most important is the spread of God's Word, not your own, personal situation (9).

- A. "Suffer hardship" is literally to suffer evil. He makes no effort to hide this fact for it is simply true.
 1. Evil happens and it happens all the time.
 2. And following Jesus is a sure way for it to happen to you. And no one should be shocked when it comes your life.
- B. The suffering he is enduring is that of a criminal, the worst of the worst, and this indicates that though he is "Christ's prisoner" there is still the great awareness of the shame involved.
 1. He is viewed as a criminal. The term is used of those who were crucified with Jesus and speaks of those who commit violent, grossly evil deeds worthy of death.
 - a. This gives a sense of the harshness of his imprisonment as well, it was the type reserved for the worst of the worst.
 - b. When the people of Rome would see him on his way to execution, they would not see the great and faithful servant of Jesus. They would see what you and I would see. A man who must have done great evil and is worthy to be killed.
 - c. If you doubt me, go to the local courthouse and watch what happens when you see a man or woman brought before the judge in the jail clothes and handcuffs.
 - d. The words of A Mighty Fortress are quoted "The body they may kill; God's truth abideth still; His kingdom is forever"
 2. There is nothing wrong with experiencing the shame that the world seeks to put upon you because of the gospel. Like all trials they hurt.

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3. But in it all you must keep the right perspective.
4. There is an obvious parallel here with His Lord, who was faithful to his calling and crucified beside two criminals.
 - a. Paul, following his Lord is now suffering the same fate. He is filling up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ (Col 1:24).
 - b. Though he is truly suffering he sees through the mirage that is the power of this world, at that time Rome. He sees beyond it the greater power of God, for though the world may bind him, they cannot bind the Word.
 - c. And that is all that matters ultimately for him.
- C. This is not the first time he has witnessed this—Philippians 1:12-18.
- D. Lock observes, “God buries His workers but continues His work.”

IV. You don’t work for yourself, you work for God’s people (10).

- A. This vs supplies the reasoning behind his willingness to undergo suffering. Two reasons: divine power and human need.
- B. "Therefore" makes the connection backward. The fact that the Word is unstoppable fuels his steadfastness for the elect.
- C. He is willing to suffer in this manner not because it is fun but for what is at stake, the elect.
 1. This shows a nice balance from what many err on, which is that the sovereignty of God in salvation should not produce fatalism.
 2. There is a cooperative work that we do. Similar to Romans 10, how will they know if no one preaches?
- D. He sees this imprisonment as facilitating the gospel ministry for it is another opportunity for God to display the gospel's power. Notice the shift from "Suffering" in vs 9 to "enduring". Enduring looks beyond the present trials to a victorious outcome in resurrection (2 Corinthians 4:7ff).
- E. There is a key question that must be resolved in this passage before I go on. "For the sake of the Elect". Two ways to see this.
 1. The typical Reformed view understands it to be those elect of God who have not yet come to faith. So that they might be saved is the point.

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- a. This view, which was mine when I first sat to study the passage, is using a narrow sense of the word "salvation."
- b. It considers salvation like we tend to talk about "getting saved." Becoming a Christian in other words.
2. The second way sees that the purpose clause that starts with "that" speaks of the elect enduring or persevering to the end.
 - a. It is not speaking of "getting saved" but enduring to the experience of final salvation.
 - b. Salvation is described in the NT as Past (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:5), present (Philippians 2:12), or future (Romans 13:11). It is this final aspect that he has in view.
- F. Note that it is located "in Christ Jesus" for there is no salvation outside of Him.
 1. But adding "with eternal glory" brings it to the future/eternal aspect of being saved in the day of judgment.
 2. Salvation is more than forgiveness of sin. We will again share in the eternal glory that is God's.
 - a. We fell from that glory (Romans 3:23) and through Jesus we shall regain that by sharing in God's glory (Romans 5:2; 8:18, 30; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:14).
 - b. I think this is another way we struggle in our lives as hardships come. We forget the future state of things and are focused so much on the now.
 - c. The bible does not speak of salvation without the future, eternal aspect always being in view in some way or another.
 - d. Salvation, in its fullest meaning, is "eschatological" in nature. Though we do experience it now in a sense, we do not fully experience it, until that day of judgment, when we are declared righteous and safe in Jesus Christ.

V. Conclusion.

- A. Paul shows Timothy, and us, a pattern for ministry that is uniquely cruciform in nature. Paul is showing us that suffering is normative for the gospel ministry.

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And we do not suffer alone. We become an example for the rest of the elect to see and imitate.

- B. Do you suffer well? Does your suffering point to the sufficiency of the gospel
1. I tell you the truth, there shall come a time when your actions and reactions shall declare to a watching world, both of saved and non-Christians, what you hope in.
 2. The test of true faith and belief is the ability to echo these words of Paul's.
 3. And the only way we do this is remembering Jesus Christ.
 4. We look backward to the abiding truth of Christ's resurrection so that we can then look forward to the certainty of ours in Christ. And only then does our present situation, whatever it may be, make sense.

Small Group Questions

- Discuss your thoughts on Pastor Matt's point that in suffering we declare and show ourselves to be true Christians or not.
- If Timothy needed to remember Jesus Christ, how much more must we? How does involving yourself in close, Christ-centered relationships help in this? What changes do you need to make in your relationships to help in this task?