

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

Promises on Which You Can Bank

2 Timothy 2:11-13

Keywords: Salvation, Reigning with Christ, Died with Christ, Apostasy, Faithfulness

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

Sermon Audio Blurb: Paul brings to an end a key section of this final letter. He does so through apparently quoting an ancient hymn that sums up the various experiences of a professing Christian, but more importantly key promises given by God.

I. Introduction.

A. When you find a person who is trustworthy you find a special treasure.

1. In an age where a person's word is not considered his bond.
2. It is a good thing to discover that what a person says is what he does.
3. He lives out the simple command of Jesus, "Let your yes be yes and your no, no."
4. But no person is utterly faithful.

B. But here is where a key difference between man and God.

1. Num 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"
2. 1Sa 15:29 "And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."
3. Psa 33:4 For the word of the LORD is upright; And all His work is done in faithfulness.
4. Psa 146:6 Who made heaven and earth, The sea and all that is in them; Who keeps faith forever;

C. This faithfulness of God is the groundwork of all that God does with His creation.

1. It is at the core of true Christian belief. You either truly believe God is able to forgive you of your sins or not. Either in Jesus Christ there is eternal life or not. Either God raised Jesus Christ from the dead or he didn't.
2. Not that you hope, but that you believe God at His Word.

How to know
if someone
is lying

Comp w/
Jas 1:5 +
Man.

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3. To the degree that you rest ultimately in the faithfulness of God you gain perspective and meaning in the midst of the darkest of days in your life.
4. Jeremiah pens these words in a book that is filled with much weeping and sorrow. "The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness." (Lam 3:22-23)

D. We have been studying 2 Timothy for awhile and Paul is coming to the end of a key section where he is telling Timothy to suffer hardship, not be ashamed of the gospel, and endure to the end of his life.

1. Not the gentle, happy words you hear from speakers all across our land.
2. But hard, real words that come from a life of experience and truth.
3. Read 2 Timothy 2:11-13.
 - a. It is important to keep this in the context of Paul's command to remember. Remember Jesus. Remember that the spread of the Word is most important. Remember you are an example to the elect of Christ on what it looks like to endure.
 - b. When you remember that and you keep in mind that the apostolic is passing away and Timothy is about to receive the baton and Paul will pass it off then breath his last breathe.
 - c. And then you understand that Paul loves this young man.
 - (1) Paul knows the temptations that lie before him.
 - (2) Paul knows that the hardest part is yet to come, when Timothy can only remember what Paul taught him, for Paul is no more.
 - d. Paul is confident that he was an example to watch. He portrayed what it looked like to follow and be faithful to Jesus.
 - e. And Paul knows that this must be upon the heart of Timothy, that when he is ready to pass through into the presence of his Lord and Savior that he is able to echo with confidence Paul's words in 2 Timothy 1:12, ". . . for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."

Faithfuling @
Bank on it

E. The faithfulness of God.

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1. In our passage we have two basic promise of God for our good and one promise that is a severe warning.
 2. Show the people how each of these points helps motivate them to keep running faithfully and why we must take sin seriously.
 - a. For Hebrews 4 says that sin deceives and hardens and leads to unbelief.
 - b. Hebrews 10 tells us that we need each other to remind and encourage and warn one another.
 - (1) The first thing Satan always does is draws the person away from the Body of Jesus. Not right away, first they pull away and talk themselves into only showing up on Sundays. Then they stop meeting with fellow believers. Then they start to miss. Then they find some reason to complain. And then they fade away.
 - (2) This hardening can take place over many churches before the hardening is done.
 - (3) Never, ever, have I seen a person exhibit a lively, active faith that evidences itself in good works from a person who rejects the gathering together and involvement of other Christians. Never.
 3. Paul is not saying to Timothy, "Things are pretty bad out there right now. You need to pull back and keep quiet. Don't get too focused on doing things. You are a young man, you need to take care of yourself so that you don't burn out.
 4. Rather, he says, the promises of God found in Jesus Christ are infinitely better than all the power and glory and riches of this world.
 5. The fool sees loss in not pursuing his treasures and joy here. The wise sees infinite loss in doing so.
- F. So today we have certain promises that we can bank on. Not hopes, not "maybes" but real, certain promises by God for both those who endure and those who do not.
- G. Setting.
1. These verses are likely part of a hymn or confession that the Church had developed.

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2. In this passage there is a temporal perspective that is helpful in your reading of it:
3. It starts with conversion, moves to the present Christian experience both positive and negative, and moves to the future.
4. Since the Greek class just learned about conditional statements, these are all 1st class conditions. There are many ways to understand conditional statements, it is sufficient here to understand that basically with first class conditions you assume for the sake of the argument that what is stated in the front part, the protasis, is true.
5. Literally it reads, "faithful the Word" or the faithful Word.
 6. This is a phrase Paul uses only in the PE (1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; Titus 3:8).
 - a. The reason is likely that Paul recognized that the Apostolic Era and therefore the time for divinely inspired writing was passing away and he is preparing for the next generation to continue to carry the Word faithfully to the world.

II. If you are Christ's then you cannot lose (11-12a).

- A. Paul points Timothy back to his conversion here. And then takes him to his current situation in the first part of 12. It is designed to encourage and strengthen.
- B. We died with Christ
 1. Some take this to refer to a martyr's death but that is doubtful.
 2. Better is the understanding of what actually happens at your conversion.
 3. To "die with Christ" is something Paul teaches in connection to our union with Christ (Romans 6:3-5, 8, 11; 7:4-6; Galatians 2:20 3:3)
 4. When Christ died for our sins upon the cross, God the Father counted this as our death. Each believer then must by faith reckon themselves that death to be actual fact (Romans 6:11; Colossians 3:5).
 5. What happens in our conversion to Jesus Christ is that we are infinitely and intimately connected to Him. What is His is ours.
 6. Our life is intimately connected to Jesus. In John He describes himself as the vine and we are the branches. In Colossians 3 he is life itself. In

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Ephesians 5 he is the head of His body, the church. In 1 Peter 1 he is the corner stone off of which all of us are built up into the temple of God.

7. As a result the bible makes it clear that if we died with Jesus, we are also raised with Him.

C. Assuming that this is true in the life of the person claiming to be saved then the consequence naturally follows. We will live with Him.

1. Just as sure as Christ died and then rose, so too we shall rise if in Christ.

a. Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:1-2)

b. For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. (2 Corinthians 4:6-11)

2. In times of sadness and depression we can wonder if we will stay true when faced with dying because of Jesus. The answer is impossible to know.

3. The best way to know this would be: recognize that God gives us grace as it is needed and not before then; and, the better question is are you daily dying to this world because you are dead to sin with Christ?

To daily die to this world requires that we start with the mind.

1. Romans 6:11 with 12:1-2.

2. Then and only then can we begin to consider what that looks like in our lives (cf. Romans 6:13).

We all don't
get glimpses
into heaven
why?

We Walk by
Faith

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- E. Jim Elliot, who died without ever having the chance to bring the gospel to the people he went to. A man who died by their hands said these famous words, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

2Ti 2:12F.

But he also says in 12a that there is great value in enduring as well.

1. Here he moves us to the daily life of a Christian.
2. We remember first that we died with Christ to this world and to sin. Then we get on with the business of living a life of enduring faith with a clear focus on the reward.
3. The verb for "endure" is the same as what was used in vs 10 and this is why he is likely quoting this hymn.
 - a. It is a broad principle that all Christians will have to endure in various ways as Christians.
 - b. This passage is one that gives us the promise of future grace by pointing us beyond the suffering/enduring and to the reward.
 - c. The promise is to share in the reigning of Christ. This first was promised by Jesus on earth: "just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22:29-30)
 - d. And later, after his resurrection:
 - (1) The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, (Revelation 2:26)
 - (2) He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (Revelation 3:21)
 - (3) This was also taught by the apostles:
 - (a) 1 Corinthians 6:2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?
 - (b) Revelation 20:4, 6.
4. This promise is huge when you face the shaming and affliction the world will give.

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- a. Hebrews 11 has people who the world did not see as worth anything—other than persecution and destruction.
 - b. Yet these same persecuted men and women, most of whom we know nothing about, the persecutors were not worthy to know.
- G. So Paul starts with words of great encouragement and now he gives us a strong word of warning.

III. If you abandon Jesus you can only lose (12b).

- A. Here are the consequences of not enduring. And it gives us a sense of what not enduring means--denying your Lord.
- B. The path for a Christian is a fixed path, it starts with a cross and then a crown. Now Paul takes us to the idea of what happens to the one who does not endure but rather he denies.
 - 1. To deny here means to renounce or disown. It is that terrible moment when a person who has confessed Jesus says he is done.
 - a. He walks away and denies Jesus.
 - b. Hebrews 10 says that there no longer remains a sacrifice for his sin, for he has rejected and turned his back on the one true sacrifice.
 - c. This is the lot of people like Judas, who for 30 pieces of silver he betrayed the One who did him only good.
 - 2. If we deny Jesus then He shall be the one who denies us (think Matthew 7:21) and it will be a testimony of denial before His Father.
 - 3. This is not always clear for us and we need to be careful. The parable of Tares reminds us that all is not as it appears.
 - 4. Nor should we assume that somehow the warnings in Jude and 2 Peter have nothing to do with us.
 - 5. Matthew 10:32, "Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven, but whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."
- C. I think here is a good place to speak briefly on the nature of what the gospel demands of those who hear it.

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1. It is nothing less that a call to believe that Jesus truly is the Risen Lord and is our Sovereign King and to follow Him in that light.
2. It is in contradistinction to the foolish idea of “making a decision” or “asking Jesus into your heart” where the focus is on you and your decision rather than the person and work of Jesus and the natural demands that are connected to it.
3. MacArthur makes a helpful point here: “ Accepting Christ is not really used in Scripture. What the Scripture does in inviting a person to Christ is call them to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That's the issue. You don't say to someone, "Jesus died and Jesus rose again and He wants to change your life. If you just accept Him He'll change your life." That's simply a short-term kind of thing, you just do this and you'll get that. That is a very confusing thing and that kind of evangelism, I think, has produced a lot of still-births. What we should say to people is if you believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died and rose again, if you believe that He's the Savior who paid the penalty for your sin, if you believe that He desires to forgive you and you are willing to follow Him in obedience and live to His glory, then come and follow Christ. We should be calling people to discipleship, not to decisions. We should be calling people to follow Christ, not accept Christ. And we see here again that you will reign if you continue under persecution faithful to Christ, if you're a follower. No one is elect who does not endure.”

IV. If you struggle in your faith you will find that Jesus supports you (13).

- A. Here we find him ending with a word of hope and encouragement.
- B. Some see this verse as saying that if you have no faith, Jesus is still faithful in that He shall judge and punish you. I don't think that is the point at all.
- C. Instead, it had in view the idea that points to those lapses of loyalty to Christ.
 1. This could be a good word of encouragement to repent and return for the many who have fled and abandoned Paul in his shame.
 2. When the bible speaks of God's faithfulness it is almost always in the fact that he is utterly faithful to his promises. And that is bound up in his nature, he cannot deny himself.
- D. If it is a promise then it speaks to the persevering work of Jesus in the lives of His people.

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1. All Christians experience times of faithlessness.
 2. It is not a denial of Jesus, it is the battle of continuing in faith in those multitude of ways all of you experience.
- E. He is unable to deny himself because salvation is ultimately rooted in the faithfulness of God. Praise God that this is true.
- F. This reminds us of the essence of the gospel message, that though we were dead and helpless, enemies of God; He in his rich mercy came to us through His Son Jesus and lifted us up and said, "Live."
- V. **Conclusion.**
- A. So I remind you of the verses I quoted at the beginning and I tell you that there is nothing you will lose in following Jesus to the end.
- B. Fight the good fight, run the race set before you in endurance for in the end you shall live and reign and delight yourself for all eternity in the one person who truly satisfies.

Small Group Questions

- Do you agree with this statement, why or why not? "Too many Christians want the supernatural power of Jesus without dying with Christ."
- What situations do you find help harden you to a faithful walk with Jesus? How can your brothers and sisters in Christ help you? (This is not something to shy away from, you must know your weaknesses so don't just let someone else answer this.)
- Describe ways you have seen the faithfulness of God at work in your life or someone else's that encourages you onward.