

Remember Jesus

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Hebrews 13:8

As we go on to 2 Timothy chapter 2, we see Paul continue his loving, detailed instructions to Timothy. This was Paul's last opportunity before leaving this world. By way of review, let's see what he had instructed up to this point as recorded in chapter 1.

First Paul laid the foundation of his love for Timothy. Then he gave final instructions on how to live for the Lord and how to lead others:

1:6 Stir up the gift of God in him;

1:8 Don't be ashamed to testify of Christ; don't be ashamed of Paul being a prisoner;

1:8 Experience attacks and troubles in the strength and love of God;

1:13 Hold to the words Paul taught Timothy, and the way that he taught them;

1:15-18 Examples: 2 men who turned from Paul, and one who stayed and helped him (Onesiphorus).

Leading into our passage for today, Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:1 *Therefore*. So to follow the instructions in Chapter 1, we will need to walk in the things Paul wrote about here in Chapter 2:1-13.

READ 2 Timothy 2:1. To follow the example of Onesiphorus, *be strong in the Lord's grace*.

Strong = power, dynamo; this word is in many places in the New Testament – the *power* of God.

Grace = gift; also favor, benefit; this is freely given by the Lord.

So there is actual power in God's grace in our lives – HIS power, strength.

Paul continued his instructions to Timothy – and HOW to do these things.

READ 2 Timothy 2:1-13

Verse 2: How will Paul's teachings be spread to others? By those who heard him teach.

Commit it to faithful men – entrust it to those who are faithful to God and trustworthy to handle His Word correctly. (We will see next week one important way to do this.) And they will teach it to others.

It's the same for us – take what you hear taught and faithfully pass it on to others.

Verses 3-6: 3 examples of how it all works.

Paul then wrote (verse 7) *consider* (take heed, pay attention to) these examples, and God will give you *understanding*. These are mini-parables, so we are given spiritual lessons in something familiar in the world. For us, soldiers, athletes and farming are not quite so familiar. So we will look into the characteristics that apply to the spiritual lessons here. May the Lord give us *understanding* – help us to grasp the meaning. We will look at each one and then see the characteristics that they have in common.

Soldiers (vs.3-4): *endure hardness* = suffer afflictions, difficulties; as Paul did, and as all *good soldiers* do. *Entangleth* = be entwined. So we as soldiers for the Lord do not get so involved with the things of this world that it hinders our serving the Lord.

Athlete (v.5) An athlete in competition must follow the rules to win and not be disqualified. Hebrews 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

In New Testament times, the Greek athletes were rewarded with a wreath crown. For us Christians, let's see what is our crown. Paul wrote:

*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge,
shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*
2 Timothy 4:7-8

Husbandman = farmer; the farmer who works hard will partake of the fruits. And our work for the Lord is hard work, too. Laziness will bring a small harvest.

So all three involve (1) preparation and/or training beforehand; (2) following the correct way to do these things, and (3) hard work. All this brings (4) fruits, victory, and rewards. Of course the greatest reward besides our own salvation is to see souls saved and believers blessed and growing in the Lord.

Verse 7: Paul often prayed for and encouraged believers to have understanding. One example brings out the thoughts of today's passage in 2 Timothy. Colossians 1:8 *Who [Epaphras] also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. 9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*

Verse 8: Remember...*Jesus Christ* – He is our greatest example.

Of the seed (lineage) of David;

Raised from the dead – Paul's gospel is the cross of Christ and the resurrection of Christ. Here are 2 examples of this: 1 Corinthians 2:2 *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* Acts 13:29 *And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. 30 But God raised him from the dead.*

READ Hebrews 12:1-4 They, and we, are to run the race with Jesus as our example.

Verse 9: Following these guidelines was the cause of Paul's troubles, and he was even chained like a criminal.

BUT the Word of God cannot be bound and cannot be stopped. Many have tried over the years, but have never succeeded.

Verse 10: So Paul would press on for the sake of those who would believe – so that they would all be together with Christ Jesus in heaven.

Verse 11: This is very important! Galatians 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Verse 12a: Suffering does not disqualify us from reigning with Him in heaven. In fact, it will make it sweeter.

Verses 12b-13: If we deny Him and believe not, He will deny us.

Yet He will never change. In the very last book of the Old Testament God was still appealing to His people to be faithful to Him. It was all based on the everlasting covenant He made with Abraham and that was passed down through Isaac, Jacob... David... Jesus Christ... and to us believers. Yet again God promised to keep His covenant: Malachi 3:6 *For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.* And the Lord is still faithful to His people.

Conclusion

Let us walk in the power of God's grace working in us. As we look to Jesus as our greatest example, we can stay steady as He leads us. As the soldier, athlete and farmer, we can prepare and work for Him as shown to us in the Word of God.

And be sure to pass it on!

*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;
who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,
and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Hebrews 12:2