

Soul Saving Shared Hardship

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- [0 : 0 0] Okay, the title of my message today is Soul Saving Shared Hardship.! Soul Saving Shared Hardship. And I'm going to be sticking in basically one text for most of the whole sermon.
- So, if you've got your Bibles, you can turn to 2 Timothy 2, 3-10. 2 Timothy 2, 3-10. We're going to look at that text predominantly this morning.
- So, I'm going to read through the text to start off. 2 Timothy 2, 3-10.
- It says, Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.
- An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say. The Lord will give you understanding in everything.
- [1 : 1 2] Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains is a criminal. But the word of God is not bound.
- Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Okay. Okay.
- So, that's the text. I was just thinking about our church and thinking about just the required daily embracing of hardship, but thinking about it together.
- In that first verse in 2 Timothy 2, verse 3, he says, share in suffering. Okay. You know, you're eating a sandwich. Someone else is hungry. You might, you know, break off another half.
- You might share it with them. Think about that. You've got some chips. You might say, hey, share with my chips. You know. You ever think, oh, I'm suffering. That person's suffering. I'm going to share in their suffering.
- [2 : 2 0] Not normally, right? Not your go-to. Maybe chips. Maybe a sandwich. But not typically, suffering. In the NASB, he says, suffer hardship with me.
- With me. Okay. So, there's a togetherness. And one of the things, one of the best ways to build us up together is by doing hard things together.
- By doing hard things together. You think about all the people you're closest with. There's probably at some point in time, you had to do something hard together. And when you make it through a hard thing together, that relationship is just stronger.
- It's just better. And it always, every time you go through hard things together, it tests the relationship. In other words, if you don't make it through, well, then the relationship wasn't that strong, right?
- But if you make it through, it gets stronger each time. And there's a number of ways we can build family together. We can build togetherness together. And one of them is just doing hard things together.

[3 : 22] And so, it's important for us to realize that the human nature is to avoid hard things, right? We don't typically choose hard things. It's typically hard things that we want to avoid.

And we live in a culture that is doing everything we can to avoid hard things. And to seek after convenience. We live in an extremely convenient culture. A friend of mine just bought a wash machine.

No dryer. You know why? Because they're the same thing. It's just all in one now. You just throw it in there. You never have to switch it. Once it's done washing, it gets dried. It just keeps getting easier.

Everything just keeps getting easier, right? That's how life is. It's trending towards those kind of things. And yet, the call to follow Jesus, the call to be a Christian and be a disciple of Jesus, is one of losing our life.

It's one of inconvenience. It's one of suffering. It's one of hardship, okay? And Paul, when he starts off this part here, he says, share in suffering. Suffer hardship with me, says in the NASB.

[4 : 34] Do this together with me. And we should have that same kind of view as a small little church. Just say, hey, if someone's going through something hard, I don't ever want them to go through that alone.

I want to do this together with them. I want to embrace the suck, so to speak, with them, right? Like, if they're going through it, I want to go with it. I want to help them. I want to be with them. I don't want them to go through things alone.

And if something's hard, a lot of times it's a lot harder when we do it by ourself. But when we do things together, it becomes easier. So he says, share in suffering. Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, okay?

So he's specifically talking about hardship related to being a soldier, okay? So what's hard about being a soldier? Well, no civilian pursuits.

We'll see that in the next part, right? One of the hardest things about being a soldier is you're fairly limited. You know, if you sign up for, like, the U.S. military, you know you're not your own anymore. They got you.

[5 : 33] You're theirs. They can send you where you want. You don't have any, really, rights of your own at that point. They are, you're bought and sold to the U.S. military, and they can do whatever they want with you, right?

The civilian pursuits that you would do, the kind of fun things you do, you give those up when you serve in the military, right? When you become a soldier, there's no more civilian pursuits.

You don't get to do what normal civilians do. Ordinary, everyday pleasures and pursuits are sacrificed for the soldier's mission, okay? A soldier has an objective, a mission, okay?

When a soldier gets sent someplace, one of the first things they ask is, what are my orders, right? What are my orders? What's the mission? What's the objective?

That's what soldiers do. Soldiers don't soldier for the sake of soldiering. Soldiers always have a specific objective that they're after. Even when they're not at war, their objective is to train so that they're ready for one, okay?

[6 : 36] And to do that, they have to forego certain things. They make commitments. They are signed up for a certain length of time. They're not afforded some of the luxuries that regular civilians are.

If someone goes away as a soldier, they're away from their family, okay? So being a soldier involves a level of hardship because you're having to give up certain things in order to serve the mission or the aim, as it says.

Verse 4 says, no soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him, okay? So here we're seeing this section of scripture.

There's three different groups of people that are being talked about here, right? We got soldier, we got athlete, we got farmer, okay? Soldier, athlete, farmer. Each one is talked about with a specific thing that they do.

And then each one of those specific things that are doing something has a certain kind of reward that comes with it, right? And here we see the first one, the reward he's speaking of, that when a soldier, his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

[7 : 47] When a soldier is not getting involved in civilian pursuits and is a good soldier, as he says earlier, and he's enduring hardship as a good soldier, he's not getting involved with civilian pursuits, this pleases the one who enlists him.

This pleases his commanding officer. That's the goal. That's the aim. But to do that, he has to not get entangled in civilian pursuits, okay? It's an interesting choice of words there, entangled.

This word entangled in the Bible dictionary BDAG says, to become involved in an activity to the point of interference with other activity or objective.

To become involved in an activity to the point of interference with other activities or objectives, okay? So, what ends up happening is, we can get involved with other things apart from the mission of God, and what it can do is, it interferes with the mission of God.

It interferes with God's priorities. It interferes with what we're supposed to do. That's the kind of entanglement we have to watch out for, all right? Something that involves an activity that pulls us away or interferes with the thing that we're supposed to be doing.

[8 : 59] Now, the question is, do you know what you're supposed to be doing? Do you know? Are you confident in it? A lot of times people say, man, I'm so tired. I'm so worn out.

I need rest. I need a vacation. I need a break. And oftentimes, I agree with them. They need rest. But the rest isn't because of hard work.

It's because of lack of priorities. What do you mean? There's few things that are more tiring than lack of priorities. Why? Because a lack of priorities is a lack of confidence.

It's insecurity. When you don't know that what you're doing is right, and if you're a Christian and you have a conscience that is animated by the Holy Spirit, you'll feel bad about being out of priority.

And that will wear upon you. Another word for that is called stress. Stress is what happens when you're doing something and involving a lot of effort into something that you subtly know or don't know, and maybe that's the problem, whether it's a priority or not.

[10 : 05] Either you know it's a priority and you're not engaging in the thing that's supposed to be a priority or you're engaging in something else, civilian pursuits, or you don't know.

And so there's always this nagging question in the back of your mind, like, am I doing what I'm supposed to be doing? I lack confidence. I'm insecure about it. And you know what? That's exhausting.

You end up being way less productive when you're out of priority because the things you're doing are so much more exhausting. They're stressful. They weigh upon you.

We must prioritize our lives based on the kingdom of God. We've got to seek first the kingdom, and then all these other things will be added. But do you know? Do you know whether what you're engaged in in your life is a priority?

Have you ever just sat down and said, what are the things I'm doing right now in this season of life? And then you just list them out, and then you prioritize them based on the Bible, based on the kingdom of God.

[11 : 03] Just doing that sometimes is one of the most clear-headed ways to live, and you just start to see, like, oh, my gosh. I shouldn't be doing this. Or, man, this thing needs to move way down the list.

Why am I spending so much time and effort on this? It's causing me to be distracted from these other aims that I know for sure are a priority, but because I've never just sat down and thought about it, I didn't actually get a confident knowing that this was a priority.

Essentially, I'm involved in civilian pursuits, and I'm missing the aim to please my commanding officer, the one who enlisted me. When I look to him, I know what's the priority, but if I live in such a way where I'm so busy that I never take the time to ask what I'm doing, whether or not it's what I'm supposed to be doing, I end up living this exhausted lifestyle that feels productive because I'm busy.

And yet, really, all we could really be doing is just being involved with civilian pursuits, and we really could be distracted from what our commanding officer wants us to do. This is one of the worst ways to live.

Now, the opposite is one of the best ways to live. When you know what is a civilian pursuit and what is your king's orders. When you know, hey, this is what I'm supposed to be doing in this season.

[12 : 20] And don't get weird on me with some weird, sacred, secular stuff. I'm not talking about that kind of stuff. You can do very normal, everyday things like working a job and taking care of kids and cleaning your room or your house.

Those things are very spiritual because they're part of the priority of bringing order to your home that God wants you to do. I'm not talking about making sure that you spend every waking moment in a quiet time with your Bible open.

I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about ordering your life in such a way as to honor God and to not get involved with civilian pursuits. Because when you say yes to one thing, you're automatically saying no to something else.

Whenever you say yes to something. And in a society that has FOMO and hates missing out, we don't like to think that way. We like to think, no, I can have it all. Well, you can't have it all. The biggest lie of our age right now is that you can't.

You can't. Is that you can have it all? You can't. You can't. And so we have to ask, what are civilian pursuits? What are those things that are not even bad things in and of themselves, but that are keeping me from the things I know I'm supposed to do?

[13 : 27] Maybe they're keeping you from just what I mentioned before. Maybe they are keeping you from just spending time reading the Bible and praying and fellowshiping with Jesus. Maybe that's the thing that's going.

If your life doesn't fit to have that, well, something's out of order and something needs to go, right? Or maybe you don't have enough time to be with the church, to actually fellowship with the church and be in relationship with this church.

Like there's too many other things. And you have to say, you know what? I need to be connected with the church in a meaningful way. Or maybe things in your life are keeping you from being on mission to lost people.

We'll look at that here in a second. Okay? But beware that a good soldier doesn't get entangled in civilian pursuits since his aim is to please the one enlisted in.

Okay? So that's the soldier. The next one is an athlete. Verse 5. It says an athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. Okay?

[14 : 32] So a similar thing. He's basically saying what an athlete is supposed to do, just like he did with the soldier, right? And a soldier shouldn't be engaged with civilian pursuits. An athlete has to make sure he competes according to the rules.

Right? Or another way of saying it, the way I would like to say it probably would be no shortcuts. Right? No shortcuts. No cheating. An athlete can't cheat. Right? He's got to compete according to the rules.

And, you know, that's true in athletics, but it's also true in just in training as well. You know, you get a lot of people, they can talk all they want about how to gain muscle, but you got to actually get in there and lift some weights.

You know? And there's no shortcuts. You can, you know, there's things that can help, but at the end of the day, nothing trumps actually getting in the gym and putting in the work. Right? You can have people who talk about it all the time.

They take pictures at the gym and do videos at the gym, but are they actually working out? You know? And there's no shortcuts for that. And it's the same way in the spiritual world.

[15 : 39] Right? The Bible says you reap what you sow. Right? God's not mocked. You know, if you sow to please your sinful flesh, then you'll reap destruction. If you sow to please the Spirit, then you'll reap the fruit of the Spirit.

Right? You'll reap life. Okay? There's no shortcuts. There's no easy way out of this. There's no, you know, and some people like to be spiritual gurus or trying to give you all these.

There just, there isn't any shortcuts. It's the same thing. Tried and true. The Word of God hasn't changed. Same yesterday, today, and forever. Or the Lord doesn't change. These things are all true.

So there's no shortcuts. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. And again, what's the goal here? The crown. The crown. How do you get the crown? You gotta compete according to the rules.

And this, I think, speaks of prioritization and focus. Okay? Prioritization and focus. Again, what is your priorities and what are you focused on?

[16 : 36] Okay? You might say, well, yeah, this is a priority of mine. Are you focused on it? Well, yeah. What does that look like? Do you give time to it? Do you plan it? Is it planned? Anything worth doing is worth planning into your week.

Okay? Do you have weekly rhythms? Are you kind of a, you know, spiritual nomad, just kind of hoping that good things will happen to you, right?

Like, I just hope I'll get in the Word. I just hope I'll engage with great friendships in the church. And I just hope that lost people will get saved. But there's no plan. There's no discipline. There's no training.

You know, 1 Corinthians 9.25 says, every athlete, this is the other verse that talks about athletes in the Bible, every athlete exercises self-control in all things. NIV says, goes into strict training.

They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we in imperishable. Okay? There's a strict training that's involved in the kingdom of God. It says, hey, I'm going to train. I'm going to be strict with it.

[17 : 36] You know, as well as I do, that if you're ever on a diet, and you're trying to train yourself, if you're not strict, what happens? It doesn't work. And, I know, because I've tried it.

If you're not strict, it doesn't work. But when you are strict, it does work. And, the difference between results and not result is strictness over time.

Strictness over time. The difference between a good athlete and a bad athlete, a lot of times, other than just naturally talented, and some are, is, strictness over time.

Even the ones who are really talented, I remember, I think it was Rob Gronkowski, his last season that he played, he, while he was, he was supposed to do training for the summer, and he took videos the same day with different clothes on to say that he was doing his training for the summer as an accountability thing, that he was faking it.

He didn't really do the training. And, you could tell when he started the season, even though he was a great athlete. But, over time, at the end of the season, he got, you could tell he was back in shape. And, and he ended up winning the Super Bowl.

[18 : 46] But, even a great athlete like that, can't fake it. There's no shortcuts. He tried to do the shortcut. If I just, send in this video saying that I was working out, that'll, that'll do it. The thing you're working out isn't as good as working out.

Apparently. He was sluggish on the field. It didn't work. Okay? Strictness over time. Now, what we like is, flashy over a short time.

Right? Give me something new. Give me something novel. Give me something flashy and, and, and different. I don't want to do the same boring thing over and over again for a long period of time.

Well, that's immaturity speaking if we say things like that. Now, most people wouldn't say that out loud, but in fact, you might be thinking that, right? But, that's the difference between maturity and immaturity. Maturity does strictness over time.

Strictness over time. Same things, day in and day out. One of the things that was most impressive about Daniel in the Bible was what? Every day. He did the same thing.

[19 : 45] What did he do? Morning? Lunch? Night? What did he do? He got before the Lord, opened up that window, and he prayed. The thing that was most impressive about the three guys he ran with, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, was they had a strictness over time that separated them from the people around them.

Okay? An athlete goes into strict training. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. Takes prioritization and focus.

Some of us have had seasons of prioritization where we've really hunkered down. January seems to be a great time for that a lot of times for people, right? But January Christians aren't the one who see the kingdom of God come.

Okay? We need some December Christians. We need people who carry on through the whole year. Strictness over time. Strict training. Prioritization and focus. Not seasons of prioritization.

Lifestyles of prioritization. Do we do that? Can't we do that? We don't want to just, you know, I want to see this church grow. I want to see this church mature.

[20 : 56] I want to see us grow close as a family. I want to see lost people get saved. I want us to take advantage of this new move to Grandview and whatever the Lord might have for us. Because we weren't anticipating this, right? So, kind of excited to see what that's going to look like.

But, we want to build for the long haul, right? We want to build a church that our kids are excited about when they're older. We want to build a multi-generational church. We want to build a church that isn't a flash in the pan.

Those happen all the time. You know, when we planted Bellicose 14 years ago, there was a lot of churches being planted in Kansas City at that time. I was just talking to someone the other day and they were saying it was kind of a weird amount of churches that were being planted at that time.

You know what? A lot of them don't exist anymore. They don't exist anymore. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. Strictness over time.

Okay? Third one. Third one. The hardworking farmer, right? Verse 6. It is the hardworking farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.

[22 : 05] Okay? The hardworking farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Again, we have the two things. We have what he's doing. He's doing hard work. What's the result? He gets a share in the harvest. He gets a share in the crops.

He gets the fruit of his labor. Okay? Again, these are all principles. You got the soldier, the athlete. You got the hardworking farmer. They're supposed to do certain things.

And when they do those things, certain fruit follows. It's no different with the hardworking farmer. When he works hard, he gets the first share of the crops. Okay? All of us are working.

And that's one thing I really preach about this church is there's a lot of collective effort and work. We're going to, you know, after the service, we're going to stack up all the chairs, throw some in some trucks, and some of those are going to head over to the new building.

Right? It's usually never a problem asking people to do that. All right? Work is one thing. Do you work hard? Do you work hard? Do you work? It's easy to work, but do we have a consistent hard work ethic?

[23 : 10] Do we work hard when no one's looking? Do we work hard when we're tired, when we're discouraged, when there seems to be no results? That's the thing about a farmer, right? He's got to keep going no matter what.

Any of you guys ever see that movie Faith Like Potatoes? That true story about the potato farmer who put all his money into, all he had left into planting a bunch of potatoes? The thing about potatoes is they're below ground.

You can't tell if they're growing until you harvest them. So the whole time, you know, you're growing corn. It's like it's going taller and taller. In Wisconsin, they always said knee-high by the 4th of July.

That's not how it is here. It gets a lot taller before then. You can see it growing. You know, you're driving around like, oh, it's getting close to harvest season. That corn is taller than I am. Right?

You're planting potatoes. It's just a big field of dirt. There's nothing. And you just got to keep working, keep trusting.

[24 : 11] And church planting is a lot like planting potatoes. Right? A lot of times you're like, is there anything underneath that ground? Is it some fools Aaron? Were we dumb to do this? Should we have just stayed where we were?

Did we really have to get out and inconvenience ourselves and start a new church? What if nothing happens? What if there's no fruit? What if nothing grows? Those are the questions that get there.

But there's a principle. It's the hardworking farmer who have to have a first share of the crop. Okay? Hardworking farmers, what ends up happening? They get crops.

They get crops. Acts 20, 35. Paul said, In all things I have shown you, that by working hard in this way, we must help the weak.

And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Okay? He says, In all things I have shown you that by working hard, must help the weak.

[25 : 11] Remember the words of Jesus. It is better to give than to receive. That's why we work hard. We work hard because it's better to give than to receive. We're not just looking to receive. We know it's actually better to be givers.

We know that if we stay diligent, there's a crown waiting for us. There's a crop waiting for us that will please our commanding officer. Okay? In all things I've shown you, are we showing a good work ethic in our attention to the details?

In our attention to the little things that we need to make a church run and to work? The little things of discipleship. The little inconveniences that we have to do to be in each other's lives.

The inconveniences of mission. You know, we talk a lot about the inconvenience of discipleship. Mission is inconvenient. It is. It's much easier to not be on mission. You know how I know that? Because that's why a lot of churches don't do it.

It's just much easier not to. It's just much easier to just enjoy your life, have your little church, us four no more, your kids have friends, you got people you can watch Chiefs games with, and all's right with the world and we can sing love songs to Jesus and celebrate the gospel.

[26 : 19] Right? Isn't that great? Well, what about the lost and dying world out there? It's inconvenient. Gets into our schedule. Takes up our time. Causes us to have to be able to give up certain other things for the mission.

It's like, well, all the things I want to do, I don't have time to do them and mission. Yes. That's right. Those other things are called civilian pursuits.

Okay? So with hard work, we keep, we'll reap a harvest if we don't give up, the Bible says. We'll reap a harvest if we don't give up. Okay? But we just keep, we got to just keep being consistent.

Praying for the gospel to be proclaimed to believers and unbelievers. Building new and existing relationships with people. Okay? Preaching the gospel to strangers and those we're building relationships to.

Exposing the people we're on mission to to the family of believers. Then making those people into disciples. And then just over and over and over and over again. Until one day, we're sitting in a coffin and someone's telling about how their whole life, they just did these things over and over again.

[27 : 28] That's what you want, right? That's what I want. I hope that's what people do and I'm dead and gone. People said this guy, he did the, he did the things over and over and over again.

He had a strict hard work ethic over time. Verse seven says, think over what I say for the Lord will give you understanding everything. Think over these three things.

Think over the soldier, the athlete, the farmer. Think over them. It's interesting. A lot of times when we think we're trying to understand things, we think, well, how do we understand things in the scripture?

This is one of the most simple commands here, but it's a good one to remember because sometimes I don't think we realize how important this is. What did he say was the way to understand these things? It's really simple.

See what he said? Think about them. Think about them. Isn't that a strange thing? You might think, okay, yeah, great. What's so big deal about that? How often do we just skim through the scriptures and we don't spend time thinking?

[28 : 35] How often do we just read it and we think, I don't really understand what that means. Moving on. Right? He didn't say Google it and then you'll understand everything. Nothing wrong with Googling stuff.

That's good. Okay? But he said, think upon them. Okay? Are we thinking upon the scriptures and we're reading them? We're going through James right now, right? Those weeks when I'm not here, you guys are going through James, so I've enjoyed listening to those so far.

Right? Are you thinking upon them? Are you taking these verses? Are you reading them outside of the Sunday mornings? Getting saturated in them before the next text gets read and gets preached on?

Are you thinking about them? Sometimes it's just as simple as that. Just reading and thinking. You know, I was just hit by the simplicity of that, right? It just says, think over what I say for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

How is he going to give you understanding in everything? Just by thinking about it. It's pretty cool, actually. Verse 8. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, is preached in my gospel for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal.

[29 : 39] Seems like a goofy thing to say, remember Jesus Christ. It's like, well, shouldn't that be obvious? Did he really need to say that? Like, duh, right? We're supposed to remember Jesus Christ?

The fact that he says it makes us, should cause us to pause and think about it and say, is that something we just forget a lot of times? When you're having a hard time being a good soldier, when you're having a hard time and you're thinking about a shortcut as an athlete, when you're having a hard time doing the hard work to reap a harvest, are you remembering Jesus Christ?

You're remembering Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. You're remembering that his resurrection is your justification. You're remembering that. When we remember that, it's preached in my gospel.

You're willing to do things that he did, which is suffering. He was bound with chains as a criminal. And he closes with this, in this section here, and he says, but the word of God is not bound. Therefore.

Therefore. The word of God is not bound. Therefore. So this next section is going to be tied to the fact that the word of God is not bound. The word of God isn't chained. The word of God isn't hindered.

[30 : 47] The word of God isn't stopped. No matter who gets in office, no matter who's getting more airtime in the media, no matter what celebrity says this, that, or the other, the word of God is not bound.

No matter what you see with your natural eyes, the word of God is not bound. No matter whether you see the church growing or not, the word of God is not bound. Whether you see results or not, the word of God is not bound.

The word of God is not bound. Do you believe that? You believe that the word of God is not bound. Do you preach like the word of God is not bound? In your workplaces, do you speak the word of God like it's not bound?

Do you make effort to be on mission like the word of God is not bound? Like it's powerful. Like it's sharper than a two-edged sword. Separating soul and spirit, joints and marrow. That it actually judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4.12. Do you believe that the word of God in the gospel in Romans 1.16 is actually the power of God for the salvation of those who believe? Do we believe that? We believe it.

[31 : 43] Then he says, therefore, I endure everything. Endure everything for the sake of the elect that they may also attain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Here he throws in one more motivation, right? He says, I endure everything. It's another one of these. He doesn't give a category of this like he did with soldier, athlete, and farmer.

But it's the same thing. He says, what does he do? He endures everything because the word of God is not bound. He endures everything. And then what is the result of that? It's for the sake of the elect that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

And this is what we have to remember, that we're enduring everything. We're voluntarily inconveniencing ourselves. Why? For the sake of the elect, so that those who are not in Christ now could be in Christ, though those who are lost could be found.

For those who are heading towards eternity without Jesus could hear the gospel, repent, and believe. Think of all the people.

[32 : 52] It's good every once in a while to think of people that you'll be in eternity with because they heard the gospel through your lips. Isn't that an amazing thing to think about those people?

I was thinking about this the other day. I don't know why I was thinking about it. I was thinking about the first person I ever saw saved in high school. And I remember I was talking about not believing the word of God, God is not bound.

I shared the gospel with her and I didn't believe she was going to get saved. And then she got saved and I was shocked. And her life is so different from what it was before.

And sometimes when I think about that, I just think it's so incredible. Like every single Christian you know, before they were in Christ, they were someone who you'd look at and think, I don't think that person's going to become a Christian.

That person's life is going in the total opposite direction. And now look at them. That's all of us. That was all of us. There's a lot of other people out of these four walls. There might be a few more than four, but out of this room, okay, that were just like us before we were in Christ.

[33 : 58] And they need to hear the gospel. And when they hear the gospel, for the sake of the elect, that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. They might obtain eternal glory forever and ever and ever and ever reward with Jesus.

Eternal glory. Glory. That is what we get to give to people. That is the gift that we get to offer to people. That's why we endure all things. If you get weary of enduring all things, you're like, man, this is an endurance.

Yeah, it is. Remember Christ Jesus risen? And remember the elect. Remember those, that God is wanting to pluck out of darkness and into his light. That he's wanting to save.

Even, it says in Jude, that we should even hate the clothing corrupted by sinful flesh. We rescue people from the fire. That's an awesome vision. And that's the one I want to hear the Lord say, my commanding officer, well done, good and faithful servant.

You were faithful with little. Now I'll be entrusted with much. You took this little life you had and you endured everything for the sake of the elect. You endured everything.

[35 : 04] You remembered me, risen from the dead. And you gave it to other people. And welcome into paradise. And we'll get to see them there. Be an amazing thing.

And, you know, there's a lot of things we can do in life that are fun. There's a lot of things we can do in life that are enjoyable. There's a lot of things that we can do in life that will make great memories. But a lot of those things will only last as long as this life lasts.

There's a way to make eternal memories. There's a way to make eternal impact. And it's being a group of people who endures everything for the sake of the elect, for the sake of the gospel. And I know you know this.

I'm preaching to the choir in one sense. But I just want to encourage us again with that. It's worth it. But you got to endure hardship like a good soldier.

We got to do it together. And there's no shortcut. We got to compete according to the rules. And it's the hardworking farmer who reaps the harvest. And we'll reap a harvest if we don't give up.

[36 : 04] Amen? Amen. Let's stand. Amen. Let's stand. Amen.