

Endure: II Timothy 1:1-18 – A Call to Faithfulness

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Preacher: Scott Liddell

[0 : 00] It is good to be in the house of Lord and worship together. I'm excited this morning to start a new sermon series in 2 Timothy.

We've entitled the Sermon series endure fight the good fight. And it is a book of the Bible where Paul is encouraging Timothy to endure hardship.

Keep going, stand firm in the faith. It's worth it. The Lord is worth it. And it is also Paul's most personal letter. You hear Paul's heart toward Timothy often, both in chapter 1, especially in chapter 4.

When we get there, you see Paul's heart toward Timothy. It is his perhaps most personal of all letters. It is also his last letter.

After this, at some point in time, Paul dies in prison. In fact, the occasion for this letter is that Paul is in prison.

[1 : 12] And we're approximately around 66 AD is when this letter is being written. And the occasion is Paul was in prison and Rome on two different occasions.

One occasion he was under what I would call house arrest. He had a lot of freedom. He could receive guests. He had the Praetorium Guard with him.

And he had occasion to write letters, send people off, receive encouragement from folks from surrounding churches and all of this. But now we see him in a different kind of setting. It's a different kind of imprisonment.

This is what I would call house arrest. This is now the dark imprisonment that you would imagine. Where there's not a lot of creature comforts. This is where men go to die.

And in fact, whether he died in prison or was released and killed, we do not know. But Paul would not make it out of this occasion. He is in prison. In Rome, and he is writing to his young spiritual son, Timothy, who is pastoring a church who Paul cares about deeply.

[2 : 25] Timothy is in the city of Ephesus, where Paul had taught the Word of God faithfully for many years. So this is a church that Paul in Ephesus is very familiar with. And now his young spiritual son, Timothy, is there in Ephesus, teaching the Word of God.

But Timothy, you gather is a little timid, and you will see that in today's text. There is some occasion for Timothy's timidity.

There is an occasion for Timothy's, he's just having a hard time. And Paul is writing this letter to encourage him to bolster courage in Timothy to say, keep going, endure, fight the good fight, it's worth it.

Proclaim the gospel, don't shrink back, keep going. And that is the occasion from which Paul writes he is in prison.

In prison, and he's also in prison in a time when it is hard for Christians. Why? Two years prior to the writing of this letter, approximately, in 64 AD, Rome caught fire.

[3 : 42] And it was a devastating fire. It burned for six days and six nights. The whole city was on fire.

And there was rumors, we're having that Nero had started the fire, deliberately burned his own town. And to dissuade that rumor, this is what Tacitus, the early historian wrote. He says this.

Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt in inflicting the most tortures on a class of hatred for their abominations called Christians by the populace.

So Nero directed his most heinous torture toward Christians because of the fire, and he blamed them so that he would be removed from the blame that was coming on him.

And so as the result, Paul now, think of yourself, you're in that season in Rome, you're in prison, you're no longer under house arrest.

[4 : 51] You're now in the prison. It's dark, it's damp, all that you can, there's no creature comforts. And it is from this place in Rome, in prison, that Paul writes to his young spiritual son, Timothy, in Ephesus, to encourage him.

And it is his most personal letter. And we see in this text that we're going to look at today. Paul is going to say to Timothy, strengthen your faithful service. And he's going to have different means by which he's going to encourage Timothy to strengthen your faithful service. And this will have great encouragement to us. Perhaps today you're here and your faithfulness to the Lord and your service into him, perhaps it is waned in some time. And today you need some encouragement too to say, I need to strengthen my faithful service to the Lord as well. You're in good company. You're in good company. And it is on this occasion that Paul writes to Timothy.

[6 : 01] He greets him as we already read in verses one and two. And we find the first place after the greeting where Paul will basically say, I'm going to remind each other of one's faith.

Look how he says this. I'm going to remind you how can we strengthen our faithful service unto the Lord? It's to remind each other of our faith in Christ. Look how Paul first does this in verses one, three through five.

I thank God whom I serve as did my ancestors with the clear conscience as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. As I remember your tears. This is why I say it's one of the most personal letters. Listen to how intimate verse four says, As I remember your tears as I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.

And verse five, I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. And now I am sure dwells in you as well.

Paul reminds Timothy of his constant prayers for Timothy. Look with me in verse four, night and day. I remember you constantly. This word, constantly, it's a continual action.

[7 : 26] There's no better way to motivate believers to consider their accountability, to be faithful and to move one's heart to the service of Christ than to continually hold them up before the Lord in prayer and then to tell them about it.

There is a couple who are in my life who I only see maybe once a year. Most likely every three years I may see them on occasion here in Spokane.

But every time I see them and they are now approaching their 80s or in their 80s. Every time I see them they say this to me, Scott, you're on our prayer sheet and we pray for you every day.

It will be a great loss to me when they pass away. And boy does that motivate me to be faithful in my service to the Lord because they are reminding me, Scott, you are his.

And you have a great responsibility to him. We pray for you. Oh, how that motivates me and shores me up. It makes me cause me to consider how am I being a faithful servant to the Lord.

[8 : 41] Look also how Paul reminds Timothy of his genuine affection for him in verse four as I mentioned. I remember your tears. There was an occasion perhaps when the Ephesus elders greeted Paul and they embraced and sent Paul on his way.

Perhaps Timothy was in that group. We don't know. But on some occasion there was tears by Timothy. And he says, I remember your tears. And in part I long to see you and we will see that this is part of the reason that Paul is writing to Timothy.

Because Paul especially in verse chapter four on three different occasions, he is going to encourage Timothy, come visit me. Come find me in Rome. Come find me in prison.

And he says, I long to see you. And just even the thought of considering you might see me brings me joy. Brings me comfort.

Even though Paul may be fully aware, he may never see Timothy.

[9 : 52] He may die before that occasion occurs. Just the prospect of seeing Timothy brings him joy. And then thirdly we see in this section that Paul reminds Timothy of their shared and sincere faith in Christ.

Paul reminds Timothy of a sincere faith. Look with me in verse five. I'm reminded of your sincere faith. The word for sincere is a compound word. It means without hypocrisy.

Timothy, faith was completely genuine. It was without hypocrisy, without pretense, without deceit.

And you know when you have met someone like this, when they know the Lord deeply and they are just genuine through and through.

What they say and their actions and their heart and tension of the motivation of their heart, it all is in alignment. And oh how beautiful it is to meet those individuals who function out of this sincere faith, one that is without pretense or hypocrisy.

During Paul's first missionary journey, he went through Timothy's hometown and undoubtedly he likely met Eunice and Lois. That's where he met them. And likely these two Jewish women were deeply rooted in their Old Testament scriptures and came to faith in Christ and saw how these scriptures pointed to and illustrated Christ from the Old Testament.

[11 : 23] And so when Paul came to town and proclaimed Christ, they came to faith in Christ undoubtedly and likely so too did Timothy. And these women poured into Timothy's life and grew him up.

That when on the second missionary journey, when Paul comes through town, he comes and he brings Timothy with him. And it says this, that Timothy was well spoken by the brothers of Lystra and Iconium, that he had grown so much between Paul's first missionary journey and the second missionary journey and he was aided by his mother and his grandmother in the faith.

He was deeply rooted that everyone in the whole region, Lystra and Iconium, he was so well spoken of. Paul, have you seen what has become of Timothy?

And Timothy learned this sincere faith from these two women, Lois and Eunice, the grandmother and his mother.

And if you turn over, we don't need to do that, but 2 Timothy 3, 15, we'll get there in a few weeks. It says this, from childhood, he knew the sacred writings which he was able to give.

[12 : 41] That is, Timothy with all wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. He was deeply rooted in the sacred writings of Scripture.

And to think of the work that his mother and grandmother did, because we know that Timothy's father was a Gentile.

And so he was an unbelieving Gentile. So there was no spiritual leadership in the home given to him by his father. And so this speaks to the importance of moms and grandmothers.

I want firstly to say this, parents, you are the primary disciples of your children. You are the primary disciples of your children.

I would love to have all of us renew our desire and efforts to instill a sincere faith in our children.

Fathers, my encouragement is to lead your families in this way.

[13 : 47] God has given you the mantle of responsibility to teach your children the way of a genuine and sincere faith. And mothers, if your husband does not know the Lord or is apathetic, all is not lost. Be like Lois and be like Eunice while praying for your husband.

And if you did not grow up in a believing family and you do not know what this is like, all is not lost. My father is a first generation believer.

He grew up in a home where my parents, my grandparents did not know the Lord. So they died in that state, in fact.

My father did not know the Lord growing up. And only until his young 20s he was in California working in an oil refinery, and his foreman invited him over for dinner, and the foreman over dinner introduced Christ and shared Christ with my father, and he believed in his young 20s.

But my dad did not have the benefit of growing up in a Christian home where he would know how to disciple his kids so he didn't know what to do, but all he did was this. He would gather our family around, my brother and myself, my mom.

[15 : 10] We would sit in the living room in the evenings, he would read a section of scripture, and we would talk about it, and then he would pray. It's all he knew to do, but isn't that great?

That's sufficient to read the living word of God together as a family and disciple us as kids. I want to also share some resources. I feel passionate about discipling children, and so while my wife and I have no children of our own, it still is a passion of mine, and so I collect books that are helpful for teaching truths of God to children.

And so if you would like after the service to peruse these books, you're welcome to do so, and I may even let you borrow them if you return it.

But parents, you don't need this. You don't need this to teach your children. My father only did what he knew how to do, and that is just read God's word to his kids and his family.

We would discuss it. We would pray as a family, and I am eternally thankful for that. I had the privilege of growing up in a home to which my father did not.

[16 : 32] There are 168 hours in a week, and as a church, we may disciple your children for one of those hours. On Sunday, that's all we have. But you have the rest of the 167 hours of the week to disciple your children.

And I want to say, though, thank you to those who teach children that one hour that we get a week to portray the beauty and the magnificence of God and lift up Jesus and the sight of children and to teach them that He is irresistible and He died to save and forgive sin.

How beautiful that is. Second, how is it that else that Timothy strengthened the faith of Paul, strengthened the faith and the service of Timothy, his spiritual son, he reminded each other of one's faith. That's what Paul did.

Remember where you came from, Timothy. And then secondly, he's bolstering courage to utilize one's gifts. And he's bolstered it with me in verse 6 and 7. For this reason, I remind you, fan into flame, the gift that God, which was given to you through the laying on of hands, for God gave us a spirit, not of fear, but of power, of love, and of self-control.

Notice that we see here that this gift that is referenced for Timothy came by the laying on of hands. In 1 Timothy 1.18, it talks about the laying on of hands by the elders. And what I believe to have occurred is that there was an occasion when the elders of a congregation laid their hands on Timothy, recognizing what God had put in Timothy to accomplish and to do, namely that he was going to be an elder and to shepherd the flock of God, that he would have this privilege to be this pastor.

[18 : 51] And this is in part what this gift is, I believe. And in elders' primary responsibility is to shepherd and to teach God's word. So why is it that we come into 2 Timothy chapter 4, we'll get there in a few weeks, where it says, preach the word, Timothy, be ready in season, and out of season, and reprove, rebuke, and exhort, and complete with all patience and teaching.

Why is that so important from Paul to Timothy? Because this is what he's been called to do. And there's been an opportunity where elders have recognized that and laid their hands on them and says, we recognize this in your life, Timothy.

That may be for Timothy, but what about us? Every believer at the moment of salvation has received spiritual gift or gifts. The word gift is an expression just of grace, of divine enablement for service.

And we all have been given them, those in Christ. Certainly it includes spiritual gifts, mentioned in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12.

And gifts are just expressions of God's grace in your life for the purpose of building up of the body. So, the serving, some of the spiritual gifts mentioned in scripture are serving and teaching, encouraging, giving.

[20 : 21] And I know leadership, mercy, prophecy, help, service, administration, wisdom, discernment, and more. And think about Timothy's situation. He's in Ephesus.

And he is serving in the Roman Empire under the emperor Nero. Being bold for Jesus, being courageous to proclaim the gospel, to proclaim the exclusivity of Christ may end up getting him killed.

And besides that, Ephesus was a place of heresy and idolatry, and there was challenges to Timothy's leadership. Timothy needed courage. And so what is Paul doing?

He's reminding him and strengthening his faithful service by bolstering and saying, utilize your gifts, this calling that you have been called to. Don't shrink back, Timothy.

And now, here's a keen observation that I worked on all week, and that is this. The tendency of fire is to go out.

[21 : 25] You're welcome. And so that is why Paul writing, he says, be sure to remind you to fan and to flame the gift of God.

Be sure to do that. Now, how is it that Timothy is to do that? How is it that we fan and to flame the gifts that God has given us is through the use of them?

It's through the use of them. One needs to always blow on fire, get the bellows out and add oxygen to fire to get the embers hot again and flame returns.

Divine giftedness is to be continually rekindled and fanned into flame in order for Christians to be, to fully work out his will through us and in us.

So to exercise one's gifts that we have received from the Lord, let's do that unless we atrophy, neglect and fall out of flame because of disuse.

[22 : 31] The very fact that we have a giftedness from the Lord demands full and constant use. And he's reminding Timothy, I want you to bolster your courage to keep going.

Continue to use this gift that God has given to you. Do not neglect it. And then watch how Paul motivates him after this fanning into the flame and think about Timothy.

Again, he's a little bit timid and so he says to him in verse seven, for God did not give us a spirit, not of fear, for God gave us a spirit, not of fear, but of power and of love and of self-control.

So don't shrink back. And in the verb tense here is that there is a past completed action, that this spirit that he gave you back here, perhaps at the moment of salvation, Timothy, that he already, it is in full effect in your life today.

Use it. And it is a spirit of love and self-control and of power. Use it, Timothy. Use it.

[23 : 51] Third way that Paul strengthens faithful service. I don't want to go to the third one because I want to share a concept with you before we get to it.

But let me just share this, that we all have hope. Let me maybe say it this way. We are influenced by our expectations.

We expect certain things. We all hope to show up to work on time, but then the car won't start. And then we get a flat tire on the way. And then after we fix the flat tire, we're in an auto accident.

And then in a hurry, we get pulled over for speeding. And then you find yourself in road construction because we're in that season now, that winter is over. And then you miss the bus or it's late. And on and on it goes.

And the expectation, it's upsetting, it's frustrating, it's angering when expectations are not met.

Correct? Thank you.

[24 : 55] Here is an unspoken expectation we often have. So long as I remain faithful to the Lord, so long as I abide with Christ, so long as I fan into flame the gifts that God has given me, utilizing them and building up the body, so long as I depend upon God's resources of His power and His love and His self-control, then I will be blessed of God by providing me a very comfortable life in the absence of adversity.

That's the man. Yeah. That's the expectation. And that is perhaps what Timothy is experiencing is he's been faithful to the Lord.

He's done right well and good, but it's hard. And Paul wants to write and say, I'm writing to you to expect suffering, because we don't expect adversity and suffering per se.

If we abide with Christ, know Him as we ought, those two things do not go hand in glove in our minds.

But how is it, hmm, we're going to see that Paul reminds Timothy of the Gospel.

[26 : 14] But let me illustrate this. You've heard the phrase, daily preach the Gospel to yourself, or preach the Gospel to yourself daily, one of those two ways.

And what do we mean by that, or what is it that someone means by that? And let me try to explain it this way. Often we have a confessional theology, which is the right and true theology of God's word that we believed to know to be true.

And then we have a lived theology, though, and there is a disparity between the two. There is a difference between the two. And that is the lived theology that forms my responses to difficulties in life that are in a fallen world.

So my responses to circumstances that may indicate what I truly believe. So we have a confessional theology, that which I declare to be true, that is true.

And then a lived theology of my responses to circumstances. Okay, everyone with me on that. Then what is the cause of this difference? Why isn't it one and the same often?

[27 : 24] May I first suggest, and you can turn to Romans 4, we're going to be there in a minute. I would like for everyone to turn their eyes onto Romans 4 for a moment.

What is the cause of the disparity between one's confessional theology and one's lived theology? What's the difference? May I suggest that it has in part largely to do with meditation?

That is, what you set your mind and heart's affection on. Let me illustrate. And I'm not using the word meditation as Eastern religions do of emptying one's mind.

I'm actually using the biblical example or definition of meditation of setting one's mind on something, on that which is true.

And I must confess, I want to become more conscious of what is capturing my heart and my attention of my mind and my heart.

[28 : 27] My mind, here's my difficulty that may be yours, is my mind focused on the difficulties in life, the fears in my life, or the concerns, or is my mind focused on the Lord?

So if you're in Romans 4, chapter 4, verse 19, I want to begin by saying this, biblical faith never requires you to deny reality.

Look with me in verse 19, 419. Without becoming weak in faith, he, Abraham, contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about 100 years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

So do you see? It says, without becoming weak in the faith, he contemplated his own body.

What did, without becoming weak in the faith, what is he doing? He's just recognizing reality. I'm 100 years old, there's a deadness of my body and there's a deadness of Sarah's womb. This promise of us having an offspring, I don't know how it's going to happen, because this is our reality.

[29 : 43] That's Abraham, okay? And that is some reality, and he's being very specific about he and Sarah, his wife's circumstance.

Biblical faith never requires you to deny reality, so why am I saying this? And we're going to get to something here in a second. There's a confessional thought theology of that which we say to be true, and then there's where we live, our responses to circumstances.

Where I would like for them to be one and the same, there's often a disparity, and I'm saying what is cause of the disparity is oftentimes what we set our focus, our mind on. And so let me illustrate where Abraham set his mind.

Keep reading in verses 20-22. Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. Where was his mind? On his circumstance?

Or on the promises of God? In fact, look at his faith again. His faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God.

[30 : 48] He was fully convinced that God was able to do whatever he promises and was able to perform it. Therefore, it was accredited to him as righteous.

Do you see? Notice the meditation here is his confessional theology. Here's his reality. Let me start with his reality. His lived theology.

He says, I'm promised to bear a child, and yet I'm dead. My wife's womb is dead. This is an impossible task.

So this is my circumstance. But what is it that he dwelt on? And what is it that he meditated on? He believed God's promise that you're going to bear a son.

That was the promise. And that his faith grew stronger and brought glory to God, and he was convinced. He set his mind. He's fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises, and he's able to perform it.

[31 : 50] And so his confessional theology and his lived theology was one and the same. But it's in part because his mind was on God, not his circumstances.

Keep in mind, we're still in Timothy. Paul is writing to Timothy to strengthen his faithful service. This is important as we have this concept. Paul is in prison.

Timothy is going through hardship and Ephesus. How is he going to do this? Come back to Abraham for a moment. Abraham looked at his reality in the face.

His meditation was on the grandeur, the splendor, the majesty of God who made him this promise. That God would bear a son. Abraham was aided by what he meditated on.

If you and I meditate, fix our mind on the little, mid-size, or difficult, big, difficult circumstances. They will begin to loom larger than God. Our circumstances will also form another gospel that I preached to myself.

[32 : 55] And that's so, for example. Let me illustrate that. When my circumstances are bigger than God, I think to myself, God must be unaware of my circumstances.

Now, is that true? No, that's the confessional theology. God is totally aware of my... He's omniscient. He is totally aware of my circumstances. But this is my response to my circumstances.

This is my lived theology down here. And I say to myself, because I'm focused, my meditation is on my circumstances. And I think, God must be unaware of my circumstances.

And I'm writing a theology in my heart that isn't true of God. Second, I think, well, if this happened to anyone else, they too would be bitter.

If this happened, my response to a circumstance, if this happened to anyone else, they too would be bitter. And besides that, I feel like I should be justified in my bitterness and unforgiveness toward

others.

[34 : 04] Because if God fully understood what happened to me, He could have prevented this. And so, do you hear how we're rewriting theology when we have our meditation of our heart on our circumstances?

So we have the gospel of difficulty. We have a gospel of aloneness. We have a gospel of envy, a gospel of unforgiveness, a gospel of questioning God's faithfulness, a gospel of victimhood, a gospel of partiality, a gospel of isolation, and on and on it could go.

And all of a sudden, I am now meditating on the perceived deficiencies of God. And now I am considering things about God that are very, very different than how God portrays Himself in Scripture and what He declares to be true about Him in His revelation that we have in Scripture. Who God is and who am I as His child gets rewritten. And so here's another news flash. No one is more influential in your life than you are.

Because no one talks to yourself more than you do. And that conversation that you are having with yourself is deeply theological. It is also deeply motivating, even though it may motivate you to wrong action, it's deeply motivating because of the thoughts and talking to yourself, the conversations you're having, of your response to circumstances.

[35 : 37] And we actively live out of those conversations that we have based on the meditations of our heart, of where is my heart spending its time and affection and thought on my circumstances or that which is true.

And so here's what happens. There are always circumstances in life that are bigger than me, bigger than my strength, bigger than my wisdom, bigger than my resources, and I am always confronted by just how little I can control and how little I truly understand.

So let me give you a practical example in my own life and give you an opportunity to think less of me.

I'm so grateful that biblical theology does not, biblical faith does not forbid you to just acknowledge reality. Abraham, I am old, she's old, how's this going to happen? I don't know. That's reality.

I, confessional theology, I am so grateful that we as a church have this beautiful opportunity to plant a church God willing in the May of 2024.

[37 : 08] That the greatness of his name gets to be communicated to more people in the city of Spokane through a church being planted, which is the pattern that we see in Scripture. I cannot wait.

And that we get to send Pastor Eric, who is a senior pastor masquerading as our youth and young adult pastor.

And that we have not just him, but others. We have elders and we have staff members who are going to go and a deacon who is going to go. And then many more members of the church who will have opportunity this fall to fill out an application to go with them.

I cannot wait. But there's a reality to that.

Confessional theology, lived theology. How is the Lord going to replace incredible staff members?

[38 : 18] How is the Lord going to fill the financial void that will be created by all of these families and giving units that go with the church plant and we will be left with this deficiency?

How is the Lord going to provide for us that circumstance is going to provide? I don't know. But here's the temptation of my heart. Where am I going to meditate on those circumstances?

Am I going to fix my mind on the circumstances that that circumstance creates? Or am I going to focus on the Lord?

This circumstance is bigger than me. It's bigger than all of us. And we get to take this journey together. It's bigger than me. It's bigger than our strength. It's bigger than our circumstance. It's bigger than our resources.

And I am confronted, here we go again, with just how little I can control. And just how little I understand. And that's just on the fourth side of campus, the thought. I'm sure Eric is thinking much the same.

[39 : 36] I have no place to meet. Will we be able to meet our financial obligations? How can we afford the rent there? How is this going to happen? And on and on and on, it'll go for the church plant. We're all, all the time, are faced with circumstances that we're having an opportunity to respond to biblically.

Okay. So, this week, I was reading Psalm 40, or I'm sorry, Isaiah 40 verses 25 through 30.

And Isaiah 40, we don't need to turn there, but it is a great chapter in Scripture that talks about the greatness of God. And my heart was encouraged as I was contemplating these things to lift my gaze to the Lord and put in my heart and meditate on that which is true of Him.

He, this is not this church plant. This is not bigger than the Lord. It is not greater than His strength. It is not greater than His wisdom. It is not greater than His resources. And He knows all things. He is in complete control and He understands it all.

I don't. But I'm going to look to Him, not my circumstances. And we get to do that together. Okay. You say, well, Scott, how in the world does this apply to Paul and Timothy? I'm glad you asked.

[41 : 04] The next several verses, remember when I began with saying, we preach the gospel to ourselves. And what I was trying to articulate is what are we doing?

Is we're trying to, when we preach the gospel to ourselves, is to remind that our confessional theology and we're trying to bring up our lived theology so there is no disparity and they are one and the same.

And so when we preach the gospel to ourselves, that is what we are doing. And so now put yourself in Paul's mind. His spiritual son Timothy in Ephesus is having a hard time.

He needs to be strengthened, His faith in service. And so now watch how he does this. He says, prepare yourself to suffer for the gospel.

But he preaches the gospel to him. Look how he does this. Verse 8, Now therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me as his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.

[42 : 06] Notice, what does he say? Timothy, you have this rich heritage of faith, Lois and Eunice, and you need a fan and a flame. This gift that God has given you, he's given you not a spirit of fear, but of power and love and self-control. Therefore, Timothy, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.

What is that? That's the gospel. What's the testimony of the Lord? That he condescended to earth, took on human form. Born of a fully man, fully God. He lived a sinless life. He died a death for sin. He rose from the grave and he ascended to the right hand of the Father. That's the testimony of the Lord that Timothy and Paul all knew. That's what they know, and he's going to return one day to judge the living and the dead.

This is the testimony of the Lord. And he says, Paul, Paul is writing to Timothy. He says, Timothy, don't back down from that. We're banking our whole life on this testimony.

And then notice that testimony of our Lord, what it has done, who saved us, verse 9, and called us to a holy calling. Not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace. And he gave us in Christ Jesus because of the age, before the ages began.

[43 : 23] He called you to this, holy calling, Timothy. And he saved you, not of your own works, of your own doing, because of his grace. And now look in verse 10, now which, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle and a teacher.

And he says, this gospel that I'm encouraging you to continue to proclaim, I was appointed a preacher, apostle, teacher too. And this is why, which is why I suffer as I do. This is why Paul is in prison. He proclaims the gospel.

But I am not ashamed. And I know whom I have believed. And I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

Do you see how Paul, in verse 8 he says, and share in the suffering of the gospel, that Timothy, you're a little timid.

You need to be strengthened. You need to be encouraged. You need to be bolstered. And suffering is a part of it. That is not opposite of what one could expect. It is in keeping with what one can expect. And I'm just here to remind you that this is the consequence of those who proclaim the gospel.

[44 : 53] And you should be encouraged by that. Take courage and don't let that potential of suffering hinder you from declaring that which is true. And oh how I need to hear that. And oh how we need to hear that. And so what is Paul doing?

He's reminding Timothy, here's our confessional theology. And in those moments of suffering, it's going to cause you to consider to shrink back and be timid.

But I'm telling you, I'm reminding you that that is part and parcel with the gospel. It's okay. It's okay to suffer. And he says, and that is why I suffer here as I do.

This week when I was working on the message, on Friday I was at home. I occasionally take a day to write the message at home or two.

And I was sitting there writing and I was on this section of thinking about the confessional theology and the lived theology and the difference between the two.

[46 : 16] And I was in the midst of sermon writing and a text comes in from Pastor Jay. And he sends me a couple of verses in Isaiah 66. So watch what Jay is doing when I say we preach the gospel to ourselves.

What is Paul doing, if you will, to Timothy? He's preaching the gospel to him to help him align those two. Jay said this. He quotes Isaiah. He gives me the few verses from Isaiah 66, one and two. And this is what Isaiah reads.

Thus says the Lord, heaven is my footstool and the earth is my footstool. What is the house that you have built for me? And what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made. And so all these things came to be, declares the Lord.

But this is the one whom I look, will look. He who is humble and a contrite in spirit and who trembles at my word. Then Jay says to me in the text, It's not the inanimate stuff within God's creation that he delights in. Rather, it is the man who is humble of spirit and takes God seriously.

Joy today in your sermon prep, Scott, as you tremble at his word. What is Jay doing? I was having difficulty in that moment. While my circumstance was small, relatively, I was having a hard time making progress in the message.

[47 : 54] And just receiving this, Paul, what is Jay doing? He's reminding me of what is true in St. Scott. This privilege we have to tremble at his word is worth it.

And to be humble and have those two in alignment, Scott, let me encourage you. And that's what happened. And this is what Paul is doing to his spiritual son, Timothy, in Ephesus. And I pray that we would be strengthened in our faithful service to the Lord in much of the same ways.

Let's pray. Father, you know all things. You know all things.

Lord, I pray that we would not have the meditation of our heart be on things of our circumstances. Let us acknowledge them.

And I love that biblical faith can acknowledge reality. But Lord, may our faith increase as we reflect upon that which is good and true.

[49 : 05] And let us focus on you, Lord. And may the meditation of our heart be on that which is greater than our circumstances. Who is you?

May we be refreshed in your word. May we speak your word to one another. And may there be alignment between our confessional theology and our lived theology.

We love you Lord. We thank you so much. And it's in your beautiful name, Jesus. Amen.