

Remember Jesus

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[0 : 00] Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as 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. The saying is trustworthy.

For if we have died with him, we will also live with him. If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us.

If we are faithless, he remains faithful. For he cannot, for he cannot deny himself. Hi everyone. Let's pray as we begin again.

Father in heaven, we thank you so much for this chance to hear you speak to us. We thank you for your Holy Spirit who lives in us. Please quieten our hearts and humble them.

[1 : 11] And enable us, give us strength by your Spirit to hear what you have to say to us this morning through these words. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, I was going to begin by talking about Forrest Gump and this guy, Rob Pope, who ran a long ultramarathon.

But Ben, who was the guy that you were talking about? What's his name? Carlos Giza. Giza? Russell Cook. Oh, Russell Cook. Okay. And he ran across Africa, north to south.

Well, Rob Pope was, in 2016, was inspired by Forrest Gump. And who fictionally ran five times across America, back and forth.

And he actually did it amazingly, 15,000 miles in 422 days, inspired by Forrest Gump. The ultramarathon. One of the images that Paul gives us, of course, for the Christian life.

[2 : 19] The life of the Christian leader and of the Christian is going to be a long, hard road. And if it feels like that for anyone here, which I guess it will for many of us, nothing has gone wrong.

Our subject today, as we consider the road ahead, what will keep us going? So if last week's question was how to guard the gospel, this week's question is why?

Why share in suffering? Why continue? Why engage in this lifelong struggle? Paul has given us the image of the soldier, the athlete and the farmer.

You'll see that in 2 verse 3 to 7. We were there last week. Soldiers, of course, get shot at quite a lot. And they have to put themselves in danger.

Social rejection. Athletes, the prolonged struggle. Pain barrier after pain barrier after pain barrier. The marathon runner.

[3 : 33] Until the finish. The farmer is the picture of just straightforward, sheer, hard work of the Christian life. As we seek to guard the gospel.

And so today, verses 8 to 13, what will the soldier write on the butt of his gun? You know, inscribed there. If he had just a few words to write there.

To remind him why he's fighting. What will the marathon runner write in henna on the back of her hand as she presses on to the finish line?

What few words will the farmer write or emboss on the inside of the window of his tractor as he goes out every day into the fields?

That's where we are in verses 8 to 13. But also, what will keep us going through the isolation and loneliness of gospel ministry? So as we've said, Timothy was basically on his own at this point in Ephesus.

[4 : 43] 1 verse 15. All who are in Asia. That's where Timothy is. Have turned away from me, says Paul.

The isolation. The loneliness. Of standing with the Lord Jesus Christ and guarding his gospel. Paul, of course, sitting all but abandoned in a Roman prison.

No one's come to him from the church awaiting his death. And even this. What will keep us going if we find ourselves not only socially rejected at school or wherever it is.

University and in the workplace. But also on the wrong side of the law. Do you see that in verse 9? Paul says, this gospel for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal.

So not only is Paul suffering at the hands of individuals or groups within society. But at this point, the full weight of the law, the state, is now against him. He's a criminal in chains.

[5 : 55] It's ironic, isn't it? I think there might be a glint in Paul's eye as he writes this. How ironic for preaching the best news that anyone can ever hear about a saviour who has abolished death.

And there sits Paul as a criminal in chains for preaching that. This is normal, it seems. It was normal then.

It's normal across the world now. If you look at Christians in various parts of the world. It hasn't quite happened yet for us in the UK. The law still just about allows us to believe and preach the Bible's message.

As far as I'm aware. Just about. Technically. But if we too start getting locked up for believing and preaching Christ.

Which may happen. What will keep us going? What would we scratch on the walls of our prison cells? Verses 8 to 13.

[7 : 08] Three rock solid motivations. Firstly, remember Jesus. Verse 8. Remember Jesus Christ. Risen from the dead. The offspring of David.

As preached in my gospel. Do you find these strange words? I do. Because of who they're written to.

Timothy. Timothy knows who Jesus is. He's spent 15 years preaching him. And then a lot more believing in him. It would be like saying to Billy Graham.

Halfway through his ministry. Billy. Remember Jesus. It would be like saying to Simon Dowdy. Send him a text. Later today.

Simon. Remember. Jesus Christ. Do you find that strange? It can't be that Timothy had forgotten the facts about Jesus.

[8 : 09] As if he would fail a doctrine exam. Who is Jesus? The Christ. He rose from the dead. The offspring of David. So what is it?

Now the point is. I think. That Paul is saying. Timothy. Remember. Remember. What you know. Remember.

What you know. Now anyone who's been a Christian for any length of time. Will immediately understand. The power of those words. From experience.

It's so easy. Isn't it? For a kind of spiritual haze. To descend. And for the cogs of life to keep turning. While slowly we forget.

What it's all for. Well if there's one foundational motivation. In the whole letter. From which all the others flow. It's 2 verse 8.

[9 : 06] Remember Jesus Christ. Risen from the dead. The offspring of David. Remember what you know. Two things about Jesus. That he's risen from the dead.

Number one. And that therefore. He's the offspring of David. So you get the fact. The resurrection. Don't worry by the way.

No matter how many times we come back to it. It will never change. As if one day we might return to. The resurrection. And find that actually the tomb isn't empty.

No. Remember. The resurrection. Jesus is alive. And then. Remember the thing that the fact proves.

That he is therefore the offspring of David. What does Paul mean? The offspring of David. Well this is shorthand. For the long promised eternal king.

[10 : 06] Of God's eternal kingdom. Just look at that quote. From Isaiah. And throughout the Old Testament. Who is the offspring of David? He's the eternal king.

Of God's eternal kingdom. Isaiah chapter 9. Well known words to some of us. To us a son is born. To us a son is given.

And the government shall be upon his shoulder. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor.

Mighty God. Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace.

There shall be no end. And on the throne of David. And over his kingdom. To establish it. To uphold it with justice. And with righteousness. From this time forth.

And forevermore. The eternal king. Who will rule over God's eternal kingdom. That's who the offspring of David is. That's what Paul's talking about.

[11:05] When he refers to the offspring of David. If you put these two things together. Risen from the dead. Offspring of David. Paul is saying to Timothy.

Remember. That Jesus is. The long promised king. Eternal king. Who will rule over God's eternal kingdom.

Of his kingdom. There will be no end. And of peace. His resurrection. Proves it. So why did Timothy need to remember what he knew?

Here he is at the crossroads. As we've been talking about. To decide. The way of suffering. Or the way of ease. Well if Jesus is. The Lord.

Over eternity. Whose kingdom will never end. Who really is coming back. Well then the finish line. Is in sight. And the finish line.

[12:07] Is forever. So brother or sister. Remember. What you know. Jesus is alive. He's the eternal king.

With his eternal kingdom. And so the finish line is real. It's not going to let us down. And it's forever. A couple of things to pause on. One. Remember what you know. Despite what things look like on the ground. That's obvious. From what we're looking at in 2 Timothy.

Isn't it? Things look weak for us in Dulwich. Yes. They did for Timothy and Paul. Is the church abandoning the gospel. Yes. Remember Jesus Christ.

He's the eternal ruler of God's eternal kingdom. Is it becoming harder to be a Christian publicly. Yes. Remember Jesus. Risen from the dead.

[13:04] The eternal king. Of God's eternal kingdom. The fact that changes everything. He is the Lord. Over eternity.

He's in charge. Nothing's gone wrong. And secondly. The second thing just to notice here. Is we never leave the basics behind.

As Christians. Do we? There's no shame in having to come back again and again. Jesus risen from the dead. Remember John Chapman.

Every morning. Having to remember. Oh yeah. Jesus. He's alive. He rose from the dead. Oh that means he's Lord. That means he's coming back. We never leave the basics behind.

Christian maturity. Growing as a Christian. Does not mean. Not needing to come back. Again and again. Jesus. Risen from the dead.

[14:05] The offspring of David. That might be an encouragement to some of us. Sometimes a sort of spirit. Spiritual mistiness can descend. And if we've been a Christian for a long time.

We'll know this. It can last for days. It can last for weeks. It can last for months and even years. Remember Jesus. Remember what you know.

Maybe that someone needs to hear this in a big way today. And it may be that someone for the first time. Secondly. The second rock solid motivation.

Verses 9 and 10. Share Paul's long-sighted love for the elect. Just look down at verse 9. For which I am suffering bound with chains as 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.

[15:04] Verses 9 and 10 flow out of verse 8. Because Jesus is the king of eternity. And therefore there is an elect.

His people that he's gathering in. And therefore there is an eternal salvation for them to obtain. So the second motivation that took Paul to that prison cell in Rome.

Ready to die for the gospel. Yes to die for Jesus his Lord. Who he knew was risen. The offspring of David. But the second motivation was love.

That others might come to share what we have in Christ. Just look at verse 10 again. I endure everything for their sake.

The sake of the elect. That they also may obtain what we have in Christ. But let me suggest that Paul's love is different in two ways from what we might assume.

[16:08] Just look down again at what he says. For the sake of the elect. Who exactly is he dying for? I think it's both a narrower group and a larger group than we might think.

It's narrower because he does not see himself as suffering for everyone. But specifically for the elect. Jesus as the risen king of the universe. Has a people.

He knows who they are. He's gathering them in. Before his return. Those are the people that Paul is enduring everything for. Paul doesn't know who they are.

But he knows that they are his brothers and sisters. And he's giving his life for them. It's narrower but also larger. Because he's not thinking simply about the people alive as he writes this letter. Do you notice that? Paul is long-sighted. Who are the elect that he's dying for? If you think about the situation. Much of the church has abandoned him.

[17:13] The churches that he's planted. He's not going to his death. Kind of surfing a wave of revival. But as he watches a great desertion.

His life's work is apparently falling apart before his eyes. Isn't that extraordinary? All in Asia have deserted him. In Rome no one's come to him.

But he's not deterred. Isn't that amazing? As he sits there in his cell. Because he knows that God knows those who are his. And he knows that his life is well spent.

Not only for those in his generation. But his brothers and sisters yet to be. In generations to come. Before Jesus returns.

It is this long-sightedness. That explains I think why Paul says in verse 9. With a glint in his eye. The word of God is not bound.

[18:17] As he dies. He knows. They're too late. They can get rid of me.

But the word is out. And the next generation will have it. And so as we give our lives.

To guarding this gospel. As we pray. As we give. As we preach. As we train men. For the next generation.

At whatever cost to ourselves. We may be even locked up. For it one day. As Paul was. As we pray.

As we pray. As we pray. Well what an example. Paul gives us. Prepare to endure everything. For the sake of our brothers and sisters. Not only in this generation.

[19:17] But in generations to come. Before Jesus returns. just as those who've gone before us have faithfully guarded the gospel for us now I don't think this has been on my radar much at all this long-sightedness of course it makes sense of training future leaders it's also liberating because it liberates us from judging the fruits of our lives in worldly ways how big are churches how many churches we've planted how many people we've personally led to faith it exponentially expands the potential impact of our lives whatever it looks like now or even when we die what could God do that we could have a share not simply in the salvation of a handful of people in our generation but perhaps of thousands and thousands in generations to come as we guard the gospel for them before the Lord Jesus returns and may I say what a wonderful God who designs things in such a way that we get to share some part in the salvation of generations to come how much joy there will be in the kingdom of heaven for those who have guarded the gospel who've taken their turn in this life and so secondly we might pray to grow more like Paul in his long-sighted love for the elect and thirdly as we consider the road ahead live for eternity and remember the conditions the words on the butt of the gun on the back of the hand on the tractor window verse 11 if we have died with him we will also live with him if we endure we will also reign with him if we deny him he will also deny us if we are faithless he remains faithful again these words flow out of the fundamental reality of verse 8

Jesus the eternal king of God's eternal kingdom well if that's true then there is an eternity to live for he is coming back and it is his eternity I remember hearing about an Australian who became a Christian I think it was in the 80s and was so filled with love for people in Sydney that he spray painted the entire city over a few evenings I think with one word eternity to try to get people to think and lift their eyes well something similar here is going on with Paul to Timothy and to us as you considered the road ahead lift your eyes to and live for eternity if we have died with him we will live with him live for that day if we endure we will reign with him in his everlasting kingdom where the peace will never end

I wonder are you living for eternity but notice also the conditions of life the point here is that there are two roads potentially that we could take into eternity it's the idea of Timothy at the crossroads isn't it and we must die with him if we are to live with him do you notice the condition if we have died with him then and only then will we also live with him if we endure and don't give up halfway through then and only then will we reign with him if we deny him that is if we walk away from him in the end his word his gospel if the prospect of suffering is too much he also will deny us on that day he will say

I never knew you if we are faithless he remains faithful not to us at this point but to himself and his promises for he cannot deny himself in other words if we are faithless to the lord jesus in this life he cannot make an exception for us in the end he must remain faithful to his word to his character to give us life in the end if we've denied him would be to deny himself his word his lordship his identity his glory and he can't do that so Paul says make no mistake the eternal king of the universe the risen offspring of David is coming back and is bringing in the eternal age it is his eternity and there are only two roads into eternity to suffer with Christ now and then reign with him forever or to be ashamed of him now and be denied by him forever these are sobering words in a good way following jesus is not a part-time hobby to fit around the rest of life it is not enough to like jesus or to enjoy hearing his words we must be prepared to die with him and to endure hardship for him three people who understood this i don't know if you saw this yesterday are david and natalie lloyd and jude montis do you hear about this anna my wife anna read out some of their most recent newsletters to me they were shot yesterday in haiti christian missionaries who'd gone there only in their twenties and in their recent newsletters they'd said things like gang warfare is heating up please pray for us it's now only half a mile away and there they were sharing the gospel with children and helping people and sharing the gospel in that part of haiti but as they continued to share the gospel they knew the dangers well three faithful soldiers of christ who chose to put themselves in harm's way for him what an inspiration to us as we think about our own context if in this country they start locking us up as criminals for believing and preaching this jesus as they did paul and as they may one day do here will you die with him will we like david and natalie and jude go towards danger for christ and for his people if they start clamping down further in your workplace on believing and sharing the lord jesus will you die with him and notice we're not alone paul doesn't say die like him but die with him he is with us and we with him and so as we consider the road ahead what will keep us going remember jesus remember what you know take inspiration from paul's

example a long sighted love for the elect live for eternity and remember the condition of life let's pray as i close father in heaven we long to be like the good soldier the athlete and the farmer for jesus we love the lord jesus we believe that he is the risen eternal king and that his kingdom will have no end we thank you for your spirit in us empowering us we thank you that the finish line is in sight and is forever we thank you for the joy and privilege of sharing in the salvation of the elect to come and we thank you for eternity where we will reign forever with him so we pray father we long that you would strengthen us with all the grace that is in christ jesus to go on running this race to share in suffering with eyes fixed on eternity and we ask it in jesus name amen well let's stand for our final song a song that leaves us with our eyes firmly on eternity on that finishing line as we sing these words lord haste the day decay is slain by glory the day you call your sons and daughters home please stand to sing you you you