

'Strengthened to Endure'

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 June 2026

Preacher: James Hoey

[0 : 00] What a joy and a privilege it is to come and open up God's word with you today. Let me pray as we begin our time together. Our great Father in heaven, we thank you that we can come to your word.

Please help us see Christ clearly. Please help us hear him. And please help our hearts respond rightly in worship to him. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

I'm the type of guy that I like to know how things work. Growing up I remember I gathered all the pens in my house. I took them to my room and I began taking them apart.

I wanted to know what makes pens click. How do they click? Why do they click? How do they come back up properly? So I took them all apart. Unfortunately my curiosity and my skill of putting pens back together meant that many of those pens now no longer clicked.

A couple of years ago we moved into our house in Nanawating and one of the first things we did was to put solar panels on the roof. I like logging into my app and seeing the sun power my house.

[1 : 09] Seeing how much power is being generated. It's currently generating 0.67 kilowatts. And I'm pulling 0.12 from the grid. That's my house right now. It's fun for me to see what's powering my house.

I'm interested. I'm like how does it work? I love it when the sun's shining. I can blast the heaters. I can boil the kettle. I can cook chips in the air fryer. All knowing it's free electricity.

Now I'm not trying to sell solar panels here today. But as we live as followers of Jesus, what powers us? What keeps us going? What fuels and sustains us as we live in a world full of war, a world full of sickness, and a world full of the effects of sin in and around us?

And more specifically to our sermon series, what fuels and sustains us as we live as followers of Jesus in the face of suffering and persecution? And as we heard last week, is to guard the good deposit of the gospel.

Guard the gospel is a thread that keeps going through to Timothy. You know, the previous chapter, it speaks of guarding it by not being ashamed of the gospel. And in the passage that we had read for us, and what we'll look at now, it is to be strengthened to endure and entrust that gospel message on.

[2 : 29] That's how we guard it. So look with me at verse 1. You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The simple command that Paul gives to Timothy, it's an interesting command though.

Did you notice, be strong? How do you be strong? I know, but not from firsthand experience, that if you go to the gym and you start lifting weights, you become strong.

I know how to become strong, but how do you be strong? See, Paul is saying to Timothy, be strong, to be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The strength that Timothy used to have is not something that he musters up for himself.

It's not something that he heads to the gym to build, but it is something that is given to him from the outside. It is a strength that comes in Christ Jesus. As with Paul, as with Timothy, and as with us, our dependency, our power, and our efforts are all because of the grace found in Christ Jesus.

The infinite will of grace. As we look to him, as we seek his grace, he gives us joy. He shows us God's beauty and his greatness. You see, as we draw near to Christ, as we lean on him, as we trust in him, it's his grace that sustains us and fuels us, right?

[3 : 53] See, God's grace is often thought of his saving grace, his unmerited kindness and his favor shown to us that we do not earn our salvation by good works, but it is a free gift of God to his undeserving people by Christ's work on the cross.

But you see, God's grace extends past salvation into our living, that it is God's grace in power, God's strength for daily living, God's gift to us to enable us to live a holy and pleasing life to him. So Paul's saying, be strong in that grace, the grace that not just saves but empowers us for our lives, to be strong is to rely and to trust in the grace that is found only in Jesus.

And you see, Timothy needs that strength, doesn't he? He needs that strength to guard the gospel and to carry out the work of the gospel. Look with me at verse 2. And the things that you've heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, in trust to reliable people, will also be qualified to teach others.

You see, Paul to Timothy, Timothy to reliable and qualified people and to teach others. See, Paul has four generations there in mind. What's really striking to me is that we're halfway through 2026. [5 : 11] About 2,000 odd years from when this letter was written from Paul to Timothy, we're at least halfway across the world from where this letter was written. We're generations upon generations upon generations away from this letter being written.

But you and I are here today, coming to God's word, letting it dwell in us richly, encouraging one another, sharing fellowship with one another.

You see, brothers and sisters, you and I coming to worship here today is a testament of God's grace. That the saints before us have guarded the gospel by entrusting it to reliable people will also be qualified to teach others.

It's been really encouraging for me to meet some of you and some of the 745 congregation this week and just hearing the stories of how long have you been coming to this church?

Some have been coming to this church before I was even born. I won't tell you how old that is, but some of you are old. Walking around the church the first few days I was here and seeing, you know, a sign commemorating 100 years or 150 years of faithful gospel proclamation.

[6 : 27] The notice board with missionaries serving across the world like praying for Lauren just then. Hearing stories of faithful saints of this congregation praying for the plant at St. John's or praying for the start of the Chinese congregation many years ago.

On my first day, Tim Walker showed me around the church and he explained to me that the old church is that sign and this is the main church and that this back wall used to be over there and it slowly moved up forward. You see, this church has been growing numerically and physically and it's just a testament of God's grace.

See, this church has a history of entrusting the gospel message to reliable people who will also teach others. See, Paul's strategy to Timothy is the same strategy that we have today.

It's exactly the same. The gospel message doesn't stop with you and it doesn't stop with me. You know that children's game, the music turns on and you pass the parcel?

That's the gospel message. If you hold on to the parcel, the game gets kind of ruined, right? You keep the parcel going. You keep passing the gospel message on. It's a message that's to be passed through from parents to children, from generation to generation, from families to families, from neighbourhoods to neighbourhoods.

[7 : 46] It's a message that's to be passed on to the ends of the earth. We're to grab hold of this message and to pass it on. We're to entrust the gospel to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

You know, people who are reliable and qualified, the issue sometimes is, well, how do you find these people? But before we look to others, what about us? Are we being reliable people?

Are we being qualified to pass this message of the gospel on? In my previous role, I was invited to a gathering of theological Bible college principals of all these different colleges all across Australia. I remember meeting in a room with about 15 of them and they were gathering to discuss the decline in student numbers over the past decades.

You know, there were lots of graphs, lots of stats and you didn't need to be a data analyst to know what was going on. There are less and less people training to be pastors and ministers and missionaries.

[8 : 47] The trend was very clear. I'm in a Facebook group called Churches for Sale Australia. Every week, new churches get put up for sale, turned into homes, Airbnbs, restaurants, function centres.

You see, it isn't just an ageing church. But some have forgotten this strategy. Some have forgotten to pass the gospel message on. Others, sadly, have forgotten the message altogether.

But may we, brothers and sisters, continue to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, entrusting the beautiful gospel message on and on and on and on again.

See, just as Paul encourages Timothy and just as we ourselves have benefited and we have seen in our church for generations, be strong in the grace and entrust this gospel message on.

See, Paul moves from this strategy, this ministry mindset, this discipleship mindset, but he talks about an attitude next, you see. You know, he doesn't mince his words.

[9 : 52] He's open and honest to Timothy that it will be hard work. He says to him, be strong in suffering. It's a suffering mindset that Paul is telling Timothy. Look with me at verse 3.

Join with me in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Join with me. A mindset of suffering together for the gospel. So as the gospel is being proclaimed, as the gospel is being lived out, it is always faced with persecution.

And suffering is natural for the follower of Jesus. Much more so when you do the work of passing it on to others. So Paul in his chains invites Timothy to do the same.

Join with me in sacrifice. Join with me in suffering like a soldier. Join with me in the hardships of being a soldier. Away from family, away from the creature comforts, in active battle, dropped in the middle of a war zone.

It's important to note that it's a soldier of Christ Jesus. See, it's not just fighting for the love of country or for freedom or for honour, but we fight because we fight for the one who loved us first.

[11 : 03] We fight for the one who laid his life down for us. We are a soldier. Verse 4. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.

See, the day we follow Jesus, we submit to his reign and his rule in our life. Everyone's lives will look different because God's gifted us all differently. But when our personal desires, our personal ambition, when the good things of this world distract us from what Christ is doing in the world, then that's when we get entangled in civilian affairs.

See, the soldier's focus is focused on serving Jesus, focused on the one serving him, focused on serving Christ. Decisions and actions, whether big or small, is to think about how can I serve, how can I please, how can I honour Jesus?

The big driving factor is Jesus. You know, there will still be the mundane things, you know, you've still got to pay the bills, you've still got to get around, you've still got to go shopping, but all those things in our lives sits within a sphere of serving and pleasing Christ.

It is a single-minded devotion of this soldier. May that be true of us who follow Jesus, that our hearts and our posture is one to serve and to please him. Next, Paul gives an example of an athlete.

[12 : 25] Verse 5, Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. See, the athlete doesn't receive the crown unless he competes according to the rules.

The rules are that the Christian life is hard and includes suffering. In 1 Timothy 4, Paul says to Timothy, watch your life and doctrine closely. It's faithfully living out the gospel and faithfully teaching the gospel.

You know, the victor's crown is given to those who follow who live according to the rules. At the end of the race, there is a crown. There is a prize and running the race set before us faithfully.

See, it's not just to finish the race but it's do it faithfully. Running with diligence and faithfulness according to the rules for the prize. And the third example Paul has for us is a hard-working farmer. The hard-working farmer should be the first to receive the share of the crops. I have such respect for farmers. I once did a locum in Jindabyne near Mount Kosciuszko and one of my patients was a farmer.

[13 : 30] So I thought I knew hard work and then I met him. He was a cattle farmer probably in his 60s. I thought, you know, he came to see me because his wife told him and nagged him to come and see me.

And the reason was because as he stepped off his tractor he tore his calf muscle. Now I said to him as I usually say to my patients, you know, just take it slow and steady, rest. You know, with a calf injury you're looking at about four to six weeks of recovery.

And when I said four to six weeks of rest, he just looked at me like it's just a really perplexed look. It's as if I told him, hey, the next person I'm seeing is a purple alien from Mars. Right? He was a hardworking farmer.

Resting for four to six weeks is just not something that he could do. He had to get back on the farm. He had to get back on the tractor, had to climb himself in. So I strapped him up with a lot of sports tape just to get him to hobble about.

He was a hardworking farmer. Verse seven says, reflect on this and what I'm saying to you for the Lord will give you insight into all of this. So what are the things that the Lord's giving us insight into? [14:32] What ties this soldier, this athlete and this hardworking farmer, the focused soldier, the dedicated athlete, the faithful athlete and the hardworking farmer together? See, it's the pleasure, the joy and the suffering and there's a pleasure of serving the commanding officer, the joy of receiving the victor's crown, the reward of tasting the first fruits of the crop.

You see, the end is worth it. It's suffering is not in vain. The hard work and the work is rewarded. See, friends, I think that this aspect of Paul's letter to Timothy is actually really hard for us to do. We live in Melbourne, one of the most liveable cities in the whole world. We have some of the best, if not the best foods that you can find anywhere.

We have prosperity, we have peace, we have pleasures that people before us have never, ever tasted or imagined. But the Bible is calling us to be strong in suffering for the gospel.

You see, the world will offer us much easier ways to live our life. much easier than what scripture instructs us. It will distract us, it will turn our eyes away from Jesus and onto us, it will push us to self-reliance and not rely on God's grace.

[15:58] But you see, as good as life is here in Melbourne, as good as life is that we can have here, as many pleasures as it can offer us, it pales in comparison to the glory that's to come.

I wonder, do you look forward to hearing those words of Jesus on that final day? Well done, good and faithful servant.

Do you look forward to receiving the victor's crown and reigning with Christ Jesus? or maybe pacing that first share of the crops at the Lord's table when he returns.

Friends, the world will throw at us distractions, the world will throw at us more comfortable, more easy, more palatable ways to live our lives, but that is nothing compared to the joy that's to come, the reward to come as followers of Jesus who suffer for the gospel.

So friends, be strong in the faith, join in suffering for the gospel because that day will be great when Christ returns. There'll be great reward, great blessings. See, Paul then gives a reason for the suffering, to be strong in enduring by remembering.

[17:11] Look with me in verses 8 to 9. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal.

But God's word is not chained. It's Christ's work. Remember Jesus. Remember his gospel. The gospel is always and only about Jesus. You know, when Paul says this is my gospel at the end of verse 8, he's not saying that, you know, my gospel is different from other Christians, but it's his gospel in that time and age.

You see, the word gospel in the first century was a military word. It's a word to go out to the kingdom about the victory of the king. You know, the gospel, the good news was to go through the kingdom that, hey, the war is won, the war is over and the victory is ours.

That's the good news. And that would mean a time of peace, a time of prosperity, a time of rejoicing. So you see, Paul's king, the victory that Paul speaks of is the resurrected Jesus, is the risen Jesus who defeated death, who is the descendant from David.

See, Jesus didn't just pop up all of a sudden in human history, but it's planned from the beginning of time that Jesus would be the saviour of the world. His death was the death that you and I deserve for our sin and our rebellion against God.

[18:30] See, his death defeated death for us. His life now gives us new life. See, Jesus is the king, the promised saviour king. Friends, if you are new or visiting or exploring Christianity, welcome.

And this is the gospel. That Christ died for us, that he saves us and he gives us new life. You see, that gospel invitation is open for everyone. Would you accept Christ's work on your behalf? Would you accept Christ Jesus to be your Lord and your saviour? Remember Jesus Christ, who he is and what he has done? See, this is the message that Paul was chained up for.

This is the message that many of our brothers and sisters around the world are chained up for. Arrested because they preach the gospel of Christ and his victory over sin and death.

Look at the end of verse 9. Even though our brothers and sisters, even though Paul is chained, the word of God is not chained. It's Christ's word.

[19 : 41] Christ's word will never be chained. Through Christian history, every time persecution comes, the gospel doesn't diminish, the gospel grows. It's the word of God that will accomplish the spiritual work of the church.

The word of God is what teaches us about the truth of who God is and how he's made and ordered the world. It's the word of God that convinces us that we are sinners in need of a great saviour. It's the word of God that offers us Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and it is the word of God that teaches us how to live our lives, how to worship him, how to give ourselves to him.

The word of God is the central thing we do in evangelism and discipleship. It cannot be chained. I started last week and Andrew sat me down over lunch and he was talking to me about the church and how we do things at church and he brought the mission statement of the church and he showed it to me.

I popped it up on the screen for us. You see that last line there, our means, I'll read it out for us and it might be a bit small to read, by prayerfully proclaiming and promoting God's word in love.

[20 : 54] I love that so much. I love it for a few different reasons. We don't need to be clever and think of new ways to engage people, of exciting ways to try to grow the church.

We just stick with the word of God. It's so simple and so free. It's not because we're stubborn but it's because it is in prayerful proclamation and promotion of God's word that people will be saved and saved to take that same gospel message out around the world.

Saved to gather and to worship together as his people. See the word that grows people in Christ Jesus. That work we do, suffering like a soldier, faithful like an athlete, hard working like a farmer. In prayerful proclamation and promotion of it, as we prayed, it will not return empty. God's word will not return empty. It is what motivates Paul to endure and it ought to motivate us to endure.

Look at verse 10. Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect that they too may obtain salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. You see, the glory that Jesus promised is to share with his people.

[22 : 08] And when you know the power that comes with the gospel, when you know the strength and endurance that comes with the gospel, our joy increases, our comfort increases, our peace increases. But so does our boldness to share that gospel.

How's our endurance at sharing the gospel? Endure in proclaiming and promoting God's word to our families who have yet to know Jesus.

Endure the aging bodies to continue to pray and to share the gospel with those who God puts in our lives. Endure in sharing the gospel to our family and our friends, even if we've had that awkward conversation with them once.

Endure and keep doing it. Be strong and endure inviting them to something like Hope Explored that runs on Tuesday night. How great is it that we had seven people come along?

Be strong and endure in inviting them to read the Bible with you. Show them the word of God. Invite them to come to church to gather with God's people. Endure in proclaiming and promoting the word of God to those lost in our city, for those lost in our state, those lost in our nation and our world.

[23 : 26] See, those lost who will go to sleep tonight and wake up tomorrow never hearing God's love for them. That God showed his love to us in Christ Jesus.

That he sent Jesus to die for us, to die for our sins and then rise and give new life again. That's the message that the lost will never hear. That's why we ought to endure everything for that sake.

Let us endure everything. Let us suffer joyfully to be prayerfully proclaiming and promoting God's word for Christ's glory and the salvation of his people. See, at the end of our passage on your Bibles, you see it's kind of indented differently.

Look at verse 11 to 13. It's a trustworthy saying, likely a hymn in the early church or a saying in the early church. Verses 11 to 13. Here is a trustworthy saying, if we died with him, we will also live with him.

If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us. If we are faithless, he remains faithful for he cannot disown himself.

[24 : 35] You see the first two statements that we see, you know, if we are, they're nice, warm, cuddly feeling statements. If we died with him, we'll live with him. If we endure, we'll also reign with him.

They're nice, warm, cuddly ones, right? But then the third statement really throws a curveball at us. If we disown him, he will also disown us. See, just in the previous chapter, people have abandoned Paul and his gospel.

And a few lines under this passage, you'll see more people do that. And I'm sure you, just like I have, have family and friends who've disowned God.

Had family or friends turn away from God and stop trusting in him and stop following him. This is a warning for Timothy. It's a warning for us to endure to the very end, to rely on the grace that is in Christ Jesus to the very end.

And look at the promise that we see in verse 13. If we are faithless, he remains faithful for he cannot disown himself. Brothers and sisters, we want to be hardworking farmers, faithful athletes, and single-minded focused soldiers.

[25 : 55] There'll be often times that we fail in that. There'll be often times that we get distracted by the things of this world. The times that we don't work hard because it's just too hard. You see, in those times of our unfaithfulness, God remains faithful.

God's grace abounds even more because he is a faithful God. You see, God is a God that is the source of all of our graces. He is the one who gives us power.

He is the one who enables us. He is the one who strengthens us for this fight. He is the one who gives us strength to endure the pain and the suffering as we live in this world as followers of him, as we entrust his gospel message on.

Brothers and sisters, be strengthened to endure and entrust. Strengthened by all of God's graces he has given to us. Be strong, brothers and sisters, in Christ Jesus and know that God is stronger still.

Let us pray. Amen. Father, we thank you for your word and we thank you for our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. We thank you that you continue to empower us and embolden us by your spirit.

[27 : 12] Please give us the strength to endure. Please give us the strength to entrust. Please help us in our lives. Please help us proclaim the glories of Jesus.

Amen.