

2 Timothy 2:8-10

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[0 : 00] Let us turn now to the second epistle of Paul to Timothy, chapter 2 and verse 8.

2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 8. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.

For in I suffer troubles and evildoers, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

We remember that Paul in this letter to Timothy is encouraging him to steadfastness and exhorting him to be strong and courageous and faithful in the name and for the sake of the gospel.

He is not to be ashamed either of the gospel or of suffering for it. And we noticed last Sabbath evening how he directed Timothy in the opening verses of this chapter to the great source of his strength, the grace that is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[2 : 08] And how he went on by using three metaphors to encourage Timothy to commitment and to dedication.

He was to be like a good soldier, like a good athlete and like a hard-working farmer. He was to be like a good soldier, like a good soldier, like a good soldier.

He directs Timothy for his further encouragement and strengthening to what has been referred to as the great central fact of the gospel.

Remember, he says, that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.

He directs him to the content, really, of the gospel. And then he directs him, secondly, to consider the permanence of this gospel.

[3 : 45] It is for this gospel, he says in verse 9, that I suffered troubles and evil to or even unto bonds. But the word of God is not bound. I am here, he says, like a common criminal, bound, chained to a Roman soldier because of the gospel.

But the gospel is not bound. The gospel continues. The gospel is permanent.

And then thirdly, in verse 10, he directs him to this consideration. The purpose for which God has appointed the gospel.

I endure all things for the elect sakes that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. There will be no believer.

And there will be no church in the world without the gospel. That being so, he says, I am prepared to endure whatever I have to face because of the purpose that God has for the gospel.

[5 : 00] So we look tonight at these three things. Its content, its permanence, and its purpose. Its content.

Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel. Now if you notice how he puts these words, you will notice that it is really one of these verses in the Bible which introduces us in effect to the whole content of the gospel.

Jesus Christ of the seed of David raised from the dead. You all know, for example, that Jesus is the name that was given to the Son of God when he came into this world.

It always refers to the Son of God in our nature. So here is a reference immediately to what we speak of as the incarnation. The act by which God became man.

Jesus. And then this Jesus was a historical person. He was of the seed of David.

[6 : 27] You can trace his lineage away back to David and beyond. He was of the family of David.

You can trace the human nature of our Lord away, way back. To David, the king of Israel.

And in the fullness of time, the Jews, of course, were looking for a Messiah who was going to come of the seed of David, from the house of David. They considered him to be a king.

They looked forward to welcoming a king who was going to espouse their cause and lead them. In rebellion against the Roman authorities and ultimately overthrow them, establish his own dynasty and throne in the world.

And they would exercise world dominion through this one who was to come from the house of David. And this person who was in this world, Jesus, in our nature, was a historical person.

[7 : 33] And this person who was in this world died. That's the inference, of course, writ large, behind the word.

He was raised from the dead. This historical Jesus died in this world. And the Bible tells us why he died.

We read there in Romans chapter 1 that Paul referred to the gospel there. At the heart of the gospel is this statement, this fact, that Jesus died for our sins according to the scripture.

You cannot speak of the death of Christ apart from the sin of man. It is a meaningless death apart from sin.

And the Bible goes on to tell us that this Jesus, who was this historical person who was in the world, in our nature, took our sins upon himself, carried our sins to the tree, to the cross, and died for our sins.

[8 : 49] That person, he said, is raised from the dead. And this is what he directs Timothy's attention to, the resurrection of this historical person from the dead.

And perhaps what he's really focusing Timothy's mind on is this, the lordship of our reigning Savior, who is none other than Jesus Christ, who was sent by God into this world.

Now, when you come across a verse like this, you've got to stop, I think, for a minute and ask yourself this question. Why is Paul emphasizing this great central fact of the gospel, the resurrection of Jesus and the lordship of Jesus?

Why should he say that to Timothy? Well, consider the circumstances. There's Paul, languishing in prison, chained to Roman soldiers, awaiting death.

Out there, in the wide world, is the Christian church, persecuted, almost obliterated. From it, day by day, accounts come of people who are defecting, abandoning the faith.

[10 : 31] People who are proving unfaithful and faithless. Out there, on the other side, is this young man, Timothy, taking over the mantle of Paul.

Going to take up the reins of directing the Christian church at one of the most dangerous junctures in its history. A man, to all intents and purposes, physically ill-equipped for the task.

Things look bleak. Rome is at the height of its power. Nero, with his persecuting zeal, almost on the point of destroying the Christian church.

Remember, in the midst and in the face of all these difficulties and of all these providences, how passive and meaningless may be to you.

Remember, it isn't Nero who's reigning. It is the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Christ, in our nature, is on the throne of the universe.

[11 : 36] And remember, something else is this. And this is something that the Bible and the New Testament makes abundantly clear to us all. The path that Jesus took to that crown was the path of suffering, was the path of humiliation.

Jesus, of the seed of David. That is the person who was in this world suffering. Is this not the son of Joseph? Do we not know his brothers?

He was, he was, say, rejected. He was ridiculed. He suffered in this world. He was put to death. It was a downward path for him while he was in the world.

He suffered in the valley of humiliation. But where is he today? Enthroned at the right hand of God. Written as the living Savior.

Savior. Perhaps he's saying to Timothy, you bear in mind that the path he took is the path I have to take and the path you have to take.

[12 : 37] If you expect a crown of glory, you too have to take the path of humiliation and pain and suffering and also of death.

But I think that he's saying to him more than that. Jesus is here, he says, enthroned at the right hand of God, governing and directing all things to the predetermined end.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, is outwith the control of our Lord. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing happens in this world by chance.

All things are predetermined by him. However you and I may see them, as I've indicated earlier, however discouraged and disappointed you may be, no matter how often your hopes may be blasted by providences which are beyond your control, they are not beyond his.

They are under his control. And we've got to remember that at the heart of the gospel that we preach is that great teaching. We're going to come across in a minute as well.

[13 : 59] That God directs all things and controls all things. Now this teaching had a great place in the preaching and the teaching of the apostles in the early days of the Christian church.

Very, very frequently, Paul refers to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. There are two things in particular that are inseparably linked with the physical, literal, bodily resurrection of our Lord from the dead.

And the two things are these, as we read in 1 Corinthians 15. The two things are these. And without them, there'd be no Christian church tonight. Faith, or as we say, saving faith, and the gospel that we preach so that people come to faith.

What does Paul say of the resurrection in this connection, 1 Corinthians 15? Well, he says, some of you, he says, don't believe that there was such a thing as a bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Why is it, he says, that there are some of you who don't believe this? Do you not realize, he says, that there is no such thing as a bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead? There is no gospel.

[15 : 21] Outpreaching is vain. It is empty, meaningless. It does nothing at its heart. You take away a living, reigning, resurrected Jesus from the gospel, and it collapses.

There's nothing. For the more, he said, if there is no such thing as a resurrected Christ reigning in glory, there is no such thing as faith. Because what is faith?

Faith is that which lays hold, not upon a Christ who was in this world alive, but a Christ who is alive, and who was dead.

As he said in front of John in Patmos, I am he that liveth, and was dead. And behold, I am alive forevermore. Now, you young Christians, particularly here tonight, you're going out into a wide, unbelieving world, and you're in already.

And you're going to come across people, very, very clever people. And people who are in very important positions in life, and even in the church, who are going to tell you, and are going to ridicule, any belief in the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

[16 : 39] They believe in the resurrection.

Animated by the spirit, filled with the spirit, what Jesus left behind them. And they went out and they preached this resurrection. But that is not the resurrection the New Testament speaks about.

It is a bodily resurrection of the Lord from the grave. He rose literally, physically. And one of the qualifications of an apostle was this, that he had...

...witness of the resurrected Lord. And that's what Paul is telling us in 1 Corinthians 15. All these men, he said, saw him. I wasn't with them.

But I saw him as one who was born at a due time. And of course, he's referring to his Damascus Lord experience. When the Lord revealed himself to Saul, when he was Saul of Tarshish, revealed himself to him.

[18 : 04] He saw the resurrected Lord. He saw him literally, physically. And he went on and he preached the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

At the very heart of their preaching. At the very heart of the belief of the early Christian church. Jesus himself spoke of it.

As that which is going to attest his Messiahship. What sign will you give us? That you are the Messiah. He says, no, I'll give you a sign. The sign of the prophet Jonah. Because just as he arose from the depths of the ocean.

So, I will arise from the dead. Paul again, writing to the church at Rome. Again, the chapter we read there. Paul again, declared to be the Son of God.

By the resurrection from the dead. His resurrection attested his Messiahship. Confirmed his own claims.

[19 : 07] And remember Peter. One of the very first men at the sepulcher. He went in and he saw the empty grave. And years afterwards, he wrote a letter.

In which he said this. By the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. We were animated. Our faith, our hope was found into newness of life.

By the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Do you think he was speaking about a spiritual resurrection? Do you think he was speaking about a living influence?

Oh, my friend, far more than that. He was speaking about what he says. And why don't we accept what the Bible says? Notwithstanding the scornful reproach of these clever devils and these clever dicks.

Who think that you're an obscurantist if you believe in this kind of thing. Well, we're in good company. We're in the company of Peter.

[20 : 11] We're in the company of Paul. We're in the company of the early believers from the Christian church. We're in the company of Jesus himself. An intellectual, though some of these people may be today.

They couldn't hold a candle to the apostle Paul. Remember, he says, Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.

This was a wondrous, miraculous, supernatural fact. And he says that that thought inspired you and strengthened you.

And remember, he says, as you go out to preach, you have no gospel without it. As you claim to believe, there is no faith apart. And don't ever forget it.

Remember, isn't it strange that Paul should have to say this to the likes of Timothy? Remember. Well, my friend, is it so strange after all?

[21 : 19] Are you tempted to forget this? Do you live at times as though this didn't happen at all? Are there not days in your own experience when you're really bowed down and a bit depressed and distressed and discouraged and full of darkness and despair?

Things aren't working out the way you expected them to be. You look at the Christian church and it seems to be disarray. The cause of Christ isn't as strong as it used to be.

There seems to be a spiritual malaise. Spiritual death hangs over all things. The church seems to be falling apart. And evil and unrighteousness seem to prosper in the world.

There are so many heroes in control of the affairs of this world and in this country of ours. The voice of Christianity is being muscled day by day by day.

Some of the great bulwarks of the Christian faith are being destroyed with every passing week in Parliament and throughout society. Do you forget that the Lord is reigning?

[22 : 31] Do you not be reminded of this? Remember who is in control. Remember that he has a purpose that is unfolding. You may not recognize it or see it at the time.

He knows it. And don't you ever forget it. Do you need this message tonight? Remember who reigns in glory above the historical resurrected Jesus.

He is on the throne of the universe. That is at the heart of the gospel. And then remember secondly he says God's the permanence of this gospel.

It is for this gospel he says that I suffer trouble as an evildoer. And I am in these chains. I am bound here. I don't know who was writing the letter to him.

He is probably dictating it. And he was saying look I am bound here to these Roman soldiers facing death. This is what I am here for. For the gospel. But he says the gospel is not bound.

[23 : 44] Now the word that Paul uses here for his imprisonment. I suffer trouble as an evildoer. This is the word that you and I would use today.

The word for the word criminal. I am here he says treated as a common criminal. It's a word that the New Testament uses for the thieves who were crucified together with Jesus.

Two manufacturers. Criminals. And he was being treated as a criminal. His crime was that he preached the gospel.

It is for this gospel that I suffer trouble. He believed in the resurrection. He preached the resurrection. He preached the whole counsel of God. The Jews didn't like it.

They got him arrested. And here he is now. Over two years after that arrest. Facing death. Well.

[24 : 45] What he says is this. They may imprison me. But they will not imprison the gospel. In prison.

Paul was able to influence other people. He was able to influence soldiers. He was able to influence the Christians in Rome. He tells us in the letter to the Philippians.

Because of my bonds. He says some people are encouraged actually to go out and witness. Isn't that strange? You see. You see. When the Christians saw Timothy in prison in Rome.

They didn't run away and hide. They went out. And they preached the gospel. So what he's saying is this. It doesn't matter what happens to me.

The gospel will triumph. And isn't it significant. That it is Paul who's saying. The gospel is not bound.

[25 : 47] If any man. In the history of this world. Had tried to bind and destroy the gospel. It was Paul himself. In his unconverted days.

He lived to destroy the faith. He was present at the martyrdom of Stephen. A leading. Took a leading role. In his death.

He tells himself in his autobiographical reference. In Philippians chapter 3. That he lived a life of persecuting zeal. He went from house to house.

From area to area. From region to region. Hounding. Hunting. Christians. Just like the Jews. After the second world war.

Set up this organization. Which was hounding. Nazis. All over the world. And being successful. In bringing.

[26 : 48] Some of these evil men. Back to Israel. For trial. And many of them. Executed. For their war crimes. That's what Paul was like.

He went around. With his persecuting zeal. Looking for them. Ferreting them out. Men and women. And children. He tells himself. In Acts. To his eternal. To his own shame.

He says this. Acts 22. And 24. 26. You know he said. I brought them to prison. I was a party. Even to the death.

Of some people. I brought them. Bound. Before. The magistrates. The day he was converted. In the road to Damascus.

What is he there for? That he might bring. These Christians. Bound. Bound. To the high priest. That's what he lived for. Many a day.

[27 : 44] He was responsible. For imprisoning. And binding people like that. He hounded them. And he hunted them. And now he says.

Here I am myself. Bound. For the same gospel. Oh my friend. Providence. Is a wonderful study. And I'm pretty certain of this. That this man. Facing death. For over 30 years. An honoured servant. Of Jesus Christ.

Must have studied. With profound interest. The providence. That found him. Bound. In a Roman jail. How he must have thought. As he. Considered his own experience. How his mind. Must have gone back. And wondered at the experience. Of men and women. Fathers and mothers. And children.

[28 : 43] Whom he had been responsible. For imprisoning himself. You can imagine. How he must have felt. He could never forgive himself. Never forget. What he did.

And now he says. I'm here. For the same reason. Myself. And how thankful he was to God. That it was for the gospel. That he was treated as a criminal.

No wonder Peter would write. To the persecuted Christians. Of his own days. And say this to him. Don't be ashamed. Any one of you. If you suffer. As a Christian. It is good.

To suffer. As a Christian. But what particularly. Encouraged Paul was this. Here I am he said. Imprisoned. Imprisoned. And bound. But they can't.

Bind the gospel. I tried it myself. And thank God. I failed. Now others are trying it. In my experience. And I know.

[29 : 41] That they will also fail. Because he was able to witness. To the soldiers. Who were. Who were with him. As I indicated. Christians in Rome.

To courage. And went out to witness as well. And there were some people. Who didn't see. Things the same as Paul saw them. And yet they went out.

And they preached at the same time. And he said this. It doesn't matter. He says. What their motives are. They're preaching the gospel. And for that. I rejoice. And so it is.

It doesn't matter. What your providential circumstances may be. That won't bind the gospel. It doesn't matter.

What your own beliefs may be. And your own practices. The gospel is not bound. To your beliefs. To your practice. Or to mine. To your emphasis. There are times.

[30 : 37] When we think. That it is. I think that we are at times. When we pray for revival. For example. And we think. We dictate to the Lord.

How revival is to come. Must come in this way. Must come in this church. Must begin in this building. Must begin with a free church. No my friend. Not bound to us.

Or to any other denomination. God has a purpose. For his own word. And he will fulfill. That purpose. The gospel is not bound.

Notwithstanding the attacks. That are made upon it. By the media. By people in the arts. And by great philosophers. Godless men. It is not bound.

By the advance of science. And technology. Or by the infidelity of men. Or the unfaithfulness of men. It is not bound. By any of these things. I know that people try to bind it.

[31 : 34] But they can't. They can't bind it. I mentioned earlier. I believe myself. That there is a deliberate attack. In some quarter of the media. To muscle.

And to silence. The voice of reformed Christianity. In our land. And it's been tremendously successful. Over the years. But that hasn't bound the gospel.

The gospel is still preached. People are still saved. And people will be saved. There was a hymn that Martin Luther composed on this at the time of the Reformation.

While his own enemies were trying to stifle the voice of the gospel. And it's been translated like this. The word of God will never yield. To any creature living.

He stands with us upon the field as grace and glory giving. Take they child and wife. Goods name.

[32 : 33] Fame and life. Though all this be done. Yet have they nothing won. The kingdom still. Remaineth.

And this is. The permanence of the gospel. Here we are. Near the end of the 20th century. And for hundreds of years.

People have tried to discredit it. Try to disprove it. Try to destroy it. It is still. The gospel. The gospel of the living God.

The word he said. Is not bound. Finally. He speaks. Of God's purpose for it. Therefore he says. I endure all things for the elect's sakes.

That they may also obtain the salvation. Which is in Christ Jesus. With eternal glory. In the face of all these difficulties.

[33 : 33] And all these efforts to dissuade and to discourage. I endure. I endure. I persevere. I accept.

And I battle on. I battle on. I rough it. Would be the common usage of this word. I am prepared to go through anything. Because he said.

I know one thing. God's purpose. God's purpose. For the gospel. For the gospel. Is through it. To bring. The elect. To glory.

Salvation. Salvation. Is available in Christ Jesus. To whom? To anyone.

Who believes. Right into the church at Rome. Paul was speaking about the gospel. And quoting Isaiah. He says this. The gospel.

[34 : 33] He said. Must be preached. Man must preach it. And that's what he quotes Isaiah. How beautiful are the feet of him.

Who publishes good titles. Who comes with the gospel of peace. Man must preach it. But man can't preach it. Unless they are sent. By God to preach.

They are commissioned. To proclaim the word. And they've got to go out of the world. With the word. So that people will believe. But he says.

How will they believe? Unless they hear. It is through hearing. That faith comes. And that's what Paul is saying here. God has an elect.

Now of course my friend. Don't run away from that teaching. It's in the Bible. It's in the Bible. Don't be ashamed of it. God has revealed it. From all eternity. He has chosen.

[35 : 30] A people for himself. And just as it was true of Paul in Corinth. And Paul in Ephesus. When the Lord said to him. I have much people in this city. So I believe it is true of this town.

And of many other towns. God has many people. In this town. Do you know who they are? The only way in which you will know who they are is this.

When they come to faith in Jesus. Make your calling. And your election sure. If you believe in Jesus. Your savior. You're assured.

That you're an elect of God. But then what about those who are not believers? Are there some of the elect of God amongst them? Of course.

That's the reason for the gospel. That's the purpose for the gospel. Why do people go to pulpits throughout the island tonight? To preach the gospel in the hope.

[36 : 32] That those who are unsaid may come to faith in Christ. Why do people go out abroad and across the world. With the gospel for the same reason? To bring them to salvation.

Through faith in Christ. This is the first step in salvation. Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. And let me say this to you tonight. You seem to make a pillow of election.

And you say to yourselves. Well if I'm elect I'll be saved anyway. These people believe in election. So why not just go on? I don't care. Your responsibility.

Is to believe in the gospel that Jesus sent to you. That God has sent to you. That's how you come to faith. Through belief in the gospel. Well he says I'm prepared to go through anything.

Because I know that this is the purpose that God. This is the purpose that God has for this gospel. If I go to prison for it so be it. It may be that God has some of his own people here.

[37 : 35] Amongst the soldiers. Amongst the servants. Amongst the prisoners. I'll preach to them. Knowing that if they believe they'll be saved. And I will preach the gospel.

He says as well knowing this. It is the gospel that is going to strengthen faith. It is a great teaching of the word of God. That is going to nourish and edify the Christian. In the exercise of his faith.

This is what feeds the soul of the believer. The great central facts of the gospel. The incarnation of Christ. The humiliation of Christ.

The sufferings of Christ. The death of Christ. The resurrection of Christ. The ascension of Christ. Christ's session at the right hand. The second coming of Christ.

All these glorious doctrines of grace. Embraced within the gospel. Feed the faith of believers. Why do they keep coming to church?

[38 : 31] Why do they study the Bible? Why do they read books? Why do they discuss the Christian fellowship? Because their faith is nourished. By the gospel.

It is the gospel that brings them. To Christ. And brings Christ to them. That they may believe in him. Receive him. Feed on him. Grow in the faith.

And then go on. And go in. To enjoy that salvation. In all its glorious fullness.

At the right hand of God the Father. Where Christ reigns. They come into the gospel. Into the church. They are brought up by the gospel.

They are fed and nourished with the gospel. They are carried along. As Jesus said in his high priestly prayer. Sanctify them through the truth. Thy word is truth.

[39 : 30] And the day will dawn. When through faith in the gospel. Day by day by day. They will enter in.

And see him. In whom. They believe. We know that he reigns. We don't see him. But we believe in him.

And we feed on him. And we look for him. And one day. You will see him. All that the gospel promises you.

Concerning. The Christ who reigns. Will be fulfilled. In your experience. You think of the purpose. That God has for the gospel. You think of it like that. Not a soul living in the world tonight. Doesn't matter where they are. Can come to faith.

[40 : 32] Except. Through the gospel. And if you and I thought of that. More often than we do. It will give a greater impetus. To a missionary vision.

And a missionary zeal. No one can come to faith. But through the gospel. Who are they going to believe in? Unless they hear.

Of the Christ of the gospel. And you who have come to faith. My friend. Your faith. Will not be nourished. Unless it is fed. By the truth.

Of the gospel. And the gospel. That nourishes. And feeds you. Is a gospel. That holds out.

Before you. The promise. Of eternal glory. You are carried along. By it. And you look forward. To the fulfillment.

[41 : 33] Of all. That it brings before you. Think of that. No wonder. No wonder. Paul would say. I endure all things.

For the elect's sake. That they may obtain. This glory. This glory. Which is. In. Christ. Jesus.

And whatever you may think. Of the gospel tonight. It will go on.

When you're not here. It can never be bound. It will fulfill. The purpose. That God. Has for it.

Remember that. Great. Great. Passage. In Isaiah. Chapter 40. In which. The word is. The grass withereth.

[42 : 31] He's looking across. At the whole. Of humanity. The grass withereth. The flower. Fadeth. But. The word. Of our God.

Shall stand. Forever. And that word. He goes on to say. He tell us. Again. In that marvelous. Chapter 55. Where he says.

Where he uses. These words. Of. The gospel. As the rain. Cometh down. In the snow. From heaven. And returneth. Not thither. But watereth the earth.

And maketh it. Bring forth. And bud. That it may give. Seed to the sower. And bread to the eater. So shall my word. Be. That goeth forth. Out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void.

It shall prosper. It shall accomplish that which I please. It shall prosper. In the thing. Where to. I say. The gospel.

[43 : 29] Will never fail. This gospel. Because God has a glorious purpose for it. While his purpose for this world endures.

To bring his elect to salvation. This is the means that he has appointed. Oh my friend.

Do you believe it? Have you accepted it? Do you live by it? And to the glorious promises embedded in it.

Encourage your soul tonight. To follow on to the day. When you will receive. Eternal glory. Eternal glory. With Christ Jesus.

Let us pray. Lord bless to us. Thy gospel. Amen. We thank thee. We thank thee.

[44 : 29] That thou hast sent it to us. And we thank thee. That it is in thy power to bless it. In the life of each one of us.

O Lord our God. Undertake for us this night. And go before us. Keep us in the fear of the Lord. And bless us with thy presence and thy peace. For Christ's sake. Amen.