

Faithful To The Glorious Gospel

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[0 : 00] Thanks, Ian. Let's turn again to what we read in Timothy, 1 Timothy, chapter 1, and reading at verse 11, verses 11 and 12.

In accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted, I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service.

In his commentary on 1 Timothy, Warren Wiresby, the American writer, he quoted from an advertisement that appeared in a newspaper in London many, many years ago.

This is what it said, men wanted for a hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful, honour and recognition in case of success.

And you'd think that nobody would apply to such an advert, but apparently there were thousands of applications because of the signature, and the signature of that was the famous Antarctica explorer, Ernest Shackleton.

[1 : 30] And just because of this man and what he was known for, there were thousands who wanted to enlist on that journey, knowing that it could end in death.

It was going to be a journey full of danger and possible death. And he goes on to say this, that if the Lord, supposing the Lord was to advertise, supposing it was to be done in such a way, and that he was wanting workers to serve him in this world, it could be, and of course he's just making this up, but this is the idea.

Wanted men and women, boys and girls are wanted for the difficult task of helping to build my church. You will often be misunderstood, even by those working with you.

You will face constant attack from an invisible enemy. You may not see the results of your labour, and your full reward will not come until after you die.

It may cost you your home, your ambitions, and even your life. And yet, we know that not just thousands, but millions, if we can use the word sign up, in other words, who are ready to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

[2 : 58] And Jesus himself said that following him meant taking up our cross, denying ourselves. So, it's quite clear, although the gospel of Jesus Christ brings so, so many enriching blessings into our lives, it is not promised us an easy life.

Now, as we know, Timothy was a young man who had signed up, so to speak, to serve the Lord. And Paul saw in Timothy somebody who he saw as the most suitable to follow him in the work of spreading the gospel, of going from place to place with the gospel.

And yet, the interesting thing is that Timothy, he was a relatively young man. He was shy. He was retiring. He was timid. He was lacking in confidence.

And he didn't keep well. And in today's cutthroat society that we live in, where self-promotion and where it's looked up, you need to have high energy levels and to display great powers, these are the kind of people that you're going to employ.

If you said to somebody who's looking for a good worker, I've got the right guy here for you. He's relatively young, but he's really lacking in confidence.

[4 : 27] He's very timid and he's shy and he doesn't keep well. You could imagine the reaction saying, I'll get lost. I'm not interested in such a passion. But you know, one of the things it shows us is that God's work is so different to any other work.

And you see, part of the thing is that it is all too easy for any of us, and every person who comes to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, wherever you are, wherever God has you placed, you are involved in our work and our service to him.

It's all too easy to get in the way of the work. And so that is why God will often use people, that people who have often been broken, or people who aren't going to be seeking honor and esteem for themselves.

We mentioned Moses this morning. When Moses was 40, Moses really thought he was it. And Moses took the law into his own hands when he killed that Egyptian.

He was not ready to do God's work. Because Moses was too full of himself. God took 40 years to break Moses. And all that time, although it may many people think these were wasted years, they were anything but, at the end of 40 years, Moses was ready to be God's servant, to do what God asked him to do.

[5 : 56] In fact, the Moses of 40 years earlier, he was ready to begin to fight for Israel right there and then.

40 years later, when God called him, I said, not me. I said, send my brother. Aaron's far better. Aaron's much more eloquent. I'm slow of speech.

I can't speak very well. But you see, these are the people that God uses. And so the heart of the apostle Paul was thrilled with this young man.

Because although the world might not see the potential in him, Paul could see the potential. And he could see that this was a young man that God was going to use. And so these two letters, 1 and 2 Timothy, are personal letters from Paul to Timothy.

Timothy. And it would seem that Timothy, for all his abilities and gifts which he had, was also somebody who was very easily discouraged.

[7 : 00] And I would say, we really need to be careful with one another. That we don't discourage each other in this life. You know, there is so much to discourage us and knock us down in this life.

We're constantly getting knocked down. And you know, it's one of the things I often say in a marriage service. I often say to couples, encourage one another at home.

It's the last place you want to be knocked down. There's enough knocking down going on in life. Particularly in the kind of day that we're living in. It's such a critical age.

Where people are always picking up on the tiniest fault of anybody. And trying to highlight everybody's faults. The church is our home as well.

It's our spiritual home. And just as our natural home, we should be seeking to build each other up and encourage one another at home. So also in the church.

[8 : 02] Let us be careful that we don't knock each other down. But that we'll be always seeking to build one another up. Well, that was one of the things that Paul was very, very good at. Although Paul could be as blunt as anybody, could be very forthright.

He was known for his encouragement. He was always seeking to build up and to encourage people. Just like his partner with him in the gospel for some of the time, Barnabas.

And so in this chapter, Paul gives some of his own testimony. And he realizes what an awesome privilege has been given to him. Because he said, God had entrusted the gospel of the glory of the blessed God to him.

Now, tonight there are many people, even in this town, who cannot understand why we're in church. And church has absolutely no appeal in any shape or form.

They would think that it's boring. And they would think that the time spent here would be wasted time. And they cannot understand why people, people that they work with, people that they know, what's the side to them that finds anything about worthwhile in church?

[9 : 20] Many people think genuinely like that. And yet, for you tonight, you've come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing could be further from the truth. Because church, although there is a duty in coming to church, and it's wonderful that we're now starting to be able to get back.

And hopefully, as maybe social distancing will get less, and we'll surely, hopefully soon be able to get to sing. But we're already beginning to move a wee bit in that direction.

It's, it's a, church isn't simply a duty. It's what we want to do. You see, we're family. We want to meet together, and we want to worship God in collective togetherness, where our hearts go out to the living and to the true God.

And so, the gospel of Jesus Christ is anything but boring. It's thrilling, and it's exhilarating. It's real life. It's where life begins.

If you're a Christian tonight, your life began the day you came to discover Jesus Christ. Whatever your life had been before, and your life might have been very good before in many ways, but it took

you to another level, a new dimension.

[10:38] You began to see things and understand things, and there was a new perspective to your life. Life was looked at through different glasses, and you saw things that you had never seen before, and you live life in a different way to the way you lived before.

And so, there is, it's a, it's a wonderful life. And so, Paul, as he writes, he does, as he hears about the gospel of the glory of God.

Now, as was mentioned on Wednesday night, Derek Maxwell was speaking, he was talking about the gospel, and the good news that the gospel is. And that's what the gospel is, good news.

You know, so often after our news bulletins, you can actually be quite depressed. Sometimes you can watch for half an hour, and you think, oh my word, that's heavy going. It just seems to be one thing after another.

There might be a thing that's a wee bit lighter, but so much of it is heavy. I don't know whether it's a reflection on ourselves, and that they give to us what they think that society wants.

[11:48] And of course, some of what we do see and hear, which it's important that we do, is heavy going. It's hard going. Some of the news is heavy. But so much of the news is depressing.

But here is news that's uplifting. That's why the angel sang at the very beginning, glory to God in the highest, and on earth, it was good news they were bringing, that Jesus Christ, the Savior, has come into this world to bring a new life, to bring openness and freedom to people.

So this is the best news. It's the gospel of the glory of God. You see, it's a gospel of the glory of God. It begins in glory, and it ends in glory.

A glorious Savior has come into this world to do a glorious work, to begin bringing the start of glory into our lives, and eventually bring us to glory.

glory. Because the question is asked, what is glory? And it has been said that it's grace begun, the beginning of grace. And that glory is grace perfected.

[13:01] We begin by grace, but it goes on to glory. And that's what Paul is writing about here. And of course, glory is light.

Glory is radiance. Glory is brilliance. And of course, that's what happens when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, that the light shines in.

Everything begins to make sense. And I'm sure many of you, like me, sat for years under the gospel. And it, I thought I knew it, but it didn't make sense.

There were aspects of it I couldn't quite grasp. Yes, I knew Jesus Christ was the Savior of sinners. I knew I had to believe. But how I could get from here to there, I was beat.

Didn't know. And it took a long time, but it came the time when that glorious light shone into my heart and I was able to see what I couldn't see before, that salvation is a gift.

[14:12] This is God's great gift to us. And I was given the faith in order to receive Jesus. And what had been a blur before began to become clear.

Not crystal clear, but I began to see. And if somebody had said, what happened to you? I couldn't tell them. I was like the blind man that Jesus had cured and they said to him, what happened to you?

And he says, I don't know. But the one thing I do know is I was blind and now I see. And that's often how it is. And it's maybe further down the line that it begins to, you begin to understand more and more of what it is, what exactly has happened to you.

And that's why it's a glorious gospel because it is a light, the shining light, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And we see God when we see Christ. He who has seen me has seen the Father, is what Jesus says. And so Paul tells us that he has been given this gospel.

[15:26] It has been entrusted to his care. And you know, that's actually a very solemn thing because it means this, that what we do with the gospel is very, very important.

Not just for preachers or gospel workers, but for everybody because once you become a Christian, you are serving God wherever you are. And you serve God with his word.

His word is at the center of your lives. And it's very important that you are faithful to what God's word says because, you know, it's all too easy for people.

And people do this today. People try and change God's word. People say, oh, you know, you've got to bring it up to date. That was okay for when it was written. But we're thousands of years down the line and we've got to bring it all up to date.

I'm not talking about translations because translations are accurate to the original language, but I'm talking about changing the whole idea of what God is saying. And God says, no, you can't do that.

[16:33] You can't change my word to make it sound something that it isn't. So we have to be absolutely faithful. And that's what Paul is saying. God has actually trusted me.

He's given me the gospel and he's saying, Paul, look after that. Be absolutely faithful to it. Distribute it. Take it out. Share it with people. Show people the way of salvation.

And God is saying the same thing to us as well because God has entrusted us with this gospel, this glorious news. And then Paul, then he says, goes on to say, I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful.

And you see what Paul is saying here. God has given him strength. The AV translates that as enabled. And you know, that is so true that God enables us to be Christians.

He enables us and he gives us a strength to keep going. And whatever you do for the Lord Jesus Christ, and remember, you're all serving him wherever you are, whether it's in your work or in school or in your home.

[17:54] You might be the only Christian in your home, the only Christian in your class and school, the only Christian in college or university, might be the only Christian in the workplace. But you're serving God wherever he has put you.

And that's not an easy thing. And that's why you need the strength and the enabling. And you know, we often feel failures and we feel that we can't do it. I've never met a Christian worker who has said, you know, there's poor, see me, I'm the best that God could have.

I can't think of anybody who could do this job better than I can. I think I'm the most equipped, the most qualified person. I've never heard anybody speak like that.

Because whenever we're doing any work for the Lord, there is always a sense of our own inability, our own often weakness.

But it's in that very place that we discover, we mentioned that this morning, it's in this very place that we discover God's strength, God's enabling to keep going.

[19:02] This stickability. You know, you might have been following, might be following the Lord for 40, 50 years. And you say to yourself, you know this, I've been through thick and thin.

I haven't always followed Him very well. I've strayed here and there. I've done this and that. But you know, I'm still going. And I don't want to be going in any other direction but the direction I'm going in. I want to be following Jesus Christ. Why? Because God has enabled you. He's given you the strength. He's given you the grace. And so Paul is so aware of this that he has been equipped and enabled and strengthened by the Lord.

And so he talks there, he talks here about the faithfulness. That's what he says, Christ Jesus our Lord because he judged me faithful.

Now, I'm quite sure that there were times when Paul would look back over his own life. And I'm only looking at a little bit of his testimony here. And however great and wonderful an ambassador Paul was for Christ, I'm sure there were days he felt that he wasn't faithful.

[20:18] I think probably it's a thing that gets us as much as anything. It's when we look at God's faithfulness and our lack of faithfulness to him. But you know, at the end of the day, that's how God will welcome us home.

God doesn't say to his people when they come home, well done, good and successful servant. He'll say, well done, good and faithful servant. It's a stickability.

It's a keeping going, keeping going, keeping going. As we said earlier, Moses said to God, not me, get my brother. My brother will be far better. No, the Lord says it to you.

There were days the work was too much for Moses. He felt he couldn't go on. When God called Jeremiah, Jeremiah said, oh no, I'm but a child. I can't do this.

Well, the Lord said, you will. And he enabled him. And there were days when it was terrible for Jeremiah. And many a day, Jeremiah sunk. But he kept going.

[21:23] He was faithful. And God will enable you too to be faithful. He's kept you going. And he'll continue to keep you going to the very end.

And that's, that's a wonderful thing because he is faithful. That's the beauty of it. God's faithfulness. He will never, ever, ever be unfaithful to you.

You know, sometimes, you have people in relationships and one is unfaithful to another. It's heartbreak. It's difficult. And I'm sure there's so much sorrow and guilt in these things.

But you know, in the relationship we have with the Lord, there are many a time we have to confess to the Lord and say, Lord, I haven't been faithful. I hold my hands up. I've got a broken heart, Lord, over it. I'm really sorry. But there's never a time when God will say, you know, I haven't been faithful to you. Every single day and every single night, God is committed to being faithful to you.

[22 : 29] And he'll be faithful to you to the very end. And that's what gave Paul so much encouragement. That he was serving a faithful God and it should give us encouragement as well that we're serving a faithful God.

And if tonight you have never yet come to embrace the great gift that this faithful God has given in sending his son into this world to be savior, ask this Jesus to save you.

And you know, if you ask him, if you ask him with all your heart, he will save you. Why? Because he's faithful to his promise. He says, whoever comes to me, I will in no wise cast out.

He's faithful to that promise. So you go to him and ask him. Let us pray. Lord, we pray to bless us and give thanks for your word. We pray that your word will indeed be a social blessing to our souls and that you'll grant us light and life by it.

Take us to our home safely, do us good. Cleanse us from our every sin, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude now singing from Psalm number 119.

[23 : 49] This is from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 119, the Scottish Psalter, verses 57 to 60. 119, verses 57 to 60.

Thou, my sure portion, art alone, which I did choose, O Lord, I have resolved and said that I would keep thy holy word. With my whole heart I did entreat thy face and favor free according to thy gracious word.

Be merciful to me, I thought upon my former ways and did my life well try. And to thy testimonies pure, my feet then turned I.

Verses 57 to 60 of Psalm 119, Thou, my sure portion, art alone. Thou, my sure portion, are not alone.

With thy issues, O Lord, I have resolved and said that I would give thy holy word.

[25 : 26] With my whole heart, With my whole heart, I give and treat thy faith, thy faith, thy faith someday agree.

According to thy gracious word, Be merciful to me I thought upon my former place And in my life well try And to thy testimonies true My deep and time divine I did not save your even home As old and soft for life But rest in me Thy laws to thee My self I give me air Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit Rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen