

2 Timothy 2.8-10 Fixate on Jesus Our Hope

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[0:00] The book of 2 Timothy was written by the Apostle Paul and what's going on at the time that 2 Timothy was written is that Paul is suffering in chains.

! He was suffering affliction from enemies and he was suffering abandonment from friends and he was about to be executed in an attempt to snuff out the gospel.

In other words, execute the Apostle Paul, stop the gospel. But Paul knew something that Nero didn't know.

Let's take a look. 2 Timothy 2, we'll read from verses 1 to 13. You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus and the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses.

Commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, but he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

[1:08] And also, if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops.

Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains.

But the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

This is a faithful saying, For if we died with him, we shall also live with him. If we endure, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he will also deny us.

If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself. Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the Lord's Day, the means of grace, and for the ministry of the word.

[2:21] We pray that you would attend the preaching of the word by your spirit and power. We pray that you would bless the preaching of the word, that you would bless the hearing of the word. We pray that you would help us to free our minds of distractions, and help us to fixate our gaze on Jesus Christ.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Now this morning we're going to look at verses 8 to 10. And in 8 to 10, I want to draw your attention to something in specific. And that is this.

Fixate on Jesus, our hope, who endured hardship, overcame death, and ransomed his elect. That's fixate on Jesus, our hope, who endured hardship, overcame death, and ransomed his elect.

Now we have a tendency to like stories where there is a hero who defeats an oppressive enemy.

And that oppressive enemy typically is holding a damsel in distress, and she's being held in bondage. And the hero comes along, and the hero defeats the enemy. He frees the oppressed, and he's crowned as a king, and he restores the land, and they all live happily ever after.

[3:33] Why do we like this kind of story? We tend to like these stories because somehow we know that this is good. We know that this is good of what's happening in these stories.

And we somehow have a yearning for this kind of liberation and restoration and happily ever after.

And something innately inscribed in us tells us that this is necessary, but it's necessary on a much larger scale than a dragon-slaying prince and a princess locked up in a tower.

Now the history of redemption, it can be summarized, and it has been summarized in two brief statements. Kill the dragon, get the girl.

And you might be thinking, I thought we just read about Paul who is in chains. And Paul's not a girl, and maybe you're a man, and you're thinking, I don't want to be called a girl. So why are you saying

a girl?

But you're getting ahead of me. So let's start with the first statement. The first statement is, kill the dragon. Now, I want to first take you back to Genesis 3.15.

[4:44] And what happened leading up to Genesis 3.15 is that sin came into the world. There was the fall of mankind, and then the curse. And in God's declaration of the curse to the serpent, serpent, by the way, in Hebrew, you're thinking, the snake, the snake seduced Eve, they sinned.

A snake in the Hebrew language is a serpent. A dragon in the Hebrew language is a serpent. Both a snake and a dragon are serpents. One deceives and one destroys.

A snake is a serpent that deceives. A dragon is a serpent that destroys. And another fun fact is that Leviathan is a sea serpent. But that's not relevant.

That's not what we're looking at today. So leading up to Genesis 3.15, we have sin. Sin comes into the world, the fall of mankind, and the curse. And in the curse, God's declaration of the curse, God makes a promise.

And that promise is that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. So that first statement, kill the dragon.

[5:54] The Messiah's victory in suffering. Okay, so kill the dragon means the Messiah's victory in suffering. In our text in verse 8, it starts off by saying, remember.

You might think at first, well, this is kind of odd. He's writing to Timothy, and I highly doubt that Timothy forgot. And typically we say remember because perhaps we have forgotten. And it's not like Timothy would be like, oh yeah, I forgot about Jesus.

No, he's saying something else by saying remember. Remember, in this context, means to call to mind, to contemplate, to keep something in mind, to think of continually, or in other words, to fixate.

To fixate on something. So what is it that he's to fixate on, or that we, the church, is to fixate on?

Remember, remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David.

Now notice that phrase, of the seed of David. There's something very important about that, that the Jews certainly would have had right at the forefront of their mind. But before we get to that, whoever this, of the seed of David is, it's according to the flesh.

[7:09] And what it would bring to mind is 2 Samuel 7. 2 Samuel 7, verses 12 to 16. We won't flip to it now, but if you're taking notes, jot it down. Or if you're listening to the recording on cassettes, plus pause and go read it.

But in 2 Samuel 7, 12 to 16, it's what we call the Davidic covenant, where God makes a covenant with David. And he promises him that his seed would sit on the throne, and he would be a son to him, and that his kingdom would be established forever.

And also, that he would build a house for the Lord. So we see this temporarily fulfilled in Solomon, who's the seed of David, who sat on the throne, who built a house for the Lord.

But its fuller and more greater fulfillment was in Christ, who's seated on the throne. He's building, he built a house, he's building a house, and his kingdom is established forever.

But 2 Samuel 7, 12 to 16, calls to mind the seed of David. The seed of David, who would be a king, who would sit on the throne, and his kingdom would endure forever.

[8:23] Remember, Jesus Christ, seed of David. So it's telling us that this Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the line of David, which means monarchy.

It means dynasty. It means dominion. And it also means being a representative of the people. And that's something significant about the Davidic covenant, is that Israel's blessings and sanctions depended on the king, who was a representative of the people.

And we see that with Christ as a representative of his people. And this is the Psalm 2, Messiah King, which should bring to mind a fuller understanding of who this Jesus Christ is, being of the seed of David.

So also, as we just read this morning in Psalm 89, 4. So this Jesus Christ, remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel.

So what comes to mind in this is raised, raised from the dead. But to have been raised from the dead means that he died. And this might be troubling at first, because we think this is the Messiah who was prophesied in the Old Testament, who would sit on the throne, and his kingdom would be established forever, and then he died.

[9:41] If it was to end there, that would be a pretty sad story. Now, this one in whom the people of God for generations have been looking towards in faith, who would be their king, and whose

kingdom would be established forever, well, he's now died.

So if it were to end there, that would be pretty disappointing and pretty sad. But it doesn't end there, but it is an important aspect of his kingdom, and of killing the dragon.

Something happens with the death of the prophesied Messiah that defeats the dragon and establishes his kingdom forever.

Why did he die? Was it unexpected? Was his purpose in being established forever thwarted?

There's something in the death that is both kill the dragon and get the girl or liberate the girl from bondage.

And Jesus' death on the cross, his death wasn't because he himself was sinful and deserved to die, but his death on the cross was to take the sins of his people to the cross to pay the penalty of sin, to die to satisfy divine justice, and raised in power with victory over Satan and sin and death.

[11:11] So he died, he was raised from the dead, he rose victorious, and in rising in power, victorious, he defeated the dragon and liberated his bride.

So Jesus crushed the head of the serpent through his dying and rising, he defeated death and the power of sin by his death. He paid the ransom price for his people, and he secured their salvation by defeating Satan, defeating sin, and defeating death.

He was raised in power in the flesh and is reigning and ruling. He is seated on the throne. He is reigning and ruling for the advancement of his kingdom.

And the advancement of his kingdom is the salvation of the elect. Who are the elect? The bride of the lamb. His reigning and ruling and the advancement of his kingdom is the salvation of the elect, which is his bride.

So we see, kill the dragon, get the girl, but to tie back into Genesis 3.15 of that whole promise of the serpent's head being crushed by the seed of the woman.

[12:29] There was, the serpent's head would be crushed but the seed of the woman's heel would be bruised. So in the killing of the dragon, how does this work out for the crushed head of the serpent and the bruised heel of the seed of the woman?

So let's start with the crushed head. What is the head? The head is the chief member of the body. The head is the place of power and authority for the rest of the body.

So when the head is crushed, the authority is dead. And Jesus crushed the head of the serpent through his death on the cross and a victorious resurrection from the dead.

So in other words, the serpent and his seed have no power. The dragon has been defeated. So what about the heel? The heel will be bruised.

Primarily, this is primarily speaking of Jesus, the seed of the woman. He was bruised for our transgressions. So primarily of Jesus, the seed of the woman, by his suffering and death.

[13:36] He was bruised for our transgression. But, he was not defeated. Jesus is the head of his body. And we can think of the heel as a part of the body.

So secondarily, primarily of Jesus and his suffering and death, but secondarily, his body is the church. And in the curse, that we see this promise of the gospel where the head of the serpent will be crushed, but the heel of the seed of the woman will be bruised.

And the body of Christ is the church. That is his members or the elect. That's true believers whom the defeated serpent and his members seek to harm and seek to thwart the advancement of the kingdom or to obstruct and impede the salvation of the lost.

That is, to stop the spread of the gospel. Which makes a lot more vivid Paul's suffering, suffering affliction from enemies and suffering abandonment from friends for the sake of the advancement of the gospel.

It is an attempt to snuff out the gospel and stop its spread. But Paul knows something that Nero doesn't know. John 8.44 says, You are of your father, the devil, and associating the seed of the serpent, who is the seed of the serpent.

[15:06] John 8.44, You are of your father, the devil. So speaking of the offspring of the serpent. You are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.

He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. But remember Jesus Christ.

Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel. What does he mean when he says according to my gospel? He means the only gospel, the gospel which is not corrupted.

That is the good news of salvation. The skull crushing seed of the woman defeated the serpent and ransomed his bride. To kill the dragon, the skull crushing seed of the woman defeated the serpent, get the girl, and ransomed his bride.

So, get the girl. The church's incentive in suffering. So we know that Paul is in chains and you're thinking, okay, so I'm trying to piece this together.

[16:16] I see how Jesus is the seed of the woman who crushed the head of the serpent in his death and victory, resurrection from the dead, victorious over Satan and sin and death. So I get the whole kill the dragon, but what about get the girl?

Paul's not a girl and Paul's the one who is in chains and in this story it's this girl that's in bondage in a tower. So how does this all work out?

How does this make sense? Yes, Paul is in chains but he's not the girl. So let's go back again to Genesis 3.15 to better understand it. Genesis 3.15, who we have there is Adam and Eve and Adam is a type of who?

Adam is a type of Christ and Eve is a type of the church. Adam failed to defeat the serpent. Adam failed to judge and execute punishment on the serpent and he failed to protect the girl.

But, praise be to God, Jesus, the second Adam and representative of his people secured the victory. He secured the victory and saved the girl.

[17:31] So who's the girl? The girl is the church. It says Eve is a type of the church. The church can be referred to in the feminine as she.

The church is the girl or the church is, even to put it in a better way, the bride of the lamb. This is language which the Bible uses.

In Song of Solomon, it's a picture of Christ and the church and it starts off by saying, who is this coming up from the wilderness?

So think of wilderness in the Exodus. God redeemed his people from bondage and slavery, led them through wilderness pilgrimage through the Jordan River into the promised rest.

And the greater Exodus, same thing, God redeems his people from bondage and slavery, leads them through wilderness wandering through the Jordan River into promised rest.

[18:33] So, have that in mind when you hear Song of Solomon 8.5. Who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved? There's so much imagery about this of, first of all, coming up out of the wilderness.

Think of what, in time, what moment that is. But of coming up out of the wilderness where? Into promised rest. So for the greater Exodus, into glory.

And coming out of it, leaning on her beloved, supported by leaning on close to Christ. And of course, Ephesians 5.25.

Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. Husband and wife, imagery of Christ and the church. And then Revelation 19.7, we have the marriage supper of the Lamb, a marriage supper.

And then further in Revelation 21.2, it says this, Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband.

[19:43] Kill the dragon, get the girl. Who's the girl? The church. Jesus' work of redemption in defeating the serpent of old and his liberating each member of the bride of Christ, having paid the ransom price, his blood-bought people are claimed and liberated from bondage by the word and spirit.

This occurs by the word and spirit. And that is why Paul is in chains. Paul is in chains because by the word, by the preaching of the word, by the word going forth, by the word being heard, the gospel being heard and attended by the spirit, the elect, the bride of Christ, is being liberated from bondage.

So that is why Paul was in chains. The seed of the defeated serpent bruising the body of Christ was trying to bind and stop the spread of the gospel.

But again, Paul knew something that Nero didn't know, that the gospel cannot be chained. You can chain the messenger of the gospel, but you cannot chain the gospel.

So we see the apostle's hardship. He says, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer even to the point of chains. Now, what might come to mind is Romans 13.

[21:15] Romans 13, let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. And think about this for a second. Who was the governing authorities when Romans 13 was written?

It was Nero. Who wrote Romans 13? It was Paul. What is the setting here? Why is Paul about to be executed? By Nero, trying to snuff out the gospel.

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God.

And the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

I'm going to skip some parts here. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. That's important. Governing authorities are a terror to evil, to evildoers.

And then in verse 4, for he is God's minister to you for good, but if you do evil, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain.

[22 : 14] Governing authorities bear the sword to punish evildoers, for he is God's minister, an avenger, to execute wrath on him who practices evil, evildoers.

Again, context of Romans 13. Paul wrote it, Nero was the governing authority in Rome at the time.

What's the context here? Paul is about to be executed under the state-sanctioned sword of Nero.

Paul, though he was doing good, he was not doing evil, though he was doing good, he was treated like a criminal. And Nero had inverted his God-ordained calling.

Nero was God's minister to punish the evildoer and to praise those who do good. He had inverted his God-ordained calling by bearing the sword, treating as criminal, as an evildoer, Paul, who was doing good.

Nero inverted his God-ordained calling, who's bearing the sword to execute wrath on the messenger, Paul being the messenger, and get this, Nero has the authority to bear the sword on those who are evildoers.

[23 : 29] Paul's not an evildoer, he's treated as an evildoer, the weight of the state-sanctioned swords about to fall on his head, being treated like a criminal, for what? For being a messenger of the immensity of God's love to mankind who goes astray.

And as a result, he was going to be executed, and many were ashamed. And many abandoned Paul for being a messenger of the immensity of God's love to mankind who goes astray.

And our text here, it says, I endure all things, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains, even to the point of chains, but the word of God is not chained.

Now he says, I endure all things. Keep your finger here, but flip over to 2 Corinthians 11. At this point that he's written this, again, he's in prison, it's the last time, he's not going to get out.

History has it that he's beheaded. And he's writing his last letter, and this is what he writes in 2 Timothy, in his last letter, which you can imagine is of utmost importance to Paul.

[24 : 54] And when he says, I endure all things, he is in difficult conditions, poor conditions, imprisonment, but think of what he has also endured up to this point.

It's not that he had a pretty comfortable life, and now there's this, but everything that he endured leading up to this, for this purpose, for the advancement of the gospel, for the elect, for the body of Christ, to be liberated from bondage.

He says, I endure all things. What exactly is all things that he has endured already? in 2 Corinthians 11, in verse 23, 23b, it says, in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

From the Jews, five times I received 40 stripes minus one. Imagine that, 39, 39 lashes. Imagine his back, how scarred his back would be.

Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Stoning was to kill the person. Three times I was shipwrecked.

[26 : 15] A night and a day I have been in the deep. And journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils of the city, in perils of the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and toil and sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst and fastings often, in cold and nakedness, besides the other things, what comes upon me daily, my deep concern for all the churches.

You can imagine at this point, Paul could probably say, I think I've probably done enough. Maybe I can just go and find a remote cabin in the middle of the mountains and just find my sunset days.

But although Paul has endured all of this, he's even now in chains. He says, I endure all things.

Why? What's his incentive? What's his reason?

What's his purpose? What's his motivation? What's driving him to endure all things? What is it for?

John Chrysostom wrote, If God has chosen them, it becomes us to suffer everything for their sakes, that they also may obtain salvation.

By saying, they also, he means, as well as we, for God has chosen us also. If we are Christians today, it's because of God's purpose of the church before us.

[27 : 49] Now, you might be the uncommon case where maybe it's something like Augustine, take up and read, and he picks up the Bible, and it's attended by the Spirit.

But, even Augustine, that's not the first time he'd heard the word of God. His mother was a Christian. Or even still, if that was the case, if you'd never heard the gospel, and there was just this Bible, you picked it up and read it, how'd that Bible get there?

Who printed that Bible? Who put all this work in it? Who translated the Bible? The work of the church is God's means for his saving of his bride.

Well, for hearing the gospel attended by the Spirit. So, Paul's assentive, in his hardship, I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains, for the sake of the elect.

It's not the pain that makes a martyr, it's the cause. And the cause, here's the glory of God and the salvation of the elect. Paul's incentive in suffering hardship is the cause of the glory of God and the salvation of the elect.

[29 : 06] Now, this is contrary to a strawman argument against the sovereignty of God and salvation that says if God's sovereign in salvation, then there's no incentive to evangelize.

There would be no incentive to ensure that the gospel spreads. Paul, his writings are saturated with the sovereignty of God and salvation. And Paul demonstrates, as an example, his incentive for suffering hardship to the point of imprisonment and death so that the word of God, that the gospel would go forward and that the bride of Christ, would be liberated, that members of the body of Christ, that the elect would be saved.

The word elect is in the Bible and it's in reference to those whom God has chosen. And this argument, which arose as a different teaching in the early 1600s, was addressed in the Synod of Dort and settled, and the response was God's sovereignty, we won't go into detail now, but God's sovereignty over salvation.

Although God is sovereign, and that's what's behind that word elect, God's chosen from the foundation of the world, we are not God and we are not to suppose that we have to know God's decretive will and order for us as the church to do our duty of ensuring that the gospel goes forward. The duty is ours, the results are the Lord's. so why suffer? It's so that they also may obtain salvation.

[30 : 44] Why suffer? For the blessedness of the bride of Christ. Why suffer? For the blessedness of God's elect. Philippians 1.12, but I want you to know brethren that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.

While the execution of Paul may have been an attempt to snuff out the gospel and to stop it from spreading, it has actually, the gospel cannot be chained and it was actually for the furtherance of the gospel.

Verse 9, but the word of God is not chained. Physical chains were put on Paul while at the same time spiritual chains were being removed from the elect.

I want to do a quick comparison of Nero and Paul. Nero is the governing authorities at the time. Paul is in prison.

Under Nero's authority, there is state sanctioned persecution against Christians. Paul is a leader of this Christian faith. Paul is to be executed.

[31 : 58] Nero, when we look at Nero from the perspectives of this world, Nero had glory in this world. He had great success, he had wealth, he had numerous armies, he had imperial subjugation, he had a splendid palace, he was arrayed in gold and precious stones, he was robed in purple, he was called Lord, Emperor, Caesar, and King, men in high places trembled at him, he fancied himself a god, and was even worshipped as a god.

What greater glory of this world than what Nero had? But ultimately, what dishonor? He despised God. Nero's glory in this world was like a passing mist that comes and then is gone, and then for Nero, nothing glorious, nothing splendid, but dishonor, judgment, condemnation, and wrath.

Let's compare Nero to Paul. Paul suffered numerous hardships. He suffered pain, beatings, imprisonment, and eventually, according to history, a sword, state-sanctioned sword, fell on his neck as Nero had him beheaded.

Is this dishonor? Was Paul's life and death one of dishonor? Well, with Nero, the glory of his life was a mist that comes and then is gone.

The weight of the falling sword on the neck of Paul was but a passing mist compared to the eternal weight of glory. So what do we do with this text?

[33 : 46] What use can we make of it? Have you ever taken a look around you at the brokenness of this world, the problems of this world, the sinfulness of this world, and just wanted to escape it and go find or build a cabin in the mountains somewhere and just go live in an isolated cabin in the mountains?

There's a problem with that idea. The problem is that you'd be there. I'm not offending your company. What I'm getting at is that in this world, we cannot escape sin.

Although we are in a state of grace, we are not in a state of glory, which means we have remaining corruption. So even if you and you alone were to be in an isolated cavern in the mountains, there would still be sin.

There would still be remaining corruption because this isn't as good as it gets. This isn't glory. This isn't the inheritance of the saints and it's not supposed to be. we cannot escape sin this side of glory.

We are in a state of grace and we grieve over remaining corruption and yet God has still given you breath this morning.

[34 : 54] You woke up. God's given you life today. Why did God give you life? Why did God give you breath today? What is God's purpose in your waking up with breath in your lungs this morning?

Even though God has eternally chosen the names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, the elect, he uses the church as the means to that redemptive end.

And Paul didn't seek to escape but he faced suffering, hardship, head-on because he knew that it meant that lost sinners in misery and bondage would be made alive by the spreading of the gospel. That is the knowledge of the coming of the Messiah in the flesh, his suffering and dying to defeat sin and death, and being raised in power.

2 Thessalonians 2, 13-14 says, But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which he called you by our gospel.

[36 : 16] God calls those whom he has chosen from the beginning by the gospel for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Second use, remember how this passage in verse 8 starts off. It says, remember. Remember doesn't mean you've forgotten. Remember means call to mind, to think continually upon this, or to fixate.

Fixate on this. Fixate on Jesus, our hope. So, if you are delighted with the Lord's communicating grace to you through the means of grace, fixate on Jesus, our hope.

And isn't that the whole purpose of the means of grace, and the hearing of the word, our minds and our whole soul is fixated on Jesus, our hope. And baptism and seeing the person of the profession of faith going under the water and coming up, being of Christ, being baptized into Christ, death and resurrection with new life, being fixated on Jesus, our hope.

Or in the Lord's supper of Christ's signs, signifying Christ's body and blood for our forgiveness, fixating on Jesus, our hope.

[37 : 38] So, if you're delighted with the Lord's communicating grace to you through the means of grace on the Lord's day, fixate on Jesus, our hope. If you are imprisoned for the gospel, fixate on Jesus.

If you are staring down the barrel of martyrdom, fixate on Jesus, our hope. If the world disapproves of your embracing the gospel, fixate on Jesus, our hope.

If you suffer for the gospel, fixate on Jesus. If you grieve over your remaining corruption, fixate on Jesus. If you are advanced in this pilgrimage and are nearing the Jordan River between this world and eternity, fixate on Jesus, our hope.

If you have not yet come to Christ, fixate on Jesus, our hope. Our hope is a living hope because Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

He lived a life of perfect obedience. He suffered and died as a substitute to pay the ransom price of his people and satisfied divine justice and he rose from the dead in power as our redeemer, the promised seed of the woman who crushed the head of the serpent and liberated his people from Satan, sin, and death.

[39 : 02] Let's pray.