

## 2 Timothy 2.11-13 The Undeniable Faithfulness of God

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[0:00] In Paul's letter to Timothy, he used the metaphor of an athlete and he used the metaphor! to illustrate objectively enduring hardship. He didn't use the metaphor to illustrate the fan club that an athlete has. This is what I mean. At an Olympic race, when the athlete is running, they're surrounded by fans who are cheering them on. Think about when Paul wrote 2 Timothy. Was Paul surrounded by fans who were cheering him on? No, in fact, he was suffering in chains. He was being afflicted by enemies and he was abandoned by friends and he was awaiting alone his execution. Think also in Pilgrim's Progress when Christian fled the city of destruction. Christian fled running and as he ran, was everybody around him in the city of destruction cheering him on? No, they weren't. They were ridiculing him. So what did he do?

He took his fingers and he stopped his ears and he cried out, life, life, eternal life. And the Christian and Pilgrim's Progress is like the Christian pilgrimage with an orientation set not towards the approval of the perishing world around us, but with an orientation set to eternity.

An orientation fixated on Jesus Christ, our living hope, and the undeniable faithfulness of God.

Let's read 2 Timothy chapter 2. We will be looking at verses 11 to 13, but we'll read from verses 1 through 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.

[2:04] 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, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

And also, if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hardworking 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 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 also will deny us. If we are faithless, he remains faithful. He cannot deny himself. Our great God, we thank you for your word that we have supernatural revelation. As we seek to understand your word, we pray for your spirit to illuminate your word, and that you would grow us in truth and knowledge and wisdom and understanding, that you would guide us. I pray that you would use even me in the preaching of your word, that you would bless the preaching of the word, and that you would bless the hearing of the word, and that you would help us to look to you, to expect to hear from you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, what is going on in verses 11 to 13? We see that the basis of enduring hardship is grounded in the faithfulness of a trustworthy God. Now, verses 11 to 13, we see two universal principles concerning two, concerning man, which will break up into two parts, and then we will look at God. So, first, starting off with the first universal principle, is concerning those who have died with Christ. Look at it in verse 11. It says, 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.

[4:46] Now, before jumping into the universal principle, notice the reliability of what we are going to hear in these verses. There's a statement that tells us about the reliability of what we are about to

hear, and that it is a faithful saying. In other words, what you are about to hear is worthy of belief. It's worthy of trust. It is trustworthy. It is dependable without doubt, without doubting. So, remember that because that applies to the whole text. Everything that we read is faithful. It's worthy of belief. So, what is faithful saying? First of all, we have the first of two universal principles. And before we look at that principle, have you considered the prosperity gospel, or the health, wealth, and prosperity teaching? It's a teaching that hinges everything basically on the hearer's faith. And I'll give an example. When I was in high school, I had friends that went to different churches in town, and I'd go to different events that they had. And I had friends in the Pentecostal church, and I went to an event that they held. And I knew that what went on there was strange. And I remember people would ask what it was like, and I said, strange things happen. And you could say there was strange fire being offered up. There's one event that I went to, and there was this man who had brought in, I don't remember his title, probably something like a traveling evangelist. And he claimed that he had the power from God to heal people, that he had the gift of healing, and that he could heal diseases, illnesses. He could heal depression. He could heal deformities in the body. But it all hinged on whether or not the recipient had enough faith. Of course, he had the power. He had enough of the power that God has given him. He'd been gifted. But whether it was effective depended on the person's faith. So either as a placebo effect or adrenaline in the moment, they perhaps didn't feel the pain or whatever it may be, then it's, of course, because of the power that he had to heal. But when it didn't work, what's the fault of the person that didn't have enough faith? And this teaching is not only wrong, it's very manipulative, and it's very damaging, and it's very dangerous. And everybody should flee this false teaching.

[7:15] The manipulation of what faith is, whereas faith is actually a gift of God. And the gifts that God gives, if it's from God, is true. And true faith is faith that receives Christ, which means receiving Christ's satisfaction of divine justice. It receives Christ's righteousness. It receives Christ's merits. It receives Christ's benefits. And it receives Christ's mediation. And receives all that is Christ's in believing, not only that it is true, but that it is true for the individual. This is what true faith is. It's not a matter of being able to escape hardship. If I want it bad enough, then it'll happen. True faith is despite subjective hardship. So despite the subjective hardship, what is objectively true is that believers, at their conversion, believers have died and been raised to new life in Christ. So despite subjective hardships that every believer will face, because it's subjective, each person's experience is their own and different, there is an objective truth that every believer has died and been raised to new life in Christ. And we have union with Christ in his death and resurrection. And to us are the gospel promises of salvation and our future resurrection to glory. So let's work that out a little bit.

In the Old Testament, there are prophecies about the Messiah, the Christ. And these prophecies are about his suffering and subsequent glory. Suffering and after suffering, subsequent glories.

[9:13] And this, these prophecies are fulfilled, of course, in Jesus Christ. So all these prophecies of the Old Testament of the Messiah, his suffering, his subsequent glories are fulfilled in Christ. Okay?

And believers, when at our conversion, we are united to Christ, Christ is our representative. Which means that he represents us. He represents us in what was prophesied, his suffering and subsequent glory.

So Christ represents us in his suffering, in his death. And as our representative in his death, it is as though we were there with him at his death. So although you physically weren't on the cross dying, everything that we are everything that Jesus as your representative accomplished on the cross is accomplished as though you were there.

So Christ's satisfaction of divine justice, as though you were there. Divine justice has been satisfied for your account. Your sins have been paid for as though you were there.

And with Christ as our representative, as though you were there with him, it's not only in his death, but think of baptism. The ordinances are a, the sacraments are a sign where they signify.

[10:42] Baptism is a sign that signifies death, burial and resurrection. Being baptized to Christ, united with him in his death, as though you were there, is burial and resurrection.

So Christ as our representative, it's not only as though you were there in his burial or in his death, but also in his resurrection, as though you are present.

As if you are present in his resurrection and we participate by faith. Okay, remember that word, you're going to hear it again. That's important for a distinction that we're going to have to make to understand what this text says.

But we participate with Christ as our representative in his death and resurrection by faith. There's in union and communion with him. Our union is that we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection.

And communion that Christ communicates his benefits to us. He communicates to us all his benefits.

[11:41] Now I want to pause for a moment and look at the Greek grammar in this sentence. To translate the Greek into an English, there are things which are understood in the Greek language that you don't understand by, that we can't understand by looking at the English word.

But the word if, it's a small word, but it's actually quite a big word, isn't it? A lot of weight, a lot of heavy things can hang on this little word if.

And the word if is in this text. If we died with him, we shall also live with him. If we endure, we shall also reign with him. Now in English, the word if means if.

In the Greek, it's a conditional participle, but there's different kinds of conditions depending on how it's used in the word that comes after it. And how it's used in this context is a first class condition, not a third class, which means it is not describing a future possibility.

But a first class condition means it's assumed to be true for the sake of argument. So it's true, we're stating an argument. So the word itself is best glossed as if.

[13:01] It's the word for if, but you can read it as though it says since. In other words, since we died with him, we shall also live with him. It's assumed to be true for the sake of argument.

Since we endure, we shall also reign with him. So in this first universal principle, it pertains to those who have died with Christ, and we see their destination.

With each universal principle, we see the destination. What's the destination of those who have died with Christ? We shall also live with him. To live with him means forever.

This is life indefectible. And if you recall from the fall, there was a loss of spiritual life, natural life, and eternal life.

But being in Christ, living with him forever means spiritual life forever, natural life forever, eternal life with God as our highest good and chief end.

[14:08] And perfect, blessed communion with God forever. If we die with him, we shall also live with him. And it goes on to say, if we endure, we shall also reign with him.

Now the word endure, it means to patiently and objectively undergo hardship. So we shall also reign with him.

It means raised to glory with him and seated with him. With Christ as a representative, now it is though we were there with him. But we will be raised to glory and seated with him.

Since we endure, since we patiently and objectively undergo hardship, of course the two statements are one, since we died with him, we shall also live with him. Since we endure, we shall also reign with him.

And participate in the consummated kingdom of Christ as his body, as Christ's body. Romans 8, starting in verse 9, it says, But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit. If indeed the spirit of God dwells in you.

[15:16] Now if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he is not his. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.

But if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you.

And then further in 17, it says, So the first universal principle is concerning those who have died with Christ.

And God is faithful in his promises of salvation, as well as his promises of damnation. Which brings us to the second universal principle in our text.

If we deny him, he also will deny us. And we want to properly understand what it means when it says deny, and what it doesn't mean.

[16:22] To deny Christ means to reject him in unbelief. To reject Christ in unbelief is to be faithless. Okay, so there's that word again.

And we're not done with it yet, so don't put it away. But to deny him is to be faithless. To reject Christ in unbelief. This is not referring to a temporary defection because of psychological pressure in situations such as Peter.

If you remember Peter, Peter denied Jesus three times in one night. This is not what this principle is talking about. Nor also Thomas Cranmer. If you're familiar with his story, he was very influential in the Protestant Reformation of the 1500s, when King Henry VIII was king.

Thomas Cranmer was the Archbishop of Canterbury. And he was very influential in the Protestant doctrine being used for the Church of England.

And he was the main author for the Book of Common Prayer. And he was the main author for the doctrine, which became the Protestant doctrine for the Church of England, which would now be the 39 articles in Anglican churches.

[17 : 42] Thomas Cranmer was the main author for those things. And he did so to bring Protestantism into the Church of England during, well, he was the Archbishop of Canterbury.

After King Henry VIII, Queen Mary, who you probably have heard as Bloody Mary, she's called Bloody Mary because of the fierce persecution against Protestants.

She wanted the state, she wanted the Church of England to be Roman Catholic. So she made it illegal to be Protestant and was actively persecuting and killing those who were influential in Protestant theology.

So Thomas Cranmer was arrested for heresy and treason and he was locked up. So also was his friends Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley for Protestant doctrine.

And Thomas Cranmer was obviously very influential. And so whatever he says, whatever he does is influential to people. So there was a lot of psychological pressure that was put on him to recant, including isolation.

[18 : 54] And his friends, Latimer and Ridley, were tied to a stake and burned to death. And history has it that Cranmer was forced to watch his friends burn for standing for Protestant doctrine.

So under such psychological pressure, he recanted publicly, but he signed a recantation of the Protestant doctrine.

And then he was to be brought forward in public and to publicly recant of Protestant doctrine. But he just couldn't live with himself for what he had done. So in public, he renounced his recantation.

He reaffirmed Protestant doctrine, justification by faith alone. He rejected transubstantiation. He declared the Pope to be the enemy of Christ and Antichrist.

So he was taken and rushed out and tied to a stake and burned in the street. And as he burned, remember, the deny, he may have in a moment of weakness, because of the psychological pressures, recanted.

[20 : 08] But he did not reject Christ in unbelief. In fact, when they burned him, when he was being burned to death, he signed the recantation with his right hand. And he stuck his right hand in the flame, because that hand was unworthy, because that was the hand that signed the recantation.

So he steadily held his hand in the flame until it had burned. And then shortly after, he himself burned. So he did not reject Christ in unbelief. Sometimes people have a moment of weakness in their life, such as Peter and Thomas Cranmer.

This is not what this universal principle is speaking of. It is not requiring of us our perfect obedience in order to live with Christ. This is a different category.

It is a different principle. It is faithless. Now notice what it says. If we deny him, which means if we wholly deny Christ, like Judas Iscariot, or like Phylgelus and Hermogenes, of 2 Timothy chapter 115, if you recall from earlier, it's the one who departs.

Sorry, the one who does depart by denying Christ. So like Judas, like Phylgelus, like Hermogenes, who departs by denying Christ, they had never died with Christ in the first place.

[21 : 36] It's not that they fall into both categories. It's not like they had died with Christ, and then they deny Christ. It's that they were not in the first category. They were in the second universal principle.

So the one who departs by denying Christ has never died with Christ. And such a person, it tells us, will be denied by Christ. And the trustworthy God is faithful to his promise, both of salvation and of damnation.

And nothing changes on God's part. God is trustworthy. God is faithful. So in these situations, what changed was not God, but the outward profession of pseudo-Christians.

And with the second universal principle, we see also their destination. It says, if we deny him, he also will deny us.

In other words, they will be denied by Christ. Those who deny Christ will be denied by Christ. And in Matthew 7, 22, it says, many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not?

[22 : 46] And then it goes on to describe all these wonderful things they did for God. Now notice that they think that they are going to have merit before God because of all the things they did.

What category does that put them into? That puts them in the category of works. They think that their works are going to win over God's merit. But it says, and then I will declare to them, I never knew you.

There was no union with Christ. They had not died with Christ. And while they thought that all these things that they did, their works, were wonderful and that God would be delighted with them, it says, I never knew you depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.

They thought their works were marvelous. But in God's eyes, it was lawlessness. And their destination is depart from me. And according to John 3, 36, God's wrath remains on them.

The trustworthy promises of a faithful God are grounded in the faithfulness of a trustworthy God. So in other words, we've looked at these two universal principles as it pertains to man, according to whether they have died with Christ or whether they have denied Christ.

[24 : 07] But now we will look at it in considering God. God's covenant-keeping faithfulness. It says, if we are faithless, he remains faithful.

Now to understand this phrase in the context of these verses and the two universal principles, there is an underlying doctrine to understand of the distinction of these two principles.

The covenant of works and the covenant of grace. The covenant of works is do this and live. Ten commandments, how do I inherit eternal life?

How do I inherit eternal life? Do this and live. Do the law of God and you will live. But doing the law of God requires perfect obedience.

Now Adam was born with original righteousness. He was the only one born with original righteousness. Or he wasn't born. The only one with original righteousness. And because of the fall, because of sin, all the posterity of Adam is born with sin nature and sins.

[25 : 24] Adam was the only one with original righteousness. So everyone by the seed of Adam has sin nature and does actually sin and cannot perfectly obey the law so therefore cannot merit eternal life according to their works.

Which is why it required the word to become flesh. That is the son of God to assume our nature to take to himself a body. And that's why the incarnation was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary and born of her yet without sin.

Not the seed of Adam but the seed of the woman. And Christ was without sin and did not sin and did perfectly obey the law. So this distinction, either you are under the law which we are under the law as we are born and we are condemned under the law or under the covenant of grace united to Christ.

and that distinction is important and Romans 7, 4-6 helps understand it because if you remember it Romans 7, 1-6 is not about marriage but it uses marriage to help illustrate the power of the law.

And when a woman's husband dies she is no longer bound to him but is free to come under another, to marry another. So also when someone dies to the covenant of works they are free to come under another namely Christ, those whom have died with Christ and are united with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.

[26 : 59] So this distinction of covenant works of covenant grace is the distinction of these two universal principles. Either you have denied Christ and you are under the covenant of works in which case you have to come before God with perfect, exact, entire, perpetual obedience of his law to merit eternal life or you will be denied.

The other option is the first universal principle not the covenant of works Romans 8, 1 there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. You are under the covenant of grace united to Christ having died with him in his death, burial and resurrection.

If you have died with Christ you will live with Christ. So this is what it comes down to. Either you wholly renounce yourself and cling to Christ in faith there is that word again either you wholly renounce yourself or cling to Christ in faith or you cling to yourself and wholly renounce Christ in other words faithless.

So if you have not died with Christ then you are denying Christ. It is one of the two universal principles it is not both and it is not neither. So you might be asking will God change his mind? Maybe God will change his mind and it could be depending on what universal principle you find yourself in. If you are in the principle where you have denied Christ maybe you think well when I die and I am before God maybe he will just see how lovely I really actually am and he will say oh don't worry about that sin stuff.

[28 : 34] My holiness is not that important which is not going to happen because God is faithful he cannot deny himself. So God will not change or the other universal principle if you have died with Christ says you will also live with Christ how do I know God is not going to change his mind when he sees how unlovely I actually am because God is faithful and he cannot deny himself.

So how do I have confidence in the trustworthiness of this faithful saying? Remember it started off by saying this is a faithful saying. How do I have confidence in the trustworthiness of this faithful saying?

The grounds of the trustworthiness of God's promises are this. He cannot deny himself. And this is why the doctrine of God is so important.

In the evenings these past two months we've been considering the doctrine of God and working through the perfections or the essence of God and attributes of God as it's articulated in the second London Confession of Faith and it's taken us two months to and we're probably not even halfway through the first paragraph.

But this is why the doctrine of God is so important. He cannot deny himself that the trustworthiness of God is because God is faithful because of who God is his very nature.

[29 : 59] God cannot deny his very nature. Consider the perfections the essence of God that we've considered his self-existence his independence. He is the source and fountainhead of all life.

There is nothing that has formed him or created him. He's the first cause that God is not composed of parts. Nothing has caused him to come together. Because he's not composed of parts God cannot fall apart when something happens.

God's omnipotence his almighty power God is the source of all power. God's omnipresence his his most infinite and that he transcends the bounds of space.

He fills all space and God transcends the bounds of time. He fills all time his immensity his eternity and God's impassibility that God cannot be caused to suffer because of something outside of him that changes him.

God is always perfect all the time. So God's impassibility means that God wasn't lacking in love that he had to be brought up to love and at no time in the future God can be brought down from his perfection of love.

[31 : 15] He is always at all times the perfection of all that he is. All that is in God is God. He's always most loving. He is always most powerful. He is always most holy.

And so because God is not moved in emotions God doesn't fall in love with us then when we sin God won't fall out of love with us.

So this is why the doctrine of God is so important because he cannot deny himself. So what is it that he can't deny? It's his very essence. Who God is. So why is this a faithful saying?

Well this is why the saying is faithful. It is trustworthy because of God. The trustworthy promises of a faithful God are grounded in the faithfulness of a trustworthy God.

And it says he cannot deny himself. It doesn't say he will not deny himself. That would indicate that denying himself is a possibility but he's decided not to. He cannot. He cannot go against his own nature.

[32 : 18] He cannot deny himself. He abides the same. He always is. He cannot deny his own being. He cannot cease to be God. His essence cannot change and you cannot change God's essence.

These two universal principles those who have died with him will live with him. Those who deny him he will he also will deny.

So what are some concluding uses that we can take from this text? Here's the crux of the matter. After this life, after the veil of the flesh is removed and you stand on the brink of eternity, the way back will be closed.

You can't go back and redo life. You can't take a mulligan. You can't hit control Z. You can't undo. The way back is closed. The way forward is fixed.

It's determined. There will be no second chance. There's no such thing as purgatory. There will be no waiting room to pay off outstanding debt. The way forward is final.

[33:30] It is fixed. It is determined. And there are only two destinations, only two options, only two principles that come into play. The destination of your soul for all of eternity will come down to one of these two universal principles.

And this is the most important matter of your entire life. Have you died with Christ or have you denied Christ? And at this point there will be no further opportunity to repent.

After death there will be no further opportunity to repent. You might say, well, maybe I never died with Christ.

I continued to live a life of sin. But it's not like I actually formally publicly denied Christ or anything. If you believe that, then you are deceived because to not die with Christ is to deny Christ.

To not do the one is to do the other. To not die with Christ is to deny Christ. So either you have died with Christ or you have denied Christ.

[34:46] So then you must ask the question, how then must I respond to Christ? What is the appropriate response? And the answer is implicit in verse 13.

If we are faithless, there's that word faith again. Faith, we see it in both. The first universal principle is faith. The second universal principle is faithless.

Either you have died with Christ and received him by faith or you deny Christ and are faithless. And the trustworthy promises of a faithful God are grounded in the faithfulness of a trustworthy God.

If we died with him, we shall also live with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us. Let's pray.