

Remembering Jesus Christ

Printed Text · 2 Timothy 2:8-15

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **ARTICULATE** our Christian beliefs and values as reflected in 2 Timothy 2; **REFLECT** on the reasons why we need to effectively communicate our beliefs and values; and **DEVELOP** a strategy to share the Gospel with others.

In Focus

Anthony was a Christian who was not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He believed wholeheartedly in God and in God's Word and sought to live for Christ. One day, he ran into Andre, who studied world religions when they were in college. They began to talk about current events, and Anthony posed this question to Andre. "If you were to die today, what do you think would happen to your soul?"

Andre replied, "Nothing would happen to my soul—that's it—it is the end!"

Anthony quoted some Scriptures to him, but he began to get frustrated because Andre referred to Christianity as folklore.

Finally, Anthony discerned that Andre's issues went deeper than the surface responses he presented. Anthony knew that as a child, Andre had suffered from some awful wounds at the hands of a hypocritical clergyman and, as a result, Andre decided there must be a better way to God than Christianity. Anthony was a strong apologist (defender of the Word of God), but he knew that it would not serve the kingdom of God well for him to continue debating with Andre. Andre's mind was already made up.

We as Christians must be firm in what we believe and must be ready and able to articulate our beliefs in a convincing manner.

Keep In Mind

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV).

Words You Should Know

- A. **Gospel** (2 Timothy 2:8) euaggelion (Gk.) — Preaching and teaching of the kingdom of God.
- B. **Evil Doer** (v. 9) kakourgos (Gk.) — A wrongdoer, criminal, troublemaker.
- C. **Eternal** (v. 10) aionios (Gk.) — Everlasting.

Say It Correctly

Davidic. de-vi-DIK

KJV

2 Timothy 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.
10 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.
11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:
12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:
13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.
14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.
15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

NLT

2 Timothy 2:8 Always remember that Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David, was raised from the dead. This is the Good News I preach.
9 And because I preach this Good News, I am suffering and have been chained like a criminal. But the word of God cannot be chained.
10 So I am willing to endure anything if it will bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen.
11 This is a trustworthy saying: If we die with him, we will also live with him.
12 If we endure hardship, we will reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us.
13 If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.
14 Remind everyone about these things, and command them in God's presence to stop fighting over words. Such arguments are useless, and they can ruin those who hear them.
15 Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.

The People, Places, and Times

Early Christians. Due to their strong faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, believers in the early church were persecuted. They were perceived as suspicious criminals. Gentile rulers in the Roman Empire, as well as aristocrats, believed in multiple gods. They worshiped at the throne of their own intellect and developed their own philosophies. They did not want anything to upset the status quo. In addition, Jews who did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus also brought opposition to early Christians. The persecution came to a head under Nero's rule. He used Christians as scapegoats when Rome was set ablaze in A.D. 64. Historians believe that Nero started the fire in a fit of rage and put the blame on Christians. Many Christians were brutally persecuted and murdered under his reign until A.D. 68. The apostle Paul suffered, too; he was imprisoned and later beheaded in A.D. 66.

Background

Paul, imprisoned for what was believed to be his final time, was locked up on a more serious charge than his first arrest. Treated as a common criminal, Paul instructed Timothy, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:8). Timothy was a much younger man than Paul, who was a senior by now. Timothy was often timid because of his age, especially when it came to leading those older than he was. In this light, Paul encouraged Timothy in his letters to be strong, to endure hard times, to avoid getting sidetracked, and to boldly instruct those who followed him. Also, Paul sought to warn Timothy about wickedness and admonish him to represent the Gospel of Jesus Christ well. This second letter to Timothy, written about A.D. 66, was very personal for Paul as he passes the torch. He reminds Timothy of Timothy's heritage (2 Timothy 1:5) and charges him to use the gifts that God has given him at the laying on of Paul's hands when Timothy was first called into the ministry (v. 6). Paul speaks candidly to

Timothy as a father in the ministry, who is soon leaving his son and wants to give him as much of God's wisdom as he can before his departure. Paul takes this occasion to reinforce key messages, to encourage Timothy warmly, and to say goodbye.

At-A-Glance

1. A Reminder of Whom We Serve (2 Timothy 2:8–10)
2. A Reminder of the True Rewards of Serving (vv. 11–13)
3. A Reminder to Know What We Believe (vv. 14–15)

In Depth

1. A Reminder of Whom We Serve (2 Timothy 2:8–10)

Paul reminds Timothy not only to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1), but to remember who Christ is as the heir to the throne of God, as promised to David (cf. 2 Samuel 7:12–13, 16; Psalm 89:3–4; Luke 1:31–33). He reminds Timothy of who we as believers serve. In other words, he reminds him of the Good News, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This Gospel is God's atonement for our sins and ministry of reconciliation between God and humankind "for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Paul, in baring his soul to his son in the ministry, admits that while he is suffering as a common criminal ("an evil doer"), the Word of God is not bound but continues to reach the lost (2 Timothy 2:9).

2. A Reminder of the True Reward of Serving (vv. 11–13)

Paul has presented Timothy with the realities of Christian fellowship, such as the truth of Jesus Christ and who He is as our salvation, the persecution current and future, and those who would deny Christ and join in with other malefactors. Then Paul reminds him of the true reward that lies ahead for those who endure to the end. He recalls for Timothy the tenets of the faith as revealed to him by Christ. Jesus Himself said, "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29–30). God Himself will reward His good and faithful servants with the eternal life that He secured for them through the blood of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul assures Timothy that as new creatures in Christ, we shall experience the highs and lows of life all with God's intent to fashion us into His image—molding and making us into His character. The writer of Hebrews says, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). If we are resurrected with Christ in order to live and reign with Him, we, too, must die to self and will suffer persecution as we carry our own crosses. We, too, should learn obedience to God by the things which we suffer. This, however, does not negate the reward that we will receive when all is said and done on this earth (Romans 5:5–8).

3. A Reminder to Know What We Believe (vv. 14–15)

Timothy is charged with not only reading what has been said in this letter to him, but to "put them in remembrance" by urging those who are led by him to do so out of the fear or reverence of God (2 Timothy 2:14). Timothy is to admonish believers not to spend time getting involved in verbal challenges with those who subvert the truth of God in Christ, for it only gives them an unwarranted audience.

At this time, Timothy was facing opposition from false teachers who looked for people to follow and esteem them as great and who often distorted the truth (v. 18). Paul writes to Timothy, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God” (v. 15), or as he said on another occasion, “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Ephesians 4:1). Because Paul knows that Timothy was called out by God from his youth for the Gospel, and that he laid hands on Timothy to commission him to carry out his duties in the kingdom of God, he now exhorts him to stand firm in what he believes and to make understanding the Word a priority.

This text teaches us that it does not benefit God or us as Christians to argue with unbelievers just for the sake of debates that may be meaningless. Later on in this letter, Paul reaffirms, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). We should know God’s Word and rightly divide the Word of truth so that we can grow in the wisdom and knowledge of God and walk in His Word. But we should not engage in heated arguments just to prove how much we know; this is detrimental to God’s kingdom-building initiative.

Search the Scriptures

1. Why was it important for Paul to remind Timothy and others about the ancestry and kingship of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:8)?
2. What does Paul mean when he said the Gospel is “not bound” (v. 9)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. Why is it important to know what we believe?
2. What role does worship play in expressing our faith?

Liberating Lesson

There is a lot of strange doctrine, and many prominent people are viewed as influencers in shaping public opinion. However, no matter the star power, if what they propagate conflicts with the Word of God, we must be ready to refute arguments and stand up for what we believe. Worship is central to expressing what we believe, and it does not take place only in church. Worship is a lifestyle rooted in abiding belief in living by the Word of God.

Application For Activation

Are you spending enough time in prayer, praise, and worship? Determine this week to spend extra time in the Word of God. If you have not done so already, carve out a place in your home for quiet time with the Lord. Ask God to reveal His will for your life and show you how you can better serve and represent Him in your everyday life.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

2 Timothy 2:8–15

8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

Christ is the ultimate example of perseverance leading to success. He is the example to always remember. The continued remembrance of Christ's resurrection has practical consequences in proportion as it is understood in its fullness. The power available to Timothy is founded on mighty facts about Christ: He was really raised from the dead, and He descended from David. These facts are vital for Christian proclamation and for Christian life.

Christ was raised from the dead. The Greek verb *egeiro* (*eg-I-ro*), "to raise," is in the perfect tense (an action already accomplished, but its results are still present) marking a permanent condition. It means that Christ is now up from the grave and will never die again. He is alive permanently. The resurrection of Christ is the most important Christian truth. It contains the guarantee of all other aspects of the work of Christ. It is the final proof of Christ's deity and of the fact that God has accepted His sacrifice for the sin of humanity (Romans 1:3–4; 4:25). It is the pledge of the future resurrection of believers, for Christ is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20). It is a call to live in newness of life (Romans 6:4, 11; Colossians 3:1).

Christ's Davidic lineage points to the fact that He was human and the Messiah indeed (cf. Acts 2:29–35; Romans 1:3–4). Truly, He became human, was qualified to be the Messiah, and really did suffer. Timothy must always keep these facts in mind, because just as a disciple is like his master, he will suffer, too. However, suffering is followed by resurrection. "According to my gospel" means the Gospel that Paul preached (cf. Romans 2:16; 16:25). The truth about the humanity and resurrection of Christ was emphasized in the Gospel preached by Paul.

9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

The verse reveals Paul as an imitator of Christ and an example to Timothy and the believers (cf. v. 3). If Paul can endure, Timothy can and we can. The Greek construction *en hoi* (*en hoi*), "on account of which," indicates the Gospel as the domain of Paul's sufferings. It is Paul's work "in the gospel" that has caused him to be mistreated by the Roman authorities. The Greek word *kakourgos* (*kak-OOR-gos*, "evildoer") suggests that Paul was being treated as a common criminal (cf. Luke 23:32, 39). *Kakourgos* here describes those crucified with Jesus; it is the only other use of the word in the New Testament. The apostle Paul had been in prison and had been treated like a criminal because of the Gospel on many occasions (Acts 9:25; 2 Corinthians 11:33; cf. Luke 23:32–39; Philippians 2:8).

In contrast to Paul's own condition is the absolute freedom of the Word of God. The persecution of preachers may slow down the progress of the Gospel, but it cannot prevent the Word of God from spreading. The Word does not lie in chains like the man who had spent days in preaching it. It is living and active (Hebrews 4:12). It is still with us, and it still needs preachers (Romans 10:14–17). God raises up people to preach it (Acts 4:20; 1 Corinthians 9:16).

10 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

Paul then gives a reason that he can “endure” (Gk. hupomeno, hoop-om-EN-o, meaning “to take patiently”). It is for the sake of the “elect” (Gk. eklektos, ek-lek-TOS), or “the chosen.” The “elect’s sake” here seems to mean those who are chosen but do not yet believe. They have to hear the Word of God to believe. It can also refer to those who had been and were being saved through the apostle’s ministry. Paul had spent many years spreading the Gospel. He had seen many people receive the Word and be saved (Acts 16:31). Thus, the churches of Macedonia were his “crown” and his “joy” (Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19). The expression in 2 Timothy 2:10 “with eternal glory” refers to the consummation of salvation. Paul in his writings often links glory with salvation (Romans 5:1–2; 8:21–25; 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14). Salvation may be enjoyed in part in this life. It will be consummated in eternal glory (2 Corinthians 4:16–18; 5:1–10).

11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

Paul here introduces a quote with an expression very familiar in the pastoral epistles (cf. 1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; Titus 3:8). It attests that the saying is “faithful.” The saying is presented in four statements with a double facet: the first two are expressed in a positive manner (vv. 11–12a) and the last two are characterized by a negative (vv. 12b–13). In view of the use of the Greek verb tense sunapothnesko (soonap-oth-NACE-ko, “to die together with”), the phrase “If we be dead with him” is referring to a past event, an experience of identification with Christ such as baptism (see Romans 6:1–8). The Greek word for “suffer” (Greek hupomeno, hoop-om-EN-o) means “to persevere” (see verse 10). “We shall also reign with him” expresses an identification of the believer with Christ.

The experience of identification with Christ forms the basis of Christian living (Colossians 3:3). Christ suffered, but one day He will reign (1 Corinthians 15:25). In the same way, the believers, who are suffering now, will reign one day with Him (Revelation 3:21). We may go through hardship in the present, but there are great things to look forward to (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:16–5:10). Having risen to a new life, we are called to patiently endure. The result of endurance is blessings (Romans 8:17; James 1:12; 5:11). Jesus Himself endured and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).

The statement in 2 Timothy 2:12, “If we deny him, he also will deny us,” refers to a possibility of apostasy (cf. Matthew 10:33; 1 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 10:38–39; 2 John 9). Regardless of one’s stance on the issue of eternal security, we all have observed those who have identified with Christ, at least for a time, but later denied Christ. If we are faithless, He remains faithful.

Even if we are lacking in loyalty, He remains trustworthy (cf. Romans 3:3–4). He is loyal to His promises (1 Corinthians 1:8; Hebrews 10:23; 11:11; cf. Psalm 89:28). Christ’s faithfulness to His own promises gives the believer his or her greatest security. God cannot lie; thus, He will do what He says He will do (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Malachi 3:6; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). It is unthinkable that any incident could affect God’s faithfulness because He cannot contradict Himself. He cannot be false to His own nature. Our powerlessness cannot affect Him in His nature.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

The tense of “put...in remembrance” (Gk. hupomimnesko, hoop-om-im-NACE-ko) means “call to mind” or “remember” and is the imperative present indicating regularity. Paul exhorted or urged Timothy to remind people of “these things” regularly. Paul gives specific instructions to guide Timothy in his inevitable encounters with false teachers. He must first maintain the right doctrine. Everyone is to be reminded regularly of the apostles’ teachings. Therefore, the deposit of the Christian truth is to be guarded (2 Timothy 1:12–14; 2:2; see Jude 3).

The Greek word for “charge” is diamarturomai (dee-am-ar-TOO-rom-ahee), which means “to testify” or “to confirm a thing by testimony.” Timothy had to instruct the converts to avoid strife over mere words. They should not engage in word battles. It does no good. It can actually be harmful. The Greek word katastrophe (katas-trof-AY) means “subversion” or “ruin” and literally “turning upside down.” Verbal strife can upset the faith of many. It is the antithesis of edification, or building up. We should always ask if the subject under discussion is worth a fight and if it is for building up or tearing down God’s kingdom (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:8; 13:10).

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The meaning of “study” (Gk. spoudazo, spoo-DAD-zo) means “to hasten,” “to be eager,” or “to do one’s utmost” (cf. Matthew 20:1, 8). Timothy must persistently live in a way “approved” (Gk. dokimos, DOK-eemos) meaning “accepted after testing” by God. Timothy must maintain the standard at all times. He is always under God’s eye. The most effective way to refute error is to live out the truth (see the book of James). Therefore, Timothy must be a teacher, who without shame, can submit his work for God’s approval (cf. Matthew 25:14–30). He must remain in the truth so that all deviations will be evident. “Rightly dividing the word of truth” means doing a correct analysis of the Word of God. Therefore, we cannot give a correct analysis if we do not know the Word and the God-intended meaning of the Word.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday

Acts 3:11-16

Tuesday

Romans 1:1-7

Wednesday

Titus 3:1-7

Thursday

Matthew 26:17-30

Friday

1 Corinthians 11:23-33

Saturday

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Sunday

2 Timothy 2:8-19