

A Worthy Message (2 Timothy 2:8-13)

Convictions have sometimes been defined as those values in life for which we would be willing to die. It seems that few of our values measure up to the level of convictions. But without true convictions we have little worth living for, let alone dying for. When it comes to the gospel of Jesus Christ we find something worthy of rising to the level of conviction. The good news about Jesus—His life, His death, His resurrection, His reign—is a worthy message, worth dying for and therefore worth living for. The life changing gospel of Jesus Christ is a message worthy of our absolute allegiance. It's worth both dying for and living for.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is worth dying for (2:8-10).

Having exhorted Timothy to be strong in the grace of Christ Jesus, Paul presents both Jesus and himself as examples of perseverance in the face of severe opposition. Jesus died and rose again—worth remembering—and Paul was chained like a common criminal. But such sacrifices were worthwhile because of the nature of the gospel.

The gospel deserves our careful reflection because it centers on the resurrected Christ (2:8).

“Remember Jesus Christ.” We remember Jesus during our times of communion around the Lord’s Table, but remembering Jesus should be a constant reflection of our hearts. Hebrews 12:2 says, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus.” One reason Jesus should be at the forefront of our minds is because He modeled for us the patient endurance required of those who follow Him. He died for us. More specific to Paul’s thoughts in this passage, however, is Jesus’ resurrection. We’re to reflect on Jesus and His resurrection—His victory over death and His life giving, life sustaining power. This Jesus, as Paul points out, is “of the seed of David,” a reminder of Jesus’ human nature and royal authority. Paul states that this royal and resurrected Jesus is the heart of his gospel message. The good news about Jesus includes the fact that He rose to give us life and He has the right to rule over our lives.

The gospel deserves our humiliating hardship because it proves to be the unbound truth of God (2:9).

Jesus suffered to bring us His salvation. In a similar way Paul endured hardship in order to deliver the gospel to others. Paul described his situation at the moment as one of “suffering evil” or “enduring hardship.” He was bound by chains “as an evildoer,” a term that described some of the worst of criminals (compare Luke 23:32-33). Such conditions and accusations were

humiliating to a man of Paul's stature, but he willingly endured such hardship for the sake of the gospel. While he himself was chained like a common criminal, he knew and declared, "The word of God is not chained!" The gospel cannot be confined by ridicule, imprisonment, or persecution. Its power transcends boundaries and barriers of all kinds, physical and spiritual alike. For this reason the gospel is worth any sacrifice we might make.

The gospel deserves our patient endurance because it brings salvation to God's people (2:10).

Because he knew that God's Word is so powerful Paul was willing to "endure," that is patiently tolerate all things—humiliation, imprisonment, even death itself. He did so "for the elect." Those called by God to be recipients of salvation, the salvation that's available only through Jesus Christ, needed to hear this good news. Paul strikes a balance here between election and the need for a response to the gospel. God, in the mystery of salvation, indeed calls people to Himself but these same people need to hear and respond to the gospel. That's why Paul persistently and patiently endured hardship in order to spread the gospel message. Salvation is available only in Christ Jesus, and that salvation comes with "eternal glory," the future blessing of the radiant presence of the believer with God in heaven (compare Romans 8:18). Paul was willing to die for the sake of the gospel. In fact, the gospel is a message worth dying for.

**The gospel of Jesus Christ
is worth living for (2:11-13).**

The gospel is a message not only worth dying for but also worth living for. Paul introduces a poetic series of statements with the phrase, "this is a trustworthy saying," a phrase he uses four other times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; Titus 3:8). Second Timothy 2:11-13 may record a commonly known creed or hymn of the early church. It points to the importance of living out the truth of the gospel.

To die with Christ is to enter into life with Him (2:11)

"If we died with him, we will also live with him." Christians have, through faith, died with Jesus Christ, meaning that we have put aside our old lives in order to live for Him (compare Romans 6:1-11; Galatians 2:20). Through His death we enter into life. We presently live in union and fellowship with our Savior, a resurrected life that will continue on into eternity.

To persist with Christ is to reign with Him (2:12a).

“If we endure, we will also reign with him.” The verb “endure” implies an ongoing condition of the spiritual life, to abide or persist in our faith. As a reward for our endurance we will one day reign with Jesus Christ. The Lord has reserved a role of responsibility for His people in His future kingdom.

To deny Christ is to receive His denial (2:12b).

“If we deny him, he will also deny us.” In Matthew 10:33 Jesus stated a similar warning. While Paul may have in mind the denial of rewards to those who falter under persecution, it seems preferable to view denial in this passage as a blatant rejection of Jesus Christ that reveals a lack of faith and therefore an absence of true salvation. Those who deny Jesus will be denied access to heaven by Jesus due to a lack of saving faith. This stanza serves as a strong warning to all who claim to know Jesus Christ.

To be faithless toward Christ cannot diminish His faithfulness because He is always consistent with His character (2:13).

“If we are faithless, he remains faithful.” In an interesting twist this phrase assures us that Jesus will remain faithful to His faltering people even when we are faithless. To be faithless is quite different from denying Jesus. It refers instead to those all too common, momentary lapses of trust that every Christian experiences. The present tense of the verb implies recurring lapses of faith. But even when we’re not faithful, Jesus always remains faithful to us. Why? Paul states, “He cannot deny himself.” Jesus is always consistent with His perfect character. We can depend on Him even when we fail. Therefore, Jesus is worthy of our complete commitment, our unswerving allegiance. The good news about Jesus is worth living for as well as worth dying for. The life changing gospel of Jesus Christ is a message worthy of our absolute allegiance.