

**Title:** Strengthened by Grace

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 2:1-7

**Series:** The Pastoral Epistles

## 1. Introduction –

a. In Chapter 1 of our epistle, we studied incredible truths in regards to Christianity and ministry. We understand that this epistle is written from a seasoned minister to a young minister that must carry the mantle of fidelity.

i. We were urged to fan into flame the gift of God

ii. We were reminded that our God had not given us a spirit of fear, but instead, we have, as believers, been given a spirit of power, love, and self-control.

iii. It is this grace, God’s gift, that makes us able to stand unashamed of the gospel.

1. God’s grace and abiding power give the Christian the ability to co-participate in the church’s suffering over the ages.

iv. We learned that it is proper to call God our Savior because he has:

1. Called us with an effectual calling. This is the doctrine of Irresistible Grace.

2. This calling is a holy calling. This is the doctrine of Sanctification.

3. Our calling is not based on our works. This is the doctrine of Total Depravity.

4. Our calling is based on His free grace.

5. Our calling was sure before the ages began. This is the doctrine of Election.

- v. This salvational grace became evident in the 1<sup>st</sup> advent of Christ.
    - 1. Jesus has abolished death. His resurrection defeats death.
    - 2. Jesus has brought life by overcoming the curse of death in Genesis.
    - 3. Jesus has brought immortality. This is the doctrine of Glorification.
    - 4. It is the gospel that represents God's grace accurately.
  - vi. Beloved, Christ's life and work have saved us and made us worthwhile for ministry. We are to herald, proclaim the Gospel of God, the gospel of our salvation.
  - vii. We also learned that our living and proclaiming the gospel must be according to doctrinal purity. We learned that doctrine matters. Because doctrine matters, the following two statements must be true.
    - 1. We must follow sound doctrine's pattern
    - 2. We are to guard this rich deposit of treasure by relying on the Holy Spirit's power.
  - viii. Finally, we learned that not all professing Christians stand for the gospel. Many people will turn away from God's ministers and truth and therefore turn from God. However, there are those, like Onesiphorus, who will stand for the gospel even in the hardest of circumstances.
- b. Today, we study Paul's command of the young minister, Timothy. The minister must stand in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Paul demonstrates this

truth with four examples. Today, we will study these examples to precisely explain what it means to stand in this grace.

i. May God illuminate our minds, hearts, and wills.

2. Verse 1: Lean on Christ's Grace: You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus,

a. As we have studied, Timothy had a difficult situation in Ephesus. Some of the elders were not qualified for their task, there were signs of schisms within the church, false teachers were making inroads, and Timothy's pastoral authority was constantly challenged. It is in difficult moments like these that Christians tend to surrender.

i. Paul reminds Timothy that he cannot behave in this cowardly way.

ii. Timothy, like all Christians, has been called by God.

iii. We must remember that to surrender the call is to turn our backs on our God.

b. Therefore, again the apostle reminds Timothy that he must **stand**. This is a command based on the authority of God.

c. However, we notice with what affection this command is given. He calls Timothy **his child**.

i. We are reminded that the Lord's strongest commands are always given from the wellspring of His love.

1. God commands the Christian because He loves His child. He wants what is best for him.

- a. The Apostle Paul adopts this same attitude.
2. The word of God should always be brought to bear upon the heart from the place of love. An example of this is our Lord's dealing with the rich young ruler. Christ commands him to abandon his idolatry. But how does he do this?
  - a. We read in **Mark 10:19-21** You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" (20) And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." (21) And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."
3. We, too, must preach God's command in the same spirit of love.
- d. Timothy is commanded **to be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.**
  - i. Timothy, like all Christians, does not have any reason for walking in weakness or fear. God grants the Christian a spirit of power, love, and self-control.
  - ii. In the book of Ephesians, we are reminded of God's good gifts that are freely given.

1. **Ephesians 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
  - iii. Therefore Timothy, like all Christians, is commanded to be **strong**.
    1. Brethren, let us consider that the command to walk in the strength of the Lord is everywhere recorded in Scripture. In the book of Joshua we read, **Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”
  - iv. We are to stand and be strong in the Lord. This strength is in the knowledge that we are being kept by the **grace that is in Christ Jesus**. We are dependent solely on Him and not on any human effort.
    1. Because we belong to Christ, we are continuously in the sphere of His grace.
  - e. At this point, Paul gives the young minister four examples (analogies) of the strong Christian life.
    - i. These truths must be evident in the minister’s life and need to be present, to a certain extent, in all believers’ lives.

3. Verse 2: The First Analogy is the Minister as a Teacher: and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

- a. Timothy is to view himself as a teacher that is a link in the chain by which sound doctrine is passed down from one generation to another. The chain is composed in the following way:
  - i. The head of the chain is Jesus Christ. All sound doctrine and teaching come only through Him.
  - ii. Jesus had taught Paul.
  - iii. Paul had taught Timothy **in the presence of many witnesses.**
  - iv. Timothy is to teach faithful men by **entrusting** them with the in-depth teaching of God's Word.
    1. **Entrust:** depositing a treasure of great value for safe-keeping. Timothy must **entrust** these faithful men with the doctrine of our salvation.
    2. **Faithful men:** the official church position of bible teacher is reserved for faithful men both in character and in exercising the divine gift of teaching that is given. Not everyone is a teacher.
  - v. Those **faithful men** were to teach **others.**
  - vi. A minister is to be a teacher. To a certain extent, all Christians are teachers as well.

4. Verse 3 and 4: The Second Analogy is the Minister as a Soldier: Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (4) No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.
  - a. A minister is to be a teacher, but he must also be a soldier with wholehearted devotion.

- b. The apostle calls Timothy to be spiritually strong by viewing himself as a devoted soldier to his King.
- c. As a man under authority, **Timothy must share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.**
  - i. A **good soldier** does not serve the King with minimum effort but would give up his very life for the King's cause.
    - 1. He is willing to **suffer** as a soldier. He is ready to brave the elements, exhaustion, pain, and even death.
      - a. The word **suffer** means to accept one's fair share of rough treatment.
- d. The minister (like all Christians) is to be an **active soldier** on call every hour of every day. His body, health, skills, and time, all that he is, belong to the service of the army of God. This is why he must not get **entangled in civilian pursuits.**
  - i. If a Soldier pursued a business on the side, one that would consume his interests, so that he becomes "**entangled**" in it, he would not be able to really "**give**" himself to his appointed task as a soldier.
  - ii. Remember, Paul is not referencing sinful things or actions. He is talking about harmless everyday things. A good soldier refuses to let earthly matters deter him from his service to Christ. His sole **aim is to please the one who enlisted him.**
    - 1. A minister is to perform his office with wholehearted devotion to Christ.

5. Verse 5: The Third Analogy is the Minister as an Athlete: An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.
- a. Paul now moves to the example of an athlete.
  - b. An athlete will not receive the crown, the prize if he does not compete according to the rules set forth for the competition.
  - c. Teaching and wholehearted devotion is not all that is required. God's rules must be obeyed as well.
    - i. **Rules for the minister (and also the Christian):**
      1. He must faithfully study and obey God's Word.
      2. He must live as a genuine disciple of Christ.
      3. He must preach and teach the truth in love.
      4. He must exercise self-discipline.
  - d. Competing according to the rules is to be steadfast in our confession. The bible teaches that steadfast Christians will be rewarded in the eternal state:
    - i. **James 1:12** Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.
      1. Notice that steadfastness is the measure by which God judges our love for Him.
    - ii. **Revelation 2:10** Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.



6. Verse 6: The Fourth Analogy is the Minister as a Farmer:

It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.

- a. Finally, we have the example of a farmer.
- b. Along with being a teacher, possessing wholehearted devotion, and living in obedience to rules that govern the Christian life, a minister must also work diligently. He is to be a **hard-working farmer**.
- c. Christian ministry is often equated with farming in the Scriptures.
  - i. There is the example of the sower who went out to sow.
  - ii. There is the admonition of Jesus for us to pray for the laborers that will harvest the field.
  - iii. **1 Corinthians 3:9** For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.
  - iv. We learn from these analogies to farming that there is no room for a sluggard in God's kingdom. The minister must be given to the task of spiritual work.
- d. If a minister works diligently, then he will receive **the first share of the crops**.
  - i. If Timothy (or any worker in God's vineyard) exerts himself to the fullest in the performance of his God-given spiritual task, he, too, will be the first to be rewarded. Not only will his faith be strengthened, his hope made alive, his love deepened, and the flame of his gift renewed, but also, he will see in the lives of others the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

1. A minister is to work tirelessly in the ministry field with an understanding that his work is of great importance.

7. Verse 7: Contemplate the truth: Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

a. Because Paul has used four separate analogies to describe the spiritually healthy Christian life, he now calls Timothy to **think over what he had just said**. The mere reading of what had just been written was not enough. Timothy needs to contemplate and chew on the sound doctrine that the apostle had just given.

i. All Christians are called to contemplate the truths presented in Scripture.

b. A promise is made that **the Lord will give you understanding in everything**:

i. We have Christ's promise that contemplating His truths is a worthy endeavor. We read in **John 16:13** When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his authority, but whatever he hears, he will say, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

c. Understanding is given to those that apply themselves to know God. The minister must pray for wisdom.

i. **James 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

8. What great truths our Lord shares with us in this passage.

- a. We are challenged to stand strong by trusting in His grace.
- b. God paints a picture of the spiritually strong life by giving the reader four examples that illustrate what is required.
  - i. We learned that a strong spiritual life requires faithful teaching of sound doctrine.
  - ii. A strong spiritual life requires wholehearted devotion.
  - iii. This life requires obedience to rules set forth by God.
  - iv. A strong Christian must be hard-working.
- c. Let us, like Timothy, contemplate these things, and our Lord will give us spiritual understanding for the tas ahead.

9. Benediction:

- a. **Jeremiah 23:4** I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD.

**Public Reading of Scripture:  
Jeremiah 23:4-8**