

Endure Hardness (1)

Text: 2 Timothy 2:1-4

Introduction:

1. Previous lesson review: Timothy has been exhorted to be faithful to the Lord in a number of key areas. Theme of faithfulness continues through this section.
2. This section (Vs. 1-13): Timothy is to be strong and endure the rigors of the ministry faithfully, fulfilling the duties of the Christian life with courage and determination.
3. Outline: 1. The Empowerment for Endurance (Vs. 1) 2. The Examples of Endurance (Vs. 2-7) 3. The Encouragement for Endurance (Vs. 8-13)
4. This lesson: Study of the Empowerment for Endurance and the first two of the Examples of Endurance.

I. The Empowerment for Endurance (Vs. 1)

A. The Order to be Strong (Vs. 1a)

1. 'therefore' = builds on what has preceded. Paul and Onesiphorus were both examples of men who had demonstrated that God's grace was sufficient to empower them to endure their trials (Fairbairn)
2. "my son" = term of warm affection. Imagine what it must have been like for Timothy in his discouraged frame of mind to read these precious words from the Apostle.
3. "be strong" = literally "be made strong" or "be empowered". A frequent command in Scripture. Examples:
 - a. Joshua: Joshua 1:9 "Have not I commanded thee? **Be strong and of a good courage**; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."
 - b. Solomon: 1 Chr. 28:20 "And David said to Solomon his son, **Be strong and of good courage**, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD."
 - c. Daniel 10:19 "And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, **be strong, yea, be strong**. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me."

B. The Origin of Strength (Vs. 1b)

1. "in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" = the source of the strength (2.Cor. 9:8; 12:9). This strength is not something that Timothy works up in himself. It is a Divinely provided strength that Timothy is to consciously appropriate as he serves the Lord.
2. Eph. 6:10 "Finally, my brethren, be strong **in the Lord**, and in the

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power of his might.”

3. Charles Wesley Hymn: “Soldiers of Christ, arise, And put your armor on, **Strong in the strength which God supplies** Thru His eternal Son; **Strong in the Lord of hosts**, And **in His mighty pow’r**, **Who in the strength of Jesus** trusts Is more than conqueror. Stand then **in His great might**, With all **His strength** endued, And take, to arm you for the fight, the panoply of God; That having all things done, And all your conflicts past, Ye may overcome **through Christ alone**, And stand entire at last.”
4. Hudson Taylor: “It is not by trying to be faithful, but in looking to the Faithful One, that we win the victory.”

II. The Examples of Endurance (Vs. 2-6)

Timothy was to endure faithfully in a number of areas. He was to be:

A. A Teacher (Vs. 2)

1. The Subject to Teach (Vs. 2a)
 - a. Apostolic truth – “the things which thou hast heard of me”
 - i. The things mentioned in 1:13 “form of sound words”
 - ii. We are to transmit the doctrinal standard of the N.T. to the next generation.
 - iii. We are to teach the “whole council of God” and “all things” Christ commanded (Acts 20:27; Matt. 28:20)
 - b. Attested truth – “among many witnesses”
 - i. The truth by its very nature is open and transparent.
 - ii. Not secret, questionable doctrines (e.g. like the cults) but doctrines openly taught and received by credible witnesses. (See 3:10)
2. The Students to Teach (Vs. 2b)
 - a. ‘commit’ = to set before, entrust, deposit as a trust
 - b. “faithful men” = trustworthy, dependable, reliable, characterized men.
 - i. There is an order of priority here. While the preacher is there to be a servant to all of God’s people, he does have to allocate his time wisely so as to give priority to “faithful men”. Much reproach upon the Name of Christ will be avoided when we make sure that the men we place in leadership are men of spiritual character.
 - ii. Illustration: Neh. 7:2 *“That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many.”*
 - iii. Paul surrounded himself with faithful men: E.g. Timothy (1 Cor. 4:17); Epaphras (Col. 1:17); Onesimus (Col. 4:9); Tychicus (Col. 4:7)
 - c. “able to teach others also” = men who are apt to teach and can be trusted to pass on the doctrines of the Word of God INTACT!
 - d. Note: There are four generations in this verse. Paul, Timothy, faithful men & others. God’s design is for the truth to be perpetuated.

B. A Soldier (Vs. 3-4)

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1. A Soldier's Faithfulness (Vs. 3)
 - a. "therefore" = on the basis of the preceding instruction. Hardship accompanies the man who faithfully seeks to transmit the truth to others.
 - b. "endure hardness" = what is bad, ill treatment, hardships. Same word translated in this same Epistle as "suffer trouble" (2:9) and "endure afflictions" (4:5).
 - i. Every preacher needs a hard head and a soft heart!
 - ii. Ezekiel 3:8-9 *"Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house."*
 - c. "as a good soldier" = a noble, excellent soldier
 - d. "of Jesus Christ" = every believer is a soldier under the leadership of Jesus Christ, the great Captain of our salvation.
2. A Soldier's Focus (Vs. 4)
 - a. "No man that warreth" = present tense. Describes a man in active duty. The Christian is not saved to a life of ease but to a life of bitter struggle against the powers of darkness (Eph. 6:11-12)
 - b. "entangleth himself" = to become intertwined with something. Webster: "To twist or interweave in such a manner as not to be easily separated; to make confused or disordered; as, thread, yarn or ropes may be entangled; to *entangle* the hair." Principle of separation highlighted.
 - c. "affairs of this life" = the ordinary affairs and occupations of a worldly calling (Fairbairn). Pursuits and occupations of civil life (Wuest). Note! There are no "reservists" in the Christian army; no part time soldiering for believers.
 - d. "that he may please him" = the primary concern for every Christian
 - e. "who hath chosen him to be a soldier" = we have been enlisted by Christ to do spiritual battle for him.
 - f. Illustration: Josephus' description of discipline and focus of the ancient Roman army:

"...they (Roman soldiers) do not begin to use their weapons first in time of war, nor do they then put their hands first into motion, while they avoided so to do in times of peace; but, as if their weapons did always cling to them, they have never any truce from warlike exercises; nor do they stay till times of war admonish them to use them; for their military exercises differ not at all from the real use of their arms, but every soldier is every day exercised, and that with great diligence, as if it were in time of war which is the reason why they bear the fatigue of battles so easily; for neither can any disorder remove them from their usual regularity, nor can fear affright them out of it, nor can labour tire them; which firmness of conduct makes them always to overcome those that have not the same firmness...the readiness of obeying their commanders is so great, that it is very ornamental in peace; but when they come to a battle, the whole army is but one body, so well coupled together are their ranks, so sudden are their turnings about, so sharp their hearing as to what orders are given them, so quick their hands when they set to work; whereby it comes to pass, that what they do is done quickly, and what they suffer they bear with the greatest patience." (*Wars of the Jews*, book III, chap. V)

Conclusion: Are we being reliable, dedicated & faithful servants of the Lord?