

brentwood baptist

BRENTWOOD SUMMER SERIES • LEADERSHIP • 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-14 • 7/12/2020

MAIN POINT

As a Christ follower we have the responsibility to lead others to Christ.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone? How did he or she respond? How did you feel?

What aspects of life are most likely to keep you from sharing Christ?

People who are used by God are sensitive to God's leadership, and they go where He sends them—not out of obligation, but whole-hearted commitment to His call. In 2 Timothy 2, we'll see that leading people toward Christ is an essential part of being a follower of Christ.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-3.

What advice did Paul give Timothy?

What does it mean to "be strong in the grace" of Christ Jesus?

Paul referenced the grace of Jesus as an enabling source of power. Recall the initial conversation with your group at the beginning of this study. What examples were given as sources of strength? Paul told Timothy to remain strong, or empowered, in the grace found in Jesus. When things are difficult, as Paul knew they would be, remember that Jesus is your source of strength and power.

If you've been mentored, what was that relationship like? If you haven't had a mentor, who has been a spiritual leader or example in your life?

How are you carrying on their legacy of upholding and sharing the gospel?

Timothy's ministry would play out much differently than Paul's, but Paul knew that no matter the scenario, remaining strong in faith was necessary. The more active we are in ministry, the more we realize the need for a source of strength outside of ourselves.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 TIMOTHY 2:3-10.

What do Paul's suffering, imprisonment, and execution for the sake of the gospel—not to mention his continued determination to share the gospel—teach us about sharing the gospel?

Of the examples of endurance Paul mentioned, which can you relate to most and why?

Paul used multiple examples of endurance, but the common theme was discipline and sacrifice. The metaphors Paul used bring to mind words like loyalty, commitment, patience, labor, stamina, and selflessness. In each case, personal circumstances and comforts take a backseat to leadership and evangelism.

Why is our endurance in the faith important for future generations?

Evaluate your passion for those who do not know Jesus. What are you willing to do for the sake of their salvation? What steps can be taken to endure hardship for their sake?

When we endure, we have the ability to share the gospel. At times we do not share our faith because we fear what others may think. We must remember what Paul says, that sharing the gospel is for the sake of their salvation, not our reputation.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 TIMOTHY 2:11-14.

What were the incentives Paul focused on that allowed him to endure, regardless of circumstances?

How do the two promises (vv. 11-12) inspire you to endure in the Christian faith?

The notion of endurance presumes an active Christian life. No endurance is necessary if we seclude ourselves from the world and don't spread the gospel. However, the calling to follow Jesus requires activity, and thus, endurance. In this final trustworthy saying, Paul gives Timothy the incentive of enduring in faith to the end of our lives as he had modeled.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How does Paul encourage you to overcome anxieties or fears about sharing the gospel? Who might you be able to share the gospel with this week?

What struggles do you have in your walk? How is Paul a good example of facing difficulties?

Who is someone that you look to as an example for how to live the Christian life? How does he or she go about sharing the gospel?

Do you have a mentor like Timothy had Paul? How do mentors help the church? How do mentors bring about the spread of the gospel?

Do you have someone you mentor? What might be the first step?

PRAYER

Close your group time in prayer, thanking God for sending Christ to save you. Pray that the truth of Christ would encourage the group to share their faith. Pray that our church would be a church where young believers find leaders and mentors to help them in their walks.

COMMENTARY

| 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-2

2:1. Paul commanded Timothy not only to follow the path of endurance, but also to multiply his ministry through others. The apostle's first specific charge was be strong. However, Paul did not mean Timothy was to roll up his spiritual sleeves and find within himself strength for success in ministry. Timothy would find strength only in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Grace for Timothy was the unmerited and abundant help the living Christ would give him for effective service. Only in this sphere of grace would the young pastor find power for service in Jesus' name. The image of a sphere, or circle, of grace in which Timothy must live and serve seems to be the idea. Outside the circle of grace, Timothy would find no power to carry on the Lord's work.

2:2. The second command Paul laid on Timothy's shoulders was commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others all he had heard from Paul in the presence of many witnesses. While Timothy was to come to Rome at Paul's bequest, Paul still took the opportunity to stress to Timothy that the gospel of Christ must be guarded from corruption by false teachers. Even as

Timothy packed his bags to travel to Rome, he was to entrust the precious gospel of grace to others for safe keeping. These guardians must have two qualifications—a reputation of loyalty to the gospel of Christ and giftedness to pass on to others God’s truth about His Son. Only when Timothy set up that security could he consider his ministry a success.

2:3. In 2:1-2 Paul gave Timothy two commands—“be strong” and “commit,” but he was not done. In this section, he gave three more—share in suffering ... consider what I say ... keep your attention. Clearly Paul was urging on his friend and associate in the Lord’s work. Perhaps Timothy, Paul felt, needed some man-to-man directives not only to nail down what to do, but also to bolster his courage to endure in ministry and faith after Paul was dead. The first directive probably was not what Timothy wanted to hear, especially a second time (1:8).

Share in suffering! Had Paul been present with Timothy, we can imagine the great crusader reaching out and placing his hands on Timothy’s shoulders, looking compassionately yet seriously into his eyes, and saying, “Share in suffering!” Paul called for Timothy to get off the sidelines and join him and all others who endure hardships for Christ. Timothy could not duck and run from threats, pressures, or people of power who oppose Christ. Christ’s gospel guarded and proclaimed is more important than personal safety and comfort valued and maintained. The mention in Hebrews 13:23 about Timothy’s release suggests that Timothy did suffer imprisonment.

2:4. Paul colorfully illustrated his point about suffering with three metaphors. He first used the imagery of a soldier to pull his reluctant co-laborer into the fray of suffering for Christ’s sake. Timothy had to rough it as a good soldier of Christ Jesus to please God. A Christian soldier is someone who belongs to something bigger than himself or herself. He or she is under command of a higher authority. A good soldier obeys orders without question even when personal obedience means suffering the hardships common to military life. Paul wanted Timothy to know that living on the sidelines was not for him, for nothing should get in the way of kingdom work. Paul called on Timothy to dedicate himself to the one who enlisted him, to let go of any longing for an easy life, to avoid getting entangled in the concerns of civilian life, and to become a tough-minded devotee of his recruiter.

2:5. Second, Paul pictured the necessity of self-discipline and stamina by referring to an athlete who competes according to the rules if he or she wishes to be crowned the winner. Living for Christ and serving His purposes often require struggle, even suffering—just as training for an athletic event calls for suffering in a physical sense. Sore muscles, aches, exhaustion, and injuries are the athlete’s lot. He or she must deal with these pains and press on. Paul’s message here is that Timothy needed the rigors of a disciplined life to minister effectively. No shortcuts to

spiritual maturity and effectiveness would do. Achieving the glory of Christ in a sinful world is not done by couch potatoes. It takes disciplined believers who deal with physical and emotional pains and keep going. They alone win for Christ's honor.

2:6. The soldier seeks to please the commander, the athlete disciplines for the crown, and the farmer works hard to produce the crops. He gets up about sunrise, plows the hardened soil until sundown, then flips on the tractor's lights to plow into the night. He plants seeds, kills weeds, and in the fall harvests his crop. It's hard work. One might even call the farmer's lot a life of suffering, especially when crops fail after months of hope and wearying work. Similarly, Paul urged Timothy to endure even weariness in ministry for Christ, dealing with the hardships and hurts as they come.

2:7. Paul wanted Timothy to consider what he said in order to understand the full implications of the three word pictures of soldier, athlete, and farmer. This second imperative verb means to think over, to understand clearly, to work out what Paul was getting at. If Timothy applied himself to ponder and digest the implications of the three metaphors (soldier, athlete, farmer), God, Paul promised, would increase Timothy's understanding of their importance and intent. He then could apply to himself the relevant significance of the threefold figures.

2:8. Paul's third command to Timothy was keep your attention on the living Christ. Following this directive would enable Timothy to better follow through with the previous two commands ("share in suffering" and "consider what I say"). Jesus is risen from the dead and remains the living Lord in heaven. He also is descended from David, showing that Jesus met messianic requirements. The risen One is the reigning One. Paul wanted Timothy to remember who Jesus is and where He is to inspire him for continued Christian service. Whatever happened, Timothy could take comfort that his reigning Lord is governing over all for His people and for God's glory.

The apostle next cited his own situation as an example and motivation to Timothy. What was that situation? Paul put it like this: I suffer ... to the point of being bound like a criminal. Paul indeed faced serious charges. He was in a bad way. Yet God's message is not bound, for even if Rome silenced Paul, Rome could not silence God. The apostle might be imprisoned, but the gospel marched on. And it marched on triumphantly. That's why Paul endured in ministry. That's why Timothy should as well. God's chosen people, His elect, will be recipients of salvation and its eternal glory. The glorious and everlasting result of suffering in ministry was worth the temporal and painful cost to win it.

2:11-13. The soldier seeks to please the recruiter; the athlete eyes the crown; the farmer expects a harvest. Their endurance is active, not passive. What's the overall point of these three metaphors? Each one has a different emphasis, yes, but the main purpose is the reward. The

soldier's reward is the recruiter's pleasure; the athlete's is the crown; the farmer's is the harvested crop. In the same way, God calls today's believers to focus on His promised reward because of hardships endured, discipline, and hard work. What is that reward? Paul pointed out the loyal believer's reward by another "trustworthy saying." The quotation flows in the form of four couplets, the first two being positive and the last two negative. The first couplet states, For if we have died with Him, we will also live with Him. The saying does not refer to martyrdom for Christ, but to believers' identity with Christ in His death and life. The second couplet is in verse 12. It further identifies the Christian with Christ. Here the saying contrasts suffering and glorification rather than death and life as in the first couplet. Christ endured rejection, even the cross; believers who also endure in faithfulness to Him will reign with Him.

Couplets three and four are negative. If we deny Him refers to ultimate disowning of Christ, and He will also deny us is Christ's ultimate rejection of all who profess Him temporarily but, instead of remaining in faith, finally turn from Christ (see 1 John 2:19). The fourth couplet (in v. 13) refers to the true Christian believer, not the temporary professor as in verse 12. The comforting truth here is that since Christ cannot disown Himself, a clear impossibility, He will not deny Christians who are faithless, here acknowledging true Christians will still sin and fall short in ministry for Christ. True believers, even when they live disobediently and in weakness, always belong to Him. Our Lord's own faithfulness to His people does not ultimately depend on our faithfulness to Him. No matter how faithless we might be, Christ's love and faithfulness to us continue forever.

2:14. As a minister of the gospel, Timothy must remind all those in the church about the instructions and warnings Paul had delivered to him. Pastors are to keep reminding their congregations of the truth of Scripture, the nature of God, and the demands of holy living. This task is never complete.