

2 Timothy 2:8-13 | “Remember Jesus Christ”
Preached on February 12, 2023 by Pastor Matt Brown

You can turn in your Bibles this morning to 2 Timothy 2, and we will be in verses 8-13. *[pause]*

Paul has been writing to Timothy, calling him to a commitment of faithfulness, even amidst great suffering.

He has reminded Timothy of his faith, the power and grace that God has given to him, examples of other people, a reminder of who God is, and how it is worth it just like a soldier, athlete, and farmer see their hardships as worth it.

And it seems as though he caps off his argument about suffering by calling him to remember Christ above all. *[pauseeee]*

A pastor gave an illustration of “three sisters—ages 92, 94, and 96—who lived together.

One night, the 96-year-old drew a bath. She put one foot in, and then paused.

“Was I getting in the tub or out?” she yelled.

The 94-year-old hollered back, “I don't know, I'll come and see.”

She started up the stairs, but stopped on the first one. She shouted, “Was I going up or coming down?”

The 92-year-old was sitting at the kitchen having tea, listening to her sisters with a smirk on her face.

She shook her head and said, “I sure hope I never get that forgetful,” and knocked on wood for good measure. Then she yelled, “I'll come up and help both of you as soon as I see who's at the door!”¹ *[pauseeee]*

We are forgetful people, aren't we?

Maybe not as bad as those three sisters, but we are forgetful nonetheless, and we need continual reminders. *[pauseeee]*

How often do we need reminders of the truth of God's Word?

We easily forget that we are loved by God and we feel insecure, uncared for, and alone.

We constantly fail to remember that God is in control and we fret over chaotic-seeming events in life. *[pause]*

¹ Rob Hall, <https://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/sermons/2022/march/remember.html>.

We are like the Israelites in the wilderness, forgetting that God has continually proven Himself trustworthy and faithful. *[pause]*

After a trial is over, we are good at remembering, “Yes, God is faithful!”, but when the next trial comes down the path, we are thinking, “Where is God?” *[pauseeeee]*

When you get hurt, you focus on the pain, and the pain alone.

So also, there is a great temptation to focus on your suffering when you are suffering. *[pause]*

Like clouds that block the view of the sun, so we let our circumstances block our view of the Lord.

We become overcome with despair and forget who God is and what He has done. *[pause]*

It’s not that we have literal amnesia, and the memory of the Lord isn’t there at all, but it’s that we don’t bring God’s person and work to our minds.

The memory is there, but we don’t recall it and think over it like we should. *[pause]*

And so that’s why Paul is calling Timothy (and us) to...

Remember Jesus Christ!

Paul says, “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel.” *[pause]*

As Timothy continues in ministry, he will face suffering, but he must not forget Christ.

He must continually remember Jesus Christ through all of the ups and downs of ministry, and that’s exactly what we need, too. *[pauseeeee]*

Jesus Christ left the place of perfection in Heaven to come to this sin-cursed world for us - remember His love. *[pause]*

He is the offspring of David, and therefore, He is the rightful, true, eternal King!

In Him, God was showing His faithfulness to the promises of a Messiah, so remember His Kingship! *[pause]*

Though he was tempted by Satan himself, he resisted the Devil, and never once sinned during His whole life - remember His sinlessness. *[pause]*

He displayed great signs and wonders in stilling the sea, and healing masses of people - remember His power. *[pauseeeee]*

He taught like no one else, and His words bring encouragement to the most downtrodden sinner and conviction to the prideful - remember His teachings. *[pause]*

He suffered greatly, but persevered through it all, being mocked and beaten by sinful men - remember His sufferings. *[pause]*

He suffered to the point of dying for us, so that the penalty for our sin would be paid - remember His death. *[pause]*

Yet He rose again, conquering sin and death.

His resurrection means that our suffering doesn't mean defeat, but His resurrection guarantees our resurrection to immortality - remember His resurrection! *[pauseeee]*

What do we need to fear when we have a risen Christ, whose resurrection assures ours?!

Death is not truly death for us, but the risen Christ beat death, and the grave is empty - so remember the empty tomb! *[pause]*

He is the risen, eternal King, who lives forevermore - remember His sovereign eternity. *[pauseeeee]*

In your suffering, bring Him to mind time and time again!

Keep thinking about Christ: who He is and what He has done! *[pause]*

He is the true Lord and King, who conquered, and that very One is the one who strengthens you with His grace!² *[pauseeee]*

Remember the glorious worth of Christ!

We follow the risen, eternal King, who reigns!

How could we not endure for such a Savior?!

He is worthy, worthy, worthy!!!

May our hearts at this very moment bow down in worship to the One who is the lion and the lamb, who conquered.³ *[pauseeee]*

When you truly remember and reflect upon who we serve, then anything we endure is TOTALLY worth it.

The risen King is *our* risen King, that's who we serve and follow.

Don't forget him, but remember who you serve. *[pauseeee]*

So often we get focused on our suffering that we lose sight of the glory of Christ.

² Look back at 2 Timothy 2:1.

³ A reference to Revelation 5:5.

He died for us so that we could have life, and rose again victorious.

What do we have to fear?

Do not lose sight of who Christ is! *[pause]*

James Dobson gives the story of the man who decided to build the Taj Mahal...

He says, "In 1629, when the favorite wife of Indian ruler Shah Jahan died, he ordered that a magnificent tomb be built as a memorial to her.

The shah placed his wife's casket in the middle of a parcel of land, and construction of the temple literally began around it. *[pause]*

But several years into the venture, the Shah's grief for his wife gave way to a passion for the project.

One day while he was surveying the site, he reportedly stumbled over a wooden box, and he had some workers throw it out.

It was months before he realized that his wife's casket had been destroyed.

The original purpose for the memorial became lost in the details of construction.

They built the Taj Mahal, but they forgot the reason for the building."⁴ *[pauseeee]*

Do you forget who your Savior is and the reason why you live?

Are we so consumed with what's going on in our lives, with suffering, with trials, with the busyness of life that we forget who the Lord is and what He has done for us?

He is the risen, eternal King!

He is the One proclaimed in the gospel, the good news that is for the whole world, and that saves and transforms. *[pauseeee]*

When people are making fun of you for what you believe - remember Jesus Christ.

When you are mocked and hated because you believe in Christ - remember who He is and what He has done.

When you are threatened with legal action because you stand for Him - remember that He is the true King.

And if you are ever threatened with death for being a follower of Christ - remember that He rose from the grave, and that means you will too, if you believe in Him. *[pause]*

⁴ Dr. James Dobson, *Coming Home: Timeless Wisdom for Families*, (Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton; 1998), 122.

He is worth anything that we face because He is worth everything. *[pause]*

In fact, that's why Paul shows us that....

A. He's worth suffering for!

After talking about Christ and the gospel, he says in verses 9-10...

“for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” *[pause]*

Paul's saying, “He's worth suffering for!”

The gospel didn't bring a life of prosperity, comfort, and ease in Paul's life, but it was still totally worth it. *[pause]*

Paul believes that Christ and the good news of Christ are so worth suffering for that he's willing to be chained up in jail for Him.

He's suffering so much for Christ to the point of being treated like a criminal for Him. *[pauseeee]*

Paul's example shows us that Paul remembered Jesus Christ.

He remembered that He was worth it, even to the point of being treated like an evildoer. *[pauseeee]*

The world is going to treat us like an evildoer for following Christ, but is He worth it to you?

Do you believe that He is worth every ounce of suffering, even if it means imprisonment or death? *[pauseeee]*

Paul knew that though they could imprison and bind him, they couldn't bind the Word of God, and that gave him utmost confidence. *[pause]*

Though we be bound, the Word never is.

The message of Christ will go powerfully, and triumphantly do what it needs to do in the world.

It can't be shackled or stopped. *[pause]*

What an encouraging reminder!

As Isaiah 55:11 talks about: the word of God does not return void, but it accomplishes His purposes, and succeeds in what it was sent to do. *[pause]*

Though the powers of darkness try to bind the Word of God, they can't!

Though the world tries to quiet it down, it will go forth.

And that means that people will be saved, transformed, and brought to life!

That's why Paul says in verse 10, "Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." *[pauseeee]*

The unbound Word of God gives Paul confidence to endure and keep proclaiming the gospel. *[pause]*

Since He knows that nothing can stop the gospel, then he's willing to endure everything for more people to be saved.

Because he knows that it *will* powerfully work in hearts. *[pauseeee]*

Imagine if we had such assurance in the power of the Gospel!

Wouldn't we be more bold to share the gospel, and more willing to face suffering so that it could go forth? *[pause]*

We get to play a part in God's grand, cosmic work of saving people and bringing them to eternal glory. *[pause]*

Are you willing to go through hardship so that more people are saved?

Are you willing to endure mocking and degradation to share the Gospel, so that more people are led to Christ? *[pauseeee]*

Christ and the good news of what He has done is totally worth suffering for, for we are serving a Lord and His Word that will not and cannot lose. *[pause]*

He is the risen Christ, and His Word is the unbound Word.

He is doing a grand work of saving people, and He is using us and our willingness to suffer to bring more and more people to salvation. *[pauseeee]*

Not only is Christ worth suffering for, but also...

B. He's worth enduring for!

Verses 11-13 say, "The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself." *[pause]*

By starting out saying, "The saying is trustworthy," Paul seems to be bringing up a well-known saying or hymn of that day and makes it clear that it is a trustworthy, reliable saying.

This saying is true and ought to be believed and repeated. *[pause]*

So what's the content of the saying that can be relied upon?

There are four different “if...then” statements.

So if this happens, then this happens. *[pause]*

The first two are positive, and the last two are negative.

So let's take the first two to begin.

They say, “If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him.” *[pause]*

Because of our union with Christ through faith - when Christ died on the cross, our old lives died with him, and then once he rose again, we also were raised to new life. *[pause]*

What great news!

Because of our union and identity with Christ, his death and resurrection means that we will live on with him forever. *[pause]*

So in your suffering, what do you have to fear if you remember this truth?

We have life, even in the face of physical death.

Even if they kill our physical body, we go on living because we have life in Christ. *[pause]*

What an amazing, confident hope that we have in Jesus!

Though someone threatens your life, you can remember that in Jesus, you have eternal life that cannot be taken away.

To know that and believe that helps us to endure anything that this world throws at us. *[pause]*

If you ever have to face great suffering for Christ, you can remember, “Because I died with him, so also I will live with him.”

No one can take that away from you!

Your relationship, union, and identity with Christ is sure, and therefore, your life is secure. *[pauseeee]*

Paul also says, “if we endure, we will also reign with him.”

So it's implied that if we *don't* endure, we won't reign. *[pause]*

This is the teaching of Scripture.

A couple times in Matthew, Jesus says, “The one who endures to the end will be saved.”⁵

⁵ Matthew 10:22 & 24:13.

In Hebrews it says, “we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.”⁶

I could go on and on with Scripture passages about this truth. *[pause]*

Only those who persevere until the end are saved, but here’s the thing, only those who are saved persevere.

Meaning, if you don’t endure, it’s not that you lost your salvation, but it merely shows that you never truly trusted in Him. *[pauseeee]*

Many people who grew up in church do not realize this truth - we each need to persevere to the end.

We don’t just profess belief in Christ and then go on and live our lives how we want to live.

We can’t just give up, throw in the towel, and say, “I don’t trust in Christ anymore,” and expect all to be fine. *[pauseeee]*

D.A. Carson talks about someone who was a medical doctor, a former missionary, and who was appointed as an elder in a church.

But later on, “he had an affair, divorced his wife, abandoned his children, and separated himself from any form of biblical Christianity.”

People tried to reach out to him and bring him back, but to no avail.

And so many people wondered, how did this happen? *[pause]*

Carson says that one man made the point that this man “had never had to make a decision that cost him anything. Everything was too easy; at every point he had been supported and praised.

Then, when some troubles opened up in his marriage..., and an attractive alternative presented herself, this doctor had no moral center on which to depend.

He had never, for the sake of Christ, made a decision that cost him something; and he wasn’t about to start now.

In hindsight, it is not even clear that his profession of faith was real, for real professions of faith manifest themselves in a principial death to self-interest, in a principial commitment to the cause of Christ and his gospel.”⁷ *[pauseeee]*

Your allegiance shows itself when it costs you something.

⁶ Hebrews 3:6.

⁷ D. A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 76.

If you go to Christ only for your self-seeking purposes, then when life gets hard, you will walk away, and it will show that your faith was all a facade. *[pauseeee]*

There may be some today, listening to this sermon, who won't endure until the end, but will walk away from Christ when things get hard.

Your faith isn't genuine, but you come to church because that's just how you were raised, and if you don't go, you feel guilty.

Maybe you come because of what you get out of it, but you have never really seen your sin for what it is, and you've never truly trusted in Christ alone to save you, as your only hope. *[pause]*

You may have said the right words, but your heart hasn't been changed.

I plead with you right now this morning, run to Christ!

See your sin in all of its ugliness, and see Christ in all of His beauty.

Only He can save you from that guilt that you feel, only He can forgive you, and only He can give you life and save you. *[pause]*

He is worth everything!

So humble yourself, and look to Him to save you because of what He did on the Cross, dying in your place, so that you wouldn't have to pay the penalty that you deserved. *[pauseeeee]*

There is suffering and struggle for the Christian, but in Christ, there is hope, life, and a future promise of reigning with Him.

It's worth it to endure because of who we follow and what He gives us!

So don't give up, but keep enduring all things with your eyes on Christ, who has promised so much to those who believe in Him. *[pauseeee]*

So Paul motivates Timothy with the positive: "Hey, look at how endurance is worth it because of the life we receive and the reigning with Christ to come!"

But now he motivates him by talking about the negative side of things. *[pauseeee]*

The next part says, "if we deny him, he also will deny us." *[pause]*

Here we see that the opposite of enduring is denying. *[pause]*

To deny Christ is to renounce, disown, or repudiate Him.

This saying reflects Jesus' words in Matthew 10:33 which says, "whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven." *[pause]*

So if you say, “I don’t know Christ,” then Christ will say, “I don’t know you.”

Put another way: if you reject Christ, he rejects you, and that’s a serious matter. *[pauseeee]*

This denying Christ isn’t only if you say those words, but it can also be displayed in a life that denies Christ.

If someone turns away from Christ, rejects Him, and just lives how they want to live - they are denying Christ.

They are refusing to be associated with him, and rejecting a relationship with Him. *[pauseeeee]*

But what is it that makes the difference between someone who endures compared with those who deny Christ?

Of course faith in Him, but with that, it’s their view of the worth of Christ. *[pause]*

Those who endure have acknowledged the worth of Christ and placed their faith in Him.

They know that He is worth it because He is worth everything!

But those who deny Christ see Him as someone they can reject and repudiate, and He is of little value in their eyes.

They are denying His true worth, for to them, He’s not worth everything, and therefore, they think that they don’t need Him. *[pauseeee]*

The person who denies Christ may have professed Christ at one point, but they deny Him, and it just goes to show that their view of Christ is infinitely too small.

But if someone understands and believes that Christ is who He is and has done what He has done, then He is infinitely worthy of any suffering, and therefore they can endure. *[pauseeee]*

What a serious warning about denial!

I pray that no one here will be guilty of denying Christ, for what a serious thing, since the result is that Christ will deny you.

You will be rejected forever by Christ because you have rejected Him. *[pauseeee]*

So what will you do if standing for Christ means mockery from others, a loss of a job, loss of possessions, status, or reputation?

Will you deny Christ, or will you acknowledge Him? *[pause]*

By bringing out this serious statement about denial, Paul is showing us that it’s NOT worth it to deny Christ and give up.

If you don't endure, but deny Christ - you will *eternally* regret it. *[pauseeee]*

And the last part says, "if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself."

Paul had just said, "if we deny Him, he will deny us."

And now he says, "If we are faithless," but Paul cannot and will not say, "If we are faithless, He will be faithless."

That is impossible, for God cannot go against His nature.

So he says, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful." *[pause]*

Now this is a debated line, and we can get into it further this evening, but I just want us to rest in the truth that Christ is faithful.

He cannot deny Himself, and go against Himself - it's impossible.

And so He is faithful, no matter what. *[pause]*

He is faithful to save us, even in our failings, if we have truly trusted in Him.

If we are in Christ, then we can never be disowned!

Our greatest security is the faithfulness of the Lord, not in our own faithfulness. *[pause]*

But here's the thing: since He is faithful, then He is also faithful to deny those who deny Him, for He has promised judgment upon those who reject Him. *[pause]*

God cannot acknowledge those who disown Him for He can't agree and deny Himself.

So Christ's faithfulness is both a comfort for those who trust in Him, and a warning for those who don't believe in Him. *[pause]*

His promise of life and reigning for those who believe in Him are sure, and His promise of denial and judgment are also sure. *[pause]*

If you exalt the value of Christ, he won't deny that.

And if you deny His value, He won't affirm that. *[pause]*

There are grave consequences for not acknowledging Christ and just leaving the faith and living for yourself.

It's not worth it to deny Christ!

So I plead with anyone here who hasn't truly trusted in Christ and hasn't seen the worth of Christ and what He has done - fling yourself on Christ, your only hope!

See His infinite worth and value! *[pauseeee]*

You see...

Remembering Christ helps us to be faithful to the end.

We remember who He is and what He has done.

We remember His utmost value and worth -- He is the risen, eternal King!

So He is worth any suffering that we face, and He is worth enduring it all until the end.

[pauseee]

Don't give up -- He is trustworthy!

His promises will happen, whether it be life for those who believe, or judgment for those who are faithless. *[pause]*

Brother or sister in Christ: "remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David."

When you remember who He is, what He has done, and what He gives to those who trust in Him - how could we not go through anything for such an amazing Savior, Lord, and King?