

May 30, 2021 - II Timothy 2:8-13 - “The Rewards Exceed the Sacrifice.”

Introduction:

Tomorrow is Memorial Day and yet only a small percentage of people will take time on this national holiday to reflex and remember over a million soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen and coastguards laid down their lives in service to our country since the founding of the Continental Army in 1775. We honor these fallen hero’s through prayers, moments of silence, flying the flag, attending a ceremony and other meaningful reflection. Folks, we need to be worthy of the sacrifices of the fallen by remembering the cost of American freedom and liberty.

As the people of God, we look to our Lord Jesus Christ’s death on the cross to remember the terrible price He paid for our sins and to give us eternal liberty. Paul opens this section saying to Timothy, there is reason enough to suffer. We “remember” Jesus Christ (2:8a). The word in Greek is *mnēmoneúō*, (*ma- nay-mon-new'-o*) from which we get our English word Memorial meaning to exercise memory, to recollect; to be mindful, remember.

I. Remember the Commander we Serve (2:8).

1. This is what Paul is reminding Timothy as a good Christian soldier to remember the one we serve. Remember that Jesus died for us and was raised from the dead (2:8b). Dr. Ironside states that this sounds like a battle cry, like remember 9/11. This proves His deity-He is God. We do not serve a dead person. We serve, honor and worship a Living Savior who was raised from the dead and is still alive.

2. Timothy had hit a low point in his life. He was in a difficult ministry. He was failing to do all that he ought to have done. He was letting his gift fall into disuse and Paul was very concerned about him. So, he writes this epistle to encourage him toward dedicated spiritual service.

Paul was still serving God and he had more than his share of problems because of the first major, widespread persecution of Christians. On the night of July 19, 64 A.D., a fire broke out among the shops lining the Circus Maximus, Rome’s mammoth chariot stadium. In a city of two million, there was nothing unusual about a fire — the sweltering summer heat kindled blazes around Rome on a regular basis, particularly in the slums that covered much of the city. Knowing this, Nero himself was miles away in the cooler coastal resort of Antium. Yet this was no ordinary fire. The flames raged for six days before coming under control; then the fire reignited and burned for another three.

Most of the common people of Rome lived in tenement buildings made out of wood, and they went up like kindling. In fact, it burned at such an incredible rate that Nero, it is said, stood on the tower near his palace and watched it burn with a certain kind of glee in his heart over what he saw. He was actually thrilled at what is quoted, in *The Historians*, as “the loveliness of the flames.” It became apparent to the people that Nero himself had started the fire. You see, Nero loved to build, and he wanted to burn Rome to the ground, apparently, so that he could build it again bigger and better and more to his own glory. So Nero blamed Christians and turned the

attention from him to others. Paul did not allow him to steal his mission or his joy.

It was said the week after the disaster, a Rabbi carried to his pulpit an unbroken vase, which was the only thing recovered from his home during Rome's inferno. He asked his congregation, "Do you know why this is still here and my house is gone?" He answered his own question by saying, "Because this had passed through the fire once before." Can the fiery trials of life actually prove to be a blessing? The apostle Peter indicated so, he explained that various trials can result in "praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7).

3. Sometimes being a Christian produces intense trials and problems. At times believers are ridiculed by their unbelieving spouses, while others are resented and ostracized in their workplace. Until Jesus returns, if we take our faith seriously, we will sometimes find our faith creates friction. The peace we have in Jesus is not absence of conflict or trouble. It can only be experienced in the midst of problems. To find this peace, we must remember three things: the Person we serve, the power of God's Word, and the purpose of our problems.

We must remember Jesus was not only resurrected; He was of the seed of David (2:8c). This means He was fully human and knows firsthand about our problems and suffering. Jesus was human from Mary's side, and on His Father's side He is divine. Remembering the humanity of Christ is important. Because Jesus was human as well as divine, He understands the pressures and problems of living in this world. Jesus knows what it's like to be misunderstood, persecuted, put under pressure, and to suffer. He can relate to every discouragement, every temptation, and every problem we will ever face. This tells us the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to help us with all our problems.

The value, the worth of your ministry far outstrips any personal consideration that would make you back down to protect yourself. To find peace in the fire, - remember the Person we serve and...

II Remember the mission we're Assigned. (2:9-10).

1. Paul had more than his share of problems. He writes: ... according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil-doer, even unto bonds ... (2:8b-9a). Paul was in prison because of the Gospel he preached. He was in a humiliating situation because he was being treated like an evil-doer. The word translated evil-doer describes a violent person, like a murderer. Paul was being treated like a felon.

2. Paul was not complaining about his circumstances, for he writes: But the word of God is not bound (2:9b). Paul knew God's Word could not be bound. **For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12**

In fact, Paul's imprisonment resulted in his writing what we call the five prison epistles. God's Word still spreads and changes lives, despite opposition and persecution. God promise us in Is. 55:11 that his word would not return void. Regardless of the circumstances, God's Word will always accomplish its intended purpose.

3. Why was Paul willing to endure such suffering and humiliation? He tells us in 2:10: The word translated elect (EKLEKTOS, ek-lek-tos) means “the chosen” and refers to all those who will yet believe on Christ. The purpose of enduring tough situations is that people may ... obtain salvation. Paul knew what truth found in Acts 4:12.

Sometimes the purpose of our problems is that our endurance and our response might win others to Christ. Therefore, to find peace in our problems we must remember the Person we serve, the mission of God’s and ...

III. Remember, to ponder a Song. (2:11-13).

1. When distresses come keep a song in your heart...it helps. Verses 11-13 are one long sentence and are said to be an early Christian hymn. That’s why in some modern translations it is set in verse form. Each of the four stanzas begins with an “if” that describes our actions and ends with the inevitable result of our actions. --- Galatian 2:20 When we mess up, God’s faithfulness encourages us to come back to God and get a fresh start. Like the father of the prodigal son, God will run to receive us and give us a fresh start. Finding peace in our problems requires we remember these points.

God allows us to suffer difficulties and hardships for a purpose. Testing reveals what is in your heart and produces a greater faith in God.

Illustration:

Every computer printer shipped by a Colorado company is first frozen, then heated to 130 degrees Fahrenheit, and finally shaken violently for a quarter of an hour. This testing is the final step in a process called “ruggedization,” which prepares an ordinary printer for use by the military. With its circuit boards secured and all components enclosed in a metal case, the printer is thoroughly tested to make sure it will work on the battlefield.

2. It is God Himself, our loving Father, who allows the times of testing to prepare us to serve Him. When we find ourselves in difficult circumstances, the Bible offers the surprising instruction to “count it all joy . . . , knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” (James 1:2-3).

Paul didn’t live to see the impact of his epistles he knew God would use his suffering to help win others to Christ. Only God knows how many people have come to Christ through reading the prison epistles or hearing them preached and taught. God sometimes allows us to be in prison. It is not a prison of bars and locks, but it is a prison just the same. It may be a problem marriage, a hostile work environment, or a health problem. How we react to the prisons of life is often our greatest platform of witness to nonbelievers. To find peace in our problems, we, like Paul, must focus on the purpose of our suffering, which may be to bring others to Christ.

Conclusion:

If that reminds you of the spiritual ruggedization you’re undergoing today, take heart. Remember the Person we serve, the power of God’s Word, and the purpose of our problems.

Gospel