

2 Timothy 2 (8-10) – A Faithful New Year

Tomorrow begins a new year. And with it, many people will be thinking of new year's resolutions. Today, I want to talk about God's new year goal for you, for me, for all Christians. And how, this coming year, you can be faithful to God's mission in your life. And God's mission for and through your life.

Our text today gives three prime directives for living a life that is faithful to God's mission this year. And you can say it's A, B, C – Advancing the Gospel, Believing the Bible, and Committing to Christ.

Advancing the Gospel (vs.8) – Jesus Christ is *the offspring of David*. Jesus was an historical person. He was spoken of many hundreds of years before he was born. Lots of details about his life were prophesied. He is not a myth. And he was not a mere man. He is the Divine Messiah. And he *is risen from the dead*. As Romans 4:25 says, Jesus died for our sins and was raised again, proving that he saves sinners. That's *the gospel*.

The truth is that you have sinned against God. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, and he has given us his Law. And when you break that Law, you may be sinning against others and causing other consequences, but ultimately you are sinning against God. And only God can set the penalty for breaking his Law and the terms of making peace with him. In his mercy and grace, he has done so by the sinless life and atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ is the only way of salvation. And that is the gospel. Faithfulness means advancing the gospel, spreading the message in whatever ways you can. As Romans 10:17 says, *faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ*.

How are you advancing the gospel? You can be you preaching, teaching, evangelizing, or passing out tracts and Bibles. You can be giving, serving, supporting ministries, and missions. You can be witnessing online, by phone, by text, in public, on social media, in private, in prayer, in whatever way you can. It's time for you to tell people about Jesus more than ever this

year! Don't think of the obstacles, think of the opportunities! And remember, even if you are limited, the Word of God is unlimited!

You also need to remember this, that in order to be faithful to the mission, you must be faithful to the message. And so, part of advancing the gospel is when you are believing the Bible.

Believing the Bible (vs.9) – Paul wrote this letter in prison. He was *suffering, bound with chains as a criminal*. But even though he was bound, he said that *the Word of God is not bound!* The Bible is 66 books, written by over 40 authors, in 3 different languages, on 3 different continents, over a period of 1600 years. And yet the Bible is one cohesive message that points to Jesus Christ as God, Lord, and Savior.

There have always been enemies of the Word of God. These enemies attack the message of God. They attempt to stop the methods of God. And they try and silence the messengers of God. But God's word always prevails. It will always accomplish God's purpose. People will be saved or judged through the Word of God. Isaiah 55:11 says – *so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it*. And no government, no society, no culture, no demonic plot, no ungodly person, and no ungodly law can withstand the power of God's word. They could make the Bible illegal. They could say Christianity is immoral. They could try to make proclaiming and distributing it impossible. But the Word of God is invincible.

You need to live as if this is true! How are you believing the Bible? What are you doing to apply it to your life? For example, are you actually working as unto the Lord? Or are you being greedy, or lazy, stealing, cheating, or lying about your work? Is your work about advancing your kingdom, without regard to God's kingdom? I'm not just talking about your job, or your business; I'm talking about your whole life! Why should God give you more if you're only going to use it on yourself? But if you have less and yet you still give God your best, God is well pleased.

For another example, if you really want to bring your children up in the nurture and instruction of the Lord, it means getting them to read the Bible. But it also means living it out before them, demonstrating how the Bible applies to your personal decision making and thought process. You can't just cheerlead for the Bible, your loved ones need to see you as a repentance and faith type of person, who is a teachable person, who is growing in God.

If you want to see a Great Awakening to the gospel in our day, if you want to see a revival sweep across the world of God's people, then it all starts with you. You must be faithful to the mission, advancing the gospel. You must be faithful to the message, believing the Bible. And you must be faithful to the Master, committing to Christ.

Committing to Christ (vs.10) – Paul was remembering (vs.8), suffering (vs.9), and enduring (vs.10). Why? For the sake God's people, *that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory*. Paul was faithful to the mission because he was faithful to the Master. Paul was willing to do whatever it took. He was willing to pay the price with his life.

Committing to Christ means enduring whatever comes your way for the sake of God's people, whoever they are, wherever they are, and whenever they come to know Jesus Christ. You must be willing to do whatever it takes if you truly want to see an awakening of the lost unto God and a revival of God's people. You can't simply talk about how society is declining and how the church is compromising or just cheerlead for biblical standards. You have to live your convictions out! Faithfulness to God's way is the only real way to push back against the cultural tide. You've got to live out what you say you believe in. The enemies of God are coming in like a flood, and we are the standard that God is raising up against them.

How are you committing to Christ? Does inconvenience stop you from serving? You know, if you can't handle discomfort, how will you handle persecution? Are you committing your mind, or are you polluting your mind? When you pollute your mind, you poison your mindset.

Too often people just hear a message like this and think or even shout amen. That is not necessarily a bad thing, unless you just get stirred but you don't actually change. Are you going to get all excited and think what a great message this was, but not really do anything about it? You can't afford to look aside and get God out of the center of your gaze. That's the pattern for spiritual problems, distraction, deception, destruction.

Or you might be thinking you're on the right track. But you don't go out there and live like harvest time is here. You just think of these commitments in terms of your bottom-line attitude and not your daily actions. Friends, whatever may be going on in the world and in your world, don't lose your focus. Remember Jesus Christ and remember that every person you have ever met, every person you will ever meet, and every person who has ever lived will be spending eternity in one place or the other place. Everyone is going somewhere, what are you doing about it? Just because God is sovereign doesn't mean you are static. Advance the Gospel. Believe the Bible. Commit to Christ.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, the Apostle Paul says we are to pray for the message and the messengers, *so that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored*. And let me tell you that the best prayers have legs. Even if you haven't been able to leave your house, even if you are stuck in prison like Paul, you are still on the front line of that prayer. Supporting the work of God by living for Christ, winning others for Christ, and edifying your brothers and sisters in Christ by any and every godly means possible is putting legs to your prayers. This is no time for the church to be flinching and floundering. Instead, it is time for the church to be flourishing! To reveal the power of God, by his Spirit, through his word, from his people, for his glory! In the midst of all this fear and chaos, it is time for a Great Awakening! It is time for a mighty revival! It is time to be faithful!

Faithfulness is absolutely fundamental to the mission of God in the earth today. It is like your A, B, C's. Advancing the Gospel. Believing the Bible. Committing to Christ. Happy Faithful New Year!