

Message #8

II Timothy 2:8-13

It was just about this time of year, end of February to the beginning of March, about 179 years ago that there was a war taking place in San Antonio, Texas. The leader of the Mexican army—Santa Anna—led hundreds of soldiers to fight 100-200 American Texans, who were hunkered down in the Alamo. For 13 days, those Americans, like Jim Bowie and Davie Crockett, fought those thousands of Mexicans; but in the end the Mexicans overcame them. A couple of months later, John Houston tracked down many of those Mexican soldiers near what is today Houston, Texas, and this time the United States won and in the end it was the Mexicans who ended up losing the war. As Mr. Houston led his soldiers into battle, he shouted “Remember the Alamo.” It is a battle cry worth remembering, because it causes us to remember soldiers who do not quit.

The Apostle Paul wanted his son in the faith to finish an award-winner. He wanted him to be a strong son; a good soldier; a winning athlete and a reaping farmer. One of the things that could motivate Timothy to do that was to “Remember Jesus Christ.” This really is the great impetus for all faithfulness.

When it comes to ministry, it is possible to get all wrapped up in all kinds of stuff. Believers can get so wrapped up in the world that they actually lose sight of Jesus Christ. We have to live life in this world and God knows that. We need to work at a job; we need a place to live; we need food; and we need an income. There is not anything wrong with any of that. But sometimes if we are not careful we can lose sight of Jesus Christ. Even at church we can get running to this activity or this service or this ministry or this event and lose sight of the importance of maintaining a close relationship with Jesus Christ.

The entire grace of God package is found in Jesus Christ. Everything we have in our relationship with God is found in Jesus Christ. Paul was about to die and Timothy needed to realize how important it was to have a close relationship with Jesus Christ. So in this part of the letter, what he says to Timothy is this:

AN AWARD-WINNING BELIEVER WILL REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST; SPECIFICALLY, HE WILL REMEMBER THE SACRIFICE HE MADE AND THE REWARDS HE WILL GIVE.

It would be possible to be a son strong in doctrine; a soldier who is good in warfare; an athlete who focuses on winning and a farmer who reaps and start to forget about Jesus Christ. It is possible to get so caught up in the warfare, the competition, and the harvesting to the point that you start to lose sight of the Person it is all about.

One may be a true child of God and get sidetracked by a job, an education, a relationship and even a ministry that one forgets about Jesus Christ. **But no one can finish an award-winning believer if he/she forgets about Jesus Christ.**

Now in these verses there are seven Christological memories Paul wanted Timothy to have:

CHRISTOLOGICAL MEMORY #1 – Remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ. **2:8a**

Now the Greek text reads just exactly as the New American Standard and the New International Version have translated it into English. It is very clear from this opening statement that Paul specifically wanted Timothy to never forget about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This doctrine is critical because it sets Jesus Christ apart from all other systems of religion. When you are wading through life, you come up against all kinds of religious views; but the one truth that award winners will always remember is that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. That has not happened to any other religious leader.

Now this doctrine of the resurrection is critical to Pauline grace. It is this very doctrine that proves our justification (Rom. 4:25). According to Paul, we are so linked with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ that our sin was buried in that tomb in the mind of God and we have been raised up fully justified (Rom. 6:5). The one doctrine we need to always defend is that resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is so critical to our salvation and our faith.

One other point is worth remembering on this subject. Since Jesus Christ is alive and raised from the dead, then one day we will face Him (i.e. II Tim. 2:11). There will come a time when every one of us will face the Lord Jesus Christ to give an account of ourselves (II Cor. 5:10). This thought is a great motive to strive to be an award-winner.

CHRISTOLOGICAL MEMORY #2 – Remember the lineage of Jesus Christ. **2:8b**

The next point Paul wants Timothy to remember about Jesus Christ is that he was a “descendant of David.” There are at least three reasons why Paul would want Timothy to remember this fact:

Reason #1 - Remember that Jesus Christ is Jewish.

In this Grace Age, it is imperative that we realize that God is the God of Israel. Jesus Christ is God and He is Jewish. Those who like to downplay or demean Israel or who hate the Jews are satanic. People who don't like the Jews need to realize one day I am going to face a Jew.

Reason #2 - Remember Jesus Christ is Divine royalty.

David was the second king in Israel's history and God promised him that through his lineage would ultimately come the Royal Son of God who would be the King of Kings (II Sam. 7:12-13; Ps. 132:10-11). The resurrection of Jesus Christ establishes Jesus Christ's royal Deity and the Davidic lineage establishes Jesus Christ's royal humanity. Award-winning believers remember Jesus Christ is the King of Kings. He is Israel's King and He will reign one day on this earth as the Davidic King of Israel. Those churches and religions who demean Israel and the fact that Jesus Christ will literally one day reign as King of the Jews in the Promised Land, will not ever finish award-winners.

Paul wanted Timothy to remember that even though at the present time Jesus Christ is not reigning on this earth, there will come a day when He will. He is the Davidic King.

Reason #3 - Remember that Jesus Christ is God's Messiah.

This Davidic connection is critical to establishing that Jesus Christ is the only One fully authorized by God to one day rule the world. It was clearly predicted that God's anointed Messiah would come through the Davidic line (Is. 11:1-5). This One will one day rule the world.

If we are to be an award-winning believer, we must always remember God's program with Israel and the fact that Jesus Christ is the one and only Divine, Jewish, Messianic King.

CHRISTOLOGICAL MEMORY #3 – Remember the Pauline Gospel of Jesus Christ. **2:8c**

If we were to grammatically diagram this sentence, the prepositional phrase “according to my gospel” sits under the admonition to “Remember Jesus Christ.” So we may accurately understand the grammar to say, “Remember Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”

Now Paul was the one who was specifically chosen by God to reveal the doctrine of God's grace that centers on Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12; I Tim. 1:11). Since Paul knows he will soon die, he is challenging Timothy to remember that entire Pauline grace Gospel and doctrinal system that is found completely in Jesus Christ.

If we think through the various doctrines Paul teaches in his Gospel, this memory is rich. Paul taught the doctrine of the righteousness of God and the depravity of sinful man. He taught the doctrine of justification, forgiveness and redemption. He taught the doctrines of propitiation, remission, imputation and reconciliation. He taught doctrines like election and positional, practical and ultimate sanctification. Every one of those precious Gospel doctrines are linked to Jesus Christ. We need to remember those doctrines and we need to understand them.

CHRISTOLOGICAL MEMORY #4 – Remember my suffering for Jesus Christ. **2:9a**

Paul says this is the reason I am suffering, because I am unlocking the Gospel of grace that is totally focused on Jesus Christ. Paul knew why he was suffering in prison as a criminal. It was because he was preaching truth about Jesus Christ.

In A.D. 64, history says Nero started a fire in Rome that burned for six days and seven nights. Shrines, buildings, businesses and homes were destroyed. Many people in Rome died and many were left destitute. Nero blamed the Christians and Paul was one of the most powerful and notorious Christians to live on this earth. So Nero arrested him. It was a politically tactical move to try and get the public to not put the blame on the key politician.

Paul knew the real reason why he was suffering. It had nothing to do with the fire; it was because he was preaching the Gospel of God, which is the Gospel of grace found in Jesus Christ. If you are known as one who stands for the grace of God and proclaims the Word of God, you will take heat and you will stand all alone.

Years ago I taught the book of Romans at GRBSM. I taught that book in 1983. About 10 years later, I got a phone call from one of the students who had gone through the book and was serving in a very large church. He said he noticed that the church was beginning to depart from true doctrine so he said I decided to take one key leader to Romans. He said I showed him that when you believe in Jesus Christ you are totally secure, and he said I thought these people would be thrilled. Instead, he said he and others got mad at me and turned against me. This former student said, "I have learned that if you take a stand for God's Word, you stand all alone."

That is what Paul experienced. He was suffering and under attack and was even a prisoner locked up as a criminal because he preached the truth. If you take a stand for the Word of God, you will experience the same thing.

When you preach passages that teach women should not be pastors, or homosexuality is an abominable lifestyle sin choice, see where that gets you. Take a stand and say the denomination is wrong or the charismatic movement is not of God and see how popular you become. Sometimes you will be treated like a criminal, just like Paul.

CHRISTOLOGICAL MEMORY #5 – Remember the power of God's Word that proclaims Jesus Christ. **2:9b**

Paul never wanted Timothy to forget about the power of the Word of God. God's Word is living and active and you cannot contain it or stop it. The power for an award-winning believer lies in the Word of God. When God's Word is accurately communicated, it contains the full power and punch of God. No one can lock up the Word of God.

This is important for us to remember. Regardless of our circumstances or our difficulties, and regardless of our enemy's attempts to derail us, our power lies in proclaiming the Word of God. We are most powerful when we are accurately unlocking God's Word. Paul was obviously preaching the Word while in a dungeon. You could not stop him. As Harry Bultema said, "The messenger could be bound, but not the message."

Don't ever forget this point; our power is in the Word. The Word of God is a living book and when we communicate its truth, it will accomplish its goal.

CHRISTOLOGICAL MEMORY #6 – Remember the salvific purpose of God's Word that prompts us to endure for Jesus Christ. **2:10**

We get a good look at Paul's theology here. He endured all the negative things that came against him, including being in prison as a criminal for the purpose that the chosen and elect of God might obtain salvation.

That verb “endure” means Paul patiently remained under and stayed the course when things were hard. He did not bail out. **The reason he did not bail out was because of the doctrine of election.**

Paul believed it was his responsibility to take the grace Gospel to the world so God could save the elect with it. God uses the communication of the grace Gospel to save His elect and give them salvation that leads to eternal glory, and Paul says that is why I am willing to put up with this stuff.

This is so fascinating because one of the arguments against a doctrine like election is that election promotes a life of non-witnessing. That is obviously a man-made argument because the doctrine of election kept Paul witnessing, even when suffering. Paul knew God was not going to save everyone. He knew God would save His elect and he was willing to endure tough things to communicate the truth about Jesus Christ so God would save the elect.

People are willing to endure a lot of difficulty for a lot of causes. People will endure hardships for various reasons. For example, in Arizona, there are people who have invested their entire lives trying to find gold in the lost Dutchman’s mine. They have gone without sleep, water, food, and relationships to try and find gold. People will suffer hardships for money, possessions, position, prestige and power. How much are we willing to endure for the elect?

Are you willing to take a stand for grace and truth if it means you suffer with your family, friends, co-workers or fellow students? Are you willing to take some time to come and pray that God will use this church to reach His elect? Are you willing to put yourself out on a Sunday night to learn more of the Word of God so you are better equipped to teach it? Many today don’t endure any hardship because they don’t really have a burden for the elect. Paul did.

CHRISTOLOGICAL MEMORY #7 – Remember the future we will have with Jesus Christ.
2:11-13

We need to observe that Paul changes the pronoun here from “I” to “we.” It is important to see this because this has application to every believer. **The primary theme of these verses is one of award-winning service. The primary theme of this section is not salvation.** Paul and Timothy were already both saved. If you miss this point, these verses will confuse you.

The primary point Paul is making here is that faithfulness and loyalty to Jesus Christ in the present will bring great honor and rewards in the future and faithlessness and disloyalty in the present will bring great dishonor and loss of rewards in the future.

These verses are not about losing salvation, they are all about Paul and Timothy and us losing rewards. There are four key “if” clauses. Each of the “if” protasis statements (dependent statements) describe an action of a believer. All of the verbs used are indicative mood verbs, which mean these are facts. These are all faithful statements of true facts, which Paul says at the beginning of **verse 11**:

IF CLAUSE #1 – If we die (aorist) with Christ, we shall also live with Christ. **2:11**

The aorist tense indicates a point of time death. There are two ways to apply it:

- 1) Physical death - if we should die physically while ministering for Jesus Christ, we need to remember we will go live with Him. Death should not be some overwhelming threat to us.
- 2) Spiritual death - If we spiritually die to our old nature and our flesh, we will have a relationship with Jesus Christ that is alive and He will use us and then we will go live with Him.

IF CLAUSE #2 – If we suffer like Christ, we will reign with Christ. **2:12a**

Present suffering for Jesus Christ on earth means a future royalty reign in heaven. Every believer will sooner or later suffer some hardships and in those moments it is the memory of Jesus Christ that will sustain. He suffered for us and now He reigns, and if we end up suffering for Him we will also reign.

IF CLAUSE #3 – If we deny Christ on earth, He will deny us rewards in heaven. **2:12b**

Now the verb “deny” is one that means to refuse to acknowledge something or to deny or say no to something (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 59-60). The present tense of the verb speaks of a continual state of denying Christ and living for Him. This is not speaking of a moment or lapse in the flesh. This is speaking of a habitual denial to defend Jesus Christ.

The denial being referred to here is not a denial of salvation, because Paul already said he knew whom he believed and was convinced his soul was saved (II Tim. 1:12). The denial here is of rewards. Thomas Constable said, “the unfaithful believer will not lose his salvation (I John 5:13) or all of his reward (I Pet. 1:4), but he will lose some of his reward (I Cor. 3:12-15)” (*Notes on 2 Timothy*, pp. 18-19).

If we are not willing to stand up for Jesus Christ and defend the Word of God and the grace of God, there is no way He will reward us in heaven. He will deny us of our rewards.

IF CLAUSE #4 – If we are not faithful to Him, He still is faithful to us. **2:13**

This verse is one of the most comforting reminders that any believer may have about Jesus Christ. If a believer continually (present tense) is unfaithful, Jesus Christ will always remain faithful to save one who believes in Him.

When you believed on Jesus Christ, you became a child of God and nothing can undo that. You can spend the rest of your life in a way that actually is not faithful to God and you still cannot undo that. What an amazing Person Jesus Christ is. We need to always remember Him.