

# A Worker Approved by God – Part 2

## Introduction

### a. objectives

1. subject – Paul instructs Timothy to take up the mantle of leadership for the next generation
2. aim – to cause us to seek wholeheartedly to inculcate the truth of Christ into the next generation
3. passage – 2 Timothy 2:1-26

### b. outline

1. The Goal of the Approved Worker (2 Timothy 2:1-13)
2. The Pursuit of the Approved Worker (2 Timothy 2:14-19)
3. The Attitude of the Approved Worker (2 Timothy 2:20-26)

### c. opening

1. the **movement** into the next chapter of 2 Timothy
  - a. **chap. 1:** Paul's very personal words to Timothy about his legacy – that Timothy should never be ashamed of the legacy of faith that he has received from so many (*i.e.* his realization of it)
  - b. **chap. 2:** Paul's words of instruction of what Timothy is to do with that legacy (*i.e.* his use of it)
    1. the key phrase of the chapter is from **v. 15**: “*present yourself to God as one approved [through testing], a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth*”
    2. **LOW:** the legacy of Timothy is now an *opportunity* to do something with this faith
    3. or, to pick up the mantle of leadership from Paul now that *his* ministry has come to an end
3. the **outline** of the next chapter of 2 Timothy
  - a. the goal – what is the goal of being an approved worker; for *what* does he strive?
  - b. the pursuit – how does the approved worker accomplish this goal; what does he *do*?
  - c. the attitude – under what attitude does the approved worker seek this goal; how does he *think*?

## I. The Goal of the Approved Worker (2 Timothy 2:1-13)

### Content

#### a. stating the goal (vv. 1-2)

1. the guiding succession plan of the gospel is its *self-replication* into the minds, hearts, and lives of the next generation through faithful catechism

#### b. illustrating the goal (vv. 3-7)

1. the work of replicating the gospel into the lives of the next generation is under the authority of *Jesus Christ himself*, and we must never forget that he is the one to whom we look for our commendation

#### c. clarifying the goal (vv. 8-9)

1. “*remember Jesus Christ*” = not as though Timothy had “forgotten” about Jesus as the center of his life and ministry; rather, the *prioritization* of everything “around” this Jesus in the life of the church
  - a. *i.e.* the primary message of the church is the person and work of Jesus Christ (**Christocentric**)
  - b. “*risen from the dead*” = the *objective* reality around which the entirety of the faith is built – all of God's plans and purposes, redemptive history (O.T.), the words of Christ, the salvation of individuals, etc., etc. flow out of this *historical fact* (**remember 1 Corinthians 15:14-19**)
 

“And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”

    1. the center of our **assurance** – *did* Christ rise?; if so, did he say he would?; if so, doesn't that prove that *everything else* he said had deep implications?
- c. “*the offspring of David*” = either 1) the *nature* of Jesus as descended from the *human* line of David (*i.e.* the human messiah) or (**more likely**) 2) the *position* of Jesus as now seated on David's royal throne (*i.e.* with all authority as the King of Kings)
  1. Timothy (as a Jew) would have understood David as the greatest king in the history of the nation of Israel, who's throne would be occupied *forever* by a permanent king
  2. thus, the statement is *probably* a reference to the *continuing position of Christ* after his resurrection: the One who is the King, esp. of the church, who *demand*s utter allegiance
  3. **note:** Paul connects this *with his own ministry* of “*preaching the gospel*”: just as Paul was obedient to this risen and authoritative Christ, so Timothy is to submit also to this Christ and entrust the message of this Christ to the next generation

- d. **principle: the gospel that is to be replicated is one that is Christ-centered – it is a message that centers on the realities of this Christ being passed on as the means of faith**
1. **e.g.** catechism isn't *just* about imparting knowledge – it is about imparting a knowledge of Christ that leads to a deep love *of* and faith *in* this Jesus (**i.e.** you cannot love one you do not *know*)
  2. “for which I am suffering ...” = the single factor in Paul’s message that had gotten him imprisoned
    - a. it is the **preaching of Christ**, the true message of Scripture, that is opposed by many
    - b. **note:** the message of Jesus as risen from the dead and (now) the “new” king David (**see above**) was extraordinarily *offensive* to Jews (**note Acts 4:1-3:** Peter and John preaching the resurrection)
      1. it meant that they were *wrong* about so many things (**i.e.** their view of God, of the O.T. message)
    - c. but, Paul had *refused* to “tailor” his message to prevent offending the Jews, thus they arrested him
      1. **example:** this is *dangerously similar* to what is happening in the “woke” church – a new view of the gospel as a solution to “social injustice” that rejects the idea of complete solidarity in the cross *regardless of race, gender, etc.* by replacing it with a sense of the “victimhood” of certain “privileged” groups (blacks, women) and for “oppressor” groups to give *deference* to them
      2. Paul understood that the message of the gospel **humbles us all** before the cross
  3. “but the word of God is not bound” = circumstances will never prevent the Spirit of God from advancing the cause of Christ in the world – there is always another generation being raised up
    - a. similar to **Luke 19:40:** “I tell you, if these [disciples] were silent, the very stones would cry out”
    - b. **IOW:** to Timothy, you are that next generation – my work may now be done, but you have been raised up by God to carry on that message – nothing can hinder the advancement of the gospel
    - c. **principle: the goal of the church is the continual catechism of a Christ-centered faith into the next generation, unadulterated by the winds of cultural pressure around us**
- d. **emphasizing the goal (vv. 10-13)**
1. “I endure everything for the sake of the elect ...” = the most effective messenger is the one who starts with a proper view of the purposes of God in the gospel
    - a. the elect = those who have been *purposed* by God, before time itself, to receive his grace and mercy; the *personal choice* of God to act mercifully towards *some*
      1. not some “nameless, faceless” future crowd of those who will (maybe!) embrace Jesus
      2. rather, a specific set of people, known by Christ as his own (**John 10:14**), for which he dies
      3. that are scattered throughout all of time and space – in every “tribe, tongue, and nation”
    - b. **IOW:** because there are elect people out there, Paul would preach the gospel to everyone, regardless of *rejection* or *oppression*, to be sure that all would hear and the elect would believe
      1. in order that “they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus ...”
    - c. **note:** some would argue that “Calvinism” must be rejected because it *diminishes* evangelism
      1. yet, it is the *synergist* who has no *compelling reason* to proclaim the gospel, since the “power” of evangelism (for them) resides only in persuasion and technique
      2. the Calvinist has a compelling reason to preach because he *knows* that God has a people that are being regenerated by the Spirit through that preaching – **i.e.** fling the seed
  2. Paul ends the point by quoting what **IMO** appears to be a First Century **covenant** (i.e. a “saying”)
    - a. the four (4) parts are designed to *connect the believer* in assurance to this Christ
      1. to die with him is to live with him – the *fundamental* truth of Christianity is that Christ has gone to the cross *with a people in himself*, to act as their **vicarious substitute** – thus, as he died and rose, so those who come to him in faith also “die” and “rise”
        - a. note the connection of this phrase with **v. 8** – Christ as “risen from the dead”
      2. to endure is to reign with him – the *continuing* reality of Christianity is that we must *persevere* in the face of many trials and oppositions *just as he did* – thus, just as he *persevered* living in this putrid world of sin and bearing it on the cross, so must we to be included in his kingdom
        - a. note the connection of this phrase with **v. 8** – Christ as the “offspring of David”
      3. to deny him is to be denied by him – the *deadly* reality of Christianity is that there will be many who will confess this Christ *outwardly only* – thus, we must be confident in our connection by faith to this Christ by continually reminding ourselves of who he is and what he has done
        - a. note that this where our *assurance* must come in, as it comes from **v. 8**
      4. to be faithless is still for him to be faithful – the *unfortunate* reality of Christianity is that we *will sin* and fall under temptation – however, our confidence is not found in *our success*, but in *his faithfulness* to preserve his own to the end
    - b. this is the purpose behind **the Lord’s Supper** – to **remember** that he has died for us, to **remember** his completed work as our assurance, to **remind** ourselves (and others) of our need to endure, to **remember** his faithfulness even in the face of our sin and failure