

2nd Timothy
Chapter 2:8-13
“Worth it All”

All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid
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So, pressing on in the 2nd chapter of 2nd Timothy ... remember Paul’s theme in this section has been “fruitfulness”.

For three weeks we looked at the metaphors of the good soldier, the prize-winning athlete and the hard-working farmer. And from these, Paul’s given us three specific pointers toward personal fruitfulness; single-mindedness, obedience and hard work.

And although his overall theme hasn’t changed ... the direction he goes with it shifts slightly.

Having already covered the importance of personal fruitfulness as well as the recipe for it ... he now moves on to the subject of the longevity of our fruitfulness ... a sub-theme that culminates with the 7th verse of chapter 4 where Paul says ... **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.**

So, this section is Paul’s heart ... wanting Timothy, as well as each and every one of us, to be able to say that same thing ... that we’ve lasted. That we’ve continued on until the buzzer.

And that ... to me ... is such a beautiful thing! To be able to say “Lord, I have finished the course that You laid out before me.” Because that’s the ticket to His eternal response ...

Matthew 25:21 ... ‘Well done, good and faithful [servant]. You were faithful ... [now] enter into the joy of your master.’

I don’t know about you, but that phrase motivates me. I want, with all my heart, to hear the Lord say those words to me. So, I’m thankful that Paul penned this section of scripture to guide those of us who have our eyes fixed on that goal.

It’s like the great distance runners. From the very beginning of their careers the good ones are coached on their mental attitude as much as they are in their physical endurance. They’re taught to reject any and every thought of quitting.

The world class coaches say that if you entertain thoughts of quitting any race at any point ... even if you do finish the race ... you’ll lose it. Those thoughts of quitting are like running with a parachute behind you.

And as Christians ... those thoughts are just as damaging. Thoughts of quitting have to be banished. Don't entertain them. Rather ... make up your mind that you will never quit... never quit on Christ ... never quit on a ministry outside of His leading ... never quit on a marriage or your kids. Quitting is a word to be absolutely banished from the Christian vocabulary.

We must have a heart that says, "I WILL finish the race that He's set before me! Jesus as long as you remain faithful ... I'll stay the course."

Well ... let's jump into this morning's text ...

Verses 8-9: At the time of Paul's writing ... he was, in fact, physically imprisoned. And he tells us here that he wasn't imprisoned just as a Christian zealot, but as a criminal. But "**... the word of God is not imprisoned**" he goes on to say.

If you can think of it ... it's been done to stamp out God's Word. It's been banned and burned ... it's been mistranslated and corrupted. It's been taken out of the hands of us common people and it's been taken out of schools, but it lives on and by the declaration of God it always will (**Matthew 5:18**).

So, God's Word will not be chained, at least not in a social or societal sense.

But that doesn't mean that it's never imprisoned at all.

Q. How often do we feel it wanting to get out, but we close the gate and don't allow it through our teeth? -- It's imprisoned by my heart ... it's chained by your tongue!

But ... back to this issue of never quitting ... of never even contemplating quitting ... and we ask ...

Q. "How ..." Paul "**do we banish those very human thoughts of quitting**"? – Simple" he says, "remember Jesus Christ!"

- Remember that He fulfills the Old Testament prophecies perfectly ... being of the seed of David.
 - Remember that He's the messiah that this book of good news sets forth ... but most of all ...
 - Remember that He was resurrected and now sits at the right hand of the Father ... that's the first thing that Paul encourages us to remember about the Lord because that's where our hope is.
 - That's what will keep us going.
 - That's what will keep us from ever quitting.
- ✓ Remember Christ!
✓ Remember that He now reigns and rules as the King who conquered

death on our behalf.

Verse 10: “For this reason I [was able to] endure all things ...”

Q. For what reason Paul? – “Because over the years I’ve endeavored to develop within myself ... the single-mindedness of a soldier, the obedience of an athlete and the work ethic of a farmer. Because I always remember Jesus and Him risen from the dead and because even though I’m in chains ... His Word is not.”

Those are the things that helped Paul stay the course ... enduring all things faithfully.

Q. And who benefits? – Paul says, “**those who are chosen**”. Other translations render it “**the elect**”.

Q. Now ... is that “those that *will be saved*” or “those that *will to be saved*”? --

Well **Romans 10:9** says, “Those who confess with their mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in their heart that God raised Him from the dead ... will be saved.”

So rather than getting hung up on some theological point of debate ... simplify ... those that will to be saved ... will be saved. And Paul pours himself out to that end ... adopting strategies that allowed him to endure all things.

Verses 11-13: Taking ‘em one at a time:

1. If we died with Him, we will also live with Him ...

Q. You know how to be truly ready for death? – Die now!

Matthew 10:38 " ... he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

Most of us don’t really understand the cross. In the day in which we live Satan has effectively blinded us to what the cross is. Many of us feel very comfortable wearing a cross necklace or some other piece of jewelry. It’s become so commercialized.

Q. But what if this verse said, “Take up your electric chair and follow Me”? Would you feel just as comfortable putting on your electric chair necklace or your gas chamber earrings or your lethal injection T-shirt?

The cross is just as much a symbol of death by execution as any of those other things, but we’ve become desensitized to the reality of it.

What Jesus tells us to “**take up**”, is a large, rough, ugly, conspicuous and uncomfortable cross. There’s no showroom of crosses where you get to choose one that’s just right for you.

To “**take up your cross**” means to die to self.

And to “follow after Him” means to live for Him one moment at a time.

And the end result, Paul says, is “an eternal, glorious life with Christ.” If we die with Him, we will also live with Him.

Q. Do you really know that? -- You know we talk a lot? We say, “Oh ya, I know that this life doesn’t mean anything. I know that Christ holds all the power. I know that I will live forever in Christ. I know that the more I pour myself out here ... the greater my Heavenly reward will be.”

We can say that we know all that but do an exercise with me ... compare the way we live our lives to the way we might play a video game. In this life, we’re cautious and reserved by comparison. In the video game ... we don’t hesitate to jump off tall buildings or march into battle or get in the ring with world champions.

Q. Why? What’s the difference? – In the video game, if I die it’s okay because I know ... I know that I will live again. All I have to do is push the restart button and I come back to life ... so I can afford to play the game with reckless abandon.

Q. Now ... why then do we feel such a need to live cautiously in this life? -- Kinda highlights just how pathetic our faith really is doesn’t it?

2. If we endure, we will also reign with Him ...

Heavenly rewards ... living eternally ... living gloriously ... and ... reigning with Christ.

Q. But what’s the cost? – The endurance of all things.

Theologian and author, Dr. J.H. Jowett wrote; “It is possible to escape a multitude of troubles ... by living an insignificant life. ... The range of our possible suffering is determined by the largeness and nobility of our aims.”

Q. I want you to answer this question very carefully and very honestly ... do you ever get bored?

Q. Now answer this question ... can you imagine the Apostle Paul or Jesus Himself ever getting bored? – I really don't think that either of them struggled with boredom.

Q. Why? – Because they each had a very clear vision of the task that was before them as well as the timeline in which to accomplish it.

Now ... our mission ... most of us know ... it's to do everything we can to please God.

Q. But what about the timeline? How can we know how much time we really have? – And that's the point ... we can't. If you're breathing then you've got the moment, but your next breath is at the discretion of God. Use the one you've been given. There's just no excuse for boredom in the Christian life.

If you're challenged so little that you get bored ... then you're not enduring all things ... you're avoiding them.

3. If we deny Him, He also will deny us ...

Q. But wait a minute ... aren't we told in Hebrews 13:5 that Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us? – Indeed, we are and every word of it is true ...

Q. Remember Peter? – He totally put that promise to the test. He denied Christ three times with cursing and swearing and yet the Lord accepted him and embraced him upon his return (**Matthew 26**).

But in addition to the promise of **Hebrews 13:5** we're also told in ...

**Matthew 10:32 "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.
33 "But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.**

This is salvation! Confess Him before men and He'll confess you before the Father in Heaven, but ... deny Him and He'll deny you.

It's not a question of losing salvation once it's obtained, but of never receiving it to begin with.

4. If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself ...

Q. Meaning what Paul? – Well, some interpret it as a reference to God's mercies. That even if you blow it ... God has to forgive you. But that's

not it. Certainly, God is faithful in forgiveness, but not because He has to be ... He simply chooses to.

No, this is referring to God's faithfulness to minister to our faithlessness.

In other words, this is God's promise to those of us who know Him as Lord and Savior ... that if and when you blow it ... God promises to faithfully bring you back around to that same lesson again and again.

Even when we are faithless ... He remains faithful. And He will continue to remain faithful to that promise because He cannot deny Himself ... He cannot be untrue to His own Word.

Conclusion: In his book "Enjoying Intimacy with God" the late J. Oswald Sanders wrote this ...

A successful, fruitful ministry does not just happen – it is purchased by surrender of all we possess. The more influential a ministry is, the steeper the price will be. It cannot be paid in a lump sum; we pay for it in gradually increasing installments as the challenges increase. There is no such thing as a cheap, fruitful ministry.

As we wrap this up, I wanna share something that I believe, really must precede, even the things Paul's been talking to us about ... if we too are going to have long and fruitful ministries. It was true in Paul's day and it's true in ours as well.

Q. But it's something that's easier to illustrate than it is to explain so would you turn back with me to the 32nd chapter of the book of Genesis verses 22-30?

It's there that a man by the name of Jacob wrestles with God (**Hosea 12:3-5**). Jacob was a man who'd spent his life trying to maneuver and manipulate. He had a bad habit of trying to do God's thing his own way, but in **that chapter**, we read about him coming to that place where he wrestled with God. A joyously terrible and generally unavoidable day in the life of every Christian who desires a fruitful and lasting ministry.

Genesis 32:22 Now he arose that same night and took his two wives and his two maids and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok [River]. **23** He took them and sent them across And he sent across whatever he had. **24** Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. **25** When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him. **26** Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." **27** So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." **28** He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." **29** Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please

tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there. 30 So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved."

So, Jacob wrestled with God all night long, but really the context demands that we see the opposing purposes of the two; God wrestled to subdue Jacob, but Jacob wrestled to escape God.

That's why it says that just before dawn, God realized that He had not prevailed against Jacob.

Not that God couldn't whip Jacob, but that He couldn't convince Jacob to make the right choice. He did everything to get Jacob to surrender, but what's interesting to me is that it wasn't until God let Jacob go ... that Jacob reached out and took hold of God.

And none of that happened until God touched Jacob's hip and dislocated it. God had to break him!

Now at that point ... the Bible makes a very interesting claim. The claim is that Jacob won the wrestling match.

O. But how could that be? – Here's how he won ... he lost. He won by losing and that's the only way that any of us will ultimately ever win. When Jacob saw the awesome power of God ... merely touching his hip and yet making him a cripple for the rest of his life ... he finally chose to surrender.

When he saw that the Lord was no longer holding on to him ... that's when Jacob finally took hold of the Lord. And he said, "I will not let go until You bless me!" and so God did.

"I will not let go until You bless me!" Paul said that too. You and I need to say that regularly. "Lord I will not let go until You bless me", because that's Heaven.

On that night God gave Jacob a new identity and changed the way he walked forever. If you're saved, then He's done the same thing for you ...

O. Are you grateful enough to say with Paul "Lord I will not turn loose of You until my eternal blessing comes"? – That's what we're called to. Wrestle with Him if you must but make up your mind now that you will never quit on Him.

Any soldier who quits fighting ... loses!

Any athlete who give up in the middle of the contest will be defeated.

And a farmer that ceases from his labors in the middle of the season will reap no harvest.

We simply cannot quit!

So ... longevity of fruitfulness ... is vital ... and ... it begins with a wrestling match where you must choose to give it all up ... and next week, Paul builds on the "How To" aspect of fruitful longevity.