

DEAR TIMOTHY...

AN 8 WEEK SERIES IN THE BOOK OF 2 TIMOTHY

Connect group questions

2 Timothy 2:1-13 - Dear Timothy... be strong in Jesus' grace

1. Do you ever want to just give up following Jesus? If so, what circumstances usually lead up to that kind of thinking?

BE STRONG

To pass on the gospel

2. Read v2. What qualification must Timothy look for among those to whom he entrusts Paul's message? Why is this important?
3. Mark recalled in his talk, some of the ways the gospel is being entrusted to those qualified to teach others. What more could or should we be doing to entrust the gospel to others?

...like a soldier, an athlete and a farmer

4. Read vv3-7. What is the overarching point Paul is making as he uses these three illustrations?
5. Refer the church web site Mark sited, vs US Navy Seal Code. Why does the message of some churches involve no discomfort or challenge?
6. Why *should* we make church a non-negotiable opt-in week in and week out for ourselves, and where appropriate, our families?
7. Mark said: "Focus, uncompromising, hard work, passion and discipline; like a soldier, an athlete and a farmer." He then asked: "How many of us live the Christian life this way?" Is this way of understanding the Christian life old fashioned and out of touch? Why might it be unpopular? What is *your* take on this?

BE STRONG

As you remember

Jesus Christ

8. Read v8. Why are these two particular aspects of Jesus mentioned? How will remembering who Jesus is and what he has done for us, help make us strong?

The unchained word

9. Read vv8-9. What is the encouragement to us in this our day, that the word of God is not chained?

The elect

10. Read v10. What is the point of persevering in getting the gospel out even when it means suffering, if God has already chosen those who are going to be his? Won't they just be his anyway?

Our faithful God

11. Read vv11-13. Read also Luke 9:21-26. What is the 'take home' of these two passages?
12. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. How has the passage/message spoken to you?

Anything new to you in this passage? Pray that we will pass on the gospel; that by God's grace we will become more disciplined, hard working, focused and passionate, as we remember Jesus Christ, the unchained word, the elect and our faithful God. Pray that we'll grow strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Date: 19th May 2019
Services: 730, 930 Tewantin and Peregian
Series: Dear Timothy
Title: ... be strong in Jesus' grace ...
Passage: 2 Timothy 2:1-13
Outline:

1. Be strong

- a. To pass on

Be strong like:

- b. A soldier
c. An athlete
d. A farmer

2. Be strong

As you remember:

- a. Jesus Christ (and all he has done)
b. The unchained word
c. The elect
d. Our faithful God
-

INTRODUCTION

- Do you ever want to just give **up** following **Jesus**?
- it's all too **hard**?
- especially because **freedom of speech** is under fire... freedom of **expression**...
- especially as **persecution** of Christians around the globe is **serious** – it's intense
- and also as we've seen in just the first two **weeks** of our 2 Timothy series, Paul's invitation to Timothy to join with him in **suffering** for the **gospel**... and you're not sure that's an invitation you want to **accept**!
- in fact when we get in a few weeks to chapter 3, we'll read these words – 3:12 – *everyone who wants to live a godly live in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted**...*
- that's not just an **invitation** – it's a **promise!!** /
- at the end of last week's passage – I didn't comment specifically – but Paul reported that '*everyone the province of Asia has deserted me*' ... so – let's be clear – people were opting **out**... and they weren't just leaving **Paul** – they were leaving **Jesus**. //
- Do **you** want to **leave**?
- ... give **up**? **Retreat**? //
- God says to you today – *be **strong**...*
- Be **strong**...
- But make no mistake – he's not just saying – "**toughen up**..." /
- No; he says '*be **strong**... in the grace that is in Christ Jesus'...*
- So I have two points this morning...
 1. Be **strong**, and
 2. Be **strong**
- No – that's not a mistake – it will become clear – but let's make a start...

1. BE STRONG

- And the first thing he wants to say here is to be strong to **pass** the gospel **on** /
- If people are **shipwrecking** their faith (which they were) and if Timothy was to **guard** the **gospel** (which we saw last week) then one of the most significant things he can do is – have a look with me v2 – is to take what he has heard from Paul and **entrust** it to **reliable people who will also be qualified to teach**

others...

- How is the gospel to have any **future**?
- Only by passing it on to **others** who can pass it on to **others**, who can pass it on to **others**...
- And so that it was not Chinese whispers where the message is **changed** along the **way** – Timothy was to ensure that what he was passing on, was what he had **heard** from **Paul** – **exactly** what he had **heard** from **Paul**. /
- So far from giving **up** brothers and sisters – we are to ensure that we are raising up a **new** generation of **leaders**...
- I'm excited that Tori and Rhianna Cardamone are going to study the Bible for six months in a Bible college in **Costa Rica**... I was delighted when Michael Calder finished Year **12** that he decided to study the Bible in the Year **13** program.
- **Delighted** that more people are with **children's ministry**.
- Delighted with our connect **group leaders**.
- I'm delighted that around **12** people have been studying the Moore College Preliminary **Theological Certificate**...
- Delighted that Ruth **Craven** is spending Fridays down at Queensland Theological college... training in ministry... //
- But we need, in our time, to be **diligent** about this... we need as a church to be **purposefully** encouraging a **new generation** of people who will be **qualified** to **teach** others...
- Be strong, **Timothy** – to pass the gospel **on**... to those who will pass the **gospel on**...
- ...even if that results in **suffering!** ///
- What does being **strong** for **Jesus** look like?
- Paul gives three illustrations of people who are strong in their particular field...
- Be strong, says Paul –
 - a. like a **soldier**
- a soldier endures many tough challenges
- many of us have had family and friends who have served.. and some **here** have served with the defence forces.
- They join, knowing that it will be **hard**.
- Paul is saying – don't be **surprised** when tough times come
- When you're a soldier on the battle field and someone begins shooting at you, you don't respond by saying 'was it something I said?'... no; you **know** it comes with the **territory**...
- But you're **focussed**... on pleasing the **commanding officer**... on **doing** your **job**, on **supporting** your fellow **soldiers**... so you don't pull **out**... you don't **weaken** your **resolve**... you don't get **distracted**...
- Now this is not the **only** analogy for the Christian life... but don't **miss this**... we are to please **Jesus** our commanding officer... with **focus** and **determination**... and not be surprised when it's tough!
- **Fascinating** how some churches present themselves and what they offer – so here is a church website – and they promise that if you join them - you'll find a **casual atmosphere**, **today's music**, powerful **dramas**, high-**impact media** presentations, **messages** relevant to your **daily** life, a Starbucks-**esque** café where you can **relax**, **recharge** and **relate** in your **comfort zone**... coffee in hand...
- Now I **get** that... but it's fascinating isn't it when you contrast it to let's say, the US Navy seal code:
 - Loyalty to Country, Team and Teammate
 - Serve with Honora and Integrity On and Off the Battlefield
 - Ready to Lead, Ready to Follow, Never Quit
 - Take responsibility for your actions and the actions of your teammates
 - Excel as Warriors through Discipline and Innovation
 - Train for War, Fight to Win, Defeat our Nation's Enemies

- There is a tendency to 'market' the Christian faith today – which doesn't involve any discomfort – doesn't require any thing of you at all – and doesn't **match** what the Bible says about being **disciple of Jesus!**
- Be **strong**, says Paul to Timothy – says **God** to **you** – like a **soldier** /
- **And...**
 - b. like an **athlete** /
- an athlete if they are to win the prize has to compete according to the **rules...**
- ...any athlete preparing for the Olympic games next year is **focused, disciplined** in terms of **diet and training...** and yes – has to abide by the **rules** – stay on **course...** no banned **substances** etc...
- We must follow Christ with the same **passion, determination, focus, discipline...** and we must reinforce to ourselves and those in our care that there are **consequences** of not doing things God's **way!**
- And third **example** – Timothy is to be **strong...**
 - c. like a **farmer**
- following Jesus is hard **work...** **ministry is hard work...** we need to be hard **working** – like a **farmer**.
- A **lazy** farmer, simply doesn't **eat**
- **Following Jesus** – staying **strong** in his **service** – will take hard **work** and **discipline** //
- Susan and I **both** grew up in families where going to church on Sunday was **never** an **option...**
- That's something **liberating** in that... because you **never** have to **decide...** "are we going tomorrow"?
- Are you breathing? // Answer – **yes**. So it wasn't a question of whether you **felt** like it, what the **weather** was like, what **sports** were on for the **kids...**
- And we were the same with **our** kids... "are we going to church and Sunday School tomorrow?" Yes!
- look – **listen** – here's a **tip** – don't **ask next Saturday** – because the answer is always **yes...** in **obedience** to the command not to forsake **meeting together** – and in obedience to the command that we must constantly **spur** one another **on** and **encourage** each other – we'll be **going...**!
- **Focus, uncompromising...** hard **work** – **passion** – **discipline** – like a **soldier** – like an **athlete** – like a **farmer**
- How many of us **live** the Christian life that **way?** – and are we enforcing those **values** in our **people?** – our children...?
- This isn't salvation by **works** – it is a **response** to the riches of God's grace – and it is God's grace **working** in us
- Paul says in 1 Cor 15:10 – *I worked harder than any one – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me!*
- May God's grace produce that **passion**, that **focus**, that **determination** in us. //
- But as I said at the start, Paul is not simply saying – 'be strong' – '**toughen up...**' /
- He has **four** things he wants Timothy to remember, which will strengthen his resolve.
- Now remember at the start of the passage – he says – "be strong in the grace" ...? What will be that grace be? What is that grace? Well it is seen in the things he now calls Timothy to **remember**
- so

2. BE STRONG

Timothy, as you first all, remember

a. Jesus Christ

- Have a look with me – v8 – *Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David.*
- What will help **Timothy** stay strong? – what will help **YOU** stay strong?
- Remembering **Jesus Christ...** and what he's done for us

- **raised** from the **death** – as we saw last week – he **destroyed death** and brought **life** and **immortality** to **light!**
- **raised** from the **dead?** – because he is **God**
- **descended** from **David?** – because he was a **real human being** and therefore knows our every **weakness...**
- Be **strong**, because we have a great **Saviour...** who **has rescued us**, who **died** for us; and who by his **Spirit, inhabits** us...
- **Remembering him** and what he has done for you, will **make** you **strong...** which is why the Lord's **supper** is so **wonderful...** – because it reminds us of the essential of what Christ has done and who he is...
- Be **strong** as you remember **Jesus Christ** and be strong as you remember:
 - b. the unchained word**
- Look with me – v8,9 *Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. **But God's word is not chained.***
- Paul says – you can be strong in the midst of struggling... because we believe in the inherent **power** of gospel **words...** which can never be chained up!
- I may be in **chains**, I can't **go anywhere** – but the **Word of God** is not **bound...**!
- We may sometimes be overwhelmed by those who **oppose the gospel...**
- **RI** banned from school time in **Victorian** schools... **chaplains** kicked out of schools in the **ACT...**
- **RI** constantly under threat in **NSW** and **QLD...**
- Religious **freedom** – who Christian schools might **employ** etc... still not **settled....** and under **attack...**
- And we can lose **confidence** in the **Word of God**
- What is God **doing** in the world and how is the Word of God going to get out?
- But Paul says here – the Word of God is actually **not chained!**
- Remember the image Jesus uses of the sower sowing the seed...?
- The sower just keeps **sowing** – we might think quite wastefully – rocky path – hard soil – among thorns and weeds... why? Because the power is in the **germinating might** of the **seed**
- You can bury a human being a few feet underground – and they can't get out
- ...but put a **seed** into that earth – it can find its way **up** and become a tree **40 stories high** and live for **years...** – **such** is the power in the seed
- And **such** is the **Word of God**
- It is not **bound!**
- When we spread the **word** – by whatever means – **formally** – **informally** – the word **WILL** do its **work!** – and **that's** the point of Jesus' story of the sower and the wonderful **result** in the **end!!**
- So Timothy, be **strong** – keep **going** – **endure suffering** – because the **Word of God** is not **chained** – **cannot** be **chained** – and will do its work – it's **unstoppable!** //
- but he is also to remember:
 - c. The elect**
- Back to the text - *God's word is not chained. 10 Therefore (because the word is not chained), I endure everything for the sake of the elect (those God has chosen to be his), that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.*
- Here again we see the reality, that being **rescued** from **sin** and **death** and **reconciled** to God is **entirely God's work...**! Recall last week – that God's grace was given to us **before** the beginning of **time**.
- ...and **that** means in turn, that there are people in who have been **chosen** by God, who have yet to **hear** the good news and **come** into **relationship** with **him...**

- ...and Paul says – he'll endure **EVERYTHING** – *anything* to **get** the good news to **God's chosen people** – **to the elect** – so that they **too** may obtain **salvation!** //
- You may be tempted to think – well if God has made up his mind who are his – why are we busting our gut to share the gospel? – because **God** will do what he **wants**...
- But that is **never** the logic we find in the **Bible**...
- Why keep battling to **share** the **news** and to **preach**? – **because** you **believe** God has his **elect out there** – and that you never know that as you lob some hand grenades every Sunday – or where you **work** or **play** – or among your family - you don't **know** which one will **blow** and someone gets **born again**... someone gets rescued... "My **sheep** will hear my **voice**", says Jesus.
- So you keep pressing on in **faithfulness** and keep on **sharing the good news**, because you believe God has his elect out there and will use you to draw them to himself!
- Finally be **strong**, as you remember:
d. Our faithful God.
- Have a look down at vv11-13 of our passage... you'll see it is laid out a little differently..
- It was probably a section of maybe a hymn or creed that was in existence before Paul wrote to Timothy... so he's taking it and borrowing it for his purpose here...
- And you'll see there is a **pattern** to the **saying**... four **lines** – two by way of **encouragement** and the second two which are **warnings**...
- Be **strong** Timothy – as you remember our **faithful God** –
- ...because if we **die** with him – we will **live** with him...
- And if we **endure**... We will also **reign** with him... we can trust these saying, Paul says.
- So keep going – what did Jesus say? – **lose** your life for me and the gospel and you'll **gain** it...
- Keep **going** – and you'll share in his **reign in eternity!**
- **Great assurance**... assurance for **you** today...! //
- Remember our **faithful God**... lay down your life in his service... and you will **live**...
- The **flip** side is the warning and this is important too... because if we **disown** him, he will disown **us**.
- Want to give up? Walk **away**? – like those did at the end of chapter 1?
- Not a great **idea**...
- if we say – I don't want to **know** you – he will say – I don't want to know **you**...
- And in the last line – if we are **faithless** – he remains **faithful** – it means, he will remain faithful, to what he has already **decreed**... that is, if we disown him, he will disown us...
- he will remain faithful to what he has said – to his **word!**
- **Sobering?**
- Well it's both **encouraging and sobering!**
- And **together** – both the encouragement AND the warning – they **urge** us – they **strengthen** us – to be **strong in him**...
- He will remain faithful to **us** and to his **decrees**...The **question** is – will **we** remain faithful to **him**?

- Let's bring this **together**...
- I want encourage you brothers and sisters, to be **strong**...
- Be **strong** and therefore to be determined to pass the gospel on to those who will **pass it on**... and pass it on **just** as we have **received** it... as have it now in the Bible...
- To be strong as a **soldier**, an **athlete**, a **farmer** – **focused, passionate, clear, determined, hardworking**...
//

- and God in his grace has given us everything we need to be **focused, passionate, clear, determined and hardworking**... because we are to be **strong** in his **grace** – strong **because** of his grace – **strong** – **strengthened** by his **grace**...
- **STRONG** as we remember **Jesus Christ** – who he is and **all** that he has **done**,
- **STRONG** as we remember the **unchained word** – which will keep doing its **work** and **changing lives** no matter who tries to **chain it up** or **restrict it**...
- **STRONG** as we remember the **elect** across **Noosa** and **Peregian** – whom God will **draw** to **himself** as we **share** the good **news**...
- and **STRONG** as we remember God's **faithfulness**... that as we lay down our life in **his** service – he will **faithfully** bring us to **new** life with him... //
- so – be **strong** in the **grace** that is in **Christ Jesus**.