

The message today is from 2 Timothy 1:1-2:10 and it is titled “Advancing the Gospel of the Glory of the Blessed God” and it follows on the heels of our previous message from 1 Timothy that was guarding this same gospel. To briefly summarize the message from 1 Timothy I will offer you the following main takeaways from chapter 1 of 1 Timothy:

1. The gospel message is all of mercy or it is blasphemy. By this I mean that Paul presented a focus on guarding the mercy of God in Christ as the means of getting right with God. This mercy is apprehended by faith, which is relying on his mercy in place of my merit.
2. The law of God (represented by the OT commandments given through Moses) was never intended to be used for us to demonstrate righteousness to God but it was and is intended to expose sin and to lead us to trust in and celebrate the mercy of God in Christ by faith.
3. This gospel exalts God as the King of the ages and the way we live in response to this message matters.

This brings us to today’s text. We heard Rick read us 2 Timothy 1:1-2:10. But I am going to back us up slightly to the end of 1 Timothy at 6:17-21 to see the beginning of a contrast Paul has introduces to us in our text.

## Overview

So let me introduce the contrast here in the form of our sermon idea...and then I will describe how we will follow the structure of Paul’s communication in order that we would profit by its teaching, its reproof, its correction, and its training in righteousness, that we (as commissioned disciples) may be equipped for every good work.

Sermon Idea: “True life is found not in the comfort of riches, but in the joy of suffering for the sake of advancing the gospel, empowered by God himself through communion with him by his indwelling Holy Spirit”

In the transition from 1 Timothy, and having read the whole passage already, we see that true life is not a prideful comfort and a trust in the uncertainty of riches, but there is a promise of life that is in Christ that accords with suffering and a trust in God, who richly provides all we need for joy.

The remainder of our text today will help us to avoid the life of pursuing comfort for joy and embrace true life, which is found only in Christ. Roman numeral II in the notes or in vv2-7 we will see Paul encourage Timothy by reflecting upon his Commissioning. Roman numeral III in

the notes or in vv8-chp 2, v2 we will see Paul instruct Timothy regarding the nature of his commission. Roman numeral IV in the notes or vv3-10 of chp 2 we will see Paul coach Timothy in how to embrace his commission.

Movies today capitalize on the fact that people tend to feel like they should be living for something larger than themselves. Living for a purpose that goes beyond us. Whether its searching for life on Mars or ending hunger or cancer or human trafficking or raising a better generation behind us or closing the racial gaps that have divided us...we all sense the desire to be involved in something big. This awareness of grandeur and desire for awe is called worship and we are made for it. We are made to be caught up in the epic story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration that God has been unfolding since before the dawn of time and that will be consummated in a wedding feast in the New Jerusalem sometime in our not too distant future.

We are going to show you a short film that presents this epic story for us as we consider what true life is...[PLAY The Story]

Today as we look at Timothy's commission and consider our sermon idea, I hope that we will be encouraged by reflection upon our own commission. And and that we would be challenged to reflect upon it's nature and how we are to embrace it in this short life that we have to invest.

### **Exegesis**

Paul sets out here from verse 2-7 to encourage Timothy and he does so as a loving father. He reminds Timothy of the blessings that accompanied his commissioning unto gospel service. I take Paul's words as reflecting on a blessing because he is giving thanks to God for these things. Paul begins with an encouragement regarding the blessing of serving the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob together with a clear conscience and with joy.

First he indicates that there is joy in holding onto the same message of hope that many before us have held. We referred to it last week, but recall that Galatians chapter 3 explains that the OT law served to guard those who were believing in the hope of God's rescue by his promised offspring until the arrival of the offspring himself. This is Jesus, the suffering servant.

Next in v6 he turns Timothy's attention to the blessing of the gift of boldness in preaching and teaching that was observed and affirmed by the elders who commissioned him. But where do we come up with this gift since it is not expressly named here? In our very next verse, v7, Paul refers to him not receiving a spirit of fear and Paul uses a Greek word indicating cowardice or a

focus on the state of the fearful person more than on the state of the threat itself. So it would seem the gift is in stark contrast to cowardice. Subsequent chapters of 2 Tim speak directly to Timothy being charged to preach and teach the word with what sounds like boldness. And in 1 Timothy 4 Paul referred to there being prophecy regarding whatever gift this is at his ordination. There Paul tells him to exercise his gift by commanding and teaching and not letting others despise him for his youth and by being an example in speech and conduct...all this would seem to indicate that boldness in preaching and teaching the word of God was his gift.

In v6 Paul also speaks about a responsibility Timothy has to fan this gift of God to a flame and we see a principle that our gifts will not automatically spring forth but we must give attention to nurturing and exercising our gifts.

Also in v7 Paul makes reference to the blessing of the Holy Spirit to keep them from cowardice in their commission. There is debate over whether this is expressly a reference to the Holy Spirit himself or just an attitude of Timothy manifested in him by the work of the Spirit. Which means its a subtle thing regardless of where we land. But I Propose this is a reference to the Holy Spirit himself in basic agreement with the current NIV or the Good News translation that uses a capital "S" here. My judgment is due in part to the striking similarity to what Paul says in Rom 8:12-17. Let's turn there.

*(Romans 8:12–17, ESV) "12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him."*

Here in Rom Paul use the word pneuma (translated Spirit) twice and the second use is uniformly translated with a capital "S" in all versions of the english Bible to indicate him referring the Holy Spirit. In 2 Timothy Paul only uses pneuma once so there is no opportunity to differentiate the negative fear reference with the positive reference to power, love, and self control the way the negative and positive references are differentiated here in Romans 8. But notice how both contrast what was not received and what was received. And notice how simply the power of God in 2 Tim contrasts to slavery in the Romans reference. Remembering that Paul considered us enslaved to sin and powerless against it before new birth.

Hear Paul speak of the Spirit in relation to power...

*(Romans 1:3–4, ESV) “3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,”*

Elsewhere in Romans Paul tells us the this Spirit of God that raised Jesus from the dead resides in those who belong to Christ. Surely this life giving power of God manifested by his Spirit can put a hurt on our cowardice. The very power that raised Jesus from the dead has taken residence in those who trust the Christ for righteousness

And still looking at v7 see how easily love in 2 Tim can be compared to becoming an adopted heir who endearingly cries out to God in the Romans text.

*(Romans 5:5, ESV) “5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”*

We are never without love or without hope and we are never alone thanks to the Spirit of God. You can imagine how that combats cowardice. And how easily self-control in v7 can be compared to suffering with Christ in the Romans text since this is precisely where Paul takes us in 2 Timothy is this empowering of God enabling us to suffer for the gospel. “Self-control” in v7 might automatically be defined, in our haste, as sin avoidance, but the Greek word translated “self-control” in 2 Tim means behaving sensibly or with thoughtfulness to what is best, as in self-discipline. If the Holy Spirit enables us to live with self-discipline despite the weaknesses of our flesh then you can see cowardice crumbling under the weight of glory.

In the end Paul is thanking God for the blessing of the Holy Spirit... the Spirit of power and love and self-control, who enables those in the gospel service to combat their natural cowardice.

So we learn from this section of the text (vv2-7)...

1. To rejoice in the fellowship of the gospel message
2. To fan to a flame whatever gifts God has given us
3. And to rely on the Spirit of God to be our source of power and love and self-control as we seek to advance the gospel within the context of our specific calling.

Next from v8-2:2 Paul instructs Timothy, as an authoritative Apostle and mentor, in regard to the true nature of his commission. It consists of suffering together with Christ (vv8-14). Paul begins to establish this with the connector word “Therefore”...so he is treating the preceding statements about the blessings of Timothy’s commission as the ground or reason or support for what he says next. Paul begins describing the nature of the gospel commission by exhorting Timothy to not be ashamed of how Christ was treated or how others in his service are treated. This is a pretty good clue that what’s coming is not ticker tape parades and royalties and celebrity status...it’s something that the natural man would be ashamed of.

But Paul wants him to remember his commissioning and to not be ashamed. He means for Timothy to acknowledge that there is honor and not shame in imprisonment or even death for this commission. And... Paul specifically calls on Timothy, and all who would belong to Christ and who would be a fellow heir with him, he calls on these to share in Christ’s sufferings for the sake of advancing the gospel. As we saw in Romans 8:17 remember, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

*(2 Corinthians 1:5–7, ESV) “5 For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. 6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. 7 Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.”*

One more Scripture on suffering...here Paul challenges church growth strategists and he offers the Biblical way to remove obstacles that keep people from the gospel.

*(2 Corinthians 6:3–13, ESV) “3 We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; 7 by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything. 11 We have spoken freely to you,*

*Corinthians; our heart is wide open. 12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. 13 In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also.”*

It is enabled within him by union with Christ. In vv8-9 Paul indicates that our ability to suffer with Christ is by the very power of God and for the holy purpose of God that was given to us in Christ Jesus before the dawn of time. We have already seen the reference to the power of God in the indwelling Spirit and we can also look ahead to v14 and we see that it is by the Holy Spirit who indwells us that we will endure.

Paul speaks in v10 about how Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He clearly references the death and resurrection of Jesus here. Listen to Romans 6...

*(Romans 6:4–11, ESV) “4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”*

It is in this union that we exchange our record of sin for his perfect record of righteousness...

*(2 Corinthians 5:21, ESV) “21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

In v12 Paul even indicates that it is not his own effort but it is Jesus who is able to guard what was entrusted to him and yet in v14 it is by the Spirit Timothy will guard the deposit...recall how Paul told us in Rom 8 to put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit. The point being that by the indwelling Spirit of God we enjoy communion with the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and he empowers our faithful service. This is true for those who repent and believe in the gospel of the glory of the blessed God...which is the good deposit we have received.

In verses 15-2:2, The third way Paul describes the nature of the gospel commission is that it will necessarily impact relationships. Paul demonstrates that he painfully lost relationships over this gospel and yet he also made wonderful relationships in the service of this gospel. For Timothy Paul urges him to take strength from Christ and to entrust other faithful believers with the gospel deposit so that the message will multiply the witness by individual relationships in the community. Paul is clearly speaking of personal discipleship or mentoring here and the idea is coming alongside others to aid them in advancing in their knowledge of God for the further spread of the message. Jesus gave all disciples of Christ what is referred to as the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20.

*(Matthew 28:16–20, ESV) “16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.””*

So from this section (vv8-2:2) we have learned that...

1. The gospel does not call us to luxury and comfort but to suffering for the name of Christ... and this is true life.
2. We are empowered by a spiritual union with Christ that is by the Holy Spirit and by this communion with God we have assurance that we can remain faithful when it gets tough.
3. We will suffer casualties in our relationships but we are called to love and invest in others and to make disciples of Christ.

Finally from v3-10 of chapter 2 Paul, as a co-laborer in the gospel, coaches Timothy in how to embrace his holy and glorious and costly commission. Paul uses three analogies to describe how Timothy should embrace suffering for the gospel. He does not give much detail but I believe enough to draw the following implications.

In vv3-4 he employs a military analogy where sharing in suffering is like a good soldier of Christ and this soldier has a tight focus (A) on the mission before him, seeking to please his commander. A good soldier stays on point and works for the approval of his commander. I take this to represent being singularly focused on the mission and not allowing distractions to take

over. In v5 he switches to the analogy of a competitive athlete who knows he will only achieve the prize if he competes according to the rules of the mission. I take this to mean careful obedience to the mission with the prize of glory in mind (that is, the glory of God). In v6 he closes with the analogy of a farmer who works hard in the field hoping for an abundant harvest. I take this to mean diligent labor in the mission with a quiet trust that God will give growth and a harvest will be reaped in his timing.

Paul wants Timothy and I ask us to think over these analogies and consider what it teaches us about how to suffer well for the gospel. Ask the Lord to help you know what it should look like in your life for you to have a soldier's focus and devotion to the gospel mission and an athlete's disciplined obedience to seeking the prize of glory and a hard-working farmer's trust in God's reward that energizes him to labor over what he must ultimately leave for God to accomplish.

In the final section of our text (vv8-10), Paul returns our attention to the resurrection of Christ as our hope and promise of victory and he offers himself as an indication of what the result of embracing this commission looks like. It looks like enduring everything life can throw at you for the sake of helping bring others to find salvation in the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which is given in God's word and it cannot be stopped.

*(Philippians 1:21, ESV) "21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."*

For Paul life (true life) was for the service of Christ's cause of saving sinners and there was nothing life could offer him that could ever compete with that. And death was only gain since this is when he would be finally done with the burden of sin and would be in the very presence of his Savior. He held onto nothing from this world for his hope and joy and therefore, there was nothing that death could threaten to take away from him that would compete with the cause of Christ in saving sinners.

So then in our final section we have learned...

1. That although it must be by the power of God (i.e., through his indwelling Spirit) that we will endure to preserve and advance this gospel...
2. Still there are ways for us to approach our commission that will set us on course to endure to the end...Pleasing our commander, receiving his reward and gaining a crop of fellow heirs with Christ.

## Doctrine

Let's step back now and consider the what we have looked at in Paul's communication to Timothy and the church at Ephesus...and remember that we not only stopped a few chapters before the end, but we could have spent many weeks on each letter. But what we did see was that the genuine gospel is

1. All of mercy
2. And this should lead us to love God and others from the inner man
  1. with pure motives,
  2. with right actions,
  3. and with our trust in the right place...in the mercy of God in Christ for a righteousness that is in him alone, by faith and not by merit.

I don't know if you gave an ounce of thought to this message from last week but I can tell you that dwelling on the mercy of God in Christ as my only hope and prayerfully considering this throughout the week has been transforming for my attitude and emotions and for my love toward others. I don't expect anyone to have noticed this but in here...beginning in the inner man there can be quite a difference when we are mindful to be busy celebrating mercy.

This message of hope in Christ alone is worth suffering for in order to guard and to advance it for the salvation of others and this is true life, where all that we need for joy is supplied by God himself and it is not found in luxury or comfort.

What specific suffering with Christ God has designed for each of us will be dependent upon his purposes from eternity past when he set his grace upon you in Christ, but as one bearing the Great Commission and charged to suffer with Christ as a fellow heir, we can surely conclude together that we should maintain the attitude of the good soldier, the disciplined athlete, and the hard-working farmer as we consider opportunities before us to seek comfort in what we think is life or to embrace suffering for the gospel, enjoying the life that is in Christ.

Let's pray together