# 2 Timothy 2:8-13 // Be Prepared to Suffer and Endure for Jesus

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Date: 01 November 2026

Preacher: Rt Rev Andy Lines

[0:00] This evening's reading is from 2 Timothy chapter 2 and that's verses 8-13 and that's on page 1195 of the church bibles.

! Here is a trustworthy saying, If we died with him, we will also live with him. If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us. If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.
Thanks, Amy, very much indeed. Let's ask for God's help as we pray to him that he will teach us through his word now.
A little bit later in 2 Timothy, it says this, All scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.
All-knowing and all-powerful Holy Spirit, we pray that you would be our teacher this evening through your word. Please apply it to our hearts and bend our wills to obey you.
[1:42] For Jesus' sake. Amen. It would be really helpful if you would keep open that passage, which if you've lost the place is 1195-1196, 2 Timothy chapter 2 and beginning at verse 8.

Now a number of us may be aware that this week the government of the United Kingdom has been outlining its budget. That is, its plan on how it will raise and spend financial resources for the next period.
These measures will, to a degree, reflect, or should do, reflect the values that this, or indeed any other government, seeks to pursue. But like all democratic governments, this government has faced the dilemma of needing to persuade the electorate, those to whom they're accountable, of difficult and painful measures now for the sake of some longer-term benefit.
Whether that be a stronger, wealthier economy, or a more secure future through boosting, perhaps, the defence budget, for example. The dilemma is that most painful measures will not produce the results within the span of a government's term of office.
And so the temptation is constantly to put off the hard decisions in the hope that circumstances may change and improve so that they are not punished by the electorate for the unpopular measures they take.
[3:19] Governments need to think long-term, but the reality is that many democratic governments are more focused, for understandable reasons, on the short term.

Now this isn't just a feature of secular governments, because short-termism is an issue for all of us. And that includes those of us who call ourselves Christians, where it is more palatable, perhaps, to focus on the immediate benefits of Christian discipleship.
In its most extreme forms, this has come to be called, in different parts of the world, the prosperity gospel, promising health and wealth now, and even claiming that the Bible itself promises this.
But we are all tempted to do this in one way or another. The fact is that there are many wonderful, immediate benefits to the Christian faith.
There really are. But authentic Christian faith, as revealed in the Bible, makes no attempt to hide the hardships and suffering that go hand in hand with trust in Christ.
[4:30] One prayer letter I received from missionaries yesterday asked for prayer for them as a couple to, quote, keep persevering despite discouragements and challenges.

And that's part of my role, is to encourage people. Now, 2 Timothy is a letter written by the Apostle Paul, who is in prison again in Rome and expecting his imminent death.
Chapter 4, verse 6. He is concerned to ensure that his younger disciple, Timothy, proclaims, suffers for, and hands on, the authentic gospel to succeeding generations.

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But this is not just a message for Timothy. So it's not just a letter between Paul and Timothy, which might be of some interest to us, because the last verse of 2 Timothy points to a plural audience. And in our passage, verses 11 to 13, we have one of five trustworthy sayings of these short letters to Timothy and Titus, giving us a summary of important early Christian teaching that has a wider application in view, as we will see.
[5:47] Now, the context is that 2 Timothy, chapter 2, in this, Paul is appealing to Timothy to labor sacrificially and to pass on the true gospel to those who can teach succeeding generations.

And after illustrating his point in the early verses of the chapter with examples from three different vocations, a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer, he tells Timothy, and through Timothy to us, in the passage read to us by Amy in verse 8, to remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended, and descended, sorry, raised from the dead.
Jesus is the center of Christianity, and he is the one whom we are told to fix our eyes on. We heard from Hebrews 12 earlier in our service, and we're told in Hebrews 12, for the joy set before him, that is, Jesus, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners so that you will not grow weary. The endurance required of the Christian is common to those addressed in both Hebrews, which I've just read, but also in 2 Timothy, which we're looking at now.
As in the Hebrews passage, the path that Jesus took was through sacrifice to a glorious future. In our passage, Paul is saying that though Jesus was and is the son of David, the promised God-provided king, yet he still had to go through the ultimate suffering of the cross and then be raised and ascended to his father's side, never to die again.
[7:45] That was the message that Paul had proclaimed and he had staked his own life on it. And he says in verse 9, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal.

So Paul follows Jesus' example of suffering in the short term because he trusted in God's promises for his future for himself, but also, as we see, for the prize of seeing what he calls the elect obtain that same salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.
Verse 10. That was why he was prepared to endure everything. Notice the word endure again cropping up here.
It means to hold ground, to remain when others might wobble or give up. Like Christ, Paul trusted in God for the future and was thus prepared and enabled to suffer and even to die in the short term.
Well, that brings us very neatly to our trustworthy saying this evening with its wider application through, as you will see, the use of the word we of the same underlying principle.
[9:02] Be prepared to suffer and endure for Jesus and his gospel. Why? For God is faithful. And the next few verses from verse 11 to 13 take the form of four what are called protasises and apodosis.

That was new to me and I had survived and have survived and will continue to survive without needing to know those terms. What it means is that each sentence has a condition.
If I do such and such then that is followed by a consequence. So, a condition followed by a consequence and they naturally fall into two pairs.
First of all, God's promises, God's gospel promises verses 11 and 12a and then gospel warnings in 12b and 13.
All are derived from elsewhere in scripture as well as with the apostolic authority of the apostle Paul here. All are included in Paul's gospel for which he is suffering, verse 8, and therefore should be included in the gospel that we profess.
[10:19] Altogether, they provide the theological basis for Paul's appeal to Timothy and to us to endure. So, let's look at those two.

First of all, gospel promises, verses 11 and 12a. If we died with him, we will also live with him. If we endure, we will also reign with him.
We need, as we look at the first bit, to recognize how opposed to all human wisdom that is. If we have died with him, then we will also live with him.
How on earth can that be? Well, it is clearly in line with Jesus' teaching after predicting his own death and resurrection to the disbelief of his disciples.
He states clearly for them in Mark chapter 8, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

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[11:24] For whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it.

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? So being prepared to deny themselves, take up their cross and following the one who would die even up to the point of losing their own lives, defying all human wisdom, would result in these people in salvation, having salvation to eternal life.
This is followed up by the apostle Paul in, for example, Romans chapter 6, verse 4, following. Paul says this, 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.
For we, if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.
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 for he, for one who has died has been set free from sin.
[12:57] Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. Do you notice the similarities with the verses that Paul is written for us in 2 Timothy?

So it is more than just emulating Christ in his death and resurrection. This refers to a union with him which he has made possible through his death in our place.
Let me give you perhaps a very inadequate illustration to explain what Paul is talking about here. I live on the Isle of White off the south coast of England. We are close to the sea and in our congregation, the congregation that I'm discipled in, we have some coast guards whose job it is amongst other things to rescue those who are drowning.
Those who are drowning generally will not survive unless they are rescued by someone like the coast guard. Now, if there are a number of people rescued, as indeed there had been recently, and they're gathered together in the same rescue boat, we have a picture of what the Bible is talking about here.
Rescued by one Savior, they and we are as good as dead, but have been saved. We have our lives again. They may be people from all different nationalities, ages, backgrounds, varied in so many different ways, but united together in Christ as his redeemed people.
[14:30] This first phrase that we're looking at now refers to what happens when we become followers of Jesus. Our old selves die with Christ, and that is symbolized in baptism, and we are now united with Christ.

We have a new life, his new life, both now and on into eternity, but that is dependent upon us dying with him. The second part refers to our subsequent continuing Christ.
In the Christian life, if we endure, he says, we will also reign with him. Notice again that endure word, remaining, keeping going, in spite of suffering and difficulty.
Christianity is a marathon, not a sprint, and there will be temptations to lose heart and to give up, as the example of the couple in the prayer letter, bear witness to.
But the promise here is, if we endure, we will also reign with him. This is described in various other parts of the Bible, but in Revelation chapter 22, verse 5, it says that the new heavens and the new earth will be consummated when Jesus returns one day.
[15:56] And he goes on to say, and night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they, that is those united to Christ, will reign forever and ever.

What gospel promises for those who put their trust in Jesus, who have died with him, and who endure and keep going.
they, we, will have eternal life and will reign with Christ forever. Knowing that, trusting that, will help us to bear the cost now for the promise of what is to come.
Let us turn secondly to the gospel warnings of verses 12b and 13. As we move into the second half of this trustworthy saying with its pair of conditions and consequences, we get the gospel warnings that are as much part of the deal as the gospel promises.
We're now addressing the false and the faithless, and there will always be in any congregation a mixture of faithful and faithless in the local congregation, as in, I believe, celebrity traitors, there were some faithful as well as some traitors.

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[17:23] And it says here, much more importantly than that, if we disown him, he will also disown us. If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

This, like the other parts, also traces its roots elsewhere in the New Testament. In Matthew 10, a parallel passage to the one with the wonderful promises I read from Mark 8 earlier, Jesus says this, whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven. The Luke equivalent of that verse is Luke chapter 9, verse 26, and it was one of the first Bible verses that I learned as a new Christian, as a teenager, just as a reminder of it being worth the cost of being known as a disciple of Christ in my school, in my university, in my army regiment, and even amongst my unbelieving family, partly for the wonderful promises we have pondered, but also because of the warning against apostasy in the sense of repudiating, denying, or disowning Christ. Christ. This rejection of Christ will lead ultimately to him rejecting us. Now there are examples in 2 Timothy of what Paul perhaps had in mind from Hymenaeus and Philetus in chapter 2, who had departed from the truth, or Demas in love with the world, who deserted Paul and the team.
More certainly, someone like Judas Iscariot, or those from John chapter 6, who had followed Jesus as his disciples, but faced with the hardness of the road, turned back, and no longer walked with him.
[19:23] There is a permanence to this disowning that causes Jesus to disown them when he comes to his father's glory with the holy angels, as Mark puts it.

And this too will be permanent. This is a salutary warning to those of us that there will come a time. Those of you who were with us this morning, hearing from Martin as he preached from one of the Gospels, will remember this.
This is a salutary warning that there will come a time, and we do not know when, when our disowning of Christ and his Gospel will be reciprocated without hope of change as the rich man in Jesus' parable discovered.
God. And then in verse 13, we have the final condition with a consequence, which is perhaps a bit of a surprise. If we are faithless, he remains faithful for he cannot disown himself.
We might have expected to end it. If we are faithless, so will he be faithless. But no, faithlessness differs from denial, the disowning of the second half of verse 12.
[20:36] But how? Well, faithlessness refers to being unfaithful, unbelieving, and failing to trust. Examples might be struggling to take God at his word and to trust the promises we've just been studying.

If we endure, we will reign with him. So making us unprepared to suffer now, or when we perhaps keep quiet about our trust in Christ for fear of what others might think of us.
I have to say, all of these things are examples that I have done on more than one occasion. So what is the difference between this faithlessness and the permanent disowning of the second part of verse 12?
Well, there are biblical examples of this which help. The apostle Peter denied, disowned, that very same word, Christ three times when challenged during Jesus' trial, and the other disciples did no better, they fled as well.
But Peter later turned back, repented, was restored, and was forgiven, and used mightily in Christ's service, being prepared ultimately to pay the price for his discipleship with his life.
[21:52] Yesterday was Reformation Day, as well as other celebrations for some people, when many remember the formal beginning of the 16th century Reformation by Martin Luther.

And life was not easy for Luther thereafter, but he did die from illness in the town of Eisleben, where he was born. But that was not true of all the Reformers, like the leader of the English Reformation, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury.
Under fierce pressure, he wobbled and denied the gospel truths that he had taught. But he later repented and faced being burnt alive, but holding on to the truth that he had declared.
He too followed Peter's line. His denial was temporary, and he repented. The fact is that our unfaithfulness will fluctuate, but God's faithfulness will never fluctuate.
Peter denied Christ, but Jesus did not abandon Peter. We may have bad days, but God does not have bad days. He never ceases to be faithful to his own character and promises.
[23:05] He cannot deny or disown himself. After warning of his faithfulness to his promise to disown those who disown Christ, here is a wonderful encouragement.

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Just as the previous examples of Peter and Cranmer who wavered, so Timothy was in danger of wavering, and we, if we are honest, also waver repeatedly.
Now, there was one Scot in the 17th century who was exiled from Galilee to Aberdeen for, amongst other things, daring to disagree with the idea of bishops.
I can't think what that meant. But demonstrating that he was prepared to die with Christ and endure in the face of hardship. That took him into exile, and yet he wrote from there, often and often I have in my folly torn up my copy of the Lord's covenant with me, but blessed be his name.
He keeps it in heaven safe, and he stands by it always. You see, he took refuge in God's faithfulness, even in spite of his faithlessness.
[24:15] By his own words, he wavered and was faithless, but because he was united to Christ, he was upheld. So whilst the warning of 12b should make us examine ourselves, the assurance of 13 should make us cling to the faithfulness of God.

If you have a tender conscience and are worried that you may have disowned or denied Christ, as I have, then that itself is possibly an indication of God's ongoing work in you.
As Peter found, a serious failure is not necessarily a final repudiation. There is always room for repentance in this life, though we never know how long we may have left.
So what are we to take away from this trustworthy saying as we conclude? There are four statements together. They remind us that following Jesus is not an easy option, nor is it a short-term undertaking.
It is a lifelong commitment which may involve suffering, sacrifice, and hardship. But it is a commitment with a glorious future. If we have died with Christ, we will live with him.
[25:23] If we endure, we will reign with him. What wonderful promises. They remind us that the suffering of the present cannot compare with the glory that is to come.

But there are the warnings. If we disown him, he will disown us. We cannot treat Jesus as someone we can conveniently acknowledge when it suits us and quietly abandon when the cost becomes too great.
There is a seriousness about Christian discipleship which we must never lose sight of. Yet, if we are faithless, he remains faithful for he cannot disown himself.
What a wonderful encouragement for those of us who know our own weakness, who have failed, who have been fearful, who have sometimes been ashamed to speak of Jesus, and who have not always trusted his promises as we should.
So don't confuse a stumble with a decision to abandon Christ. Don't allow past failures to keep us from returning to him. Peter found that the Lord was gracious to restore him, and that same Lord calls us tonight to repentance and renewed faithfulness.
[26:37] And neither should we presume upon God's faithfulness as an excuse for carelessness or compromise. His faithfulness is not a reason to take our discipleship less seriously, but a reason to trust him more completely.

And so, whether we're facing opposition, discouragement, suffering, or simply the daily temptation to take the easier road, let us remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, the son of David.
He suffered, he died, he rose again, and he reigns. And those who belong to him will share in that glorious future.
The challenge is not simply to begin well, but to keep going. Not to choose the easy way now, but to remain faithful to Jesus and his gospel, whatever the cost.
And we can do that because our confidence ultimately rests not in the strength of our faithfulness, but in the faithfulness of God. He will keep his promises, he will not fail his people.
[27:41] So let us be prepared to suffer and endure for Jesus and his gospel, because he is faithful. Let's pray. Let's take a moment just to ponder what the Lord may have been laying on our heart by his spirit as we prayed at the beginning.

Lord, we thank you for your promises. We thank you for your promises. We thank you for your promises. Unlike a government that chooses short-term options to avoid unpopularity, you never sweeten the pill unnecessarily.
But we can trust in you and your faithfulness in spite of our weakness. us. We thank you for that and pray that you will help us to obey you and to endure for the rest of our lives.
In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Amen.

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