

II TIMOTHY 2:8-13
CHRISTIAN IDENTITY!
PART 2

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to II Timothy chapter 2 as we continue our in-depth study of Paul's second letter to Timothy.

Keep in mind that Paul is on death row in the Mamertine prison there in Rome. Ceaser Nero had him re-arrested and now Paul is going to be put to death for his faith in Jesus Christ.

So as he writes his last letter to Timothy he is giving Timothy the tools to carry on the work after he is gone. Thus, Paul is not going to just put fluff in this letter, these are important points that he is giving to Timothy and then Timothy would pass this on to the people in Ephesus and onward.

Last week we began looking at our – *CHRISTIAN IDENTITY!*

And we saw how Paul encouraged Timothy to “**be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.**”

And he told Timothy to take those things that he had taught him and to “**commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.**”

And the focus of our study was this, as Paul admonishes Timothy to be like a . . .

- **SOLDIER** who is **FOCUSED** on the work his commanding officer has given to him.
- **ATHLETE** who is **OBEDIENT** to the rules that are before him.
- **FARMER** who works hard and is **PATIENT**, waiting for the harvest to come in.

In other words, it is a battle, it is not going to be easy but don't give up, follow the Lord and the harvest is coming, keep your eyes upon Jesus.

Keep in mind that throughout church history there has been persecution against believers, and that has not stopped.

Let me share this with you. We are told,

Throughout the history of the church, the cost of discipleship has continued to be high. Millions upon millions have severely suffered for the cause of Christ, including those who have laid down their lives.

Many believers have been maligned and deserted by unbelieving spouses, a desertion that is particularly hard on wives who are left with children to support.

Often there is rejection and ostracism by family, friends, or business associates who are offended by the gospel.

Even in the church, *“those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh”* resent [dislike] true godliness. They substitute humanly achievable standards, as the Judaizers did in regard to circumcision, for God’s spiritual standards, in order *“that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ”* (Gal 6:12).

Believers who are self-centered and self-willed find God’s standards to be onerous [difficult] and often make life difficult for believers who seek, in the Spirit’s power, to live up to them.

During World War II, eleven missionaries were martyred on the Island of Panay in the Philippines.

One of these was Dr. Francis Rose, who had penned these poignant and challenging words in what is commonly called “The Martyr’s Hymn”:

*All human progress up to God
Has stained the stairs of time with blood;
For every gain for Christendom
Is bought by someone’s martyrdom.*

*For us he poured the crimson cup,
And bade us take and drink it up.
Himself he poured to set us free.
Help us, O Christ, to drink with Thee.*

*Ten thousand saints come thronging home,
From lion’s den and catacomb.
The fire and sword and beasts defied;
For Christ, their King, they gladly died.*

*With eye of faith we see today
That cross-led column wind its way
Up life’s repeated Calvary.
We rise, O Christ, to follow Thee!*

Until Christ returns, the bold proclamation of the gospel will continue to stir up the animosity and opposition of the spiritually blind, Christ-rejecting world.

In the farewell discourse . . . Jesus told the disciples, **“In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world”** (John 16:33).

Later in the present letter, Paul would remind Timothy that **“all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”** (2 Tim 3:12).

Satan makes certain that persecution accompanies faithfulness to Christ.

- John MacArthur, II Timothy 2

Make no mistake about it, persecution was growing and growing in Rome and then throughout the Roman Empire against Christians and Paul wanted Timothy to be prepared and not to lose focus. He wanted Timothy to continue on in the work of God and to finish the race of faith strong!

And this is so important for us to understand. What is our **CHRISTIAN IDENTITY** in the midst of this persecution or in the midst of when things are difficult, or when things are falling apart in our lives. What are people seeing in us?

You see, our Christian identity is found in Christ and in our study this morning that is what we will be looking at.

I have broken down the verses we will be studying this morning into the following main points. They are,

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT – II TIMOTHY 2:8

THE RESULTS OF LIVING FOR CHRIST – II TIMOTHY 2:9-10

A HOPE OF GLORY – II TIMOTHY 2:11-13

The problem for many Christians is that they play many different roles in life to appease the people that they are around. And in doing that, many times they are compromising their faith.

And in the end, sometimes they don't know who they are!

What do I mean by that?

I mean that they forget what role they are playing and thus, sometimes we are imitating the world when we are around Christians, and it can be shocking.

And not just Christians, sometimes we are around the unsaved and we are trying to fit in, look like them and what they see is shocking to them because we claim to be a Christian.

Who are we? What is our identity?

In The Mask Behind the Mask, biographer Peter Evans says that actor Peter Sellers played so many roles he sometimes was not sure of his own identity.

Approached once by a fan who asked him, “Are you Peter Sellers?”

Sellers answered briskly, “Not today,” and walked on.

- Today in the Word, July 24, 1993

We need to know who we are because it will determine what we say and what we do. My prayer is that as people look at my life, they see something different. That they see Christ in me and not that flesh nature which is contrary to the Christian life! And I am sure you feel the same, less of me and more of you Lord in my life!

Remember what Paul said to Timothy here in II Timothy 2:7, because it will lead to what we will be looking at this morning. He said, **“Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.”**

Don’t forget these things because they are important in understanding our ***CHRISTIAN IDENTITY!***

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in II Timothy chapter 2, beginning in verse 8 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we look at part 2 of our study – ***CHRISTIAN IDENTITY!***

II TIMOTHY 2

VERSE 8

The first point is simple and yet very important. The first point – ***WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT!***

As we have seen, Paul is telling Timothy over and over to “*consider*” to “*remember*” that “*you therefore must*” and it is Paul pleading and really commanding Timothy to pay attention and do these things.

And that is what we see here in II Timothy 2:8 as Paul opens up these verses with the word “**Remember.**” And in the Greek, it is a command that goes something like this, “***Keep on remembering, don’t you ever forget it!***”

What was he to remember and never forget?

The idea here is to, “***Keep the main thing the main thing!***”

And here is the problem for many. They have lost focus of what the main thing is, and they are off on tangents, all kinds of wild ideas and in the end, there is not much talk about the main thing. The reason being is that the main thing has been replaced with all this other stuff!

So what is the main thing?

I don’t think I have to tell you, but I am going to tell you anyway. The main thing is ***JESUS***, God who became flesh and dwelt among us, born from the lineage of David and raised from the dead giving us the confidence that in Christ we will have eternal life and one day we will be raised up or resurrected from the dead, receiving eternal bodies just as our Lord did!

It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 6:14, “**And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.**” This is not hopeful or wishful thinking – ***HE WILL RAISE US UP!***

Thus, Paul wants Timothy to keep Jesus at the forefront of his message, not to lose sight of Him!

I remember when COVID was on everyone's mind and that is all that they focused on. Many teachers, that was all they focused on, that is all that they taught on. And in doing that they have lost focus on what the main thing is.

Yes, they brought up the fact that the Lord is coming back, and it is going to happen, and they would not give dates, but they said it has to be soon. And each time the time would pass, they would say the same thing about another timeframe. And here we are, and people are now focused on the next big thing, and they have lost sight of that which is most important – ***JESUS!***

A few years back I was dealing with this very thing, not with COVID but with Christians who were posting on Facebook saying that the earth is flat, and they came down heavy on those who disagreed with them.

And I tried to reason from the Scriptures with them, but there was no way that they were going to listen.

But just something for you to think about. In Answers in Genesis we are told,

So how did people in the ancient world know that the earth is spherical?

The earliest recorded discussion of a spherical earth is from Pythagoras in the sixth century BC.

Pythagoras correctly understood that the cause of lunar eclipses is the shadow of the earth falling on the moon. This can happen only when the moon is opposite the sun in our sky, which coincides with full moon.

The earth's shadow is larger than the moon, so we cannot see the entire shadow at once.

However, during a lunar eclipse we see the earth's shadow creep across the moon.

Because the edge of the earth's shadow always is a portion of a circle, the earth's shadow must be a circle.

If the earth were flat and round, similar to a disk, it could cast a circular shadow, but only for lunar eclipses that occur at midnight.

For a lunar eclipse at sunrise or sunset, the earth's shadow would be an ellipse, a line, or a rectangle, depending upon how thick the disk was compared to its diameter.

However, the earth's shadow during a lunar eclipse is always a circle, regardless of the time of night when the eclipse occurs.

The only shape that consistently has a circular shadow, regardless of its orientation, is a sphere.

- <https://bit.ly/3OEIphr>

That is just one point. And to really make this flat earth a reality there has to be conspiracy theories that keep you from going to the edge and finding out that the earth is flat.

As we continued on in this debate, I saw that we were going nowhere, and it was not going to go anywhere.

And I just felt we both were missing the point and as I looked at their posts, they were missing the main thing in all of their posts that I looked at!

Because of that I posted, ***“You can believe whatever you want about the shape of the earth, that is your choice. And you fight very hard showing that the earth is flat. But what you don't speak of is Jesus and isn't it all about Him? It doesn't matter if you are right or wrong about a flat earth, but if you are wrong about Jesus, you lose everything. So don't you think we should be talking more about Jesus?”***

I heard nothing back except about the earth being flat!

May we keep the main thing the main thing, and like I have said, the main thing is –

JESUS!

In fact, Jesus held the Jews accountable for not seeing Him in the Scriptures.

Remember what Jesus said in John 5:39-40, **“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”**

And I do realize them some have come to the faulty conclusion that Jesus is a New Testament idea, that the Jewish Scriptures, the Old Testament, never spoke of God becoming flesh to save us from our sins.

I disagree.

The Scriptures, what we call the Old Testament, is what Jesus was speaking of in John chapter 5!

And there are many places we can look at in the Old Testament, but let’s just start in Genesis 3:15 where we are told after Adam sinned, **“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”**

I realize that does not mean God will accomplish this, it just speaks of the seed of the woman, which is interesting in itself, for the man is the one that carries the seed to fertilize the egg. So there is a hint of the virgin birth here.

Then, in Micah 5:2 we are told, **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”**

In other words, this babe in the manger, the one who is to be born in Bethlehem always existed, he is eternal, from *“beyond the vanishing point.”*

Folks, that is an attribute that only God has!

And there are over 300 prophecies of Jesus in the Old Testament that are related to His first coming and have been fulfilled down to the tiniest detail!

Also, in the New Testament, in Revelation 13:8, we are told, **“All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”**

Notice, before the world was created, Jesus, God Almighty, the Word before the Incarnation, knew what He would have to do to save us from our sins!

Obviously, we can look at other passages, but I think you get the idea, as we are told in Matthew 1:23, **“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God with us.’”**

You see, not a man or *a* god, but God with us! Or as John tells us, **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”** John 1;14.

And that is what we read in John chapter 5, that the Jewish Scriptures themselves were a witness of Him.

Remember what Jesus said, what we have read already, **“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”** John 5:39-40.

And Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead on the third day, something Jesus told His men, even though they did not believe until after His resurrection.

In John 14:19 Jesus told them, **“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.”**

There is that promise, because He was raised from the dead so too will we be raised one day. And to have that resurrection life, that eternal life with Him, you have to believe in the Gospel.

What does that mean?

It means you have to believe that Jesus is Almighty God. That your sins have separated you from God. And the only solution to that problem of sin and separation is the Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ.

Thus, you must repent of your sins and ask Jesus to come into your life to be your Lord and Savior.

Once you do, as Peter reminds us in I Peter 3:18 what takes place. He wrote, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

The Living Bible puts this verse like this, **“Christ also suffered. He died once for the sins of all us guilty sinners although he himself was innocent of any sin at any time, that he might bring us safely home to God. But though his body died, his spirit lived on.”**

Because of that, just as Jesus promised, we too will live. It is Jesus who is the Mediator between God and man, and He is the One, the only One who can bring us to God the Father!

May we not lose sight of this fact, that Jesus is the main thing!

Now in II Timothy 2:8, when Paul says **“according to my gospel”** some get confused by this.

What does he mean?

He is not saying that this is something he came up with on his own.

Then what is his point?

Jesus taught Paul the Gospel and Paul received this Gospel, which means Good News, into his life as he received Jesus into his life as Lord and Savior, and thus, he could say that it was his Gospel, it was his Good News!

What is good news to you?

We can put all kinds of things like money, jobs, a house, a car and so on.

But if the greatest news to you is Jesus, then you can say as Paul said, “**according to my gospel**” because it is yours!

So – ***WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?***

Because it is the Good News! It is the Gospel Message! And apart from Jesus we are still dead in our trespasses and sins.

Don’t let other things get in the way and cloud the picture of Jesus!

Stand up for Him, speak of Him, live for Him and when you do, and our next point –

THE RESULTS OF LIVING FOR CHRIST!

VERSES 9-10

I wonder if many of these prosperity Gospel teachers today would fit in with the early church. I don’t think so!

Do you know why?

Because the Gospel message did not bring Paul a life of glamour and ease.

What did it bring him?

It brought him a life full of adventure and challenge, and a life also marked by suffering.

That is what Paul is saying here. That the results of his preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, **“for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains.”**

Paul tells Timothy that he is suffering as someone who has done evil. But what evil did Paul do?

Like I have said, he proclaimed the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Gospel message.

Thus, when people reject it, they will try to silence those who proclaim the Good News.

Paul in II Corinthians 11:23-33 gives to us some insight into what he went through for the Gospel’s sake.

He tells us, **“Are they ministers of Christ? - I speak as a fool - I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness - besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.”**

Can you imagine going through just a little of what Paul went through! And Timothy witnessed some of the trouble Paul endured as he preached the Gospel message and now, he wants Timothy not to forget that!

Why?

To encourage Timothy not to give up, to finish the work no matter what may come his way, no matter how difficult it will get.

Especially when Paul is put to death for his faith, don't let that discourage you, but forge ahead, don't give up, he is telling Timothy!

In fact, in II Timothy 3:12 Paul said, **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”**

If you are serving the Lord, if you are living a life that is pleasing to the Lord you *WILL* suffer persecution, not might!

People will come against you because your light exposes their darkness. Thus, they try to extinguish the light, put it out – don't let them!

Look at the life of Jesus as an example for you.

He healed the sick, freed those who were demon possessed, raised the dead, fed the hungry, comforted the brokenhearted, had compassion for people and they put Him to death!

Thus, if they did this to Jesus, then we, as His servants can expect no less if we are living godly lives, speaking forth the truths of God.

Jesus warned us in John 15:18-20 of this as He said, **“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”**

And Paul, admonishing us to fight against sin, not to give up or give in, to endure the hardship of living a holy life, tells us in Hebrews 12:2-3, **“looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”**

Folks, faithful service to the Lord, being His disciple is costly, it has always been costly.

In Hebrews 11:35-38 we are told, **“... Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented - of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.”**

How did they do it?

It is as Paul said, **“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”** Acts 20:24.

Did you know that there were over 600 miles of catacombs under the city of Rome, nearly all dug and used by ten generations of Christians and for a period of some 300 years?

These catacombs were used as meeting and burial places for over four million Christians!

Now think about the millions of Christians who have been martyred for their faith in our generation.

In fact, more Christians have been martyred for their faith in our generation than any other time in church history!

The cost of being His disciple is high, but it is what we have been called to endure!

One writer said this about the early church and what they suffered. He wrote,

One of the most spectacular sights in Israel is the ancient city of Beit She'an – a spectacular city that is, piece by piece, being uncovered and restored by archaeologists.

If you ever visit, you can see the coliseum there – the oval stadium, complete with chambers and rooms for lions and other wild animals – animals that were almost certainly set upon Christians for the entertainment of the mob.

For me, to walk on floor of that stadium – on the ground that had almost surely received the blood of Christians – was something sacred, and reminded me of the extreme price many have had to pay. In the modern western world, the price we pay for faithfulness to Jesus seems small in comparison.

Any true follower of Jesus Christ will be willing to suffer with Him.

Those who are determined to never suffer for Jesus may admire Him from a distance, but they do not genuinely follow Him.

- David Guzik, II Timothy 2

Think about this. Paul, writing these words was chained, locked in prison, but he also understands that no matter what may happen, God's Word is not chained!

John Bunyan wrote Pilgrim's Progress while in jail in Bedford, England for preaching the Gospel.

They thought they put a stop to the Word of God being proclaimed and yet, Pilgrim's Progress, for many years was the second most popular book, behind the Bible!

Nothing can stop God's Word from going forth except us by keeping silent, by watering it down, by abandoning it!

Paul is admonishing Timothy and us to keep speaking forth God's Word no matter what may come our way, as Jesus said in John 16:33, "**These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**"

Listen to this perspective because I think we are becoming fearful, wondering what the government is going to do, that they are going to stop us from speaking about Jesus.

Before I get to that, let me say this. When we put up our radio station some were wondering why we were spending all that money when the government is going to shut it down!

We have been on the air for a little over seventeen years now! I know, incredible and God's Word is being broadcast here in town and all over the world through the Internet. Make no mistake about it, God's Word is not chained, it will never be chained. And if the FCC ever shuts us down, God will open another door for us to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Please don't forget that God is God, and nothing is impossible for Him!

Okay, this is what one person had to say about all of this. He wrote,

No government, no religious authorities, no skeptics, no scientists, no philosophers, or no book burners have ever been able to stop the work of the Word of God.

Yet, if there is any sense in which the Word is bound, it is bound when its supposed friends abandon it.

When pulpits sound more like self-help books than those who proclaim God's word; when Scripture is used sparingly like a spice in a message, instead of being the core of it, pastors themselves put a chain around the Bible.

- David Guzik, II Timothy 2

Exactly. May we boldly proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Now here in II Timothy 2:10 Paul opens up this verse with the word, "**Therefore**" and the idea here is he is reflecting back on what he has just said.

Think about it like this, ***"Just as I have endured persecution, beatings, hardships etc. that people might be saved, even so you my dear son in the faith follow my example and serve the Lord with that kind of all out commitment, for nothing is more important than the salvation of the lost and eternal glory."***

And Paul said that he is doing this all "**for the sake of the elect.**"

Who are these "*elect*" that Paul is speaking of?

Some say it is speaking of the Jews, and that can be because we see that both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, it just depends on the context of the verse.

Others say that in the New Testament it is speaking of Gentiles and that is true, we see that in the New Testament as well, it all depends on the context of the verse.

But when you look at the context here, and you remember where Paul was at, in prison in Rome and preparing to be put to death for his faith, I think he has another idea here.

First of all, we see that Greek scholar A. T. Robertson said that when Paul talks about the elect in II Timothy 2:10 he has in mind all who are saved both Jew and Gentile.

But Robertson also says, that in the Greek, when Paul said, *“that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory”* the Greek is literally, *“that they as well as I may obtain the salvation . . .”*

What is the point.

I don't think Paul is speaking of a salvation from hell here, but of the salvation or the redemption of the body, which will take place at the Rapture of the Church when we are raised with our glorified bodies, and we will experience that **“eternal glory.”**

Yes, they must be saved but it is the end point of these lives, going to be with the Lord!

Listen to what Paul said in Romans 8:18-25. He is speaking of these new bodies that we earnestly groan to obtain. He wrote, **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, *eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.* For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”**

The fact that Paul knew he was going to die soon no doubt caused him to focus on eternal glory and the salvation or redemption of his body after he was executed by the Roman government.

We long for that day and that glory but think about all the glory that is poured out on people when they die, even on the wicked.

Think about it. They could have been wicked people and yet, at their funeral, they are spoken of as saints.

Maybe you heard of the story of the two wealthy men who were wicked, filthy, lived a very immoral life and one day one of the brothers, Bob, died.

So his other brother went to the priest and said that he wanted him to do Bob's funeral service and if he could speak of how good Bob was.

The priest knew both of these men and he knew they were bad people, and he must have had a worried look on his face, for the dead man's brother said to the priest, ***"If you do this, I will give you a million dollars, just say some good things about him!"***

The priest agreed to do it.

At the service the priest got up and started to share. He said, ***"All of you know Bob, the lifestyle he lived. He was a drunkard, a womanizer, he spoke filthy words, he was dishonest."***

At this point the dead man's brother looked at the priest, confused, upset and the priest looked at him and said, ***"Yes, Bob was all these things, but compared to his brother Pat, he was a saint!"***

Folks don't look for the praise of men, but the praise of God as you serve Him.

We will one day be raised in glory to be with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Paul, in Romans 8:16-17 put it this way, **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if [since] indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”**

It is a glory that outshines anything that the world has for us and by God’s grace we will be raised up in glory one day!

Thus – ***THE RESULTS OF LIVING FOR CHRIST!***

You will suffer persecution, not might.

I have shared a little bit about this last point already but listen to how Paul sums this all up – ***A HOPE OF GLORY!***

VERSES 11-13

Many feel that Paul is quoting an early Christian hymn known by Christians in his day and thus, Timothy was familiar with it.

This hymn starts out with a promise of resurrection life for those who have died in Christ.

What is Paul’s point here?

Some feel that Paul is speaking of those who have been martyred for their faith in Christ, but I think it goes far beyond that.

You see, I think Paul is speaking of all believers who have died in Him. They have died to the old life, they are living for Him and in the end, these physical bodies will die but we will go to be with the Lord!

In fact, as you read through the Bible you will see that the Bible speaks of dying with Jesus in the following ways.

First, it speaks of us dying at the point of our salvation, when we are saved. We might call this – ***SPIRITUALITY AT THE POINT OF SALVATION!***

And we see this spoken of by Paul in Romans 6:5-11 when he wrote, “**For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”

The second way speaks of us dying through water baptism. We might call this – ***SYMBOLICALLY THROUGH WATER BAPTISM!***

We see this spoken of in Colossians 2:12 where Paul wrote, “**buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.**”

And lastly, which I touched on already – ***PHYSICALLY THROUGH MARTYRDOM!***

We see this spoken of in Romans 8:16-17 where Paul wrote, “**The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.**”

From here Paul moves on to those who endure, those who are faithful believers; they will receive an eternal reward. We will reign with Christ in the Kingdom Age! Thus, in this life we are being prepared for the next life, for resurrection life with Christ!

Keep in mind that the word “**endure**” comes from the Greek word, *HUPOMENO*, (hoop-om-en’o) and it means “*to remain under.*”

We might say, “*Hangin’ in there under pressure.*” Think of a quarterback and he gets the ball, and three linebackers are coming after him as he is in the pocket. Amazingly he remains there and throws a pass for a touchdown. He remained in there even though there was tremendous pressure for him to move!

For us as Christians, we do not forsake Jesus even when things get bad, even when things get tough, we remain strong through it all, even in the face of death!

Jesus tells us in John 8:31-32, “**Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’**”

In other words, this idea of remaining faithful to Jesus, staying with Him, not forsaking Him is a mark of a genuine believer!

But here is a warning. If you deny Christ, He will deny you!

We see this spoken of in John 15:5-6, “**I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.**”

The contrast of those who are abiding in Christ will live with Him and those that don’t, will be cast into the fire!

John speaks of this in regard to those who play church but are not really saved. We see this in I John 2:19 where John wrote, **“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”**

And in Matthew 10:33 Jesus said, **“But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”**

You see, count the cost, and don't make an empty profession of faith so that as things get tough, you deny the Lord.

I don't believe those that deny the Lord were ever saved for their failure to endure and hold onto their relationship with Christ shows they were never saved in the first place.

Now we all fall into denying the Lord when we fail to stand for the Lord, as happened with Peter.

The thing is, it is not a continual denial but a temporary one. But if your life is given over to denying Jesus, then you are lost!

And in the end, when all is said and done, all that the Lord is, is not based upon our faithfulness or what we have to say.

Just because some deny the Lord doesn't change anything about the Lord, He is who He is!

That is what Paul is saying here in II Timothy 2:13, **“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”**

To show you the point that Paul is making here, let me share with you this example of Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park.

Old Faithful erupts about every ninety minutes.

Say you are sitting there, waiting, and you get tired of waiting after about 45 minutes and something in the woods gets your attention, a big elk, so you go into the woods looking for it.

I, on the other hand, wait and at ninety minutes Old Faithful erupts.

After a while you return, and you don't see it erupt.

Did Old Faithful erupt?

You didn't see it!

Here is the thing, no matter what you do or say, Old Faithful will erupt, it is not based upon what you see or what you say.

Thus, no matter what you do or say about the Lord, He is still King of kings and Lord of lords! His blessings will flow no matter if you are faithful or not.

You may miss out on those blessings just because you were not there, but they still flow from God and God is still God!

We have been looking at our *CHRISTIAN IDENTITY* over the last few weeks and we will continue on next week looking at this because it is important.

But look at what we have seen so far.

The soldier is to be *FOCUSED*.

The athlete is to be *OBEDIENT*.

The farmer must be *PATIENT*.

The message is about *JESUS*.

The results of living for Christ is *PERSECUTION*.

The way we stay focused is *OUR HOPE OF GLORY*.

May we continue on in the faith and never surrender to anyone or anything except the Lord.

You see, we are a new creation in Christ and those old ways have been crucified with Him and we live that new life in Christ. Let me share this example with you because too many times we like to hold onto that old life, and we will never fly if we do.

We are told,

While walking through the forest one day, a man found a young eagle who had fallen out of his nest. He took it home and put it in his barnyard where it soon learned to eat and behave like the chickens.

One day a naturalist passed by the farm and asked why it was that the king of all birds should be confined to live in the barnyard with the chickens.

The farmer replied that since he had given it chicken feed and trained it to be a chicken, it had never learned to fly. Since it now behaved as the chickens, it was no longer an eagle.

“Still it has the heart of an eagle,” replied the naturalist, ***“and can surely be taught to fly.”***

He lifted the eagle toward the sky and said, ***“You belong to the sky and not to the earth. Stretch forth your wings and fly.”***

The eagle, however, was confused. He did not know who he was, and seeing the chickens eating their food, he jumped down to be with them again.

The naturalist took the bird to the roof of the house and urged him again, saying, ***“You are an eagle. Stretch forth your wings and fly.”***

But the eagle was afraid of his unknown self and world and jumped down once more for the chicken food.

Finally the naturalist took the eagle out of the barnyard to a high mountain. There he held the king of the birds high above him and encouraged him again, saying, ***“You are an eagle. You belong to the sky. Stretch forth your wings and fly.”***

The eagle looked around, back towards the barnyard and up to the sky. Then the naturalist lifted him straight towards the sun and it happened that the eagle began to tremble. Slowly he stretched his wings, and with a triumphant cry, soared away into the heavens.

It may be that the eagle still remembers the chickens with nostalgia.

It may even be that he occasionally revisits the barnyard.

But as far as anyone knows, he has never returned to lead the life of a chicken.

- Theology News and Notes, October, 1976,
quoted in Multnomah Message, Spring, 1993, p. 1

The choice is really ours. Do we want to remain with the chickens or soar like an eagle?

Let me close with this.

When one Christian in the days of the ancient Roman Empire was commanded to give money to the building of a pagan temple, he refused; and though he was old, they stripped him practically naked, and cut him all over his body with knives and spears.

They started to feel sorry for him, so they said, ***“Just give one dollar to the building of the temple.”*** But he still would not.

“Just burn one grain of incense to this pagan god,” they asked – but he would not.

So, he was smeared with honey, and while his wounds were still bleeding, they set bees and wasps upon him until he was stung to death. He could die; but he could not deny his Lord.

The Lord can give you the same strength to live for Him, even as this man died for Him.

Semper fidelis (always faithful).