
Honor One Another

Make a Difference

2 Timothy 2:1-19

5/26/2019

Main Idea: As Christ followers we have the responsibility to disciple others in Christ.

Lesson Objective: Pray for God to show you someone to disciple.

Introduction

As your class time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

A tourist in Manhattan decided to take an express elevator to the observation deck of a soaring skyscraper. When he stepped on and the elevator moved, he had made an irrevocable decision that committed him to the entire vertical journey. He may be gripped with a sudden panic after 30 seconds...but this does not change the fact that he will safely arrive at the top floor.

Similarly, giving our lives to Christ and then submitting His rule over them is an exciting, yet at the same time nervous feeling. Before coming to Christ, we lived in our own desires and pleasures, but now we are called to live under God's reign in the Kingdom of God. In this new life we are called to leave the sinful patterns of the past and embrace the freedom Christ has given to us. In the same way, we are empowered to go and teach these principles to others. People who are used by God are sensitive to His leadership, and they go where He sends them—not out of obligation, but out of whole-hearted commitment to His call. In 2 Timothy 2, we'll see that leading people toward Christ is an essential part of being a follower of Christ. This call does not ensure us of no hardships or sufferings. There will come a time in all of our lives when fear and doubt will arise. Praise God that they do not put a Christian's salvation in jeopardy. God is in complete control over all things! He knows our strengths and weaknesses, and He still desires to use us in His work.

When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone? How did he or she respond? How did you feel?

What aspects of life are most likely to keep you from sharing Christ?

Make a Difference

2 Timothy 2:1-7

¹You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ²and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. ³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. ⁷Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#).

Paul's first specific charge was to **be strengthened**. However, Paul did not mean Timothy was to roll up his spiritual sleeves and find strength within himself for success in ministry. Timothy would find strength only in **the grace** that is **in Christ Jesus**. For Timothy, grace was the unmerited and abundant help the living Christ would give him for effective service. Only in this sphere of grace would the young pastor find power for service in Jesus' name. The image of a sphere, or circle, of grace in which Timothy must live and serve seems to be the idea. Outside the circle of grace, Timothy would find no power to carry on the Lord's work.

Once Paul identified the source of strength for Timothy's ministry, he reminded him to continue the ministry by investing in the lives of others. This would require Timothy to **entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others** all he had heard from Paul **in the presence of many witnesses**. What Paul was asking Timothy to do was not something new, it was in fact the way that Jesus had invested in the lives of His disciples so they in turn could go and

make disciples who would make disciples. The method of making disciples is by teaching them the Word of God. The Bible is God's holy, infallible, inerrant Word. It is not a mystical book of magical prayers or methods given to us in order to have a better life. It is not a book of only history given to us so that we can understand the factual information about the origins of the Jewish people and faith. It is God's love letter to man. We learn more about God and His holiness and how we can approach Him through grace by faith in Jesus Christ. Through His word and His Holy Spirit, we learn how to have fellowship with Him. Out of this fellowship we should desire for others to find the love and peace that God offers, so we go to them and share His story with them. This is the heart of teaching, not transferring information but spiritual transformation done through the Spirit of God. Teaching is more than just sitting in a classroom while a teacher gives biblical information. We should be pouring our lives into others so that they in turn can do the same. This was the heart of Jesus' ministry and it should be ours as well.

Timothy was to entrust the precious gospel of grace to others for safe keeping. These guardians must have two qualifications—a reputation of loyalty to the gospel of Christ and giftedness to pass on to others God's truth about His Son. Only when Timothy set up that security could he consider his ministry a success, but it would not be easy. Paul urged his friend and associate to stay focused in the Lord's work and to **share in the suffering**. Paul colorfully illustrated his point about suffering with three metaphors. A Christian **soldier** is someone who belongs to something bigger than himself or herself. He or she is under command of a higher authority. A good soldier obeys orders without question, even when personal obedience means suffering the hardships common to military life. Paul wanted Timothy to know that living on the sidelines

was not for him, for nothing should get in the way of kingdom work. Paul called on Timothy to dedicate himself to the one who enlisted him, to let go of any longing for an easy life, to avoid getting entangled in the concerns of civilian life, and to become a tough-minded devotee of his recruiter.

Second, Paul pictured the necessity of self-discipline and stamina by referring to an **athlete** who competes according to the rules if he or she wishes to be crowned the winner. Living for Christ and serving His purposes often require struggle, even suffering—just as training for an athletic event calls for suffering in a physical sense. Sore muscles, aches, exhaustion, and injuries are the athlete’s lot. He or she must deal with these pains and press on. Paul’s message here is that Timothy needed the rigors of a disciplined life to minister effectively. No shortcuts to spiritual maturity and effectiveness would do. Achieving the glory of Christ in a sinful world is not done by couch potatoes. It takes disciplined believers who deal with physical and emotional pains and keep going. They alone win for Christ’s honor.

The soldier seeks to please the commander, the athlete disciplines for the crown, and the **farmer** works hard to produce the crops. He gets up about sunrise, plows the hardened soil until sundown, then flips on the tractor’s lights to plow into the night. He plants seeds, kills weeds, and in the Fall harvests his crop. It’s hard work. One might even call the farmer’s lot a life of suffering, especially when crops fail after months of hope and wearying work. Similarly, Paul urged Timothy to endure even weariness in ministry for Christ, dealing with the hardships and hurts as they come. Timothy’s ministry would play out much differently than Paul’s, but Paul knew that no matter the scenario, remaining strong in faith was necessary. The more active we are in ministry, the more we realize the need for a source of strength outside of ourselves. Our task is

difficult, but we should remember that Jesus is our source of strength and power.

Paul called on Timothy to **think over**, to understand clearly, to work out the bigger picture of what he was saying. If Timothy applied himself to ponder and digest the implications of the three metaphors (soldier, athlete, farmer), Paul promised that God would increase Timothy's understanding of their importance and intent. He could then apply the relevant significance of the threefold figures to himself.

Do you have a mentor like Timothy had in Paul? How do mentors help the church? How do mentors bring about the spread of the gospel?

Do you have someone you mentor? What might be the first step?

Have you been mentored in the faith? What was that relationship like? If you haven't had a mentor, who has been a spiritual leader or example in your life?

How are you carrying on their legacy of upholding and sharing the gospel?

What do Paul's suffering, imprisonment, and execution for the sake of the gospel—not to mention his continued determination to share the gospel—teach us about sharing the gospel?

Evaluate your passion for those who do not know Jesus. What are you willing to do for the sake of their salvation? What steps can be taken to endure hardship for their sake?

Endure Everything

2 Timothy 2:7-13

⁸ Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, ⁹ for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! ¹⁰ Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹ The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself. [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#)

Paul once again took an opportunity to share the gospel with Timothy. This should show us that the Gospel is not only for the lost, but also for us. We can very easily get side tracked in our faith by thinking of ourselves, or get so busy doing the work of the ministry that we lose sight of why we are doing it.

Paul called on Timothy to **remember Jesus Christ**. Jesus is **risen from the dead** and remains the living Lord in heaven. He also is **the offspring of David**, showing that Jesus met messianic requirements. The risen One is the reigning One. Paul wanted Timothy to remember who Jesus was and where He was to inspire him for continued Christian service. Whatever happened, Timothy could take comfort that his reigning Lord was governing over all for His people and for God's glory.

Next, the apostle cited his own situation as an example and motivation to Timothy. He reminded Timothy that he was **suffering** and **bound with chains as a criminal**. Paul indeed faced serious charges. He was in a bad way. Yet **the word of God is not bound**, for even if Rome silenced Paul, Rome could not

silence God. The apostle might be imprisoned, but the gospel marched on; and it marched on triumphantly. That's why Paul endured in the ministry. That's why Timothy should as well. God's chosen people, His **elect**, will be recipients of **salvation** and its **eternal glory**. The glorious and everlasting result of suffering in ministry was worth the temporal and painful cost to win it.

The soldier seeks to please the recruiter; the athlete eyes the crown; the farmer expects a harvest. Their endurance is active, not passive. The main point of those metaphors illustrated the fact that each one had a different emphasis, but they all had the same main purpose...the reward. No endurance is necessary if we seclude ourselves from the world and don't spread the gospel. However, the calling to follow Jesus requires activity, and thus, endurance. In the same way, God calls today's believers to focus on His promised reward because of hardships endured, discipline, and hard work. The notion of endurance presumes an active Christian life.

The phrase "the saying is trustworthy," points to the reward which will be given to the faithful disciple of Jesus. Paul used a familiar quotation which flowed in the form of four couplets, the first two being positive and the last two negative. The first couplet states, "**For if we have died with Him, we will also live with Him.**" The saying does not refer to martyrdom for Christ, but to believers' identity with Christ in His death and life. The second couplet is in verse 12: "**if we endure, we will also reign with him.**" It further identifies the Christian with Christ. This saying contrasts suffering and glorification rather than death and life as in the first couplet. Christ endured rejection, even the cross; believers who also endure in faithfulness to Him will reign with Him. Couplets three and four are negative. **If we deny Him** refers to ultimate disowning of Christ, and **He will also deny us** is Christ's ultimate rejection of all

who profess Him temporarily but, instead of remaining in faith, finally turn from Christ (see 1 John 2:19). The fourth couplet refers to the true Christian believer, not the temporary professor as in verse 12: **“if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.”** The comforting truth is that since Christ cannot disown Himself, a clear impossibility, He will not deny Christians who are faithless. Unfortunately, true Christians will still sin and fall short in ministry for Christ. True believers, even when they live disobediently and in weakness, always belong to Him. Our Lord’s own faithfulness to His people does not ultimately depend on our faithfulness to Him. No matter how faithless we might be, Christ’s love and faithfulness to us continue forever.

What were the incentives Paul focused on that allowed him to endure, regardless of circumstances?

How do the two promises (vv. 11-12) inspire you to endure in the Christian faith?

How does Paul encourage you to overcome anxieties or fears about sharing the gospel? Who might you be able to share the gospel with this week?

What struggles do you have in your walk? How is Paul a good example of facing difficulties?

Who is someone that you look to as an example for how to live the Christian life? How does he or she go about sharing the gospel?

Approved Worker

2 Timothy 2:14-19

14 Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. 16 But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. 19 But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#)

As a minister of the gospel, Timothy must **remind** all those in the church about the instructions and warnings Paul had delivered to him. Pastors are to keep reminding their congregations of the truth of Scripture, the nature of God, and the demands of holy living. This task is never complete.

Paul pointed out the false teachers and their messages. One of the primary characteristics of the false teachers at Ephesus was that they focused on debating over meanings of words. He believed that these word-battles were good for nothing, and that they led only to the ruin of those who listened. The word "**ruin**" means literally "overturning" or "subverting." These "word-battles" produce "overturned" lives for those who give heed to them. At the same time Christian ministry should contrast the false teachers who engage in those word-battles.

In contrast to the false teachers, Paul called on Timothy to “***do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.***” A workman might rightly be ashamed if his work were shoddy or lacked real effort. For Timothy to be an unashamed worker, he must use the word of God correctly. The word translated “**rightly handling**” appears only here in the New Testament. It means literally “to cut a straight path.” It is a call for Timothy and all other workmen of God to be good exegetes of Scripture. In other words, let God’s word say what it says, not what you want it to say.

After instructing Timothy as to what he is to promote and do in vv. 14–15, Paul instructs Timothy of the things he is to “avoid” in vv. 16-18. The description of the banter of the false teachers as “**irreverent babble**” (literally “profane empty sounds”). Such godless chatter is to be avoided because it only “**will lead the people to more and more ungodliness.**” The “**talk**” of those who engage in this behavior will progress in ungodliness that would eventually spread like **gangrene**. Gangrene is a medical term used for spreading sores or ulcers. The metaphor depicts in very descriptive language the advance of false teaching in a Christian community. Two of those engaged in this false teaching are Hymenaeus and Philetus. These two men seem to be leaders among a group of false teachers “**who have swerved from the truth.**”

The next phrase indicates the nature of their heresy: saying “**that the resurrection has already happened.**” Greeks often showed a contempt for the belief of a physical resurrection. Because they viewed the body as evil, they taught against a future bodily resurrection. They believed more in a spiritualized or sacramental view of resurrection. Perhaps they had used Paul’s own words in order to bolster their concept of spiritual resurrection (see Eph 2:6; Rom 6:3–

4). However, they failed to mention his other teachings on the reality of a future resurrection (1 Cor 15; Phil 3:21). They only taught half of the truth thus leaving the church in a state of confusion.¹

Despite the uncertainty that the false teaching might produce, Paul proclaimed, **“God’s firm foundation stands.”** Paul can be seen as simply saying, “What God has founded is solid. What the false teachers say cannot thwart his work.” It likely represents a proverbial saying familiar to Timothy and the church at Ephesus. The true servant of the Lord demonstrates that he belongs to him by departing from iniquity.

How would you recognize false teachings?

What actions would you take to avoid false teachings?

Why is the physical resurrection necessary for believers?

How do we find courage to continue when the world shouts down our biblical viewpoints?

¹ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, [1, 2 Timothy, Titus](#), vol. 34, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 216–217.