

THE GOOD FIGHT - PART 2:
“ENDURANCE IN TEACHING GOD’S WORD”
2 TIMOTHY 2:1-13

Personal Introduction

Good afternoon everyone. I'm Jeff - one of the pastors at HMCC of Jakarta. And it's my privilege to preach the Word of God for us today!

Sermon Series Introduction

We'll be continuing with Part 2 of our sermon series called “The Good Fight” - where we're going through the letter of 2 Timothy together.

This is widely known as Apostle Paul's final letter before he was executed.

The title of this sermon series comes from one of Paul's famous last words from this very letter - where he said, *“I have fought **the good fight**, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*

The title of today's sermon is “Endurance In Teaching God's Word.”

Introduction

I think we all can agree that endurance is important, right? Not only is it important to start something, but it's also important to endure (and keep going) even when it's difficult & not easy.

So let me ask us a question: what are you willing to endure (or fight) for?

- The answer to this question will help reveal what we love and desire in our hearts...

Because as we live our lives, we're actually willing to endure a lot of things for many different reasons...

- We're willing to wake up early everyday and endure through Jakarta traffic and hours of work for the sake of our career.
- We're willing to go to the gym multiple times a week and endure hours of exercise for the sake of a fitter body.
- And we're willing to endure even more things for the sake of getting married.

We can endure a lot of things... but how many people endure in teaching God's Word?

- This question is not only for the pastors because all Christians are called to teach God's Word to ourselves & to one another.

How many of us are enduring in picking up our Bibles each day and feeding our souls with good spiritual food? And helping others to also feed themselves?

In our passage today, Paul urges Timothy to endure in teaching God's Word for the sake of God's people; that if there's something that he should endure in... it's this...

The One Thing

By the grace of God, let us endure in teaching God's Word to one another.

Scripture Introduction

If you have your Bibles with you, please turn to 2 Timothy 2:1-13.

For context:

- Apostle Paul is writing this letter while he's imprisoned in Rome.
 - And he's been in and out of prison before. But he knows that this time, it's different.
 - It doesn't seem like he'll be getting out alive, and he knows that the end of his life & ministry is near.
- So this can be considered as **Paul's farewell letter** - And he writes a very heartfelt letter to his dear friend Timothy - who's been his faithful ministry partner, and is like a spiritual son to him... And is now a pastor at the church in Ephesus.
 - The previous chapter ended with Paul telling Timothy that many people have decided to leave Paul because they became ashamed of being associated with him - Unlike them, Timothy is not to not be ashamed of Paul's chains or of the Gospel. Instead, he's to boldly guard the Gospel that's been entrusted to him.

This is where we're at today. I'll read for us 2 Timothy 2:1-13...

2 Timothy 2:1-13 (ESV)

You 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. ⁷ Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

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.

This is God's Word.

Overview

Three exhortations as we endure in teaching God's Word:

- I. Be strengthened (vv. 1-2)
- II. Share in suffering (vv. 3-7)
- III. Remember Jesus (vv. 8-13)

I. Be strengthened (vv. 1-2)

Let's look at verse 1 - "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus"

Why is Paul telling Timothy to be strengthened?

- Because there's going to be times when Timothy is going to feel weak.
 - Paul knows Timothy. He knows that Timothy is a faithful brother and he genuinely desires to guard the Gospel of Jesus.
 - But even though the desire is there, there are still going to be times when he's going to feel like he's reached his limits & he's completely drained & not able to keep going...
 - Maybe that's what he's feeling right now...
 - Because his mentor is about to be executed and they're losing support from many people. He's experiencing hardship instead of seeing fruit...
 - So I think we can sympathize how Timothy may be feeling discouraged during this time...

But notice what Paul is telling Timothy - He's not saying, "Suck it up, Timothy! Just get over it!"

- Paul is pointing Timothy to a source of strength that's outside of himself.
 - So he himself may be feeling completely dry and used up... But how comforting is it for him to know that there's a source of strength that'll never run dry... He can always look to the grace that is in Christ Jesus!
 - The Lord is always ready to strengthen his people!
 - At this time, Timothy doesn't need to pretend like he's strong (in & of himself). He can honestly just say, "Lord, I'm not feeling so great right now. I need your help; I need your strength."

We can trust that the Lord will strengthen his people to keep going. What Paul is referring to here is supernatural strength - not our own strength that comes from within, but supernatural strength that comes from outside of us; from God Himself.

Let's look at verse 2 - There's a reason why Timothy needs supernatural strength... Because he's been given supernatural work...

What Timothy has been entrusted with is supernatural in nature - what Paul has taught him is not the words of man, but the Word of God. And now he's to do something with God's Word - he's not just to keep it to himself, but he's been given an important mission to pass it on to the next generation...

- He's to preach and teach God's Word to others.
- And he's to entrust it to other faithful men (referring to the next generation of pastors), who will then continue to preach and teach God's Word to others...

What a big responsibility that is... But what a great privilege that is...

Because as Timothy continues to look at God's grace for strength... I think Timothy will start to remember... That it's completely by God's grace that he's in a position where he's able to understand and teach God's Word in the first place...

- He's not a pastor because he was so holy or impressive and highly influential. In fact, he was relatively young, possibly timid, and a physically weak person - he had a chronic stomach illness and would often get sick. He's not someone who you'd be impressed by.
- So who was he? He was a nobody! But by God's grace, someone weak like him is one of the people whom God has entrusted to guard the Gospel and to preach & teach it to others.
 - Not so that Timothy's power would be displayed, but so that God's power and glory would be displayed through him.
 - And it's the same with us... Who are we? Compared to God, we're really nobodies... But God chose us and entrusted us to do His work.
 - For God chose the weak to shame the strong.

So even though pastors have been given the responsibility to preach and teach God's Word... From other parts of Scripture, we know that this is actually something that every Christian has been entrusted to do (Before Jesus ascended to Heaven, he gave his church the Great Commission to proclaim the Gospel and make disciples of all nations).

Brothers and sisters, we've been given the supernatural work to teach God's Word to one another (what a great privilege that is! And what a great responsibility!).

- And think about it this way - if we don't teach one another God's Word, who will?
- We're gonna be taught many things as we go through our daily lives. But the world that we live in is predominantly Non-Christian. What our Non-Christian family members, friends, co-workers, and surroundings will be teaching us... is probably not the Word of God.
- The responsibility falls on us to teach one another.

The one word that encompasses this is "discipling" - Discipling is helping one neither to follow Jesus; helping one another understand God's Word... We're to disciple one another...

And there's many ways that we can disciple one another & teach God's Word to one another (it's not only through the preaching of God's Word in front of everyone).

- You don't need to work your way up to be a pastor first, you can start right now!
- It can look like having Bible Study in small groups at somebody's home - where church members are gathering to teach & learn God's Word together (it can be Scripture from last week's sermon, the next week's sermon, or another passage from the Bible).
- It can look like having lunch or dinner with another brother or sister and then asking one another what we've been reading in the Bible... What stood out to us, what we learned from it...
- It can look like sharing your Bible reading notes via WhatsApp with one another to keep each other accountable in reading God's Word each day.
- Parents and children, it can look like family worship where you're reading God's Word and praying together as a family.
 - There can be multiple contexts and it can look different for different people. But the important thing - as a church family - let's spend some time where we open and read and study the Bible together.
 - To help you in your study, as you read the Bible, you can ask yourself 2 questions:
 - (1) What does this passage reveal to me about God?
 - (2) What does this passage reveal to me about man? And about myself?
 - And then help each other to apply God's Word in each other's lives...
 - And this is the amazing thing about God's Word - God's Word is all-encompassing and is helpful for all areas of life.
 - Help each other to not only understand God's Word, but then help each other see what it would look like to apply God's Word in your lives personally...

- Help each other see: If this is what God's Word teaches then how should it change the way I view myself, or the way I view God?
- How should it change my thoughts and actions as I'm going through what I'm dealing with at home, at work, or at church...

This is the kind of culture that we're trying to cultivate at our church - a culture of discipling where brothers and sisters are teaching each other God's Word, and helping each other to apply God's Word in their lives, and mature in their faith.

And as we aim to cultivate this kind of culture at our church, let's remember to be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus...

- This means that we need to remember that - as we're teaching others about God's Word - we also need to be teaching ourselves God's Word, and applying it in our own lives, and relying on God's grace as we do this great work that He's entrusted to us.
 - We can't teach others by our own strength. But think of ourselves as an empty cup that first needs to be filled with God's grace and strength... to the point that we're so filled, that it's pouring out unto others!
- But... this doesn't mean that we need to completely understand God's Word, and have our lives completely figured out before we can start teaching one another.
 - If you feel discouraged because you feel like you don't know enough about the Bible to start teaching it. That's ok. Even pastors have so much to learn still about God's Word.
 - Teaching and learning doesn't have to be a one-way thing. Where you're only learning or only teaching God's Word. You can still be teaching and learning God's Word at the same time.
 - So my encouragement to you is: if you feel like you're not ready to teach the Bible, don't feel like you can't start a small group where everyone is just learning the Bible together.
 - That's actually the Christian life, as we're discipling... we're also being disciplined.
 - So you don't need a doctorate degree in Scripture to start teaching, we can continue teach and learn the Bible together.

So first - as we endure in teaching God's Word - be strengthened. Second...

II. Share in suffering (vv. 3-7)

Let's look at verse 3 - Paul tells Timothy that as he endures in teaching God's Word, he needs to be prepared to endure suffering.

Teaching God's Word will not be easy. It's easier to just keep God's Word to yourself. After all, Paul is not being persecuted for believing in Jesus, he's being persecuted because he won't stop talking about him with others. And just as Paul is suffering for the Gospel, Timothy must also be ready to face this kind of suffering.

- Paul is not referring to a general kind of suffering that's faced by everyone. The kind of suffering that he's referring to is one that is shared uniquely between followers of Christ.

Christians share in suffering together because our Lord Jesus also endured suffering when he was on Earth. Because what Jesus teaches and what we believe in (and what we're teaching) is completely different from what the world teaches.

- The world teaches that people are generally good, while the Bible teaches that everyone is a sinner.
 - That's not a popular teaching.
- And Jesus was also not afraid to call out those who were hypocrites.
 - And so Jesus had enemies, and those who were against him plotted against him.
- And so Jesus warned his disciples that just as the world hated him, the world will also hate his disciples.
 - And so there's a cost in following Jesus. That's why he said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16: 24).
 - He didn't say that it was gonna be easy to follow him; it's gonna be difficult.

Paul calls Timothy to be ready to share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. In his letters, Paul often refers to Christians as soldiers and the Christian life as a battle. It's quite fitting. Because as Christians, we are at war.

And that's because while we live in this world, we're not to be of the world. But we have 2 natures in us: a sinful nature that leans to the world's teachings, and a regenerated nature that leans to what God's Word teaches. And so there's going to be a constant battle in our hearts between our flesh and the Spirit in us...

- Our flesh desires to listen to the world's teachings, while the Spirit desires to listen to the teachings of God's Word).

So as followers of Christ, the war we're in is not a physical one against flesh and blood, but a spiritual one against the forces of evil.

- The battlefield is going to be in our hearts...
 - There will be spiritual warfare, and Timothy's heart is gonna be under attack from the enemy.
 - And it's the same with your hearts...
 - Your identity will be under attack.
 - Your faith will be under attack.
 - Your endurance will be under attack.

- The enemy is not happy that Christians are preaching & teaching the Gospel to one another. The enemy would rather see Timothy...
 - Distracted by the pleasures of the world
 - Discouraged and hopeless in his ministry
 - And down and out.
 - And the enemy would also rather see you and your pastors... down and out...

Some of us may be going through persecution like Paul and Timothy. But most of us are probably not. The enemy is devious and uses different strategies to get specific Christians to stop teaching God's Word. So for most of us, it may not look like heavy persecution, but it may look like going through the mundane of everyday life.

- As we go through the daily grind of work, traffic, work, traffic... It's understandable that we can feel physically and emotionally drained...
- And unmotivated to teach God's Word to ourselves and to others... we just want to lay down all day and watch Netflix.
 - So we may be struggling to teach God's Word because of something very difficult or just because we're going through the mundane...
 - So the struggle may look different, but either way, we'll still need endurance to continue doing the mission that Jesus has entrusted to us...

And so to help Timothy (and us) endure in this battle, Paul reminds him to be ready to share in suffering to teach God's Word.

- He tells Timothy this using 3 analogies... He's to endure suffering like a soldier, like an athlete, and like a farmer.

First, verse 4 - Timothy is to endure suffering like a soldier. And that's with single-minded focus.

- Let's think of a soldier and a civilian.
 - A civilian has the luxury to think about *what* he wants to do and *when* he wants to do those things. He can be focused on many things, whatever he pleases.
 - On the other hand, a soldier is someone who used to be a civilian, but not anymore.
 - He's left that old life behind to be in the army.
 - And now, his single focus is to please his commanding officer.
 - His life is not his own. What the commanding officer says, he does!
 - In the same way, Timothy (and us, as Christians) - we've left our old lives behind to follow Christ. Our new aim now should be to please our Lord Jesus.
 - But if we're honest with ourselves, oftentimes we're not single-minded in our focus, but multi-focused (yes, we do want to please Jesus, but we kinda want to please ourselves too).
 - And sometimes, maybe we want to please Jesus, only as much as it won't affect our lives too much. But once things start to

negatively impact our lives (making things more difficult for us), then we're not so sure anymore...

- But imagine a soldier who still thinks like a civilian...
 - Imagine a battle where the commanding officer commands his soldiers, "Go! Go! Go!" And the soldier is saying, "no, thank you. Not right now. There's something else I'd rather do." That'd be a horrible soldier, right?
 - The enemy would love for us to be these kind of horrible soldiers of Jesus.
 - Paul is reminding Timothy to be a good soldier with a single focus.
- So let's ask ourselves: Given my current circumstance, how would it look like for me to please Jesus?
 - Even if what I'm currently going through is suffering... though I personally would want my suffering to end... How would it look like for me to please Jesus in my suffering?
 - How would it look like for me to teach myself and others about God's Word in this season?

Second, verse 5 - Timothy is to endure suffering like an athlete. And that's with discipline.

- An athlete is very disciplined in following the rules of the game (when they compete, they don't just start making up their own rules). They make sure to follow it, so that they can win that crown.
- Here's what you won't see in a race: A runner just cutting across the field, skipping straight to the finish line and then celebrating! Why not? Because then they'd be disqualified because they didn't compete according to the rules.
 - And just as there's someone who governs the rules of a competition, there's also someone who governs the rules in which we're to run our race as Christians. That someone is Jesus.
 - And so if Timothy (and us) - if our goal is to please Jesus in the way that we live our lives, then we do so by abiding by the rules that Jesus has set for us.
 - And if this means living a Christian life in which we undergo suffering so that his power and glory will be displayed in our weakness, then who are we to say that we don't want to live this kind of life... and we rather just skip straight to the good stuff?
 - As Christians, let us be able to say, "Lord, help me live in such a way that would please you the most. But if it means enduring through suffering, please give me the strength to endure till the very end."
 - And I just want to encourage us - some of you are going through some very difficult things (maybe one of the hardest things in our lives thus far)... I'm sure it's not easy, but what an opportunity you have to please our Lord Jesus.

Third, Timothy is to endure suffering like a farmer. And that's with hard work.

- A farmer works really hard to prepare the land, and to plant and water the seeds.
- What you won't see is a farmer who does nothing, and then who goes to the field and asks, "Hey, where's my crops?"
- A farmer knows that hard work is required to see fruit.
 - In the same way, Timothy is also to work hard in the midst of his suffering. He's to continue to preach and teach God's Word in the hope that there would be a harvest in the future (maybe in his lifetime; maybe beyond his lifetime). But even if he doesn't see much fruit right now, he's to endure in his preaching and teaching.
 - Church, it's the same with us...
 - Even when there's no fruit yet (and we don't know when the harvest will come), our pastors are to continue in faithfully preaching God's Word.
 - And our church members are to continue to labor in teaching God's Word to one another.

Now, let's look at verse 7 - Paul tells Timothy, "Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything."

I love this. The analogies that Paul shared to Timothy was divinely inspired by God. And he encouraged Timothy to continue to reflect on it (thinking about what it means for his own life).

Brothers and sisters, no sermon can ever cover everything in God's Word. These words and analogies from God are so rich. There's still so much to uncover. I encourage you to spend more time on your own (or with others) to study this; to think and reflect about what this means for you personally in your specific context and what you're currently going through. Pray that God would help you understand & apply these things in your life.

Imagine that - the Lord Himself will be the one to give you understanding. What's being described is a personal teaching moment - between you and Jesus. As you reflect on God's Word, pray that he would reveal to you what His Word means personally for you...

First, be strengthened. Second, share in suffering. And third...

III. Remember Jesus (vv. 8-13)

Let's look at verse 8 - To help Timothy endure in teaching God's Word, Paul tells him to... "remember Jesus."

- And I love how he says, "remember" here! Because he knows that Timothy already knows. He just needs to remember.

- And it's the same for a lot of us here... maybe we're already familiar with Jesus and his Gospel. But we just need to keep reminding ourselves of who Jesus is and what his Gospel is all about...

So let's take some time now to remember our Lord Jesus...

- Jesus Christ is the only man who actually didn't have to endure anything if he didn't want to.
 - After all, even though Jesus is fully man, he's also fully God. So in that sense, Jesus is completely sovereign and in control over his life, and he does not need to endure any suffering if he really wanted to.
 - But when Jesus lived on Earth, he endured much suffering...
 - People rejected his teachings and mocked him, and he endured...
 - He was betrayed by one of his own apostles, and he endured...
 - He was beaten, spit upon, and crucified. And as he lay there, hanging on the cross... He endured.
 - At any point, Jesus could've rescued himself...
 - At any point, more than 12 legions of angels could've come to his aid... But he endured.
 - The question is why? Why would Jesus endure so much suffering if he didn't have to?
 - It's because if Jesus didn't endure such suffering, then his people would be the one to endure eternal suffering in Hell (because of our sins).
 - Jesus endured suffering for the sake of his people.
 - If you've put your faith in Jesus Christ, then you're one of his people. And that means that Jesus died specifically for you.
- Earlier, I asked: "what are you willing to endure for?"
 - Because what you're willing to endure for reveals what's in your heart and what you love and desire.
 - And we're willing to endure a lot of things for all kinds of reasons...
 - So what does it reveal to us about Jesus' heart that he was willing to endure such suffering for our sake?
 - It reveals that Jesus loves us so much; that he'd endure such suffering and even die for us so that we may live.

Let's take that in for a second. This is what we need to remember in times when we need strength - Remember Jesus... Remember that we have a God who's able to relate with us and sympathize with us in our suffering... Remember that we have a God who loves us and is for us!

And remember the amazing truth that Jesus didn't remain dead. Jesus is the one who rose from the dead!

Look at verse 9 - This is why Paul's tone is not discouraging but encouraging! Paul is able to see the reality that God is powerful and the Word of God cannot be stopped.

- This means that even though Paul may be physically in chains at that moment... he knows that because of Jesus, he's saved!
 - His life on Earth may soon come to an end, but his eternal life in Heaven is about to begin.
 - And so Paul does not sound like a man who's been defeated! He sounds more like a man who's sure of the coming victory!
- And he knows that even though his enemies can bind him in chains, the Word of God can never be bound!

Look at verse 10 - This is why Paul confidently says, "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."

Just as his Lord Jesus endured suffering for the sake of his people, now Paul - as a soldier of Christ - is also willing to endure suffering for his fellow soldiers, so that they may be saved.

Just as a soldier is not fighting by himself or for himself, but with his fellow soldiers and for the sake of their lives as well... So are Christians - as soldiers of Christ - also to fight the good fight for the sake of our fellow brothers and sisters...

Isn't that a great privilege? And isn't that amazing? That God can use our work and efforts to save souls & change the lives of His people.

Let me ask our church this: What if for all of our efforts and sacrifice, only one person's soul is saved because of our church, then would the work still be worth it? Yes, I think so.

This answer is actually personal for me because I'm one of those lives that were saved because of this church's ministry. So how can I say "no" that one life wouldn't be worth it...

I came to know Christ in this church. I came to know Christ because others before me were saved by the Gospel, and they didn't keep it to themselves. I thank God that He used ordinary people to preach and teach the Gospel to me, so that I may know Jesus Christ.

And that's how we all came to know Jesus - it's because someone shared the Gospel with us. And how we continued to grow in our knowledge and relationship with him is because others continue to teach us about God's Word. So as a church, let's continue to endure in teaching God's Word.

And as we do, we can be sure of the coming victory.

Let's look at verses 11-13

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.

Our efforts in enduring in teaching God's Word will not be in vain... It'll be worth it! Because we are guaranteed victory and can have great assurance even now!

- For those whose faith is in Jesus, we not only share in his death, but in his resurrection.
- And we not only share in his suffering, but in his eternal victory!
 - Brothers and sisters, if you're currently feeling tired and unsure if you can keep going... Isn't this comforting?
 - Because of Jesus, your suffering is not forever... One day, it will end. Because in Heaven, there will be no more tears, and no more pain, and no more suffering.
 - Think about it this way: For those who believe in Jesus, our suffering on Earth is as close as we'll ever get to Hell.
 - What's awaiting us is far better than what we can imagine.
- But look at the second half of verse 12 - For those who deny Jesus and do not believe in him, they will also be denied by Jesus and will not share in his victory.
 - For those people, the temporary pleasures of the world will be as close as they'll get to Heaven.
 - What's awaiting them is something far worse than what they can imagine.

So if you're here with us today, but have not yet placed your faith in Jesus, what Christians (past and present) want you to know is that Jesus is the only way that you can be saved from eternity in Hell. So if you're feeling weak right now and in need of help, I invite you to rely on the strength of Jesus (the one who is fully God and fully man), and who died & resurrected to secure victory for his people. Please come up to me or anyone around you, and we'd love to talk to you more about Jesus.

And for those who've already placed our faith in Christ, let's continue to remember Jesus...

Conclusion

As we conclude, let's take a closer look at verse 13...

if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

This is not referring to those who deny Jesus and do not have faith in him, but this is referring to those who do have faith in him but are currently going through a period of unfaithfulness. Perhaps at a time where we're struggling to teach God's Word to ourselves or others...

Well even in those moments, we can be comforted that the faithfulness of our Lord Jesus does not depend on our own faithfulness.

Even when we struggle in our faithfulness, he will remain faithful.

So even as we aim to endure in teaching God's Word, we can be assured here that we don't have to do so perfectly. We don't have to endure perfectly.

Rather, we rely on the strength of the one who has endured perfectly...

The One Thing

By the grace of God, let us endure in teaching God's Word to one another.
