

2 Timothy Chapter 2 v 1 - 14

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[0 : 0 0] 1.95, page 1,195. 2 Timothy, chapter 2, we'll begin from verse 1, reading through to the first part of verse 14. 2 Timothy 2, beginning at verse 1. Apostle Paul writes this letter to Timothy. You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things you've heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, in trust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. The hard-working farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I'm saying. For the Lord will give you insight into all this. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 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. Keep reminding God's people of these things. And we will come back to that passage a little later on.

If you would like to have 2 Timothy chapter 2 open before you in your Bible, that will be a help as we look together at particularly one verse, but the context of the context of that as well. As I said earlier on, by introduction to our service this morning, we are part of, well, billions of people remembering the fact that 100 years ago today, the First World War came to an end. The war to end all wars.

So it was thought, the Great War, as it's been called, but was a war of terrible, terrible loss. And as all wars are, achieve very little, it seems.

[3 : 2 1] We've been called to remember as a nation, to remember as a people. Now, remembering, of course, is much more than simply knowing about something, isn't it? We all know about the First World War. We're taught that at school, or we pick that up as we go through life.

We understand that the First World War happened, and we don't forget that. But remembering is more than that. It's an action, isn't it? It's a positive action of the mind, focusing our thoughts upon that war and upon those who lost their lives in that war.

And the wars that followed, too, as well, of course. And we have to make our minds remember. We have to take hold of our minds in one sense, thinking about those millions of people who died, were killed in that war, and the wars that have continued, and the conflicts that continue, and particularly those that our own nation is engaged in.

Well, we may ask, well, why should we remember these things? Why should we strain our minds, or cause our minds, or make our minds remember these people and these events?

Well, we can say, because those actions, even though a hundred years ago, and though none of us were there, and in fact, none of those who took part in the conflict are alive anymore, there has been a direct impact upon our nation because of that war.

[4 : 53] Even today, we're affected by the consequences of it. And, of course, when we make ourselves think about war, and the loss of life in war, and the cost of war, that remembering has an effect upon us to steel us against wanting war, to determine, as it were, in our minds, that we should not go into war, to put us off war.

There was that sense, of course, for those men who were going to war in that First World War, it was a glorious thing. They were engaged in a wonderful thing. There was something, a sort of very celebrity about it, something quite wonderful about it.

Everybody wanted to be part of it. It was thought to be glamorous, even. Of course, the reality is that war is anything, anything but glamorous. So it steels us against that.

And, of course, we need to be called to remember these things, because we have a very bad habit of being forgetful. We need people to say to us, remember, because we know that our minds so easily are caught up with the things of life, the things of today, and our own concerns and worries.

We forget. In fact, what was it, the saying, that he who forgets the past is determined to repeat its mistakes.

[6 : 17] We need to remember, because there is a blessing to be had. He wants us to help to be had, because we are forgetful. And forgetfulness is not just a problem for the old, is it?

Well, no, I can't say that, can I? I'm not allowed to say old. It's not something that just afflicts us as we progress and mature in our years. It's a problem for those of us who are younger as well.

Though we might think it's just an age problem, it's all the way through. We are people who are forgetful. And even in our modern society, where we have so many aids to help us to remember events and remember occasions and remember anniversaries and so on, we've got calendars and diaries and alarms and mobile phones and apps and everything else to remind us not to forget things.

We still do, don't we? All of us, I'm sure, even just this week, let something slip our minds, as we put it. We still are forgetful. We still are forgetful. Now, of course, a lot of the things that we forget probably aren't necessarily all that important, but some of the things we forget can be very important if we forget to take our medication.

That can be very important. I sat next to one of the men during the conference, and we were just partly through the first meeting the morning, and he said, oh, I've just remembered I've forgotten to take my medication this morning, and he shut off to take it.

[7 : 37] He is getting on a bit, so that probably excuses him for that. But we do. And, of course, if you forget to take your medication, that can have an effect upon your health. If we forget, some things are very important.

It could be a matter of life and death for a husband to forget his anniversary, couldn't it? Has been for some of us. There's lasting consequences.

We need to remember because it affects our now and our future as well, and the lives of others around about us. God is well aware that we are forgetful people.

That's why over and over in the Scriptures we find God calling upon his people to remembrance. The fourth commandment is remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

Later on in Deuteronomy, we're told, remember the commandments Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave you. In Ecclesiastes, that very helpful book, I encourage you.

[8 : 38] If you don't read Ecclesiastes, read it. It takes a... You've got to understand it to read it, but when you understand it, it says, remember your creator while you're young. Very important not to forget our God.

And of course, when we get into the New Testament, we have, of course, the Lord Jesus on the night before his death, instituting, setting up what we call the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Table, where he says to his disciples, do this in remembrance of me.

Why would Jesus need to do that? Surely his disciples could never forget Jesus, could they? They spent three years with him, and he taught them, and they saw him raise the dead and heal the sick.

They heard from his words, mouth incredible, life-changing words. Their lives were altered completely from meeting with Jesus. Why should Jesus tell them to remember him?

How could they ever, ever forget him? But that's not what Jesus is saying, is it? He's not saying, you're going to forget me, and you need a reminder of who I am.

[9 : 40] No, it's something more than that. He is encouraging them, and therefore us, as we celebrate the Lord's Supper, as we do regularly, to focus their thinking upon him over and over again in a particular way.

Because that is the way that our faith is strengthened, that is the way that our faith grows. That's the way that we are helped and encouraged, as we seek to follow him by remembering. And so I want to bring to our thoughts these words of Paul to Timothy, into Timothy chapter 2, verse 8.

He says, remember Jesus Christ. And again, that doesn't seem necessary, does it? If you know anything about Timothy, you know that he was brought up in a Christian family.

As a young man, he came to faith in Jesus. Even as a young man, he began to serve the Lord Jesus. Paul took him along with him, one of his missionary journeys, and put him into the church, to pastor a church and to care for the people.

Every day of Timothy's life, like Paul's, was about Jesus and sharing the gospel of Jesus and making Jesus known. Surely Timothy would never forget Jesus.

[10 : 50] Paul wasn't afraid that Timothy would forget Jesus. Of course not. Nor what he'd done for him, dying for him and giving him new life. But he knew that Timothy needed to set his mind upon Jesus in a very special way.

He needed to take stock of Jesus afresh. He needed to set his mind upon him. Set his thoughts upon Jesus. And the reason he needed to be reminded of Jesus and to think upon the Lord Jesus Christ was because Timothy was struggling.

He was struggling with all sorts of difficulties, with conflicting thoughts in his mind. Anxieties and fears and worries. It seems that the very reason Paul writes this letter to Timothy is for that very reason.

To help Timothy, to encourage Timothy, to strengthen Timothy in what was a very tough life that he was going through. We know that Paul himself was in prison.

We read that there, don't we? In Timothy chapter 2, verse 9. And I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. Several of Paul's letters are written. Well, he was in prison.

[12 : 03] In prison not because he was a criminal. He says, I'm at the point of being chained like a criminal. I'm not a criminal. He hadn't broken any laws. He wasn't a robber or a thief or a murderer or a fraudster or a liar. He was simply in prison because he preached Jesus.

He loved Jesus and sought to follow him and tell others of Jesus. And that always has been hated. We're going to think about that next week, particularly about Christians even today who are imprisoned and put to death.

And one thing I forgot to pray for today, which is a cause of great rejoicing, is that Azia Bibby has been released, hasn't she? I meant to mention that. I mention it now, but we'll pray for her later on this evening.

But that's a wonderful thing. A woman, eight years in prison she was. Simple wife and mother in Pakistan. Because she was hated for being a Christian.

Nearly killed. Well, with the answer to prayer, God set her free. But Timothy is now worried. His mentor, Paul, the one he looked up to, the one who took him under his wing and helped him, the one who has instructed him and been with him, he's in prison now.

[13 : 13] And Timothy is finding himself under all sorts of opposition and pressure. And Paul is worried that Timothy may well bend under that pressure.

You know, we're not as strong as we like to think we are, are we? All of us have pressures put upon us. And there are times when we feel as if we may well give in to those pressures. Following Christ is not easy.

It never has been easy. It never will be easy. It's not easy in our day. It's not easy in Paul's day. And so Paul is concerned for Timothy. You can tell that by the sort of things he writes to him.

Look back at chapter 1, verses 7 and 8. He says, For the Spirit of God, sorry, The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, anxious.

Timid is somebody who's nervous, aren't they? They're worried. He's speaking to Timothy that he feels he's timid. And he goes on, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

[14 : 11] Verse 8, So do not be ashamed of the testimony. That's the worry that Timothy will be ashamed of speaking for Jesus. And he'll quieten down. He'll tone down. They'll sort of become that reclusive type of Christian.

That's how people think Christians should be. Particularly, I think, in our own day and age. Christians shouldn't be telling us what they believe. They shouldn't be telling us the things of God.

If you have faith, keep it private. Keep it to yourself. There's no place for Christianity in the public politics or the public workplace or the public media.

Yes, there must be. There must be. It's not a private thing. It's not just a matter of what I think. It is the gospel of God. And so poor Timothy was concerned.

Sorry, Paul was concerned for Timothy that these pressures upon him. And we see as well, don't we, later on where he says to him in the very start of chapter 2, You then, my son, be strong.

[15 : 12] Sense in which Timothy is perhaps weak. And then he gives him that, chapter 4, that charge to preach the gospel, to keep on going. And what was the cure then for Timothy?

What's the cure for us as Christians? Perhaps we face those temptations, those pressures as well. Those fears. What will people say about me if I stand up clearly as a Christian?

I don't talk about the Lord Jesus in school or in college or in work or to people. I like to keep it private because I don't want. And there's pressures perhaps in the family, pressures in the home, pressures wherever we are.

To just be, to chill. Don't be so zealous for Christ. Don't be so keen for Jesus. Timothy himself actually was imprisoned for a time.

And released. Whether that was after this or before this, probably after this time. So what's the cure? The cure here, it seems to me, is what these three little words that Timothy brings, is spoken to Timothy by Paul in 2 Timothy 2 verse 8.

[16 : 27] Remember Jesus Christ. Remember Jesus Christ. And particularly, I would say, Paul's determination is remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead.

The person of Jesus. The person of Jesus as the one who has conquered death, who is alive. This is what Paul wants Timothy to grasp afresh.

That Christ is alive. And he knows it. Believes it. Preaches it. But he needs to be reminded of it. And so do we, dear friends. To think and to set our minds upon this truth.

Jesus Christ raised from the dead. Just as we have even this Sunday and over these last few weeks remembered the end of the First World War.

Remembered it because of the sacrifice there. Remembered it because of the repercussions. And so we as Christians constantly remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead. The sacrifice and the effect that it has upon our lives.

[17 : 33] Three simple things that I think Paul is wanting Timothy here and us to grasp afresh. And to remind ourselves, particularly when times are tough. Particularly when we are under pressure.

The first is this. Because Jesus is raised from the dead, our past is dealt with. Our past is dealt with. Now again, the remembering act of today is a looking to the past, isn't it?

To something that has happened. The reality of what happened in those wars. Well, as Christians we are to remember the reality of Jesus risen from the dead. It's not just a vague idea, a story that's been told to us.

It's a reality, an act in history. And in that act in history, we have confidence that it means that we are forgiven. Our past has been dealt with.

I'm sure you've noticed that when that verse of verse 8 is more than just simply remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead. We have the second part, descended from David.

[18 : 38] Those three little words, descended from David, is what we might say is Bible shorthand for everything that Jesus was about when he came into this world. It reminds us that he was fully human.

He was a descendant of David. Born of David. Born of that kingly line. It was this King David we're talking about. It reminds us, of course, that he was descended from David because David's descendant, or one of David's descendant, would be the great saviour, the Messiah of the world.

David was given that promise and others since then, throughout the Old Testament, that God would send someone to be a deliverer, a rescuer, a saviour for the people of God.

This one-off, unique person. Do you remember on the day, Palm Sunday, we call it, when Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem and the palm leaves were spread out and the coats were spread out?

Remember what the people shouted? Hosanna to the son of David. David. They had those promises. They knew that this son, this descendant of David was coming and they looked at Jesus and they said, here's the one promised from long ago.

[19 : 49] Here's the one who's coming to save us, to be this glorious king as David was, to defeat the enemies as David did, to bring peace to God's people as David did. But what David did in one sense, in microcosm, in a small way, Jesus did in macrocosm, Jesus did for the world.

David did for Israel, that country, that small people, Christ did for the church, the people of his throughout the whole world. And in order to fulfill his destiny as David's descendant, in order for him to triumph over those enemies and to bring peace to the world and to deal with our past and bring forgiveness, of course, he had to die.

You can't be raised from the dead if you're not first dead, can you? None of us were raised from the dead this morning when we got out of bed. Few of us looked like we had been.

Few of us felt like we had been. But you've got to be dead to be raised. And so what Paul is saying, remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead, remember that he first died.

And that he's raising from the dead is the guarantee, the assurance to us that he has done everything necessary to deal with our past, to deal with our sin, to bring us forgiveness.

[21 : 20] Here's how Paul describes it earlier in one of his other letters, this time to the Christians in Rome. Jesus was delivered over to death, handed over to death, gave himself to die for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Justification is the Bible word for declared innocent, declared pardoned, set free, as it were, from the consequences and the guilt and the punishment that we deserve because of our rebellion against God.

Jesus was raised from the dead. When God raised Jesus from the dead, he was saying, I accept his sacrifice. I am pleased with what he's done on behalf of his people.

I have set my seal upon it and say that is the guarantee that what he did was good enough for God to make us right with God.

We remember today the sacrifice of men and women who died in war. Wars which were fought on our behalf, even if we weren't alive at the time.

[22 : 32] And from which we've received freedom and blessing. The sacrifice of Jesus was the only price that God would accept for your forgiveness and mine.

To make us right with him. To deal with the past. To remove it. To no longer have it as the axe hanging over our head.

To no longer have that sense of guilt and shame and anxiety and fear of what will happen when we stand before God. No matter what life throws at us, dear friends.

No matter what pressures are upon us. No matter how bad we feel. The resurrection of Jesus assures us that today God has accepted us. That we are forgiven.

And we are loved by him once and for all and forever. Now don't we need to remind ourselves of that, don't we? We need to be reminded of that wonderful joy when the devil comes and tells us, you're an awful Christian and a terrible sinner.

[23 : 36] And how on earth can God possibly allow you into heaven? How can you call yourself a Christian? I can call myself a Christian because Jesus died and was risen.

And he lives. And my sin has been dealt with. So there's a past, isn't there? We remember with past. But also, wonderfully, Paul is saying to Timothy this, I believe.

Because Jesus is raised from the dead, we have new life today. Our past is dealt with. But our present as well is affected. A Christian is someone who not only believes that Jesus has been raised from the dead.

Not only believes that the historical event which is recorded, not only through the four eyewitnesses which are the Gospels, but through other testimonies of those who are not Christians.

The reality of Jesus being risen from the dead is not something that we believe, but we've experienced. We've experienced for ourselves. That's the Gospel that Paul and Timothy preached and that we've come to believe.

[24 : 43] Notice that. Go back just in a chapter to 2 Timothy 1 and chapter 10. The second part of chapter 10. Christ Jesus who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

Life and immortality to light. When anyone becomes to Jesus Christ, when anybody comes to him and puts their faith in him, turning away from their sin, they experience a resurrection in their souls, in their spirits.

We are given new life. It's what Jesus promised. Listen to Jesus' words when he spoke to the people in John chapter 5. Truly, very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, that's God himself, has eternal life and will not be judged, but has crossed over from death to life.

Here's Paul, a bit later on in one of his letters to the church at Ephesus. But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ.

Even when we were dead in our sin, it is by grace you have been saved. See, just as when Jesus died upon the cross, in one sense we were united with him in his death, because he died for our sin, we were one with him in that experience.

[26 : 15] We died to sin when Jesus died to sin. So when he rose again to life, we rose again to life as well. It's not just theoretical. It's not just pie in the sky.

It's not just something ethereal that we sort of vaguely think about. It's something solid and experienced in the life of every believer. Resurrection life.

Sin has killed the soul, the spirit, cut us off from God, but Christ has made us alive to God and in relationship with him.

We're united with Jesus. Just as Jesus used the example, didn't he, of the vine and the branches, just as a branch of a tree is united and receives life from the trunk of the tree, so we are one and united with Jesus.

Just as the arm is connected to the body and is one with the body, so we are one with Christ, the head of the body. The resurrection life of Jesus is ours.

[27 : 23] Flows in you and in me by a spiritual union. That's why God, that's why Paul could say to Timothy in chapter 1 verse 7, the spirit of, the spirit God gave us is power, love, self-discipline.

There's only been an imparting of the very spirit of God himself, the spirit of Christ himself has come into and connected with us so that we now have power, love and self-discipline.

That's why he says there at the beginning of the chapter, 2.1, then, my son, be strong in the grace that's in Christ Jesus. That grace which gives us strength, God's blessing as it were, God's favor, God's love is in Christ and we are in Christ.

We're strengthened by that. Timothy, along with every single one of us, with every Christian has strength and power.

The sort of power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Pretty tremendous power. Not a couple of double A bolt batteries.

[28 : 34] Not even a car battery. Not even a turbine generator. Not even a great windmill out at sea at Redco. The power that raises the dead is the power that lives within you and me today and every day.

So what on earth can the world throw at us? So what on earth pressure and power can break us? We may feel it.

We may feel that we are cracking. We may feel that we're crumbling. We may feel that we're under. But we are sustained by and we need to remember that we have the power of Jesus Christ raised from the dead.

Doesn't mean that we don't feel weak. Of course we feel weak because it's not our own natural strength. But our strength is in Christ. And we are in Christ. And Christ is in us. So Paul says to Timothy Be strong in the Lord.

Because the strength of Christ risen from the dead is in you. So it's the present. It's the past. We remember the past. We remember things concerning the present, don't we? We remember to put the oven on for our dinner.

[29 : 47] We remember to do things that affect us in the present. We remember who we are, of course. Remember who we're married to. Remember who our children are. Who are the children of?

These are things that we remember all the time and they affect our lives now. So it is with who we are in Christ. We are, if we are Christ, if we are in him, then we are a resurrection people. And thirdly, it seems to me that we are to remember in a future way.

Because Jesus is raised from the dead, we shall live forever. Isn't that great? We shall live forever because Christ is raised.

Notice that Christ was raised from the dead. He didn't die again several years later. The people that he raised, people like Lazarus and the widow of Nain's son and Jairus' daughter, those people that he raised to life, they ultimately went on to die because it was simply a physical life that he gave them.

But we have been given immortal life, eternal life. We read that there, didn't we? In chapter 1 and verse 10. Christ Jesus who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality.

[30 : 58] The word immortal and immortality means never dying, ever living. It's come through the gospel. In other words, when this present earthly life that we live is over and the reality is that just as those men and women who've gone before us died, we too must physically die.

But the reality, the truth, the promise, the guarantee for the resurrection of Jesus is this, is that though we shall physically die, we shall be raised to life forevermore.

We shall be raised from the dead. Jesus is raised from the dead. He lives now. Now, it's something more of his resurrection life is for us to come.

We've received of it, we enjoy it, we experience it, but there's more to come, there's more to be received. There's another resurrection to take place. Paul talks about it in that wonderful chapter of 1 Corinthians 15 which is all about resurrection and he talks about the end.

Listen, he says, I tell you a mystery. In other words, something that's been hidden but now it's been revealed. Something wonderful that people didn't realize and understand but I'm going to tell you this secret.

[32 : 13] We will not all die. He uses the word sleep because for the Christian, death is simply sleep. It's as dangerous to the Christian as sleeping because it's momentary, temporary.

We will not all die, we will not all sleep but we will all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. The trumpet will sound.

The dead will be raised imperishable and we will be changed. In other words, the dead will be raised never to die, never to get old again, never to become weary and creaky and groany, a bit grumpy again.

It's not an empty dream. It's not some vague floating on the cloud sort of thoughts about death. It's not the sad, vain hope that many people have.

Oh well, he's gone to a better place. For the Christian, it is certain and sure and real. Just as real as Jesus dying and rising again.

[33 : 19] Just as real as he lives forevermore. Just as real shall we be raised again in resurrection bodies to live forever with the Lord. We have a future hope, dear friends.

Remember those words, I think, they're part of a poem or something from the First World War. When you go back home, tell them, for your tomorrow we gave our today. Dear friends, we have a future.

We have a future. We have an eternity. We have a future. Yes, this life in which we live is real and it's important and how we live it and how we seek to serve and follow Christ is vital and there's consequences now.

But dear friends, this is not all there is. This is not the end. Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead because you're going to be raised from the dead too.

And in that same day when the Lord Jesus Christ raises the dead, the world that we know will change. There'll be no more wars and there will be peace.

[34 : 40] There will be no more suffering. There will be no more pain. Here's how Paul, as he preaches to the people of Athens, describes what's going to happen and God's view of things.

He says, in the past, God overlooked ignorance. That was ignorance towards God and to who he is and what he's done for us. But now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

That's to turn from our sins and to turn back to God. For God has set a day. In other words, there's a day in God's calendar. There's a day in his app that says, when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed.

He has given proof to this to all men by raising him from the dead. The reality that this world is not going to last for eternity, the reality that there is a day of judgment coming when Christ will return and we shall be raised, the reality and the certainty of what will happen when men and women, every single one of us, will stand before the God who is the judge of all and because of our lives and how we have dealt with Christ will either be sent to everlasting sorrow and grief or brought into everlasting joy and peace.

the assurance and the definiteness of that day is the reality that Jesus has been raised from the dead. Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead.

[36 : 20] The very best act of remembrance for all of us. Whatever circumstances we're in, let me close simply by saying again, dear friends, have you remembered Jesus Christ raised from the dead, descended of David?

Have you in your mind set your faith and trust upon him because only he can deal with your past and assure you that your sins are forgiven? Only he can give you resurrection life to live for him in this present day and only he will raise you to life eternally when he comes again.

But he's going to do it. God has commanded all people to repent for the day of judgment must come.