

Unashamedly Embracing the Gospel

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[0 : 00] Amen. Well, good evening, everyone. It's good to see you all. It's great to be here and open up God's Word this evening. And we're in 2 Timothy. 2 Timothy. Now, a helpful tip I was found with the books beginning with T in the Bible are all together. That's something I learned and it's very helpful. So they're all together. The rest of the Bible is not alphabetical, but it's always good to find them. So Thessalonians, the two Thessalonians, the two Timothys and the two Tituses.

So anyway, there's a bit of trivia for you, but it might help you in the future. But please do keep it open. And I'll talk a bit later on why it's so important to have the Bible in front of you as you're hearing from it.

So we're in 2 Timothy and it is easy to know that it's Paul writing to Timothy. Okay. So Paul, we're in AD 66 or 67. He is in Rome, which I can kind of see that. So Rome right up the top, the center of the Roman Empire is the place to be, is the heart of that massive empire at the time.

Now, Paul, he is in his second imprisonment. He knows that he is coming to the end of his life.

Whether he's been told that or he's under an execution order, we're not really too sure.

But the way that he talks, he knows that his life is going to end soon. That's what's happening in the context of this letter. And he knows that his execution is coming and he tells Timothy about it. And he's writing to this guy called Timothy.

[1 : 35] Now, Timothy, he was in Ephesus. Now, that is sort of central there towards the right, if you can see that. Now, Ephesus, this was one of the churches that Paul had set up on one of his previous missionary journeys.

And Timothy there is described as he is leading the flock. He is in charge of that church and he is helping it grow in its infancy, in its early stages.

Now, the first letter of Timothy, it's all about good order in the church, how to run the church. And it's also addressing the teaching that is going on. And essentially here, 2 Timothy, well, that is Paul's final words, in a sense.

Essentially, in this letter, he is saying to Timothy to preach the truth that I have taught and also that I have lived by. And this is our second in the series. I got Sam to read the whole thing because it really flows nicely together.

And I really hope to build on what Craig took us through in the first seven verses last time. But as a bit of a catch-up, Craig, he took us through the fact that God equips the family of faith with the Holy Spirit.

[2 : 50] And the Holy Spirit, he enables them to pass on this baton of the gospel. That is our heading for this series. And the encouragement is to use your God-given gifts.

Use your God-given gifts to see the kingdom of God grow. And the sort of end bit there that Craig took us through was that Timothy is given his commission to serve in the boldness of the Spirit.

And we have these three things. We have power, love, and self-discipline. Power being the ability to accomplish. Love being the willing love of others.

And self-discipline being a disciplined mind. And it is off that that we hope to springboard into this passage that we are studying tonight, which is verse 8 to verse 18.

And tonight we'll see that when the heat is on, when things get difficult, people basically go two ways. They go towards gospel ministry or they go away from it.

[3 : 50] And really this passage, hopefully by the end, is saying to us that we should unashamedly join that costly mission, which is passing on of the gospel.

And we can do so with the help of the Spirit. Our plan tonight, we're going to look at it with three headings, which is first of all, being unashamed of the gospel.

Second of all, staying true to the gospel. And lastly, living according to the gospel. So that's our plan for tonight. But you know, we were coming down, we were up at Corey's parents up north today. And we were driving down and they dropped me off here and then they went home. And Santa said, why have you got to go? I said, and Corey said, oh, well, you know, dad's preaching at church tonight.

She said, oh, okay. Tell them all about Jesus. So, you know, if we get to the end of tonight and we've learned a wee bit more about Jesus, then you know what? That's mission accomplished, isn't it?

[4 : 51] So, here's a bit of an illustration to get us thinking. I don't know if you've heard of the term glory hunters. So it's people that maybe, the fact that Man City is up there has nothing to do with it.

But it's, you know, it's maybe people that follow one. It's not necessarily sport. It could be anything. You know, they follow something because it is successful, because it is popular in and of itself. Now, you take Man City as an example.

They used to kind of be this low-down team that weren't particularly good, and I'm sure they had a faithful following. But as soon as they got all the money and they got all the players and they started winning, suddenly, and you mainly see it with children, is the children suddenly start wearing the Man City shirts.

They love the popularity of it. They love the fact, they all go towards it, don't they? Oh, they're successful. It's attractive. They want to be seen as part of that thing.

But, you know, sport or anything else in life, it's good and it's bad. You know, there's good times and there's bad times. But, you know, true followers of a club or a football team or whatever it might be, they go through the thick and the thin.

[6 : 01] You take the other side of the city there, Man United. They are terrible at the moment. I would traditionally be a Man United fan, and they are terrible. But, you know, it's when a true fan would really go with that, and they still identify as a Man United fan.

They don't abandon ship. They go with it. And, you know, we'll see tonight that we're called to be unashamed of the gospel. If we claim the gospel as our own, then we are to be followers of the Lord Jesus in the good times and in the bad.

So that takes us to our first section, being unashamed of the gospel, which we see in verse 8 to 12. So, Timothy, he's got his commission from Paul, and Paul exhorts him to be unashamed of the gospel.

And we have that so in verse 8, the very first word. And that's part of the reason I got Sam to read the first bit, because it really is talking about what has gone before. Timothy's commission in the Spirit, the Spirit gives ability, gives that willing love, gives that disciplined mind, in order that Paul's commission is, Timothy's commission is possible.

So verse 8 says, So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me, his prisoner. Rather, join with me in the suffering for the gospel by the power of God.

[7 : 27] Don't be ashamed of the gospel that Paul preached. And, you know, potentially it's a slight aside, but I think it's important to see that Paul describes himself here as a prisoner of the Lord.

Now, surely you think, well, he's a prisoner of Rome. It's the Romans that have locked him up, right? And that is true. He is a prisoner of Rome, but he sees himself as a prisoner of the Lord. He sees his situation as being so much in the part of God's will that he is, in fact, there by the Lord's choice, not by the Romans' choice.

And that's powerful. It was really God's will, and Paul totally accepted that. He had totally accepted God's will in that difficult situation.

And off the back of that, he says to Timothy, Join with me in suffering for the gospel. Paul was suffering, and he says, Join with me in the suffering.

You know, we're all glad to join the blessings, the good times, aren't we? We've thought about that already. You know, when it comes to the gospel, when it comes to the work of God, potentially we're glad to join in the work itself.

[8 : 43] We'll be happy to get involved. I'm sure we'll be glad to join in with the blessings of gospel work, of the Lord's work. Certainly the reward, we'll take the reward for doing God's work.

But are we willing to join in the suffering that comes with God's work? You know, we can be encouraged that it is only possible to endure this suffering in God's work by the power of God, it says.

By the power of God. So verse 8, it's telling us to be courageous. And then it goes on to say why we can be courageous in verses 9 to 12.

And this here is an amazing laying out of the gospel, of the message that we have to share. Verse 9, he has saved us and called us to a holy life, not because of anything we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace.

This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. Mind blown. If you take time to read that verse again, it's amazing.

[9 : 58] The truth of these things. You know, it says that we have been saved from, and that is really important. We have been saved from our sinful position. The position of being helpless before God, of being guilty.

We have been saved from that. But you know, we have also been called to a holy life. It is not one thing or another.

And we will go on and see here what it talks about that holy life is all about. What that looks like. Telling others. Living out that life.

And suffering. You know, we are not just saved. If we are saved, then we are not just saved, and then we just are idle. We're sitting around waiting for heaven.

That is not what the Bible says. In fact, the Bible would say that that is a wrong thing to be doing. We are saved from, but then called to this holy life. We are called to work.

[10 : 59] And you know, thankfully here, it says not because of anything that we have done comes this salvation and this calling. And a good job. Because if it was on something that we had done, then it would fail, wouldn't it?

It would be on an imperfect foundation. It wouldn't be good enough. But thankfully, it is not because of anything we have done. But as verse 9 tells us, but because of his own purpose and grace.

This grace was given us before the beginning of time. Here we have the totally unmerited grace of the Bible. If you want to look at that further this week, go and look at Ephesians chapter 1 to 3.

You know, in past eternity, God determined the wonderful plan of salvation to save guilty people. You and I. He did this through the substitutionary work of Jesus.

He decided to offer eternal life to as many who would accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The Lord Jesus, he came down.

[12 : 08] That was always the plan. He lived that perfect life. And he bore the suffering that we deserved on that cross. You know, that wasn't the end.

He rose again to life. The resurrection. Proving that he was who he said that he was. Proving that he was truly God.

And that he had taken our sins away. Verse 10. But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

What a privilege it is to live in this day. This day when we can look back and we can see the truths of these things. We know them as history. At one point, these things were hidden from the world. Christ had not yet come. But Christ, he has revealed the truths of these things. He has reversed that curse of sin and death.

[13 : 17] And as it says, he has brought life. You know, it talks about here that Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death.

You know, I don't want to get that wrong here. Christ in his work, maybe a better word would be that he annulled death. Because we might read that and think, well, we still die.

People still die. What's that saying? You know, Christ rendered death ineffective. Sometimes we use the phrase that has lost its sting.

Because death cannot hold us anymore. Just as Christ was resurrected, so will we be if we trust in him. Death has no hold upon us if we are in Christ.

He has annulled death. And in doing so, he brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, as verse 10 finishes.

[14 : 19] That eternal union of soul with God. Our resurrection is guaranteed in him. These things have been brought to light through the gospel, through the good news that we can read about in God's word.

That is the good news that we have. And in verse 11, Paul describes himself. He says, And of this gospel, I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.

You know, the fact of the matter is, is that we are too. If we are saved, if we are a Christian, then we are also called to tell others. And Craig, very helpfully last time, he took us through the three ways that this is done.

And I have his slide that I've unashamedly copied from last week that he sent me. But we have evangelism. So we have telling those who do not know the Lord Jesus.

Reaching the lost. That is one way that we are appointed to tell others. Paul describes it of being a herald. Then we have discipleship.

[15:33] So the development of faith. Developing those who do know the Lord Jesus as their Savior. But developing their faith. Training them. And the last one is training.

It is developing that next generation of leaders. Like Paul did with Timothy and Titus and others. I think that's a very helpful way to look at this.

Paul himself describes himself as a herald, an apostle, and a teacher. And it's because of these things, that is why Paul, he says in verse 12, that is why he is suffering as he is.

And he is also willing to suffer as he is. Why? Because he knows the gospel that he is suffering for. He knows why. You know, I can't read that verse without thinking of the old hymn.

I know whom I have believed. And I'm persuaded that he is able to keep those that I've committed unto him until that day.

[16:36] It's a great truth, that verse. Verse 12. But Paul knows in whom he has trusted. Not what, but whom he has believed in the person of the Lord Jesus.

He is convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him to that day. Paul, in that language that he uses, he is assured completely of his salvation until that day.

Paul, he uses that phrase, that day, quite often. It's talking about the judgment seat of Christ. That day in a future time after the Lord Jesus has returned. Where Christians will be judged for their work on the earth.

Things that they have done or haven't done for God. He is convinced of the safety he has in God.

But the more we learn, the more that we deepen our relationship with God, then the more willing we will be to serve.

And that means that when the tough times come, the more willing we will be to endure. But here we really see that we are in God's hands.

[17:51] And if we are saved, then we cannot be taken out of his hand. No matter what life throws at us. And Paul is not saying here, as he knows, as we can read, he did not have an easy life.

He suffered terribly. So it doesn't mean that we won't suffer in life. It does mean that our salvation is secure in him. Paul, he is the ultimate example of being unashamed of the gospel and living out the consequences of it.

So that's us seen being unashamed of the gospel. And that takes us to our second heading, which is stay true to the gospel.

So Paul, having laid out the truth of the gospel, he exhorts Timothy not to deviate from it at all. I don't know if you've probably been a while.

You ever played Chinese whispers? I probably shouldn't call it that nowadays. It should probably be something. I don't know why it's called that. But the girls now, so I've got two daughters, if anyone doesn't know, but they love to play this game.

[18:57] So if we're sitting waiting for dinner or something, can I play Chinese whispers? So it normally starts with Maggie, which is difficult, because she can't talk that well. But she'll whisper something to Santa. Santa will whisper something to me, and then I have to say it out loud.

And no matter what I end up saying, one, it is wrong, and two, it's funny. Just because, you know, the age that they're at. But, you know, it's an interesting game, isn't it? But if we did this in this room and we tried our best, the chances are we would get to the end, and it just wouldn't be the same as it started.

Here Paul is saying to Timothy, do not deviate at all from the gospel that was preached to you.

Verse 13, it says, what you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

Paul is saying, follow my example. You know, Paul, he would have passed on the gospel to Timothy, the good news of the Lord Jesus.

And interestingly, in this day, they were so much better at remembering things and passing them on than we are in our culture today. There was oral stories passed down from generation to generation

to generation that stayed the same.

[20 : 16] They were almost trained in it. But, you know, we have the Bible in its written form. And in a sense, it is therefore easier to stick to it. You know, we are called, and Timothy is called here, to keep on speaking the truth in faith.

And what that means is with dependence on God, trusting in God. We're also to do so in love. Yes, the love of God, but also to the love of others, both those who are fellow believers and those who are not.

You know, this is the key to these three things that we thought about earlier, evangelism, discipleship, and training. It isn't just what we say. It isn't just the content.

It is how we say it. It is the motivation behind our words. Paul, he has many correctional letters in the Bible.

He has many letters where he is calling people out, individuals or churches, saying, you are doing things wrong. You need to do it this way. You know, over the years, there's been many a right word said, but with the wrong motivation or said in the wrong way.

[21 : 32] These things can be extremely damaging, whether to individuals or to groups of people. And that challenge then for us is, what is our motivation when speaking?

It's a massive challenge to me standing up here. What is my motivation when I come to teach from God's word? But it comes down to that individual level as well of when we are speaking to others, when we are trying to challenge or encourage or even just in our home groups.

You know, what is our motivation? Are our words said with love and with the right motivations behind them? So that's verse 13.

In verse 14, Paul carries on and says, guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you. Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Don't edit the gospel. Don't twist it. We have that language of guard twice. You know, the language is clear. Later on in this letter, and it's not a long one, the false teachers, they are called out for twisting the gospel, for twisting what Paul had preached for their own benefit, for the good of themselves, because it suited them.

[22 : 52] You know, this is such a threat. It wasn't just a threat for the early church. It's such a threat in this day that we live in now. False information. People saying things that sounds about right, but it just isn't.

And that is why I encourage you, and I'm glad that Sam said it as well, to keep your Bibles open. Many people that come up to the front and speak at Brunswick will encourage you to do so.

Please have your head in your Bible. Challenge what you are hearing. And it's not to be in a way that you're trying to catch people out or look for mistakes, but it's just fact-checking.

It's checking that what you're hearing goes along with what your knowledge of the Bible and what the rest of the Bible says in its completeness. Don't be led astray.

Keep studying things for yourself. But you know, you're not alone in this. Yes, we can encourage each other, and we can challenge each other and discuss these things with one another.

[23 : 58] Ask questions. You know, the encouragement is that as it finishes in verse 14, we have the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Help us discern what is good and what is true and what is right. It's not in our own strength, once again. It is the only way that we can do it. But you know, don't edit the gospel and don't take other people at face value that may be doing the same.

Be aware of false teachers, and we'll see that more as a letter develops. So our challenge from this section is to stay true to the gospel. Speak the truth of the gospel with the right heart and with the help of the Spirit.

And that leaves us to our final section, which is living according to the gospel, which is the last three verses there.

So Paul, he finishes with this juxtaposition of these two different groups of people, the faithful and the faithless. I'm not going to get you to do it, although I might wake everyone up a little bit, but it's like that kids game where you have two options.

[25 : 12] You all stand in the middle of the room and you say, right, you know, is an apple a fruit or a vegetable? Fruit's over here, vegetable's over there, and everyone runs.

And it's great when no one knows and you get a bit of running back and forward, but eventually people have to decide. And that's a wee bit of what we have here. We have these two total

contrasts of people described.

So verse 15, what it's saying is that everyone has deserted Paul. Everyone has deserted Paul because of their fear of the Romans. Paul, this great leader, he has been taken away, he's been locked up, he's been imprisoned.

He is facing persecution, he is facing death, and no one wants anything to do with him. That's what he is saying. And these two people, and Sam did a great job of pronouncing their names, and I'm not going to try, but they are particularly mentioned.

And what is interesting about them is that we know absolutely nothing else about them. It's the only time they're mentioned. They are not described elsewhere about who they are, what they did. You know, we know absolutely nothing of them.

[26 : 20] But some, I read this, this is not my quote. I would love to take credit for it, but it isn't. But I read someone that said this, they couldn't help their ugly names, but they could have helped their ugly character.

They had really ugly characters. They totally abandoned Paul. We don't know the situation, but they were particularly called out for their faithlessness.

When the going got tough, they just got out of there. You know, Paul's friends and colleagues in the gospel, they left him in his chains.

And if you think of the world of celebrity and fame nowadays, you know, we live in a cancel culture, don't we? In a worldly sense, if someone is popular, if they're at the height of fame, of their profession, all it takes is one thing, and they'll just be dragged straight back down.

You think of, you know, various people, I'm not giving an example, but you think of various people who have just been at that height, but then something has switched, and society's opinion of them just drags them away.

[27 : 28] And they are just suddenly, no one wants anything to do with them, and everyone else is off to the next thing or the next person. And you know, if we are true to the gospel, then we will have chains.

Not physical chains, we are unlikely to end up in prison. We are unlikely to have to die for the gospel in this country. But you know what? Our chains, it may well be unpopularity.

It may well be poverty. It may well be that we suffer physically on this earth. Our friends may well leave us if we have chains of the gospel.

But you know, the encouragement is 16 to 18. And once again, we have this man that Sam pronounced very well, and he was very loyal. Despite the threats, despite that he will have known the difficulties that Paul was facing, he ran right towards it.

You know, even being associated with Paul at this point could have brought a rest. It could have ended up being executed alongside him because you were associated with Paul.

[28 : 43] But this man, he was unashamed in its entirety. He went to the riskiest place to find the most wanted man to help him and support him and encourage him in his godly work.

And you know, as I was thinking about this, that he went, he searched him out, he found him, he would have had to have gone to Rome and asked around, where's Paul? Where are they keeping him? You know, I was just really thought about the contrast of this man and Peter, the disciple in the Bible.

When the Lord Jesus was arrested, we all know the story, I'm sure, but Peter, he went to that courtyard. He wanted to be near Jesus. He wanted to see what was going on, but he denied him three times.

You could imagine this man here, I'll give it a go, on a ciphers, he would have been asking, where's Paul? I want to see him. Can I go and see him? Let me in. I want to have my, you know, my five minutes with him.

But Peter, no. Peter didn't do it. Peter denied him. He was too scared of what the people would do to him. He was too scared of that worldly cost.

[29 : 52] But you know, because of this man's faith, Paul wishes him a reward on the, once again, that day, that judgment day.

That's what that word mercy really means. It's really a reward from the Lord on that judgment day. What an example this man is here of being unashamed of everything and anything to do with the gospel of Christ.

We might not face arrest. We might not face death, but we may well face embarrassment. We might be embarrassed, potentially, sharing the gospel.

We might be outcast socially from various groups left out of things, left out of friendship groups because of our faith.

You know, are we willing to push on for the gospel? Are we willing to suffer these things regardless? Live according to the gospel.

[30 : 59] Just to sum up before we finish. So we saw that Paul, he exhorted Timothy to be unashamed of the gospel through the power of the Spirit. He laid out in that middle section there that marvelous truth that we have to protect, to keep the same, and also to preach, to tell others about.

And we have our gospel, so let's live it out. Live out the consequences of living that holy life that we have been called to. We have been saved from and called to this holy life.

You know, next time, as we go into chapter 2 and as we go through 2 Timothy, it's great to keep reading the whole thing because we need to remember it was written in one, it was to be read as one. The next time we'll see that Jesus' grace is a source of great power and it helps us to endure for a greater good.

So let me just pray as we close and then I think Simon will come back up for another hymn. Come on, Father, we just thank you so much for your word.

We thank you for the truth that we can find in it. We thank you for the marvelous truth of the gospel. We thank you that before time even began that the salvation plan was hatched, that the Lord Jesus would come and he would live that perfect life, that he would proclaim who he was and prove it by his death and resurrection we thank you that we can be saved because of that glorious work and we look forward to that day that we will be united in heaven and that we will live forever praising the one who has done everything for us.

[32 : 52] So we do just ask that you will help us on this earth, help us to work hard for the gospel, that holy life we've been called to. We ask for your help as we do dearly need it.

We thank you for the Holy Spirit who helps us in all these things. Help us to endure even in the difficult situations and the persecution and the suffering. We do just pray for our brothers and sisters around the world that suffer in ways that we will never suffer and we do just ask your blessing and help on them where they are and in the situations that they are in.

So we just thank you for your word and we do just pray that everything from you will be remembered and everything from me will be forgotten about and we do just ask that as we think on these things this week that you will continue to work in our hearts and to convict us and challenge us of what you want to say to each individual here in this room.

So we just thank you for this time and we pray for it in the wonderful name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.