

## *Suffering for Those Who Are Not Saved*

### 2 Timothy 2:10

There was a certain king whose son was sent upon an errand to a far country, and when he came into that country, although he was the lawful prince of it, he found that the citizens would not acknowledge him. They mocked at him, jeered at him, and took him and set him in the pillory [the stocks], and there they scoffed at him and pelted him with filth. Now, there was one in that country who knew the prince, and he alone stood up for him when all the mob was in tumult raging against him. And when they set him on high as an object of scorn, this man stood side by side with him to wipe the filth from that dear royal face; and when from cruel hands missiles in scorn were thrown, this man took his full share; and whenever he could he thrust himself before the prince to ward off the blows from him if possible, and to bear the scorn instead of him. Now it came to pass that after awhile the prince went on his way, and in due season the man who had been the prince's friend was called to the king's palace. And on a day when all the princes of the court were around, and the peers and nobles of the land were sitting in their places, the king came to his throne and he called for that man, and he said, "Make way, princes and nobles! Make way! Here is a man more noble than you all, for he stood boldly forth with my son when he was scorned and scoffed at! Make way, I say, each one of you, for he shall sit at my right hand with my own son. As he took a share of his scorn, he shall now take a share of his honor." And there sat princes and nobles who wished that they had been there—they now envied the man who had been privileged to endure scorn and scoffing for the prince's sake! You need not that I interpret the parable. May you make angels envious of you, if envy can ever pierce their holy minds. You can submit for Christ's sake to sufferings which it is not possible for seraphim or cherubim to endure.<sup>1</sup>

--C. H. Spurgeon

Last week we focused 2 Timothy 2:8-9, and today we will tackle verse 10 **in greater depth**. Let us, however, read from the beginning of the chapter so we have a background for verse 10.

#### 2 Timothy 2:1-10 NAS:

<sup>1</sup> *You therefore, my son, **be strong** in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

<sup>2</sup> *The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, **entrust these to faithful men** who will be able to teach others also.*

<sup>3</sup> ***Suffer hardship with me**, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*

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<sup>1</sup> Tan, Paul Lee: *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: A Treasury of Illustrations, Anecdotes, Facts and Quotations for Pastors, Teachers and Christian Workers*. Garland TX: Bible Communications, 1996, ©1979. Brackets added.

<sup>4</sup> *No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.*

<sup>5</sup> *Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.*

<sup>6</sup> *The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.*

<sup>7</sup> *Consider what I say, for **the Lord will give you understanding in everything.***

<sup>8</sup> **Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,**

<sup>9</sup> **for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.**

<sup>10</sup> **For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.**

Paul is suffering as a bound criminal in prison and yet he says, *"I bravely endure, remain and hold out under every kind of condition, persevere under suffering, because the Word of God will never be silenced."* Because the Word of God is not bound, Paul is willing to endure all kinds of suffering. **He knows** God's message will reach those to whom Paul delivers it, either by the written word as he is doing here with Timothy, or by those with whom he speaks while in prison. Then, after hearing the truth about salvation and eternal life, the Holy Spirit of God will wait for **individuals** to receive and believe the Gospel. For those who do believe and confess their sin, the Holy Spirit will by the grace of God grant those folks forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life in Heaven. But remember this confession of sin and faith in Christ must be sincere. If you do not really believe it, salvation will not take place and the Holy Spirit will not become part of you. .

*"The elect"* or *"those who are chosen"* are not, as Calvin taught, a fixed number of people whose names were written on a list before God even created Adam or Eve, to whom God would grant salvation and eternal life in Heaven. The people who were not on that list were destined for Hell according to those who believe in **predestination**. That would fly in the face of everything we know God to be, and that He reveals about Himself throughout Scripture. Do you think Christ would reveal in 2 Peter 3:9 that He desired for everyone to be saved, and then turn around and save only a predetermined few?

2 Peter 3:9 NAS:

<sup>9</sup> *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

God is not a deceiver. That is Satan's way of doing business. **If God says He wants everyone to be saved, then He is somehow going to make it possible for everyone to be saved. Notice we are not saying that everyone will be saved. Unfortunately** there are going to be plenty of foolish people who refuse the gift.

Remember, *"God is love."* There can simply be no place in Heaven for anyone who does not love God and **who** has refused His free gift of salvation.

*“Both Christians and unbelievers alike receive the kindness of God leading them away from destruction,”<sup>2</sup> but all of them must make their calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10). They must exercise their free choice to accept or reject what God is offering. Without this free choice how could a person express a true faith? If there was no free choice then the doctrine of predestination might have some validity. God would just stand there and say, “You five people are going to love Me, so get on into Heaven and love and worship me always. The two of you were designed and made by the plan of God just like these five before you, but I didn’t include you on the ‘saved’ list, so get out of my sight. The elevator to Hell is just over there.”*

We hold to the belief that the **Doctrine of Predestination** has been misinterpreted and some interpreters may have had the best of intentions to honor the Lord by believing this doctrine, but we cannot see where it stands up to a complete understanding of Scripture as an entire work.

God’s character can be found throughout Scripture. For example, Exodus 34:5-7 (NLT):

<sup>5</sup> *Then the LORD came down in a cloud and stood there with him; and he called out his own name, Yahweh.*

<sup>6</sup> *The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, “Yahweh! The LORD! The God of **compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.***

<sup>7</sup> ***I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations.** I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty.*

2 Peter 1:1-15 NAS:

<sup>1</sup> *Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, **by the righteousness** of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:*

<sup>2</sup> *Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;*

<sup>3</sup> *seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge **of Him who called us** by His own glory and excellence.*

<sup>4</sup> *For by these **He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises**, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*

Let us also read verses three and four from *The New Living Translation* for a little further clarification of Paul’s meaning.

2 Peter 1:3-4 NLT:

<sup>3</sup> *By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.*

<sup>2</sup> Hughes, Robert B. ; Laney, J. Carl ; Hughes, Robert B.: *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 2001 (The Tyndale Reference Library), S. 700. See also Romans 2:4 and Matthew 5:45.

<sup>4</sup> **And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises.** *These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.*

Now we can return to the NAS translation:

<sup>5</sup> Now **for this very reason** also, **applying all diligence, in your faith** supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,

<sup>6</sup> and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,

<sup>7</sup> and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

<sup>8</sup> **For if these qualities are yours and are increasing,** they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>9</sup> **For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.**

<sup>10</sup> *Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;*

<sup>11</sup> *for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.*

<sup>12</sup> *Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you.*

<sup>13</sup> *I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,*

<sup>14</sup> *knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.*

<sup>15</sup> *And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.*

R.C. H. Lenski has this to say:

"The entire Holy Trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, directs all men to Christ, as the Book of Life, in whom they should seek the eternal election of the Father.' 'They should hear Christ, who is the Book of Life and God's eternal election of all God's children to eternal life: He testifies to all men without distinction that it is God's will 'that **all men should come to him,** who labor and are heavy laden with sin, in order that he may give them rest and save them, Matthew 11:28'<sup>3</sup>

Matthew 11:28 NLT:

<sup>28</sup> *Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy*

<sup>3</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *Lenski New Testament Commentary – The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 785-792.

*burdens, and I will give you rest.*

Lenski also encourages us to consider the subject of election (or predestination) in connection with the thoughts in 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15.<sup>4</sup>

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 NAS:

<sup>13</sup> *But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because **God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.***

<sup>14</sup> *It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

<sup>15</sup> *So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.*

The Greek word rendered “*from the beginning*” also has the sense of “*the firstfruits.*” That suggests that the word does not necessarily mean “*from the beginning of time*” but rather it suggests that it is speaking of “*the first who would believe.*” Again for clarification let us look at *The New Living Translation.*

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 NLT:

<sup>13</sup> *As for us, we can't help but thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are always thankful that God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation—a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and through your belief in the truth.*

<sup>14</sup> *He called you to salvation when we told you the Good News; now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

God's call to salvation came through the Gospel message to everyone. They had to hear it before they could believe. Back in chapter one of 2 Timothy, Paul wrote this:

2 Timothy 1:9-11 NLT:

<sup>9</sup> *For **God saved us** and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but **because that was his plan** from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus.*

<sup>10</sup> *And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of death and **illuminated the way to life and immortality** through the Good News.*

<sup>11</sup> *And God chose me to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of this Good News.*

Romans 10:17 NAS:

<sup>17</sup> *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

Just one more passage and we will rest our case on this issue of predestination. John 3:16 is

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

considered to be the most quoted verse in the Bible. Let us look at it and some verses surrounding it.

John 3:14-21 NLT:

<sup>14</sup> **The Son of Man** must be lifted up,

<sup>15</sup> so that *everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.*

<sup>16</sup> “For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that *everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.*”

<sup>17</sup> God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

<sup>18</sup> **“There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged** for not believing in God’s one and only Son.

<sup>19</sup> And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.

<sup>20</sup> All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed.

<sup>21</sup> But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.”

Does this passage sound like God made His decision prior to creation and that no matter what you do He is going to see to it that your chances of getting to Heaven are nonexistent? Of course not.

So now we come back to Paul’s words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:10 about being willing to suffer hardship and to “*endure all things*” if it will help others come to the Lord in salvation. Are those words only regarding Paul? Are they for Timothy too? And the big question is, are those words for us today as well?

I believe so. Are you aware that 100 million Christians in various parts of the world are this day suffering persecution for their faith? They are being abused and imprisoned, yes, and even losing their lives.<sup>5</sup>

You may or may not have paid attention to a news story a couple weeks ago about a Pakistani cabinet member who was assassinated on March 2, 2011. But here are a few more details. Shahbaz Bhatti was the Minister of Minorities in Pakistan. As such he served on the Pakistani Cabinet and he was the only Christian to do so. Bhatti founded the Christian Liberation Front in 1985 worked hard for over twenty years opposing the blasphemy laws so that Pakistanis could have freedom of worship or at least for the government to be tolerant of Christians and their right to worship.<sup>6</sup> At one point Shahbaz Bhatti said “I am living for my community and suffering people, and I will die to defend their rights.” And that is just what he did.

“His death was the ultimate demonstration of Christian love... loving those who persecuted him. This is a fundamental challenge we face in our work – loving those who hate and want to destroy

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Open Doors USA. <http://www.opendoorsusa.org/persecuted-christians/>

<sup>6</sup> Source: Annabelle Bentham, “Shahbaz Bhatti obituary” at [guardian.co](http://guardian.co)

us, just like Jesus loved those who abused and killed him.”<sup>7</sup>

Or consider this pastor in India. He is a farmer who became a Christian twelve years ago. He now leads a house church of about 40 people. Here are some excerpts from a newspaper article in *Compass* about what happened to him.

Pastor Hari Shankar Ninama, 65, was praying in a home in Ambarunda, Peepal Khoont, Pratapgarh district for an 8-year-old boy’s recovery from illness on Feb. 1 when at least 10 Hindu extremists arrived on motorbikes and stormed in, he said. The assailants beat him and, putting him on one of their motorbikes, took him outside the village, where they stripped off his clothes and struck him.

They fled after stealing his watch, cell phone and a small amount of money.

Pastor Ninama told *Compass* that he was visiting his daughter Galadh Mangiya Bujh in Ambarunda village when her neighbor, Lasiya Bujh, requested he pray for his sick child. Ambarunda is . . . nearly 11 miles from Pastor Ninama’s home village of Aamliya.

“As I sat praying, a group of at least 10 men interrupted the prayer and started to beat me,” Pastor Ninama said.

Others were awaiting prayer at the home of the pastor’s daughter and witnessed the attack, including Paasu Dindore.

“They slapped Pastor Ninama’s daughter Galadh and beat the sick boy’s father too,” Dindore said. “I was there to request Pastor Ninama to pray for me, and as soon as the attack took place I fled from the spot and witnessed the event from a distance, hiding.” . . .

“Ninama’s daughter and son-in-law came to the police station requesting the police not to pursue the case,” he said, adding that police had not investigated. . . . the extremists have threatened to burn down the home of Pastor Ninama’s daughter if police prosecute. . .

Though feeble, however, Pastor Ninama told *Compass* that he will continue to evangelize in area villages and pray for people wherever and whenever called. . . .<sup>8</sup>

We in the United States may not at this time suffer like that, but we also may have to endure

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<sup>7</sup> Source: Open Doors USA

<sup>8</sup> Source: *Compass*, February 17, 2011. Reported in Open Doors USA <http://www.opendoorsusa.org/persecuted-christians/persecuted-christians-news/2011/February/Pastor-in-India-Traumatized-after-Attack>

scoffing and rejection at times because we are Christians. When it gets tough we can gain strength by remembering the following things.

- 1) God wants everyone in the world to hear the Gospel so that they can respond to His gift of salvation (John 3:16; Matthew 28:19-20). Both Bhatti and Pastor Ninama believed that.
- 2) As we learned last week, God's Word cannot be bound or chained. It cannot be restrained in any way. God's Word is powerful and will accomplish His purpose in people's lives (Hebrews 4:12; Isaiah 55:11).
- 3) Christ's suffering was the ultimate; none of us will ever suffer to the extent that He did. Yet He suffered willingly because of the "*joy set before Him*" (Hebrews 12:2).
- 4) Paul suffered willingly so that he might win the heavenly prize (Philippians 3:14).

So let us be willing to suffer if necessary so that others can hear the Gospel. And let us also keep our eyes on the prize: spending eternity in heaven with our wonderful Lord God.

The purpose of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Their Gospel had become Paul's life's purpose. No suffering was too great for him if it in any way supports this purpose, which includes his own salvation and that of so many others. Even though Paul has been dead for almost two thousand years, he still speaks to us and **to** all those who have lived since the time of Christ. Some have accepted that truth, some have not. Paul was placed in time by God to serve Him when and where he was needed. Because of Paul's willingness to obey, suffer, and persevere, many of us were led to the cross where Christ finished the work of salvation for both Paul and many of us. How, therefore, can we do any less?<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Op. Cit. Lenski