

ENDURANCE

2 Timothy 2:12

We want to begin this morning by reading the biography of a failure.

“A man who had less than three years of formal education failed in business in '31, was defeated for the legislature in '32, again failed in business in '33, was elected to the legislature in '34, defeated for speaker in '38, defeated for elector in '40, defeated for Congress in '43, elected to Congress in '46 and defeated in '48, defeated for Senate in '55, defeated for the Vice Presidential nomination in '56, defeated for the Senate in '58.
His name? Abraham Lincoln.”¹

Obviously defeat only pushed Abe to try again; he endured, he never gave up and, as you know, he ultimately became one of the greatest presidents of the United States. Today we will consider Paul's call to endurance. Since we have not been in 2 Timothy 2 for several weeks, let us begin by reading verses 1-14.

2 Timothy 2:1-14 (NLT):

¹ Timothy, my dear son, be strong **through the grace** that God gives you in Christ Jesus.

² You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

³ **Endure suffering** along with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus.

⁴ Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them.

⁵ And athletes cannot win the prize unless they follow the rules.

⁶ And hardworking farmers should be the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor.

⁷ Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you understand all these things.

⁸ Always remember that **Jesus Christ**, a descendant of King David, was raised from the dead. This is the Good News I preach.

⁹ And because I preach this Good News, I am suffering and have been chained like a criminal. But the word of God cannot be chained.

¹⁰ So I am willing to endure anything if it will bring salvation and eternal

¹ Michael P. Green, ed., “Perseverance,” in *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 264-262.

glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen.²

¹¹ *This is a trustworthy saying: If we die with him, we will also live with him.*

¹² *If we endure hardship, we will reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us.*

¹³ *If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.*

¹⁴ *Remind everyone about these things, and command them in God's presence to stop fighting over words. Such arguments are useless, and they can ruin those who hear them.*

Verse twelve is our focus for today. First, let us consider several translations in order to get a better idea of the meaning:

2 Timothy 2:12 ESV:

If we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;

2 Timothy 2:12 KJV:

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

2 Timothy 2:12 MSG:

If we stick it out with him, we'll rule with him; If we turn our backs on him, he'll turn his back on us;

So we see from these translations that endurance involves suffering and that we should persevere or stick it out during the hardship or suffering. The Greek word translated, “*involved*,”³ is used several places in the New Testament and in the majority of those places it is translated with some form of the word “*endure*.” Endurance, according to English dictionaries, is “*the ability to bear prolonged hardship, toleration of hardship, or persistence over time*.”⁴

So then what are we to endure? If we look at the preceding verses in the chapter we see in verse three that we are to **endure suffering**; in verses four through six that we are to **persist, work hard** and follow the rules as soldiers, athletes, and farmers do; that is, we are to stick it out through the challenges of life. In verse ten we are called to **endure** anything that will bring salvation and the gospel to those who need to hear it. Then finally in verse twelve we are called on to **endure** hardship and suffering for the cause of Christ. Paul knew what he was talking about. He himself had endured much. He had been ostracized, beaten, imprisoned, and shipwrecked all for the cause of Jesus Christ.

In our culture today we disdain suffering and hardship. We look for the easy life and the easy way to do things.

Each one of us has challenges and hardships in our lives. How do we greet those

² Those who by His grace God has awarded salvation and eternal life. Footnote mine.

³ *hupomenô* —NASB Greek-Hebrew Dictionary.

⁴ According to the Encarta Dictionary: English (North America)

difficulties? Do we see them as coming from the hand of a God who loves us? Or do we grumble and complain, fret and worry about them? Do we “*count it all joy*”⁵ and look for the power of God in the situation?

James 1:2-4:

² *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,*

³ *knowing that **the testing of your faith produces endurance.***

⁴ *And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

Do we determine to stick it out and make it through our trials, no matter what? Do we determine that we will do it with an attitude of faith and trust in God, with an attitude of praise for Him, “*giving thanks in all things*”?⁶

In fact, we may not be called upon to make some great, huge sacrifice. We may find our hardship comes in smaller doses during each day of life.

Fred Craddock, in an address to ministers, [said] . . . "To give my life for Christ appears glorious," . . . "To pour myself out for others . . . to pay the ultimate price of martyrdom -- I'll do it. I'm ready, Lord, to go out in a blaze of glory.

"We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking [a] \$1,000 bill and laying it on the table-- 'Here's my life, Lord. I'm giving it all.' But the reality for most of us is that He sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000 for quarters. We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid's troubles instead of saying, 'Get lost.' Go to a committee meeting. Give a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home. Usually giving our life to Christ isn't glorious. It's done in all those little acts of love, 25 cents at a time. It would be easy to go out in a flash of glory; it's harder to live the Christian life little by little over the long haul."⁷

So whether we are called on to live with huge challenges and great suffering or to live our lives “*little by little over the long haul,*” we are to do it with endurance. When Paul says that if we endure hardship we will reign with Christ, he is echoing Christ’s words:

Matthew 5:10-12 NAS:

¹⁰ *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

¹¹ *"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all*

⁵ James 1:2.

⁶ 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

⁷ Darryl Bell. <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/f/faithfulness.htm>

kinds of evil against you because of Me.

¹² *"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

Now let us jump over to Colossians 1:21-22:

²¹ *And **although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,***

²² *yet **He** (Jesus)⁸ **has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him** (God)⁹ **holy and blameless and beyond reproach—***

In order for Christ to present you to God you must be "*holy and blameless and beyond reproach.*" You can only be those things if Christ is Lord of your life; if you truly believe He is the only source of salvation and eternal life in Heaven. Then He can present your life before His Father. If you continue to reject or ignore Him, you will never see the millennial kingdom or Heaven. The only life that can **endure** is an obedient life.

"*Rocky*, the motion picture that won three Academy Awards, tells the story of a small-time boxer given the opportunity of a lifetime—the chance to fight the undisputed world heavyweight boxing champ. After weeks of punishing, grueling training, on the evening of the fight Rocky finally admitted the futility of his effort. "Who am I trying to kid?" he pondered, "I'm not even in the same class with da guy. But I gotta go da distance. I gotta go da distance."

"Rocky Balboa set as his goal to go all fifteen rounds. He wanted to hang in there when he knew every muscle in his body would scream to quit. He wanted to endure under pressure. As a fighter, he wanted to go the full distance. The fight began, but in round one Rocky was knocked down. The count commenced, but after wildly shaking his head back and forth, he struggled to his feet and lasted not just one or two more rounds, but all fifteen. He was able to go the distance because, during training, his body had been subjected to grueling preparation. Daily he had driven himself to the point of exhaustion. One-arm push-ups, back-bending sit-ups, sprinting, sparring—this had all been part of his schedule of training.

"The design of a demanding training schedule enabled Rocky to endure. Perseverance in any great test comes as a result of

⁸ Parentheses mine.

⁹ Ibid.

disciplined preparation in the ordinary days.”¹⁰

If you want eternal life in a kingdom where you will find only hope, happiness, joy, and acceptance, and spend your time in activities that you will love, the time to begin preparing yourself for such a life is right now, today. If you have not already done so, ask Jesus to be your Savior. And if you cannot do that today, if unbelief still prevents you from doing so, just ask Him today to show you His truth and He will. *“Knock and the door will be opened. Seek and you will find.”* (Matthew 7:7)

Matthew 19:27-30:

²⁷ *Then Peter said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?"*

²⁸ *And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

²⁹ *"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.*

³⁰ *"But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.*

Jesus promised His twelve disciples that they would reign with Him and this applies to us as well.

Luke 22:28-30:

²⁸ *"You are those who have stood by Me in My trials;*

²⁹ *and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you*

³⁰ *that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

Believers will also reign with Christ and have positions of authority in the millennial kingdom.

1 Corinthians 6:1-6 (NLT):

¹ *When one of you has a dispute with another believer, how dare you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter instead of taking it to other believers!*

² *Don't you realize that someday we believers will judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can't you decide even these little things among yourselves?*

³ *Don't you realize that we will judge angels? So you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disputes in this life.*

⁴ *If you have legal disputes about such matters, why go to outside judges*

¹⁰ op cit., Bell.

who are not respected by the church?

⁵ *I am saying this to shame you. **Isn't there anyone in all the church who is wise enough to decide these issues?***

⁶ *But instead, one believer sues another—right in front of unbelievers!*

Then Paul deals with those who openly deny Jesus. *"If we endure hardship, we will reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us,"* 2 Timothy 2:12 (NLT).

First, Paul says, If we deny Him, that is, Jesus Christ, He also will deny us. This verse points toward some future event(s) that will test the reality of a person's faith. A person who fails to **endure** and denies Christ will **deny Him** BECAUSE HE NEVER BELONGED TO CHRIST IN THE FIRST PLACE. "Anyone who does not live in accordance with the teaching of Christ has never truly believed in God. The person who is obedient to Christ's teaching has both the Father and the Son living within them in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Those who remain faithful to the truth they have received from the Word of God show proof that they belong to God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL NOT ALLOW ANY TRUE BELIEVER TO DENY CHRIST.

Many people go to church, get baptized, give generously of their finances, serve on the board, organize the bake sales, and behave as if they are saved, while the truth be told, they do not have a clue as to what salvation is all about. Many think it has to be earned. Many do not accept God and Jesus Christ as the only true God because they do not want to offend anyone. They may even believe that Jehovah God, Allah, Brahman, Confucius, and others are all the same God. These folks are going to be in store for the shock of their lives when they die.

2 John 1:9 (NLT):

*Anyone who wanders away from this teaching has **NO** relationship with God. But anyone who remains in the teaching of Christ has a relationship with both the Father and the Son.*

Now someone right now is asking the question, *"What about Peter's denial?"*¹¹ *Can a true believer deny Jesus?* Well, let us face up to it. We probably have done something similar to what Peter did at one or even several times in our lives. We all do it in various ways when we are not willing to declare our love for Christ in certain situations, such as when having a conversation about religion with family members or good friends, or even when asked a direct question about how you can be so sure that your God is the only God? We hear so many people today comment that we should all respect the gods that other people believe

¹¹ Matthew 26:69-75.

in.

Well, we are here to tell you that is a lot of modernistic doo-doo. God and Jesus have no respect whatsoever for the gods of other religions. In fact They detest such false teaching. There simply are no other gods anywhere. These claims are simply ludicrous.¹² Yet billions of people subject themselves to eternal damnation by accepting the foolishness and inconsistencies in their primary religious books. *The Bible* is without blemish or flaw. It is a masterpiece given to us by God so that we will know how He wants us to live. If you pattern your life after the teaching of the Bible, you will find peace and freedom even in the middle of serious threatening events. The other so-called "*holy books*" are filled with inconsistencies, lies, deceit, and some even support violent behavior and the right of a man to beat and even murder women. If all these other religions have the same God, why would He have so many conflicting instructions to different people? How do you explain that? If all these gods are actually the same god, would He not expect the same things from all people?

Now there is one final irrefutable truth and that is that Jesus Christ was and is God and was willing to come to earth to be the perfect sacrifice for sin so that men and women could be reconciled to God as sinless and be given salvation as a gift by God. All the other gods that people give their allegiance to are still in their graves or never were living beings. Jesus Christ is the only God that rose from the dead as witnessed by over 500 people, and then after several weeks ascended into Heaven. That means He walked and talked with many after He came out of the grave. No other deity can match that feat. And that should prove to us that if Christ came back from the dead and promised we could do the same, it will happen if we have a genuine faith in what He accomplished on our behalf.

Confronted by the reality of having abandoned the Lord when his life was threatened, Peter for the moment was captured by fear, and you might remember that the **Holy Spirit** was not yet available. In fact Jesus had not yet been crucified and resurrected proving that He was who He said He was. So Peter denied he knew Christ because he did not yet have that power of the Holy Spirit within him; but after he had denied Jesus three times he was overcome with shame and remorse¹³ and wept bitter tears of penitence.¹⁴

Matthew 26:75:

⁷⁵ *And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.*

Then later Jesus forgave Peter and restored him in Galilee.

¹² **ludicrous** *adjective synonyms* LAUGHABLE, comic, comical, droll, farcical, funny, ridiculous; *related words* absurd, foolish, preposterous, silly; antic, bizarre, grotesque. *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus.*

¹³ **remorse:** a gnawing distress arising from a sense of guilt.

¹⁴ **penitence** *noun*, regret for sin or wrongdoing; sorrow for sins or faults.

John 21:15-17 (NLT):

¹⁵ After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I love you.” “*THEN FEED MY LAMBS,*” Jesus told him.

¹⁶ Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you love me?” “Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.” “*THEN TAKE CARE OF MY SHEEP,*” Jesus said.

¹⁷ A third time he asked him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.” Jesus said, “*THEN FEED MY SHEEP.*”

Sounds to us like Peter was genuinely saved, but he had not yet learned and put into practice Jesus’ full teaching. And until **Pentecost**, Peter did not have the fullness of the Holy Spirit. After the Holy Spirit became available to live in him and all believers according to the New Covenant, “his courage, boldness, and willingness to face any hostility became legendary.”¹⁵

Acts 1:3-8:

³ To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

⁴ Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me;

⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶ So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

⁸ but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

We would also recommend you read Acts 2:14-36; 3:1-6, 12-26; 4:1-4, 8-13, 19, 21, and 31. Peter died a **martyr**,¹⁶ just as Jesus had foretold he would—faithful in the face

¹⁵ John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary – 2 Timothy*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 63-66.

¹⁶ MARTYR The transliteration of a Greek word meaning “witness,” in particular one who gives his life for a cause. Trent C. Butler, ed., “MARTYR,” in *Holman Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: “MARTYR”.

of execution for his Lord (John 21:18-19). Tradition holds that, by his own request, he was crucified upside down, because he felt unworthy to die in the same manner as his Lord.¹⁷

“So perhaps the answer to the question of Peter's denial of Christ is that his was a momentary failure, followed by repentance. He did not as yet have the fullness of the Spirit, but during the rest of his life after Pentecost he boldly confessed Christ, even when it cost him his life.”¹⁸

Let us take a look at Matthew 10:33: *"Whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."* There are many people who continually deny Christ and will do so right up until they die. They never repent and they harden their hearts against Jesus.

Acts 3:13-15:

¹³ *"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned [denied]¹⁹ in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.*

¹⁴ *"But you disowned (denied)²⁰ the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,*

¹⁵ *but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.*

Denying Jesus is the worst mistake you can make. Please, do not make that mistake!

¹⁷ John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary – 2 Timothy*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 63-66.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Brackets mine.

²⁰ Ibid.