

## 2 Timothy 2 – Sermon 5

### Be Strong in Grace

When the call for service comes, too often we give the excuse of weakness, inability, or lack of training. Christians fail to count on the omnipotence of God to take their small talents and use them for the accomplishment of His purposes.

“D.L. Moody told the story of a passenger on an Atlantic steamer who lay in his bunk during a raging storm with a severe case of seasickness. Suddenly he heard the cry, "Man overboard!" "May God help that poor fellow," he prayed, "but there's nothing I can do." Then he thought, "I can at least put my lantern in my small window," and with an effort he did so. The man was finally rescued. In recounting the story the next day, he said, "I was going down in the darkness for the last time when someone put a light in a porthole. It shone on my hand, and a sailor in the lifeboat grabbed it and pulled me in." Weakness is no excuse for not putting forth the little strength we have. Who can tell how God will work?"<sup>1</sup>

1 Corinthians 1:27 (HCSB):

*<sup>27</sup> Instead, God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong.*

### I Asked God for Strength

“I asked God for strength that I might achieve,  
 I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.  
 I asked for health, that I might do greater things,  
 I was given infirmity that I might do better things.  
 I asked for riches, that I might be happy,  
 I was given poverty, that I might be wise.  
 I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men,  
 I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> *6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths*, (Omaha, Nebraska: Christianity Today, 1997), under: "Strength".

I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life,

I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for—but everything I had hoped for.

Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.

I am among all men, most richly blessed<sup>\*2</sup>

2 Corinthians 12:9 (HCSB):

<sup>9</sup> But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may reside in me.

Let us now begin our study with the first seven verses of 2 Timothy 2.

2 Timothy 2:1-7:

<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.*

<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.*

I imagine you all have committed First Timothy to memory by now, but if there might be one or possibly even two who have not, here is what it says:

2 Timothy 1:6-8:

<sup>6</sup> *For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

<sup>7</sup> *For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.*

<sup>8</sup> *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,*

Now after everything that Paul taught Timothy in chapter one, examples of faith on the part of Lois and Eunice, Paul himself, and Onesiphorus. Timothy also heard from Paul about the Holy Spirit's gift to Timothy, the great salvation that is waiting for him and everyone else who **does**

<sup>2</sup> 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths, (Omaha, Nebraska: Christianity Today, 1997), under: "Strength".

**not abandon God when faced with suffering.** Paul begins chapter two by telling Timothy to **be strong** just as he (Paul) had been strong.

Acts 9:22 :

<sup>22</sup> *But Saul [Paul]<sup>3</sup> kept increasing in **strength** and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.*

Ephesians 6:10 (NASB):

<sup>10</sup> *Be strong in the Lord and in the **strength** of His might.*

Timothy could be strong because of the grace which was given to him by Christ.

2 Timothy 1:9:

<sup>9</sup> *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and **grace** which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.*

Timothy's **strength will grow** if he uses the gift which Jesus' grace has provided him. Again Paul uses language that suggests the strong love of a father for his son; "*my child.*" What the teacher father (Paul) wants the son (Timothy) to do is covered in verses 1-7. The example which the father is setting is described in verses 8-10a. What all believers should remember about how faithfulness to Christ is rewarded and unfaithfulness punished is covered in verses 10-13.<sup>4</sup>

Now, one way of becoming strong in grace is to give others what you have, the truth of the gospel message (salvation) which captured both your heart and your mind. Timothy will be a teacher, even better, he will teach more teachers. Paul's life is almost over. He is passing the baton so to speak to Timothy, who, in turn, will pass it on to others. Timothy must only select men who are trustworthy and capable to be teachers themselves (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2).<sup>5</sup>

This Gospel of salvation, is described as "*The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses*" (2:2). This probably is a collection of Paul's sermons and lessons which he had provided Timothy.<sup>6</sup>

Many men had also heard Paul's preaching and teaching, and many of them had come to believe, and also many of them were willing to teach. To the man who was judged reliable and was trusted enough to teach the Gospel, he also had to expect and be willing to endure hardship. "*Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus*"(2 Timothy 2:3). When a man

<sup>3</sup> Brackets added.

<sup>4</sup> William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Baker New Testament Commentary – Exposition of Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1955), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 245-247.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

fighters hard for the cause of Christ, and lives according to the rules given him by God, **he will receive a generous reward.**<sup>7</sup>

**2 Timothy 2:4-7:**

<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>8</sup>

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

The Christian is considered to be a soldier in God's army. The last chapter of Ephesians tells us that those who believe are fighting a spiritual battle and that they need to put on the **armor of God**.

Ephesians 6:10-17:

<sup>10</sup> *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.*

<sup>11</sup> ***Put on the full armor of God***, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

<sup>12</sup> *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.* <sup>13</sup> *Therefore, take up the full armor of God, **so that you will be able to resist** in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.* <sup>14</sup> *Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,* <sup>15</sup> *and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;* <sup>16</sup> *in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.* <sup>17</sup> *and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

"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" (verse 4). Imagine a soldier in the middle of battle going to his sergeant or his lieutenant and saying, "Sir, I'm sorry to have to leave, but I have to go over into the city to see about some business; and then I have a date with a local girl, and I just won't be able to be here for the battle tonight!" A great many Christians are trying to fight like that today!<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Reward. Footnote mine.

<sup>9</sup> J. Vernon McGee, – *Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Chapter 2".

If you claim to be a believer you have to establish your priorities and you have to endure trials, hardship, and rejection. If you cannot handle rejection the ministry is probably not the life for you. There are those who interpret this verse to mean that a Christian is not to get married. Paul is talking here about being so entangled in worldliness that one is not able to live the Christian life.<sup>10</sup>

*“Let me give you an example. A lady called me one morning while I was a pastor in Los Angeles. She said, ‘I was at church yesterday when you asked for those who wanted to accept Christ. Well, I did accept Christ, but I made no move to come forward for a particular reason that I want to tell you about. My husband died recently and left me the operation of our liquor store. I am calling you now because I don't think I can continue operating it. If you say to get a hammer and break every bottle, I'll do it. But tell me what I should do.’ What would you have said? I'll tell you what I told her, ‘Don't go in there and break bottles. You won't stop the liquor business by breaking up a few bottles. If you could, I'd be in favor it. But that has been your only income. I would say that you should sell the store and get out of the business.’”<sup>11</sup>*

This story tells us basically that we are not to entangle ourselves in such things that might get in the way of fighting the good fight by using **the armor and power that God provides** us.

“The children of God are to recognize that they are **soldiers**. And we are to recognize that the Christian life is not a playground; **it is a battlefield**. It is a battlefield where battles are being won, and where battles are being lost also.”<sup>12</sup> The moment you get out of bed in the morning you step out onto a battlefield.

*“Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules (2 Timothy 2:5). It is rather obvious to recognize that every athlete wants to win the gold medal, not the silver or the bronze, but the gold; and he/she will do everything he/she can to be the winner. Paul likened the Christian life to a footrace, and he said:*

Philippians 3:14 (NLT):

*<sup>14</sup> I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*

Paul also said in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NLT)

*<sup>24</sup> Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!*

*<sup>25</sup> All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.*

*<sup>26</sup> So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing.*

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Op Cit., McGee, under: "Chapter 25".

*<sup>27</sup> I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.*

Paul's goal was to run the Christian race in such a way that the One who is at the end of the race - the Lord Jesus -- would be able to reward him and be able to say, "*Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master*" (Matthew 25:21).

God wants to see you win the race and He will give you all the power you need to do so, if you have accepted His Son's death and resurrection as payment for your sin, and if you ask for it.<sup>13</sup>

God wants to see you win the race and He will give you all the power you need to do so, if you have accepted His Son's death and resurrection as payment for your sin, and if you ask for it.<sup>1</sup>

God gave us sixty-six books in the Bible, and each one of them is very important. It takes the complete picture, all sixty-six books to give us the mind and the Word of God. We are to study the entire Bible. An athlete can't only jump over the hurdles that he wants to and win the race. The rules require that he jump over all the hurdles. A linebacker in football cannot decide that he will only try to tackle the running back on every other play. "A child of God has to do that, too. If you're going to win, you can't take any shortcuts."<sup>14</sup>

### **2 Timothy 2:7:**

*<sup>7</sup> Consider<sup>15</sup> what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.*

I would ask you to look at the footnote below where I have placed a number of definitions of the word "*consider*." You will see that almost all of them hold considering something to involve deep thought and careful evaluation. Timothy is told in verse seven to focus his mind on what Paul had just said. **Merely reading God's Word is not enough. God's Word must be studied carefully.**

#### **Matthew 11:28-30:**

*<sup>28</sup> "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*

*<sup>29</sup> "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*<sup>30</sup> "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

#### **Matthew 13:34:**

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> consider *verb1* to give serious thought to; *synonyms*: contemplate, ponder, study, think (out or over), weigh, related words meditate, muse, ruminare; cogitate, reason, reflect, speculate, think; examine, inspect, look (at), scan, scrutinize, see idioms bestow thought to, chew the cud over, revolve (or turn over) in one's mind. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus*.

*<sup>34</sup> All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables[stories]<sup>16</sup>, and He did not speak to them without a parable.*

Matthew 15:15-20:

*<sup>15</sup> Peter said to Him, "Explain the parable to us."*

*<sup>16</sup> Jesus said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also?"*

*<sup>17</sup> "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?"*

*<sup>18</sup> "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man."*

*<sup>19</sup> "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders."*

*<sup>20</sup> "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."*

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<sup>16</sup> Brackets added.