
Sunday School Lesson
2 Tim. 2:1-13
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Good Soldiering



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In this second study in the Formations Sunday School lessons under the unit theme “Voices from the Early Church,” the focus shifts to a passage in 2 Timothy 2 in an emphasis upon commitment.

I Context

a. Historical

The **external history** of 2 Timothy is one of those thorny issues over which enormous difference of opinion exists. During the early 1800s as modern New Testament scholarship was blossoming on both sides of the Atlantic, one stream of German scholarship emerged in connection with the University of Tübingen in the Black Forest under the leadership of F.C. Baur. In the application of emerging modern principles of technical literary and historical analysis to the documents of the New Testament, he came to the conclusion that only four of Paul’s letters could be “scientifically” proven as having come from Paul himself: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians. The remainder of the Pauline collection of letters in the NT had to have originated at a much later date coming either from subsequent schools of Pauline thinking or from completely anonymous writers wanting to assert their view of Christianity in the name of Paul in order to give it more credibility. Included most emphatically in this last group was the so-called Pastoral Epistles, containing 1 and 2 Timothy along with Titus. The impact of the soon to be called Tübingen School upon New Testament scholarship was enormous internationally and has continued strong some 180 plus years. Consequently, the Pastoral Epistles will most often be grouped under the Deutero-Pauline Letters in surveys of the New Testament. Baur accepted the canonicity of these letters and based it on his inherited Lutheran view of a “canon within a canon” principle, first advocated by the reformer Martin Luther in the early 1500s, who in turn had adopted and modified a view first set forth by the Church Father Origen in the early 200s.

The technical reasons for rejecting Pauline authorship of the pastoral letters are too detailed to explore here but my colleague for many years at SWBTS, Prof. E. Earle Ellis [“Pastoral Letters,” *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, (*Logos Systems*)] effectively summarizes Baur’s objections through a quote of another German scholar of Baur’s era, H. J. Holtzmann: “His views were elaborated by H. J. Holtzmann, who summed up the objections to Pauline authorship: (1) the historical situation, (2) the gnosticizing false teachers condemned, (3) the stage of church organization, (4) the vocabulary and style, and (5) the theological views and themes.” Prof. Ellis then proceeds to thoroughly examine each point in presenting a contrary interpretation of the evidence in support of Pauline authorship of the pastorals. Baur’s viewpoint has had its severe critics since he first set it forth in 1835 in his work *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe*. These opponents have been German, French, English, American etc. and have reflected the theological spectrum completely, although his more intense critics recently have come from American Evangelicals. The British NT scholar P.N. Harrison in his *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* proposed in 1921 a middle ground viewpoint that

understood authentic elements of Pauline writings to have been incorporated, by disciples of Paul, into these three letters only a little while after the death of the apostle in the mid 60s. This remains a major alternative view to that of Baur still today.

Thus today most of the discussion of the external history of the pastorals will revolve around these three perspectives and the sifting through the arguments for each position. Personally, I tend to come down somewhere between Ellis and Harrison on this issue out of the conviction that much of the discussion has become too polarized to be helpful. Added to that is the stigma on one side, that if you are a real scholar you have to take some form of Baur's position. On the other side is the frequent stigma that if you even hint at uncertainty about Pauline authorship of the pastorals you are a "wild-eyed liberal, who doesn't believe the Bible." My hunch -- and it's just that -- is that this material came together by disciples of Paul either during the 60s or shortly after his death in order to preserve a legacy of the apostle's ministry in the closing years of his life. Most of the arguments for a second century dating reflect more of a bias against these epistles because of a variety of things they assert which are not acceptable ideas to many scholars today. Mostly, the affirmation of an increasingly well organized and defined church structure rubs the anti-institutional Christianity bias of many today. This is but one of many examples. On the other side, genuine issues about writing style, more mature perceptions of the Christian faith etc. do create some tensions with things Paul had said early on in his writing ministry. Thus the available evidence is not clear cut one way or the other. Plus modern scholarship has tended to adopt the old preacher adage about one of the points in the sermon he was preaching: "Weak point; scream like Hell!"

The **internal history** of 2 Timothy depends entirely upon the view of the external history that one adopts. One of the weaknesses of the Tübingen School view is the inability of scholars in that view to come to anything like a consensus of what sort of situation in the mid to late second century would have motivated the production of this document. James D.G. Dunn ("The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus," *New Interpreter's Bible*, iPreach) describes this dilemma in detail from a modified insider's perspective.

The Pauline authorship view can set forth a relatively coherent understanding at this point, taken largely from historical allusions inside these documents and supplemented from early church traditions reaching back to the middle of the second century. This scenario moves along these lines. After Paul's first appeal to the Roman emperor Nero, which Acts 28 indicates he was waiting to make, Paul was released from imprisonment in appx. AD 61-62. He resumed ministry, mostly in the Aegean Sea region of the north central Mediterranean Sea area. His stated desired in AD 57 ([Romans 15:23-24](#)) was to pass through Rome on his way to Spain. Some early church traditions suggest that he did manage to get to Spain after being released from imprisonment, but this is not certain in spite of the powerful legacy even to this day in the Spanish Roman Catholic Church. During this resumed ministry 1 Timothy was written to encourage Timothy while trying to lead the Christian community at Ephesus. Then Titus was written to do the same thing as he tried to lead the various Christian communities on the Island of Crete. By the writing of 2 Timothy Paul has again been taken prisoner by the Roman government and was facing certain execution at the hands of Nero in the mid 60s. Thus 2 Timothy becomes the last set of ideas to flow from Paul before his death, again written to encourage Timothy's work at Ephesus.

Something of the latter view will be the working assumption for this study, although the paraenetical nature of chapter two limits the need for a detailed historical assessment of the situation.

b. Literary

Our passage, 2:1-13, stands as a part of the [Body of the letter](#) (1:6-4:18). The thought development of the Body of the letter largely revolves around three ideas. First, there is frequent reminder to Timothy of past experiences in Paul's life, especially in suffering persecution for the sake of the gospel: 1:8-17, 2:9-13, 3:10-11; 4:6-8, 9-18. Secondly, a lot of admonitions are given to Timothy regarding his service to Christ: 1:6-7; 13-14; 2:8, 2:1-7, 8, 14-16, 22-26, 3:1, 14-15, 4:1-2, 5, 9, 13. Thirdly, the overarching concern of the letter is in regard to those who for one reason or another are slipping into false belief and/or abandoning serving Christ: 1:15-18; 2:17-18, 23-26; 3:1-9, 13; 4:3-5, 9-18. These three motifs are woven together much like a rope with three strands. Separating them out from one another can be helpful for examining

each strand in greater detail, but in unraveling the “rope” something important is lost as well: the sense of interconnectedness of these three motifs to one another.

Western mindsets find it almost impossible to resist organizing a set of ideas into a logical outline, even creating some kind of thought progression as a foundation for the outline. The Body of the letter comes close to defying such an effort, although detailed analysis of the Greek text will suggest natural linkage of core statements that can be grouped into units of ideas and then formatted as paragraphs. But the great danger here is losing sight of the “rope” that extends from 1:6 through 4:18. It is the weaving together of these three motifs that provides the cohesiveness of the letter body. Some “steps” forward may then be perceived as the “rope” moves from beginning to end. Those are typically perceived as 1:6-14, 14-18; 2:1-7, 8-13, 14-26; 3:1-9, 10-17; 4:1-5, 6-8, 9-15, 16-18.

II. Message

Our passage contains elements of all three strands of this “rope” but does seem to divide itself out into two major emphases: (1) faithful teaching of others, vv. 1-7, and (2) focusing on Christ, vv. 8-13.

a. Faithful Teaching of Others, vv. 1-7

GNT	NASB	NRSV	NLT
<p><2:1> Σὺ οὖν, τέκνον μου, ἐνδυναμοῦ ἐν τῇ χάριτι τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, <2:2> καὶ ἃ ἤκουσας παρ’ ἐμοῦ διὰ πολλῶν μαρτύρων, ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, οἵτινες ἱκανοὶ ἔσονται καὶ ἐτέρους διδάξαι. <2:3> συγκακοπάθησον ὡς καλὸς στρατιώτης Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. <2:4> οὐδεὶς στρατευόμενος ἐμπλέκεται ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, ἵνα τῷ στρατολογήσαντι ἀρέσῃ. <2:5> ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ἀθλῆ τις, οὐ στεφανοῦται ἐὰν μὴ νομίμως ἀθλήσῃ. <2:6> τὸν κοπιῶντα γεωργὸν δεῖ πρῶτον τῶν καρπῶν μεταλαμβάνειν. <2:7> νόει ὃ λέγω· δώσει γάρ σοι ὁ κύριος σύνεσιν ἐν πᾶσιν.</p>	<p>1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 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. 3 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 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. 5 Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. 7 Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.</p>	<p>1 You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; 2 and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. 3 Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer. 5 And in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules. 6 It is the farmer who does the work who ought to have the first share of the crops. 7 Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.</p>	<p>1 Timothy, my dear son, be strong with the special favor God gives you in Christ Jesus. 2 You have heard me teach many things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Teach these great truths to trustworthy people who are able to pass them on to others. 3 Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 And as Christ's soldier, do not let yourself become tied up in the affairs of this life, for then you cannot satisfy the one who has enlisted you in his army. 5 Follow the Lord's rules for doing his work, just as an athlete either follows the rules or is disqualified and wins no prize. 6 Hardworking farmers are the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor. 7 Think about what I am saying. The Lord will give you understanding in all these things.</p>

Notes:

The internal structure of these verses flows around two introductory admonitions (vv. 1-2), that are reinforced by admonitions using the analogy of a soldier (vv.3-4), an athlete (v.5), and a farmer (v.6). The final admonition with its basis (v. 7) summarizes all the preceding as a climatic encouragement to pay

attention to what has just been said.

Paul begins the encouragement of Timothy with an admonition to being strong in divine grace: “**You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus**” (NRSV) [Σὺ οὖν, τέκνον μου, ἐνδυναμοῦ ἐν τῇ χάριτι τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ]. The “then” is important for contextual understanding. This admonition grows out of an implication contained in the preceding section of 1:15-18: “**15 You are aware that all who are in Asia have turned away from me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. 16 May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain; 17 when he arrived in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me 18 —may the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! And you know very well how much service he rendered in Ephesus**” (NRSV). Timothy needs to be strong for a couple of reasons. First, those who have deserted Paul who are serving in Asia, the Roman province of which Ephesus was a major city. This has handicapped the advance of the gospel in the part of the Roman Empire. Faithful, strong leaders are needed in Asia where Timothy was more than ever. Secondly, Timothy has the inspiration of the example of [Onesiphorus](#) who exhibited faithfulness to the gospel and to Paul in spite of danger and personal sacrifice. He made several trips from his home in Ephesus to Rome to assist Paul.

This context underscores the power of a positive example to encourage faithfulness. When many Christians exhibit a “cut-flower” kind of faithfulness, the inspiration of those who remain faithful becomes even more significant and encouraging.

What does the text mean by “be strong in the grace of Christ Jesus”? This [Greek verb](#), ἐνδυναμῶ, is used some seven times in the NT with the core idea to “take on strength” from some source. Here the specified source is the grace that flows from the Lord. God’s favor bestowed upon us through Christ Jesus becomes a source of spiritual enabling thus providing needed resources to remain consistently faithful in our service to Christ. In Rom. 4:20, Paul noted that Abraham “**with respect to the promise of God, ...did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God**” (NASB). Earlier to the Philippians (4:13), the apostle declared, “**I can do all things through Him who strengthens me**” (NASB).

Growing out of this strengthening of Timothy comes then the admonition: “**what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well**” (NRSV) [ἃ ἤκουσας παρ’ ἐμοῦ διὰ πολλῶν μαρτύρων, ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, οἵτινες ἱκανοὶ ἔσονται καὶ ἑτέρους διδάξαι]. With renewed energy and determination Timothy is to “pass on” the teaching of the apostle to those who will receive it and then teach it to others. One important note here is that Timothy is drawing his understanding of the gospel from having heard Paul preach and teach it, not from some written summations of the gospel by Paul. Even though, in the traditional view of authorship of the pastoral letters, this letter represents the final written document of Paul’s writing ministry, the preference is still for the oral tradition of the gospel over the written tradition. This preference for the orally transmitted gospel message will still be true for several centuries to come. The ancient world preferred things that way. Add to that the Jewish heritage for early Christians that the spoken word contained potentially the breath of God, especially if those words had been authorized by God to be spoken. This infusion of spiritual life into the spoken words gave the preached gospel message a level of power that the written words could never possess. Even reading in the ancient world had to be done vocally and not silently in order to bring the written words to life.

Additionally Paul stressed that his preaching of the gospel stood confirmed through many witnesses. The confirmation of a message by [witnesses](#) was important to Paul, reflecting the traditional Jewish demand for at least two witnesses to confirm something. The central point here is that witnesses confirm the genuineness of the gospel message indicating that this message has not been dreamed up by a single individual. Rather, it stands confirmed by others. Thus Timothy can accept it confidently and then pass it on to others.

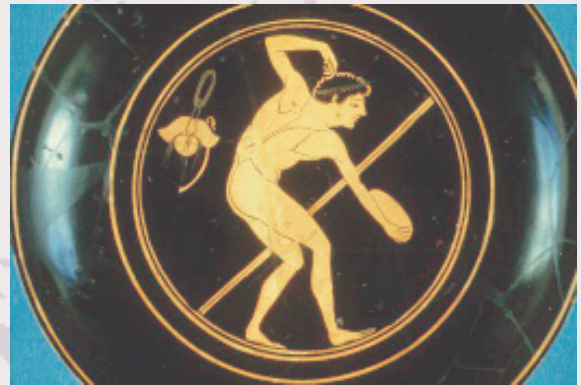
The objective of Timothy’s teaching ministry is to insure the transmission of the gospel to others. And that by the training of faithful Christians who becomes transmitters of that message as well. The youth musical from years ago “Pass It On” captures well the idea here. One should note that Timothy is instructed to focus upon “faithful people” as the target of his training. The NT generally stresses that entrusting the sacred should be done only toward those who can be trusted as good stewards. For one example, see my [Festschrift chapter](#) “Throwing Your Margaritas to the Pigs: a Rhetorical Study of Matt. 7:6.” This principle should prompt caution by church nominating committees in the choosing of individuals to serve in the life of the church, especially in its teaching ministry.

These two core admonitions to Timothy define foundational aspects of his service to Christ. Paul then draws from three areas of everyday, non-religious life to reinforce and amplify these core admonitions.



The first one is from the military: “3 Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer.” (v. 3-4, NRSV) [<2:3> συγκακοπάθησον ὡς καλὸς στρατιώτης Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. <2:4> οὐδεὶς στρατευόμενος ἐμπλέκεται ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, ἵνα τῷ στρατολογήσαντι ἀρέσῃ]. The admonition encourages Timothy to function as a noble fighting machine working in concert with fellow soldiers as a part of a team. [Military imagery](#) provided a natural and familiar illustration for Paul's point. The Roman military dominated life all through the Mediterranean world of that time; the majority of young boys spent their late teens and twenties in the military. Lessons drawn from the military would be clear and easy to understand in Paul's world. The background of the imagery is true to the emerging professional army begun by the first Roman emperor Augustus (34 BC-13 AD) based upon enlistment by recruitment, rather than the citizen temporary soldier that characterized the previous era of the Republic. The good soldier concentrates on the collective goal of his army and doesn't tolerate distraction by day-to-day details such as his food rations etc. Struggle and suffering are givens in being a soldier. The enlisting officer in the image is Christ, who set the example in his own sufferings. One important note here: the military image doesn't allow for a triumphalist, arrogant attitude, as sometimes has been taken from this imagery in Paul. The image of the soldier is for the point of willingness to suffer in obedience to the orders of the commanding general, in this case, Christ.

The second image is from the ancient Olympic Games, that of an athlete: “And in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules.” (v. 5, NRSV) [ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ἀθλῆ τις, οὐ στεφανοῦται ἐὰν μὴ νομίμως ἀθλήσῃ]. The [Olympic Games](#) also played a huge role in ancient life in the Mediterranean world. Although very different from the modern era of the Games that resumed in 1896, one of the common traits is the point stressed by Paul in the metaphor: to win one must play by the rules. The point of the metaphor to Timothy is mostly along the lines of his conveying the true gospel in a faithful manner to others. He could not by-pass the “rules” established by God for that and then expect God to bless him in judgment at the end of life's race. In 2 Timothy, Paul alludes by name to others who were doing this very thing and thus were not going to “win” the game.



The application point is that we must play the spiritual game of Christian service by God's rules, if we expect God's blessings at the end of life. There are no short cuts to winning. We must pay the price of disciplined training and maximum effort as we serve our God. The athlete served to remind Timothy that his calling was to pass on the gospel and that this had to be done according to the guidelines set forth by God, not by his own desires or preferences.

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The third image is that of the farmer: “It is the farmer who does the work who ought to have the first share of the crops”, (v. 6, NRSV) [τὸν κοπιῶντα γεωργὸν δεῖ πρῶτον τῶν καρπῶν μεταλαμβάνειν]. James D.G. Dunn, (“The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus,” *New Interpreter's Bible*, iPreach) makes the following observation about this image: “Since many successful military veterans retired to farm land granted them by the state, the two images (soldier and farmer) went naturally together (as in 1 Cor 9:7). The latter metaphor uses ideas that were important for Paul elsewhere: work hard (see the Commentary on 1 Tim 5:17); “share [in benefit]” (Rom 15:27; 1 Cor 9:10; 10:16-18; Gal 6:6; Phlm 6). For

Paul the same rule applied to the community of faith and the service of the gospel. The imagery need not imply a regular stipend for ministry (but see the Commentary on 1 Tim 5:17).”

Then comes the summary applicational statement in verse 7: “Think over what I say, for the Lord will give

you understanding in all things.” (NRSV) [νόει ὁ λέγω· δώσει γάρ σοι ὁ κύριος σύνεσιν ἐν πᾶσιν]. Paul admonishes Timothy not just to listen to his words, but to ponder them so that the Lord would have a chance to sink them deep into Timothy’s consciousness.

The connecting up of meaning to application Paul saw as coming from the Lord. The word used for “understanding” is σύνεσις [sunesis] with the etymological meaning of “to be together.” Thus meaning and application have come together so that we know clearly what the words are saying to us as sources guiding us in our service to Christ.

b. Focusing on Christ, vv. 8-13

GNT	NASB	NRSV	NLT
<p><2:8> Μνημόνευε Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐγγεγερμένον ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβίδ, κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου, <2:9> ἐν ᾧ κακοπαθῶ μέχρι δεσμῶν ὡς κακοῦργος, ἀλλὰ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ δέδεται· <2:10> διὰ τοῦτο πάντα ὑπομένω διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ σωτηρίας τύχωσιν τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ μετὰ δόξης αἰωνίου. <2:11> πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· εἰ γὰρ συναπεθάνομεν, καὶ συζηήσομεν· <2:12> εἰ ὑπομένομεν, καὶ συμβασιλεύσομεν· εἰ ἀρνησόμεθα, κάκεῖνος ἀρνήσεται ἡμᾶς· <2:13> εἰ ἀπιστοῦμεν, ἐκεῖνος πιστὸς μένει, ἀρνήσασθαι γὰρ ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται.</p>	<p>8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, 9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. 10 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. 11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; 12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.</p>	<p>8 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David—that is my gospel, 9 for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. 10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. 11 The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; 13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.</p>	<p>8 Never forget that Jesus Christ was a man born into King David's family and that he 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 I am willing to endure anything if it will bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen. 11 This is a true 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 himself.</p>

Notes:

This second segment centers around an emphasis upon Christ and upon Paul’s commitment to Christ in behalf of the people he served. This is seen in verses 8-10. The second part, vv. 11-13, appeals to a piece of pre-formed Christian tradition, a saying counted as reliable and trustworthy.

Paul begins with an admonition to Timothy: “Remember Jesus Christ,” (NRSV) [Μνημόνευε Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν]. The present tense imperative form of the Greek verb is closer to the idea of the NLT “Never forget...” For Paul and for Timothy, everything they did was to revolve around Jesus Christ and getting the message out about Him.

What is it about Jesus that is so important? The qualifying statements “risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,” (NRSV) [ἐγγεγερμένον ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβίδ, κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου], echos numerous confessional statements scattered throughout Paul’s letters: [Christ is risen](#); Christ is a [descendant of David](#). Thus Paul further qualifies this Christ as “according to my gospel, 9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned” (NASB) [κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου, ἐν ᾧ κακοπαθῶ μέχρι δεσμῶν ὡς κακοῦργος, ἀλλὰ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ δέδεται]. He gladly endured

shame and dishonor for the sake of this Christ as a prisoner with tones of being a criminal. But he quickly adds that this gospel (=the word of God) does not stand chained and limited by his imprisonment. Commitment to the risen Christ as God's anointed Deliverer is foundational, not just to Paul and Timothy, but to every person claiming to be Christian. Without it, no legitimate Christianity exists. That is just as true today as it was in the 60s of the beginning Christian century.

For Paul this commitment was the basis ("for this reason" [διὰ τοῦτο]) for his sacrificial ministry to the elect of God: "Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory" (NRSV) [διὰ τοῦτο πάντα ὑπομένω διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ σωτηρίας τύχωσιν τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ μετὰ δόξης αἰωνίου]. The ultimate goal of all this sacrifice is stated in the purpose clause "so that..." [ἵνα]. It is that those chosen by God may indeed receive eternal salvation in the overpowering glory (divine presence) of God that endures for all eternity. Again, James Dunn has some helpful observations:

The gospel was the good news of Christ Jesus, in whom was salvation. The characterization of the beneficiaries as "the elect" was one of the terms Paul had carried over from his earlier Jewish self-understanding (e.g., Ps 105:6; Isa 42:1; 45:4; 65:9; Sir 47:22); it underpinned his claim that the salvation into which Gentiles were entering was the salvation promised to his own people by the God of Israel. The talk of "eternal glory" carries forward the honor/shame motif of the previous chapter and implicit in the contrasts of vv. 8-10: This glory comes not through great acts of heroism and civic honors, but through the rescue and wholeness offered by the gospel of the cross, proclaimed by a man in chains.

As reinforcement of this point, Paul appeals to an existing set of sayings in early Christian tradition that is introduced as a "faithful saying" [πιστὸς ὁ λόγος]. This phrase first appears in [1 Tim. 1:15](#), "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all" (NRSV) [πιστὸς ὁ λόγος καὶ πάσης ἀποδοξῆς ἄξιος...]. Next in [1 Tim. 3:1](#), "the say is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task..." (NRSV) [πιστὸς ὁ λόγος...]. Thirdly, in [1 Tim. 4:9](#), "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance" (NRSV) [πιστὸς ὁ λόγος καὶ πάσης ἀποδοξῆς ἄξιος...].

The set of sayings stand in poetical structure in the form of first class conditional sentences in the Greek text, which assumes the occurrence of the "if-clause":

If we have died with him,
we will also live with him;
if we endure,
we will also reign with him;
if we deny him,
he will also deny us;
if we are faithless,
he remains faithful
for he cannot deny himself.

We cannot know with certainty how this material was used in the early church, perhaps as a hymn or as a confessional statement repeated as a part of worship. The structure of the stanzas are as follows: the first two are positive oriented and echo similar declarations of Paul elsewhere in the Pauline collection of letters. The third and fourth lines reverse the perspective to the negative actions of denial and faithlessness. As Mt. 10:33 asserts ("but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven" NRSV), Paul asserts that denial of Jesus has disastrous consequences in eternity. Along somewhat similar lines in the "if-clause" the issue of faithlessness is raised. But as the OT repeatedly asserted, even though the Israelites often proved to be faithless to their promises to God, God would not reciprocate by breaking his promises to them. Paul had previously addressed this in [Rom. 3:3-7](#): "3 What if some were unfaithful? Will their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? 4 By no means! Although everyone is a liar, let God be proved true, as it is written, "So that you may be justified in your words, and prevail in your judging." 5 But if our injustice serves to confirm the justice of God, what should we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) 6 By no means! For then how could God judge the world? 7 But if through my falsehood God's truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 And why not say (as some people slander us by saying that we say), "Let us do evil so that good may come"? Their condemnation is deserved!" (NRSV).

As such this hymn stands as a powerful encouragement to service! Both to Timothy and to us today!

GNT

⟨2:1⟩ Σὺ οὖν, τέκνον μου, ἐνδυναμοῦ ἐν τῇ χάριτι τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ⟨2:2⟩ καὶ ἃ ἤκουσας παρ' ἐμοῦ διὰ πολλῶν μαρτύρων, ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, οἵτινες ἱκανοὶ ἔσονται καὶ ἑτέρους διδάξαι. ⟨2:3⟩ συγκακοπάθησον ὡς καλὸς στρατιώτης Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. ⟨2:4⟩ οὐδεὶς στρατευόμενος ἐμπλέκεται ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, ἵνα τῷ στρατολογήσαντι ἀρέσῃ. ⟨2:5⟩ ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ἀθλῆ τις, οὐ στεφανοῦται ἐὰν μὴ νομίμως ἀθλήσῃ. ⟨2:6⟩ τὸν κοπιῶντα γεωργὸν δεῖ πρῶτον τῶν καρπῶν μεταλαμβάνειν. ⟨2:7⟩ νόει ὃ λέγω· δώσει γάρ σοι ὁ κύριος σύνεσιν ἐν πᾶσιν.

⟨2:8⟩ Μνημόνευε Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐγγηγεμένον ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ, κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου, ⟨2:9⟩ ἐν ᾧ κακοπαθῶ μέχρι δεσμῶν ὡς κακοῦργος, ἀλλὰ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ δέδεται· ⟨2:10⟩ διὰ τοῦτο πάντα ὑπομένω διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ σωτηρίας τύχωσιν τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ μετὰ δόξης αἰωνίου. ⟨2:11⟩ πιστὸς ὁ λόγος·

εἰ γὰρ συναπεθάνομεν, καὶ συζήσομεν·

⟨2:12⟩ εἰ ὑπομένομεν, καὶ συμβασιλεύσομεν·

εἰ ἀρνησόμεθα, κακεῖνος ἀρνήσεται ἡμᾶς·

⟨2:13⟩ εἰ ἀπιστοῦμεν, ἐκεῖνος πιστὸς μένει,

ἀρνήσασθαι γὰρ ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται.

NASB

1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 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. 3 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 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. 5 Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. 7 Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, 9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. 10 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. 11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; 12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

NRSV

1 You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; 2 and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. 3 Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer. 5 And in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules. 6 It is the farmer who does the work who ought to have the first share of the crops. 7 Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

8 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David—that is my gospel, 9 for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. 10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. 11 The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; 13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

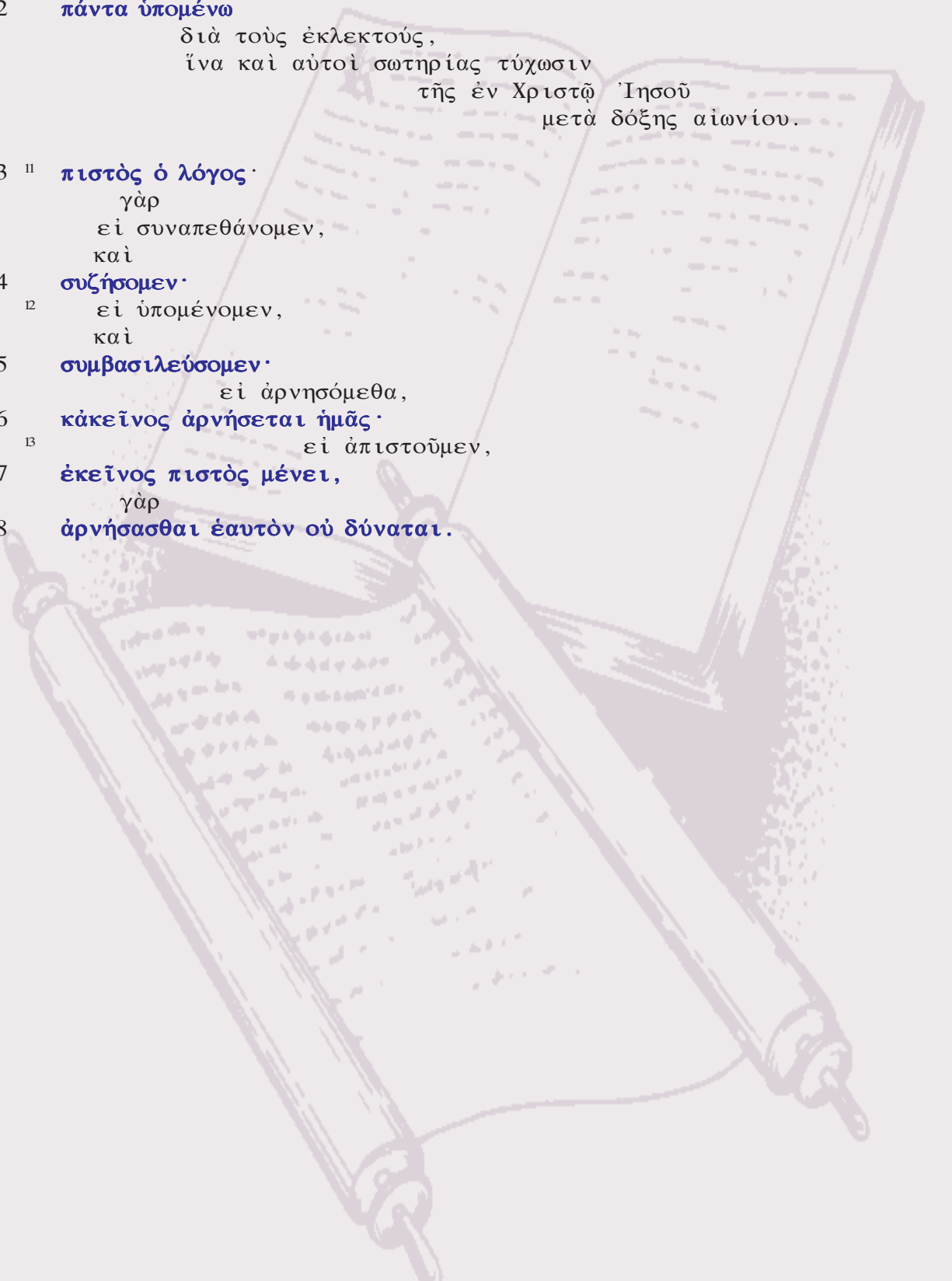
NLT

1 Timothy, my dear son, be strong with the special favor God gives you in Christ Jesus. 2 You have heard me teach many things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Teach these great truths to trustworthy people who are able to pass them on to others. 3 Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 And as Christ's soldier, do not let yourself become tied up in the affairs of this life, for then you cannot satisfy the one who has enlisted you in his army. 5 Follow the Lord's rules for doing his work, just as an athlete either follows the rules or is disqualified and wins no prize. 6 Hardworking farmers are the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor. 7 Think about what I am saying. The Lord will give you understanding in all these things.

8 Never forget that Jesus Christ was a man born into King David's family and that he 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 I am willing to endure anything if it will bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen. 11 This is a true 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 himself.

GNT Diagram

- 1 οὖν
1 **Σὺ... ἐνδυναμοῦ**
τέκνον μου,
ἐν τῇ χάριτι
τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,
- 2 καὶ
ἃ ἤκουσας
παρ' ἐμοῦ
διὰ πολλῶν μαρτύρων,
2 **ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις,**
οἵτινες ἱκανοὶ ἔσονται
καὶ
----- ἐτέρους διδάξαι.
- 3 **συγκακοπάθησον**
ὡς καλὸς στρατιώτης Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.
- 4 **οὐδεὶς... ἐμπλέκεται**
στρατευόμενος
4 **οὐδεὶς... ἐμπλέκεται**
ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις,
ἵνα τῷ στρατολογήσαντι ἀρέση.
- 5 δὲ
ἐὰν καὶ ἀθλῆ τις,
5 **οὐ στεφανοῦται**
ἐὰν μὴ νομίμως ἀθλήσῃ.
- 6 **δεῖ... τῶν καρπῶν μεταλαμβάνειν.**
τὸν κοπιῶντα γεωργὸν
6 **δεῖ... τῶν καρπῶν μεταλαμβάνειν.**
πρῶτον
- 8 **νάει**
ὃ λέγω·
γάρ
9 **δώσει σοι ὁ κύριος σύνεσιν**
ἐν πᾶσιν.
- 10 **Μνημόνευε Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν**
ἐγγεγερμένον
ἐκ νεκρῶν,
ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ,
κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου,
9 **Μνημόνευε Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν**
ἐν ᾧ κακοπαθῶ
μέχρι δεσμῶν
ὡς κακοῦργος,

- ἀλλὰ
11 **ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ δέδεται·**
10 διὰ τοῦτο
12 **πάντα ὑπομένω**
διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς,
ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ σωτηρίας τύχωσιν
τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ
μετὰ δόξης αἰωνίου.
- 13 ¹¹ **πιστὸς ὁ λόγος·**
γὰρ
εἰ συναπεθάνομεν,
καὶ
14 **συζήσομεν·**
12 εἰ ὑπομένομεν,
καὶ
15 **συμβασιλεύσομεν·**
εἰ ἀρνησόμεθα,
16 **κάκεϊνος ἀρνήσεται ἡμᾶς·**
13 εἰ ἀπιστοῦμεν,
17 **ἐκεῖνος πιστὸς μένει,**
γὰρ
18 **ἀρνήσασθαι ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται.**
- 
- An illustration of an open book and a scroll. The open book is positioned in the upper right, showing two pages with faint, illegible text. Below it, a scroll is unrolled, also showing faint text. The scroll is held by two wooden rods with metal clasps. The entire illustration is rendered in a light, sketchy style with a purple tint.