

2 Timothy 2:8-13 “Offspring of David, Part 2” (December 11, 2011)
Micah 4:1-5:6
Psalm 80
Matthew 2:1-15

Through Micah God promised that the day would come when the mountain of the LORD
would be established as the highest of the mountains –
when the Word of the LORD would go forth from Zion
and the nations would submit to the offspring of David.

The day would come when every man would sit under his vine and fig tree,
and nation would no longer rise up against nation.

And God would bring back his exiled people from Babylon
and would restore the broken down house of David,
and one would come forth from Bethlehem
and “he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.”

The Son of David will bring the nations together under his rule and dominion.

We respond to this good news with Psalm 80,
a Psalm that asks God to do precisely what he has promised –
Using the image of a vine,
the Psalmist tells the story of how God once delivered Israel from Egypt,
and planted his vine in the land.
But now the boars have invaded and ravaged the vine –
“so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit.”
And he asks God to look down from heaven and see,
to “have regard for this vine,
the stock that your right hand planted,
and for the son whom you made strong for yourself.”
“Let your hand be on the man of your right hand,
the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself.”

“Restore us, O LORD God of hosts!
Let your face shine, that we may be saved!”

Sing Psalm 80
Read 2 Timothy 2:1-13

Paul urges Timothy, “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David.”
“Offspring of David” is a very potent phrase.
It evokes all the prophecies from the OT of what God would do for David’s house.”

And we hear of what this means in our Gospel lesson, Matthew 2:1-15

Matthew reminds us of Micah's prophecy –
regarding the shepherd that would come from Bethlehem.

Jesus is the Offspring of David –
and he has established his throne through his resurrection from the dead
and ascension to the right hand of the Father.

Jesus reigns.
His kingdom has been established.
And he sits on the throne of his father David forever!

Jesus Christ has been seated above all power and dominion,
and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.
And God has put “all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,
which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 2:21-23)

Jesus *now* rules over all things –
but his rule is especially manifested in the church.

That's why Paul opens his discussion of the rule of Christ
by talking (as we saw last time)
about the importance of the Succession of Apostolic Doctrine. (verses 1-7)

Reformed and Presbyterian churches affirm the concept of apostolic succession –
the idea that all ministers should be ordained by someone
who was ordained by an apostle.

The doctrine of apostolic succession is designed to maintain sound doctrine,
though it is not a magical formula!

We'll see next week that Paul himself says that two formerly orthodox teachers
have swerved from the truth.

There is no earthly power that can guarantee orthodoxy.
Remember, *Jesus* is King!
He is the one who reigns over all things.
As Paul said in 1:12 –
“I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able
to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.”
We need to believe that God will do what he has promised!
Jesus said that the gates of hell will not prevail against his church.

And our confidence is grounded in the gospel – the good news – that Paul preached.
As he said to Timothy in 2:8

1. The Succession of Apostolic Doctrine (2:1-7)

[last week]

2. The Content of Apostolic Doctrine (2:8-10)

a. Jesus Christ: Resurrection, Incarnation, and Preaching (2:8)

⁸*Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel,*

What is Timothy supposed to entrust to faithful men?

The message of the Resurrection and Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

And not just any idea about the resurrection and incarnation of Jesus,
but the resurrection and incarnation, *as preached in my gospel.*

Apostolic succession only works if you have apostolic doctrine.

Yes, it is true that Paul promises Timothy that the Lord will give him understanding –
but the test of Timothy’s understanding is Paul’s gospel.

As Paul says to the Galatians,

if we, or an angel from heaven, preaches a different gospel,
let him be anathema.

While there are lots of different parts to Paul’s teaching,

the center of Paul’s thought – the heart of the gospel –
is Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David.

Now, last week I emphasized the incarnation (partly in the light of the Advent season),
but I want you to see that for Paul,

“offspring of David” is not *just* a statement about the incarnation
(or just about the virgin birth).

In Acts 13, when Paul is preaching in the synagogue,

he recounts the history of God’s dealings with his people,
from Egypt, the Conquest, the Judges, Samuel, Saul, and David.

And he says of David, “Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus,
as he promised...” (13:23)

Then he recounts the story of John the Baptist and Jesus,
concluding by saying,

“And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers,
this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus,
as also it is written in the second Psalm,
‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’”

Notice how he speaks of the resurrection of Jesus as the declaration of his Sonship.

And he says that Jesus’ resurrection is *how* Jesus has received

“the holy and sure blessings of David,”

quoting from Psalm 16, “you will not let your Holy One see corruption.”

Psalm 16 had promised that the Son of David (God’s Holy One)
would not see corruption.

Therefore the resurrection *demonstrates* that Jesus is the Son of David.

The incarnation and the virgin birth are essential parts of the gospel message,
because in the incarnation the Creator joined himself to the creation –
in the virgin birth the One who was in the beginning with the Father
took to himself our flesh and blood.

And so Matthew will emphasize the royal line of David in his genealogy,
showing how Jesus rightly inherits the Davidic throne.

But the center of Paul's thought – the heart of the gospel –
is Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David.

Paul will emphasize the resurrection as entitling Jesus to the throne of David.

You see – this is the gospel!
The good news is that the Son of God has come in the flesh
to redeem those who were in bondage to sin and death.

And so I say to you:
Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David,

And it is this gospel, Paul says,

b. I Am Bound – the Word Is Free! (2:9)
⁹ for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound!

When you have this gospel – this good news – at the center of your life,
then you can endure anything!

Paul is bound with chains as a criminal.
He is languishing in a Roman prison – about to die.

But he almost laughs at his suffering
because the word of God is not bound!

The Word is free – and there is nothing that anyone can do to stop it!
I know a man who has suffered precisely like Paul for preaching Christ in Eritrea.
And he has precisely Paul's confidence in the gospel.

The Word of God is not bound!
I may be bound – I may be chained as a criminal.
But the Word will still go forth and accomplish the purpose for which it was sent.

Martin Luther often commented on how little he had to do with the spread of the reformation.
Luther rarely left Saxony.
It was the Word that went forth and accomplished its purpose.

The Word of God is not bound.

But what does Paul mean by “the word of God”?

There are three things that scripture can mean by “the word of God.”

- 1) the Word of God incarnate (think of John 1:1 – in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us);
- 2) the Word of God in scripture (e.g., Matthew 15:6, where Jesus says that the Pharisees make void the word of God for the sake of their traditions.)
- 3) or the Word of God as preached (e.g., Acts 4:31, where the apostles “speak the word of God with boldness.”

Or, as I suspect is the case here,

“the Word of God” can mean “all of the above.”

There are many passages where “the word of God” clearly refers to the *content* of the Word rather than the form.

Think of Jesus statement that the seed that is sown is “the word of God.”

That refers to the content of scripture *that is preached*.

And, as Paul says here in 2 Timothy,

that content of scripture that is preached,

is nothing less than Jesus Christ, risen from the dead the offspring of David!

So when Paul says that the Word is not bound,

he is not referring exactly to Jesus –

but neither is he referring precisely to the Bible –

nor to preaching *by itself*.

You can tie up all the preachers and throw them in prison –

but you cannot chain the word of God.

You could burn all the Bibles in the world –

but you cannot destroy the word of God.

The word of God (as Hebrews says) is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword.

That is true of the written word –

it is true of the preached word –

but it is only true of the written and preached word of God

because it is first true of the Word who was in the beginning with the Father.

The Word of God is more than words on a page.

The Word of God is more than sound waves bouncing off your ear.

The Word of God has been with the Father from before all times and ages,

because in the beginning was the Word,

and the Word was with God,
and the Word *was* God.

And, so Paul says:

c. So I Endure Everything for the Sake of the Elect that They May Obtain Salvation (2:10)

¹⁰*Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

Notice that in verse 10, Paul comes back to the idea of suffering *for a goal* –
in this case, “for the sake of the elect,
that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

Paul does not seek out suffering for its own sake.
He suffers for the sake of the elect – for the sake of God’s chosen ones.
You might wonder at this.
If God has chosen them, then why should Paul suffer?
Why not just sit back and enjoy life and let God work?

Because God has not only chosen his people,
he has also ordained that they will only obtain salvation
through the suffering of his servants.

When we talk about election we are not just talking about *who* will be saved,
we are also talking about *how* they will be saved!

Paul does not know who the elect are.
Therefore when he says “I endure everything for the sake of the elect,”
he is talking about those whom God has chosen.
And *whoever they are*, Paul endures any suffering for them
so that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

I want to go find the elect!
I know that they are out there.
Luke tells us in Acts 13:48 –
the same passage we referred to earlier,
that “as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.”

I know that God has appointed some to eternal life,
and I will endure anything
so that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Paul suffers for the sake of the elect, because he understands
that people will only be saved
through the *Word*
through the proclamation of the incarnation and resurrection of Christ.

And people will only be saved
through the *suffering* of the ministers (the servants) of the gospel.

Paul and Timothy – and all who are ordained after them –
all who share in that apostolic succession –
must also share in the sufferings of Christ;

because it is only through sharing in his sufferings
that we will also come to share in his resurrection glory.

And again, while this is primarily true for ministers of the gospel –
it is also true for all Christians,
as Paul concludes our passage:

3. A Faithful Saying: He Is Faithful (2:11-13)

¹¹*The saying is trustworthy, for:*

*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 also will deny us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful—
for he cannot deny himself.*

The first two statements are of great comfort:

“if we have died with him, we will also live with him.”

As Jesus said, “if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself,
take up his cross, and follow me.” (Mark 8:34)

There is no way to glory except the cross.

We do not seek out suffering because we like it!

We endure suffering for the sake of the elect, that they may obtain salvation.

And that is why we endure – because

“if we endure, we will also reign with him.”

But then Paul warns that if we deny him, he also will deny us.

Jesus said:

“Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me.”

Every day you are faced with a choice:

deny yourself and follow Jesus,

or deny Jesus and follow your own way.

Will you say “no” to yourself?

Or will you say “no” to Jesus?

If, when the rubber meets the road – when the day of testing comes –
if you deny him, he also will deny you.

You've experienced this!

Because there have been times when you *have* denied Jesus.

There have been times when you chose to be selfish:

you denied him – you said “no” to Jesus;

and you have paid for that when he denied you –

when he said “no” to you,

and so you drifted further and further from your Lord.

But Paul gives us some reason for hope.

Because he concludes,

“if we are faithless, he remains faithful – for he cannot deny himself.”

God is faithful.

He has promised.

The elect *will* obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

He cannot deny himself –

he cannot say “no” to himself.

God will always do what he has promised!

And this gives us hope – and it calls us to repentance!

Because he is faithful.

As John will say,

“if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

I want to conclude by reflecting on how Paul's discussion of Christ's kingship
(how he is the risen “offspring of David”)
should affect your life.

Why do you do what is right – why do you “endure” all things?

The reason why you do what is right is *not* primarily for “virtue's” sake.

It is not because of your profound sense of *duty*.

Rather, the reason why you do what is right – why you endure all things –

is because you long to see Jesus,

you long to be with him,

you long to *reign* with him!

Too often we think of this age as the age when all the fun stuff happens.

The age to come is just sitting on clouds, playing harps –

or roasting in hell –

and since that sounds pretty awful,

I guess I'd rather be bored than roasted!

I'll admit that we don't have much in terms of the *details* of the age to come.

But Paul describes it as *reigning* with Christ.

Do you remember the best day of your life?

Do you remember your most glorious triumph?

(hitting that jump shot from the corner to give your team the victory?)

What Paul is talking about is *better than that*.

I know that people have come up with all sorts of wacky ideas about what we'll be doing.

But the *reason* why it will be *better than all that*,

is because we'll be reigning *with Jesus*.

Often you hear people say,

"I'm looking forward to seeing mother again" –

or

"I can't wait to see my husband again."

The reason why the biblical authors don't spend much time on the details of the new creation

is because they are so preoccupied with Jesus,

that they don't seem to care much about the rest.

You need to discipline and train yourself to love Jesus in such a way

that to see him – to be with him – is all you desire!

David Powlison rightly says:

"You cannot face death with true, honest courage

unless you are looking forward to meeting Jesus—

the One who faced death for you and who is now alive and with you.

Are you looking forward to meeting the Lamb of God who took away your sins?

Do you long to hear your Good Shepherd call you by name?

Are you looking forward to going to your heavenly Father's home?

It's a home of glory, filled with the radiance of the Holy Spirit.

In God's home all wrongs are made right,

all darkness becomes bright,

all losses are restored,

and all tears are wiped away." <http://www.ccef.org/facing-death-hope-living-what-lasts>

What motivates Christian obedience is not the Law –

but the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus!