

## BE STRONG IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS

### TEXT: II TIMOTHY 2:1-4

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. Often in Scripture, we see that believers are encouraged to "be strong." Here are just a few examples:
  - Deuteronomy 31:6 says, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."
  - Joshua 1:9 says, "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."
  - In Daniel 10:19, the angel said to Daniel, "O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong."
  - First Corinthians 16:13 says, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."
  - Ephesians 6:10 says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."
  - And then we see in II Timothy 2:1, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."
2. To "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," means we are depending upon God's grace. It means God is working in us and through us. It is His strength, not ours.
3. Paul said in I Corinthians 15:10, "I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
4. In Ephesians 3:7 Paul says, "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power."
5. And in Ephesians 3:20 -- "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."
6. Philippians 2:13 says, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."
7. Colossians 1:29 says, "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."
8. We are saved by grace, and we serve God by God's grace. Second Peter 3:18 says, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever."

9. We grow in grace as we allow God to fill us with His strength (II Tim. 2:1).

#### I. THERE IS A PATTERN TO FOLLOW

#### II. THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY

#### III. THERE IS A PERSON TO PLEASE

#### **I. THERE IS A PATTERN TO FOLLOW (2:2).**

1. "And the (spiritual, Biblical, doctrinal) things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.
2. This pattern is found all throughout Scripture. For example, Samuel and Elijah and Elisha had their school of the prophets.
3. Paul taught Timothy, and then Timothy taught other "faithful men," who in turn went on to teach others, and so on.
4. The idea here is to entrust something (in this case, God's Word) to another for safekeeping. The transmission of Christian truth must not be left to chance. It must be "committed to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2:2).
5. In this manner, Christian teaching is preserved and passed down from generation to generation. This is why Sunday School is very important.
6. This is why Christian schools are very important.
7. This is why Christian colleges are very important.
8. Some churches, like the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church, speak of so-called "apostolic succession." But here in II Timothy 2:2 we see genuine apostolic succession, and it is a succession of apostolic doctrine, not a succession of bishops.
9. We have a responsibility to reach our generation. Acts 13:36 says, "David...served his own generation by the will of God."
10. We have a responsibility to reach our generation with the Gospel, but also to pass it on to the next generation. This is not just my responsibility as a pastor. This commandment applies to all Christians -- parents, church workers, etc.

#### **II. THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY (2:3, 4).**

1. Second Timothy 2:3 says, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Many Christians do not want to endure any hardness.

2. Spurgeon said, "If thou desirest delicacy, join not the army. A soldier's calling is not to be linked with softnesses, and if thou desirest ease and comfort, join not the army of Christ."
3. Our Lord said in Luke 9:23, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."
4. A.W. Tozer said,

Unannounced and mostly undetected there has come in modern times a new cross into popular evangelical circles. It is like the old cross, but different: the likenesses are superficial; the differences, fundamental...The new cross does not slay the sinner, it redirects him. It gears him into a cleaner and jollier way of living and saves his self-respect. To the self-assertive it says, "Come and assert yourself for Christ." To the egotist it says, "Come and do your boasting in the Lord." To the thrill-seeker it says, "Come and enjoy the thrill of Christian fellowship." The Christian message is slanted in the direction of the current vogue in order to make it acceptable to the public. The philosophy back of this kind of thing may be sincere but its sincerity does not save it from being false. It is false because it is blind. It misses completely the whole meaning of the cross.

The old cross is a symbol of death. It stands for the abrupt, violent end of a human being. The man in Roman times who took up his cross and started down the road had already said good-bye to his friends. He was not coming back. He was going out to have it ended. The cross made no compromise, modified nothing, spared nothing; it slew all of the man, completely and for good. It did not try to keep on good terms with its victim. It struck cruel and hard, and when it had finished its work, the man was no more.

The race of Adam is under death sentence. There is no commutation and no escape. God cannot approve any of the fruits of sin, however innocent they may appear or beautiful to the eyes of men. God salvages the individual by liquidating him and then raising him again to newness of life.

5. I saw an article on the Internet that nearly made me sick. A wicked Hollywood movie producer Tyler Perry, known for making dirty movies, visited Bishop T.D. Jakes during a worship service at The Potter's House in Dallas, Texas. Mr. Perry bragged about how much money he has given away and declared he was donating \$1 million to Jakes. Perry began speaking in tongues and preaching, and then he laid his hands on Jakes. The worldly crowd stood to their feet applauding this foolishness.

6. This is what is popular in America today (and sadly we are exporting this garbage all over the world), but God is not in it (2:3, 4).
7. A woman once said to evangelist D.L. Moody, "I'd give the world to have the power with God that you have." Moody told her, "That's precisely what it will cost you."
8. There is a price to be paid. Our Lord said in Luke 14:28, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?"
9. Second Timothy 2:4 says, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Paul often used military terms.
10. In Philippians 2:25, Paul said, "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants."
11. In Philemon 2, Paul referred to Archippus as "our fellowsoldier."

Isaac Watts wrote:

*Am I a soldier of the cross,  
A follower of the Lamb,  
And shall I fear to own His cause,  
Or blush to speak His Name?*

*Must I be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
While others fought to win the prize,  
And sailed through bloody seas?*

*Are there no foes for me to face?  
Must I not stem the flood?  
Is this vile world a friend to grace,  
To help me on to God?*

*Sure I must fight if I would reign;  
Increase my courage, Lord.  
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,  
Supported by Thy Word.*

*Thy saints in all this glorious war  
Shall conquer, though they die;*

*They see the triumph from afar,  
By faith's discerning eye.*

*When that illustrious day shall rise,  
And all Thy armies shine  
In robes of victory through the skies,  
The glory shall be Thine.*

12. Soldiers go off to battle, oftentimes thousands of miles away from home and family, sleeping in tents, getting shot at, and enduring much hardship for their country, for their flag, and for freedom.
13. Soldiers give up their own businesses during the time for which they are enlisted, and they devote themselves entirely to the service of their country.
14. Albert Barnes said, "The farmer leaves his plow, and the mechanic his shop, and the merchant his store, and the student his books, and the lawyer his brief; and neither of them expect to pursue these things while engaged in the service of their country."
15. Today the Lord is looking for good soldiers for His army, but too many Christians are AWOL or MIA.
16. *Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,  
With the cross of Jesus going on before.  
Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;  
Forward into battle see His banners go!* -- Sabine Baring-Gould
17. The Christian life is a battlefield, not a playground.  
*It's a battlefield, brother, not a recreation room,  
It's a fight and not a game,  
Run if you want to, run if you will,  
But I came here to stay.*
18. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare" (I Timothy 1:18).
19. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (I Timothy 6:12).
20. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).
21. Paul kept on fighting, right to the end (II Tim. 4:6-8).
22. The figure of the soldier suggests obedience, discipline, keeping the body in subjection, and valor in defense of what is right. These qualities should be the mark of all true Christians.

23. Furthermore, the soldier of the cross must be separated from "the affairs of this life" (2:4). Some Christians need to "untangle" themselves!
24. Scriptural separation has been abandoned by many churches today. Consequently they are very worldly, carnal, and backslidden.

### **III. THERE IS A PERSON TO PLEASE (2:4b).**

1. The paramount concern of every Christian should be to please the Lord in every area of his or her life.
2. Albert Barnes said, "The grand purpose of the minister of the gospel is to please Christ. He is to pursue no separate plans, and to have no separate will, of his own; and...members of the churches shall be as entirely subordinate to the will of Christ, as an army is to the orders of its chief."
3. If God is not first in your life, then you need to get your priorities right.
4. Our Lord said in John 8:29, "For I do always those things that please him."
5. Beloved, there is a Person to please, but we have a tendency to spend a lot of time pleasing others and pleasing ourselves, but not enough time pleasing God.
6. Hebrews 11:5 says Enoch "had this testimony, that he pleased God."
7. Is that *your* testimony?
8. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. There is a pattern to follow (2:2); there is a price to pay (2:3, 4); and there is a Person to please (2:4b).
2. If we follow this pattern, and pay this price, and please this Person, then we will "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."