

2 Timothy 2:1-26
“Stay In The Fight”

~ INTRO ~

LET’S DIVE INTO OUR STUDY THIS MORNING...

- (2 Timothy) “Keep The Faith”
 - (Chapter 2) today.

#1 PAUL

- Is writing while he’s on death row in a Roman prison...
 - These are his final words to his “son in the faith”.

#2 TIMOTHY

- Losing his mentor & ministry partners (v. 15)...
 - Having his credibility questioned...
 - Over his heritage & youth (1 Tim. 4:12)

#3 EPHESUS

- Timothy is commissioned to lead a church in this pagan city...
 - With false teachers who are undermining his authority.
- This letter is Paul teaching Timothy how to stay strong in the faith...
 - And maintain spiritual health...
 - By not letting go of what he already has.

TODAY WE’RE LOOKING AT (CHAPTER 2)...

- Where Paul is teaching Timothy (tired & worn down)...
 - The secret to staying spiritually strong...
 - When he wants to **quit** or **compromise**

SO I’VE TITLED TODAY’S MESSAGE...

- “Stay In The fight”
 - (Read 2:1-2)

~ IDEA #1 – STAY FAITHFUL UNDER PRESSURE (vv. 1-13) ~

(vv. 1-2)

PAUL CHARGES TIMOTHY...

- To pass on what he’s learned from Paul over the years...
 - To faithful men that could do the same.

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- Focuses on character over competency.

(v. 3-7)

HERE ARE THREE ILLUSTRATIONS OF ENDURANCE...

- That speak to the three “D’s” that impact spiritual health:

#1 Distraction = Soldier

- Roman soldiers were legally barred from civilian entanglements
 - (Marriage / Business dealings / land purchases)
 - His life was structurally arranged around...
 - Undivided availability to his commander.
- For the Christian: This isn’t about inactivity vs. activity
 - It’s about which loyalty is sovereign when they conflict.
 - Work / marriage / responsibilities are important...
 - But should never make us unavailable to Christ.

#2 Disqualification = Athlete

- Competing lawfully meant more than just following the rules...
 - Had to meet eligibility requirements & abide by rules of the event.
 - If any corners were cut or rules were broken...
 - They would be disqualified – no matter how fast!
- For the Christian: life must be lived out...
 - **God’s way** on **His terms** by **His methods**...
 - Success isn’t just about the outcome but also the process.
 - (Ministry or living by faith)

#3 Discouragement = Farmer

- The farmer was the one doing the work of cultivation...
 - But would have to be patient to wait for the results.
 - This is a double-sided encouragement...
 - Patience & reward.
- For the Christian: the farmer reassures us...

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- Being faithful isn't a losing position...
 - Even though the results aren't always seen right away...
 - If you endure the labor you will eat the harvest.

(v. 8-13)

PAUL NAMES THE SOURCE (v.8) OF OUR ABILITY TO ENDURE...

- It's because of the victory we have in Jesus...
 - And HIS faithfulness in our lives. (vv. 11-13)

BUT NOTICE THAT ENDURANCE HAS A PURPOSE (v. 10)...

- So that others may enter into the Kingdom...
 - Because God still has a work for us to complete!

~ IDEA #2 –FIGHTING FOR TRUTH (vv. 14-26) ~

WHEN WE HEAR FIGHT FOR THE TRUTH WE PICTURE...

- Winning the argument, having the last word, proving we're right...
 - Paul is about to redefine what fighting looks like...
 - And it's the opposite of what we would expect.

(vv. 14-18)

PAUL MOVES FROM ENDURING HARDSHIP TO HANDLING TRUTH...

- Teaching Timothy to study the Word & keep it straight...
 - Against the crooked teachings of false teachers.

THE DANGER ISN'T KNOWING TOO MUCH INFORMATION...

- It's arguing for the sake of arguing...
 - Speculating / debating / chasing controversy...
 - Until the goal becomes winning instead of godliness.

PAUL ISN'T SAYING DOCTRINE DOESN'T MATTER...

- He even gives examples of real people teaching error (v. 18)...
 - The problem isn't deep study – it's quarreling...
 - This crowds out sound teaching & produces strife.

WE SEE THIS EVERYDAY ONLINE...

- A believer convinced they're defending truth...

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- Shares or reposts something that’s smearing the “other side”
 - And they feel they’ve done “the Lord’s work” ...
 - But they’ve left a trail of contempt instead of Christ.
- The culture calls this fighting for the truth...
 - Paul calls it a quarrel that *“ruins the hearers”* (v. 14)...
 - You can be right about the issue & wrong in the fight.

IN FACT, PAUL WRITES ELSEWHERE...

- The fight for truth was never meant to be won with worldly tools...
 - Louder arguments, sharper comebacks, winning the exchange...
 - These weapons don’t win a spiritual battle!

"We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NLT)

THIS SHOWS US THAT THE BATTLE FIELD...

- Is the **mind & thoughts** not the people in front of us...
 - And it’s fought with God’s weapons not ours.
- Paul says we *“capture”* rebellious thoughts for Christ...
 - We’ll see the enemy has *“taken captive”* people (v. 26).
- So the fight isn’t against the person...
 - It’s a rescue mission to save someone caught in captivity...
 - Which changes everything about how we fight.

THE WARNING FOR THE CHRISTIAN...

- Cut this quarreling mindset off before it spreads...
 - Because it’s cancerous (gangrene) to a life of faith (v. 17).

(vv. 19-23)

BEFORE PAUL GOES ANY FURTHER HE PLANTS SOMETHING SOLID...

- Right after naming teachers who wrecked people’s faith...
 - He says God’s work still remains secure...

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- *“The Lord knows those who are His”*

THIS IS THE ANCHOR FOR THE WHOLE FIGHT...

- False teaching can damage people but it can't topple what God built...
 - This tells us that we contend from a place of victory...
 - On the foundation that already stands in Christ.

"... upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it." (Matthew 16:18 NLT)

NOW THE ILLUSTRATION CHANGES TO VESSELS IN A HOUSE...

- Some for honor & some for dishonor...
 - Pointing to becoming the kind of person God can use.

IF WE CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM WHAT'S DISHONORABLE...

- We become useful – set apart, ready for good work (v. 21) ...
 - **Run** from what corrupts & chase after righteousness. (v. 22).

(vv. 24-26)

FINALLY PAUL REVEALS THE POSTURE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

- Who's standing on & contending for the truth...
 - It's not actually a fighting stance at all!

THE GOAL OF ANY DISPUTE OR CORRECTION IS RESTORATION...

- Knowing that our fight isn't with the person standing in front of us...
 - It's the unseen enemy of our soul who's holding them captive.

ONLY GOD IS ABLE TO CHANGE THE HEART OF MAN...

- Which is comforting to the one who's contending for the faith...
 - It removes the pressure of manufacturing an outcome...
 - And focuses only on the approach.
- It also guards against giving up on someone as a “lost cause” ...
 - Because God's in control of the outcome.

~ IN CLOSING ~

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LET’S BRING THIS HOME...

- Paul’s not simply giving Timothy ministry principles...
 - He’s repeatedly anchoring our lives in Christ Himself!

EVERY TIME TIMOTHY IS TOLD TO DO SOMETHING DIFFICULT...

- Paul points him back to Christ.
 - When he needed strength – Christ’s grace (v.1)
 - When he needed purpose – Christ as commander (v. 3)
 - When he needed endurance – Remember Jesus (v. 8)
 - When he needed a reason to endure – Salvation in Christ (v. 10)
 - When he needed hope – Live & reign with Christ (vv. 11-12)
 - When he feared his own weakness – Christ remains faithful (v. 13)
 - When he needed holiness – Those who bear Christ’s name...
 - Depart from sin (v. 19)

PAUL DOESN’T LEAVE TIMOTHY STARING AT THE FIGHT...

- He keeps lifting his eyes to the Savior...
 - And that’s where our strength comes from too.
- The same grace that saved you...
 - Is the same grace that strengthens you...
- The same Savior who called you...
 - Is the Savior who remains faithful to you...
 - So don’t quit...
 - “Stay in the fight!”