

SECOND TIMOTHY

Chapter 2

A Good Soldier of Christ Jesus

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men,[a] who will be able to teach others also. 3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. 5 An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. 7 Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. 8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, 9 for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! 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. 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.

2:2 *in the presence of many witnesses.* Refers to Paul's preaching and teaching, which Timothy had heard repeatedly on all three missionary journeys. (CSB)

Paul taught and publicly affirmed Timothy's calling as a pastor. (TLSB)

faithful men. Timothy must now teach and affirm other men who are qualified for the pastoral office. (TLSB)

2:3–6 Paul gives three examples for Timothy to follow: (1) a soldier who wants to please his commander; (2) an athlete who follows the rules of the game; and (3) a farmer who works hard. (CSB)

Paul uses three analogies to help Timothy understand his pastoral task: the Christian is like a combat soldier, a competing athlete, and a hardworking farmer. (TLSB)

2:3 *suffering as a good soldier.* Faithful to follow the command, regardless of the suffering involved. (TLSB)

2:4 *civilian pursuits.* Soldiers remain focused on combat duty, undistracted (e.g., Uriah; 2Sm 11:6–13). (TLSB)

one who enlisted him. God (cf 1:1). (TLSB)

2:5 *crowned.* In ancient times, victorious athletes would receive a laurel crown. (TLSB)

2:6 *to receive a share of the crops.* In this illustration, as in the previous two (soldier, vv. 3–4; athlete, v. 5), the main lesson is that dedicated effort will be rewarded—not necessarily monetarily, but in enjoyment of seeing the gospel produce changed lives. (CSB)

In a family or community effort, a hard worker has first claim on the results. (TLSB)

2:7 *give you understanding.* Working through His Word, the Lord opens eyes (Ps 119:18) and minds (cf Lk 24:45) to understand the Scriptures. (TLSB)

2:8 *remember Jesus Christ* – mnamoneue – “keep in mind, think of.” Paul urges ongoing reflection upon God’s salvation story, which centers on the death and resurrection of Jesus. He also draws on OT vocabulary of “remember” where God promises to remember his own covenant promises of grace and so act mercifully toward his people (Gen 8:1; 9:15; Lev 26:45; Ezek 16:60-63). God’s people are also to remember His saving acts (Deut 8:18; Ps 105:5) by participating in celebrations of them (Ex 13:3, the Passover; Ex 20:8, the Sabbath; cf. Deut 5:12) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 4)

Such remembering involves knowledge and a vicarious experience. Though the Word and Sacraments, God’s people themselves actually become part of the salvation story. Jesus often urged his followers to remember. In the Words of Institution he twice told them to celebrate his Holy Supper “in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:24-25) In Mt 16:9, Jesus encourages the disciples to remember the five loaves with which he fed thousands. In Jn 15:20 Jesus counsels his followers to “remember the words I spoke to you” as he anticipates that they, too, will face persecution as they follow him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 4)

raised from the dead, descended from David. Christ’s resurrection proclaims his deity, and his descent from David shows his humanity; both truths are basic to the gospel. Since Christ is God, his death has infinite value; since he is man, he could rightfully become our substitute. (CSB)

2:9 *I am suffering* – Paul’s entire ministry was one of suffering for the sake of the gospel (Acts 9:16; 2 Cor. 11:24-29), and now he finds himself in chains. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 4)

chained as a criminal. Apparently Paul was awaiting execution (see 4:6). (CSB)

bound with chains. Not merely under house arrest, as in Ac 28:30, but in a dungeon. *not bound!* The living and active Word (Heb 4:12) cannot be imprisoned or chained—it accomplishes God’s desires (Is 55:11). (TLSB)

2:10 *therefore* – dia touto – “therefore, for this reason,” points both to the preceding and the following. Looking back, Jesus, the seed of David, is risen; the promise has been fulfilled, God’s new covenant has been established, and God’s Word is not chained but is spreading and bringing many to faith. Looking ahead, Paul is ministering on behalf of the elect - God’s chosen in Christ – in order that they may obtain eternal glory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 4)

I endure everything for the sake of the elect. No suffering is too great if it brings about the salvation of God’s chosen ones who will yet believe. (CSB)

All Christians. (TLSB)

Being assured of God’s salvation does not lead to inactivity on Paul’s part. Endurance is no passive experience but is a spiritual self-discipline which enables one to stay on course, to keep one’s eye on the goal, and ultimately to obtain the victory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 4)

eternal glory. The final state of salvation. (CSB)

The fullness and conclusion of Christ's salvation, when the resurrected elect will live eternally with Him. (TLSB)

2:11–13 Probably an early Christian hymn. The point to which Paul appeals is that suffering for Christ will be followed by glory. (CSB)

2:11 *If we died with him, we will also live with him.* The Greek grammatical construction here assumes that we died with Christ in the past, when he died for us on the cross. We are therefore assured that we will also live with him eternally. (CSB)

2:12 *If we endure, we will also reign.* Faithfully bearing up under suffering and trial will result in reward when Christ returns. (CSB)

Life as a Christian does not exempt us from trial but calls us to endure. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 4)

If we deny him. See Mt 10:33. (CSB)

2:13 *he remains faithful* – God remains true to himself. He is love. He will remain faithful even if we are not. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 4)

God is love (1Jn 4:8), and He loves faithfully because it is part of His nature—even if no one should love Him in return. “He is unchangeable in will and essence” (FC SD XI 75). (TLSB)

If we are faithless, what then? Will the Lord also then become faithless toward us? Not so. Never. He would not be God if he were to become unfaithful. (PBC)

2:1–13 Using several comparisons (solider, athlete, and farmer), Paul calls Timothy to find other faithful men who are able to share in the pastoral office. Christians—including pastors—need one another, bearing one another's burdens. Paul describes his love for others with the words “I endure everything for the sake of the elect.” These words also describe Christ's love for all people. He bore all things for us, so we would not be crushed beneath our overwhelming load of sin and death. • Thank You, Lord, that You bore all things for me. Give me strength and love to help my neighbors bear their burdens. Amen. (TLSB)

A Worker Approved by God

14 Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. **15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. **16** But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, **17** and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, **18** who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. **19** But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.” **20** Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. **21** Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. **22** So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. **23** Have nothing to do with

foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant[e] must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

2:14–18 The wording of vv. 14–16 indicates that the heresy mentioned here is an early form of Gnosticism—the same as that dealt with in 1 Timothy and Titus (see note on 1Ti 1:3–11 and Introduction to 1 John: Gnosticism). Two leaders of this heresy, Hymenaeus (see 1Ti 1:20) and Philetus, denied the bodily resurrection and probably asserted that there is only a spiritual resurrection (similar to the error mentioned in 1Co 15:12–19). Gnosticism interpreted the resurrection allegorically, not literally. (CSB)

2:14 *them.* The faithful men of v 2. (TLSB)

not to quarrel about words. Avoid meaningless word games; speak God's Word simply and clearly. (TLSB)

ruins the hearers. The congregation would grow frustrated with petty fights. (TLSB)

2:15 *Do your best.* See 4:9, 21. (CSB)

present yourself. Timothy preaches not only in the presence of people but also of God, who sees all things. (TLSB)

approved. Timothy ought not to preach self-consciously, as if he needs first to prove himself. He must preach as one already accepted by God through faith in Jesus. Bas: “[They are] keeping plain and inviolate their faith in Father, Son and Holy Ghost” (NPNF 2 8:219) (TLSB)

word of truth. The gospel. (CSB)

rightly handling the word of truth. Faithfully preaching and teaching according to the “pattern” of 1:13. “We tell godly minds to consider the promises, and we teach about forgiveness of sins and about reconciliation, which happens through faith in Christ. Afterward, we add also the teaching of the Law. It is necessary to distinguish these things aright, as Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:15. We must see what Scripture says about the Law and what it says about the promises. For it praises works in such a way that it does not remove the free promise” (Ap V 67). (TLSB)

2:17 *spread like gangrene.* Highly pervasive decay or corruption. (TLSB)

Hymenaeus and Philetus. Two false teachers, perhaps also in Ephesus, who preached contrary to Timothy's preaching. (TLSB)

2:18 *resurrection has already happened.* The false teaching that denies the physical resurrection of the body and claims the resurrection is only a spiritual one, taking place in Baptism (such a teaching arose in later Gnosticism). Paul speaks of Baptism as a connection to Christ's death, in order that we might rise and “walk in newness of life” (Rm 6:4). But this Baptism also looks forward to the resurrection of all flesh on the Last Day. Cf 1Co 15:12–17; 2Th 2:2. (TLSB)

2:19 *God's firm foundation.* The church, which upholds the truth (1Ti 3:15). In spite of the heresy of Hymenaeus and Philetus, Timothy should be heartened to know that the church is God's solid

foundation. There are two inscriptions on it: One stresses the security of the church (“The Lord knows those who are his”; here “know,” as often in the Bible, means to be intimately acquainted with), while the other emphasizes human responsibility (“Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness”). (CSB)

seal. The church is owned and securely protected by God. (CSB)

The Lord knows ... his. A quotation from the LXX of Nu 16:5. (TLSB)

Let everyone ... iniquity. Source unknown; perhaps a popular saying. (TLSB)

2:20 *great house.* Having used three comparisons (vv 3–6) to describe the pastoral office, Paul now uses the example of a mansion to describe the difference between “rightly handling the word of truth” (v 15) and “irreverent babble” (v 16). (TLSB)

vessels. Cups and pots. An unclean vessel might get discarded. “He says clearly about the vessels of mercy that the Lord Himself has prepared them for glory. He does not say this about the damned. They themselves, and not God, have prepared themselves as vessels of damnation” (FC SD XI 82). (TLSB)

2:21 *cleanses himself.* A preacher must separate himself from the “wood and clay” (v 20) of the “irreverent babble” (v 16). (TLSB)

set apart as holy. Consecrated for God’s good purposes. (TLSB)

master. God. (TLSB)

2:22 *flee.* Resist by means of the Word. (TLSB)

youthful passions. Strong emotions and desires are often associated with youth. Timothy is still a fairly young man (see note, 1Tm 4:12). (TLSB)

pure heart. A heart having been cleansed by Christ’s forgiveness. Cf Ps 51:10. (TLSB)

2:24 *servant.* Gk *doulos*. Paul uses this term to describe both the pastoral office and his own apostolic office (Rm 1:1). (TLSB)

2:26 *captured by him.* False teachers and heretics, having abandoned the “pattern of the sound words” (1:13) and no longer “rightly handling the word of truth” (2:15), now serve the devil by destroying faith with their lies, which they claim is God’s truth. “[The devil] hates to hear God’s name and cannot remain long where it is spoken and called upon from the heart. Indeed, many terrible and shocking disasters would fall upon us if God did not preserve us by our calling upon His name. I have tried it myself. I learned by experience that often sudden great suffering was immediately averted and removed by calling on God. To confuse the devil, I say, we should always have this holy name in our mouth, so that the devil may not be able to injure as he wishes” (LC I 71–72). (TLSB)

2:14–26 Paul reminds Timothy that he and his fellow pastors must remain focused on their task of proclaiming God’s Word. They must not get bogged down in quarrels or give in to the temptations of the flesh (such as temper), but be generous and kind to all. When we keep a tight rein on our tongues, not allowing ourselves to quarrel or to fall into petty arguments, we also avoid dishonoring Christ’s name with our selfish words. When God’s Word is front and center in our minds and on our tongues, it acts powerfully to create ongoing repentance and faith. By giving His gift of repentance to us through His Word, our Lord Jesus Christ snatches us from “the

snare of the devil.” • Guard my tongue, O Lord, that it may be an instrument of Your praise.
Amen. (TLSB)