



1 AND 2 TIMOTHY: Week 3

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1 AND 2 TIMOTHY

WEEK 3: Grace to Overcome Anything

BIBLE: 2 Timothy 2:1 - *Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus.*

BOTTOM LINE: God's free-flowing grace is our true strength.

SUMMARY OF WEEKS 1 AND 2

Before we dive into Week 3 of our 1 and 2 Timothy series, let's do a quick recap.

These two books of the Bible are letters written by Paul to his "spiritual son," Timothy.

Much of the scripture that we've covered has been advice that Paul gave to Timothy about leading the church in Ephesus.

However, much of Paul's advice applies today, both for our churches and our personal lives.

In Week 1, we talked about facing our fears and living out our faith.

Timothy was young and likely would have experienced quite a bit of push-back when it came to leading a church.

Plus, he was leading a group of people toward Christ, an action worthy of death in those times.

We have to ask ourselves, "Would I risk it all—my reputation, my popularity, my life—for the Gospel?"

If we can answer "yes" to that question, then we can put ourselves in Timothy's shoes.

We learned that faith takes risk, but the reward is eternal.

Later in our study of 1 Timothy, we read about Paul's advice for church leadership—from deacons to women in the church.

Overall, the biggest takeaway was that a church should be focused on the truth: the message of Christ.

Paul warned Timothy not to allow false teachings and not to engage in arguments about random philosophies.

Today, these same issues try to creep into our church.

It seems that not much has changed between Timothy's church and today's Church.

Then, in Week 2, we talked about holy living.

This is something that we can pursue no matter what age we are.

Paul addresses Timothy's age when he tells him to set an example and not to let anyone look down on him because of his youth.

Paul knew that Timothy's influence would make a difference in his community.

In other words, our actions matter—no matter our age.

We must be careful that, as believers, we are always representing Christ to our circle of influence.

This is a lot of pressure, and no one said it would be easy...

But it's necessary.

Just as Paul advised Timothy to be holy, we must be holy.

LESSON

As we closed out our lesson last week, we talked about how God's way often stands in opposition to what our culture teaches.

Ask:

- Can you think of an example of how God's expectations/values are the opposite of our culture? (Some examples: God values humility, the world values popularity; God values THE truth, the world says "find your own truth"; God says the last shall be first, the world says "the strong survive and the weak perish".)

Today, we're going to talk about another contradiction.

In 2 Timothy 1 and 2, we see the common theme that God's grace is what gives us the strength to endure.

That doesn't seem to make sense at first glance.

Let's think about it.

How can grace—undeserved mercy—be the source of strength?
Don't we get "stronger" by being challenged?

Don't our muscles gain strength by taking on a heavy load?

If the answers to those questions are "yes," then how can God's *removal* of our burdens actually *strengthen* us?

How can forgiveness of our sins—lifting of the weight—give us strength?

The answer to this question lies in the mystery of the Gospel.

See, God's grace empowers us to stand firm in the truth.

When we recognize that the consequence of sin is death and that we don't have to worry about those consequences when we're in Christ, we experience the freedom of salvation.

That grace—once again, the undeserved mercy that God gives us—is fuel that drives us through hard times.

Read 2 Timothy 1.

1 This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I have been sent out to tell others about the life he has promised through faith in Christ Jesus.

2 I am writing to Timothy, my dear son.

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace.

3 Timothy, I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day, I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4 I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again.

5 I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. 6 This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

8 So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either even though I'm in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News. 9 For God saved us and

called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. 10 And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News. 11 And God chose me to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of this Good News.

12 That is why I am suffering here in prison. But I am not ashamed of it, for I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return.

13 Hold on to the pattern of wholesome teaching you learned from me—a pattern shaped by the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus. 14 Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you.

15 As you know, everyone from the province of Asia has deserted me—even Phygelus and Hermogenes.

16 May the Lord show special kindness to Onesiphorus and all his family because he often visited and encouraged me. He was never ashamed of me because I was in chains. 17 When he came to Rome, he searched everywhere until he found me. 18 May the Lord show him special kindness on the day of Christ's return. And you know very well how helpful he was in Ephesus.

God's values will stand in opposition to what the world values.

And, even though it doesn't seem to make sense to the world, God's grace is our true strength.

He doesn't value big muscles or long impressive resumes.

He values an obedient and joyful heart.

When the world mocks us for our beliefs, we can rest and have peace because we know we are no longer under the law that brings death.

We're under grace.

Paul, as he wrote this letter to Timothy, was in jail for spreading the Gospel, but he refused to recant the message.

Why?

Grace.

When we begin to understand the power that comes from living in forgiveness, we don't really care what others think.

We just want them to have what we have.

We are excited, not ashamed, about the Gospel.

And we love to watch others as they grow in God's grace just like we have.

Discussion questions:

1. Try to think of an example of grace in the Bible.

Why does this example stand out to you?

How does this example reveal the character of God?

2. Describe a time when grace has fueled you to act in love toward another person.

What happened?

What were the results of this grace?

3. Is it hard to accept and trust God's free gift of grace?

Why or how so?

Read 2 Timothy 2.

1 Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. 2 You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

3 Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them. 5 And athletes cannot win the prize unless they follow the rules. 6 And hardworking farmers should be the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor. 7 Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you understand all these things.

8 Always remember that Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David, 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** So 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 trustworthy 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 who he is.*

14 Remind everyone about these things, and command them in God's presence to stop fighting over words. Such arguments are useless, and they can ruin those who hear them.

15 Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. **16** Avoid worthless, foolish talk that only leads to more godless behavior. **17** This kind of talk spreads like cancer, as in the case of Hymenaeus and Philetus. **18** They have left the path of truth, claiming that the resurrection of the dead has already occurred; in this way, they have turned some people away from the faith.

19 But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and "All who belong to the Lord must turn away from evil."

20 In a wealthy home some utensils are made of gold and silver, and some are made of wood and clay. The expensive utensils are used for special occasions, and the cheap ones are for everyday use. **21** If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work.

22 Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.

23 Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. **24** A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. **25** Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. **26** Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

Yes, grace gives us strength.

But strength is useless if there is never any challenge.

God's Word reminds us, time and time again, that we will face trials.

However, we don't have to live in fear of the future.

In these scriptures, Paul encourages Timothy to be strong and steadfast in God's grace so that he can endure until the end.

And this is possible for Timothy, for you, and for me when we live the truth that God has had mercy on us, saved us from sin, and set us apart to be used by Him.

We don't have to wonder if He's got it all planned out.

And we don't have to wonder if He wins.

What *do* we have to do?

The answer is simple: answer the call to the Great Commission.

Make disciples, teach, and baptize.

And do it all with grace as your fuel.

If you are in Christ, you are God's instrument.

Extend grace to unbelievers, teach them the truth with love, and—if they listen and turn from their ways—watch Grace change them.

Nothing on earth is more beautiful than this, and we get to be a part of it.

Without grace, we'd still be on the outside looking in.

But here we are, standing in a space of forgiveness and living in the greatest blessing of all time: salvation.

Let's fix our eyes on God's beautiful plan of redemption for His people.

Let's be a part of God's plan to extend grace to a lost and dying world.

Discussion questions:

1. What obstacles stand in your way when it comes to fulfilling your role in the Kingdom of God?
2. Why are Christians ashamed of speaking the message of grace?

What do they fear in doing so?

3. How can our own sin get in the way of our calling to be used by God?