

Finishing Well with a Simple Gospel (2 Timothy 2.8-13)

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Dominant Thought: The good news of Jesus overcomes our weaknesses.

Objectives:

I want my listeners to understand the basics of the gospel of Jesus.

I want my listeners to feel encouraged by the gospel of Jesus.

I want my listeners to share the gospel of Jesus.

We had a special night Wednesday evening at youth group. We are teaching our student the six symbols of the Bible Story. Creation from [Genesis 1-2](#) is a down arrow. Fall into sin from [Genesis 3-11](#) is represented by an X. Promise of a Savior from [Genesis 12](#)-Malachi is symbolized by a horizontal arrow. Gospel of Jesus Christ found in Matthew-John is represented by a cross. Mission of the church from Acts-Revelation is described with another horizontal arrow. Finally, New Creation from [Revelation 21-22](#) is drawn with another down arrow.

This week, we were on the mission of the church, the witness of the church to tell the story of Jesus. We had four adult leaders share their testimonies of what life was like before Jesus, how they met Jesus, and what God is teaching them now. Three of the four shared their stories with tears. And I was not one of the four who shared. Their stories included words like broken, messy, alcoholism, abuse, meaning, and fulfillment. Their stories also included friends, family members, ministers, and Christian adults. They talked about how the church met them and walked with them through life's hardships. They testified to the truth of Scripture they learned and memorized. Their stories centered on Jesus and his grace to forgive us when we don't deserve it.

It was a beautiful night. It was a powerful night. Stories of the power of the gospel to transform lives. As we continue through 2 Timothy, we come to [2 Timothy 2](#) where we will explore Finishing Strong with a Simple Gospel.

I want to recommend and give thanks to a book Matt Proctor, president of Ozark Christian College. I've leaned on his chapter from *Finish Line Faith*, as a guide for this message.

The main idea for today's message is **“The good news of Jesus overcomes our weaknesses.”**

As we look at [2 Timothy 2](#), we will read [2 Timothy 2.1-13](#) with a focus on [2 Timothy 2.8-13](#).

As, we look at [2 Timothy 2.8-13](#), we discover three reminders associated with the gospel of Jesus, the good news of Jesus.

First, Remember God's grace in your past (2 Timothy 2.8). Paul commands Timothy, “Remember Jesus Christ.” We need reminders of Jesus. Before we think about Jesus, we need to remember what life was like before Jesus. Can you think back that far? What was life like for you? I can remember talking to my preacher in Seneca, MO when he asked me why I wanted to be baptized. I responded, “Being a good person is not enough. I need the grace of God.”

As we think about our stories, it is important to remember what life was like before we met Jesus.

Mary Ann Bird once experienced grace. She wrote a book, *The Whisper Test*. She writes:

I grew up knowing I was different, and I hated it. I was born with a cleft palate, and when I started school, my classmates made it clear to me how I looked to others: a little girl with a misshapen lip, crooked nose, lopsided teeth, and garbled speech.

When classmates asked, “What happened to your lip?” I'd tell them I'd fallen and cut it on a piece of glass. Somehow it seemed more acceptable to have suffered an accident than to have been born different. I was convinced that no one outside of my family could love me.

There was, however, a teacher in the second grade whom we all adored—Mrs. Leonard by name. She was short, round, happy—a sparkling lady.

Annually we had a hearing test...Mrs. Leonard gave the test to everyone in the class, and finally it was my turn. I knew from past years that as we stood against the door and covered one ear, the teacher sitting at her desk would whisper something, and we would have to repeat it back—things like, “The sky is blue,” or “Do you have new shoes?” I waited there for those words that God must have put into her mouth, those seven words that changed my

life. Mrs. Leonard said, in her whisper, “I wish you were my little girl” (quoted in *Finish Line Faith*, p. 43).

Paul wants Timothy to remember Jesus Christ. The one who wants us in His family.

Paul says, “Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead.” That’s Easter. But, before there is Easter morning, there is Good Friday, the day Jesus died on the cross. During one of our testimonies, one of the lessons shared was, “Life’s not fair.” Life is difficult and not fair. The cross of Jesus reminds us how unfair life is and how unfair grace is. The only who did not sin, Jesus Christ, the innocent one, died on a cross. The innocent one was punished for the guilty ones.

Jesus raising from the dead is the keystone belief of our faith. Jesus raising from the dead separates Christianity from every faith system in the world.

Paul commands Timothy remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead, descended from David. While Jesus rose from the dead, Paul wants to remind Timothy and us that Jesus was a man with flesh and blood with ancestors. Jesus was fully God and fully man. His great, great, great...granddad was king, King David. The gospel of Matthew begins this way, “This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham” ([Matthew 1.1](#)). Paul opens his letter to the Romans in [Romans 1:1–4](#) (ESV), “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Remember your past. Jesus, your Saving King died on a cross and rose from the dead. He can meet you where you are and overcome your weaknesses.

Paul says, “This is my gospel.” This is the good news that I preach and believe. I proclaim a Saving king to rescue us from our past. Remember this gospel, Timothy.

Second, Remember God’s help in your present ([2 Timothy 2.9-10](#)). It may seem strange to say, “Remember your present.” Maybe it’s better to say reflect, meditate, and think about your present. Paul states that this gospel is the cause of his suffering as a chained-up criminal. This week, 30 Christians in China were arrested as reported by the BBC (<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2pez2vg8wo>). Following Jesus may land

you in prison. Paul was chained up like a criminal, but then he declares, “But God’s word is not chained.” In each of those testimonies on Wednesday night, our friends shared how God’s Word directed their steps.

The gospel of Jesus empowers His followers to endure hardship for the sake of God’s chosen people. We endure hardship because we want more people to gain salvation with Jesus with eternal glory.

Do you need encouragement to continue with Jesus in the midst of a difficult season? Do you need strength to carry on? Paul says the gospel of Jesus helps him endure hardship. Earlier in [2 Timothy 2.3](#), Paul invites Timothy, “Join with me in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

In the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Derek Redmond of Great Britain was a favorite for a medal in the 400-meter race. The runners lined up, the gun sounded, and Derek quickly seized the lead. But with 175 meters to go, Derek suddenly pulled up and fell to the track, clutching his right leg. He had pulled his hamstring. The other runners finished, and tears began to stream down his face. It appeared his Olympic dream was over.

Up in the stands, Derek’s father, Jim, watched in disbelief. Immediately he began racing down from the top row to the track, bumping some people and sidestepping others in his hurry. Later he told the press, “I wasn’t going to be stopped by anyone.”

Down on the track, Derek Redmond grimaced in pain, but he refused the medical crew with the stretcher. Instead, in a moment that will live forever in my mind, Derek lifted himself to his feet and began to hobble down the track, hopping on one leg. He was not limping to the side of the track to drop out. No, he was going to finish the race on one leg. He would cross that finish line. The crowd stood to their feet and began to cheer, then roar.

Derek hobbled on, each step slower than the last, his face twisted in pain. Then unexpectedly, another figure ran onto the track behind him. Jim Redmond had leapt over the railing, evading security, and was now running alongside Derek. The father put his arm around the son, and the son collapsed momentarily, sobbing into the father’s shoulder. Together, arm in arm—with 65,000 people clapping, cheering, and crying—father and son finished the race (Story told by Matt Proctor in *Finish Line Faith*, p. 47).

The gospel of Jesus helps us in our present to finish strong. The good news of Jesus overcomes our weaknesses.

Third, Remember God's promises in your future ([2 Timothy 2.11-13](#)). In [2 Timothy 2.11-13](#), encounter another one of those five faithful sayings in these letters to Timothy and Titus. It is a trustworthy saying or a faithful word. You can trust these words. It is poetic. Some may consider it an early hymn.

“If we died with him, we will also live with him.” Paul said something similar in [Romans 6:8](#) (ESV), “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.” The context is baptism. If we unite ourselves with Jesus in His death, we will unite ourselves with Him in His resurrection.

“If we endure, we will also reign with Him.” Again, remember Jesus is our King, descended from King David. The prophet spoke these words to David in [2 Samuel 7:12](#) (ESV), “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.” It was a promise that his son Solomon would fulfill in the next generation and find complete fulfillment in Jesus.

“If we disown Him, He will also disown us.” Jesus said in [Matthew 10:32–33](#) (ESV), “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.” To disown Jesus is a willful act to deny Him without a desire to repent and return to Jesus.

“If we are faithless, He remains faithful for He cannot disown himself.” This phrase surprises me on the ending. I would expect it to read, “If we are faithless, He is faithless...” But Jesus remains faithful because He cannot be unfaithful or disown Himself. These words should encourage us when we slip into seasons where our faith is not as strong as we'd like. He still is faithful. The last two descriptions: disowning Jesus and He will disown us and faithless, He remains faithful may be the difference between Judas and Peter.

Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. He handed over his Rabbi with a kiss. Judas recognized that he had betrayed innocent blood. He returned the money and hung himself.

Peter denied Jesus three times. He was seized with godly repentance, wept bitterly, confessed His love for Jesus, and went on to lead God's people and preach the gospel until his final breath. One took matters into his own hands. The other returned to the nail scarred hands of His Savior.

Remember God's grace in your past, His help in your present, and His promise of your future.