

Sunday: October 09, 2022
Sermon: How Do You Remember Christ?
Scriptures: 2 Timothy 2:8-15, Luke 17:11-19

Timothy was a believer when Paul first encountered him in Lystra. Paul asked Timothy to accompany him on his Second Missionary Journey. Elsewhere, Paul refers to Timothy as “my beloved and faithful child in the Lord” and “my true child in faith.” Timothy became Paul’s most faithful associate.

Paul encouraged Timothy to “stir up the gift of God which is in you”, and not to be ashamed of the Gospel, or of Paul, who was writing from prison. Paul encouraged Timothy to teach others what he had learned from Paul. He warned Timothy that he must be prepared to endure hardship for Christ even as a soldier endures hardship and to compete by the rules even as an athlete does so to win the crown).

“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead” (v. 8a). Paul draws Timothy’s attention to the core of the Christian faith, “Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.” Christ’s resurrection serves as a promise that the God who raised Jesus “will also raise us up by his power” (1 Corinthians 6:14; see also 1 Corinthians 15).

“according to my Good News” (v. 8c). The Good News of a salvation is made possible by the grace of God—by the gift of his Son on the cross. Paul uses some form of that word, Good News, nearly fifty times, using it to incorporate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“in which I suffer hardship to the point of chains as a criminal” (v. 9a). **“But God’s word isn’t chained”** (v. 9b). God’s word is powerful. In the creation, “God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). By his word, God created an expanse, gathered the waters together in one place, brought forth vegetation, put lights in the sky, and created animals and humans (Genesis 1:6-27).

God’s word cannot be held by prison walls. It cannot be tamed by chains. It penetrates to our hearts and breaks the bonds its’ enemies would impose on it.

We have seen that happen. People in some parts of the world have done everything possible to restrict Christianity, but churches were filled to overflowing. Underground house churches are active in China.

“Therefore I endure all things for the chosen ones’ sake” When we hear the word chosen, we should recall that Israel was God’s chosen people or chosen nation. With the advent of Christ, the church became the people of God (Ephesians 2:12)—the household of God (Ephesians 2:19; 3:15; 4:6)—God’s children (Galatians 4:6-7; Romans 8:15).

Paul is saying that he is willing to endure all things, including the many things he has suffered, as well as his current imprisonment, for the sake of God’s chosen people.

“that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” v. 10. Paul believes that he and Timothy have obtained salvation. Paul is willing to make any and all sacrifices personally so that those whom God has chosen might be faithful and obtain the prize of salvation and eternal glory.

The idea of salvation is especially important in Paul's letters. While this salvation has a future dimension, it also has a present dimension. The salvation which Christ offers gives us freedom from the power of sin now, because we have died to sin (Romans 6:2) and have become new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17).

'For if we died with him, we will also live with him' (v. 11).

- "IF we died with him, then we will also live with him" (v. 11).
- "IF we endure, then we will also reign with him" (v. 12a).
- "IF we deny him, then he also will deny us" (v. 12b).
- "IF we are faithless, then he remains faithful" (v. 13).

'If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us' (v. 12). This verse presents a clear choice: Endurance or denial. The ability to stand one's ground when challenged—persevering in the faith in spite of difficult circumstances. The promise is that, if we endure for Christ, we will also reign with him. What a promise! Just consider the glory that Christ has on his heavenly throne. We shall share that glory—if we endure. We shall be "priests and kings." We will reign with Christ forever and ever.

We want to remember Jesus perhaps in two specific ways: Remember him as risen from the dead. And remember him as the offspring of David. Why these two things about Jesus?

Because if he is risen from the dead, he is alive and triumphant over death, including our death! "If the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to our physical bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you" Romans 8:11. Which means that no matter how serious the suffering becomes, the worst that it can do on this earth is kill you. And Jesus has taken the sting out of that enemy. He is alive. And you will be alive. "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" Matthew 10:28.

But more than that, the resurrection of Jesus was not a random resurrection. It was the resurrection of the son of David. "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, *the offspring of David*." Why does Paul say that? Because every Jewish person knew what that meant. That meant that Jesus is the Messiah. And that meant that this resurrection was the resurrection of an everlasting King. Listen to the words of the angel to Mary, Jesus's mother:

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Luke 1:31-33.

So, remember Jesus, the one you serve, and the one for whom you suffer. He is not just alive from the dead, but he is alive as a King who will reign forever — of his kingdom there will be no end. No matter what they do to you, you do not need to be afraid. You will live again. And you will reign with him.

Dear CUMC Family, we are to remember what matters the most: Jesus Christ, crucified and raised. Somehow, we know these things by heart and we are thankful for that. All throughout your week, may God remind you in your daily life that he is with you.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, in days that are hectic and filled with the attitude of "just get it done," help us remember why we are here together. May we remember the plan you have for us. Amen.