

## Sermon Notes, 2 Tim 2:8-13, Sunday 17 May 2026

It's a joy to deliver good news – you've got something to say people will be delighted to hear. Sometimes you have to deliver bad news. If you work as a doctor or a policeman it probably comes around fairly often. That's hard because you know people won't want to hear it.

How about the Christian message? This is good news – the word “gospel” means “good news”. Yet people often don't want to hear it. Which means telling others about Jesus can come with a personal cost. That was the subject of last week's sermon.

So what do you do when you share the good news of Jesus, and it costs you?

You have to hold onto the fact that the message you're sharing is good news.

There are many who are not Christians who do appreciate hearing about Jesus. If you're still looking into the claims of Jesus, that's probably you. You wouldn't be here otherwise! You must be intrigued. Why do Christians tell others something they don't want to hear? Why do some even lose their lives for doing so? Because it's good news, and they love people enough to tell them.

Paul has two things to say to Timothy about the word of God – things we know, but need to remember.

### God's Word is not Chained (8-10)

Verses 8b-9a. Paul is suffering for the gospel. Chained like a criminal.

He does so willingly. Verse 10a

So God's people can gain salvation / eternal glory. 10b. Salvation in Christ Jesus. Eternal glory – glory that lasts forever.

Short-lived pain for eternal glory. “No pain, no gain” = “your own gain”. Paul suffers for the gains of others.

One more little sentence in the middle. Verse 9a, 9b, “therefore” verse 10.

Beautiful picture: Paul carries the gospel. Lock Paul up, might think the gospel has no way to get out. But it's God's gospel, carried by Paul, and locking him up doesn't stop it.

This is liberating. If we think the gospel depends on us being around to tell people, it's stressful. Easy as a pastor to think: If I'm ill / go on holiday / don't work a bit harder, people won't hear. We all feel that pressure. Unless I'm around to tell this friend about Jesus, they won't hear. God's word not chained.

It also builds endurance. Knowing this is why Paul endures everything. Pragmatism very tempting. (Hide truths people might find off-putting). Temptation to do what we think will work, rather than doing the right thing. God's word is not chained means we're freed from that. You don't think: “If I'm locked up, people won't get to hear, so I mustn't do anything that might lose me my platform”. The gospel will spread. We don't need to be fearful.

Celebrity culture. Resolves around the star player / manager / presenter. If best scorer injured / century batsman sent off for 10 / presenter of TV show ending their run / charismatic boss of big brand retires – “it won’t be as good”.

We take it into church life too. Lee installing new senior minister in Sheffield after Tim, the original planter, has led the church for 20 years. “How will we manage without Tim?” If I get arrested for preaching, who will pastor the church? If I lose my job, if my friends won’t talk to me any more, who will tell them about Jesus?

Sometimes it’s true, it did all hinge on one key person. Often not true, because of team work. Paul is saying something far greater. It’s not just that others can preach too. It was never about him. It’s not even that God’s Spirit can empower others. The preacher was the word of God. You can’t put that in a prison. So Paul can do what God calls him to do, and trust that the word of God will continue to be spared.

## **God’s Word is Trustworthy (11-13)**

Verses 11-13.

“Here is a trustworthy saying”, or literally “the word is trustworthy / faithful”. Not just that these 3 verses can be trusted. God’s word is not only unchained, it can be trusted. Then get 4 pairs to explain it: If this, then that.

First two: Verses 11b-12a. What happens if we are faithful to God. Become a Christian – die with Christ. Die to self. Living for Christ is costly, especially if we speak about him, so we need to endure. If we do that, we will live with him (everlasting life is on the horizon) and reign with him (not just survival, we’ll be royalty). God is faithful. It’s not gold at the end of the rainbow that doesn’t exist. The future God promises is real, and he will deliver.

Last two: What happens if we are unfaithful to God. Two sides of the coin. Result for us (12b). Mark 8:38. Peter’s denials: “I don’t know the man”. The day will come when Jesus will look at us: “Who are you?”. Then the result for God (13). It’s like the gospel being unchained. If we are unfaithful in our calling to spread the good news, we can’t take God down with us. His promises still stand, the gospel will go to the ends of the earth, and God will save his people.

God wants us to serve his purpose, but he doesn’t need us.

*18 June 2023: Titan disaster. 5 on board lost lives. Stockton Rush, 61, CEO of OceanGate. 5 years before, he was emailed by one expert, warning him his sub was not adequately tested: “I think you are potentially placing yourself and your clients in a dangerous dynamic. Ironically, in your race to Titanic you are mirroring that famous catch cry ‘she is unsinkable’. Having dived the Titanic, and having stood in a Coroners Court as a technical expert, it would be remiss of me not to bring this to your attention.” He ignored many warnings: “I have grown tired of industry players who try to use a safety argument to stop innovation and new entrants from entering their small existing market. Since Guillermo and I started OceanGate we have heard the baseless cries of ‘you are going to kill someone’ way too often. I take this as a serious personal insult.”*

He made a catastrophic mistake that cost him his life. But he took the ship down with him, 4 others died, his business collapsed, and the submarine adventure industry lost all credibility. Paul is saying that if we turn out back on Jesus he will turn his back on us. But we don't take the ship down. God remains faithful. Jesus still saves his people.

Whether we persevere telling others about Jesus or not, God's word can be trusted. He'll keep his promises to his people, and the gospel will do its job faithfully.

### ⇒ **Remember Jesus**

There's the perspective on the gospel that we need. Not chained, trustworthy. But what is Timothy / are we to do? Only one command in the whole passage, and it's not "keep telling people": Verse 8.

How do I keep going as a Christian? How do I keep telling people about Jesus even if there will be a personal cost? Remember Jesus Christ. He's the one to focus on.

Paul tells us what is about Jesus that means we must focus on him.

(i) He's the Jesus who suffered and died. Everywhere else in 2 Timothy he's Christ Jesus. Here, "Jesus" comes first. Not his title as messiah, but his human name. We heard Paul say how he endured all things, not for his own eternal good, but for that of God's people. You only do that if you're fixed on Jesus. Jesus was the one who endured the cross, for our good.

(ii) He's the Jesus who rose, "raised from the dead". Eternal glory is not a dream or a wish. Jesus is the first to be glorified. It's worth it.

(iii) He's descended from David, that's to say he's vindicated as God's chosen king over this world. God's ancient purposes for his people all come true in him. He will keep his promises, he will accomplish his purposes.

So remember Jesus. It's so easy to forget him, to take our eyes off him. Life / gospel ministry is full of pressures. We need to be told to remember.

His word marches forth and cannot be chained. His promises are true, and everything it costs us to follow him will be more than worthwhile. He is faithful to his purposes, and nobody can sink his ship.

Verse 8a. Fix your gaze on him.