

2 Timothy 2:1-13

What are you expecting the experience of church planting to look like?

Paul reminds Timothy that one thing that will characterise gospel ministry

'Join with me in suffering for the gospel' (1:8)

'join with me in suffering' (2:3)

Four commands that provide the structure to this passage.

1. Be strengthened by the gospel (1)

2:1 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Implication

Are you putting yourself in a position to be empowered by grace? Is it God that's strengthening your ministry?

2. Train others with the gospel (2)

2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

Implication

Who are you pouring your life into? Who are you reading the Bible with? Who's your next apprentice?

3. Endure hardship for the gospel (3-7)

3 Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. 5 Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. 7 Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

Metaphor	Place of Work	What's required of them	Awaiting
Soldier		He's obedient to his Commanding Officer and so he's not going to be DISTRACTED by civilian affairs	The pleasure of the CO
Athlete		He's diligent in playing by the rules and so he's not DILUTING the message of the gospel	The victor's crown
Farmer		He's the hardworking farmer and so he's disciplined and he's not DOSSING around	The share of the crops

Implication

Are you about to do a Timothy?

- Are you avoiding suffering for the gospel because you're distracted from the central task of gospel ministry that God has given to you? Are there civilian affairs that are filling up your diary and causing you to be distracted from the arduous task of trying to plant and pastor a church?
- Are you avoiding suffering for the gospel because you're diluting the gospel message or gospel lifestyle and somehow making it more palatable for the people around you who are less likely to give you grief if you don't mention the sharper bits of the gospel?
- Are you avoiding suffering for the gospel because you're dossing and you're not actually doing any hard work in the light of the coming harvest? I'm all for sustainable sacrifice. We need to keep killing ourselves for the gospel. But is life more comfort than cost for you at this moment?

4. Remember the hope of the gospel (8-13)

8 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, 9 for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. 10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

11 Here is a trustworthy saying:

If we died with him, we will also live with him;

12 if we endure, we will also reign with him.

If we disown him, he will also disown us;

13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

But what about (13) is it a warning or an encouragement?

- Is it inking in what's been said about apostasy?
- Or is it an encouragement to those that have wavered in temporary faithlessness that God will not give up on us?

Conclusion

If the gospel is not going to die out in our generation because people like you and me have wandered away from the truth like Phygelus and Hermogenes then

- We're going to need to learn to be strengthened by the grace of God,
- We're going to need to pass on the gospel to a new generation who will pass it onto others
- We're going to need to do what Paul did and endure the hardships that accompany genuine gospel ministry
- We're going to need to look ahead and not only accept but anticipate that the reward for our work lies in the future

Only then will the gospel be preserved, protected, promoted and passed on.