

I don't know about you, but sometimes I need a reminder of why I am doing something. Sometimes I get discouraged and I feel like just checking out. I feel like quitting. It might be helpful to see the finish line, but sometimes it is rough because we can't. I read the following last week:

In 1952, a very brave and strong young lady waded into the Pacific Ocean. Florence Chadwick was determined to break another record. To date, no woman had ever crossed the channel between Catalina Island and the California coast.

Long-distance swimming wasn't new to Florence. She was a seasoned long distance competitor. In fact, she was the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions.

But this was a twenty-six-mile stretch. And the conditions that July morning were not optimal. Not only was the water incredibly cold, but a thick blanket of fog had settled in. And to make matters worse, there were sharks who trailed her course and had to be driven off several times!

Florence's coach and family followed along in a small boat, cheering her on. "Go for it, Florence! You can do it!"

But it was foggy. Real foggy. And even when she'd been swimming for fifteen hours, Florence still couldn't see the shore line.

A bit discouraged and very tired, she finally took her last stroke, telling her family she just couldn't go on.

She quit.

They all consoled Florence as they pulled her aboard, and she collapsed with exhaustion. Well, as it turned out, Florence quit much too soon that cold July morning. She swam twenty-five and a half miles, but because she couldn't see the end—couldn't see the coast—Florence fell short of her goal by just half-a-mile. Had she only known! One half a mile!

By the way, Florence didn't give up. She gave it another try. Just two months after her first attempt, she became the first woman in history to swim the twenty-six-mile channel. She set a new speed record, as well.¹

In our Christian life we can get discouraged as well. We cannot literally see the finish line, though God may give us glimpses off the finish line and the reward. Sometimes we need a

¹ Swindoll, Charles R. Read in *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*. Thomas Nelson. Nashville, TN 1998. Page 212. Excerpted from *Leadership Journal*.

reminder. In 2 Timothy 2:8-13 Paul gives Timothy a reminder of the reason for persevering. The reason is the Gospel. Let's look at this nice outline of the importance of the Gospel. Read with me 2 Timothy 2:8-13:

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, ⁹ for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! ¹⁰ Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹ The saying is trustworthy, for:

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

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

if we deny him, he also will deny us;

¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful—

for he cannot deny himself.

As I begin, I think it would be so very wrong for me to think that everyone comes to the church happy and ready to face another week. No, I realize that some come here discouraged. You may be discouraged in your Christian life. You may be discouraged in your life in general. You may be tired as you have been fighting illness. You may be tired of dealing with a nagging knee problem. You may be tired of trying to get a good job. You may be tired of bill collectors You may be tired of caring for a loved one. You may be tired, tired, and just tired. You may wonder where God is. Well, I hope that as we talk about this passage it will be a helpful reminder of the Gospel. This may not help you in direct ways, but I hope at least indirectly this will help you. God is Faithful to the end.

- I. Reminders (2:8-10) I heard last week about someone who was afraid of getting Alzheimer's: her son said he would tell her: It is okay to forget where you put your keys; it is not okay to forget what your keys are for. Here Paul gives a reminder of the gospel worth suffering for.
 - a. In verse 8, Paul begins by reminding Timothy of Jesus. Notice Paul even tells Timothy "Remember." He is very straightforward. Remember who: Jesus Christ rose from the dead. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, we would be worshipping a dead Lord. No, He conquered the grave. But more than that, Paul says that Jesus is a descendant of David. The Jewish Messiah, the Jewish anointed King was to be a descendant of David. Now, what this verse is stating is that Jesus is God as He conquered the grave and rose from the dead. This verse is also stating that Jesus is man, as He is a descendant of David.

Piper shares:

Why Should We Persevere for Christ? What Does Christianity Matter? (2 Timothy 2:8-13)

Paul mentions two specific ways to remember Jesus: 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 him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal 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 (John 7:42). 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.²

² https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/two-ways-to-remember-jesus?utm_campaign=Daily%20Email&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=71472312&_hs

Devotional excerpted from *"He Cannot Deny Himself"*

- b. So, our hope is in Jesus. We'll get discouraged but just remember that our hope is in Jesus. Our hope is in the One who conquered the grave. Our hope is in the One who is fully man and so He could take care of our sins. Our hope is in the One who is fully God so He could take the wrath of God on our sins. Our hope is in the One who reigns intermedating for us right now.
- c. God's messenger is chained but His message is never chained. (2:8-10): Now Paul is chained. Paul is in prison. But I love this verse because Paul says that the Word of God is not in prison. Sometimes I take the Bible too lightly, but the Bible is God's Word declaring God's good news of salvation. Isaiah 55 says that the Word of God will go out and it will not come back void. It will accomplish its message.
- d. Then Paul says that he will endure all things so that people can receive the Gospel. Paul says the "elect," which pretty much means those that will receive salvation and trust in Christ. Why do we do this? Why not be discouraged? The answer is that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is good news for you and for me and everyone else and Paul says that he is willing to endure hardship for the Gospel. Are you?

Billy Graham said: The evangelistic harvest is always urgent. The destiny of men and of nations is always being decided. Every generation is strategic. We are not responsible for the past generation, and we cannot bear the full responsibility for the next one; but we do have our generation. God will hold us responsible as to how well we fulfill our responsibilities to this age and take advantage of our opportunities.³

I also read someone said: It is my opinion that the best evangelistic center in the greater metropolitan Boston area is not a church. It is a filling station in Arlington. It was owned and operated by a man named Bob who caught the vision early in his life that his vocation and his calling were to be welded together. As time passed, his station became known as the place to go for gas, new tires or, other car services. I have seen a half dozen cars lined up bumper to bumper near two pumps in front of that little station just waiting to be served by that man. He has no banners out, no "Jesus Saves" flags, so signs, no "ichthuses," nothing plastered all over the station or in the windows, no sign, "Bring your car to Bob and take your soul to Jesus." He

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³ Swindoll, Charles R. Read in *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*. Thomas Nelson. Nashville, TN 1998. Billy Graham. Quoted from Lloyd Cory, *Quote Unquote*. Page 183.

*simply did his job! He did it well and people knew he was in partnership with the Lord. He led dozens of people to faith in Jesus Christ.*⁴

You are an evangelist wherever you go.

II. The results (2:11-13)

Remember how we need reminders and encouragement. When I was in eighth grade I committed to strip wall paper. I made a deal with my dad that for a certain amount of money I would take care of this job. Well, I got home from school and began the job. By 6:00 I made little progress. I was stripping the wallpaper and the glue in a downstairs hallway, up the stairway and the upstairs hallway. The glue was on real thick, and it didn't come off easy. I decided I was going to quit. I told my dad that I didn't care about the money. But my dad said that I had to do the job. I had committed to do the job and I needed to follow through. Well, I finished, but it wasn't easy. But the money was my return for my labor.

In the Christian life we have a return as well.

- a. If we die with Christ, we will live with Him (2:11) This is pretty straightforward. But Paul is not talking about literal death. He is talking about baptism. When we give our life to Christ, we die to ourselves and our ways. We now live with Him instead.
- b. If we endure hardship with Christ, we will reign with Him (2:12a) Why endure? I know we get discouraged and frustrated, but we will reign with Him. We will have eternal life with Him. This is eternity. Our life might be 80-90-100 years but eternity is a long time.
- c. Bobby Murphy shares from Chapter 11 of the Knowledge of the Holy
- d. *Is it that we will have a comfortable and trouble free life? Sociologist Tony Campolo claims that the chief goal of most people is to get through life with as little discomfort and pain as possible and that is probably true. It's also true, I think, that they project their desires on to God. They assume that His chief goal for them is the same as theirs. They then become bitter and disillusioned when pain and discomfort come upon them. The tragedies and trials of life make them worse persons instead of better ones.*
- e. *Obviously, God's chief aim for us is not that we have a comfortable and trouble free life. So what is it then? Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 2:11-12. This passage was part of a Christian hymn written in the first century. Notice what we who follow Jesus will do in verse 12. We will reign with Him. John also tells us what God's chief aim for us is in*

⁴ Swindoll, Charles R. Read in *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*. Thomas Nelson. Nashville, TN 1998. Page 184.

Revelation 22:1-5. This passage is about eternal life in heaven after the Second Coming of Jesus and our bodily resurrections. Verse 5 tells what it is that we will do there. We will reign with God forever and forever.

- f. *We go through troubles, sickness, pain because God is preparing us to reign w Him.*
- g. *If we deny Christ, HE will deny us (2:12b). This is talking about a total absolute denial. If we deny Christ. He will deny us. In Matthew 10:33 Jesus said that whoever denies Him, he will also deny before His Father in Heaven.*
- h. *If we are unfaithful Christ remains faithful (2:13)*
- i. *Piper "Providence" page 307: This cannot mean, "If we are faithless, he remains faithful to us." For he has just said, "If we deny him, he will deny us." What God remains faithful to is explained in the next clause: "He remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself." God is faithful to himself. He is unwaveringly committed to uphold and display what is infinitely valuable, beautiful, and satisfying, namely, his own perfect and glorious being. This means that God acts in righteousness when his actions accord with his own infinite worth and beauty. If he acts in a way that diminishes his worth and beauty, his action is unrighteous. It is not right. It is not true to the ultimate standard of the universe, God himself.*
- j. *One writes: The point is, if we do not endure in faithful good works and thereby deny him, he will deny us and send us into judgment.⁵*
 - i. *This is likely referring to our momentary lapses in faith. Even though we lose faith at times, God is still faithful. This is not a total falling away.*
 - ii. *God doesn't change and cannot deny Himself. God is what we call immutable. This means that He doesn't change.*
 - iii. *This is critical in the Christian life. What if God could change? That would mean that He wouldn't be that great, right? That would also mean that He could change His mind on our salvation. One minute we are saved and another minute God decides not to save us. That wouldn't be good at all.*

Close: So persistence paid off for Florence Chadwick and her 26 mile swim. Maybe you can think of a time you were persistent, and it paid off.

⁵ https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/justified-for-good?utm_campaign=Daily%20Email&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=81340529&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--6z-obW0MRBdmVldEx_eFohcC6_xHt5F5-3THkAA_OQ00cHgNvqvXoTUc5s2VKvMpl8T05jEWsSKu4q-KkuWmm9fcnmg&_hsmi=81340529

Why Should We Persevere for Christ? What Does Christianity Matter? (2 Timothy 2:8-13)

The devil was training three of his assistants how to get Christians to doubt their faith and to turn away from God. He opened his tool box and told each one to pick the tool they thought would work best. One picked persecution. The devil said, "No, that one is the least effective." Another picked temptation. The devil said, "No, that won't work." The third one picked the smallest tool in the box and handed it to the devil. The devil smiled as he looked at the tool of discouragement and said, "Yes, while this one is small, it will do the job better than all the rest. Discouragement is the most useful tool. Discouragement has caused the fall of more Christians than any other tool. Keep it handy at all times.

Sometimes in our lives as Christ followers we will feel like quitting but this passage is our reminder.

Our finish line is with God in Heaven and the Gospel of Christ. This is great news to share with all people.

Pray.