



STUDY 2

'TIL THE END

2 TIMOTHY 2:1-13

In his book, *Zeal Without Burnout*, Christopher Ash describes his great desire to train the next generation of young men and women for Christian service:

“I have tried to prepare them for a marathon, not a short, energetic sprint. In other words, to help them have a lifetime of sustainable sacrifice, rather than an energetic but brief ministry that quickly fades in exhaustion.”¹

The temptation to run hot and cold as a Christian is a real danger - especially in the face of difficulties and set backs. But Paul wants Timothy to know that following Jesus is a long-term endeavour. It's not a sprint, it's a marathon. And the goal is to endure to the very end.

¹C. Ash, *Zeal Without Burnout: Seven Keys to a Lifelong Ministry of Sustainable Sacrifice* (The Good Book Company, 2016)

5. What can you do to be a reliable man or woman who receives the gospel and in turn entrusts it to others? Be specific and follow through with it in the weeks ahead.

Timothy is ministering in the thick of battle, half way through a marathon, and the gruelling time of growing season. And so Paul encourages Timothy to keep going - to look ahead to the victory, medal and celebrations that are yet to come. He says it might seem hard now, but it'll be worth it! You need to keep persevering until the end ... like me.

It's here that Paul turns to his own life and example of what it means to persevere to the end, even when things are difficult.

REMAINING FAITHFUL IN THE TASK

Re-read 2 Timothy 2:8-13. (Note that '*the elect*' in v10 most likely refers to Israel, God's old-testament chosen people.)

6. How does Paul himself model the things he mentions in the opening 7 verses of the chapter? v9-10

7. How does looking forward to resurrection (v8) help with suffering for the gospel now?

Do you share the same confidence as Paul? Why/Why not?

Matthew 10:32-33 & 38-39

Paul's warning and encouragement here echoes Jesus' warning in Matthew 10...

³²“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven... ³⁸Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

He remains faithful...

Verse 12 says: if we disown God, he'll disown us. So we might expect v13 to say: if we're unfaithful to God, he'll be unfaithful to us. But “unfaithful” is not something God could be - or ever be. He's always true to his own character, always faithful. If we're faithful, he's faithful to save as promised. If we're unfaithful, he's faithful to *judge*, as he *always said he would*. See also Romans 3:3-4.

8. Verses 11-13 contain an encouragement (v11-12a) and a warning (v12b-13) to all followers of Jesus. How does this encouragement and warning help us endure?

It's not easy holding fast to the gospel in the midst of hardships and opposition. It requires the single-mindedness of a soldier, the integrity of an athlete, and the investment of a hard working farmer. But the reward for faithfully sharing the gospel and enduring 'til the end will be worth it - sharing in eternal glory with God and with others!

9. Of the three metaphors that Paul uses in the passage, which one do you most associate with? And which attribute is missing from your involvement in Jesus' mission (the single-mindedness of a soldier; the integrity of a clean athlete; or the personal investment of a farmer)?

10. What patterns of life do you need to establish to get stronger in these areas and stay on gospel mission to the end?

Spend some time honestly reflecting on when you find it hard to keep following Jesus and pray for each other. Pray for single-mindedness, integrity and personal investment as we seek to continue Jesus' mission together.