Trust, Entrust - Repeat
2 Timothy 2:1-13

vs. 1, Therefore my son…

1:7, For God has not given us a spirit of fear
1:8, So don't be ashamed…share in suffering for the gospel
1:13, Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching
1:14, Guard the good deposit

vs. 2, You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others. (NLT)

My life is about to end.
- Take what you have heard me say.
- Allow my life to be an example of *Jesus centrality*.
- Commit / Entrust / Teach to those who are faithful.
- Their character, because it is reliable, will continue to teach the good news of Jesus.

vs. 3, Share in suffering.
Cross imagery - Jesus invites his listeners to take up their crosses.
- Dying to self
- Learning self-denial is a long and painful process.

Military imagery - struggling against those who oppose the gospel.
Paul's meaning is straight forward -> whole hearted devotion to our our divine commanding officer.
- A desire to please.
- A desire to obey.
- The call to engage (serve), includes sacrifice (suffering).

Athlete imagery - success requires competing according to the rules.
Paul's meaning is straight forward -> whole hearted devotion to the gospel **will include** suffering.
- Be encouraged, those who suffer receive the victor's crown. 2 Timothy 4:8 There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing.

Farmer imagery - those who work hard are the first to get a share of their crop.
Paul's meaning is straight forward -> there is a benefit to the hard work (suffering) required as a follower of Jesus.
- In the end there is a reward.

vs. 9-13, Here is our confession…
Remember Jesus
- Risen from the dead
- Descended from David

For this reason I suffer hardship
- To the point of being bound like a criminal
- But the word of God is not bound.

This is why I endure all things
- For the elect (the people of God): So that everyone God calls will embrace the fullness of Jesus in all glory.

To follow Jesus is to the follow the way of Jesus (narrow path kingdom living).
- The way of Jesus is dying to self and living for others.
- Enduring the brokenness of this world. Having hope in the restoration of all things.

- To deny Jesus means he will also deny us. Matthew 10:32-33 “Therefore, everyone who will acknowledge me before others, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. **33** But whoever denies me before others, I will also deny him before my Father in heaven.
- When we are faithless, he remains faithful. He cannot deny himself.
  - Humanity has failed (throughout Israel’s history and in our own reality).
  - But the resurrection of Jesus clearly displays the faithfulness of the long-awaited Davidic messiah who brings restoration (salvation) to his people.

Union with Jesus prompts pervasive, grace-empowered *Christ likeness*.

John 16:32-33 Indeed, an hour is coming, and has come, when each of you will be scattered to his own home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. **33** I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.”

“God, who is the source of all good things, is in no way responsible for evil. Evil is not a substance, but a deviation from the good, and it enters human life through the misuse of free will.” ~ Gregory of Nyssa

“We would rather God be neatly culpable for the evil that comes upon us, would rather believe that cancer and infant death and abuse and tornadoes are explainable as necessary to the overarching story of the world, than face the kind of ancient, true drama in which God himself weeps at the sight of what he has made, now defiled and destroyed.” ~ Sarah Clarkson, *This Beautiful Truth: How God’s Goodness Breaks into Our Darkness* (Baker Books, 2021), 58.

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him.

We try to make profound human suffering “a puzzle piece in God’s grand design - a picture we couldn’t yet see, but would make sense in time.” ~ Jonathan R. Bailey, Dwelling in Christ

I believe we need to kneel in the tension.

Cancer, war, murder, abuse, death… is the result of living in an unpredictable world.
- Our world (all of creation) is shattered, broken, and moaning with all kinds of pain.

Truth: We are told over and over again that in our suffering God is present.

The goal of faith is not to answer “the why”.
The comfort of faith is trusting in the things that are uncertain, accepting a world of mystery, learning to discover hope in the darkness.

Jonathan Bailey continues, “Tragedies shouldn’t be rationalized. They’re just there - raw and unresolved.”

God through the giving of his son has chosen to suffer with us.

Jesus displays who he is, God with us!

The “why” will almost never find an answer.
We are left with the weight of grief.

“I don not believe that sheer suffering teaches. If suffering alone taught, all the world would be wise, since everyone suffers. To suffering must be added mourning, understanding, patience, love, openness and the willingness to remain vulnerable” Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Hour of Gold, Hour of Lead (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993), 214.

For those that follow Jesus, grace gives us the opportunity to remain pliable and open to promised transformation.

Amos 5:15 Hate evil and love good; establish justice at the city gate.
Perhaps the Lord, the God of Armies, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Do I trust in an infinite loving God?
Have I created a space to truly hate what is evil?
Can I release the need to try and explain?
Can you find comfort in the truth that Jesus is God with us?

Is my faith strong enough to acknowledge that God created a world where tragedy is possible but not final?

Revelation 21:3-6 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.
5 Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new." He also said, "Write, because these words are faithful and true." **6** Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life.