

Title: Hold Strong, Don't Crash Out!

Text: 1 Timothy 1:18-20

Have you ever seen people crash out? Just get so fed up they quit or go crazy? I've seen it happen to some people. For various reasons. I remember one guy who seemed like a great person, until he didn't get the position he wanted and thought he deserved. He changed after that, became problematic, forceful, and even threatened people. The guy completely crashed out when he didn't get his way and took it out on those he thought responsible.

I've seen other people who just quit. They couldn't take the pressures they had on them and they just got up and left to do something else. Sometimes they even got hostile with people on their way out.

This is nothing new. Especially in ministry. People don't understand the warfare going on, or the pressures that come with choosing to labor in ministry. Paul had seen people crash out through his ministry. Some were able to come back, but others were lost. He knew the work Timothy had on his shoulders was tremendous. A church in a cosmopolitan city, full of sin, greed, prosperity and cultural differences. Dealing with a church that was still cleaning itself out of false doctrine and false teachers.

Some of them were carnal, given over to the fads of the world, some of them were prideful, some of them were confused. As a young man in his thirties, he was seen as young and inexperienced in life by some of the congregation. So Paul wanted to remind him why he was there, and how to prevent crashing out, or as Paul will phrase it, shipwreck his faith.

Now to understand these verses, you have to understand the flow of the chapter. Pastor Dan recently told me that something Bible teachers should do after they teach is ask themselves **"if Paul or Peter were in the audience when I taught what they said, and I went up to them and ask how I did, would they say 'Yeah you got the gist of it' or 'I have no idea what you just talked about because it wasn't what I said at all'?"** Unfortunately, a lot of young Bible teachers would fall into the latter category due to their inexperience. It's fine because that's how you start, it takes time to realize we have to say what Paul wants to express, not what we want to focus on, and it takes hours of study and prayer. It often takes years of doing it to truly begin to see the flow of some chapters.

This can happen because we don't read a lot of translations and realize they don't say the same thing. And a safety mechanism for this is to go look up the Greek and Hebrew. But that takes time, dedication, and leading of the Spirit. We have to be willing and humble enough to ask the Lord "show me what you actually wanted to say here".

So the flow of the chapter is important, because if you don't understand Paul's thought process, you won't understand what he is saying. Remember, chapters and verses aren't divinely inspired, neither is your Bible translation. It's important to look into the original language and let the Lord show you what He meant to say there.

The flow of the chapter is Paul introducing the letter, the "prescripto", which also validated Timothy's authority. He then went on to tell Timothy he needed to ensure to keep the house clean because of false teachers who wanted to be law teachers, yet didn't understand the law. They didn't understand that the goal of Bible teaching is to produce love, out of a pure heart and from a good conscience.

Paul then explains the purpose of the law, that it is NOT for the believers, but for the unbelievers. And it is as he explains that, that in verse 12 he goes into a rabbit hole of praise. He shares his personal testimony and the emphasis of verses 12-17 becomes the Gospel of grace. Paul becomes overwhelmed by the grace of God, stating in verse 14, which is a key verse to understand the text and how Paul viewed grace, that the grace of God was exceedingly abundant.

In those verses, Paul emphasizes that true ministry is only possible through God enabling us. And that faithfulness, proven character, is what God searches for, not gifting, not charisma, not education, but faithful character. I read verse 14 in multiple translations and the NKJV is good, AMP, and ASV do great, as they convey the real emphasis of Paul here, while other translations aren't as strong or even pretty weak. The idea Paul is pushing is that is that the grace of God was exceedingly abundant, abounded exceedingly, or how the AMP says it, flowed out in superabundance on his life despite his sins, which he was ignorant of.

Paul recalls his former life, he saw himself as the chief of sinners, despite doing it in a way he thought was right. But the emphasis and idea of the text is that the grace of God is so super abundant, that it was able to save him, and if he could be saved, anyone can be saved by God's grace!

It's vital you understand what Paul is truly saying because it is why he is so determined to call Timothy now to defend the Gospel. When you preach the absolute forgiveness of sins, when you stand by the fullness of the Gospel that Paul preached, you may be accused of being "hyper grace". Yet Paul taught hyper grace, because the original word he uses in verse 14 that is translated exceedingly abundant is "**hyperpleonazō**", and we get our word hyper from this. It means to abound beyond what is needed.

This is the Gospel of Grace that Paul now so adamantly tells Timothy “you can’t quit, because you have a mission to defend it”. When you read the letters to Timothy, you have to see that there is a recurring message in the letter that is “don’t quit”. So now, having established the supremacy of the Gospel and the false message of the false teachers, he encourages Timothy to not quit or crash out in four ways in these verses.

1. You Have A Mission v18a

1. **“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy”**
2. That word charge is a military command. It means an urgent command handed down from a superior officer.
3. He tells Timothy “My son, don’t quit, you have a mission to fulfill.” The fact he uses “son Timothy” adds a fatherly affection to the weight of the command. Paul is encouraging him as a father who is also a military officer.
4. The fact that Paul was enabled for ministry by the grace of God means so was Timothy. People needed Timothy to remain at Ephesus and be a faithful Pastor.
5. There are people who God wants to use you to reach that no one else can. He’s given you a sphere of influence, and He has commanded us all to preach the Gospel to every nation and make disciples. But He also places you in specific areas He wants you to be in. And those areas may at times be extremely difficult.
6. True ministry isn’t easy. Pastors are quitting in droves, especially after covid, and true faithful pastors are harder to find in a world marked by itching ears seeking teachers that stroke their egos.
7. So Paul reminded Timothy he had a mission to fulfill, an order to follow, and that is why he couldn’t quit.
8. But not only was Timothy given a charge, he was also called to it. God had called him to that role, and Paul reminded him of this.

2. You Have Been Called v18b

1. **“according to the prophecies previously made concerning you,”**
2. At some point, prophecies had been spoken over Timothy. Timothy was a pastor by divine appointment. This was both to give Timothy credibility in Ephesus, that people would know he was called to the work, but also to remind Timothy that it was God who had placed him there to serve and labor for His people!
 1. **Warren Wiersbe - “Furthermore, Timothy was there by divine appointment: God had chosen him and sent him. It was this fact that could give him assurance in difficult days. If you are God’s servant, called by the Spirit, obeying His will, then you can “stay with it” and finish the work. These assurances enabled Timothy to wage good warfare.”**

3. When God calls you to serve somewhere, you must realize there will be moments of great difficulty and challenge where you will be stretched to your breaking point. You will want to quit. It is at those moments you need to remind yourself that God has called you to it.
4. You need to remember what the Lord told you when He called you to the work of the ministry. Be it volunteer or full time.
5. I have tried to quit 3 times, gave in resignation letters and everything. I have thought of quitting dozens of times. I have gone through times of such discouragement and even some depression where I thought this is it.
6. Every single one of those, in some random way, the Lord has someone bring up the exact verses He spoke to me back in October 2011. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. It is one of the few times in my life I can say I heard the closest thing to an audible voice speak to me. I had plans for college, and career, and He told me that I was allowed to pursue those things and be wise in the world's eyes, or choose to be seen as a fool by people around me by not pursuing those things, but wise in His eyes, and join the ministry just as I was.
7. He reminds me of that every time I think it's over. He'll bring it up in a message, someone will send me a text and that's the scripture, it shows up on social media. Every single time.
8. So when you want to quit what God has called you to do, make sure to remember the prophecies, the scriptures, the words of encouragement and knowledge He gave you when He called you.
9. As a side note, I do want to mention, be careful of those supposed prophets who like to declare extravagant ministries on people and say you have this destiny to be like Paul. Those can be dangerous, and should be weighted by scripture, where prophecy is said to be to build up, to stir up, or to wake up.
10. But there is another reason not to quit. It's because we are at war.

3. You Are At War v18c-19a

1. **"that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience"**
2. The prophecies to Timothy were encouragements to remain strong despite the warfare that awaited him. It wasn't prophecies about greatness, but encouragements that God had enabled and called him so he could withstand and fight the good fight.
3. Christianity is not a playground but a battleground. God has given you every weapon, armor and tool you need for the war, but that doesn't do much if you forget there is a war.

4. The battle at times can be a slog fest. It can feel like we are stuck in trenches and not gaining ground. In war, desertion is a real problem. And even as believers, we will see people who quit. But you don't have to.
5. Timothy was reminded he was a soldier who served a great general. That general had already given him everything he needed to fight the good fight, because the battle was already won by Him.
6. The scriptures declare that Christ is already victorious. But just like world war 2 you had Japanese hold outs who refused to surrender or did not know the war was over, Satan and his armies refuse to go down quietly. They have already lost, their kingdom lies in ruins, but they are going to take out as many as they can with them.
7. The more involved in ministry you are, the bigger a target you become. Satan seeks to bring you down, he might do it by pain and suffering, or he might do it by distractions! We have to realize we are in a war. Paul reminds Timothy of this as yet another reason not to quit!
8. **David Guzik - "This gave Timothy still another reason to remain in Ephesus. He should sense a responsibility to stay when he felt like leaving because he was like a soldier in a battle, who could not desert his post."**
9. **2 Timothy 2:4-5 NKJV - "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."**
10. We have a responsibility as soldiers in God's army to remain at our post. The weapons to succeed are faith and a good conscience. Believing the fullness of the Gospel, and living it out as an expression of what it has done in our lives will allow us to fight the good fight. We win by holding on to Jesus, believing and trusting Him entirely, so much that we live and obey in everything He asks of us.
11. But remember the exhortation is to not shipwreck our faith. Because sadly, some do. Which is the last reason Timothy shouldn't quit.

4. You Have Examples to Learn From v19b-20

1. **"which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, 20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme."**
2. Timothy was to remain faithful with a good conscience, not quitting, because some have quit and shipwrecked their faith.
3. We can learn from examples, but not all those examples are good ones. Paul mentions two negative examples. Two men who shipwrecked their faith. Hymenaeus and Alexander.

4. These men rejected faith and a good conscience. They spoke blasphemy, and so Paul cast them out of the church. What was their blasphemy?
 1. In **2 Timothy 2:16-18** Paul said of Hymenaeus **"But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. 17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some."**
 2. Hymenaeus seems to have claimed that the resurrection of the dead had happened. That the 2nd coming of Jesus had passed. Alexander was a common name, but could be the same man Paul references in 2 Timothy 4:15, but if so, he became a major opponent of Paul and hurt the ministry.
5. Regardless of what their blasphemy was, the phrase "given over to Satan" is the same Paul uses in 1 Corinthians when Paul tells the Corinthians to throw out the sexually immoral brother. It is clear, these men shipwrecked their faith by rejecting a good conscience, choosing their sinful life over the following Jesus.
6. Timothy was to be different from them. And this is a reason not to quite as well. I have seen A LOT of people shipwreck their faith. I have dozens upon dozens of stories of friends, of people in leadership, who quit, who shipwrecked their faith. They chose what they wanted, the lifestyle they preferred, over Jesus.
7. They rejected the Gospel, and crashed out. But you don't have to be one of them. In the same way Timothy could remain afloat by faith and a good conscience, the same is true for you. You can hold strong and not crash out. You can remain faithful, because He has enabled you. He has given you everything you need. The God who calls is also the God who equips!
8. Remain faithful, don't quit, no matter how hard things become. And they will be hard, and sometimes you will stand alone in this world. But take heart, remember the promise of Jesus, that though in this world you will have tribulation, He has overcome the world.
9. As the days become darker and the world becomes more corrupt, hold on and don't shipwreck your faith. He is able to keep you till the day He has appointed for you. Remain faithful, hold on to the Gospel, defend it, and live it out and remain strong!

Discussion Questions:

1. Paul reminds Timothy that he has been given a "charge" or military command from God (1 Timothy 1:18). How does viewing the Christian life and ministry as a mission change the way we respond when we want to quit?
2. Timothy was encouraged to remember the prophecies and calling God had placed on his life. What Scriptures, encouragements, or reminders has God used to strengthen you during difficult seasons?
3. The sermon emphasizes that the motivation for defending the Gospel comes from understanding the super-abundant grace of God. Why is it important to remember God's grace before thinking about our responsibility to serve Him?
4. The sermon describes Christianity as a battleground rather than a playground. In what ways do believers experience spiritual warfare today, and how can we remain faithful in the middle of it?
5. Paul mentions Hymenaeus and Alexander as examples of those who shipwrecked their faith. What lessons can we learn from both faithful and unfaithful examples in the Christian life?
6. Throughout this passage, Paul repeatedly encourages Timothy not to quit. What are some of the greatest temptations believers face to "crash out" or give up, and how does this passage encourage us to remain strong and not give up?
7. We are reminded that "the God who calls is also the God who equips." How does that truth give you confidence to remain faithful, defend the Gospel, and continue serving Christ regardless of the difficulties you face?