Multiply Your Life — Delivery Transcript

2 Timothy 2:1–7 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, April 24, 2016 · *Entrusted*

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I think every one of us, if we're honest, except for the total, you know, underwhelming folks in the room, those real underperformers who just kind of want to exist and then die, I think that's not very many of us, but for the most part, when we think about our lives and what we would want for our lives, most of us probably want to make an impact in this world that extends beyond our deathbed. Nobody wants to die, but we're going to die, and we want to have an impact beyond the duration of our actual lives.

And how do you go about doing that is the question, and the book we've been looking at for the past couple of weeks answers that question. It was a letter, a New Testament letter written by an old guy who was about to die. It wasn't just any guy. He was someone who used to hate Christianity, tried to wipe it off the face of the planet, and then Jesus revealed himself to him, resurrected from the grave, showed up and confronted him and said, you need to stop trying to wipe Christianity off the face of the planet because you're not going to be successful in it.

Why don't you just switch teams and start planting churches? And so the Apostle Paul, having seen the resurrected Christ, said, okay, I think I'll do that. And so he stops trying to persecute Christians and instead starts planting churches. And he plants churches all over the known world. And one of the churches he plants was there in Ephesus, and one of the people that he had discipled along the way during those missionary journeys was a guy named Timothy. So Timothy's in Ephesus, and Paul's about to die. He's there in Rome, and he writes a letter to Timothy, his spiritual son in the faith, on how Timothy can pass his faith on to the next generation.

And that's a question every single one of us need an answer to, because we don't just want to have a faith for ourselves. We want to take the faith that we own, something that is meaningful to us, that is true for us, and we want to give it to the next generation, especially

our kids and grandkids. So Paul says, here's how you make an impact beyond the grave. And he doesn't just show Timothy how to do it. Paul is actually an example in this letter of what it looks like. And the reason we're studying this book as a church is because we have a unique situation in our church in which there's a lot of Pauls and there's a lot of Timothys.

A lot of older demographic, you might call them the baby boomer generation, and there's also a lot of young millennial type people from 18 to 30 years old or so and even younger than that as this morning's testimony testified to. So how can we take both of those demographics and instead of seeing them drift further and further apart, instead see them draw closer and closer together and help one another grow in their faith? And 2 Timothy is an answer to that question, and so we've been studying it strategically. This morning gets to the heart of the book.

Really the text this morning gets to the heart of your pastor. There's probably no other text in 2 Timothy or really in the New Testament that gets at what it is that we're trying to achieve with that first aspect of our 2020 vision. If you were here for our 2020 vision series, you know that one of the things that we believe is going to be the engine for planting churches and blessing our city and sending missionaries, the thing that moves must be there or nothing else happens is this disciple-making culture of multiplication where we have people who are so convinced of their responsibility as a disciple to make disciples that they are intentionally engaged in multiplying their lives to the next generation and teaching that generation to multiply their life to the next generation, a disciple-making culture of multiplication where people don't just sit and soak Christian information, but they instead go and make.

They're actively involved in giving themselves away and teaching others to do the same. And this text is in that heartbeat. It shows you how to do it. It reveals that all of us should be doing it. And it gives us a little insight into how to go about it. So if you'll take your Bible, turn to 2 Timothy, we're just going to jump right into the text and spend a little bit of time on the first two verses and then we'll move on past that. Remember, it's Paul writing to Timothy.

He says to him, you then, my child, he's pulling from this past discussion, if you weren't here with us, he juxtaposed or contrasted a guy named Onesiphorus—I can't pronounce his name. I call him Mr. Uno— and two other guys who deserted him and he's trying to say to Timothy, I want you to be like someone who comes alongside of me, suffers with me, encourages me. So you then, my child, my spiritual child, he wasn't his baby daddy, he was his spiritual baby daddy. So, "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."

The name of the series is Entrusted. And the name of the series really comes from this text because here's Paul entrusting Timothy with this wonderful gospel, good deposit, and he's saying to Timothy, I want you to entrust it to others also. I want you to multiply your life. But before we get to the activity portion of the text, you know what you need to do. What's more important than any of those things is the motivation and the power for doing what it is that you need to do. And you see right there at the beginning of the text, Paul tells Timothy, Timothy, before you go and multiply your life, the thing you need more than anything else is to be strengthened by the grace that is yours in Christ Jesus.

If you have an NIV, it says be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And most of us, if you've been in church world for any length of time, you've probably heard sermons on grace, you've probably heard people talk about it. The definition that most people throw out there when they talk about grace is God's unmerited favor. How many of you heard that phrase before? Grace is God's unmerited favor. Yeah, it's out there. Unmerited favor. And I think what we have a tendency to do is to focus on the unmerited part, which we get, right?

We know that we're sinners separated from God, that God's holy, we're not. Even on our best day we've probably fallen short of what it is that God requires from humanity. So we don't deserve God's favor and we focus on that. We had a Protestant Reformation to kind of, you know, emphasize that. But instead of focusing on the unmerited part this morning, which I think all of you get, why don't we instead focus on the favor part? That God's disposition towards you and I, if you are in Christ Jesus, is one of favor.

That he has a mind and an aim to help you and to strengthen you and to come alongside you and to resource you with what it is that you need in order to face the things that you're going to have to face to achieve the things that you need to achieve that God, even in your weakness—yeah, yeah, you don't deserve it. But instead he comes along and he gives you his favor. And how many of us start our day without being strengthened by that truth? We start our day, you know, we get up—whatever you do when you get up, we all don't have the same traditions, but I would assume you do something along the lines of: you take a shower, most of you brush your teeth, most of you make coffee, you cook you eat breakfast, you get your thing of oatmeal, maybe you go to the gym, you work out.

But the one thing without which we cannot live the Christian life, the grace of God, how many of us start our day without being strengthened in the grace, without being reminded through the word of God or through prayer or just through some kind of musical message or some means of grace. How many of us get up and just jet out, get started with our day without first being strengthened by the grace that is ours in Christ Jesus. I mean I slip into it all the time. You got seasons in which you get so busy, you get occupied, get so much pressure, the harder life becomes, it seems, the more prone we are to start our day without being strengthened by the grace.

And Paul's telling Timothy, you've got a big responsibility. Your life's about to be very, very difficult. And so now it's more important than ever that you as a Christian be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And you can't strengthen yourself, okay? It's not an active verb, it's a passive verb. So it means that it's an outside force acting on you. But just because you don't have the ability to strengthen yourself in grace, that doesn't mean you don't have a role to play in being strengthened. God uses means of grace.

So one of the means of grace that God uses in your life, you might think of it if grace is a shower, one of the ways that you get underneath the shower and get showered with the grace of God is with humility. 1 Peter chapter 5, verse 5—I should know that as a preacher, but I don't. I think it's 1 Peter 5. Says God opposes the proud, but he gives what to the humble? He gives grace to the humble. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.[1] Humility is a means of grace.

You find yourself proud and arrogant and God's gift to green earth, you maybe got a little leak in your grace bucket. Humility, it starts with humility. One of the ways to promote humility in your life is to engage with the word of God. When you're engaging with the word of God, the word of God has a way of cutting to the quick. It gets past the veneer, it gets to the heart of the matter, oftentimes exposes in you things that nobody else is going to expose. Your wife won't expose it.

Husband, children, they won't expose it, but the word of God will expose it. And so a means of grace that God uses is engaging with the word of God, not just to learn information, but to speak with the Lord and have Him reveal things in your life, promotes humility. Another thing that will promote humility and amplify grace in your life is confession of sin. Nothing like admitting wrongdoing to make you feel humble, right? Nothing like a little humble pie to say, I was wrong here, and confess it to the Lord.

You confess it to other people. Bible reading, prayer, confession, your small group. If you have a small group, that's a means of grace that God uses. Preaching, hearing the preaching of the Word of God. Gospel preaching is a means of grace. I listen to a lot of podcasts. Maybe you have some music that is just really rich, gospel-rich music. That's a means of grace. What Paul is saying is you've got all of these resources available to you, Timothy, but don't start your day without being strengthened by the grace that is yours in Christ Jesus.

Don't get out on activity level, activity, activity, activity, without first being strengthened by the grace that is yours in Christ Jesus. And the phrase in Christ Jesus is important too, right? You just can't find grace in your place. The grace is yours in Christ Jesus. I was talking with someone this last week about what it means to be a Christian and one of the problems that they have with Christianity is its narrowness, its exclusivity that you can only be saved by faith in Jesus. Why only Jesus? And why the exclusivity?

And you know, you got to take some of that up with Jesus himself. He's the one who made it that way. He said, John 14:6, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. So that's exclusive. It's exclusive in its scope, but it's inclusive in its invitation, right? Jesus says, come to me, all who are weary. Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord can be saved. So yes, it's exclusive, but the reason that grace is exclusively found in Christ Jesus is because it was only Christ Jesus who stood in our place, paying the penalty for our sin on the cross.

It was only Christ Jesus who was God in the flesh, who lived a sinless, perfect life that we could never live. It's only in Christ Jesus that we find atonement for our sin because we as sinners have sinned an infinitely serious offense against God and an infinite offense must be atoned for by an infinite being and it's only Christ Jesus of all the other religions in the world, of all the other prophets, only Christ Jesus was one who claimed to be God in the flesh. So it's exclusive in those terms because Jesus is unique in that way and it's because of Christ Jesus and our union with Christ Jesus that we can have favor with God because Jesus is the only one who's paid the penalty for our sin and the only one who's clothed us with his perfect righteousness.

And again, there's a lot of religions out there and a lot of noble truths that a lot of religions share, but it's only Christianity, if you think about it, it's only the gospel that teaches that we can have a relationship with God even though we're sinful because God Himself came down and rescued us, and through faith in Christ that He paid the penalty for your sin and God raised him from the dead, gave him eternal life, and you can have that same life through faith in him. That Christianity is the only religion that pushes that message.

And so Paul's telling Timothy, be strengthened by that truth, in that truth alone, that you can be united with Christ. There is enough gospel grace in that truth alone that you can wake up every morning, just think about that, and be strengthened for what it is that you got to do. Just to be reminded that I was a sinner running from God, that in my lowest worst moment, that he pursued me and rescued me and drew me to himself even though I was undeserving, that he gave me meaning and purpose in life, meaning and purpose that I've never had anywhere else.

Just thinking about your union with Christ. That when God looks at you, He doesn't see you in your filth or in your sin. He sees His one and only Son, whom He loves with an intense, abiding love. Just thinking about those things strengthens you with grace. And that's all Paul's saying. Be strengthened by the grace that is yours in Christ Jesus. So what about you? Are you strong in the grace this morning? Do you find yourself this morning a little bit anxious or tired or fearful, angry, bitter, those are emotions you can't deny, but those are symptoms sometimes of a lack of strengthening in the grace that is yours.

And what Paul wouldn't say is stop feeling bitter, you know, stop being angry. What he would say is be strengthened by grace that is yours in Christ Jesus. Before you have an obligation to do anything, you need to reflect on the grace that is yours because of your union with Christ. Abide in it. Be strengthened by that enabling grace that is yours. Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:10 talks about his life. He says I worked harder than anybody else. I was the best of the best. Kind of sounds like a braggart. And then he says, but it wasn't me.

It was the grace of God that was in me. In 2 Corinthians chapter 12, he talks about his thorn in the flesh, that three times he prayed for God to take it away, but God said to Paul, my grace is sufficient for you, Paul. My power is made perfect in your weakness. At the end of the book of Romans, he says, now to the God who is able to strengthen you through my gospel. So just meditating on the gospel as portrayed in the book of Romans is a strengthening agent. So you find yourself tired and weary looking for some little wisdom nugget, some amazing insight into reality, maybe that's not what you need.

Maybe all that you need is to be reminded that God loves you with an intense, abiding love because of the grace that is yours in Christ Jesus. Be strengthened in that. That's point number one. That's the motivation, the power, and then the way that you multiply your life. Having been strengthened by that grace is, number one, the teacher principle: pass on what you learn. Look at what he said in verse 2: what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

That word entrust is the same word that Paul used in chapter 1, verse 14, where he said, Timothy, by the power of the Holy Spirit, guard the good deposit that's been entrusted to you. So Paul entrusted something to Timothy, and the word guard doesn't mean guard it so that no one else can access it. It means protect it so that no one else defiles it. Don't let it get muddy. Don't let it get compromised. Protect the integrity of the gospel. But keeping it pure, what I want you to do is to pass it along.

I want you to give it to other people, faithful people, who will be able to then give it to other people also. It's the teacher principle. Teachers, good teachers, pass on what they know, and all of us can be a teacher. Had a terrible, boring teacher growing up? Most of us. Mine was Miss Fitzpatrick. I'll never forget her. Books have feelings. No, they don't. Books don't have feelings. Okay. Miss Fitzpatrick was a bad teacher. How many of you have wonderful teachers? Yeah, you can remember a couple of wonderful teachers. The teachers that were wonderful were the ones who made learning fun, made it engaging, made you want to know what it is that you didn't know.

And that's what Paul is getting at with Timothy. Timothy, pass on what you know. One of the reasons that some of us have a little leak in our grace bucket is because some of us spiritually are like the Dead Sea. We come to church, we sit in the seat, we soak, we soak, we soak, we soak, and learn and learn and learn, but we never give it out. We never pass it along we never

share with others what's been entrusted to us, and that'll kill you spiritually. Nothing lives in the Dead Sea, nothing's going to live spiritually in that kind of person.

I think that God intentionally withdraws grace from the people who say that what God has given to me is for me and me alone and nobody else, whether that's financially, with your stewardship and you know I'm just going to take, take, take, I'm never going to give or spiritually with the Christian truths that God gives to you maybe through preaching or podcasts or just things you learn in the Word of God when you think it's just me, me, me, you're missing out on some grace that is yours in Christ Jesus, and you're missing out on the opportunity to multiply your life and have an impact that extends beyond the grave.

So Paul says, multiply. Take what you've learned from me, this pattern, this gospel truth, and entrust it to faithful men. That's the vision of our church, the 2020 vision, the disciple-making culture of multiplication. We talk about a hundred discipleship coaches and I wrote about the coaches in my newsletter, but I think the thing that could happen if you focus too much on the coaching thing is that you miss out on this idea that all of us can multiply to some degree or another. A lot of us when we think discipleship, we almost immediately go to this one-on-one relationship over six to twelve weeks covering a curriculum that says discipleship and most of us when we think of that it kind of scares us and we think to ourselves, you know, that's not me.

So stop thinking like that for just a second. If you think of discipleship merely as consisting of the word of God, the Spirit of God, and people, then anybody can be a disciple maker. Anybody can multiply. All you're doing is you're taking the Word of God, empowered by the Spirit of God, and using it to help people grow. You can do that as easy as taking what you learned today in the sermon and talking about it at lunch. You're multiplying your life. That can be as simple as you doing something for the community that they weren't expecting, just some random act of kindness, and you do so because of what you've been given here.

On Sunday morning, maybe in your small group, and you're passing it on, that's one way to multiply your life. All these bless the city projects that so many small groups are doing, that's one way to multiply your life. It doesn't always have to look like one-on-one over six weeks period of time with a set of curriculum. Sometimes it's as simple as just taking what God has given to you and giving it to your kids, sharing it at bedtime through a devotional. That's what it means to multiply. And in that way all of us can do it.

Now what Paul is talking about with Timothy is a little more official, okay, because Timothy is a pastor. These are the pastoral epistles. So Paul's telling Timothy, I don't want you to waste your time investing in the people who aren't going to multiply. Don't spend all your time with these false teachers who are trying to destroy the church. I want you to find faithful men. That just means men who understand the gospel and believe it, who can teach

it to others also. And having taught it to them, I want those guys to pass it along to somebody else.

Now why is Paul saying that? Because Paul wants Timothy to come to him and replace him. It's the idea—most pastors have this responsibility to replace themselves. So Pastor Roger, one of the things he's worked towards is if he's gone on a Wednesday, the youth ministry doesn't fall apart. Why? Because he's replaced himself with a team who can carry on in his stead. He's entrusted to others what's been entrusted to him so that they can entrust it to other people past that. Paul's telling Timothy the same thing. Tim, replace yourself. You need to come to me, and if you're going to leave, you need people who are going to do what you're doing where you're at.

Now I saw this model portrayed when I was in East Asia. This is their church planting model. This is the way Christianity is exploding in places like China and South America. The way that it works is one guy goes out, he wins another guy to the Lord, shares the gospel with him, teaches that person how to be a Christian, teaches that person what a church looks like, sends that person out onto the mission field, and that person wins another person to faith in Christ and does the same thing with them.

And that person is discipled, and that discipled person knows what it means to be a Christian, knows what the church looks like, and he's sent out to disciple another person. Over a long period of time, after that takes place, what you have is a church full of people, not church people who are swapping churches because of the better music, but unreached people who are coming to church because they've finally come alive to the greatest realities of life. They're finally free from slavery to sin. They're finally awake. Those kind of churches full of disciples who make disciples, make other disciples, plant other churches, those churches plant other churches, and before you know it, you have a movement.

Now the way that you really launch movements is by disciples who make disciples to the third and the fourth generation. And you see that in this text. Paul is generation number one. Timothy is generation number two. Timothy entrusting it to faithful men is generation number three. And those faithful men entrusting it to others also is generation number four. And as a result of that, Christianity spread like wildfire. It was literally all over the known world within 300 years because of this multiplication movement. Now just imagine if that kind of movement took place here.

What if church didn't look like big, big buildings and impressive speakers, but it instead looked like normal everyday Christians making disciples who made disciples. Maybe the churches would be smaller, but there would be a lot more of them and a lot more kingdom impact in Abilene and around the world if we got back to a New Testament approach of multiplying your life. Is everyone going to do it like Timothy? No. But everyone can do it some way or another. All of us can multiply. So that's point number one. Multiply: the

teacher principle, pass on what you know, and then what you're going to see him move to is these three analogies as a way of answering the suffering that takes place in our life that will keep us from multiplying.

One of the things that keeps you from passing on your faith to the next generation is your life is hard or your life is full of busyness. How many of you say my life is hard? Some of you, how many say my life's too busy? I got too many things to do. Okay. For most people in the world, those are the two reasons why they wouldn't multiply. And Paul knows that. He anticipates it and he answers it. So look at what he says in chapter 2, verse 3. Timothy, share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

So analogy number one is the soldier. And he says of the soldier, chapter 2, verse 4, no soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. In other words, soldiers are disciplined, they're loyal to their commanding officer. Soldiers are focused. They're not always torn away by civilian pursuits. If you've ever talked with a soldier who's in like wartime zone, he knows he's in a war. He knows he can't just lollygag around, as my coach who was a soldier used to say, no lollygagging around.

Same way with the Christian. Christians who are engaged in battle, who know they're soldiers of Christ Jesus. They're not out there trying to jihad people like some other religions, but they're aware that there is a battle going on in the world. That our battle isn't against flesh and blood, but it's against principalities and powers, that there's war going on for your soul, for the soul of people around you, that there's temptations and dark forces of evil trying to destroy. You have an enemy who's at war against you, and good Christians know that they're in that battle, that no decision is a neutral decision, that every choice matters.

And on top of that, they're not just aware that they're in a war, but they're intentionally not allowing themselves to be distracted by all the things that distract us in this life. And in the twenty-first century with the technological revolution, distractions are more prevalent now than they've ever been—

[Recording ends.]

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "for theirs is the kingdom of God"; Matthew 5:3 reads "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Luke 6:20 has "kingdom of God"). Source: ESV text of Matthew 5:3 and Luke 6:20. ↩