



“THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF FAITHFULNESS”

2 Timothy 2:1-2

Theme: *We each must see ourselves as an indispensable link in others following Christ more.*

Introduction: In 1999, I had an experience unlike any other I’ve experienced. I traveled through Ukraine and Russia with my father, Bob Provost (former President of SGA), and John MacArthur. We were preaching in churches and conducting pastor’s conferences. SGA had sponsored the translation of MacArthur’s commentary of Romans into Russian, and we were distributing them as gifts to the pastors. When we traveled between Kyiv and Moscow, we rode a train on which hundreds of commentaries had been loaded and spread throughout our berths – each room containing hundreds of copies. When we arrived at the station where we were to exit the train, we had five minutes before the train departed again. We had to off-load these commentaries from each room. We formed a “bucket brigade” – a man in each room pulling out the commentaries and handing them to the next man, who continued doing this until all of the books were off the train. The last book was carried off the train as the train began rolling, and the man stepped off with a book in hand! It was a close call – we were all sweating and breathing heavily. But we did it!

Whenever I read the verses in our text, I think of that experience. We receive the truth of God’s Word, and our task is to pass it along to the next faithful saint, who can then deliver it to the next. How would it go if any of the men decided they wouldn’t participate, coming up with some reason they were “exempted?” John could say, I don’t need to participate; I wrote it! My father said: “I don’t need to participate; I’m too old.” Bob Provost said: “I don’t need to participate; my gift is administration, not serving!” I wouldn’t have had the energy or time to get them all off the train. Each of them was necessary. Likewise, each of us is necessary in the task of making disciples. No one is exempted, excluded, or extraneous. Our text teaches us, ***“We each must see ourselves as an indispensable link in others following Christ more.”*** Let us turn our attention to it ...

I. THE STEWARDSHIP OF ONE’S INTENSITY – 2:1

A. Refuse to Depend Upon Yourself

1. Having demonstrated the differing ways people had endured in the faith – from the faithfulness of his grandmother Lois & mother Eunice, and Onesiphorus to the failures of Phygelus and Hermogenes, Paul now turns his attention to Timothy – ***“You therefore, my son ...”***
2. There is a tenderness associated with Paul’s appeal to Timothy – identifying him with a term of endearment – ***“my son” [ΤÉΚΝΟΝ]*** – a term that conveys one who is dear to another and is vulnerable to their influences.
3. It implies there is room for growth in this man who is the pastor of the

church at Ephesus and needs to be fortified in his faith.

4. Essentially, Paul is appealing to Timothy to refuse to rely on himself, his resources to serve Christ, and his own ideas, energy, and intellect, which are insufficient for faithfulness.
5. Timothy must look outside of himself for the strength he needs to remain faithful – **“be strong”** [ἐνδυναμώω] – (Pres. Act. Imperative) that means to “be constantly strengthened” or “made capable” within from a source outside of oneself.
6. We have the responsibility to take responsibility for being strengthened – by refusing to assume we are sufficient the way we are and confess that we need help to become what we need to be - cp. **Philippians 4:13; 1 Timothy 1:12.**

B. Rely on the Means of Grace

1. How can we be strengthened to possess the intensity adequate to sustain us in the demands of Christian faithfulness?
2. Paul told Timothy that he was to **“be strong in the grace ...”**
3. There are several vital components, or means of **“grace,”** that both individuals and churches must remain committed to, which in turn strengthen us in our faith:
 - a) **Scriptures:** Commitment to the teaching of God’s Word – **Acts 20:32.**
 - b) **Service:** Commitment to fellowship – **Ephesians 4:16.**
 - c) **Sacraments:** Commitment to reflection on Christ’s Accomplishments for us through communion and baptism – **1 Corinthians 11:28.**
 - d) **Supplication:** Commitment to prayer – **Jude 20.**
4. The early church constantly pursued these things individually and corporately as a church – cp. **Acts 2:42.**
5. These things are not intended to be supplied independently of the assembly of believers and the engagement in the community of faith – **Hebrews 10:23-25.**

C. Recognize that Strength Is in Christ Alone

1. Ultimately, the source of strength is Christ – **“... in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”** – the Living Word revealed in the written Word.
2. We are commanded to be constantly looking to Jesus – cp. **Hebrews 12:2.**
3. The strength found in Christ is needed to fulfill the calling of Christ – **Ephesians 6:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:24.**
4. If we are not seeking Christ, fellowshiping with Christ through God’s Spirit, we will be unable to find the strength needed to remain faithful.

II. THE STEWARDSHIP OF ONE’S INTEGRITY – 2:2A

A. Exemplify What You Teach

THE EPISTLE OF 2 TIMOTHY

1. In this sense, Paul calls on Timothy to make himself a student of *“the things which you have heard from me ...”*
2. Paul had sought to model and instruct Timothy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ as the point of all they commonly believed.
3. Paul stated that Timothy needed to master the truths about Christ not only in orthodoxy (what he believed) but in orthopraxy (what he did).
4. The old statement holds: *“What you do speaks so loudly people can’t hear what you say!”*
5. Paul expresses here that he desires the leaders he trains to follow his example – cp. [1 Corinthians 11:1](#).
6. This means we must examine ourselves and constantly adjust – cp. [1 Timothy 4:16](#).
7. Paul mentions that his teaching was something he was publicly accountable for – *“... in the presence of many witnesses.”*

B. Explain What You Teach

1. There is also a need to be clear in what you teach.
2. Our goal is that the very things we have been taught will be intact when we process them through our lives and then communicate them to others.
3. This means that we guard the treasure of the Gospel entrusted to us – cp. [2 Timothy 1:14](#).
4. We must not allow ourselves to see truth as a static commodity to be locked up within the confines of a vault, but the Gospel is made secure as it is exemplified in the lives of the people it converts.
5. Our explanation of what we believe must find its way not only in word but in deed as well.
6. We must learn it ourselves and then apply it to our lives, and as its impact is evident, we share it with others who can see “exhibit A” in our lives.

III. THE STEWARDSHIP OF ONE’S INVESTMENT – 2:2B**A. Consider the Stewardship**

1. In appealing to Timothy to remain faithful, Paul referred to the Gospel as a treasure entrusted to us – cp. [2 Timothy 1:14](#).
2. Timothy had received the truth directly from the Apostle Paul – cp. [2 Timothy 1:13](#).
3. Timothy had received a sacred stewardship – an indispensable link in the process God has determined as His means of others following Christ more.
4. This stewardship is something that each of us will give an account – cp. [1 Corinthians 4:1-2](#).
5. Now, Paul tells Timothy that he must not hold onto the truth but must do

something with it – “... **entrust these ...**” [παρατίθημι] – in the “middle voice” which this is, it means “to entrust for safekeeping, give over, entrust, commend.”¹

6. This is a command – the second major responsibility in this text following the command to “**be strong**” – and demonstrates that there is a purpose for the vitality of our spiritual lives that extends beyond ourselves.
7. Others depend on the spiritual strength we gain through our relationship with the Lord – cp. **2 Timothy 4:17**.

B. Consider the Stewards

1. Here, we see that one of our primary foci must be the identification of “... **to faithful men ...**”
2. “**Faithful**” [πιστός] – refers to a bi-directional faithfulness in men whom we ought to seek to identify and “entrust” with the treasure of the Gospel.
 - a) *First, they are people in whom God has done a faithful work of regeneration and sanctification and are therefore being transformed by grace.*
 - b) *Second, they are people demonstrating faithfulness to God and to the Word of God – men willing to do the hard work of studying God’s Word, applying God’s Word, and living out the instructions of God’s Word.*
3. This ought to be the characteristic of each believer – but we must make sure that faithfulness characterizes those who invest ourselves and in whom we deposit the treasure of the Gospel.
4. We cannot ever perfectly ensure that those with whom we work will stay true, but we must seek to do all we can to identify those who appear to be genuinely following the Lord.

C. Consider the Succession

1. Those we seek to help follow Christ more, who respond well to the truth, and demonstrate commitment to Christ Jesus and the Word of God, we train – “... **entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also**.”
2. One day, we will be gone (if Christ Jesus tarries), and the Gospel will be left in the hands of those we have trained.
3. The picture is of a relay race – God handed the baton to Paul, who handed it to Timothy, who handed it “**to faithful men,**” who handed it to others, who ultimately handed it to you.
4. God’s intention for us – the “**faithful**” – is that we have one hand reaching

¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 772.

up grasping the hand of someone who can help us along, with a second hand reaching down to intentionally help another follow Christ more.

- a) *This would mean reaching out to the lost to see them come to faith in Christ – the very first thing taught by Jesus – cp. **Matthew 28:19-20**.*
- b) *This would also mean reaching out to other believers to help them be more intentional in their obedience to “all that [Jesus] commanded you ...”*

So What?

1. Am I resolved to being strengthened in grace? ... if so, what am I doing to ensure it?
2. Can I be strong without regular interaction with Jesus? ... why?
3. Does my life exemplify the truth I am learning from God’s Word?
4. How am I engaged in equipping others to follow Christ more?

**We each must see ourselves as an indispensable link
in others following Christ more.**