



## **Persevere – Remember Jesus Christ**

**2 Timothy 2:8**

Lake Arrowhead Church, Waleska, Georgia  
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**PERSEVERE – REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST**  
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America was born of revolution 244 years ago, and this weekend we celebrate our nation's freedom. As we celebrate our freedom, we must also admit our failures. We praise God for His blessings, but we must also pray for His healing of our broken nation.

America was founded upon Judeo-Christian values, yet today, those values are eroding, and our nation is becoming increasingly secular. America was built on the ideals of human freedom, yet at the same time guilty of the greatest hypocrisy by denying that same freedom to African slaves. America declared freedom of speech and freedom of religion, yet failed to guarantee ultimate freedom for all.

America has stood as a righteous ally against Nazism, an adversary against Communism, and a defender of peace all over the world, yet we struggle to find peace within. America bears the guilt of Rodney King and George Floyd and bears the guilt of 50 million abortions since 1973. We have endured Vietnam, Watergate, and 9-11. And today, we are struggling with COVID-19 and "black lives matter." We are the most prosperous and most powerful nation on earth, a beacon of freedom and a champion of democracy, but America is sick, and we are being torn apart from within.

"America, the beautiful ... sweet land of liberty ... land of the free and home of the brave ..." is at risk. These are desperate times and we need God's help. Thankfully, He promised, "If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

This weekend, we celebrate our nation's freedom, and we are proud to do so. Yet, with humility and honesty, we must admit that our nation is far from perfect. This is why we pray. We pray that God would continue to protect our nation and that He would continue to bless our nation. But as righteous, humble, and honest people, we also pray that God would forgive our nation of its failures and that He would heal our land. **[PRAYER]**

This morning, we continue our summer series in 2 Timothy. It is about perseverance, endurance, and faithfulness. Paul's second letter to Timothy includes this famous challenge. ***"Be strong in the Lord, fight the good fight, finish the course, keep the faith."*** If you want to be a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ, you must take these words to heart.

Paul's letter to Timothy is a series of exhortations in which Paul urged him to ...

- 1:6 "kindle afresh" the gift God had given him
- 1:8 "do not be ashamed" of the Gospel
- 1:14 "guard" the Gospel as a "treasure"
- 2:1 "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"

- 2:3 “suffer hardship ... as a good soldier of Christ Jesus”
- 2:15 “be diligent” as a worker approved by God
- 3:14 “continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of”
- 4:2 “preach the word”
- 4:5 “fulfill your ministry”
- 4:7 “fight the good fight, finish the course, keep the faith”

Tucked in the middle of these fatherly exhortations it’s as if Paul’s cadence slows down. It’s as if he paused, and then with a different tone said, “Oh Timothy, whatever you do, ***remember Jesus Christ***” (2 Timothy 2:8). Compared to all the other injunctions Paul gave, this one jumps off the page, and it should. “Remember Jesus Christ.”

To help us remember, Jesus gave us the Lord’s Supper, Communion. And this morning we are going to reenact the Lord’s Supper. Because ***the day the memory of what Jesus did for us on the cross begins to fade is also the day our spiritual vitality begins to fade.***

## THE UPPER ROOM

The scene of the Last Supper in the upper room is recorded in Luke 22. Artists of every generation have offered their interpretation of that night. The most famous is Leonardo da Vinci’s masterpiece. Luke 22 lets us peek inside that upper room.

“When the hour had come, (Jesus) reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him” (Luke 22:14). In a candle-lit room, they sat around a low table, reclining on cushions. The twelve were alone with Jesus. Jesus was sitting right there in front of them. They looked Him in the eye. They heard the sound of His voice. It was an intimate evening and it was a sacred moment.

That night, Jesus washed the disciples’ feet.<sup>1</sup> He talked about heaven and going to prepare a place for them.<sup>2</sup> He talked about the Holy Spirit, and promised to send Him as their “Helper.”<sup>3</sup> He urged them to abide in Him, to cling to Him just as a branch clings to a vine.<sup>4</sup> He called them “friends.”<sup>5</sup> He warned them of the world’s opposition.<sup>6</sup> And He prayed for them.<sup>7</sup>

It was a sacred night, but 30 years later, what was meant to be sacred had degenerated into an all-you-can-eat buffet. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul scolded the believers at Corinth. The Corinthian church was marred by division and faction, and they had lost focus. We see it in how carelessly they observed the Lord’s Supper. Paul said, “One goes hungry, another gets drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not!” (1 Corinthians 11:21-22, ESV).

People were getting drunk at the Lord’s table. It had turned into a gluttonous feast. The rich were not sharing with the poor. There was division and faction. They were going through the

motions, they were playing church, but it was far from the sacred night in the upper room when Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of Me.”<sup>8</sup>

### REMEMBER

I hope you’re grasping the theme of 2 Timothy this summer. Every chapter and every message is a warning about spiritual drift and a call to perseverance. It is so easy to drift, so easy to forget, and so easy to wake up one day far from God. That’s why Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” That’s why Paul wrote to Timothy, “Remember Jesus Christ.”

There is a unique sadness in seeing an elderly person confused with memory loss. The most frightening form of dementia is Alzheimer’s. Alzheimer’s is a cruel prison; often afraid, hostile, and unable to remember the names of their own children. Family members find it hard to have the simplest conversation because the victim’s memory is so sporadic. As Alzheimer’s kidnaps memory, family members are forced to prematurely grieve the loss of someone they love, a loss that has been called “the long goodbye.”

This is how one woman described her mother’s battle with Alzheimer’s.

“Where have you been?” my mother asks. She insists, “I’ve been here a week and not one of my six children have been to see me. Nobody cares about me, please get me out.” We explain that we have been to see her, many times. And the other children? So have they. But she does not believe us ...

Conversation is almost impossible. We try asking questions, “What did you did have for lunch mom?” They didn’t give her any lunch, she says. We try to tell her about her grandchildren. It is all news to her. “Why, I had no idea she had children! I didn’t even know she was married! Why didn’t you tell me?”

She asks why our father (her husband) has not been to see her, not even once. We remind her that he has been with the Lord for 23 years. “Why, nobody told me!” she says, bewildered at our carelessness.<sup>9</sup>

If we’re not diligent, we can be afflicted with a spiritual Alzheimer’s. As the years pass, the initial excitement of coming to Christ can fade. And before we realize it, there is little freshness or vitality to our faith. We wake up one day wondering where God has gone and wondering why our faith is so stale. And it happens because *the day the memory of what Jesus did for us on the cross begins to fade is also the day our spiritual vitality begins to fade.*

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul wrote, “For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me’” (1 Corinthians 11:23-25, NIV, Luke 22:19).

***“Do this in remembrance of Me.”***

Throughout the Bible, God calls His people to remember.

- Deuteronomy 5:15 – “You shall *remember* that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out ...”
- Deuteronomy 8:22 – “You shall *remember* all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years ...”
- 1 Chronicles 16:12 – “*Remember* His wonderful deeds which He has done”
- Psalm 77:11 – “I shall *remember* the deeds of the Lord ...”
- Psalm 111:44 – “He has made His wonders to be *remembered*.”

The Hebrew concept of remembering went beyond merely recalling something from the past. To remember, in the Hebrew sense, was to retrieve something from the past and allow it to influence the present. To remember God was to bring Him into the moment.

The Lord’s Supper does more remember Jesus Christ, it brings Him into the room with us. “Do this in remembrance of Me,” Jesus said.<sup>10</sup> “Remember Jesus Christ,” Paul said.

- Remember His humanity, a newborn baby nursing at His mother’s breast, being worshiped by magi and shepherds alike.
- Remember Jesus resisting Satan’s temptations in the wilderness.
- Remember Jesus baptized and the voice of His Father say, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”
- Remember His miracles. Remember His compassion. Remember His teaching.
- Remember His tears, as He cried at the tomb of Lazarus.
- Remember His fury, as He chased the money-changers from the temple.
- Remember His humility, as He washed His disciples’ feet.
- Remember His agony in the garden, as He surrendered to His Father’s will.
- Remember His silence and His resolve before Pilate.
- Remember His blood dripping from the cross.

Isaiah wrote this 700 years prior to Jesus’ crucifixion. “All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth” (Isaiah 53:6-7). And why did Jesus remain silent? Because He cared more about saving us than saving Himself.

## RENEW

When Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of Me,” He was asking more of us than mere reflection. Paul explained to the Corinthians, “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Corinthians 11:26-29, NIV).

Notice we are to “examine” ourselves. Before we eat this bread and drink this cup, we must confess our sins, we must come clean before Him. We must never partake of Communion in a flippant way. It must never be casual or ritual. May we examine ourselves so that we do not partake in “an unworthy manner” and bring “judgment” on us.

Notice also that every time we eat this bread and drink this cup, we “proclaim the Lord’s death.” Another version of 1 Corinthians 11 says, “Every time you eat this bread and every time you drink this cup you *reenact* in your words and actions the death of the Master” (1 Corinthians 11:26, MSG). Communion is our way of remembering the sacrifice of Jesus. ***It is also a reenactment of His sacrifice and a renewal of our vows to follow Him.*** When we partake the Lord’s Supper, we are declaring what we believe, and we are also renewing our commitment to follow Him.

As a pastor, I have officiated over several ceremonies where couples renewed their wedding vows. When they do, it’s like they are saying to each other, “Honey, if the clock were turned back, I want you to know that I’d do it all over again with you ... Honey, I love you more today than the day we were married ... I can’t believe someone like you would marry someone like me. I feel like the most blessed person alive.”

When we observe the Lord’s Supper, we renew our vows.<sup>11</sup> We’re saying “yes” to Him all over again. It’s as if Jesus turns to us and says, “Follow Me,” and we say, “Yes Lord. I’m still following. I’m right here behind You.”

So, I want to give you some time to sit with Jesus. To “remember Jesus Christ.” To remember His love, His sacrifice, and His grace. And, some time to renew your vows. To say, “Yes Lord. I’m still following. I’m right here behind You.”

## NOTES

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1. See John 13:4-17.
2. See John 14:1-3.
3. See John 14:16-17, 16:5-15.
4. See John 15:1-11.
5. See John 15:14.
6. See John 15:18-24.
7. See John 17.
8. From *The Message*, 1 Corinthians 11:17-22, Eugene Peterson paraphrases Paul's words:

"Regarding this next item, I'm not at all pleased. I am getting the picture that when you meet together it brings out your worst side instead of your best! First, I get this report on your divisiveness, competing with and criticizing each other. I'm reluctant to believe it, but there it is. The best that can be said for it is that the testing process will bring truth into the open and confirm it.

"And then I find that you bring your divisions to worship – you come together, and instead of eating the Lord's Supper, you bring in a lot of food from the outside and make pigs of yourselves. Some are left out, and go home hungry. Others have to be carried out, too drunk to walk. I can't believe it! Don't you have your own homes to eat and drink in? Why would you stoop to desecrating God's church? Why would you actually shame God's poor? I never would have believed you would stoop to this. And I'm not going to stand by and say nothing."
9. Elisabeth Elliot, "Forget-Me-Not," *Christianity Today*, July 17, 1988, page 22.
10. In that upper room illustration, Jesus took the cup and said, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood" (Luke 22:20); "poured out for many for forgiveness of sins," Matthew added (Matthew 26:28). Jesus also said something shocking and controversial. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:53-54). Putting the theological complexity of that statement aside, surely it teaches us that we are not just spectators at the cross, we are participants at the cross. [See John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), page 70]. We were then and we are now. In a sense, repeating the Lord's Supper represents Christians "feeding upon Christ." [Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer*, Volume 4, "The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century" (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1984), page 47].
11. Samuel Johnson called the Lord's Supper an "oath of fidelity" ("An Oath of Fidelity," *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 32, 1986, page 34).