Favorite Chapters - 2 Timothy 2

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. This evening we are in 2 Timothy 2.

It took me seven weeks to get through chapter 2 when I taught it in that class.
And then Michael has this cruel joke of saying, take a favorite chapter and preach it all in 30 minutes or 40 minutes or so. So I'm going to do my best. This is about 37 pages of notes condensed down to about 11, which for me is about three pages too many for a sermon.
So we'll see. We'll see if we get out of here in any reasonable time. But I'm very excited about this.
This is a favorite chapter because of the context in which we find Paul.
I want to give you a very brief timeline of Paul. So he's born in Tarsus, approximately 5 A.D. He is a Jew and he is a Roman citizen by birth.
[1:19] Fast forward through a radical conversion and this incredible life of ministry about 60 A.D. Paul arrives in Rome and is under house arrest. That's Acts 28 verses 30 and 31.

He is unhindered in preaching. He's allowed to continue to preach. It's about 62 A.D. He's released from house arrest. It's believed that he goes and continues to travel.
And during this time he writes 1 Timothy and Titus, the other two pastoral epistles. At this point we don't really know what happens to Paul.
Some extra biblical texts suggest that he at least attempted a journey to Spain. We don't know what he did. But by 66 A.D. he's arrested and he's returned back to Rome.
Back to the Romans and Nero, the emperor, has sentenced him to death. And this is likely because he has been found guilty, although he wasn't, of setting fire to Rome.
[2:21] And Nero wants to use him as an example to scare people away from Christianity. So Paul is being falsely accused of something. And his sentence is death.

Now because he is a Roman citizen, he cannot be crucified. He has to be beheaded. And he is in his prison cell writing a letter to his true child of the faith, as he calls him, to Timothy, who is a young pastor in his 30s in Ephesus.
This is a book that Paul really puts his money where his mouth is. He's already gone on record in Philippians for saying in chapter 1 verse 21, For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.
Later on in that letter, I know how to be brought low and how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Paul has faced death before. He has been unwavering in his faith. But now, he knows what's coming.
[3:37] And for me, as I read 1 Timothy and Titus and then go to 2 Timothy, I feel like the tone has changed. It's different. In this letter, Paul shares his need for a cloak, his books, his parchments.

He reminisces on his ancestors, as well as the ancestors of Timothy and their faithfulness to the Lord. He's reminded of those who have come to his aid and have loved him in the past.
He reminds Timothy of the pastoral role that he's been called to and encourages him to press forward. He reminds Timothy of the godlessness that will take place in the last days.
And that while he is imprisoned, God's word is not bound. It's the exclamation point to his ministry.
One last letter to perhaps his closest friend and disciple that he has raised up.
He's facing execution, preparing to lose his head, literally, for the sake of the gospel. And he writes to Timothy one last time.
[4:48] Now, I'm working on this sermon a few weeks ago, and I'm sitting at Summer Moon, drinking a coffee, and it dawns on me that we don't face this circumstance.

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It is unlikely that very many of us will be beheaded for the sake of the gospel in this room. It's unlikely that many of us have sat in a Roman prison and wrote letters asking for a cloak because winter's coming and it's cold.
But we all face suffering in life. We all face hardship. We all have our own moments that we feel like we're in a Roman prison and suffering in life.
The circumstances here are serious. And so are ours when we're suffering, when we're walking through those things. And what I think Paul has done for Timothy and what he has done for us is give him some real practical ways in which he can be strengthened as he faces this.
He starts in chapter 2, verse 1. Paul wants Timothy to be strengthened and prepared and ready to face whatever it is that's coming.
[6:22] his way. And I think that's an easy thing for us to say. Okay, yeah, by grace we're going to get through this. But what does that mean? What are you talking about?

And I think he gives him some very realistic pictures of grace in his life that will allow him to endure hardship. I have six of those for us this evening that I want to look at.
Six things that are God's grace that strengthens us to face suffering and hardship in life. The first thing that we see in verses 2 through 7 is that we are strengthened by other believers.
We are strengthened by other believers. Again, verse 1 says, 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 the faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
So as Paul has experienced, you can't do ministry alone. You can't do life alone as a believer. We have to have community. We have to have people around us. And he's saying, you've got to have others around you.
[7:33] Take what I have taught you and pass it on to other people who will also pass it on to other people. We see five generations of the gospel here. We see Christ. We see Paul who has received the gospel from Christ and has been saved.

We see Paul who has passed it on to Timothy. Timothy who is to pass it on to entrusted faithful men. And those guys are to pass it on to others also. There's five generations of discipleship going on here.
Of ministry training going on here. Of evangelism going on here. There's five generations. We see that cycle of passing on this truth of the gospel. And that's because we have to be surrounded by other believers to endure.
Why do we do this? We do this because we need strength to face suffering. There are hard moments in life that we have to have people around us.
People who have lived through things and struggled through things. With us. We can learn from their experiences. And see how we are to face the hardships that life offers.
[8:42] In verse 3 it says share in suffering. And in the Greek that literally means to suffer hardship together. Paul is literally calling Timothy to suffer in the exact same way that he has suffered.

It's as if Paul is saying, hey Timothy. They've persecuted me all through my ministry. I've been faithful to preach the gospel. Now they've arrested me and they're going to kill me. I want you to do the same thing.
I want you to be faithful. They're going to persecute you. Eventually they're going to arrest you. They're going to kill you. But keep preaching the gospel. And while you do that pass that on to other people. So that they can be persecuted and preach the gospel.
And be captured and killed. And hopefully they have passed it on to other people as well. It's just this constant cycle. And no, we're not facing the same kind of persecution that they had in Rome. But we all face suffering. We all face hardship. We all have family members who have rejected us for the faith that we hold to.
[9:41] We all have situations at work that are incredibly awkward or frustrating because of the faith that we hold to. We all have those moments in life that we suffer because of the gospel.

Then in 3 through 6, Paul gives us three examples of how believers behave as they're facing suffering. And what's interesting about this is I think everyone in this room will see one of these that they can relate to in some way.
So Paul says there's a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer. A soldier is one who is loyal to his commander. And he is unengaged in the civilian world. He's not paying attention to the things outside of his mission, what he should be focused on.

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Gives the example of an athlete who competes according to the rules. Not their own way of doing things, but they follow the instructions that they've been given, and they strive towards the finish line.
And then he gives the example of a farmer who has an unmatched work ethic and will reap the benefit of his work. And while all these characteristics are things we should all be striving towards, we don't have all of these naturally.
[10:57] You may have one of the three kind of built into you. Naturally, you're just put your head down, grind it out, you're a hard worker. Or maybe you're just extremely disciplined. Or maybe you're good at just blocking certain things out and kind of just focusing on what you need to get done in the moment.

But this is also a reminder that we all have different skill sets and ways in which we help one another and support one another, teach one another, and learn from one another. We need people around us as we face the life of a Christian.
Verse 7 says, Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. We need other people around us. We need other believers.
And when we meditate on these instructions that Paul has given us, I think the Lord will give us understanding through his Holy Spirit. God is a God of fellowship and community.
And we see that all the way back to the very beginning in Genesis 1 and 2. It's not good for Adam to be alone. He needs somebody with him. God is a God of fellowship.
[12:08] And we should be a people of fellowship. Suffering together. Sharing hardship together. Secondly, we're strengthened by the example of Jesus.

Verses 8-13. We're strengthened by the example of Jesus. Paul then says, Remember Jesus Christ.
And Paul tells Timothy that he is risen from the dead. The offspring of David as preached in my gospel. He wants to remind him of who Jesus is.
And he gives him these different descriptions of Christ. Risen from the dead. And he uses this in a perfect tense verb. Risen. That it's an action that shows that it is completed.
Finished. Perfected. Paul wants Timothy to see that he is on his throne right now. Reigning and ruling. He's not a God of the past.
[13:09] He's not a man that died and was just a good example. But he is the Christ who was raised again. Came back to life. And is alive and well to this day. Remember him.

He is the reason that we do this. Look at the example of Christ. Christ. During times of suffering and hardship. It might be easy for us.
As we sang. Let those winds of doubt blow through us. But Paul wants to reorient Timothy's mind back to why we go through the things that we go through in this life.
It might be easy for us to abandon them. It might be easy for us to walk away. But we have a reason in which we live the way that we do.
And suffer through this world. It's because of Christ Jesus. Jesus suffered faithfully for our sake. Now we suffer for his.
[14:09] We walk through this life bearing the name of Christ. So Paul is saying no. Don't walk away Timothy. Remember Christ Jesus.

He's risen from the dead. He also says he's the offspring of David. And Paul is pointing out the divinity and the humanity of Jesus here. This Jesus, the one who is risen.
He is the offspring of David. The one that was promised. He is the one whom I have preached in my gospel. He says in verse 8. This very gospel that he has preached is also what he drew strength from in his life and ministry.
That kept Paul on task. And he's now encouraging Timothy to do so. It is the reason that he shares his suffering with Christ is for the sake of this gospel.
The reason he is writing this very letter. There is no other worldly help out there that can sustain us like Christ Jesus can sustain us.
[15:14] There is nothing else that compares. Two Sunday nights ago, Joey was preaching through Hebrews 1. One of his favorite chapters. And Joey said that the author of Hebrews was trying to show them the worth and excellence and supremacy of Jesus over everything.

In Hebrews 4, we see that Jesus is able to sympathize with our weakness. He knows what it means to face trials and hardships. And I think that's what Paul is trying to point out to Timothy. That Jesus

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is better than everything.
He is far more excellent and supreme over everything. Even the suffering and the trials that you may face. Even if it includes losing your head.
Nothing compares to Christ. So hold fast to that sure and steady anchor.
Don't let go. Verse 10 says, Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect. That they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.
[16:26] Paul is willing to walk through anything for the sake of the gospel. Because he knows it has the power to save and change people's lives.

In verses 11 and 13, Paul breaks out in song. Scholars say that this is an early, an ancient church hymn.
Which is all about who Christ is. And perhaps one of my points should have been that we are strengthened by church music. But ultimately, our church music that we sing and that we're a part of here is all based on scripture.
So really my third point is that we are strengthened by scripture. We're strengthened by scripture. Verses 14 through 18. When we are taught scripture.
When we sing it. When we memorize it. When we study it. When we meditate on scripture. We are strengthened. And when we face times of suffering and persecution and hardship.
[17:27] We don't look to the world or to anything else that can help us in the moment. We run to God's word. And we are reminded of who God is based on his word.

Verse 14 says to remind them. Paul wants Timothy to remind the church of these things. What do they need to be reminded of? Not to quarrel about words. Which does no good.
But only ruins the hearers. Verse 14. To quarrel about words. Literally in the Greek means a word war. To fight. To contend about words.
And what do these word wars do? He tells you. They do no good. But only ruin the hearers. In verse 14. The Greek word for ruin here is where we get our English word catastrophe.
And the word wars that people are engaging in in this moment are leaving their lives in catastrophe. Ruining their lives. Imagine those times you're on Facebook.
[18:34] And you see the two people going back and forth. We just finished like a political season. So it's like all over the place I'm sure. And at no point in that back and forth is anyone being convinced of anything other than their own opinion.

In fact, they're only getting more angry with whoever's on the opposite side of them. It's just ruining the hearers. It's not doing any good. There's no fruition of peace or unity happening.
It ruins us when we engage in these arguments. Instead, Paul wants Timothy to verses 24 and 25 to patiently endure and teach with gentleness.
In Genesis 3, we see Eve and Satan go back and forth about what God's command really was. And what happens? She said and entertained what Satan was saying.
And it ruined the hearer. The whole world was plunged into sin. It destroyed lives.
[19:43] What she should have done was trusted in God's command in his word and fled. But she didn't. She engaged in a word war.

And instead of arguing, what we should do, verse 15, is rightly handle the word of truth. Now this is a charge for Timothy, but it's also a priority for all of us.
That we know God's word and we apply it to our lives. And we teach it patiently and gently to people around us. God's word will walk us through whatever suffering and frustration and hardship we are going through.
But if we are fighting and arguing over God's word, it's going to create disunity between all of us. And we won't have people around us to lock arms with, as we talked about in my first point, that we need others around us.
But if we're arguing over God's word and we're splitting and dividing, we no longer have that unity. That's why as Michael was teaching 1 Timothy and he got into eschatology, he opens up with talking about how we were not going to separate over these doctrines.
[21:03] We aren't going to divide and argue over these things. That he has good, faithful friends that believe in some of these secondary issues differently than he does. So what is our goal?

To rightly handle God's word and focus on what it says and endure patiently with one another. We must rely on God's word.

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It unifies us. And church unity is critically important. You ever seen the videos of the wolves who are hunting the elk? There's like three wolves and like 400 elk.
And these wolves don't stand a chance. What do they have to do? They've got to get one by themselves. They've got to get him divided from the rest of the herd. And then at that point, that elk is all but defenseless.
Can't do anything. And that's what this world wants to do to us as a church. It wants to divide us and get us arguing with one another and debating things with one another.
[22:03] No, we should look at God's word, rightly handle it, rally around it, and be unified according to God's word. Paul gives the examples of Hymenaeus and Philetus, who apparently were once considered believers.

Because in verse 18, it says that they have swerved from the truth. So we are to stay focused on Scripture, not to separate or weaken the church or lead people away from the gospel into irreverent babble, as verse 16 says, or into more ungodliness.
We are to focus on the truth of Scripture and hold to them. And perhaps there is none more dear than what we see in verse 19. Number four, we are strengthened by our completed and sealed salvation.
We are strengthened by our completed and sealed salvation. One of the great truths of Scripture here in verse 19, but God's firm foundation stands.
Bearing this seal, the Lord knows those who are His. As we sang earlier, we have a firm foundation. Jesus Christ, our Lord, and through Him, God knows who are His.
[23:29] We are saved through Christ. Paul has already mentioned that he suffers for the sake of the elect, those whom God has called to be His own through Christ Jesus.

Paul recognizes that we will face this suffering, but ultimately it is all for God's glory and for our good because He does what's best for His people because we belong to Him.
We had Valentine's Day recently. My kids come home with all these Valentine candies and all this stuff and their goal is to eat as much of it as quickly as possible.
And so we're saying, okay, let's pick and choose here, okay? Let's go easy on it. And for them, they think, oh my goodness, this is the worst day of my life. I can't believe you're making me do this.
I can only eat seven pieces of candy right now? Like what? We're terrible parents, you know? We're just mean. But it's not for their suffering that we're doing that.
[24:28] It's for their good and for our sanity later when people are throwing up, I guess. But it's for their good that we don't let them just indulge in this thing. Make them suffer a little bit and put some stuff aside and make some good decisions.

That's what the Lord does with us. He walks us through life and He does things for His glory, but also for our good. And we have to trust Him in that.
And we are strengthened when we are reminded of the salvation that we have. Because if we truly belong to God, He knows what's best for us. And He is walking us through the difficult situations of life.
As Christ suffered, He did so because that's what was best for His people. As verse 11 says, if we have died with Him, we also live with Him. Our salvation is completed.
And we need not be worried about God's love for us. We know that we will be with Christ in the end, no matter the outcome of whatever difficult circumstance we face.
[25:39] Calvin coined the phrase, post-tenebrous lux, which is after darkness light. You're probably familiar with it. And it's the whole idea that whatever situation a believer faces, they'll either be killed for their faith, and they'll be in the light of heaven, or they will proclaim the gospel in a dark situation, and people will come to know Christ, and the light of the gospel will shine forward.

And whatever situation we face, after darkness always comes light. It's the win-win situation for Christians. It says that this firm foundation, that the Lord knows who are His, it bears this seal, like a wax stamp that has the name of its owner in it.
God's firm foundation represents His ownership over us, and He will not let us go. In the same way that Satan tempted Job to let him go, because the only reason he really follows you is because you've blessed him and taken care of him in life.
Let me have him, and he will curse you. Let go of him. But God never lets him go, and He'll never let you go, if you are His, and you are found in Christ Jesus.

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Fifthly, we are strengthened by holy living. By holy living. As we read and study God's word, we don't just retain it, but it should pour out of us, and we should live it.
[27:20] Paul tells Timothy to depart from iniquity, in verse 19, and to cleanse himself from what is dishonorable, in verse 21, and to flee youthful passions, in 22.

It's not enough that we just have good theology and doctrine. We also have to live it. It has to affect the way that we live, and the way that we act, and the way that we engage the world around us.
Something Michael often shares in our new members classes, is that we have pastors and leaders in our church, that are far from perfect, and you shouldn't expect them to be perfect. But when we walk through difficult situations in life, you should expect that you will see a faithful example, of someone walking through a difficult situation, and relying on God.
And that should be true of all of us. None of us are perfect, but we do face these difficult situations.
And the way that we live, demonstrates what we truly believe about God.
What we truly know about Him. It's great to claim Christianity, and to have some Hobby Lobby, scripture pictures on your wall, and all of those things.
[28:37] That's great. But if you aren't living in a way that reflects who God is, then you don't really believe those things. You don't really trust in Him.

That's exactly what we're seeing from Paul in this letter. He truly believes the things that he's been teaching all throughout his ministry. And he's willingly laying his life down.
Saying, I'm going to die for this. I'll suffer for this. Timothy, you do the same. And keep passing this on, generation to generation to generation.
That we will live according to God's word. That we will die for God's word and the gospel that it proclaims. We're strengthened by holy living.
Because it is what really proves what we believe about who God is. So in light of what you believe about God and what He has done for us, we shouldn't pursue those youthful passions.
[29:51] Instead, we should pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, in verse 22. And have nothing to do with foolishness or ignorant controversies or quarreling, verses 23 and 24.

But when the suffering hits, we need to remind ourselves of who God is as well as to others around us who God is based on the way that we live.
We should have spiritual disciplines and habits in place that when hardship comes, we don't falter. But we keep our eyes and our mind focused on Christ through everything that goes on.
Whatever that situation is. I can remember being 26 years old and my wife was at a funeral here in Oklahoma City for her grandfather.
I was in Albany, New York in my apartment with Maverick and I had a call from my mom. I'm the oldest of two. My mom calls me and she says, Jeremy, your dad and I need to talk to you about something.
[31:01] I'm like, okay. And she says that we've never told you this. We've never told most people this.

But you have an older sister who we put up for adoption when she was born. We hid it. We didn't tell anyone. But she found us. And in that moment, everything I understood about my childhood, everything I knew about who I was as the oldest, not just the oldest kid in my family, but the oldest of six grandkids, shifted and changed.
What was also happening in that season of life was that the Lord had been working in mine and Chelsea's life to strengthen us, to teach us, and to make us very reliant on His Word.
And in that moment, I had no idea. I didn't know what to say. I didn't know what to do. I thought, how do you go 30 years and never tell anybody about your child? How do I go 26 years and not know that I have an older sister out there?
That's a shocking revelation. And not a half-sister not a stepsister, like a full sister. It's actually kind of weird.
[32:27] She looks just like us. It's bizarre. But in that moment, the only thing I knew to do was to cling to our hope in Christ.

And I tried to encourage my parents as much as I could as they were trying to figure out what they were doing next. And I immediately called my wife and explained the whole thing to her.
And then after that, I immediately called my pastor. I ran back to the church. And not because I'm so holy or look at how great I am or discipline, none of that.

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Because I simply didn't know what else to do. The Lord presents difficult situations and He walks us through things.
We have to retreat back to what we know is true about God and the way we behave and the way we respond in those situations will prove what we truly know about God and believe about Him.
[33:32] Lastly, we are strengthened by sharing the gospel with others. We're strengthened by sharing the gospel with others.

As we endure suffering, we can be strengthened by going out into this dark world and sharing this message with the world around us.
In verse 25, it says that God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth. In verse 26, that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil.
And I think that when we see this and we think about sharing the gospel, even in the midst of hardship, I think it can remind us of two things as we're facing these difficult seasons. First, I think it reminds us that suffering is temporary.
Because if Christ can save us from our sin, and we can go out and share the gospel with others and pass this good news on, it reminds us that whatever we're facing is a temporary thing.
[34:43] It's a temporary situation. And what better time than when you are in the pits of despair to go and share the gospel with others and others can look at you and say, how can you have such a great hope in life as you walk through whatever this situation is and you can point back to Christ as the one who walks you through it and takes you through those situations.

And the other thing it reminds us of, secondly, that while we may face temporary suffering here on earth, there is a way of escape from eternal suffering in a place we call hell.
As you face the reality of difficult situations in life, it should remind you that this is as bad as it gets for the believer. But for those that do not know Christ, the suffering that we face in this life does not even compare to the suffering that they will face in eternity.
It's a sad and sobering reality for those who surround us. And I know that we are in Bible Belt, Oklahoma, but there are more unbelievers around here than I think we could ever even comprehend.
I think we would be shocked by the number of non-Christians that are all around us every day and the despair that they are living in, the hopeless lives that they have despite what they may say or claim.
[36:19] 2 Timothy 2 is one of my favorite chapters because we see a very real practical way in which we are strengthened by the grace to face suffering.

Primarily, that all comes through Christ Jesus. It's through His gospel. We have to know and understand the gospel and repent of sin and submit to the Lordship of Christ and be found in Him to face that eternal suffering of hell.
If you don't know Christ, don't leave this place tonight without talking to somebody and figuring out who this Christ is. But I want to remind us that we are strengthened by having other believers around us and by the example that is found in Christ Jesus, by the written word that God has given us, by our complete and sealed salvation through the way in which we live and by sharing truth with other people.
All of this fixed upon the gospel of Jesus, the reason and the purpose for which we suffer and the very promise that we will endure that suffering. I pray this has been an encouragement to you and a help for all of us.
Let's pray. Father, we thank You for this chapter. We thank You for Paul's words in which he gave to Timothy. that Timothy passed on to the church and that we have passed on through generations of believers for over 2,000 years.
[38:02] Lord, I pray that as we do face suffering that we would be reminded of these truths, reminded of how it is we should act and live and how we are to keep our minds focused on Christ and surround ourselves with believers and be bold with the gospel even in the darkest of circumstances.

Lord, I know that there are a lot of people in this room walking through difficult seasons of life and I pray that they would be strengthened by Your grace, that they would remember that if they are found in You, that You were doing all of this for Your glory and for their good.
Lord, we love You so much. We thank You for this time for us to gather as believers. We pray all of this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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