

Thursday, May 18, 2023 ▫ Read 2Timothy 2:11–13

Questions from the Scripture text: What does v11a call these verses? What is the first “if” statement (v11b)? What will also be true, if we died with Christ (v11c)? What is the second “if” statement (v12a)? What will also be true, if we endure with Christ (v12b)? What is the third “if” statement (v12c)? What will also happen, if we deny Christ (v12d)? What is the third “if” statement (v13a)? What will still be true of Christ in this case (v13b)? Why (v13c)?

Why can, ought, and must Christians endure hardship for Christ? 2Timothy 2:11–13 looks forward to the second reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these three verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the reality and necessity of union with Christ drives Christian endurance**.

We can endure hardship for Christ, because we are united to Him, v11. We are familiar with this language from Rom 6:3–8. There, the conclusion was that the only way that we can come to faith in Jesus is if the Spirit, Whom He poured out on us in baptism from heaven, as united us to Christ Himself. So we died with Him, so we rose with Him, so we live with Him, and so we are and must be sin’s mortal enemies now, not willing servants.

Similarly, if the life that we are now living is lived by faith in Christ, in union with Christ, by the grace of Christ, then we have everything necessary to endure whatever hardship comes. The apostle has charged Timothy to endure hardship (v3) and given his own example as willing to endure all things (v10). Now, he reminds Timothy of the “how” of that: union with Christ. We died with Him, we will live with Him, and by His life we endure.

This is such an important concept in the Christian life that the apostle refers Timothy to a “faithful saying.” This is the fourth of five of these in Paul’s letters to him. In the last couple centuries, commentators have begun to speculate that these were from hymns written by the apostolic church. But there is no evidence of this in Scripture or history, and 1:13 gives us the Spirit’s own description of such passages. It is a pattern of sound words. In other words, it is a selection from a catechism with which Timothy was familiar. Perhaps the same catechism in which Theophilus had been catechized (a more literal translation than “instructed” in Luk 1:4).

There is nothing more essential to the daily Christian experience than the reality of our union with Christ and therefore the perception of our communion (fellowship) with Him. This is the A, B, Cs of Christian living. It is foundational to the battle against sin in Rom 6. And here, we see it is foundational to the believer’s endurance of hardship.

We ought to endure hardship, because it is worth it, v12a–b. The path to glory runs through suffering. This is a common teaching through all of Scripture, and preachers who do not remind Christ’s sheep of this sin against them and their Shepherd. For the believer, suffering is light and momentary by comparison to the eternal weight of the glory to which it is bringing us (cf. 2Cor 4:17; Rom 8:18). If we endure, we shall also reign!

But there is something else that is worth enduring hardship: not only where it takes us, but with Whom we get to do it. We have fellowship with Christ in our sufferings (cf. Rom 8:17, 2Cor 1:5, Php 3:10, 1Pet 4:13). Surely, our suffering is not so great as His, and what it accomplishes is not so great as what His accomplished. But, there is a great privilege in suffering analogously to Him and a great sweetness in getting to do so in union with Him.

We must endure hardship for Christ, because if we do not, we will be cast in the lake of fire, v12c–13. One of the great encouragements for the struggling believer is that all of his love and obedience and service and patience have come by Christ’s grace in him. We grieve over how poor all of these are in us, but their presence at all is a great encouragement, for whatever grace we have has come from One Who will persist until we are perfected. The resources of that grace never run out.

But this means something dreadful for those who do not endure. It means that whatever good had appeared to be in them was fool’s gold. It was from themselves, not from Christ. There are many who indeed seem to be quite upright and decent but have not Christ. Whatever God’s common grace has permitted them to achieve, the fact that it is by achievement rather than from union with Christ means that the resources must run out. And the surest way to be exposed as a false Christian is to come to the place where one denies Christ. Alas, many who had seemed to be something in the church have ended up this way.

But we cannot be in doubt about what happens to such. As Jesus made clear in Matthew 10:33, those who deny Jesus before men, He will deny before His Father—and this on the last and great Day (cf. Luk 9:26)! Why will Jesus deny those who deny Him? Because it is impossible for Him to lie (cf. Tit 1:2) or sin in any other way. He simply cannot deny Himself (v13c). This is great news for those who are His. He must save us, because we are His, and He cannot deny Himself.

But for those who deny Christ, who show themselves “faithless,” His faithfulness means that *He must* deny them. Their changing opinion of Christ doesn’t change anything about Christ Himself. To put it bluntly, when we are tempted to shrink back from enduring hardship of Christ, what faces us is a choice between heaven and hell. And if we are of grace, it is His grace. He is faithful, and by His grace, we will choose heaven.

What hardship are you facing? From where do the resources to endure it come? Why is it worth it to endure the hardship? Why is it such a dangerous temptation to consider giving up on enduring the hardship for His sake?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving to us to die with Christ, to live with Christ, and one day to reign with Christ. Thank You for the faithful saying by which Paul reminded Timothy of this wonderful reality of union with Christ. Thank You even for the sweetness that fellowship with Christ brings to our sufferings. Forgive us for shrinking back from enduring suffering. Please, do not let us deny Him, which would damn ourselves. Instead, forgive us, and restore us, and comfort us, and strengthen us in Jesus Christ, through whom we ask it, AMEN!

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Second Timothy 2 11 through 13. These are God's words. This is a faithful saying, For if we died with him, we shall also live with him. If we endure. We shall also reign with him. If we deny him. He also will deny us. If we are faithless. He remains faithful.

He cannot. Deny himself. So far the reading. Of gods inspired and inherent worked. Throughout the course of first a second Timothy, there are five of these Patterns of sound words. That he gives by. Saying something to the effect of This is a faithful saying, And so forth. Oddly in the last couple hundred years.

It has become. Popular even among reformed and presbyterian. Commentators to suggest, oh, these must be first century. Hymns that the church was inventing Uh, for singing in public worship. Uh, this of course, is an interpolation, there's nothing in the bible or in, Uh, the church histories that tell us this.

But there is something in the bible. In fact in first and second Timothy, where the apostle reminds Timothy of patterns of sound words that he has been given and patterns of sound words, he is to get to others. So this is actually Um, as far as the spirit has given us to understand, The fourth of five snippets from the catechism.

Uh, that they had in Ephesus at the time. And a wonderful example and reminder that it is good for us. Um, to Condense into patterns of sound words, the teaching of the bible as a whole. Um, So, Uh, the the catechism that they had. In emphasis was so sound that paul under the inspiration of the spirit could actually use clips of it inherently.

In writing. To Timothy. Which is marvelous. Here. That Timothy has been reminded of. Uh, the danger of not enduring hardship. He has been reminded of the danger of worldliness. He has been reminded of the danger. Of not applying the means of grace to himself. He has reminded of the danger.

Of not sticking with the lord jesus christ whom he professes. And the snippet of the catechism that Um, paul gives him now and these three verses that are before us They? Remind him that faith in jesus christ. Does not just a formula of words, even it is not just an idea.

It is a reality that joins us to jesus. This is very similar to the reasoning in rum and six where he's been talking about whether we should continue and sin. He says no, don't you remember that you died with the lord jesus christ? And don't you remember that? This happened by jesus's pouring out his spirit baptizing you with his spirit and that it was the holy spirit's work to join you to jesus.

So that you died with him in a way that could never be undone, and that you have risen again from within and there is a new, you That is different than the one who before was, before you believed in jesus, and the new you lives unto God and offers all that, you are unto God as slaves were righteousness and battles, whatever is left from that former you.

And so forth, like we've been hearing in roman six. Well, it applies not just to sinning and also applies to the purpose of life, it applies to what we consider to be heavenlyness. And Of course, there's a righteousness in component to those things and it applies to enduring hardship.

So as Uh, as paul has just said at the end of verse 10 leading into this passage, i endure. All things for the sake of the elect etc. He's telling Timothy, don't you remember the part in the catechism that we have memorized and are teaching others about union with christ?

If we died with christ, we shall also live with him. If we're united to christ, And, The former self is gone. And the new self is one who died and rose again with christ and lives, unto God than the news. Self is one who lives unto God. He lives unto god against his sin, roman six.

He lives unto god in enduring hardship. He doesn't give up. Uh, because of the hardship that he endures or shrank back from it because of the hardship that he endures, there's another application of the same doctrine of union with jesus christ and you start to see don't you how important it is to remember that you don't just have a forgiveness that was purchased by jesus or a righteousness that was provided by jesus but that you personally have jesus himself.

If you believe in him, you are his and he is yours, and your life is shared with him. And so you died with him and you live with him and this sort of person does not Uh, shrink back or fall away. And so you must endure. Whatever it costs you you must endure.

You know, there are people who Are not believers and By force of will, are able to give A superficial or produce a superficial level of kindness and niceness. There are many people from many cults, who do lots of good things and they're nice people and learn how to restrain their tongues externally and and have a bunch of common grace wisdom, and how they live.

With uh, there are many people is Who in their self-deception? Are even willing to die for their lives. But a true christian will not only have the external and the internal do this, do all the righteousness out of love for the lord jesus christ. Delight in him and delight in god, but a true christian will also be willing at least to do as much for christ.

As the as the wicked are. For their line. To endure suffering. To die. But i'm like, the wicked. Who when they endure and they die, they perish what happens with believers, who endure? Don't we know verse 12, if we endure, we shall also reign with them. The one who overcomes, i will give the crown of life.

He says over and over in revelation. Don't you know that the one year united to sits already on a throne in heaven? And he has fellowship with you and you have fellowship with him in your sufferings and in your endurance now and it makes the the sufferings themselves. Sweet.

That they come from his kind and why some loving and that he has fellowship with you in them and takes you through that and that they are analogous too. Nothing. So great as is sufferings accomplishing. Nothing so great as a suffering's accomplished but still analogous to his sufferings a little way in which you get to have some of the shared experience with your lord.

And if we endure, we shall also reign with him. Don't you see what is coming? As soon as these light and momentary afflictions, have accomplished everything that he sends them for And so the apostle is using the same doctrine that we had been seeing in Romans 6. For rejecting sin and resisting sin.

And he says, Doesn't this doctrine of union with christ having died with him and now living with him and yes, that living includes hardship. Which means living

with him is enduring. But what does living with him? Mean when you're indoor, when the time of hardship has done, it means raining.

Because you're not just living in yourself as someone who received things from Jesus, you are living in union with Jesus. And so, you will reign. But what about the one who? Gives up. Under difficulty, or pain, or suffering, or trial. Well. The one who gives up. They weren't really united to Christ.

Where they Because whatever, obedience there was whatever good ideas there were Whatever resolved there was if it was coming from Jesus. It wouldn't run out. That's one of the great. Encouragement for Christian. However, small, my love is, however small. My obedience is however small. My endurance is however small.

My resolve is if it has come from Jesus, by his spirit, it will never run out. And one day it will be perfect. And so while I do grieve over how small it is, I'm not dismayed. Because I know that the one from whom it came, Will never give up and will never run out.

But someone may seem to have a great amount. And yet it has not coming from Christ. That must run out. And it must be however good. It seems. Of an infinitely worse quality. Because it didn't come from Jesus. It came from the flesh. He must perish at last. And one of the ways such a person is exposed Or can be exposed.

Is under trial. Under difficulty. It says, if we deny him he will also deny us he's quoting something that Jesus said in his earthly ministry, isn't he? If you deny me before men, I will deny you before my father in heaven. This is one of the reasons why When John in, first John is talking about how you can identify Someone who doesn't?

Yeah, claims to have the Holy Spirit that doesn't If someone claims to have the Holy Spirit but doesn't say that. Jesus is God. Who came in the flesh? He doesn't have the Holy Spirit. He's denying. The true Jesus. And so Timothy is reminding him that justice sinning is to deny Christ.

Being unwilling. To submit to hardship for his sake, is a denial of Christ.

I'm just his heresy as a denial of Christ. Giving up Christianity, obviously. When it becomes hard or illegal or dangerous. To become to be a Christian. Isn't a price if we deny him, he will also deny us. If we are faithless. He is faithful. So if we are faith less, if we run out of faith, Where does that say our faith was coming from?

Coming from us. Does Jesus run out. Of the resources of giving faith to us. Does he ever run out of being faithful to himself? Let alone giving us to trust in him and hope in him. He cannot deny himself, why? Because he can't sin. Same reason he can't lie because he's God who cannot lie.

Tightest one too. And so we must remember that. However dangerous it ever becomes for us. To profess Christ. It is always infinitely, more dangerous. To deny him. Because he cannot will not. Deny himself. He can no more deny himself. As you can sin. Or stop being God. Stopped loving stop doing everything righteous.

He is faithful and he will not deny himself. And so this is a wonderful. You can see why This would be part of the pattern of sound words. The that, the apostle had given To Timothy for use in in Ephesus. Fantastic application of the doctrine of the union of with union with Christ for daily life.

Great model for About giving a pattern of sound words. And, Paul thinking about. His protegee, his son in the faith, and in the ministry. And Everything that he is going to be suffering for the sake of the gospel. If you know that you're going to be suffering, you drill yourself with the ABCs.

So that in the moment of greatest distress, you still have that most fundamental thing. And, And Paul is telling Timothy, Remember the ABCs of living in union with rights the faithful sayings? This is how I endured. All things are happening toward all things, but it's like with the electrostatic and This is how you must endure hardship, verse 3.

If we endure verse 12, We shall also reign with him. Have Christ always before your heart and your mind have union with Christ. To be your own personal union with Christ. Not just a abstract general doctrine in the ether somewhere. Have your own personal union with Christ. To be something that you keep referring back to in your heart and mind all day long.

Every day. The whole year, you get The more natural, this will be And then when we go to glory, we'll be perfectly. Holy And it'll just be perfectly natural. And then, let's pray. Father, thank you for this portion of your word. Thank you that you have given us your spirit.

To write the truth of your word on our hearts. We pray that you would help us to remember. Again, that If we genuinely believe in Jesus, it's something you gave us. And so we died with him and we rose with him and will endure with him. And will reign with him.

And so we pray that you'd keep us clinging to him. And that union, That you have given us. With him, make us to experience it and communion in fellowship. With him. Our awareness belonging to him. We asking his own name. Amen.