



river west church

Gospel Faithfulness

2 Timothy 3:10-15

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“Well done good and faithful servant.” – Jesus

As a follower of Christ, there are simply no words I long to hear more than these words from my Savior. If I never hear another compliment or kind word in my life, it seriously wouldn't matter. As long as I hear Jesus say these words to me one day in His kingdom. This morning, I imagine many of you share this longing with me. You long to have Jesus look you in the eye and say, “Well done good and faithful servant. You faithfully completed the assignments I gave you!” Today, in our study in 2 Timothy we'll take a look at a good and faithful servant our Lord and Savior used to change the world—the apostle Paul. By examining Paul's radical life and ministry, we'll glean lessons that will help us love and serve Jesus more faithfully this year!

Paul: A Good & Faithful Servant

When it comes down to faithful followers of Christ in the New Testament, not many can hold a candle up against the life and ministry of the apostle Paul. Among first century Christians, no one paid a higher price for serving Jesus than Paul did. By the end of his life, he was tortured inches away from death and tossed in Roman prison cells more times than he can count. He was bitten by snakes and managed to live through three shipwrecks! Let's be honest, how many of us would remain faithful to the assignment Christ had given us in the face of such things? And yet, the apostle Paul did. No one knew this more intimately than Timothy—a young believer Paul took under his wing one afternoon while ministering in Timothy's hometown of Lystra (Acts 16:1-2). For the remainder of his life and ministry, Paul would pour his time and energy into mentoring Timothy in Christian life and ministry. They ate together, prayed together, served together, and suffered together. Through Paul's life, God showed Timothy what a good and faithful servant of His Son actually looked like. This is why Paul, without hesitation, can tell Timothy, “You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings...” (2 Tim 3:10-11).

Truth + Relationships + Character:

A Pattern For Faithful Life & Ministry

Now, there is only one way Paul could say something like this to Timothy. If Paul hadn't practiced what he preached there's no way Timothy would have respected him enough to allow Paul to speak into his life. People don't drop everything and follow someone who's fake and flakey. No, Timothy followed Paul because he lived a life that was worth following. Through his relationship with Paul, Timothy was able to witness a pattern for faithful life and ministry. This pattern included three things: truth, relationships, and character. When one of these three things is missing from our lives our ability to faithfully serve Christ inevitably suffers in some way. This is why Paul charges Timothy in this way: “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it...” (3:14). Timothy knew that the truths Paul firmly believed and declared were faithfully reflected in his everyday relationships and personal character. He witnessed Paul's faithful life and ministry firsthand. And he knew it was a faithful way to follow!

Good News For Not-So-Good & Faithful People

Interestingly, as this passage progresses Paul shifts the attention away from his faithful life and ministry to the One who made him faithful. Ultimately, there is only one good and faithful servant—and it's not Paul. Neither is it you or I. It's Jesus. This is why Paul reminds Timothy—a man who was acquainted with the Bible since he was a kid—that the scriptures “are able to make (us) wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 3:15). The aim of the Bible is not to fill us with rules or timeless wisdom for living. Nor is point of scripture to give us good examples of how to live our lives. No, the reason scripture exists is to introduce us to a good and faithful Savior who rescues us from our sins. Sadly, it's very easy to read the Bible and miss this amazing news—to be someone who's “always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth” (3:7). Today, perhaps God is calling you to put your faith in Jesus Christ. He alone has the power to turn unfaithful men and women into good and faithful servants. Cling to Him. Continue in Him. As you do, He will make you into a good and faithful servant like Himself!