

7/28/24 - 2 Tim. 2:1-2 - "Disciplemaking is Essential"

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[0 : 00] please turn to second Timothy two one through two you then my child be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus and what you've heard from me in the presence of many witnesses and trust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also this is God's word thanks be to God indeed you guys with me guys awake amen amen well it's great to be gathered with our Bibles open and I'd encourage you maybe your first time visitor here today it's really helpful to just have your physical Bible in your hands finger in the text and follow along throughout the the sermon at least that's my opinion that I think that that's what helps me maybe that'll help you but we'll be going through these two verses I know it's going to be an exhausting one today I know I know and so we're are we are in a series of in second Timothy and this series has has been really interesting as it's it's highlighted things that that are often cross-cultural or counter-cultural is what I'm looking for here and things that the culture will say to do this and while the church kind of says well God's word tells us to do this actually and so this brings to mind specifically in this passage an illustration and if anybody of you are track fans you'll probably love it if you don't like track just maybe use the bathroom for the next five minutes but I want to share for you an illustration a story that I believe connects with the passage today and the angle and the direction of of the text picture yourself at this stadium at a track event specifically a relay the track was filled with anticipation a hush fell over the crowd as the starter's gun echoed through the stadium and it was the final of the four by hundred meter relay a test of endurance speed coordination and heart

Alex the lead runner shot out of the blocks like a bullet his powerful strides ate up the track his eyes fixed on the exchange zone and he gripped the baton a smooth cylinder of metal a symbol of an entrusted deposit to him with a precise underhand toss he released it into the outstretched hand of Ben and Ben was ready his momentum carrying him forward the baton slipped seamlessly into his hand and he sprinted off his muscles burning with adrenaline and the crowd's roar seemed to fuel him and he focused on the track his eyes scanning for the approaching figure Chris Chris was a blur of motion his hand extended ready to receive the baton and the exchange there was flawless as well with the baton secure Chris surged forward his heart pounding in his chest he could feel the weight of the race the hopes of his team resting on his shoulders then it came to Danny as the anchor of the relay race

Danny had to bring it home the stadium stood on their feet erupted in cheers as they took the baton as he took the baton every muscle in his body was straining every fiber of his being focused on the finish line as he crossed the finish line the weight of the world seemed to immediately be lifted off of his shoulder in relief the victory was theirs but it wasn't just about the win it was about the dialed in passes it was the seamless transitions it was the unwavering trust of his teammates knowing that their effort contributed to the overall goal it was about teamwork and faithful transmission similar church to this race we see parallels in the text today but rather than merely passing batons for an earthly sport the focus is on passing on the gospel as an eternal mission of God and the plan of God on this earth to a Christian this baton passing act is known as discipleship in the church look quickly in verse 1 this passage commends commands Timothy in this present passive tense in verse 1 to be strengthened strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus it's kind of nuanced in the Greek it would read something like this keep on being strong or if we wanted to make it a command sound like a command it would be do this through God who is actively strengthening you this is the point of the previous this is the point where the previous illustration of that relay race falls short utterly falls short every illustration that any preacher tries to use will fall short especially if it's our imagination our context and everything and this is where it falls short especially contrasting with our contemporary views in our culture and opinions on how to be strong today to believe in yourself right to pull yourself up by your bootstraps as my grandma would always say or maybe even the contemporary contrast of this idolatry of self that everything rests upon me the world revolves around my opinions my feelings my emotions and it's an idolatry of self and this bad sense of individualism as if we belong solely to ourselves well for the last few weeks we've seen imperatives unfolding that go against our strength and depend on something outside of ourselves

Paul established the call of the gospel in verse 1 the call of the gospel that is to be upheld by Timothy which led to another passage that invited Timothy to suffer for that call in the gospel and then last week Pastor Rick expositied the passage leading up to the end of chapter 1 where our duty in this calling in this suffering is to guard the gospel guard that deposit and today's text is a command to Timothy and to us today how we are to steward God's strength steward God's strength through faithful transmission of the gospel and we must remember that if it's a command church this is where it gets dicey if we uphold the authority of scripture and the sufficiency of scripture in this church body and we do if this is a command according to

God's word we are duty bound as Christians to work towards submitting our lives our whole selves to it and myself included and just as that 4 by 100 relay race or whatever length of a relay race you want to call it by the end of our time we will see that our mission is about faithful transmission of the gospel and for that I have a sermon titled Disciple Making is Essential I know that you're you're wondering how I'm going to break this this doozy of a passage up two verses how am I going to do three points in that but we're going to have two sections and what we'll see develop in these two sections according to this passage is that the faith of the next generation is our priority today and we'll see that by the end of our time at this time

[9 : 30] I want to have a moment of prayer as we enter his word and allow it to start stepping on our toes let's pray father thank you for your word thank you for something that we can hold as objectively true it's not our opinions that matter in contrast with your word your word matters and has authority over our opinions and so help us to look at this relay race and this exchange and the beauty that unfolds in redemptive history if we are good stewards of your strength in our lives help us to see that and let it bloom for us today and we pray that in Jesus name amen amen so the first section I have is to keep on being strong by receiving grace

I'm going to play on that Greek nuance of the passage keep on being strong by receiving grace in verse one just as it was read you then my child be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus this you then is a conjunction to this passage which turns attention away from those who have rejected Paul rejected his message and who have turned against Paul back in Asia and it focuses instead upon Onesiphorus from last week Onesiphorus who was an example of what it means to be strengthened and while Paul really doesn't give us the biography and the details about Onesiphorus Paul is certain that Timothy is aware of his impact in Ephesus and the expectation that Timothy is called to a calling that will carry on his work as a pastor in Ephesus maybe you don't know much about the church in Ephesus but let me let me tell you if you check the pulse of the church as I often do and us elders do in Steel

Valley Church as we check the pulse how are we doing what's going on you would find that Ephesus was a little bit of a hot mess there was a city of blatant heresy there was widespread disbelief and a very divided and a difficult church with difficult people teaching difficult heresies in the church there's a critical need for the first letter to Timothy which we went through a series not too long ago which laid the blueprints of the church how it ought to be established according to God's design which kind of gives us an indication that maybe you know a hot mess church and it's usually the result of man-made pragmatics taking over God's institution it's pretty easy to see and so if Timothy being a fragile vessel was going to last in this work as a pastor in this hot mess church he had to not only lay the blueprint but he'd have to be strong in this work well he could enroll into seminary those get a good education that'll make him strong right no he says to be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ

Jesus in other words forget your grandma's bootstraps forget the bootstraps forget your strength this task needs divine grace maybe you found yourself here today falling for the lie of the world that your strength lies within your own abilities your own achievements maybe you're not a Christian today and you're kind of just on this fringe line of faith knowing that every aspect of exerting your strength to make things right in your life and trying to appease this bridge between human frailty and a holy God you find yourself flat on your face in failure time and time again you fight to be strong in your own strength and you find that nothing that you do is enough according to God's standards maybe you felt for a moment that is there even enough grace for God to strengthen me with because you're talking about a hot mess church in

Ephesus I'm a hot mess human my record count I'm still paying off fines I'm still paying off judgments in my life is there grace for me right you probably feel the weight of your own failure you maybe even feel insignificance in light of the grand scope of the galaxy friends if that's you today and you are looking for strength you're looking for something to receive of good news Paul says in another letter to Ephesus by grace you have been saved through faith and it's not of your own doing it's a gift of God if you earned it you would have every reason to boast but God being rich in mercy gave himself for you to die the death that you deserve and if you're a non-Christian or trying to figure out what salvation is all about you learn very quickly that if

[16 : 04] Timothy is strengthened not by his own works you are certainly not strengthened by your own works you are saved by grace alone through faith alone and maybe for the rest of us we might find it intellectually easy to affirm the reality of God's grace grace Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so and we just skip through life's problems patting ourselves on the back when life gets real it's easier to intellectually affirm God's grace isn't it like okay I'm saved I'm saved I'm saved you can tell yourself that and make your declarations in the bathroom all you want but you have to be persuaded of it do you feel God's grace do you experience his grace this simple command to

Timothy is much easier said than done because we are to be strengthened by God's grace and the only way we are strengthened by God's grace in Jesus Christ is to be first convinced of God's grace convinced of John 1 16 for from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace and if you want to have Brent's translation it would be grace upon grace upon grace upon grace that might be in the message but it would be in Brent's little commentary of that 2nd Corinthians Paul says and he quotes Jesus that my grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness he says to the Corinthians in his first letter in 15 10 by the grace of God

I am what I am it's nothing that he did he is what he is by grace and God's grace towards me was not in vain when these things are not only words on a page but something we experience real time in our lives we have to be convinced of it to endure to be strengthened by God's grace so if you find yourself needing to be persuasively convinced of God's grace in your life you don't need another study you don't need another book you don't need another pastor you don't need another church we have to remember that forgiveness is not always a feeling it's a transaction and the problem is that we don't realize our frailty that was the basis of that transaction right we forget the penalty of sin the lostness that we have and so in that nothing could hit

Timothy in his life that God's bestowed strength couldn't handle which is the expression of God's grace upon grace upon grace and the same is true today all who are in Christ and thus under his grace have a reason outside of themselves outside of yourself to stand tall to stand confidence in that and maybe if you're looking for forgiveness to be a feeling maybe maybe it starts with asking and pleading God to renew your heart prayerfully pleading God for a little more grace to tap into the well of the gospel that our faith depends upon if you're not in Christ today this is a command to you to surrender by your faith don't have faith in yourself have faith in

God and if you're in Christ today the command is to keep on being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus it's important to note that strength you might be like well I've been a Christian since I was a young lad right all these years strength doesn't have seniority strength doesn't have seniority but it does have a source so it's not all about how long you've been a Christian it doesn't matter how long or how much you know about the Bible or how long you've been in ministry we see that if Timothy is supposed to be encouraged by this and commanded by this I mean Paul is really leaving him short he has not much experience in ministry he's young in his faith we see a strength doesn't have seniority but it has a source maybe you're a parent it's not about how long you've been a parent it's not about how many kids that you have to boast about or maybe don't have or it's not in anything that's carnal social status political status economic status strength does not have seniority it has a source and it begins by tapping into that source through humility coming to the end of ourselves reckoning with our weakness to uphold

[21 : 47] God's strength see our strength in this very moment is in Jesus Christ our union with him and we are strengthened through daily communion with Jesus amen but the command has a second half we might feel good we might feel forgiven we might be reassured today well thanks Brent really picked me up today but there's a little pesky three letter word in this command not only to be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus there is an and look in verse two as we get to the second section and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses and trust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also introverts just hit the eject button out of this sanctuary peace

I'm forgiven amen I'm out of here just me and God get that bad juju out of here the second section is titled keep on being strong by instructing grace as we've been incrementally unpacking this series we ought to sense this baton like reality of the Christian life and you might argue with me after the sermon or maybe in a small group this week that Brent you think the Christian life is really 4 by 100 meter you're kidding yourself things a 1600 meter man like you need some endurance you need to pace yourself and illustrations fall short right I'm focused on the baton transaction of the relay race whatever length it is it might be a 100 meter relay for somebody who just became a

Christian then goes to meet the Lord and gets in a car accident right but for many of us in the usual sense it is a 1600 or I don't know if they even make a relay race longer than that my wife would tell me she used to do those relays 2400 are you kidding me wow there is a 4 by 2400 not a relay all right thanks but you should sense this baton like relay in this passage and being the and that being the preservative means of which the gospel is even made known in our current century in this building with this people right it is because of this baton like relay regardless the distance it began with Christ's message to

Paul Paul deposits the message to Timothy that we saw last week and Timothy is called commanded ordered you introverts to entrust to others other faithful men for Timothy but others for us and those who those men those people are to entrust to others join in the race in other words the gospel message is a transcendent delegated deposit the holy heritage of instruction how does it look well the orthodox would say that it's through apostolic succession it's through this untainted apostolic line but more biblically speaking as according to this passage and context we would see that it's actually done through pastoral stewardship the apostles have passed this baton to pastors and elders overseers to guard to preserve to instruct the pastor's job description is in scripture imagine that and the ephesian church was packed full of plenty of theological unsound we'll just call them wild cards robes but also blatant opposition how did

God deal with it well the command for Christians was to raise other Christians to stand against it you see a faithful Christian doesn't let the gospel die with them introverts a faithful Christian doesn't let the gospel die with them and to take it a step further every Christian is commanded to be a disciple maker it's not my opinion isn't it amazing that some of us could probably have a PhD for making excuses as to why we can't take time in our lives to pour into other people a PhD we could be doctors of excuses not just you this guy can be a doctor of excuses we could complain about having no time in the week we could talk about the just we recluses at the idea of being vulnerable that somebody might find out how much you actually don't know about the

[27 : 37] Bible or mispronounced Sadducees or maybe you have a trust issue and you can't trust other people easily or maybe you have a fear of the inevitability of somebody hurting you leaving you hanging not following through and letting you down church not only must we be strengthened on our knees reaching for God's grace continually that grace upon grace but we also have to be active on our feet reaching others with God's grace and this is not a suggestion this isn't bonus work to the Christian life if a church will survive in the next generation it will rise and fall upon how well we devote ourselves to be disciplined but also to disciple others preaching this is not enough a half hour 45 minutes on

Sunday is not enough Sunday is not enough and this baton like work of the gospel is not bonus work don't fall for that lie this and is imperative for us to know not only are we forgiven but we have a duty just as Timothy did and it's the central commission to the church universally to go and make disciples it's not a suggestion many of us can boast about how we've never been late to work we've never taken sick days we always show up early we always leave late not early we can always boast about how we are the kindest parents we give our kids the experience in life we take them to Disney World every year and rack up those credit card bills but faithfulness in the things of this world will while failing the instructive command of

God is the epitome of Christian mediocrity faithfulness in the things of this world boasting about our carnalness about how we're striving at our job at Home Depot but failing at this eternal command to a church that is going to last into eternity is pathetic it's Christian mediocrity faithfulness in the things of this world while failing this instructive command of God is the epitome of it we must realize both the internal and external nature of this command we must all realize before it's too late before we let the gospel die with us I must realize it my time is not unlimited with my kids at home to disciple them this church I don't know I could get hit by a bus after church right and the future of the church will rest in the balance of this disciple making this instruction not upon my role but upon our activity in the church you see the faith of the next generation is our priority today

God gave his word through the scriptures for the purpose of instructing his people and maturing them we'll get into that in chapter three in second Timothy it's not only vital to Paul but it's vital to God it's vital throughout the Old Testament through the Shema that we read this morning first scripture we read it's vital to God through the New Testament teaching is the antidote to false teaching teaching produces love it produces unity encouragement nourishment godliness submission it produces a proper focus in life we saw all of this within the constructs of first Timothy and so now if we intend to continue to strive as a healthy church at Steel Valley it will come by way of filling our fellowship with Christian doctrine instruction intentional if we intend to continue to strive as healthy families it will only come by way of filling our homes with

Christian doctrine and if we intend to continue to strive to impact the city Youngstown it will only come by way of filling our city with Christian doctrine not filling the seats but filling the streets and that rhymes did you know that the most revolutionary act that we could do in Youngstown as Steel Valley Church is for each and every one of us to find one person and pour into them and teach them to pour into the next person revolutionary it sounds so simple right but isn't it always those simple things that we tend to complicate we have to be reminded that Jesus turned the entire world upside down by pouring into 12 men 12 men and how often we can complain so quickly about the problems in our church the problems in our home the problems in the world while we neglect this very command did you know that problems didn't just happen we have to look back in history of what has created the problem and if we're going to remedy the problem of tomorrow it starts now now stop complaining and start commissioning will you embrace the strength of

[34 : 15] God's grace and pass that baton the faith of the next generation is our priority today let's pray