

9/29/24 - 2 Tim. 3:10-13 - "The Price of a Godly Life"

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[0:00] We will be reading today from 2 Timothy chapter 3, and we'll be starting in verse 8 for context. Paul writes, starting in verse 8, Just as Janaz and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also opposed the truth.

Men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, which persecutions I endured.

Yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. While evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. It is great to be gathered here together with each and every one of you. It's the best day of the week, Sunday.

[1:18] Amen to that. And just hearing those voices singing, oh, praise the one who paid my debt. I could just cash in and die now.

That's great. Man, take me home. That is some good news for us to be declaring. I think the neighbors heard that. And so I'm excited to continue through the 2 Timothy series.

We're just over halfway through now in chapter 3. And what I want us to think about as we're getting into this passage is the transition, the thought of transition between what he said, as Pastor Rick just read in verse 8, to where he arrives now and what he's getting at.

And I hope that every sermon is sort of guided by that whole purpose, like what does God need us to know by his word, to speak to us today through his word.

And so with that, I want us to think about what he's saying in the practical sense of expanding upon what Scripture says in light of this passage.

[2:34] Because when we survey the world and the Christian church in the world and worldwide and compare its condition to the promises of Jesus Christ, we might be surprised of what we find and maybe what we don't find.

For instance, you go into China. They got a lot of problems that are different from our problems. Right? And so when we go to Christ's commands, we might get a little bit confused because Jesus promised a couple things that we embrace both here in the States and in China, that there is new life in Jesus Christ.

As Jesus declared in John 3.3, he says, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. We know the promise to embrace regarding abundant eternal life. Something awaiting for us in the next life to come. Jesus said in John 10.10, I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

And then we are promised that we will have victory over death. In John 11.25, Jesus promised, I am the resurrection and the life.

[4:01] Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

These are great promises. But there's another side of what is missing from those picked verses.

There's challenges that Jesus also promised. He promised suffering. Jesus said in John 15.18, If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

He promised persecution. Jesus said, If Christ's promises are true, how do we rectify the hatred of the world against the hope of the gospel?

It makes us wonder, like, who's wrong here? Do I got it wrong? Or do they got it wrong? Right? You would think that if you gave a message of hope, of new life, of abundant life, of victory over sin, as Jesus promised, you would think that people would come running to it.

[6 : 01] Why these challenges? And Paul is guiding Timothy through this very conundrum, we'll call it, as Paul is about to face his own death.

And today's passage will reveal this foundational expectation that comes with following Jesus Christ.

And that we are to, we are called to count the cost of living a godly life. Recognizing the challenges that it will naturally present to us.

And so what we'll see by the end of our time, I firmly believe as we reflect this afternoon, we'll see that a godly life comes at a great earthly cost.

A great earthly cost. But its eternal reward is priceless. You can't put a price on that. And so I want us to look at nine costs in Paul's commendation, we're going to call it, to Timothy.

[7 : 12] As he encourages Timothy. And then another section, looking at this commission to suffer. And I want to tease the, till the soil a little bit in our minds and in our hearts today.

The sermon title is, The Price of a Godly Life. And before we dive in and break up this passage and see its meaning, I pray that you're open to the imperatives of its commands today.

I pray that you see my heart stewarding you with love and adoration. Knowing that God has given me this difficult task to shepherd, to pastor well in this life.

And all of which that is according to God's word and guiding us. And so please see that today. And I'd ask you to join me in prayer as we proceed. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for assembling your church on the best day of the week. The Lord's Day. A day set aside for just this observance of worship.

[8 : 29] Digging into our relationship. Resting our bodies. And letting our minds just go and be focused and be devoted.

And just reflect continuously throughout the day. Of your glory. And our need to rest in you.

Knowing that you always are working. Help us, Lord, in this endeavor. And help us to reflect well today. According to your letter. That you wrote to Timothy through the hands of Paul.

Help us to see that today, Lord. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. And so the first section is, I want us to see Paul's warm commendation.

Which is going to lead to Paul's cold commission. Is what I'll call it. So let's look at the warm commendation. And we see this from verse 10 through 11.

[9 : 32] He says, You, however. He says, you, however. Contrasting the opponents of the gospel. The imposters. The wolves in sheep's clothing. Of the passage before.

And he said, you, however. Have followed my teaching. My conduct. My aim of life. Let's pause there.

With this, he's laying out nine in total sort of attributes of Timothy's followership with Paul. And we see the first three here.

And you kind of get the sense of that fatherly relationship that Paul has with Timothy. You have followed.

I can only hope that my kids grow up and know that they have followed my leading and guidance. In the same similar fatherly fashion.

[10 : 28] And he contrasts away from those who were not to follow. And leading us to, from false teaching to true teaching. My teaching.

My conduct. My aim of life. Don't be duped. Follow this way. And continue doing so. And it's something important that Timothy must never do.

Is to ever separate his life from Paul's teaching. Life from doctrine. That life is theologically the outflow of what anyone believes.

Right? This is the importance of his first letter to Timothy. As Paul wrote to Timothy in chapter, let's see, it was 4, verse 16. Where he says, watch your life and doctrine.

Right? It wasn't just watch your doctrine. Be a big theological head. No. Watch your life and doctrine. Why? Well, preserve in them.

[11 : 31] Because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. Right? In other words, if you're free in Christ, your life ought to proclaim it.

That you're free in Christ. Not to go into sin, but to say yes to God. In all sorts of different expressions. Be bold about it. Be confident about it.

Just as you have followed. And he continues from not only just going from teaching to Paul's conduct and how he handled himself and his aim in life, sort of his life's purpose.

Paul's life purpose was let not my will, but yours be done. You saw that all throughout his ministry throughout the Book of Acts series, didn't we?

And so he continues. He continues. He continues with a couple virtues. He says, not only my teaching, my conduct, my aim of life, but he says, my faith.

[12:32] You have followed my patience. You've followed my love. You've followed my steadfastness. These four virtues, guess what, are listed in Galatians 5 as fruits of the Spirit.

This isn't just for pastors. This is for anyone who calls themselves and considers themselves a born again Christian with a new nature, new attitudes, a new purpose in life.

Now, I could only imagine young Timothy on the road with Paul all throughout that excursion. Can you imagine those miles, all those hours together?

And Timothy having this natural pull towards whatever Paul had. I want more of that love for people. I want more of that patience, enduring opposition. I want more of that steadfastness and faith that all I have is Jesus Christ.

[13:40] I could only imagine those late nights, right, with Timothy and Paul just sitting around, probably a bonfire. I mean, they were human beings, right? They liked fires just like all of us should, right?

Coming from somebody whose house burnt down about ten years ago. Don't like fire that much, but man, I love bonfires, right? Right? Those conversations where Timothy was just drawn because Paul exuded the fruits of the Spirit, right?

Praying for those who persecuted him, just as Jesus commanded. It's mysterious, but it's awfully attractive to be drawn to that.

And that's what he followed. You have followed my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness.

And similarly, I imagine that our desire for those in our lives is that we hope that we magnetically pull people closer to Christ because of our role in their lives, right?

That ought to be our aim to various degrees. Sometimes we really suck at it, right? But that should be our aim, our trajectory. That's the horizon of our lives that we're desiring to get better at, right?

[15:09] It's all produced by the Holy Spirit being a fruit of the Spirit in sanctification. But then we get, you know, everything sounds pretty good, right?

Between these seven attributes of Timothy's followership. But then we get to number eight. He followed my persecution.

Ooh. He followed my suffering. And the ninth one. Man, what a different sermon this would be. A different application for Timothy.

If he would have stopped at seven, he could have even turned spiritual. Ooh, seven. It's the number of fulfillment, right? And just kind of read into that.

It would have sounded good. It would have hit. You'd be like, everything's going to be okay. But he says, no, because Jesus said it's not going to be okay. And clearly, as Paul is penning this letter to Timothy, certainly knows, he knows where his true reward, his true treasure lies.

[16:21] It has nothing to do with the chains that bind him. But everything that awaits for him in the future. Phone drop on that, for sure.

How in the world do we get to number eight and number nine here of persecution and suffering after those previous?

Well, here, Paul begins to formulate his point. He says, all of those things that you follow, all of those good things, the world is going to hate you for it.

The world is going to hate you for it. The very things that would crown you prom king, to separate you, to rise you above, are going to be inevitably the things that are held against you.

And Paul highlights a few of the most uncertain and dangerous moments of his missionary journey that ensued following Timothy being brought on board. He says, a specific suffering to Timothy's mind.

[17:29] That happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, which persecutions I endured. Yet from them all, the Lord rescued me.

Now, Paul had been driven by persecution from the city in Antioch. This might be recalled if you were in our Acts series.

This is the time in Acts 13, verse 50, where he fled. He fled from Iconium. Once he realized that there was a plot to lynch him in Acts 14, verse 5 and 6.

And Timothy was in Lystra. Timothy knew what was going on with Paul. Timothy saw Paul stoned nearly to death in Acts 14.

Bloody, broken, nearly lifeless that his opponents that hurled the stones thought they were done with their work. And they went home and kicked on the game.

[18 : 37] And Paul was left there to die. And they assumed that he was dead, but he was not. He was that bloody. He's saying to Timothy, think about this.

You're following this. It's almost like he's saying, brother, it's not going to be easy. It's going to be a difficult road.

The very hope of the gospel will receive hatred from the world. It's a conundrum. You see, Paul echoes many of the promises of the Psalms of David, of the Lord providentially intervening on behalf of his people.

And this reinforces, for all Christians, our confidence, knowing that God always rescues his people. Because he loves his people.

He's dedicated. He's devoted to his people and to you if you are in Christ. And this means that he will rescue you in this life.

[19 : 45] And if not, he will rescue you through the life to come. Our reward is not on earth. It is not always health, wealth, and everything is all good.

Church, did you know that the fine prints upon Christian conversion, the moment that you said, Jesus, I'm all yours? Church, there is fine prints that was written on your hearts from John 16, 33 that says, In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart.

I have overcome the world. And this is where Paul settles into a theological point and emphasis for Timothy to pay close attention to, of which we too are invited to spend some of our time teasing this out today.

And so what we have here is a cold commission. In verse 12, he continues to say, And elaborate, Indeed, indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Notice what Paul does not indicate here. He doesn't say, He doesn't say, Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus might be persecuted.

[21 : 28] It doesn't say, Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Jesus Christ will be happy, healthy, and wealthy. No, what Paul does here indicates a guarantee.

A guarantee for those devoted to their faith in Jesus Christ as an outflow of being devoted to his teaching. It's that those who desire to live a godly life in Jesus Christ.

That's possessive. In Jesus Christ. Will be persecuted. Will be persecuted. And you see, the outflow of a godly life will not be embraced.

The world won't wrap their hands around you and be like, Yes! I want it all! Why? Because Jesus Christ is in it.

It is a phenomenon of rejection that took Jesus Christ to be hung on a cross and crucified. The light shined in the world.

[22 : 42] Darkness didn't want anything to do with the light. You see, once God places us upon this new road in life, we are directed to the only supply of which our lives must draw upon.

It has nothing to do with anything in this world. This world has nothing to offer to us. And only, and it has everything to do with the one who overcame the world.

In other words, this world has nothing and our lives ought to testify to it. Simple as that. The world celebrates. The world affirms.

The world applauds. Standing ovation to everything that the Bible condemns. That should be a concerning factor for the church living through this world.

Knowing that there is going to be friction at proclaiming the gospel. And you might be like, well, Brent, I'm not really facing any issues that this passage presents.

[23 : 50] Right? Maybe the world finds you pretty pleasant to be around. But I would have to ask you. Have you been transparent with your unbelieving friends about the hopelessness of their situation?

Have you told them that they're in trouble? Have you told them that at the end of their life? There's nothing to celebrate.

Have you told them about Jesus Christ? That he came and died for them? Have you told them that they were in trouble? Or are you just re-running a Cheers episode?

Everyone knows your name. Right? And everyone loves you. Because you never define that line of truth. What if your friends truly knew that your conversation was the last they had before they got killed in a car accident on the way home?

Right? Are they aware of the danger that they're in? You see, a godly life, this is what Paul's getting at and which I want us to get today, is that a godly life does not suppress the truth.

[25 : 15] That's the world's job. Not our job. To live, exude the truth. To all around.

This has to make us think seriously about our lives. And like I said, it's out of the deepest love and adoration that I have for you guys.

You guys have no idea how much I love you. All of you. The only reason I get out of bed on Monday morning, I would love to sleep in.

To get out of bed. To get out of bed. To look into God's word and see what he wants to teach us this coming week. It's because I love you.

And it's deep. It's motivating. And so this has to make us think seriously. That if Paul were to spend an extended amount of time in our lives, would he be drawn closer to God or pushed further away?

[26 : 19] And I say that out of love. Let's put myself on the chopping block. I think Paul would be pretty upset with me. I don't have a doctor yet.

But man, I'm the doctor of excuses. Right? How many opportunities I missed to proclaim the gospel in what could have been a conversion, a new member in the church, somebody baptized, all because of dummy Brent.

Couldn't get his mind off of his to-do list in the grocery store. Know what I mean? I'm the mastermind of excuses. And I know that I'm not alone in that.

And how many of us share the same sentiment with me? You see, the cost of following Jesus Christ is indeed great.

And it comes with consequences. And just as the path of deception is sure to be welcomed, he finishes in verse 13.

[27 : 27] We'll pick up next week. It says, while evil people and imposters, the outright evil people or the wolves and sheep, clothing, imposters will go from bad to worse.

That's a given. It's just going to keep getting worse and more bad. Deceiving and being deceived. It's almost as if he's also saying, going back to his teaching, in verse 10, the path of truth is sure.

And just as he says in verse 12, it will be met with resistance. This is normal. Welcome to Christianity. Right?

And for those who ask why, well, why is it met with resistance? Well, it is because Timothy was not following Paul after all.

Because Paul was following Jesus Christ. How many times we hear, I mean, it's coming up to October and Reformation Day, you know, and we just quote these reformers and everything like that.

[28 : 35] Well, the reformers didn't care about any of that. They wanted Jesus Christ. They wanted to be biblical. And they changed the culture of Christianity against the Roman Catholic Church.

And it's profound to know that their goal was Jesus. And our goal isn't to be like the reformers. It's to be like Jesus.

And the invitation to Timothy here is not to follow Paul, but to follow Jesus as seen through Paul.

And man, that changes. If you want a reformation today, right?

Pray for revival. Well, I think revival precedes, or reformation precedes revival in all of these things. People get to the Bible first, and then God changes hearts.

And that's what happened, but it's only going to come by way of focusing on Jesus Christ. The path of truth is short. It's to be met with resistance.

[29 : 40] And the doctrine of Jesus Christ, it is objective. It's absolute. And living in a world that is consumed in sort of like your own truth, whatever works for you is good, and everything like that, good vibes, you've heard that, right?

Well, the world lives in relativism. Everything's kind of just like fluid. You can be what you want to be. Want to be a cat? Be a cat.

And there's cats out there. They're walking around. Human beings as cats. I mean, how chaotic that the world is. And to go, and no wonder we're met with resistance.

Because what we have is objective. What we have challenges is reality. To get them back to reality. It's objective, and it's absolute that God is holy and just, and there is one true God.

Right? He's just. He's sovereign over all. And He's worthy of all of our praise. Even in the midst of natural disasters.

[30 : 50] He's worthy. And man has habitually rebelled against His ways. We have been separated under His judgments.

That's the world's problem. And Jesus Christ is the only solution for that problem. He lived perfectly. He died willingly. And He rose victoriously over sin.

And that man is now called to repent from sin and place their faith in Jesus Christ. And this response involves a wholehearted truth in Jesus Christ and a costly commitment to following Him. This isn't just holly jolly run down the altar. I want Jesus. I want Jesus. You get baptized and join the church and serve in every ministry possible.

But then all of a sudden you realize that yeah, I lost a lot of friends that I used to have. This isn't holly and jolly at all. I didn't know about Jesus.

[31 : 55] I thought this was all new life. Blessings upon blessings upon blessings. Abundant, abundant, abundant. What about how do you explain this, Jesus? Why?

Well, He tells us why. Man has habitually rebelled against God. Nobody wants the fruit of the gospel that has the gospel in it.

They don't want the fruits of the spirit because they don't want the spirit. They want the fruit. They don't want the spirit. For the Christian, there's no gray areas as to what is true, what is false.

We've been covering that the last several weeks. What is sound doctrine? What is unsound doctrine? And that gospel truth draws its own line for us between what is right and what is wrong. And so as we think about this in our own lives and and in your own situation, I can't possibly understand everything that everyone's going through.

[32 : 57] But we definitely can't be surprised at the drastic reorientation that the gospel has upon our lives. It reorients us radically from how we talk.

I'm a testimony of that. I'm glad that YouTube and Facebook didn't exist when I was in grade school. Praise the Lord for that. Hallelujah. I would probably not have a job.

It reorients everything, gives us a new nature. How we walk, how we talk, what we do, how we even dress, what we eat, what we drink, how much we eat and how much we drink.

Moderation. How much we, or how we spend our money, how we spend our time. And the costly reality of a godly life is, it's costly because there is no reward for it on earth.

Nobody's going to high-five you for being a disciple of Jesus Christ other than the church. The world will stone you for it. And we often look foolish to the world as Paul promised in his letter to the Corinthians.

[34 : 09] But don't be surprised when our friend list and likability declines on behalf of our following. Right? Don't be surprised when our desires and our aspirations change and people are concerned about us.

Have you seen what Brent is posting on social media? He loves Jesus now. I'm a little concerned about him. Don't be surprised when we're ridiculed for not attending those parties that we used to just frequent all the time.

The drinking buddies and everything like that. And don't mistake in that Jesus sat with sinners. Jesus was God. Amen. He was out to seek the lost.

And that takes wisdom as a Christian. Don't be surprised when the world considers you dumb.

Because you don't engage in those conversations where you're talking about Nancy, your friend Nancy who does this or does that and you're just like no, this isn't edifying, right?

Or talking about spouses. That's the latest, that's the popular trend. You sit with the ladies and you talk about your awful husbands. And then you sit around and talk about your old lady at home, your boss.

[35 : 35] That's not glorifying to God. And a Christian ought to never take part in that. We adore our wives and our husbands. Right? Don't be surprised, especially ladies, when the latest fashion trends don't align with biblical modesty in our sexualized culture today.

Right? That's a hard one. Because people will take notice that you don't need your boobs and your belly button poking out to say hello to everyone like the culture does.

That's acceptable in a sexualized culture. Right? Don't be surprised when you're rejected because God reprioritizes your life to be with the people of God.

And sometimes, yeah, you've got family coming in, great, bring them to church. How about that? Don't be surprised when your family even scoffs because the gathered church takes priority over them sometimes of a birthday party.

Right? Where your kids can't enroll in sports because all of a sudden it was a good idea to put sports practices on Sunday. Well, not for a Christian. Right? You'll be ridiculed for that.

[36 : 53] You might even lose your job because all you talk about is Jesus. Praise the Lord. Lose it. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Church, if we are not facing opposition in our lives, it very well could be the result of a lack of desire to understand the cost of following Him. A love for Jesus Christ surrenders all to Him.

And if there seems to be a disconnect in your own life, you might want to reevaluate your salvation. You might want to. Now, this isn't saying that we look for oppositions, we pick fights with enemies, and we say, we want to be martyrs and run into the sword.

No. No. But we must understand that opposition is inevitable for those who count the cost seriously in this life and reflect the image of Jesus Christ to those around.

Not to be friends with the world. You see, a godly life may come at great earthly costs, but its eternal reward is priceless.

[38 : 11] It's a gospel truth. Jesus Christ's hand is outstretched to you today asking, will you follow me? If so, pick up your cross.

Right? And I pray that you know the cost that lies with that demand. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.