



On Sunday we continued our series in 2 Timothy, focussing in on chapter 2v1-10. Paul continues urging Timothy to urgently take on the mantle of gospel ministry as his life draws to a close. We noted that - even though Paul is very honest and open about the difficulty of the situation, he is not down or defensive - but rather 'on the front foot' wanting multiplication and growth,

We essentially split the text into 2 - focussing first on what it means for Timothy 'to be strong', as well as why it's worth bothering:

v1-7: Be strong in the grace that's in Christ Jesus.

We noted that Paul does not simply tell Timothy to look inside and be strong - as would be the mantra of our day, but rather strong in the grace that's in Christ Jesus. That is, primarily, a call to remember God's grace that sustains him and equips (and gives him power, love and self-discipline) for the task ahead. He is multiplying ministry by handing the message onto others who will do the same which is hard work. Rather than spelling out what it means for (timid) Timothy to be strong, he gives 3 metaphors to reflect upon (v7) - namely soldier who endures and only seeks to please his commanding officer, the athlete who competes according to the rules to win the prize and the hardworking farmer who receives a crop in due time for his labour. We noted that talk of hard work and labour for many of us is hard to hear, and yet we noted that God makes us strong through his grace.

v8-10: Why bother?

For when we feel like it's not worth bothering, we noted that Paul gives 4 reasons for perseverance: Jesus, Paul, the word and eternity:

1. Remember Jesus - in the 7 words he mentions we see both Jesus humanity and divinity - his suffering now and glory later. He is both the message and the example of how to minister as Paul calls us.
2. Remember Paul - Paul describes it as his gospel - for which he is suffering and is chained. Paul was zealous and laboured and was prepared to endure.
3. Contrasting Paul, the word is unchained - when Paul is in prison he is encouraged because it's not about him - it's God's mission and he is at work.

4. The final call for faithfulness is for the elect - that the Lord might gather in his people for the eternal glory of the Lord Jesus.

Here are just a few questions that might get things going, please adapt for your group:

Brainstorm all you can remember from 2 Timothy.
What have you been chewing over this last week from the letter?

What does it mean to be strong in the grace that's in Christ Jesus?
Are you investing in others? Could you do 1 in 21?!
Why does Paul use the metaphors that he does for the examples of living for Jesus?
In what way is Jesus an example of each?
Have you done some v7 homework (?!) How does each one challenge you?

When we ask why bother...
How does remembering Jesus help?
How about Paul's example?
The nature of God's word?
The eternal glory of the Lord Jesus as the elect come to him?

What 1 thing can you take away from these verses?