

SHARING IN SUFFERING: PART 2

2 Timothy 2.8-14

Paul and Timothy are suffering for their belief in Jesus. While we probably will not suffer because of our faith, we will experience suffering in this life.

Paul charges Timothy to “share in suffering” as a soldier, athlete, and farmer, for the sake of making disciples (2 Timothy 2.3-6).

Paul sees positive ministry impact coming from his suffering

Paul is enduring this hardship “for the sake of the elect” (2 Timothy 2.10; Cf. Philippians 1.12-14).

The Christian view of reality provides the right basis for meaning in suffering. On a strictly materialistic view, we should see suffering as a natural part of the survival of the fittest. While the atheist may admire the way a person suffers nobly, it’s hard to see what this means beyond dying with resolve.

On the Christian worldview, we see that suffering with grace invites people into the hope of the resurrection. The Christian promise of the renewal of all things meets a deep desire of the human heart. When we see Christians suffer well, it is a powerful testimony to the fulfillment of our longings.

Paul’s circumstances present a different kind of “word” ministry. While he is bound to a prison cell, the proclamation of Jesus accomplishes something grand (2 Timothy 2.9).

When suffering, we embrace the reality of the resurrection

Paul’s mind is on the eternality of the living God. In suffering “remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead” (2 Timothy 2.8). Salvation is found in a living Christ who holds all time in His hands (2 Timothy 2.10).

Paul recites an early Christian hymn. It stresses the unchanging nature of God. Paul here reflects on dying with Christ and living and reigning with Him (2 Timothy 2.11-12).

While vv. 11-12 are straight-forward, v. 13 has two primary interpretations.

On the one hand, is the hymn saying that when people are faithless, God will faithfully execute his just judgment against all unrighteousness? In this sense, it is a warning about God’s judgement. This interpretation also has the benefit of running parallel to the last line of v. 12.

On the other hand, does the hymn mean to reinforce God's faithfulness even when his followers behave unfaithfully? In this sense, it is a reassurance of God's grace and a comfort to sinners.

On either interpretation, the hymn is about the consistency of the eternal God.

Key Ideas: Represent Jesus while suffering.

*At Providence, we have a group named Renewal. This is a community of saints with chronic illnesses and those caring for them. For information please visit: providencechurch.us/care

*You can read more about how God is ministering through Jason & Amy at: drjasonkolb.com

Application Questions:

What does this passage teach us about suffering well? How does Paul understand the purpose of his suffering (Read Philippians 1.12-14, 3.10-11; Cf. James 1.2-4)?

What does Paul mean by "the Word of God is not bound" (2 Timothy 2.9; Hebrews 4.12)?

What are the main points of the hymn in 2 Timothy 2.11-13?