

## The Result of the Resurrection

II Timothy 2:10-13

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Amen. If you have your Bibles, I'd invite you to turn with me to II Timothy, chapter two. Last week as we were looking at II Timothy 2, verses 1-9, we came to verse 8, a passage in which Paul makes a glorious declaration about the resurrection as a central part of his gospel. That's something that Paul repeats on numerous occasions.

Tonight Derek Thomas will be preaching from I Corinthians 15, a passage which explains how the resurrection is central to Paul's preaching of the gospel. It's essential; it's necessary for our salvation, and Paul makes a similar statement here in II Timothy 2:8: "Remember Jesus Christ," he says to Timothy, "risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel; for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal, but the word of God is not imprisoned."

And that glorious declaration of the truth of the resurrection leads Paul to make a statement about the significance of the resurrection in his life...about the results of the resurrection not only in his life, but also in Timothy's life and the lives of the Ephesian Christians, and in our lives, brothers and sisters. He's speaking about the consequences, the significance, the effects, the results of the resurrection in our lives as Christians today, and that's the passage that we're going to study this morning.

Second Timothy 2:10-13 contains first, in verse 10, a passage in which Paul applies the truth of the resurrection to his own experience in such a way as to reorient the way that he looks at every trial that he experiences in life. And he does that because he wants the doctrine of the resurrection, the truth, the reality of the resurrection to reorient the way that you look at every trial in your life.

And then in this glorious exhortation, which perhaps came from an ancient hymn of the church based on Jesus' words in the Gospel of Matthew and Paul's words rendered for us in the Book of Romans, chapter five, he quotes those verses, those stanzas of that ancient hymn, in verses 11, 12, 13 of II Timothy 2 in order to exhort you and me to live in light of this glorious reality of the resurrection—a reality that has already transformed us into a new creation and changed the way that we look at the world, and the way that we live and minister in this fallen world.

So before we read God's holy word here in II Timothy, let's look to Him in prayer and ask for His help.

*Our Lord and God, You have given us this word. It is Your truth. We thank You, O God, that these are not simply stories or cautionary tales, or moralistic exhortations to live life taking a leap of faith, but these are the very words of the one true God, spoken to the people that He has created, meant to be our only rule of faith and life. We ask that by Your Spirit You would help us to understand the truth of Your word, and to bring to bear in our experience the reality of the resurrection. We ask these things through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

Hear God's word.

For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. It is a trustworthy statement:

For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him;  
If we endure, we shall also reign with Him;  
If we deny Him, He also will deny us;  
If we are faithless, He remains faithful;  
For He cannot deny Himself.

Amen. And thus ends this reading of God's holy, inspired, and inerrant word. May He write its eternal truth upon our hearts.

Here is Paul in prison, bound in chains, awaiting execution, celebrating the resurrection. How does that happen? How does a man awaiting an unjust sentence from unbelieving Gentiles, whose hope in life has been to spread the word of Christ to as many people as possible...how does a man face this kind of frustration? He wants to be on the mission field! He wants to be preaching the truth! He wants to see churches being planted and established; he wants to be seeing people become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he wants to see believers in the Lord Jesus Christ disciplined... and he's held in this dingy dungeon! And he's celebrating the resurrection! Why?

Because for the Apostle Paul the resurrection is not simply a historical fact which establishes the claims of Jesus Christ to be who He says He is, and to have done the things that He claims to have done, and to have accomplished the salvation He claims to have come to accomplish, though it is that. It is a historical fact; it is the record of a space/time reality, a supernatural activity of God in our human history. For Paul, the resurrection is not simply that. It is not simply a historical fact. It's not simply a historical fact that establishes the claims of the truth of Christianity, though it does that. The founder of no other world religion claims to have been raised from the dead, but Jesus. And so it is a historical fact

which attests, which witnesses to, which corroborates the astounding claims of Christianity about who this Jesus Christ is and what He has done, and that He will come again.

The resurrection is more than that for the Apostle Paul. The resurrection is a transforming reality in which every believer participates, and he is attesting to his own participation in that reality of the resurrection, and he is applying the truth of that resurrection, the reality of that resurrection, to his present sufferings in this passage.

Our privilege as believers is to behold whatever suffering we experience in this life in the light of the resurrection, because the resurrection of Jesus has changed everything for us! It is that truth to which the Apostle Paul is attesting in his own experience in this passage, and he's doing it as an example to Timothy, an example to the Ephesian Christians, and an example to you and me.

There are so many things I would like to show you from this passage, but we have time, I think, to look at three things in particular, and the first thing you'll see in verse 10.

### **I. Paul endures all things in his calling for the sake of God's elect**

Here Paul says, "For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen...."

Did you get that? The Apostle Paul is telling us that he endures all the things he endures in life in his calling for the sake of God's chosen people, for the sake of those who have rested and trusted in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, who have been drawn to saving faith by the sovereign working of God the Holy Spirit. His motive in enduring sufferings and trials and hardship, and in this case, imprisonment and eventually execution, is the well-being of God's people. In other words, Paul is telling us that the resurrection of Jesus Christ has transformed the way he views his own personal adversity; and now because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, he has a church-serving view of personal adversity.

You see, the point of verse 10 is to show us that the well-being of the church was the aim of Paul's life, of his preaching, of his ministry, but even of his sufferings. He says, 'I endure all these things: I endure this criminal accusation, I endure this wrong imprisonment, I endure the beatings, I endure the persecution, I endure the mocking, I endure the estrangement: I endure all these for the sake of....you! God's people!' It's an amazing declaration of the way Paul saw his adversity, his personal adversity serving the interest of the church, and it's all because of the reality of the resurrection.

You see, because of Jesus' resurrection, and because Paul died with Christ, because when Paul turned his back on his own righteousness and trusted in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, he died to sin and self and to the world, and he was raised to newness of life in Jesus Christ. And because of Jesus resurrection and because Paul has died with Christ, he sees his sufferings in a very different light. All of his personal adversity, all of his suffering in his trials—he sees that as serving the interest of the well-being of the church. It's an amazing thing. He views his imprisonment as profitable for God's people. Because the up-building of the church is more important than his own safety, he's ready to die and be thought of as criminal for the welfare of the church! He's willing to die, and by his manner of death to confirm the godly in their faith.

This is extraordinary. Paul is showing us what it means to experience the newness of Christ, the newness of life in Christ even in the midst of our adversity here. It changes the way that he looks at his sufferings. His sufferings have been appointed for the benefit of God's people.

Do you remember how Paul explains elsewhere that it is our privilege not only to believe on Christ, but also to share in the fellowship of His sufferings? And do you remember how he says that it is our privilege as believers to fill up that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ? Now, Paul is not saying that somehow the atoning work of Jesus Christ and His active obedience on our behalf was insufficient, and so we as believers need to do just an itty-bitty bit more, and then that will make Christ's atoning work satisfactory for our forgiveness of sins and our inclusion in the family of God. That's not what Paul's teaching.

Paul is teaching that Jesus' death fully satisfies the sins of all those who rest and trust in Him alone for salvation. But what he is saying is this: As the Master suffered, so also His people will suffer in this life. What is Jesus' message to His disciples when He says,

“Shall the Master suffer and not the servant? If they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you”?

The principle that Jesus teaches His disciples is, in union with Christ, what happens to the Master happens to the disciple. And the Apostle Paul is saying that ‘I have suddenly understood that the reality of the resurrection transforms the way that I view my sufferings in this life.’

How did we sing it in the opening hymn? Turn with me to 277. You've already sung to the Lord that you believe this. Look at the fourth stanza. It's at the bottom of the page, No. 277:

*“Ours the cross, the grave, the skies...”*

Now, that's Pauline logic: if the skies are yours through Jesus Christ; if you've

been united with Jesus Christ so that you are looking forward to everlasting fellowship with Him; if the skies are yours, so is the cross and the grave. If you're going to go the way of glory with Jesus Christ, you're going to go it via the way of death and self-denial and suffering. And the Apostle Paul is saying that he has suddenly realized the power of the resurrection transforms the way that believers look at their sufferings. Because of the resurrection, because of faith-union with Jesus Christ, Paul's life is bent towards the well-being of the people of God. He realizes that his suffering is meant for the benefit of all of God's people.

Now, I want to ask you, my friends: would that transform the way we look at our personal adversity? You've just been given a diagnosis: it's terminal cancer. The doctors think you've got three to six months. You have just been given the privilege, believer, of participating in the fellowship of the sufferings of the body of Christ, for the sake of God's people.

You've got a wayward child, straying far from the Lord, breaking your heart because you want him to know the Savior; you want him to be part of God's people. You have been given the privilege of the fellowship of the sufferings of the body of Christ, for the sake of God's people; and your endurance of that suffering and the way that you endure that suffering is meant for the well-being of all of the people of God.

You know, when we endure intense trials, one of the things that happens is, our eyes turn in on ourselves. The pain, the emotional and psychological and spiritual torment is sometimes so deep that we can't see anything else! And the Apostle Paul is saying, 'The resurrection has transformed the way that I look at my suffering, my trial, my hardship, my adversity; because I realize that that exists in my experience for the sake of the well-being and benefit of God's people. So suddenly Paul's eyes, instead of being focused in on himself, turn up and look out at God's people and say, 'How can I be a help to the people of God in the midst of my suffering?'

My wife's uncle, who was more like a grandfather to her, died just a couple of months ago. And he was a dear, dear, man—one of the kindest men that I've ever met. He was the son of a Scottish Presbyterian minister, and served as an eye doctor in North Carolina for many, many years. And his pastor, who visited him several times in the last weeks of his life, reported to the congregation in his funeral sermon that he never could go by to check on Mr. Hudson when, before he could open his mouth, Mr. Hudson was checking on him! "How's your family, pastor? How are you doing?" And the last time that he went to visit Mr. Hudson, as he was on the way into the hospital he said to somebody, "You know what? I bet that before I can minister to Mr. Hudson, he's going to ask something of me about my family." And sure enough, he walked into the room, and from his hospital bed less than three days from death, the first thing out of Mr. Hudson's mouth was, "Well, pastor, how's your family?"

His eyes weren't turned in on himself—his own predicament and suffering, the physical ailments that were going to take his life in a matter of hours. He was thinking about ministering to others! That's how he was.

And Christian, the resurrection of Jesus Christ has transformed every experience in trial and suffering so that whether you've lost a job, or you've been betrayed by a friend, or you're enduring turmoil in the family—or maybe you're being persecuted for Jesus Christ...you're being laughed at by friends because you trust in Jesus Christ. Maybe you've been mocked, or you've been made peripheral to a particular group because you trust in Christ. Or maybe you're enduring an illness. Maybe you've been bereft of a dear loved one, and your heart is breaking. Maybe you've buried a child. I don't know what it is, but your suffering, your trial, your hardship, your adversity...it is designed by the resurrection for the benefit of God's people.

That's what Paul is saying. The resurrection has changed the way that he looks at his own personal adversity. He has a church-serving view of personal adversity.

## **II. Paul is motivated by a desire for the salvation and blessedness/eternal happiness of God's elect.**

But there's more. Look at verse 10 again. There's a second thing to learn here.

“For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.”

Paul is saying he not only has a church-serving view of adversity, he is saying that he has a salvation-promoting view of his personal adversity. In other words, Paul is motivated in his hardship and suffering by a desire for the salvation and the blessedness of God's people. He is longing that his sufferings would serve the eternal interests of God's people in such a way that they would experience the fullness of salvation. He understands the logic...the logic that death for the Christian is the entrance to life, and that the only way we share in Christ's life and glory is by sharing first in His death and humiliation, and that as every believer dies to sin and to the world in Christ when we are regenerated, when we are united to Him by saving faith, so also that begins a process of life whereby we mortify sin. We die to sin daily, living to Jesus Christ, and it is that process of dying to sin and self and living to Christ which will one day culminate in our experience of glory. And the Apostle Paul is saying, ‘When I suffer, my suffering is designed to promote the eternal well-being of God's people so they experience all of what it means to be saved, in all its glory.’

You know, when the trailers, when the advertisements came out for the third *Lord*

of the Rings movie, *The Return of the King*, they had this great ad—it not only had great visual pictures, but it had three phrases that it flashed up on the screen as it showed you battle images and warfare. And those phrases went something like this: “There can be no triumph without loss; no victory without suffering; no freedom without sacrifice.” I remember when I saw that trailer, I thought it was moving; and I thought, you know, that really captured Tolkien. It really captured what he was writing about in that book, *The Lord of the Rings*.

But I also thought, you know, that's an incredibly Christian motto! There can be no triumph without loss; no victory without suffering; no freedom without sacrifice. To turn it around the other way and use the language of hymn 277, “...ours the cross, the grave, the skies.” It's a package deal. And the Apostle Paul is saying that because of the resurrection and because of his faith-union in Jesus Christ, he yearns for the eternal welfare of the church and for the church to experience all the glory of what it is to be redeemed, to be saved, and he knows that his suffering serves that interest.

Have you ever thought about your suffering in that way? ‘Lord, use my suffering to promote the eternal well-being of Your people.’

This last couple of weeks, two friends in this congregation have undergone serious, serious operations—life-threatening operations to their hearts. And I've been able to be a spectator as those two families have encouraged one another in Christ, in the midst of those operations. And I want to tell you, as a fly on the wall watching them encourage one another, it has encouraged me no end. You know, it's not often that you get a friend writing to you what he thinks may be his last word of greeting to you in this world; and when a friend writes to you in that circumstance and professes his utter confidence in Jesus Christ, it can't help but encourage you in the faith!

You see, that's a church-serving view of personal adversity: where you are determined that... because it is God's plan that in our adversity as believers that we serve the interests of our brothers and sisters in Christ...that we promote the growth in grace and sanctification, and experience a full salvation for the people of God in our adversity...that turns adversity and the way we look at adversity on the head!

The resurrection does that. The resurrection completely changes the way we look at adversity. And that's what Paul is saying: that he endures adversity for the sake of the church. And not simply for the sake of the church, but so that the church would experience all that it means to have salvation in Jesus Christ.

**III. Paul lives and ministers in light of the faithful saying, and he expects Timothy to as well.**

But he's not done yet. In verse 11-13 he goes on to show how he lives and ministers in light of this faithful saying. He expects Timothy to live and minister this way. He expects the Ephesian Christians to whom Timothy was a pastor to live and minister this way. He expects the Christians of First Presbyterian Church in Jackson to live and minister this way. He's emphasizing here why he's willing to endure all these things. And look at what he says:

It is a trustworthy statement:  
For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;  
If we endure, we will also reign with Him;  
If we deny Him, He also will deny us;  
If we are faithless, He remains faithful,  
For He cannot deny Himself.

You see, the main theme of this passage is loyalty to Christ, clinging to Christ even in the midst of persecution and suffering and hardship and trial in this life, because Christ will not fail to deliver on His promises and commitments to His people.

Now, in this passage the Apostle Paul gives us a picture of a Christ-centered, Christ-clinging approach to personal adversity. And the first thing he says is this: "If we died with Him, we will also live with Him." He's saying if we willingly resign ourselves to suffering with and for Christ for the sake of God's people, so also will we experience true life in Him.

You want to see a picture of victory in a Christian life? It's not health and wealth. It's not 'no problems.' You know, our problem is that when problems come into our lives we think something's wrong! 'Lord, it's not supposed to be this way! We're not supposed to have these trials and hardships! We're not supposed to be experiencing this suffering!'

You want to see a picture of Christian victory? Let me show you one: it's Paul in a prison, chained, waiting to die. That's Christian victory! Why? Because Christians are into sadomasochism? No! But because Paul is experiencing true life, even in the midst of his suffering he's celebrating the resurrection! There's a picture of Christian victory. Christian victory is not a picture of 'no cancer, no problems, no family strife, no marital troubles, no financial struggles'—that's not the Christian life. The Christian life is victory in the midst of those things! It's life, despite the fact that we live in the valley of the shadow of death.

And the Apostle Paul is simply saying here, 'Christian, if you've died with Jesus Christ, you will also live with Him. You will experience the sovereign life of Jesus Christ here and now as well as then and there.'

He doesn't stop, does he? He goes on to say, "If we endure, we will also reign with Him." The Apostle Paul says, 'Christian, this is why you endure the trials:

because at the end of that endurance comes reign.' It's a military term he uses here. To "*endure*" is the word "*remain*". It's the way a Roman commander would have told his troops to stand firm, no matter what was happening in terms of the barbarian charge against them.

You know, when Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, fought Napoleon Bonaparte in the Battle of Waterloo, he was not fighting with a veteran army that he had commanded in the peninsula campaign in Portugal and Spain, and had won great victories against Napoleon's vice-generals. He was fighting with a rookie army. It was sort of like the first 'European Union army.' He had about 70,000 men—about... something like two-thirds of the men Napoleon had. Napoleon outnumbered him by thirty percent. But Napoleon had gathered all of his old veterans from the Russian campaign and from all the other campaigns and had pulled them together. He had more than 100,000 of them.

And Wellington's commanding these European rookies from all over the place. Some of them had never seen battle before, and so what Wellington did is, he sprinkled his British troops throughout those rookie regiments. He wanted those Belgians fighting next to Scottish Highlanders! Why? Because when the heat was on, when Napoleon starting throwing his columns of men into his line, he wanted those Highlanders to...what? To remain, to stand. And you know, that was Wellington's battle plan: to hang on. That was his battle plan against Napoleon that day. 'All I want to do is keep my army together until the Prussians can get here. That's my plan today against Napoleon: to remain, to endure, to hang on...; and so he planted troops in their midst just to stand, so that the ones who had never before been in battle wouldn't break when the onslaught came.

And here's what Paul is saying to the Christian: '*Stand, remain, endure*; keep trusting in Jesus Christ. Hold your ground fast. Persevere to the end, because when you do, you're going to reign with Jesus Christ.' The Apostle Paul is preparing you for the onslaught, but he's reminding you of the reign. You stand, you remain, you keep trusting in Christ, and let me tell you what's coming: you're going to judge the world with Jesus Christ.

Did you know that both Jesus and Paul tell you that? If you're a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, the humblest believer, and by His grace you persevere to the end, you will judge men and angels on the last day, and you'll reign with Jesus Christ forever. The Apostle Paul says that hope, because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, because He died and He was buried and He was raised to glory and exaltation, I am confident that no matter what I experience in this life, I will be raised with Him to glory and to exaltation, because "...ours the cross, the grave, the skies." That logic cannot be broken in Christian reality: "Ours the cross, the grave, the skies." We will reign with Him.

But, of course, my friends, there's a warning here too, isn't there? "If we deny Him..." and this hymn is simply quoting Jesus, isn't it? "If we deny Him, He will

deny us.” If you think there's another way into fellowship with God apart from Jesus Christ, if you think there's another way of salvation and you seek that way, you turn your back on Christ, you deny Christ, and the Apostle Paul says this: “He will deny you.” Because He is the only name under heaven by which a person can be saved: Jesus Christ.

But for the believer, there is this great promise of victory even in the midst of hardship and trial. Do you see what Paul is saying? Paul is saying, ‘Hardship, suffering, trial in this life is of the essence of discipleship. It's not an accidental thing that creeps in from time to time: it's of the essence of Christian discipleship. But the resurrection transforms the way we view that hardship.’

On May 10, 1940, in the middle of that great conflagration which we now call the Second World War, Winston Churchill was made the Prime Minister of Great Britain. And he met with his cabinet three days later, on May 13, and on that same day gave his first speech as Prime Minister to the House of Commons. Many of you have heard this speech on tape; some of you may have heard part of it rebroadcast within a few days of its being given. It's one of the most stirring speeches ever given. He says to this House of Commons, speaking to his nation in a time of dark trial:

I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and suffering.

You ask, "What is our policy?" I can say it is to wage war by sea, land, and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy.

You ask, "What is our aim?" I can answer in one word: it is *victory*; victory at all cost; victory in spite of all terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival. Let that be realized. No survival for the British Empire; no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for. No survival for the urge and impulse of the ages, that mankind will move forward towards its goal.

But I take up my task with buoyancy and hope. I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. At this time, I feel entitled to claim the aid of all and say, "Come, then, and let us go forward together with our united strength."

And you see, the Apostle Paul is calling you and me to a bigger battle, a greater conflict against a far more dreadful foe; but he is arming you with even more hope than the hope of allies coming to our aid, or to yours. He is saying, ‘In the resurrection power and promise of Jesus Christ, your suffering and hardship has

been transformed from defeat into victory, so that it now serves the interest of the well-being and the spiritual growth of all of God's people, and as you endure it, you will certainly reign.' Paul is saying that the power and promise of the resurrection assures us of ultimate victory in an even more important struggle than the struggle that Churchill spoke about against Hitler.

My friends, do you realize what the resurrection says? It says that those personal adversities that you are experiencing as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ are part of the design of God to encourage the saints and to equip you for the experience of everlasting glory.

But, my friends, if you are here today not trusting in Jesus Christ, I want to say to you that all those adversities are for you merely the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune that have no meaning. It is the resurrection which supplies meaning to suffering in this life. It is the resurrection power which enables us to endure that suffering, trusting and resting in Christ alone. It is the resurrection promise which assures us that we will reign with Him. May God grant that no one goes from this room without resting and trusting in Jesus Christ, and thus dying with Him; because "...ours the cross, the grave, the skies."

Let's pray.

*Our Lord and our God, we thank You for the truth of Your resurrection, and for the transforming reality of it. Grant that we would believe Your word. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Grace be with you, through our resurrected Jesus, the Christ. Amen.*

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