

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

[www.twojourneys.org](http://www.twojourneys.org)

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at [twojourneys.org](http://twojourneys.org)

**Boldness & Faithfulness in the Gospel, pt. 4:**  
**Take Strength in Christ**  
**2 Timothy 2:1-13**

I. Introduction: Not meant just to be protected... Irish monasteries

A. Irish monasteries

B. Paul's circumstances

C. Paul's previous charges to Timothy:

1. vs. 6 "Fan the flame of your gift"

2. vs. 8 "Don't be ashamed of Christ"

3. vs. 14 "Guard the good deposit"

D. All preparatory for the activity of this chapter... bold faithful aggressive proclamation of the Gospel

E. One central charge: Be strong in grace that is in Christ Jesus

1. series of sub-charges

2. six metaphors:

TODAY: good soldier, dedicated athlete, hardworking farmer

NEXT WEEK: approved craftsman, clean vessel, Lord's servant

F. Read text

G. Sermon division

1. Main Charge: Take Strength in Christ (vs. 1)

2. Strength Multiplied Widely (vs. 2)
3. Strength Concentrated Totally (vs. 3-7)
4. Strength Unchained Conditionally (vs. 8-13)

II. Paul's Fourth Charge: Take Strength in Christ (vs. 1)

***vs. 1: "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."***

***OR "TAKE STRENGTH..." like a well of strength we are to return to as we stand in the grace of Christ***

Grammar is passive: be strengthened by the grace of Christ... yet it is an imperative; allow yourself to be strengthened, or take strength in the one who gives strength

A. The charge illustrated... a major theme for Apostle Paul: strength from grace

***1 Cor. 15:10 "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."***

Paul's own life... strength from grace

a. beginning... Acts 9:22 Paul in Damascus

***Acts 9:22 "Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ."***

b. end... 2 Timothy 4:17 Paul in a Roman court

***2 Timothy 4:17 "Yet the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth."***

c. Colossians 1:28-29

***Colossians 1:28-29 "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we might present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me."***

d. Philippians 4:13

***Philippians 4:13 “I can do everything who Christ who strengthens me.”***

e. Ephesians 6:10

***Ephesians 6:10 “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God...”***

B. How to BE STRONG in Christ: Abraham’s strength... Romans 4:18-21

***Romans 4:18-21 “Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. <sup>20</sup> Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup> being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.”***

1. Abraham could look two directions: his own weakness, God’s strength
2. act of will & faith to look at God
3. BUT what is God’s will? God had made a promise
4. Abraham was strengthened in his faith by understanding 1) God’s promise, 2) God’s power behind the promise

C. The charge applied

1. God has made a promise: Gospel to be spread through all the world
2. God has power to carry it out
3. Paul turned to Christ again and again for the strength to keep going
  - a. through prayer in the Holy Spirit
  - b. through deep meditation/reflection on scripture (see vs. 7)
  - c. through worship and praise (as at the Philippian jail)

III. Strength Multiplied Widely (vs. 2)

A. The key to explosion of gospel: multiplication ministry

Illus. Campus Crusade's slogan "Turning lost sinners into Christ-centered laborers."... win-build-send... multiply!!

God invented multiplication physically... each tree had fruit with multiple seeds in it

Illus. Boy and his grandfather, walking in woods with lots of oak trees; "How many acorns are there in this forest?" NOW... how many acorns in this acorn?

B. Multiplication in this verse: four levels... topic is truth of gospel... doctrines!!

**vs. 2 "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses..."**

1. Christ to Paul
2. Paul to Timothy
3. Timothy to reliable men
4. Reliable men to others

**THE WHOLE POINT IS GROWTH!!!**

C. Multiplication at First Baptist... visitation ministry

***Be a spiritual grandparent... lead someone to Christ, train them up until they lead someone to Christ***

NOT JUST MAKING CONVERTS... making world-changers—disciples of Jesus Christ

IV. Strength Concentrated Totally (vs. 3-7)

God is a God of means... things don't just happen!!

Only by a total concentration of all you have will this growth occur

A. Metaphor #1: The Good Soldier (vs. 3-4)

**vs. 3 "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs, he wants to please his commanding officer."**

1. The hardships of a soldier: strict training, the actual war
  - a. strict training: physical & mental

Illus. Baron von Steubing & Valley Forge

Good soldiers of Christ Jesus also go into strict training... total concentration on the pleasure of the commanding officer

Spiritual disciplines: prayer, Bible study, fasting, serious & sacrificial obedience... these go into making you a good soldier of Christ Jesus

- b. warfare: long hours in the field, sheer terror of the battle

Illus. Battle of the Bulge... terrible suffering from weather, sub-zero temperatures... terror from artillery shelling that went on for hours without a stop

2. Two types of soldiers... good soldiers & bad soldiers
  - a. good soldiers submit to the training and hardships and do their duty without complaining... they stay at their post and discharge their duties with courage
  - b. bad soldiers complain, spread fear and mutiny through the ranks, are insubordinate to their commanding officer, and go AWOL at the sign of danger
3. Christ calls us to be good soldiers, acting with courage to spread the gospel
4. FOCUS: DON'T GET INVOLVED IN "CIVILIAN AFFAIRS"
  - a. word means "entangled", like a sheep whose wool gets caught in thorns
  - b. "civilian affairs" are anything which could entangle you from service to Christ...
    - \*sinful habits
    - \*worldly amusements that distract you
    - \*even a career that has nothing to do with Christ's kingdom

Illus. WWII... "There's a war on, you know."

5. The “good soldier of Christ Jesus” submits to his training and follows His orders: preach the gospel, even if you get persecuted

#### B. Metaphor #2: Dedicated athlete (vs. 5)

#### Illus. Olympic race-walker

1. Must compete according to the rules: rules for training, rules for competing
2. Rules for training: set by coach, so many hours race-walking, so many hours in the weight room, so many hours in cross-training, so many hours of sleep... eat this, don't eat that; absolute total dedication to the task
3. Rules for competing: set by Olympic rules committee... for race walking, must have at least one part of the foot on the ground at all times
4. Timothy: if you want to win your victor's crown, you also must compete by the rules:
  - a. NOT rules for salvation, BUT rules for fruitful ministry
  - b. moral laws:

#### ***2 Timothy 2:19 “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”***

- c. practical laws: how the ministry is to be done... passing godly doctrine on and role modeling it every day... working very hard, by the power of the Spirit

#### C. Metaphor #3: Hardworking farmer (vs. 6)

#### ***vs. 6 “The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.”***

1. probably a tenant farmer in mind here... land owned by someone else, farmed by a tenant farmer
2. no excitement, just flat-out hard work
3. long days, toiling in the sun... plowing the fields, planting the seeds, weeding & protecting the crops from birds and animals... waiting for the harvest, then harvest time

4. what is the harvest for Timothy? HOLINESS for himself and SALVATION for others
5. Holiness only comes through incredible hard work... discipline
  - a. are you more like Christ than you were a year ago
  - b. OR are you more and more being conformed to the pattern of the world

Illus. J.C. Ryle, *Holiness*: No spiritual gains without pains... just as no farmer can expect a harvest unless he works his fields every day, no Christian can expect to grow in holiness unless he works at it every day... deep Bible study, consistent prayer, putting sin to death... this is hard work, but without it no harvest of holiness

6. So it is with a harvest of souls for Christ... no growth for this church without sacrificial labor by this church
  - a. souls are not won by some slick gospel presentation system
  - b. souls are not won by a polished worship experience
  - c. souls are won with great difficulty, sowing with tears in the soil of relationships, guarded by prayers, harvested by the Holy Spirit
  - d. Paul frequently used this word "labor" to describe the work of the gospel
7. God has given Durham to us for our field... without labor there will be no harvest... but God will richly bless our Spirit-filled labor for Christ with growth in holiness & in souls won for Christ

#### D. Three Metaphors, One central message

1. All three share this: total concentration to achieve a goal
2. Good soldier concentrates on pleasing his commanding officer
3. Dedicated athlete concentrates everything in his life to win the victors wreath
4. Hardworking farmer wants a share of the crops
5. All three lay aside everything that might distract from this one focus
6. Paul urged Timothy: put all the strength Christ gives you into multiplying disciples for Him, and do it with discipline according to the rules

E. Begin by concentrating on Scripture

**vs. 7 “*Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.*”**

1. lifetime verse for scripture memorization
2. the more you concentrate on scripture, the more insight you get
3. again, mysterious relationship between our labor & God’s gift of insight
4. Timothy, the more you think about this, the more you’ll understand what God wants you to do

V. Strength Unchained Conditionally, (vs. 8-13)

“Nothing that is easy is ever worthwhile...” “Nothing that is worthwhile is ever easy.”

God says to Paul “My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

A. Paul summons three witnesses to prove this maxim... the gospel advances through hardship, labor and suffering; EXPERIENCE PROVES THIS TO BE TRUE... GOD GIVES THIS STRENGTH CONDITIONALLY

1. Christ (vs. 8)... suffered death on the cross, then triumphed by His resurrection
2. Paul (vs. 9-10)... suffers imprisonment for the gospel, yet the gospel is unchained and free... and multiplying all over the world
3. Christians in general (vs. 11-13)

B. “Remember Jesus Christ...” EXTRAORDINARY STATEMENT!!

1. How could we ever forget Him? But we do... that’s partly why the Lord instituted the Lord’s Supper, so we can remember
2. His life was totally full of the strength of God & of suffering too
3. Yet how easy it is for us to forget Him... He was human—descended from David; yet also Almighty God—raised from the dead!!
4. He perfectly displays Paul’s principle: suffering is the path to glory

C. Paul: “I am suffering, even to the point of being chained like a criminal”

1. Paul also exemplifies the principle... if you want to see the gospel grow, you must be willing to labor and to suffer for it
2. I am chained... BUT God’s word can never be chained

Incredible power for those who understand this!! Satan can NEVER defeat a church who care more about the advance of this gospel than they do their own freedom or comfort or lives

One such man stood in danger of losing his life for the truth of the gospel... Exactly 481 years ago yesterday, on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther risked his life for the gospel by nailing his 95 theses to the Witternberg door to begin the Protestant Reformation... fearlessly, he defended the doctrine with his life, and eventually wrote these words

“Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;

the body they may kill, God’s truth abideth still;

His kingdom is forever.”

\*Paul would have said AMEN!! To Luther’s words...

\*Yes, you can imprison the messenger, but you can never imprison the word of God

\*BUT God’s strength comes conditionally... those who step out in faith understand what Paul means by “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”

D. Common Christian experience: (vs. 11-13)

1. If we died with Christ, God will give us eternal life

Endurance with Christ is the other side of the same coin

- a. we die to sin and to all selfishness
- b. we live to God

***Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”***

2. If we disown Him, He will disown us

***Matthew 10:33 “Whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my father in heaven.”***

***DISOWN = say “I never knew him”***

***Our Faithlessness NEVER changes God... he will continue being who He is no matter what we do... but a consistent pattern of shame of Christ in this evil world shows that we have never come to know Him to begin with***

3. We must prove faithful to Christ, and be bold in our witness to Him

Conclusion:

Paul's fourth charge: Be strong in the grace of Christ... take strength in Him

You'll need it as you do about a multiplication ministry of making disciples for Christ

God has given us an incredible privilege... the same privilege Paul and Timothy had—the ministry of the gospel;

like good soldiers, we must be obedient to the pleasure of our commanding officer

like dedicated athletes, we must concentrate all our efforts on winning the prize by the rules

like hardworking farmers, we must put our shoulder to the plow and sickle until the harvest time is finished

***Now is the harvest time... a perhaps some of you have never given your lives to Christ... he died for sin***

