

# Rev George Macaskill - 2 Timothy 2:1

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Preacher: Guest Preacher

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn in our Bibles to the chapter of God's Word which we read.

Second Timothy chapter 2 and as God would help us, I'd like to concentrate on verse 1. Second Timothy chapter 2 verse 1.

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

This is not a call to be strong in yourself. Far from being a call of being sure of yourself, far from a call of being self-confident or self-assured, gospel assurance is a call to be sure of Christ.

[ 1 : 19 ] Not to be sure of yourself. Be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ. Be sure of the gospel.

Be sure of the Bible states. Be sure of God.

It's a call not to trust yourself, but to trust God, to trust what he has written in his Word.

That's the call we have. The call to be assured in the Christian Bible gospel is to ensure that your trust is not in yourself, but to ensure that your trust, your hope, your confidence is in God, that it is in what Christ accomplished at the cross.

That God sent his Son to purchase, to accomplish, to clinch salvation for those who trust him and who do not trust in themselves.

[ 2 : 38 ] So what is it that we are to be sure of as believers? What precisely is it that we have to believe in the gospel?

We are to be sure, first of all, that we believe we are sinners. Trust is a saviour and we need to be saved by someone who is not a sinner, by someone else.

There are people who do not believe they are sinners. I met people who were offended because I charged, I said they were sinners, like myself.

They took offence. Be sure you believe you are a helpless sinner. That's the first thing you have to believe.

To get this assurance, be sure you are a sinner, but secondly, be sure you believe that Christ died on the cross on behalf of sinners.

[ 3 : 58 ] Be sure you understand that. Be sure you believe Christ died in the place of, instead of sinners.

There was three men crucified that Friday afternoon. They all went through the horrors of crucifixion, but Christ on the center cross went through more.

He was bearing the sin of his people. He wasn't just bearing the pains of crucifixion.

The other two thieves did that. He bore our sins on the tree if we are believers.

Now be sure you believe these two things, that you are a sinner, that Christ died for sinners and be sure thirdly that when Christ died on that cross, he paid, he had totally sold for sin.

[ 5 : 03 ] He said, it is finished. There's nothing for you to do.

He's done it all. He paid God for your sins if you're a believer. Believe these three things, the assurance comes.

You're not believing anything about yourself except that you're a sinner and you deserve the lowest hell. The more you see Christ, the more you see God, the less you think of yourself.

The best way to think of where you are before God is to look at God, to see God, to see Christ.

One effect of being sure of Christ is that you'll be unsure of yourself.

[ 6 : 06 ] Your hope will not be in yourself. In other words, the mark of someone truly trusting Christ is that he is humble.

A proud Christian is a contradiction in terms.

In the Bible, humility is not thinking meanly of yourself.

In the Bible, humility is not thinking of yourself at all. It's thinking of Jesus all the time. It's thinking of others all the time.

Exclude yourself from your thinking. Don't be self-centred. Be God-centred and think of others. That's biblical, a humility.

[ 7 : 12 ] For example, suppose you have a student sitting in exams and he gets seven A's.

You go along to him and you say, oh, you're a clever person. What is the proper response of a truly humble student who gets seven A's?

Is it for him to say, oh, no, I'm not clever at all? It's not humility. That's denying the truth. The guy's brilliant.

Not humility to deny what is the truth. What would be the humble response of such a person?

It would be, well, if I am clever, as God who made me clever, if I have gifts, it's God who gave me these gifts.

[ 8 : 19 ] If I am gifted, that doesn't make me a better person. That makes me a very privileged person.

It's pointing to God all the time. If I've got talents, it's God to be praised because it's God that gave me these talents. That's the true response of a Christian thinking of Christ all the time, thinking of his grace, thinking of his benefits, thinking of what God has given to him.

Now here we have a letter from the apostle Paul led by the Holy Spirit to write to this Timothy who had been given a gift from God, but whose natural disposition was timid.

And he was in danger of denying the very gifts and graces which God gave to him. Let's turn back to the previous chapter.

Verse 5, 2 Timothy 1 verse 5, I am reminded of your sincere faith, Paul says to Timothy, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and now I am sure dwells in you as well.

[ 9 : 53 ] For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the lane on of my hands.

You see he was timid disposition and he was wanting to opt out and keep a low profile. But Paul says God's giving you a gift, attend to it.

Verse 7, for God gave us a spirit not of fear and timidity, but of power and of love and of self-control. That's why this letter is in the Bible. This letter of Paul is a letter of encouragement.

Now he's writing from prison. According to chapter 4, Paul has just heard that in a few days time he'll be dead.

[ 11 : 01 ] His last appeal failed and according to secular history, which was no reason to question, a few days after writing this, these words, a few days after he was beheaded in a road outside Rome.

Now prison cells in general, condemned cells in particular, are usually places of despondency.

But here's Paul and he's writing a letter of enthusiasm to the only person that can succeed.

A Christian, when this letter was being written, you would say, Christianity's finished. Christianity's finished. Here's our best man, Paul, in prison and he's going to lose his head.

All that's left is this guy Timothy and he's a wimp. You'd say this new religion's not going to last, but it's of God.

[ 12 : 16 ] Paul stirs up Paul to write this letter and see what he says to him. Swear yourself up and see what he says in chapter 4 verse 2.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ, preach the word. Be instant in season and out of season.

Now wouldn't you think a man in a condemned cell about to lose his head? What for? For preaching the gospel. What is his last message?

What does he say to Timothy? Does he say Timothy, take care, take care son, take care, be very careful, look what's happening to me. Is that what he says? No, no, Timothy, be strong in the Lord. Preach this gospel. Be instant in season, be instant out of season. Don't be ashamed of the gospel. A letter of encouragement from a condemned cell.

[ 13 : 21 ] That's what God can do. That's the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And here, here's Paul writing to Timothy.

Be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. It's a call to be strengthened by Christ's grace, Christ's power.

And not its passive. Be strengthened by. It's Christ's power. It's Christ's might. It's Christ's strength. You've nothing to do but be encouraged. Be strengthened by it. Be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

He's not to be strong in himself. He's to be strong in the grace of Christ. Now the difference between mercy and grace, there's a difference.

[ 14 : 34 ] We use the terms interchangeably, but technically there's a difference. What's the difference between mercy and grace?

The best definition I've found is justice is getting what you deserve. That's justice.

Getting what you deserve. Mercy is not getting what you deserve. That's mercy.

Not getting what you deserve. Grace is getting what you don't deserve. You see the moment you believe in Christ, you don't get what you deserve.

You don't get punished. You don't get to a lost eternity. But you don't just get mercy. You get grace.

[ 15 : 36 ] You also get things you don't deserve. You don't deserve eternal life. You don't deserve joy in the Holy Ghost.

You don't deserve the peace of God. You don't deserve the gifts of the Spirit, do you?

These things are given to you as well as grace. What we don't get is mercy. What we do get is grace.

Here is Paul encouraging and stirring up Timothy to be strong in the grace. In the things you've been given, you don't deserve the gifts and the graces.

Because you see he was in danger as we said already of not using the gifts that were given to him. But of course he then goes on, as we note in what we read, he goes on to remind them the nature of the Christian life.

[ 16 : 41 ] It's a battle. But it's a battle. It's a battle where the victory has already been achieved.

And all the Christians are called to be engaged in is what may be called in military terms the mopping up operations.

Satan has already been conquered. He's not yet been cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. He can still do a lot of damage.

He can still dupe souls. He can still make a mess of your life. But he's been conquered. He's been conquered.

Not yet cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. So we are only engaged in mopping up operations.

[ 17 : 34 ] His back's been broken. His plans been destroyed. But he's going to do a lot of damage yet. We're called to be engaged in that a warfare.

And you see he goes on to talk, he gives three illustrations. The soldier, the athlete and the farmer. Christianity as we said is a fight, not an excursion.

That means blood, sweat, tears, suffering, sorrow, struggles, opposition, weakness and in some cases as it was in Paul's case death.

It means there's danger, it means there's no enemy. And so he gives an illustration of a soldier verse four, verse five he goes on about an athlete. Christianity isn't just a fight. It's very interesting.

Fight the good fight of faith and run the Christian race. These two words are, are, is talking about the same thing. It is a fight but it's also a race.

[ 18 : 43 ] But do remember it's not a sprint. The race is not a sprint, it's a marathon. Do you know what the key is?

Finish the race. My friend, that's all you've got to do. Finish the race.

Marathons have a very high fallout rate. Very high fallout. Everyone who finishes the Christian marathon gets a crown.

And all the devil has got to do is to get you to give it up. Just to get you to throw in the towel to stop. That's all they've got to do, just to get you to stop. Give it up. Throw in the towel. The soldier example, the athlete example and the farmer.

[ 19 : 52 ] Christianity is long term. The farmer, the farmer sows his seed in the spring. And he doesn't look for results the next day or the next week or indeed the next month.

It's long term. There are no instant results in farming. Seasons. They say the farmer has two graces, faith and patience.

And the lessons we learn, as grace produces what is sown. The farmer sows carrots he doesn't expect to reap turnips.

You reap what you sow. Isn't it interesting when the Bible says don't be deceived, don't be deceived. God is not mocked.

Whatever a man sows that shall he also reap. What are we sowing? What are we sowing with our lives?

[ 21 : 03 ] Are we sowing to the flesh or are we sowing to the seed? That's what we have to be careful for.

We reap what we sow, sowing to the Spirit, sowing to the things of God. And in due time, due time, due time you reap.

No sudden as we said in the morning, no sudden growth. Well, be strengthened by the grace that is in the Lord Jesus.

Be strengthened by the gifts that have been given. We are told we are to grow in the grace and in the Spirit.

We are to, we're strengthened by exercising these gifts, by utilizing these gifts and talents what the Spirit has given to us.

[ 22 : 13 ] And every day it's quite important for us to lead a heart. We're strengthened by employing the weapons of our warfare.

We employ them every day. It's the everyday use of these things that build us up and strengthen us.

Every day we're to keep his commands. Every day we're to digest his word. Every day we're to be in communion with God.

There's no quick fixes. Wouldn't be great if one short prayer would do it all. If we could just be perfectly satisfied with one week quick prayer.

That's not the way God has appointed. He has appointed means and their life long before the full fruit arrives.

[ 23 : 13 ] No simple shortcuts. Christianity is an everyday affair. Christians are strong in the faith because they're strong in the Bible.

Because they're strong in prayer. Because they're strong in obedience. That's why, that's how you get strong.

Now the gifts of the Spirit, we're told to live in the Spirit. We're told to walk in the Spirit. And that's how we become strengthened in the grace that's in the Lord Jesus.

What are the gifts of the Spirit? Well you know them as well as I do I'm sure. Love. The Bible tells us perfect love casts out fear.

I struggled for years and years and years to get my head around that. I could never understand that verse. Perfect love of what?

[ 24 : 24 ] To whom? Fear of what? I could never get my head around that. And I got the illustration that helped me greatly.

You have a mother in a kitchen. And a mouse comes into the kitchen. She's terrified. She's afraid of the mouse.

She's terrified. And she jumps up on a chair in fear of the mouse. And as she stands up on the chair she's looking out the window.

And as she looks out the window she sees her 18 month old child in the playpen in the garden about to be attacked by the neighbour's pit bull terrier.

What does she do? She jumps down off her chair. She grabs a brush. She goes outside to the garden and attacks the pit bull terrier. The one that was frightened got frightened of a mouse.

[ 25 : 28 ] Can attack a pit bull terrier. Perfect love for her child made her unafraid of the mouse.

And is that not to be us in our Christian experience? Our love for God, our love for Christ ought to make us unafraid of the things that are of Charaminas.

As we said earlier, don't think of yourself as you have problems and your weaknesses. Think of Christ and His work and His power and His word and His commands.

Perfect love casts out fear. Learn to love more. Learn to practice loving people you don't like.

That people that annoy you. Learn to love them more. That's the way to grow. That's the way to be strengthened.

[ 26 : 31 ] Love, joy is not amazing verse in the Bible. The joy of the Lord is your strength. Joy gives you strength.

The Bible says it. Remember Paul and Silas? What a high they must have been on when they got that vision.

You remember Acts chapter 16, they're starting the first evangelistic, the first mission you can say. And they get their boat, no cars in these days, they get their boat and they sail to go to Asia. But the Spirit forbade them. The Spirit forbade them. So then they turn the boat and they go to Bethania.

The Spirit forbids them as well. The Spirit forbade them to go to Asia. The Spirit forbade them to go to Bethania. Where are we going to go?

[ 27 : 30 ] And then there's a vision. Come over to Macedonia and help us. There must have been on a high. Great! We know where we're going.

Spirit gods with us. We're going to Macedonia and off they go to Macedonia. And what happens the first night? Well, I mean the first night that we read off in the Scriptures.

We don't know what's at the first or the second or the third. They're clapped in jail. They're imprisoned. What would you say?

Lord, you deceived me. I thought this was, I thought you told us to come here. I thought the gospel was going to prosper and be blessed.

What happens? They're imprisoned. The joy of the Lord is their strength. What's Paul and Silas doing in the stocks? They're singing praises to God.

[ 28 : 28 ] And at least the conversion of the Philippian jailer. The joy of the Lord. They didn't sulk and say, oh, trust me to draw the short straw.

The joy of the Lord is your strength. They can sing Paul and Silas. Can sing praises to God in the prison cell.

And the next thing you read of is a conversion of the Philippian jailer. God's ways are not the same as our ways.

Walk in the Spirit. Employ, use the gifts of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace. It's a wonderful thing to have peace you.

There's a verse in the Bible and it says, their strength is to sit still. That's the strength.

[ 29 : 27 ] The ability when everything's crashing down around you. Sit still. My God's on the throne.

Nothing has disturbed the courts of heaven. Nothing is out of control. Their strength is to sit still.

Be still, we're commanded. We're commanded. Be still and know I am God.

Tremendous strength in that. Love, joy, peace.

Long suffering. Nothing confuses the world more and makes atheists think and to see Christians plodding on in the Christian life when it costs them and when everything seems to go wrong.

[ 30 : 35 ] Because their response would be, I wouldn't have a God that would let that happen to me. I don't want a God that would let me lose my month child, take away my husband, I wouldn't have a God like that.

That's their response. But they have to see a heavenly response. They have to see the grace of the Lord Jesus in us because we might be the only time they ever meet a Christian that ever see Christianity walking in the flesh as it were.

Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness. A soft answer turns away wrath.

Bible says that. Gentleness. Yes, we have to rebuke. It's how you rebuke. Can we rebuke gently, kindly, nicely?

Don't need to be nasty. Don't need to be arrogant. Gentle rebuke. Bless. Bless by God.

[ 31 : 51 ] That's the fruit of the spirit. That's the tools. That's the weapons of our warfare. We're strengthened by these things.

The outside world, notice these things. They may not listen to your preaching, but they see how you live differently and it affects them.

Goodness. We're told as a verse that's very, very challenging. Where is it? I think it's Romans 12, last verse.

Overcome evil. Yes, yes, here we are. Romans 12, 21. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Isn't that challenging? It's hard to believe. I tell you, it's far harder to practice, but it's scriptural truth.

[ 32 : 57 ] You want to have an effect? Overcome evil with good. We tend to say, oh, give them tit for tat. Give them a taste of their own medicine.

That's what they need. It's not what the Bible says. How are you going to overcome that? Overcome evil with good. What the apostle is saying is good is the only entity that has the ability to overcome evil, the power to overcome evil.

Faithfulness. Do you want to know what it is to be full of faith? All you have to do is read Hebrews 11.

What they accomplished by faith? What they accomplished by being full of faith? Hebrews 11. It's a roll call of faith.

They say there was no faith in the Old Testament. And do you know something? It is true that in the whole of the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, the word, the word faith is only twice.

[ 34 : 13 ] Only twice in the whole of the Old Testament. But listen, if the concept of faith, the concept of faith pervades the whole of the Old Testament and Hebrews 11, just read it.

It's all about the Old Testament's faith. Saints by faith they did this, by faith they did that. But the word, the word faith is only twice. The whole of the Old Testament. But they still live by faith. It's the same religion, a different dispensation, a different administration. Fruit of the spirit, meekness.

Moses was not born meek. Moses was the meekest man that ever lived. Bible tells us that. Or the humblest man ever. And the same thing. Humblest, same word.

Same word. That's not the way he was born. He was kind of arrogant. He argues with God at the bush. And that's his knack, he had a short fuse.

[ 35 : 13 ] He was angry with God at the bush. He killed an Egyptian and buried him as a kind of man he was by nature. But grace, the grace of the Lord Jesus.

He saw him who was invisible. He knew the reproach of Christ was more valuable than all he learned in the palace of Egypt. And he made him meek, and made him humble before God.

And of course self-control even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace.

Be strengthened by the grace, in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The tools, the weapons, they're all there.

Enjoy them, use them, enjoy them to God's glory. Well just one final thing in conclusion.

[ 36 : 18 ] If you're here tonight, you're not a Christian. You need the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

But you know that grace that's in Christ Jesus is not to be sought, it's to be received.

The grace that's in Christ Jesus is offered to you. You have to receive it. You don't have to do anything.

You can't do anything that pleases God anywhere. Understand. Becoming a Christian, receiving forgiveness, obtaining eternal life.

It's not something you deserve, not something you're worth, not something you do. It's something you receive.

[ 37 : 16 ] In the everlasting gospel Christ comes to every one of us and he says come to me. Just come to me with all your problems, with all your worry, with all your nerves, with all that's facing you.

Come to me. Bring them to me and I will give you rest. I will stand in for you on the great day of judgment.

I will be responsible for your behaviour if you come and trust me with your soul. Be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus which is offered to every one of us.

May God, the Holy Spirit, make his word effectual to every one of us. Let's just bow our heads.

Our Father in heaven, be pleased to take the things of Christ and to make them ours. Tonight, here, now, bestow this saving faith upon us.

[ 38 : 31 ] We humbly pray for we pray in the name of your Son, the Lord Jesus. Amen. Amen.