

A GOSPEL WORTH SUFFERING FOR

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INTRODUCTION: (Scripture Reading – 2 Tim 1:8-12)

- A. Extra, Extra, Read All About It! With these words we pick up a newspaper and read about the main happenings of the day gone by:**
1. What do we typically read of? Soaring gas prices, economy problems, house fires, natural disasters, corporate fraud, car wrecks, robberies, & more → Bad news, bad news, bad news!
 2. Whether it is in a newspaper on the television, it seems all we ever hear about is bad news! It makes you wonder, “Does anyone ever have any good news worth telling?”
 3. We know that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news of Jesus Christ! In fact, that is what “gospel” means & it’s often translated that way in the ESV (**Acts 8:12; Rom 10:15; 1 Pet 1:25**)
- B. Because it is the good news of Jesus Christ, it is then a gospel worth suffering for! (2 Tim 1:8-12)**
- The reason why Paul was willing to suffer as he did was because he loved the gospel of Christ!

WHAT MAKES THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST A GOSPEL WORTH SUFFERING FOR?

- A. The gospel of Christ is the good news of power:**
1. Paul reminds Timothy that the gospel is the power of God and is worth suffering for! (**2 Tim 1:8**)
 - a. He knows that just like himself, Timothy would have to suffer many things... It would take a toll on him spiritually, physically, & emotionally so Paul says, “Don’t be ashamed!”
 - b. To stand firm against the assaults of the devil, Timothy would have to strengthen himself in the power of God... The good news of Jesus Christ! It provided courage! (**vs. 7**)
 - c. The word of God has always been a powerful force! (**Gen 1:3**) → Now it is the word of God in His gospel that works powerfully to the saving of souls (**Rom 1:16; Eph 1:19**)
 2. Consider some other powerful ways in which the gospel of Christ works in our lives:
 - a. It’s a message of the power of God to cleanse us from sin and remove all guilt! (**I Cor 6:11**)
 - b. It’s a message about the power of God to conquer self & our struggles (**Galatians 2:20**)
 - c. It’s a message of the power of God to take control over our circumstances (**Phil 4:13**)
 - d. It’s a message about the power of God that enables us to a Christian when being a Christian seems like an impossible thing to do! (**I John 5:4**)
 3. Paul goes on to show how it’s the good news of the power of God to change lives! (**2 Tim 1:10**)
 - a. God took an enemy of Jesus Christ, a persecutor of Christians, one who was zealously trying to stamp out Christianity and made him one of Jesus’ greatest servants!
 - b. Ask Paul if the good news is powerful! It changed him & it can change you (**1 Tim 1:12-17**)
- B. The gospel of Christ is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ:**
1. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news about the God who saves us! (**2 Tim 1:9-10**)
 - a. People love rescue stories don’t they – If a person is trapped on a mountain or miners are stuck in a mine people stay glued to their TV hoping for the next bit of good news!
 - b. The gospel tells us about our lost and hopeless state and how that God, in His great love and mercy, acted for us by sending His Son to die for our sins – Bringing us salvation!
 - c. When Jesus appeared, when He came into this world, He was the manifestation and the culmination of that great plan of God to intervene and to rescue man from his sins
 2. The gospel tells us about how God has provided us salvation from the greatest of problems and given us the greater blessings than a person could imagine! (**Eph 2:4-7**)

3. The good news about Jesus Christ, however, is also the bad news! Before a person is ready to hear the good news they must see that they need to be rescued! (**Acts 2:22ff, 36-38, 40-41**)

C. The gospel of Christ is the good news of a holy calling:

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ is in itself a calling to a holy calling – A holy way of life (**2 Tim 1:10**)
 - a. The holy calling that it is calling us to is that of living a holy and sanctified life in Christ
 - b. Holy → It simply means “set apart.” It describes are relationship to God, as dedicated to His service, and to the world, as separate from it in purity, morality, & righteousness
 - c. The gospel of Christ then is calling us to come out from among the world, to stop living and thinking like the lost of the world, and live a separate life, dedicated to serving God!
2. The gospel of Christ is then a calling to not be conformed but be transformed! (**Rom 12:1-2**)
3. The holy life is the best life because it is a life of freedom from sin, freedom from condemnation, life and peace, fellowship with God, hope, & security! (**Romans 8:1-2, 5-6, 14-15, 18, 31-32**)

D. The gospel of Christ is the good news of God’s eternal plan:

1. The good news of Jesus Christ is God’s eternal plan for our salvation (**2 Tim 1:9**)
 - a. This plan for our salvation was created by God even before time began! Before God created this world and even mankind, He made a plan to save us from our sins!
 - b. This plan is according to God’s own purpose – This plan is God’s dream and not ours! It’s a plan that truly magnifies God’s great grace... And this plan has been devoted to us!
 - c. Before the creation of this world God planned for our redemption, our forgiveness, and our reconciliation with Him → Jesus is the fullness of this plan! (**Eph 1:4 & 9; 3:11**)
2. It’s amazing that God went through with creating us even though God understood what it would cost Him and what it would cost Jesus! That really shows His desire for us! (**Passage**)
 - a. **Illustration:** Help someone & you know they may not care, will mess it up, or squander it
 - b. God knew when He created us that we’d sin & that some would continually reject us!
 - c. When God created this great plan, He also created the cross! Think about that... God’s PURPOSE included the death of Jesus on the cross – It demonstrates His love for us and shows His desire for fellowship us! This is good news everyone needs to hear!
3. The “good news” of God’s eternal plan provides us the opportunity to live life the way God intended! (**Ecc 12:13; Matthew 6:33; 1 Tim 4:8; Luke 12:15**)
 - a. Many people are living lives that are devoid of something – There’s a hole, an emptiness, and many aren’t sure what’s supposed to be in that place → The gospel shows us!
 - b. As people have to face difficult circumstances physically or emotionally they often grope to make sense of what they are having to endure – The gospel makes sense of it!
 - c. The gospel gives direction to the directionless, hope to the hopeless, a future to those without a future – It tells us all we need to know for this life and the life to come!

E. The gospel of Christ is the good news of God’s grace:

1. As we’ve seen, this great eternal plan is a manifestation of God’s great grace! (**2 Tim 1:9**)
 - a. Our salvation and our being made holy is not a something we earn... It’s not according to our own works... It’s according to the working and grace given to us by God!
 - b. It is the good news of grace, that God has bestowed upon us immeasurable unmerited favor, and mercy, that God refrains from giving us the punishment we deserve!
 - c. The good news of Jesus Christ is the good news of grace – Sins washed away, guilt

- removed, forgiveness, penalty paid, ability to begin again, and hope of eternal life
2. Through the gospel, God does not call us because we are holy, but to make us holy! **(Rom 5:8)**
 - a. God did not call us because we deserved salvation, were really good people, or were living holy lives... In fact, the opposite is true! He called us because we weren't!
 - b. The good news of Jesus Christ is for those who are sinners, ungodly, and enemies of God!
 - c. The gospel of Christ itself comes as a gift of God – God does not love us because we deserve His love... He loves us out of the sheer grace and generosity of His heart!
 3. God's grace does not eliminate our obedience or need to change... but salvation is still God's unmerited favor! **(Ephesians 2:8)**
 - a. Some turn to this passage to show that salvation is a gift and that as a gift we are to do nothing to receive it → But notice how this says it comes, "By grace, through faith..."
 - b. Grace is what God provides and faith is how we respond – Even this great passage about the grace of God shows that there is something we have to do to receive this gift!
 - c. Faith is developed through hearing the word of God! This word of God is the gospel of Jesus Christ! So this good news, gives us the faith we need to receive God's grace!

F. The gospel of Christ is the good news concerning life and death:

1. Paul summarizes the work of Jesus in relation to what He did to live and death **(2 Tim 1:10)**
 - a. Before the death & resurrection of Jesus many had a very dismal view of death – In the OT, even with inspiration there are very few positive statements made concerning death!
 - b. Jesus abolished death – This doesn't mean people won't have to die anymore but it means Jesus utterly defeated the power death held... Made it ineffective! **(1 Cor 15:54-57)**
 - c. He also brought life and immortality to light – Like a light being shined in a dark room, Jesus illuminated what true life was all about and the eternal life we can enjoy!
 - d. Jesus didn't just destroy death, He destroyed the one who had power of death... Satan! No longer would we have to fear death since the penalty for sin was paid! **(Heb 2:14)**
2. The redemptive work of Jesus completely revolutionizes the way we look at death! **(John 11:26)**
 - a. We know that death isn't a "dead end" to be dreaded but the path that takes us to the direct presence of the Lord! It's through death that we join Jesus! **(Phil 1:23)**
 - b. Death is also not the end of life, but the entrance into the true life, eternal life! It's the entrance into the life for which we are now preparing ourselves here! **(Phil 3:10-11)**
 - c. Christians literally live so they can die! Death is not something a Christian dreads with fearful uncertainty but is able to look forward to with hopeful anticipation!
3. A good way to begin a conversation with someone is to ask about life after death
 - a. "What do you think will happen to you when you die?" or "Where do you think you will go when you die?" → These aren't morbid questions but are questions leading to hope!
 - b. If one is a stranger to the good news about Jesus Christ, he probably has not thought in detail about this question, and if he has he has tried to quickly forget about it!
 - c. If you can get a person thinking about death you open a great door! They start wondering about what will happen later & may realize they are currently in a hopeless position!
 - d. Once a person starts thinking in this direction they are ready for the good news of Jesus!

CONCLUSION: Yes, the gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel worth suffering for! If it is worth suffering for, then certainly we can say that it is worth telling to everyone we know!