

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

September 17, 2023

SPEAKER

Dave Owen

SERIES

Pass It On

PART

3

TITLE

Fan Into Flame

SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 2:1-13



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Good morning to you, Providence. It's great to see you. My name is Dave, one of the pastors here and have the joy to teach you this morning. And so if you have your Bibles, I want to invite you to turn them on or open them up to 2 Timothy. We're in our third week in a series called Pass It On, where we're looking at this book in the New Testament where Timothy is a young pastor at a church in Ephesus, which is modern day Turkey. And he is there and Paul is writing. Paul is sort of his mentor. Paul is sort of a dad in the faith, Timothy's his son in the faith. And so he's going to be writing this letter. Now in the New Testament, there's probably about half of the books in the New Testament. Paul wrote those.

And so this one is unique in the sense that it's his last one. He's in prison, he's in Rome. He is bound by chains for preaching the gospel. And so as he is bound, he's writing from that cell to Timothy to encourage him. And what we've seen so far is in chapter one, we saw two weeks ago about him just really exhorting him to keep the fire alive in a sense, to fan into flame that gift God's given him. And then we saw last week an expectation to not be ashamed of the gospel for it's the very power of God and not to be ashamed to be associated with Christ. And in this week what we're going to be looking at is this word of encouragement to endure. The idea, I think Timothy's probably worn down. Maybe some of you are worn down and he's really going to encourage with this path of endurance.

Now, Ephesus is modern day Turkey like I said. I'll show you this map. It's basically Paul... You think about Paul, he would just leave Jerusalem and travel through Turkey, through Greece into Rome planting churches. He's sharing the gospel with everybody and anybody. And then a lot of times he would write a letter back to a church that he had planted or he would write to a church that he was going to in hopes to get even further, to expand the gospel to all people. And what's interesting about this particular city, it's a major city. It's modern day Isme today, but it was the center of cultural exchange. There was temples there, goddesses, Greek goddesses, art Emmaus. There was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. I mean it's loaded with idolatry and godless practices. One goddess that was worshiped was the goddess of victory. Her name was Nikke. We get our word Nike from. And so if you're wearing those this morning, how you doing?

It's interesting that even the global icon of the swoosh itself was inspired by the artist of the wing of the actual rock where the goddess was, where they would come and even bow down. And so Timothy's finding himself pastoring a culture like that and he's weary. And so let's pray and ask God to help us as we navigate these things together. Let's pray. Father in heaven we come to you. Maybe some of us are weak and weary. Maybe there's not much endurance left in the tank. And God, we want ask that as we get in your word and your word gets in us as we read it, as it reads us, that your spirit would transform our minds and our hearts and that you would teach us in such a way that you would change us as we encounter your presence and your word and magnify your son.

So please, please, please help us we pray, in Jesus name. Amen. Well, there's a few things I've done in my life that caused me to endure. One, I had the opportunity to play two sports in college and was a lot of workouts, a lot of things, trying to accomplish certain goals after college, continued to enjoy working out a little bit, not that much, but my wife and I decided to sign up for a triathlon. It was my first triathlon and my last triathlon.

I decided quickly that I could do these three things on different days instead of trying to do all three in the same day. If you do those, God bless you. But one of the ways that I was... Endurance during that time it was interesting. We were running in a neighborhood in north Raleigh up off of Durant Road and all through the neighborhoods and we were circle, we would bypass Bojangles multiple times and that caused a little bit of endurance.

Just could not wait to get a Bo-Berry biscuit when I was done. And so that helped. But the other thing that helped tremendously was I did it with my wife. And so my wife and I did this together. And so we're pushing each other, we're causing each other to endure, to finish this race. And I think this is the way oftentimes God has designed the church to run together, to endure together, to strengthen one another's hand, to not forsake the gathering together as his people. And we find ourself in a day and age, much like Timothy found himself in that day in age where many are deconstructing their faith, some of the leading hashtags are in front of words in the social media world like exvangelical or deconverted. There's multiple counseling sites that will help you leave Christianity. Many folks in some of the churches in our city even have gathered teachers who don't believe anything in the Bible to give them a warm fuzzy story with a verse thrown in. The ideologies and the practices we're moving quickly to a post-Christian culture, if not an anti-Christian.

And because of that, when we gather and then scatter, as we scatter throughout the week, we find ourself tempted, maybe like Timothy was. Maybe tempted to throw the towel in or tempted to walk away. And God is going to remind us this morning, I believe through his word, that it is so worth it to endure in order to pass on the gospel message that we've received. And so let's listen to God's word. 2nd Timothy 2:1. Listen to God's word. Here's what he says, "You then my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus and what you have heard from me and the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hardworking farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Thank over what I say for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. Verse eight, "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David as preached in my gospel for which I am suffering bound with chains as a criminal, but the word of God is not bound. Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may attain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The saying is trustworthy for if we died with him, we'll 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."

How do you and I, how did Timothy endure to the end for the sake of the gospel to be passed on? I want to show you four simple truths. The first is this. Is to rely on grace. To rely On Grace. To rely on the grace of Christ that saves and strengthens. Notice verse one. Verse one says, "You then my child..." He is contrasting those in chapter one that had deserted him. When persecution rises, many oftentimes run. And he says, not you Timothy, not you, my child in the faith, the one who helped lead to Christ. His grandma was involved

and mom was involved. And then we took all planting churches and I disciplined and poured my life into you for a number of years. And now as you are pastoring this church in Ephesus, I'm writing to you to be strengthened. Notice what he says, to be strengthened.

How? By the grace. How? By the grace. Where? Where is this grace found? This grace is found in Christ Jesus. So let's unpack a little bit of theology quickly that when you come to faith in Christ, it's a theological term called justification. It's a word that means you are made right with God, unholy people. Holy God, when you trust him, when you place your faith, when you admit that you need him, you have sin in your life and you confess and you basically bend the knee in your heart to Christ, blinded eyes can see the weight of your sin, the glory of Christ. And that's unmerited favor. That's undeserved favor. That's Christ revealing himself to you and you're justified. Once and done. You come to faith by grace in Christ. This is what Ephesians says, "For it's by grace, you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves. It's a gift of God."

Grace is a gift from God. The grace of Christ justifies us. But it's also the same grace that sanctifies us way. We define that word is being made like God, not being made a God being made like God in his character, in his kindness and compassion and grace. And so justification being made right with God. Justification being made like God. It's grace on both. The grace that saves is this grace that sustains and strengthens. Hebrews four says it like this. "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence." Now listen, this is written to believers. This is written to the church. This is a pastoral letter written and as it's written to the Hebrews that have come to faith in Christ, he's saying, now listen, "Let us approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

You and I have access as followers of Jesus. If you're in Christ in this room this morning, we have access to a throne room called grace where we can receive help. Oftentimes the first words out of my mouth when I wake up and move slowly out of bed in the morning, it's, "God, thank you for your grace. Thank you for your grace again another day." Grace and mercy, grace and mercy, grace and mercy. Second Corinthians says it like this, Paul will write to the church at Corinth, "God is able to make all grace abound to you so that in all things, at all times you may abound in every good work." The grace of God. Now notice it's an interesting word. Notice the text how it is written. It says, "Be strengthened by the grace." So it's an imperative. The word strengthened, it's an imperative, it's a command.

It says to be strengthened, but it's in the passive voice, meaning that it's done to you. So he's telling you, listen, "Be strengthened, but it's going to be done to you." What does he mean? This is what he means. He means you and I need to position and posture our ourselves in such a way that grace flows. What does that mean? It means this. It means when you go to Niagara Falls and you look at it from a distance, no mist will hit you, but as you get closer to the falls, the mist hits you. You get under the falls, it'll drown you. Right? And so this is what he's saying. He's saying, "Listen, position yourself in places where means of grace flow." Meaning services, gatherings, life groups, places where you study the word morning daily routines in the word. Where you're in the word, you're reading it and grace, it's like grace comes off the pages and it flows.

You got to position and posture yourself. In places where grace, the means of grace grows, what you'll find is strength then rises. This is what John Newton, the author of Amazing Grace, knew about this grace. It was a grace that saves sinners and strengthens those that are saved. He says in the great hymn, Amazing Grace, he says, "It was grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved. How precious did the grace appear the hour I first believed? Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come this grace that brought me safe, this far and grace that will lead me home." This is what grace does. It strengthens us. The grace of God saves us. The grace of God sustains us. Corinthians will say, "My grace is sufficient for you." Paul would write, "But by the grace of God, I am what I am."

And notice what happens in verse two; "As strength rises, purpose then takes priority." Notice what he says, what you've heard from me as your strengthened Timothy. Now what you've heard from me, here's the purpose of being strengthened. The priority is then that we would continue to teach what's been entrusted to us. We would pass it on. We would have such endurance. He's saying, "Listen, there's four generations here." He's saying, as Paul to Timothy, he says, "Now what I've taught you, you teach others and then have them teach others." This is four generations that are impacted here in the text in verse two. See D.A. Carson, a theologian of our day and time. He says, "One generation has the gospel, one generation assumes the gospel and one, the next, loses the gospel." Judges too says it like this, "That once the patriarchs were buried, Joshua and those leaders there arose another generation who knew neither the work of God nor God himself."

Oh, listen, listen. God help us. God help us to position ourselves to be strengthened by his grace. Gathering weekly life groups, plugging in, walking with other peoples, serving, serving in unique ways. Do you know on our campus, on our campus, on Sunday mornings, there are hundreds and hundreds of lost people that come every week? Non-Christians, unbelievers, they're all in the nursery.

They haven't come to faith yet. They're in the nursery, they're in the elementary schools, and it's an amazing opportunity to invest in the next generation, to deposit seeds of the gospel, to watch them be planted and then watch that seed grow to fruition. So let's position ourselves. Let's position ourselves to be strengthened by grace. How do you endure to the end? So this gospel's passed on. Listen, you rely on grace, but second is you run with grit. You run with grit. You run in such a way that there's some grit to it like a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer. Notice in verse three. Notice in verse three, what happens? He says, "Share in suffering as a good soldier." So what's happening is Paul will tell us in chapter three that anyone who desires to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted.

Think about Christianity. This is not normal. Walk in, take a left, get a little coffee, add some sugar to it, walk in, nice padded chair, ACs working, comfortable hit out first watch. Get some pancakes. No, no. The majority of our brothers and sisters in Christ are going underground at this moment to go into the church so they don't get arrested by communist party. Others, it's illegal to gather like this. Paul knew this. He's writing to Timothy. 11 of the 12 disciples were martyred. The last one was exiled on an island and Paul's awaiting for his head to be cut off.

And so Paul says, “Hey, listen, I’m going to illustrate with three characters who don’t mess around. I’m going to illustrate in the texts for you. And here’s what he’s... There’s other voices oftentimes that are beckoning for us to live a certain way.” But what he’s doing, Paul, it’s fascinating. He’s not saying, so let’s be really clear on this. He’s not saying pull the bootstraps up and get some grit so you can make it to heaven with all your might. That’s not what he’s saying. He’s saying “No, since Christ has come by giving up everything, living the life that we could not live and dying the death that we deserve was buried for our sins, absorbed the wrath of God upon the cross as he was hung, was buried and then he rose from the dead because of what Christ has done run this way.

What he saying, listen, listen. He’s going to use these illustrations that there’s no passivity or neutral gear of neutral to coast as a Christian. We want to run after Jesus because Jesus has already ran after us and saved us and is strengthening us. So he says, “Listen, let’s do it like a soldier.” What does he say about the soldier? Notice the text in verse four. “The soldier doesn’t get entangled in civilian pursuits. His aim is to please the one who enlisted him.”

So in other words, of all the voices that are buckling for our attention and affection, he is saying the soldier listens to the commander as we should listen to our king, Jesus, namely. He says, “He doesn’t get entangled.” What does this word mean? This word means it’s the word that’s used to weave things. And so he like you don’t weave, a soldier doesn’t weave his life in the midst of a bunch of different things. He’s so focused because he has a task to do and he’s listening to his commander. Soldiers grow in endurance and focus, right? This is not negating the passages that say, “Live compassionate, and humble and kind and gentle lives. No, no. To get this gospel to the next generation, it’s going to take grit clothed with gentleness.

My grandfather, he was a soldier back in the day. I wish I could have spent a lot more time with him. He died when I was six years old. My grandfather, when my mom was three months old, left as a sergeant in the US Army under General Eisenhower, for an operation where thousands would land on the beaches of Normandy. My grandfather landed at Normandy and survived it. He made his way into Germany. He would tell my mom later in life of how his feet almost froze as he walked through the snow. When he returned home from the war, my mom... When he left, she was three months old when he returned home from the war, she was four.

The bus brings him to High Point North Carolina and drops him off. And this is really the first time my mom had seen her dad in this way of knowing who he was. He was a remarkable man. This experience as a soldier created some serious grit of endurance in his life. So much so that when he had his wisdom teeth cut out, he took no Novocaine. I wouldn’t advise that. I’m not that gritty. He would go on to be changed by Jesus and he would pastor three churches at one time. There weren’t enough pastors in Southern Virginia and northern North Carolina. And so with about a thousand people that he ministered to as a solo pastor, he would preach at 9:00, drive to the next church at 10:30 and then preach again at 12:30. Funerals, weddings, all of it. He had a grit about him.



He says, "The athlete..." Notice in verse five, he says, "An athlete is not crown unless he competes according to the rules. There's no reward if you don't run by the rules." Now athletics, they teach great principles, and Paul knew this. He writes different passages throughout the New Testament alluding to athletics. In today's athletics, unfortunately, are growing. Somewhat sad state where everybody gets a trophy, everybody wins. You don't keep the score. It's so confusing, right? When I coach my kids in the Christian sports camps, I wanted to crush the other team, right? In Jesus' name. I wanted to win. Whatever you do, do it for the glory of God. That was the verse for the day. And so be kind, but go get more points than the other team, right? Listen, listen. Paul, again, he's not negating the spirit filled joy, humble, kind life. He's making a point about there's a right way to play sports. Flags are thrown in football and whistles are blown on courts. There's a way to play to win. You cheat, you're disqualified.

Performance enhancing drugs break the rules to compete. There's no shortcuts in sports. And so here's the thing, watch, stay with me. Many enjoy watching sports, but few attempt their training. Many want God's blessings without ever acknowledging what he wants. This isn't rule keeping Christianity in order to earn our salvation. It's joy filled obedience to a king who has died for us to bring us to God who loves us and has given us salvation. We keep the rules because he crushed the enemy.

He won the victory. So we run the race. This is why Paul would use, language in 1st Timothy where he says, "Train yourself for godliness." There's some value in physical training, but godliness is of great value. 1st Corinthians 9, he would say, "Don't you know that in a race all runners run, but only one gets the prize?" Run, run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like someone running aimlessly. Where are you running today? Where are you running today? You're just all over the place aimlessly trying to accomplish maybe your purposes. Listen, align your purposes with God's.

Joy will come, purpose... Listen, live for something that's going to outlast you. Listen, it's game time and the end is closer today than it's ever been. So pass the baton, pass this good news on. Pass it on like a soldier, like an athlete, and like the hardworking farmer. Notice what he says in verse six. Verse six he says, says, "Listen, it's the hardworking farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops." The farmer is a unique person. There's no lazy farmers. This is why he describes them as hardworking. You don't work. You don't eat. One theologian said, "Most of the lazy farmers have moved to the city."

How are you doing? Think with me for a second. The hardworking farmer... I grew up in a small town in Virginia where my dad was a pastor of a small country church. And I began to work for some of the men in the church as they farmed land from tobacco to soybeans to cucumbers for... Just all kinds of stuff. And it was the most intense work I have ever done in my life. I was there before the sun came up. You work really hard and then you get a 10-minute break at nine o'clock.

At nine o'clock you get a Pepsi. It's a drink, right? Competes with coke and this pack of nabs and you ate them

fast. And then you're back to work. You get to noon, you get about a 25-minute break. We would fish on the farm and eat quickly and then back to work. Three o'clock you get another Pepsi, another pack of nabs, and then you finish and go home when the work was done, usually 7:00, 7:30 at night. And I'll never forget, as I began to meet some of these farmers in our church and I would shake hands with them, it felt like I was shaking hands with sandpaper.

What are those? You know what they were? They were hands that worked really hard. Calluses everywhere. You got any calluses on your feet, you're moving so fast trying to share the gospel with people? Any calluses on the feet? We like some lotion on the feet, don't we? We get them soft. He says, "Run." He says, "Run, run like a soldier and be focused. Be disciplined like an athlete and work hard like a farmer."

Hebrews 12 says it like this, "Let us run with endurance the race that's set before us looking to Jesus, the founder, and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Let us run with endurance this race because of what Christ has done. And so let's prepare well. Let's prepare well to pass on so much entrusted to us. Let's prepare well to pass on so much entrusted to us. We've launched this website. I encourage you to go to it. It's called [pray.org/passiton](http://pray.org/passiton). Multiple ways to activate your faith from trusting Christ and being justified to signing up to serve and so many opportunities. So I encourage you to check that out. Third, quickly, how do you endure to the end? How do you endure to the end?

You rely on grace. You run with grip, but you remember the gospel. Notice verse eight, he says, "Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead." Now he anchors. It is as if. Listen, listen. When you hear this story about a soldier, and about an athlete, and about a farmer, it inspires you. It inspires me, right? But inspiration often-times will last and won't last until you get to the car sometimes. And so here's the reminder that you set on the phone to go off every single day that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. He's anchoring all the drive to endure in the divine one that endured. He always grounds our doing for Christ in what has already been done by Christ. So he says, "Remember, Timothy, Providence. Remember. Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, offspring of David." What's he doing with that statement?

He's reminding us that David, he's come through that lineage. He's fully human and he's fully God. He is what is needed to reconcile humanity to a holy God. Unholy people to be reconciled with a holy God is going to take a man fully God, fully man who's perfect without sin. Born of a virgin, died on a cross absorbed God's wrath, was a substitute for us, buried in the ground and conquered death, the wages of our sin. He's saying, "Listen. Remember Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday and the Sunday we come and we gather, we sing and we praise and we scatter, we gather, we scatter, we gather, we scatter." He says, "Don't forget the son of God who was crushed for your sins. Don't get over it."

Remember, remember. Now listen to what he says. He's like... There was other a time, ever a time to maybe just seek help rather than sending help, Paul. But notice what he says. He says, "As I preached in my gospel,



this was what was in my gospel. Christ has been raised from the dead, the offspring of David, for which I am suffering.” I am bound with chains as a criminal, but... Oh, my look at it. But the word of God is not bound. The word of God is not bound. In other words, if you look throughout history, when persecution came and martyrs were killed for their faith, they thought they were stopping the spread of the gospel. And it actually spread it further.

Think about these four, five men. Some of you know these men, some of you maybe have never heard of them. Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, these other men, they were students at Wheaton College and they would write in their journal lines like, “I do not want a long life, just a full one.” Jim Elliot would write, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” And they had a heart as young men in their twenties to get the gospel to Ecuador, to the Auca Indians. And so they flew. Nate was a pilot. They flew and landed on the beaches there in January of 1956. And on January 8th, as they’re trying to build relationships, they had flown around the jungles, dropping food and certain things into this area in the jungle to try to build friendship with these people who had never heard, had no access to the gospel.

And on January 8th, some of the Auca Indians come out of the jungle with spears in their hand and they kill all five of them. Find four of the bodies floating down the river. One never recovered. And family members of these who had gone decided to continue to share the gospel in multiple ways. God did a work through the families that did that so much so that some of those that were responsible for killing them came to faith in Christ. And two weeks ago, two weeks ago, two of our pastors from our staff flew to Ecuador and flew a small plane and landed on the same beach and watched the grandchildren of the Auca Indians who killed Jim Elliot be baptized. Yeah, it’s amazing. It’s unbelievable, right? It’s unbelievable. Listen, the word of God, it’s not bound. It’s not bound. We’re looking at possibly supporting some of those church plants in the jungle down there.

Listen, Martin Luther says it like this in this... Him, the mighty forces, he says, “Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also, the body they may kill, God’s truth abideth still His kingdom is forever.” So listen, here’s a verse I want to encourage you with. Hebrews 12. Hebrews 12. We looked at one and two. Here’s what verse three says. He says, “Run with endurance in one and two. Right? Looking to Christ.” And then he says in verse three, “I chew on this verse possibly more than any verse in the scripture. I love it all, but this one helps me when I get weary and tired and worn down.” He says, “Consider him...” Who? Jesus. “Listen, consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted. Are you weary? Are you faint-hearted?

Listen, you know what he says? He says, consider him. You know what that means. It means to frequently visit the cross of Christ daily. That’s what it means, free. Just visit in your mind, in your heart. Visit Calvary. Visit the cross. Visit what he did. Just be reminded, getting ready to walk into a meeting. It’s tough. It’s a tough day. Just consider him who endured such hostility from sinners so that you don’t grow weary and faint-hearted. Consider him who endured such hostility from sinners so that you don’t grow weary or faint-hearted. Re-

member Jesus Christ. Remember him.

And last, I got to land him completely out of time. Last service. So I'll take two extra minutes. Here we go. Listen, really quick. Reach. Reach, right? We want to consider his endurance, but we want to reach with glory in mind to those far from God. This is why he says, "Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect. They may obtain the salvation that's in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." I endure everything. What does this mean? This doctrine is so precious, this doctrine... It doesn't limit us in reaching and sharing. It launches us into sharing with a promise attached to it that there will be some from every tongue, tribe, and nation that will believe this gospel as we go. Those who persist in unbelief will meet God's judgment. But those who believe will enjoy glory forever.

So let's extend. Let's extend ourselves to the point of discomfort to proclaim this lifesaving news of the gospel to all people. Listen, listen. We have a ministry here, a vision called Reach to Reach You For, and we're encouraging you... DL Moody, a salesman up in Chicago had a list. His Sunday school teacher shared the gospel with him. He came to faith. It was absolutely amazing what happened with his life and how he then began to travel and share this good news. He had a list of a hundred people, a hundred people that he was praying for. A hundred people that he was praying for that would just know Jesus. And at his funeral, 96 had come to faith, 96. And the last four on the list were at his funeral, gave their life to Jesus. At his funeral.

So listen, let's run not aimlessly, with focus. And let's trust Christ this morning. If you don't know Jesus, listen, you can't pass on what you don't have. And so trust him this morning. Admit your need for him, believe on him, commit your life to him, and then let's run together. Let's endure together to the end. Let me pray. Father in heaven, thank you for your grace and mercy. Thank you for your kindness to us. Thank you for the grace that you have shown us. Thank you for this word that was preserved over hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years that we could read it. We could draw strength from it. It's like food for our soul. And God, I pray, I pray even this week, God, that as we contemplate and ponder the power of your good news gospel, that it would allow strength to grow in us, God, in such a way that we would continue to have a desire to pass this on to neighbors and friends and coworkers, this city, cities in our nation, to the nations. God help it spread far and wide. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.







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