

## REMEMBERING JESUS CHRIST

**God's Word:**

*II Timothy 2: 8-15*

**Key Verse:**

“BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED TO GOD AS A WORKMAN WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED, HANDLING ACCURATELY THE WORD OF TRUTH.”

II TIMOTHY 2:15

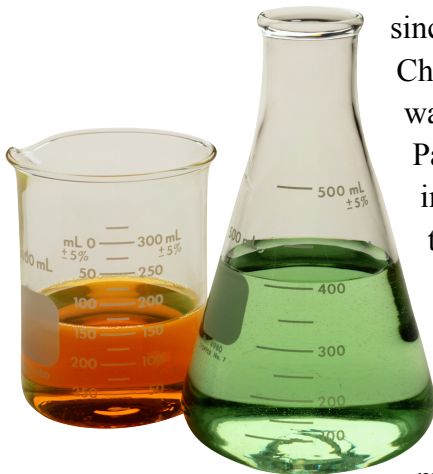
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**Breaking It Down:**

When Paul wrote the letter of II Timothy, he was being held as a prisoner in Rome. He had already had his initial hearing and was awaiting trial when he wrote this epistle (4:16). He believed the Roman authorities would execute him soon (4:6). Many things had taken place

since Rome had burned in 64 A.D. and Nero had blamed the Christians for them. It had become dangerous to be a Christian, and it was dangerous to have contact with leaders of the church such as Paul. As a result, many believers had abandoned their faith, including some of Paul's co-in their ministries. Timothy faced temptation to do the same. That is one of the reasons Paul wrote this epistle. Timothy needed to be encouraged to stay faithful to God's calling on his life, and to continue preaching the word as Paul had done, no matter what the cost.

Paul exhorts Timothy to remember Jesus Christ, including His many sufferings for the benefit of others and His triumph over death when He was resurrected. Paul also wanted Timothy to remember that Jesus was of the line of David, making Him the promised Messiah whose gospel Paul preached as His own. Paul wanted



him to remember this Jesus, whom many had rejected and taken for a madman, the same one the Jewish leaders plotted to kill because of the message He preached. It was the same Jesus whose followers Paul had persecuted, believing that by imprisoning and killing them He would put an end to Jesus' message. But everything changed for Paul when he realized his error and learned that Jesus was the true Messiah promised to Israel. Then the most zealous persecutor became the biggest advocate for Christ, willing to suffer hardship, even imprisonment as a criminal, for the love of Christ and the souls of many.

“But the word of Christ is not imprisoned,” Paul wrote in verse 9, even though he was in chains. Timothy needed to remember that the Word of God was just as powerful to change lives as ever. That was so even though its champion defender was in chains. Timothy needed to continue to proclaim the gospel, knowing there were many who needed to obtain the salvation found only in Christ. Timothy needed to continue with conviction, and in verses 11-13 Paul encourages Timothy further by citing what many believe were words from a hymn sung by the early church. This hymn is composed of four couplets, two positive and two negative. Each represents conditions that Christians will be faced with at some point in their lives. Paul says these words are true and Christians can believe them.

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### **Living It:**

The gospel of Christ did not bring Paul a life of glamour and fame. It brought him a life full of adventure and challenge, and a life marked by suffering. Today, many preachers and evangelists preach a gospel of blessings and glamour, a gospel where all of your dreams will come true and you will not have many conflicts in life. They preach a Christianity where Christ is your big brother, God the Father is a push-over, and the Holy Spirit is your favorite uncle - the one who spoils you and always bails you out of trouble. Let's get real. Are we really buying into this? If we are, then the joke is on Christ. He thought He was dying for us to be free from the bondage of sin and to be like Him, to be a group of young Christians who would be willing to stand for the truth no matter how hard and painful it would be. He thought He was dying for young Christians who would be more concerned about praising Him and sharing His message



with others than worrying about the latest fads. I'm not saying you can't dress fly, but when you make that your priority in life you need to check yourself. For you have been called to seek God's approval only, not the approval of these people who don't know right from wrong.

Paul's words still ring true; if we die with Christ, we will also live with Him. We have died symbolically in baptism and we must also die daily to sin because of our love for Him. And if we must be martyred for His glory, may God give us the strength to do so. Paul did, and many Christians around the world still die daily for the gospel. If we endure our present difficulties and trials for the sake of Christ, we will also reign with Him. Paul knew the reward of enduring for Christ was far greater than anything we might gain from quitting. That reward is that we will one day reign with Him!

But Paul warns those who deny Jesus that they themselves will be denied. There are different ways in which people can deny Christ, either by doctrine or manner of living. Someone could deny who Jesus is, deny what He has done for us, or deny what He commands us to do.

But even if we are faithless, He remains faithful. We must not deny Jesus and we must keep our commitment to Him. The Bible has been attacked more than any other book throughout history. It has been burned, banned, mocked, twisted and ignored – but the word of God stands forever. I exhort you to follow Paul's advice to Timothy. Keep focused. Don't be distracted by unprofitable things. Pay attention to your own life and ministry. Do your best to please God. Be a Christian who doesn't need to be ashamed, but one who lives and shares the message of truth correctly.

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**Understanding It:**

1. What was the environment in which Paul was living when he wrote this letter to Timothy?
  2. What was the reason Paul felt it was important to contact Timothy?
  3. Name some ways you can encourage fellow brothers and sisters when they feel discouraged?
  4. Have you ever had to give up something valuable to you for the glory of Christ?
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### **Doing It!**

This week, make it a point to speak about God and His promises for us to someone who needs encouragement. Even though Paul was in prison, he didn't stop spreading the word of God. He found it important to encourage his fellow brothers who were not in prison to not give up during difficult times. When you look at how successful Paul was in doing so, you will not be able to make an excuse why you can't do it.

