

Remembering Jesus, Trusting the Word & Sacrificing for Others

March 15, 2015

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Today we are beginning an important chapter in our communal life, my brothers and sisters. We are launching our Reaching Beyond campaign this morning, an intensive time of seeking God in his word, praying together, meeting together to discern how we can participate in the work of God here in the Taylor County area as a church family. I want to begin this morning by highlighting three very important aspects of this campaign right away to prepare you and challenge you in what's to come.

First of all, part of the strategy is making sure we as a church family are fully informed and reminded of the opportunity. We have assembled a team of volunteers ready to make a personal visit with every FBCer. That means, friends, that if you call FBC your home and we have your contact info, a fellow brother or sister will call you to meet with you. I can feel your heart racing already. "Why are they coming to see me? What are they going to ask? How long do I have to meet with them?" Great questions and let me set your mind at ease. Those meetings are meant to be warm, friendly and informative. There will be no hard sells; there will be no questions like, "So, how much do you think you can give?" They will not be asking you to give them any kind of commitment or feedback. Those visitors will be meeting with you to share the vision, to hear your thoughts, excitement or concerns; they are coming to inform you of how you can talk to a deacon. Those meeting will be a success in my mind if you end those meeting thinking, "Boy, it sure was nice spending time with Jack and Sally tonight." See these meetings as a way to interact with other brothers and sisters about the wonderful opportunity to reach out to more people in Taylor County.

So, what should you do? Be warm; be friendly and hospitable. Those visitors might be more nervous than you. They don't want to embarrass you or put you on the spot. So, be ready to put their minds at ease. Be humble; receive them in the spirit they are coming: they are coming to be a blessings.

Secondly, I want to give you this challenge: come to one prayer meeting during this campaign. Gloria E leads wonderfully warm, encouraging prayer meetings on Monday nights. We need God, friends. And God delights to give good gifts to his children. The prayers of the righteous are effective. We're hoping for faith; we're hoping for unity, for resources. So, let's ask in faith!

Don't let this pivotal moment in the life of our church go by without coming and praying with your brothers and sisters. Make a way... for your own sake and for the sake of this church family. Bring the kids if you have to; tell them about the important decisions being made and say to them, "We need to ask God for help so let's ask." If you're struggling to get on board with this, you have all the more reason to come.

Thirdly, I'm thankful that so many of you have been thinking, praying and talking about what you should do and how much God is calling you to give to this project. That's a good sign that you care. But can I challenge you not to make a final decision until you hear the counsel of God from his word? Starting this Sunday we are going to open God's perfect, inspired, profitable word and bring the *Reaching Beyond* campaign to the light of scripture. What better way to seek God's wisdom and direction together as a body than by going to the scriptures together. After that, make your final decision. How can you make a decision before you hear the word of God on the matter? Does that mean the word isn't essential for the decision? (I'm going to step on your toes right away) Pride says, "I've got this figured out; hearing God's word won't change anything for me." Friends, let's be humble and say, "You know, I've thought a lot about this; the wife and I/the husband and I have an idea of what we should do. But we need to hear God's word on the matter." That's a heart that delights our God and a heart that he gives grace and wisdom to.

So, let's dig into the scriptures: grab your Bibles and turn to 2 Timothy 2. The passage we are about to read, I believe, gives us a perfect picture of what we should do, what we should believe and what example we should follow if we want to reach beyond (REPEAT). Oh, how I pray you want to reach beyond! Grow deeper, to reach farther, to trust more radically, to live more sacrificially! Let me show you how this passage will help us (READ vs. 8-10). There are 3 parts to this little passage and they can be divided up this way. There's a command to obey; then a declaration to believe, then an example to follow (REPEAT). Let's look at these briefly.

Paul's command to Timothy is to *remember Jesus Christ*. Remember him! Don't forget him! And it's not just "remember Jesus" like "remember where you put your keys." No, remember him, meaning, "keep him before you. Don't drift away from him. Live your life with Jesus in front of your mind and heart at all times." It's the same kind of remembering we do around the Lord's Table; we're not remembering something we've forgotten; we're calling attention to Jesus again so that we don't live our lives like he does not matter. He does! Nothing matters more than Jesus so let's remember him like he does.

Being a Christian means we keep talking about the same thing; have you noticed that? Jesus. His death on the cross. His resurrection from the dead. His message. His kingdom. His Father and Spirit, who can become our Father and our Spirit, but of course, not in the same way. Most of our Christian lives aren't so much learning new information, but its about learning how to apply these glorious truths in new ways. It reminds me of what Paul said in Phil. 3:1b to the Philippians, "To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you." I'm just going to tell you the same things that I've already said. Why? Because that's what you need, I need, to be kept safe and guarded in soul.

What should Timothy (and us) remember?

- Remember he was risen from the dead. That's where God's power and Jesus' victory is most vividly seen. In his resurrection. When he stepped out of that tomb a transformed person. That's our hope, too; the resurrection power of God.
- Remember he is the offspring of David. There it is again; we looked at this in Luke (we men have recently talked about that on Thursday mornings in Romans). He's the Messiah. He's the promised King. God's people have their eternal ruler. There's no need to keep looking for someone else.
- "Remember that this is what I preached to you," Paul says. Timothy is supposed hear in that, "Timothy, I'm not telling you anything new. You know this." I pray you know this, FBC. And I'm confident you do.

But, then he says, "for which, I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal." It's pretty discouraging to be considered a criminal when you are not one. But why bring it up? Is it to get a little pity from Timothy? I don't think so. Instead, his example serves as a warning to Timothy. "Be prepared, Timothy. You will be challenged, too. Your faith will be stretched, too." He reminds Timothy to endure in vs. 12. In vs. 14 Paul tells him how to endure hardships. It's meant to wake Timothy up to the reality of the challenges in front of him.

FBC, we need to remember Christ, too - in fact, its the first thing we need to be doing. I'm wondering as you've processed and prepared for this *Reaching Beyond* campaign what challenges have you encountered. Maybe you've had disagreements with your spouse or friends as to what to give or how to serve. Maybe you've been confused as to what to do. This command is a great place to start, "Remember Jesus Christ." Keep him in front of your minds. Recall his grace and mercy. Recite his truth. 1 Cor. 1 tells us that Christ is our wisdom; that means we will learn what to do, when and how to do it the more and better we know Christ. We're starting a journey together; you can't go wrong by remembering Christ. It will guide you when you make tough decisions. Remembering Christ will help you when there is disagreement. Remembering Christ will help you get your eyes off of the puny, temporal, fleeting treasures of the world and help you see the treasures of God. Remember Jesus Christ, FBC.

The next thing that happens is that Paul makes a declaration to believe. Look at the end of vs. 9, "But the word of God is not bound!" He's in prison. If he's in imprison, maybe God's plan won't come to pass? Maybe God's enemies have found a way to stop the spread of the gospel? What does Paul think of that? No, word of God can not be imprisoned or bound. It's hard to see this in the English, but Paul is making a very emphatic contrast. "I'm bound; but, Timothy, the word of God is not (exclamation point)!"

Notice how there is no question about this in Paul's mind. He's not saying, "I sure hope the word isn't bound like I am." NO! It isn't bound! No matter what they do to me and you, no matter what regulation on religious speech a government may enforce, no matter the pressure from secular voices or violence by God's enemies, the Word of God is not bound; it can't be stopped! There's a triumphant tone to Paul's statement.

FBC, believe that the word of God is not bound. These declarations in the Bible are put forward to us to believe in them. So believe! Have confidence in this. Listen to Isa. 55:10-11, "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

Have this confidence, FBC. Know the power of God's word! Know that as you speak it, read it, proclaim it, memorize it and share it with children at Awana, teens at the youth center, mom's struggling at M&M's, as you pass on a word of encouragement to your unchurched neighbor, as it's preached here on Sunday mornings to more and more people, God will move with power. It will accomplish the glorious purpose for which God is sending it out.

Why does Paul tell Timothy that the Word of God is not bound? We learn why in vs. 10; look at verse 10 (READ). Now, before I make a big deal about the connection between vs. 9 and 10, look at what Paul is saying in vs. 10. He's saying, "Timothy, look at the great sacrifice I am making. Look at all that I am willing to endure for the sake of the elect; for the sake of the one's God has purchased by the precious blood of Jesus; for the sake of the one's who will believe (I don't know who those people are... but they are out there). And when they believe they will obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. I love that... the salvation that is in Christ comes with eternal glory. Forever and ever we will rejoice and be glad.

Did you all see the video of the dad who made his house an enormous ball pit for his kids? Check this out (VID). I'm guessing those kids couldn't wipe their smiles off their faces. Friends, that's just a small, pathetic picture of eternal glory; with God in heaven we won't be able to stop being happy and joyful and at peace in our salvation like those kids pumped up for all that fun. And Paul is saying, "I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." I want them to know what it's like to bounce in the eternal ball pit in the sky forever.

This is the example to follow. Enduring everything for the sake of others obtaining the salvation of their souls in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. And why would Paul do that? Why is that the life he is choosing to live? Because the word of God is not bound. Look at the first word in vs. 10; therefore. That's the connection between vs. 9 and 10; because the word of God is not bound, Paul endures everything for others salvation.

Friends, God's word is no different today than it was 2000 years ago for Paul. It still is unbound; it still can not be stopped. That means it begs for the same sacrifices that Paul made. Friends, are you willing to endure everything for the sake of those yet to be saved? Will you give up your time on a Wednesday night to share this unbounded word to kids or

teens? Will you exchange your passion for fishing, or hunting, for basketball or volleyball so you can be passionate about others knowing Jesus Christ? And yes, will you give up money - money to buy a nicer car, money to go on a vacation, money to retire early, money you're saving for a bigger home - so people can enjoy the eternal glory of knowing Christ Jesus?

(PIC) Put a face on those silhouettes. They are faceless because we're not sure who they are. But put your neighbors face. Put the face of some kids who live down the street. Put your co-workers face and his family on that silhouette. What if the unbounded word found them through the ministries of FBC? That's why Paul endured it all; what will we endure?

Maybe you're like me; maybe you're thinking, "I want to be that. But I'm having a hard time getting there." Our passage tells us what to do. First, Remember Jesus Christ. Keep recalling him to mind. Remember his grace for you; remember his mercy for you. Remember how he doesn't treat you like your sins deserve. Your heart will begin to change when you do. Secondly, believe that the word can not be bound. Believe it can't be stopped. Believe that when we sow the word of God as a church family, God will bring forth new life. When you do those two things, you'll begin following the example of Paul.

Small Group Questions
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Discussion Leaders - Thanks for serving. Here's a very rough outline of what the meetings could consist of

- *informal fellowship/conversation*
- *open with prayer*
- *discuss sermon questions*
- *close with prayer requests and prayer*
 - *Food could be before, during or after*

Questions

1. READ 2 Timothy 2:8-10 together as a group to be reminded of the sermon text
2. The command to obey was *remember Jesus Christ*. What about that this command has stuck with you today? Why do you think it's important to remember Jesus?
3. If we're told to "remember Jesus Christ" why are we prone to "forgetting" (we must be or we wouldn't be told to do it all the time)? What is it 1) about us, 2) our world, 3) our adversary that makes us forget Jesus?
4. How can remembering Jesus Christ help us as a church as we focus on our *Reaching Beyond* campaign?
5. The declaration to believe was *the word of God is not bound*. Why are we tempted to think the word is bound? What do we see with our eyes that causes us to doubt what we see in the pages of scripture?
6. What actions steps or behaviors would we have (both individually & corporately) if we were utterly convinced the word of God is not bound? What actions steps or behaviors would we have if we believed the word could be stopped?
7. The example to follow is Paul's from vs. 10; what is that example?
8. What's the final goal Paul is seeking by his example?
9. Is that goal worth the sacrifice?

10. So, why are we reluctant to make the sacrifice that Paul made?

11. What's one thing you'd like to ask God to change in you based on 2 Tim. 2:8-10?