

## SATURDAY, MARCH 17

2 TIMOTHY 1:8B-9

Timothy and Paul are deeply connected. They worked together. Paul sent Timothy into difficult situations to be a voice for Christ inside of chaos and division. Timothy was not weak. Paul's words to Timothy are not easy words to give or to hear.

Paul is inviting Timothy into suffering. Paul writes to Timothy from a prison in Rome. The ministry of Paul has never been easy. He suffered beatings, imprisonment, abandonment, conflict, and efforts to discredit his witness. He would die without ceremony, most likely in Rome. Yet Paul considers all of this suffering worth it. The Gospel is worth any and all suffering that might come. God's work and God's glory cannot be taken away. In fact, how followers of Christ face suffering speaks loudly about the God they serve. Paul's words to Timothy are encouraging. The Gospel is worth it. God is worth it. Keep going. Keep living. Keep spreading the message of Christ. This holy calling is worth whatever suffering and pain may come.

So how do Paul and Timothy endure? They understand that God and his work are greater than themselves. They choose to trust God and rely on him in all situations. There is power in this trust. It causes Paul and Timothy to be different, to be set apart, and to live lives of significance. God saves us. God calls us. God gives grace and purpose to us. Timothy needs this encouragement. Sometimes relying on the power of God feels risky. It means that we set aside our own ability to control things and trust in his. The courage and strength of Christ overcomes our fear. We live knowing that our God is greater than: greater than suffering, greater than loss, greater than abandonment, greater than those who would discredit us.

How do people embrace the humility that guides us to grace, strength, and courage? Perhaps it is a question of weight and value. Do we give more weight and value to our sense of safety, control, and knowledge than we give to the calling and power of God? What if playing it safe was not the most godly or holy action? How often do our personal wants or perceived needs trump God's will for our lives? In other words, how willing are we to abandon the way of Christ in favor of personal safety, stability, wealth, or preference?

When we see life as a calling from the Lord that is understood through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, we can endure and thrive. If it is not all about us, then we can see God at work in all things. Paul encourages Timothy to keep going. We are encouraged to do the same. Let us be true to God's calling and see where the Lord will lead.