

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, August 23, 2023 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



**Endurance**  
*2 Timothy 2:8-13*

*“<sup>8</sup> Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, <sup>9</sup> for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. <sup>11</sup> This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. <sup>12</sup> If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. <sup>13</sup> If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” -2 Timothy 2:8-13 (NKJV)*

## Some Key Date in Paul’s Challenging Life:

- [c. A.D. 52-57]- Paul takes his third mission trip and spends three years in Ephesus
- [c. A.D. 58]—Paul was apparently arrested in Jerusalem
- [c. A.D. 61]—This is the approximate time that Paul arrived in Rome. He had spent these three years in prison, going from one trial to another before different Roman rulers
- [c. A.D. 61–62]—Paul underwent his first Roman imprisonment. We do not have this recorded in the Book of Acts, which breaks off at the very beginning of Paul’s first Roman imprisonment
- [c. A.D. 62–63]—Paul was released from prison, and during this period he covered a great deal of territory. It was during this time that he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus from Macedonia
- [c. A.D. 63-64]—Paul was arrested again. Before his death he wrote 2 Timothy
- [c. A.D. 64-67]—Paul was beheaded in Rome.

For some 2 Timothy may nothing more than a continuation where 1 Timothy leaves off. But as you can see, it is so much more. The book is the Apostle Paul’s “Swan Song,” his warning shot, his encouragement in the face of great opposition and obstacle. It is so practical and

relevant for 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians and the church... a needed word for what we face in our day.

### **Fast Facts 2 Timothy**

- (1) **Author: Paul**
- (2) **Recipient: Timothy**
- (3) **Date: AD 64-67**
- (4) **Place: Written from a prison cell in Rome**
- (5) **Destination: Ephesus (*Timothy was pastor of the church at Ephesus*)**
- (6) **Incident: Paul's imprisonment and pending death**
- (7) **Purpose: To encourage Timothy in the face of persecution and apostasy**

### **Some Key Characteristics of 2 Timothy:**

- (1) **2 Timothy is Paul's last will and testimony** – In our study we are referring to it as Paul's "Swan Song." The deathbed statement of any individual has an importance which is not attached to other remarks. This is what lends significance to 2 Timothy. It is the final communication of Paul. It has a note of sadness which is not detected in his other epistles. Nevertheless, there is the overtone of triumph... *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,"* written by Paul as his own epitaph (2 Tim. 4:7). Also, because this was his last letter, Paul was very personal. In these four short chapters, there are approximately twenty-five references to individuals.
- (2) **2 Timothy is Paul's warning of coming times of apostasy** - In this little book of 2 Timothy an ominous dark cloud is seen on the horizon. It is the coming apostasy. Today apostasy has broken like a storm, like a Texas tornado, on the world and in the church. What do we mean by apostasy? Webster defines apostasy as "total desertion of the principles of faith." So apostasy is not due to ignorance; it is a heresy. Apostasy is deliberate error. It is intentional departure from the faith. An apostate is one who knows the truths of the gospel and the doctrines of the faith, but has repudiated them.
- (3) **2 Timothy speaks of the ultimate outcome of gospel preaching** - The final fruition will not be the total conversion of mankind, nor will it usher in the Millennium. On the contrary, some will believe and for some there will come about a great turning away, not unlike what we are seeing today... even a watering down, compromise, and total perversion of the gospel. Don't think that what we see going on today has caught God off guard. God wrote about it and warned us about in 2 Timothy.

The Christian life is not a 100-yard dash; it's a marathon. It's easy to begin a marathon well and it's not too difficult to run a few miles. The test comes over the long haul. Will you endure to the finish? In the Christian race, will you be faithful through all of the hardships, the pangs of this life, the hurdles and obstacles that come your way, even unto death?

Hebrews 12:1-3, “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,<sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.<sup>3</sup> For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”

- According to verse one what serves as a catalyst for our endurance in the race of life set before us? *(That great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us)* How? And who is that?
- What is verse 2 likely telling us as believers about what we are called to endure in this life when it says Jesus is “the author and finisher of our faith”? *(He is in control, and nothing we go through in this life as believers is beyond his authorship and finished plan in our life)* How does that make you feel? What is worrisome about that? What is freeing about that?
- How does this help us endure?
- In the context of verse 3 considering how does what Jesus endured inspire our own endurance? From what? *(He endured great hostility against himself for doing nothing wrong in Himself, He endured out of love for us... what He endured inspires us to endure what we are likely worthy of out of great love for Him and what He has done for us)*
- What does our failure to “endure” as believers cause in our lives? *(weariness and discouragement)* In what ways do you think?

Listen to this statements (quote) from one of my favorites, Oswald Chambers, in “My Utmost for His Highest,” and see if he his words don’t somehow resonate with us... think about what he is saying here:

“Perseverance means more than endurance— more than simply holding on until the end. A saint’s life is in the hands of God like a bow and arrow in the hands of an archer. God is aiming at something the saint cannot see, but our Lord continues to stretch and strain, and every once in a while the saint says, ‘I can’t take any more.’ Yet God pays no attention; He goes on stretching until His purpose is in sight, and then He lets the arrow fly. Entrust yourself to God’s hands. Is there something in your life for which you need perseverance right now? Maintain your intimate relationship with Jesus Christ through the perseverance of faith. Proclaim as Job did, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him’ (Job 13:15).”

- What is the difference between “perseverance” and “endurance” according to this statement from Oswald Chambers?
- What might Chambers have in mind when he says our lives as believers is like a “bow and arrow” in the hands of God? How are we like a bow and arrow?

- *What is he saying concerning what it takes to launch an arrow with its greatest strength and to its ultimate speed and power for most effectiveness? What does this say about our own endurance with what we may go through in this life?*
- *How is Chambers tying this to Job's words, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him?" What does this mean for us and our own endurance in this life?*

Every Christian wants to be able to say with the apostle Paul, as he thought about his own death in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." While God promises that He will keep all that He saves, the process is not automatic. We must endure hardship as good soldiers, disciplined athletes, and hard working farmers as we saw last time in 2 Timothy 2:3-7.

Paul is exhorting Timothy to embrace hardship for the sake of the gospel in 2 Timothy 1:8, "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God." And again in 2 Timothy 2:3, "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

In Paul's letter to Timothy it seems to be a repeated theme, encouraging Timothy to "endure."

*Why do we find it so hard to endure then things get tough?*

*What things seem to wear our endurance down?*

*How are some things that enable us (or helps us) to endure?*

*What are some helps that God give us in His word that may increase our endurance?*

Our hearts cry, *How long, O Lord?* And we wait. We labor. We groan as the creation groans to see its brokenness made new and beautiful. We yearn in our earthly tents for solid, eternal buildings. As a pregnant mother in labor and travail longs to hold her child, we long to see the guaranteed result of our endurance. And sometimes in our suffering, we wonder if we will in fact endure... if we will make it through. How can we press on as we traverse this broken world? It seems that Paul is not the only one that takes up the subject of a Christian's endurance. In his letter, James encourages us with at least four sources of endurance.

#### **4 Sources of Endurance:**

- (1) **You can endure because God will use your suffering** – Remember James's words in James 1:2-4, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." We do not count trials as joyous,

just as a mother does not call the pain of labor and delivery pleasant. Rather, we count what God is doing in and through those trials as joyous. And what is He doing? Increasing our faith. Making us like Himself. Teaching us Christlikeness. Molding us into spiritual maturity. We can count trials as “all joy” because trials train us in godliness. Unless there is the travail and labor of childbirth, there is no baby; unless there are trials to test and train our faith, there is no faithfulness and little fruit. We can endure because our suffering isn’t useless, and our God is at work in the midst of it.

- (2) **You can endure because God will end your suffering** – James writes in James 1:12, *“<sup>12</sup> Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”*

Many trials don’t feel light and momentary, but Scripture says that’s exactly what they are. Listen to Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 4:17, *“<sup>17</sup> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”* The grand scheme of God’s purposes will far outweigh our suffering and eventually overwhelm it. Know this: Your suffering, whatever that is, comes with an expiration date. Listen, your suffering will end—your God will see to it. We don’t know His timing or His means, or even grasp all His purposes in bringing us through the fire right now. But we do know His promise in Revelation 21:4, *“<sup>4</sup> And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”*

Know this: Your suffering comes with an expiration date. It won’t last forever. And this promise gives us hope to press on.

- (3) **You can endure because God will reveal Himself to you in your suffering** – James 5:11 says, *“<sup>11</sup> Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.”* Our greatest gain—above even the removal of our suffering and perfect blessedness in glory—is Christ. He is our aim, our goal, the joy set before us. We will endure as we fix our eyes on Him and seek Him in the midst of our trials; and He is gracious to use these trials to reveal Himself to us. Why does James mention Job at the end of his letter? Job endured horrific suffering with steadfastness, and the Lord used all of it to reveal himself to Job as a compassionate and merciful Redeemer. Listen to Job 19:25, *“<sup>25</sup> For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth.”* If Job had known less of pain and trials, he would have known less of his Savior.

When we are desperate, we are more likely to turn to the Lord. When we come to Him, He will minister to us from His infinite stores of love and grace. And we will come to know Him in new and deeper ways.

**(4) You can endure because God will receive you in your suffering** – Listen, to Job 1:20-22, *“<sup>20</sup> Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. <sup>21</sup> And he said: ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.’ <sup>22</sup> In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.”*

Think of this... few pregnant women decide to remain stoic, quite, and passive when they are in full-on labor. No, as a woman labors and feels pain, she expresses her groaning and cries out for deliverance. Similarly, as we endure suffering, we can bring our cries and pleas, lament and grief, to the God who can handle it all. If Job had known less of pain and trials, he would have known less of his Savior. Job endured his suffering by tearing his clothes, sitting in the dust, even asking God many questions—and Scripture is clear that he did not sin. As you endure trials, bring your cries and cares to the Man of Sorrows who knows and understands, since he endured the most horrible suffering in your place. Lament isn’t wrong. Even Jesus wept, and he will receive you in your tears.

We press on toward this beautiful end in steadfast endurance—toward Jesus, the Son of Righteousness, in all his majesty and beauty.

Now think of Timothy was under pressure to compromise the gospel.

- His timid personality shied away from conflict and controversy.
- Many were turning against the imprisoned apostle and at the same time, abandoning the gospel that he preached (2 Timothy 1:15 and 2 Timothy 2:17-18).
- So Paul is exhorting Timothy to persevere.
- He is showing him how to endure when he feels tempted to drop out.

In our text, he adds three more illustrations of how suffering hardship for the gospel now results in eternal glory. Jesus Christ died, but He is risen forever (2:8). Paul himself is imprisoned and facing death, but he endures for the sake of God’s elect, so that they may obtain salvation and eternal glory (2:9-10). Third, Paul cites a hymn from the early church (2:11-13), which makes the point that faithfulness now results in future glory with Jesus Christ, because God’s promises are trustworthy.

In these verses we are looking at this evening in Paul’s second letter to Timothy , Paul reveals four strategies for enduring to the end of the marathon:

***To endure hardship, remember: Jesus Christ the risen Savior; that His Word is powerful; that God’s sovereign purpose in saving His elect will succeed; and that His promises are trustworthy.***

#### **4 Strategies for Christians to Endure to the End:**

- (1) To endure hardship, remember **Jesus Christ**, our **Risen Savior**
- (2) To endure hardship, remember that **God's Word is powerful**
- (3) To endure hardship, remember that **God's sovereign purpose** in saving us will surely **succeed**
- (4) To endure hardship, remember that God's **promises** are **trustworthy**

Let's look at each of these...

*"<sup>8</sup> Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, <sup>9</sup> for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. <sup>11</sup> This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. <sup>12</sup> If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. <sup>13</sup> If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself." -2 Timothy 2:8-13 (NKJV)*

#### **TO ENDURE HARDSHIP, REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST, OUR RISEN SAVIOR (2 Timothy 2:8)**

It seems odd for the apostle to write to his younger pastor friend these words in verse 8 of our passage (1 Timothy 2:8), *"<sup>8</sup> Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel."* Do you think that Timothy was really in danger of forgetting Him? This sounds like something you might write to a new believer, but not to a man who has some years under his belt as a pastor!

Why would Paul say this to Timothy?

Keep in mind Paul's counsel one verse earlier in 2 Timothy 2:7, *"<sup>7</sup> Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things."* We have to think about these matters, leaning on the Lord for understanding. Verse 8 gives us some clues as to why Paul tells Timothy to remember Jesus Christ.

#### **4 Clues to Note - Why Paul Tells Timothy to Remember Jesus Christ:**

- (1) **The word order** - First, notice the word order, *"Jesus Christ."* So far, Paul has referred to the Lord as Christ Jesus six times (1:1, 2, 9, 13; 2:1, 3). He will go on to refer to Him as Christ Jesus four more times (2:10; 3:12, 15; 4:1). But in 2 Timothy 2:8 alone, he reverses it to "Jesus Christ."

Surely there must be a reason. I believe that he is calling attention to the humanity of our Lord, born as the man Jesus, who suffered and died on the cross for our sins.

As Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36), <sup>36</sup> *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*

So, Paul is making the point that because Jesus in His humanity suffered shame and death on a cross for our sins, God highly exalted Him (Phil. 2:8-11). His point is the same as Hebrews 12:3 that we looked at earlier, *“For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”*

- (2) **The verb tense** - A second clue that helps us understand why Paul tells Timothy to remember Jesus Christ is in the words, *“risen from the dead.”* The verb tense of these words means, *“He was raised from the dead in the past and He continues now as the risen One.”* Jesus’ resurrection is the main support of the gospel. Paul says that if Christ is not risen, our faith is worthless (1 Cor. 15:14, 17). *Everything* hangs on the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. As the risen Savior, He also promises to give us the victory over the grave. So even if we suffer and die for the sake of the gospel, “Jesus Christ, risen from the dead,” is the grounds for our hope. Be steadfast! Endure!
- (3) **An unusual phrase** - A third clue is in the phrase, *“seed of David”* or *“descendant of David.”* Why does Paul use this unusual phrase here (used elsewhere only in Romans 1:3, <sup>3</sup> *Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who <sup>[w]</sup>was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.”*)? This unusual phrase validates Jesus historically as the Messiah or Christ, who was promised to be of the seed of David. And it shows that He will return as the conquering King who will reign on David’s throne, ruling the nations with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9). So the application for Timothy and us is, when you go through suffering now as a Christian, remember Jesus Christ, descendant of David in fulfillment of God’s promise, who is coming back to reign as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Endure hardship for the gospel now so that you will be on His side when He returns.
- (4) **The last phrase** - The final clue is in the last phrase, *“according to my gospel.”* That does not mean that Paul invented the gospel, but rather that the gospel was revealed directly to Paul from the risen Lord Jesus and entrusted to him as the treasure (“good deposit,” 1:14), which he had to guard. The crucified, risen Lord Jesus Christ is at the heart of the gospel. Note also that Paul viewed the gospel as his personal treasure. He was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent aggressor (1 Tim. 1:13), but God in His great mercy laid hold of Paul through the good news that *“Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all”* as Paul put it in 1 Timothy 1:15.

If you want to endure to the end of the marathon, to stand firm for the truth through hardship and even persecution, you must be able to say with Paul, “my gospel.” God saved me from



my sins by His abundant grace. To endure hardship, *“<sup>8</sup> Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.”* (2:8).

## **TO ENDURE HARDSHIP, REMEMBER THAT GOD’S WORD IS POWERFUL (2 Timothy 2:9)**

Notice **verse 9** of our passage (2 Timothy 2:9), *“<sup>9</sup> For which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.”*

Paul’s gospel was the reason that he suffered *“... trouble (hardship) as an evildoer, even to the point of chains...”* Then he adds the triumphant note, *“... but the word of God is not chained.”* The word in my Bible (NKJV) as **“evildoer”**, is translated in more modern translations (NIV) as **“criminal”**... this Greek word word used elsewhere only of the two **thieves on the cross** (Luke 23:32, 33) Paul didn’t deserve to be treated that way. He had been arrested on trumped up charges, made no doubt by enemies of the gospel. He was being held in a filthy dungeon, chained to a guard day and night. It wasn’t fair. But, rather than complain, Paul rejoiced in the fact that no one can imprison the power of God’s Word. With **➔ Martin Luther**, the great reformer, Paul could have sung, *“Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; the body they may kill, God’s truth abideth still; His kingdom is forever.”*

Often God puts us in difficult trials for the very reason that He wants the power of the gospel to shine through our joy in Him in circumstances where the world can only complain. Maybe you are imprisoned in a hospital or in a body that is sick and dying. If you grumble and complain, you’re missing the opportunity for the power of the gospel to shine through your life. But if, through the pain and the tears, the joy of the Lord shines forth, the same powerful gospel that saved you may transform others. So to endure hardship, remember the power of God’s Word!

Listen to **Psalm 19:7-11** and what it has to say about the Word of God, *“<sup>7</sup> The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; <sup>8</sup> The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; <sup>9</sup> The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. <sup>10</sup> More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. <sup>11</sup> Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.”*

The words “law,” “testimony,” “statutes,” “commandment,” “judgments,” are all referring to the Word of God. Notice how the Psalmist here picture for us the help we receive for endurance in this life from the power of God’s Word...

### **The Power of God’s Word to Help Us Endure:**

- (1) The Word of God converts the soul giving us hope (v.7)**
- (2) The Word of God give us a surety when life feels so unsure (v.7)**
- (3) The Word of God gives us wisdom in the face of challenges (v.7)**

- (4) The Word of God gives us truth in the face of lies that defeat us (v.8)
- (5) The Word of God gives us joy in the face of our struggles (v.8)
- (6) The Word of God purifies and enlightens our perspective (v.8)
- (7) The Word of God is right and true when we face trials (v.9)
- (8) The Word of God is like a sweetener to the hardships of life (v.10) – It comforts, heals, soothes, with its words of promise and help.
- (9) The Word of God prepares us so we are not taken unaware (v.11)
- (10) The Word of God promises reward when we endure to the end (v.11)

**TO ENDURE HARDSHIP, REMEMBER THAT GOD’S SOVEREIGN PURPOSE IN SAVING HIS ELECT (*THOSE STILL TO BE SAVED*) WILL SURELY SUCCEED (2 Timothy 2:10)**

Paul explains in 2 Timothy 2:10, *“<sup>10</sup>Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”* Paul means that through his sufferings in preaching the gospel, God’s elect (the saved) would come to salvation and inherit the eternal glory that is in Christ Jesus. That is that those who are still to hear the gospel will hear it... Paul was concerned that nothing should hinder the gospel of salvation and he was motivated to “endure all things” so that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation might come to all. The term “elect” is off-putting to some and may cause a deep dive down a rabbit hole of topics such as “the doctrine of election,” “predestination,” “the foreknowledge of God,” and more. Such doesn’t need to be the case here. Whatever you may believe about election and predestination it seems rather clear that Paul saw those who were still to be saved through Jesus Christ as motive for him to endure whatever suffering came his way for the advancement of the gospel.

Many Christians get nervous when they hear the word “elect” and try to minimize or explain away its plain meaning. If you do that, you will miss a key truth in understanding your salvation and a key component that you need to endure hardship for the sake of the gospel. Don’t dodge the doctrine of election by saying, “That’s just Calvinism!” Or some will say, “I don’t believe in the doctrine of election!” Or “I don’t believe in ‘predestination’... I don’t believe in ‘foreknowledge’!” The problem with that is that you have to believe something about it because it’s in the Bible. You can’t just dismiss it, like you are picking and choosing what to believe and what to pay attention to in the Bible. You have to believe something about it. It’s just “laziness” and a lack of discipline to now delve into it and with the Holy Spirit direction get an understanding of what Scripture is teaching us.

What you need to ask is, “Is it taught in the Bible?” Paul easily could have said here, “I do all things for the sake of those who will believe,” but he did not. If you believe that the very words of Scripture are inspired, you’ve got to grapple with why he said *“the elect.”* *“<sup>10</sup>Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”* As believers, we have to submit to what Scripture says.

The “doctrine of election” is a whole study in itself and there is no way we can do a thorough deep dive into the subject in this study, but we do need to dig a bit to understand Paul’s words here to Timothy... Paul said “... *I endure all things for the sake of the elect...*” What or what are the “*elect?*”

Simply put, the “*elect of God*” are those whom God has predestined to salvation.

***Elect of God = Those whom God has predestined to salvation***

This primary meaning sometimes passes into that of "eminent," "valuable," "choice"; often thus as a fact, in places where the King James Version uses "chosen" (or "elect") to translate the original (*that is not the controversial part*)

- ***They are called the “elect” because that word denotes “determining beforehand”***
- ***It denotes “ordaining”***
- ***It denotes “deciding ahead of time”***
- ***Example: Every four years in the U.S., we “elect” a President—i.e., we choose who will serve in that office.***
- ***The same goes for God and those who will be saved; God chooses those who will be saved.***
- ***These are the elect of God.***

As it stands, the concept of God electing those who will be saved (predestination) isn’t controversial. It is a Biblical truth...

**3 Important Verses:**

- (1) **John 6:44** – “<sup>44</sup> *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*”
- (2) **Romans 8:28-30** – “<sup>28</sup> *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*”
- (3) **Ephesians 1:4-5** – “<sup>4</sup> *Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, <sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.*”

\*Now those verses certainly give us a lot to think about, prayer about, seek with the Holy Spirit to interpret correctly... we must handle them correctly. The controversy come in how we interpret them

What is controversial is how and in what manner God chooses those who will be saved. Throughout church history, there have been two main views on the doctrine of election.

### **Two 2 Main View of the Doctrine of Election:**

- (1) **The Prescient View** – Also sometimes called “The Foreknowledge View.” This view teaches that God, through His omniscience, knows ultimately those who will be saved... that God knows those who will in the course of time choose of their own free will to place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation. On the basis of this divine foreknowledge, God elects these individuals “*before the foundation of the world*” (Ephesians 1:4). This view sees “predestination” and “foreknowledge” as God’s sovereign ability to know those who will be saved and those who will not. And we know that God is “all-knowing” (Omniscience) so we don’t generally have a problem believe that God knows ultimately.
- (2) **The Augustinian View** - The second main view is the Augustinian view, which essentially teaches that God not only divinely elects those who will have faith in Jesus Christ, but also divinely elects to grant to these individuals the faith to believe in Christ. In other words, God’s election unto salvation is not based on a foreknowledge of an individual’s faith, but is based on the free, sovereign grace of Almighty God.

*\*Note that both of these views have their problems and neither seem fully capable of adequately answering the questions of election and predestination. I think it is best to see these doctrines and teaching as connected to the Sovereignty of God and His absolute attributes such as His omniscience (all-knowing), and not impose questions that the doctrines themselves don’t attempt to answer on them (these deal with the complete sovereignty of God and not issues of man’s part in salvation)*

To endure hardship, remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead; that God’s Word is powerful; and, that God’s sovereign purpose in saving His elect will surely succeed. Finally,

### **TO ENDURE HARDSHIP, REMEMBER THAT GOD’S PROMISES ARE TRUSTWORTHY (2 Timothy 2:11-13)**

Notice verses 11-13, “<sup>11</sup> *This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. <sup>12</sup> If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. <sup>13</sup> If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*” Paul cites the words of a familiar hymn to remind Timothy that God’s promises are trustworthy and will not fail. He introduces it as a trustworthy statement (there are four others in the Pastoral Epistles: 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; Titus 3:8). He probably breaks into the middle of the hymn, so that the opening word (“for”) refers back to earlier words that we do not know. It consists of four “if” clauses, followed by their consequences. The first two refer to those who are faithful. They attain to life and reigning with Christ. The last two refer to those who deny Christ or

are faithless, and the consequences. The overall point reinforces what Paul has been saying, that if we endure hardship with Christ now, we will experience glory with Him in eternity.

There are a couple of interpretive difficulties in the hymn. Some take “if we died with Him, we also will live with Him” to refer to the truth of our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, as Paul sets forth in Romans 6. The language is similar, but it seems foreign to the context. The verb (Greek aorist) may also be translated, “if we die with Him,” meaning, “if we die a martyr’s death, we will also live with Him eternally.” If that is the meaning, the hymn would have been an encouragement to those who were suffering persecution for the gospel.

The other interpretive problem is in the last line. Some understand verses 12 & 13 to be parallel, thus taking verse 13 to mean, “if we are faithless, He remains faithful to His threat to punish all unbelief.” In favor of that view is the parallelism and the present tense of the verb, “are faithless.” But, it seems to me to go against the concept of God’s faithfulness. His faithfulness is always mentioned to give encouragement to discouraged saints, not to warn unbelievers of His judgments.

Thus I prefer to understand the first line of the hymn to be connected by way of contrast to the third line, and the second line to contrast with the fourth line. The first and third lines then mean, “If we hold fast our confession faithfully unto death, we will live eternally in heaven with Him, but if we deny Him, He will deny us before the Father” (as Jesus warned, Matt. 10:33). The second and fourth lines contrast to mean, “If we endure hardship with Him now, we will be rewarded by reigning with Him in heaven. But if we are faithless by not enduring hardship, we will lose rewards, but because of His faithfulness to His covenant, we will still be saved, for He cannot deny Himself.”

Thus I would fit Judas Iscariot under line 3, as one who finally denied Christ and was lost. I would fit Peter under line 4, as one of God’s elect who momentarily was faithless, but he repented and was restored. So when we fail, we should confess our sins, knowing that He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Our salvation ultimately rests on God’s faithfulness and grace, not on our perfect record.

## **CONCLUSION**

Several years ago, Bible translators Bruce and Jan Benson and their 14-year-old son were driving down a mountainside in the Peruvian Andes. As they came around a switchback, they came bumper to bumper with a truckload of terrorist rebels known as The Shining Path. Men jumped out of the truck brandishing automatic rifles, surrounded the Benson’s car, and ordered them to get out. Jan thought, “This is it! This is the end of our lives.”

The terrorists took them to a nearby town. On the way, fearful and bewildered, Jan felt the need to pray and then to sing. She said, “It began as a trickle, a presence that said, ‘The Lord

inhabits the praises of His people.” She protested, “But Lord, I don’t know how to praise You right now.” “Sing,” came the answer. “At least you can sing.” So she began to sing the great hymn, “You Are My Hiding Place”... “You are my hiding place. You always fill my heart with songs of deliverance. Whenever I am afraid I will trust in You.” Other songs also flowed. Suddenly, she felt as though she was the only person alive on earth, just her and God. She felt His all-encompassing love and His assurance that He was in control. Nothing, not even death, could remove her from His presence.

That night the rebels unexpectedly released the Bensons, but they confiscated their car, their portable projection equipment and film reels of the “New Media Bible” from Luke, the same film material that makes up the Jesus film.

One year later, the Bensons were living in the capital for safety. Jan received a phone call. One of their captors had become a Christian and wanted to meet with them. When they met, he told them that he was an experienced killer and that he and the others had planned to kill them that night. But, for some reason they just could not do it and released them instead. Then, the rebels set up the projector and watched the film, eventually many times. At one viewing, several hundred rebels were watching and listening to God’s Word in their own language. Many were so moved that they wanted to lay down their weapons right there and leave The Shining Path. Standing before them as a fellow believer, their former enemy said to them, “Please forgive me for my part in what we did to you that day.” The Bensons were able to go back to that village and finish the translation of the New Testament into that language.

God’s witnesses may be imprisoned, but His Word cannot be imprisoned. The gospel *“is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes”* (Rom. 1:16).

- To endure hardship, remember Jesus Christ, the risen Savior.
- Remember that His Word is powerful
- That His sovereign purpose in saving His elect will succeed
- And remember that His promises are trustworthy