

- *Where does the strength to be strong in the face of opposition and hardship come from? From Jesus Christ, his grace, our soldierly service of him, the prize before us (from him), ultimately from his death, resurrection and exaltation.*

## Introduction

- Largely a continuation of theme from chapter 1 - hang in there, keep going
  - how is Timothy to do that?
  - that's where Paul starts in v.1...

## Be strong - in grace (v.1)

- He's to be strong
- But **not in his own strength**
  - this is a passage about enduring in the face of hardship, and its important where the strength comes from
  - I don't have good upper body strength...
  - can do a few press-ups... but quickly tire!
  - spiritually, the reality is we're all like that - and if we try and do anything in our own strength, we may appear to succeed for a short while... but it won't have the power and effectiveness it would have had we been working in God's strength
- We are not to trust our natural ability, but always look to God for effectiveness:
  - whether in personal holiness...
  - whatever needs we come across, physical, emotional, spiritual...
  - obvious service (Summer Focus, or FI Cafe, or BodyBuilders, or GB...)
  - daily life - kids, parents, jobs, friendships...

## Entrust to reliable men (v.2)

- Can't just hoard!
  - instruction is for Timothy, but he can't implement it on his own!
  - he needs some **reliable men...**
  - are you a **reliable person** who is growing in their own appreciation of and living out of the Gospel?
  - Paul is encouraging Timothy to do what he, Paul has done with Timothy - entrust and give responsibility...
  - (this is part of keeping going - not assuming its all down to us, but sharing the vision (not just the task...))

## Soldier, Athlete, Farmer (v.3-7)

- Three ancient world images of perseverance and endurance:
  - soldier - single minded-ness - our prime concern is pleasing Jesus...
  - athlete - focus is on the preparation, the training - the rules here probably refers to the requirement to be in training for 10 months before entering the ancient Olympics - its about endurance, keeping going, rather than not cheating
  - farmer - regular picture of patience, but with the positive incentive of there being fruit from the labour...

## God's word is not chained (v.8-10)

- Wider context of the passage is encouragement to **keep going, to be strong:**
  - despite being in the midst of suffering, even being chained up...
- But Paul's confidence is that God can be, and is, still at work
  - his word is not chained...
  - compare what he wrote about to the Philippians (1:13) "**As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.**"
  - word here includes, but is more than just a the message about God
  - in the beginning was the Word - Jesus
  - Jesus is not chained, and for his sake Paul will endure any humiliation, any hardship, and so that others will also come to know and love and serve this great

Saviour, and share in his eternal glory

## A trustworthy saying (v.11-13)

- Closing remarks in this section are a quote from a Christian hymn, most commentators think
  - connection with before is that this snippet deals with the future, with future glory, a time when present suffering comes into its fullest and most proper perspective
- *If we died with him, we will also live with him* (v.11)
  - die with - identify ourself with - baptism, down into water... (here infant baptism has the danger of weakening our sense of having died to our life without Christ)
- *if we endure, we will also reign with him.* (v. 12)
  - again, fairly straightforward - encouragement that endurance in faith will "pay off"
- *If we disown him, he will also disown us;* (v. 12)
- This is deliberate turning our back on God:
  - guess the question is open about folk who do this ever knew God in the first place, or whether it is possible to move out of salvation - trust God for the answer!
  - (very reminiscent of Jesus' words in Matthew 10:33: "But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.")
- *if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.* (v. 13)
  - here's the grace!
  - we will make mistakes; Christian faith, once owned, is not about never tripping up - and living in fear of so doing!
  - its a grace filled life - he doesn't disown children

## Conclusion

- In what do you need to endure?
  - how can you "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" specifically in that situation?
  - and how can you prepare now to keep going in the future?
- *"Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this."*