



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

GODLY LIVES IN CHRIST JESUS - 2 TIMOTHY 3:12-13

COLORADO

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Paul was assured of two things: first that hardship will come to all believers, and second; God will rescue those who put their faith in Him. He saw deliverance as preventing eternal harm done by wicked men. Paul knew in the long run that it was better to suffer with God and the good, than to prosper with the world and the wrong. Certain of the temporary persecution, he is equally certain of his ultimate glory.¹ God promises to preserve His faithful servants. He doesn't promise to keep them from suffering, rather through suffering. We must remember these things as we live out our calling. God never promised life will be easy, but promises He will be with us and deliver us and rescue us in this life or by bringing us to glory. In fact, as Paul wrote 2 Timothy 4:7-8, he was awaiting the ultimate rescue.

I. GODLY LIVES IN CHRIST JESUS - 2 TIMOTHY 3:12-13

(12) "And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (13) But evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived." 2 Timothy 3:12-13

We are reminded from Jesus words in John 15:20 that, "A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you..." Later Jesus said right before going to the cross, "These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Paul would suffer much for the Lord's sake as we have seen. Even in Acts 9:16 the Lord told Ananias that Paul would have to suffer much for Him. In 1 Thessalonians 3:2-3, Paul encourages these believers regarding their sufferings, not wanting them to be unsettled by them or for their faith to be upset as a result of their tribulation.

Paul reminded the Philippians believers that it was their privilege to believe in Christ and added to, "also suffer for Him." (Philippians 1:29). Later he reminded them of the fellowship of sharing in Christ's sufferings, "that I may know Him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." (Philippians 3:10-11). Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5:11 that believers are blessed to suffer evils because of Him.

And here in 2 Timothy 3, Paul reminds us again that true followers of Christ cannot escape persecution. This may not line up very well with teaching that says once you are saved, you won't suffer and that God wants you to be healthy, wealthy and happy. Scripture teaches to the contrary in this life. Persecution will come to all and the Lord will rescue those who put their faith in Him.

A. "ALL WHO DESIRE TO LIVE GODLY LIVES IN CHRIST JESUS"- 2 TIMOTHY 3:12A

Paul begins by speaking of all "who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus" in 2 Timothy 3:12. He refers to those who have made living godly lives an abiding determination, an earnest resolution...to be devoted to Christ. Paul continued in the work of the gospel in spite of such harsh persecution because he was firmly resolved in his commitment to Jesus Christ. And God gives a special grace and strength to all believers in such times.

Paul refers to the "godly in Christ", that is those who are in union with Christ, fellowship with Christ, intimately united with Christ. How can we live this life... persevere and remain godly? There is only one way...in Christ! Only by the power of the risen Christ can we press on to godliness. Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:18-23, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places..."

B. "WILL BE PERSECUTED"- 2 TIMOTHY 3:12B

There will always be a perpetual battle between light and dark. If anyone accepts a standard of life that is different from the worlds, then they are bound to have trouble. Some form of opposition will come if we attempt to witness to a world that hates to be told the truth and loves darkness. This can come in different forms and varying degrees of hostility. But this is the reality for the godly believer.

Timothy remembered Paul's lifestyle which encouraged him and reminded him of his eternal purpose. Timothy remembered Paul's virtues and held them as high standards as well. Timothy remembered Paul's persecutions and that the Lord rescued Paul. Timothy took that to heart as we must. And Timothy remembered that all godly in Christ will be persecuted and he embraced it, even knowing that Paul sat in a dungeon awaiting his execution.

It's important to note from John 15:18-20 that this persecution comes as believers are living in the world among the godless, and at the same time not of the world, living a godly life. Think about this. Those who are in Christ but not in the world are not persecuted, because they do not come into contact with the world and therefore into collision with their potential persecutors. It is only for those

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(12) *“And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (13) But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”*

who both are in the world and in Christ simultaneously that persecution becomes inevitable.²

Paul sought to live a godly life in Christ, serving God rather than himself and he suffered for it. Paul wrote in Acts 14:22 that it was through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God. That’s hard to hear and realize this is coming for all godly believers because Paul’s experience was not unique just to him.

Right now we live in a country where we can still worship freely and unhindered. We must be deeply grateful for that but still we shouldn’t assume that 2 Timothy 3:12 doesn’t apply to us because if we stand for Christ we can expect some form of resistance as we live obedient lives to God. If our life never affects the world, then we may have to question the depth of our commitment to Jesus. And always remember that if persecution comes our way, it should only come because of our obedience to Christ and not for being obnoxious. Obey Christ and come what may.

C. “EVIL MEN AND IMPOSTERS WILL PROCEED FROM BAD TO WORSE”- 2 TIMOTHY 3:13

Paul makes it clear that in the last days (2 Timothy 3:1) evil people with their malignant character and sacrilegious boldness, blasphemies and errors will increase and gain in strength. They will progress toward their wicked goals and drag others down with them. The only advancement they make is downward. And because evil is getting worse, this is the reason for inevitable persecution and suffering for the godly in Christ.

As we read these verses, it is easy to have a sense of need for help. How can we endure such people...such evil? How could we ever follow Paul’s example and persevere with godliness? All faithful believers should expect opposition. And we can only endure by the strength God supplies and trust in His faithfulness to His people. Just as God rescued Paul He will rescue us. Scars are the price which every believer pays for their loyalty to Christ They are also our credentials before God.³

Satan will never give up on trying to destroy the faith of God’s people. He is the adversary of our souls and there will always be evil men. Persecution today is so wide spread; in Nigeria, China, Sudan, Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia just to mention a few. Even we are being challenged here in the United States where tolerance is given for anything except true Christianity. But, we must remain firm in our resolve and refuse to compromise. We must trust God for our needed strength and grace.⁴ We must continue with Christ as Paul emphasizes in the next verse... 2 Timothy 3:14 *“You however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known*

the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Continue in Christ!

And so it is worth stating again. Just as Paul is assured that persecution will come, he is also absolutely confident in these truths:

First, God will rescue those who put their trust in Him. Paul knew in the long run that it was better to suffer with God and the good, than to prosper with the world and the wrong. Certain of the temporary persecution, he is equally certain of his ultimate glory.⁵

Second, God promises to preserve His faithful servants. He doesn’t promise to keep them from suffering, rather through suffering. We must remember these things as we live out our calling. God never promised life will be easy, but promises He will be with us and deliver us and rescue us in this life or by bringing us to glory. In fact, as Paul wrote 2 Timothy 4:7-8, he was awaiting the ultimate rescue.

Timothy was called to endure by the strength God supplies, trusting in God’s great faithfulness to His people. Paul isn’t just giving Timothy an example to follow, but is pointing him to the source of power by which to live.⁶ Paul points us there as well!

So... continue in Christ!

¹Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.223.

²Stott, John R.W., *The Message of 2 Timothy*. Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1973. Pg. 96.

³Hendriksen, William. *Exposition of The Pastoral Epistles*. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, MI, 1957. Pg. 293..

⁴Williams, Peter, *Opening Up 2 Timothy*. One Day Publications: Ryelands Road, Leominster, New Zealand, 2007. Pg. 78.

⁵Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.223.

⁶Platt, David; Akin, Daniel L.; Merida, Tony, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. B&H Publishing Group: Nashville, Tennessee, 2013. Pg.192.