



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT IMPRISONED!- Part 1: 2 TIMOTHY 2:9

### WYOMING

### FEBRUARY 18, 2015

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*The motivation for Paul's ministry always focused on Jesus Christ and the preeminence of Christ was the driving force behind his life and work. The gospel is the good news of the divinely revealed message of Jesus Christ. Paul invites Timothy to courageous action and calls him to take this gospel to the world! As we remember Jesus Christ: the Son of God risen from the dead and the Son of Man descendant of David, may we have the same unshakable confidence in Him and willingness to suffer for His sake. Only by these truths of the gospel message can people be saved and reconciled to God.*

#### I. THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT IMPRISONED! - Part 1: 2 TIMOTHY 2:9

*2 Timothy 2:9: "(8) Remember Jesus Christ... (9) for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal, but the Word of God is not imprisoned."*

Paul was in a Roman prison as he penned these last words to his son in the faith, Timothy, encouraging him to remain faithful and strong in the grace of Christ no matter the hardship he will face. Our Lord Himself made it clear what could happen when He said, *"But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to courts, and scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles."* Indeed that is exactly what happened to Paul. Maybe he even had the opportunity to witness to Nero in person, the wicked emperor of Rome.

#### A. "FOR WHICH I SUFFER HARDSHIP" - 2 TIMOTHY 2:9A

Paul was willing to endure "hardship", evil treatment for the sake of proclaiming the gospel. Paul uses the word:

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**"suffer trouble"** Greek **"kakopatheo"** to evil afflictions, to be tormented, to be treated badly, evil treatment.

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Paul was being tormented in prison, suffering evil treatment. He didn't hide it and understood there was a cost to being a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and wanted Timothy to be able to make the same sacrifice he had for the sake of Christ. Timothy must be faithful, pass the gospel to others who will be faithful and realize there will be suffering to endure as he evangelizes, disciples and teaches. He exhorts Timothy to be strong and join in the suffering as a good soldier, disciplined athlete and hard-working farmer.

What was going on that caused such hardship for Paul as a leader in the sect known as Christians? Why was there such opposition to Christians of all people? Roman historians record for us how a new wave of persecution broke out against Christianity in AD 64 after the Roman emperor, Nero, set a large majority of Rome on fire and to divert any suspicion from himself, he blamed Christians and immediately ordered their imprisonment and execution. Many were

put on poles alongside the highways and then, while still alive, set on fire to become human torches. As the prominent leader of Christianity, Paul would not escape the madness of Nero. And so, Paul is once again placed in prison, but it was different this time. Though Christianity was in disrepute, Paul was not in despair as he sat in prison awaiting execution for his faith. Yes, Paul suffered hardship. He was willing to endure evil treatment for the sake of the gospel. 1 Peter 3:16-17 says, *"and keep a good conscience so that I the thing which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong."*

Paul was indeed suffering greatly for doing what was right before God. Is it any wonder that Timothy was maybe afraid as the leader in the church at Ephesus? His fate could so easily be that of Paul's.

#### B. "EVEN IMPRISONMENT" – 2 TIMOTHY 2:9B

But what kind of "hardship" was Paul talking about? Paul endured hardship of many kinds, but here he refers to being in prison. You may remember our study from 2 Timothy 1:1 where we learned about the Mamortine prison where it was likely Paul was held until his execution. Pastor John MacArthur visited this prison and said this, *"One thing in my visit to Rome stood out above all other things and that was visiting the ruins of what was known as the Mamortine Prison in the ancient city of Rome. What is now remaining of the Mamortine Prison is a dungeon in the ground, literally a circular pit about 30 feet in diameter with a hole at the top a little larger than that of a manhole in the street. That was the place of incarceration for the criminals of the time of the Apostle Paul. We were then allowed to go down into the pit and found there just a couple of things of interest...against one section of that circular pit there was a door, a great large door that was able to be pulled up and then dropped back down in place. The guide...told us that the door basically was there for execution purposes, that it was common to place prisoners, dropping them through the hole into the dungeon, up to about 30 to 35 prisoners. And then in order to make room for the next group of criminals, the door would be pulled open and running alongside that cell was the city sewage system of Rome. As the door was pulled open, the cell or dungeon would fill with the sewage and drown all of the prisoners and wash them back out. The door would be shut, the place would be drained and ready for another 30 to 35 criminals. It was a moving experience not only because you could stand there and imagine what went on in that place without sanitation, without light, without any of the comforts that we might imagine to be absolutely necessary for existence. And you can imagine it jammed with 30 bitter, angry criminals about to be executed...In a very public display of hatred for the Christ he taught and lived the gospel he preached, he was not drowned in sewage, he was taken out of that place and his head was placed on a block and an axe cut it off his body. And*

#### BIBLE STUDY

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR, STAFF & SPOUSES: WEDNESDAY AT 6:30AM, BREAKFAST SERVED

WYOMING STATE CAPITOL, HERSCHLER BUILDING COMMONS AREA

# Wyoming

## THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT IMPRISONED! : Part 1 - 2 TIMOTHY 2:9

*“(8) Remember Jesus Christ... (9) for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal, but the Word of God is not imprisoned.”*

publicly the Romans said, "We will not tolerate the teaching of Jesus Christ nor anyone who represents Him." And when you can think back and imagine the life of the Apostle Paul, a life of self-sacrifice on behalf of the spread of the gospel, the life of a man who lived literally to communicate the greatest message the world has ever heard in order that men might know grace and mercy and forgiveness and peace, when you imagine that that's how he ended his life it seems like such a tragic and ungrateful expression of man's response. What an unjust reward for an innocent man. Not just an innocent man but a man who had brought the good news of salvation to the very people who took his life."

### C. "AS A CRIMINAL" – 2 TIMOTHY 2:9C

Not only was Paul in one of Rome's worst prison, but he was condemned as a "criminal". This was the word Luke used to describe the two thieves who died with Jesus in Luke 23:32.

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"criminal" Greek "*kakourgos*" a technical term used for violent people; murderers, thieves, malicious, treacherous, cunning.

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Paul had some very serious charges against him. He was sentenced as a treacherous, malicious evil doer. He was considered a dangerous criminal and treated like one in this prison and yet he was innocent of any wrongdoing. He was condemned to die for his "crimes", so for Paul, at the time of writing this book, death was imminent. He writes in 2 Timothy 4:13 requesting his coat for this was a cold, dark cell. We know he was chained and imprisoned with other criminals and there was no hope of deliverance. (2 Timothy 2:9) And Paul reveals that he was abandoned by almost all at his arrest. No one stood with him, only Luke. (2 Timothy 1:15, 4:9-12, 16) Paul, the Apostle who had been used by God to proclaim the gospel and start many churches across the known world now finds himself in a cold cell, chained with other criminals and condemned to die. He was alone, he was deserted and what does this man write about?

### D. PAUL PENS HIS LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT- 2 TIMOTHY

Does Paul spend the last letter he ever writes complaining, disillusioned with his faith and his God because of his incredible harsh circumstances? Does he feel sorry for himself because of his lot after serving the Lord so faithfully? **NO!** What does he write?

- ❖ "kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you..." 2 Tim. 1:6
- ❖ "do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord..." 2 Tim. 1:8
- ❖ "join with me in suffering for the gospel..." 2 Tim. 1:8
- ❖ "Retain the standard of sound words..." 2 Tim. 1:13
- ❖ "Guard the treasure which has been entrusted to you..." 2 Tim. 1:14
- ❖ "my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus..." 2 Tim. 2:1
- ❖ Suffer as a good soldier, disciplined athlete, hardworking farmer, 2 Tim.2:3-6
- ❖ "the Lord will give you understanding in everything." 2 Tim. 2:7
- ❖ "Remember Jesus Christ..." 2 Tim. 2:8

- ❖ "the Word of God is not imprisoned." 2 Tim. 2:9
- ❖ "I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen..." 2 Tim. 2:10
- ❖ "handle accurately the word of truth..." 2 Tim. 2:15
- ❖ "flee youthful lusts, pursue righteousness..." 2 Tim. 2:22
- ❖ "Realize this, in the last days difficult times will come..." 2 Tim. 3:1
- ❖ "all who live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted..." 2 Tim. 3:12
- ❖ "continue in things learned..." 2 Tim. 3:14
- ❖ "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable..." 2 Tim. 3:16-17
- ❖ "preach the Word, be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction..." 2 Tim. 4:2
- ❖ "be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." 2 Tim. 4:5
- ❖ "in the future, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness...and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing." 2 Tim. 4:8
- ❖ "Make every effort to come..." 2 Tim. 4:9
- ❖ "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me..." 2 Tim. 4:9
- ❖ "The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed and bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom..." 2 Timothy 4:18
- ❖ "Grace be with you." 2 Tim. 4:22

This is the message of a faithful man who at the end of his life, in spite of all the adversity he endured, could say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7)

### II. WHAT ABOUT YOU?

In light of what we have just observed about Paul; his enduring faithfulness and exhorting words, together with God's promises, His divine provisions and sustaining grace, take a moment to examine your life. What circumstances do you find yourself in? Are you facing another long, hard session with difficult challenges, discouraging opposition and seemingly overwhelming odds? Are you growing weary in this fight? Do you feel alone sometimes as you stay the course even when others don't? Does it really matter? What's keeping you from remaining faithful in the midst of adversity?

Could you say you have kept the faith regardless of the cost? That's a life of no regrets. That's a life of purpose. That's a journey of serving and pleasing God. He has a plan, a purpose and a course for your life. Fight the good fight for it is a noble one worth contending for, finish the course, though hard and painful, finish the race God has planned for you. Finish well. That's what this study is about. It's about Paul, his words and his life and it's about Jesus Christ, His Words and His life; so that you too may be able to say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" when God calls you home! May we have the same unshakable confidence in Jesus Christ as Paul and willingness to suffer for His sake. Only by these truths of the gospel message can people be saved and reconciled to God for eternity.