



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

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

WYOMING

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God 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" (2 Timothy 4:7) 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.

I. THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT IMPRISONED! - Part 2: 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."

Though Paul was in prison under the harshest conditions, suffering evil treatment, tortured and waiting execution as a treacherous criminal, he writes in 2 Timothy 4:17-18, *"But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."* He never dwells on his suffering but mentions it only in light of opportunities for the furtherance of the gospel. And though as a servant of Jesus Christ he sits in chains, he uses those chains to make a distinct contrast between his own imprisonment and the freedom of the Word of God!

A. "BUT THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT IMPRISONED." - 2 TIMOTHY 2:9B

There is no self-pity in Paul's words but instead, a supreme confidence in the ability of God and His Word to work in the hearts of men regardless of his situation. Paul knew as a truth, a certainty that though he was bound, God's Word was not. God's Word can never be bound or exiled. You can exile an individual but you can never exile the truth. You can imprison a preacher but **not** the Word that is preached. Paul was certain that Rome could **never** find a prison that could contain the Word of God. If human effort could have obliterated Christianity, it would have perished long ago.¹

The Word of God is always free to do the work of God in the hearts of men. Rome could try and silence Paul, but it could never silence God's Word or hinder its' power to save. Paul's chains would in no way hinder the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. The Word of God was not hindered or restrained because Paul was in

bonds. God's Word could never be deprived of its liberty to work in the hearts of men.

The furtherance of the gospel is always a work of God's divine power. It never depends on us, *never!* The gospel won't succeed because of incredible oratory skills, creative presentations or any human effort. It is all the work of God. He is the One Who drives home the message to the human heart with life changing conviction and transformation.

God's Word can never be restricted, constrained, regulated, or controlled by laws, government or mere man. It is never bound or ineffective. The power of the gospel cannot be restrained by opposition or censure. Nothing can ever keep the Word of God from going forth and accomplishing what God intends. Therefore, if that's true, compromise can never be justified in order to make the message more acceptable and the proclamation of the gospel more effective. The power of God's Word has never been dependent on man's protection of it or subject to man's restrictions of it. God's Word cannot be imprisoned or bound by anyone or anything!²

Under the city of Rome, some 600 miles of catacombs have been discovered. Most of them were dug by ten generations of Christians over a period of 300 years. In the early centuries of the Church, the catacombs were used as meeting and burial places for up to 4 million Christians who were buried there. And down in the catacombs there is a common inscription. You can see it today. It reads like this: "The Word of God is not bound."³ Those believers gave their lives for Jesus Christ, enduring tremendous persecution and death. Yet their certain hope was grounded on the truth that though they may have been chained, bound and martyred, God's Word was not bound by anyone or anything and would go forth. What a tremendous comfort knowing that nothing could extinguish the flame of the gospel, nothing could quench the Word of God, even if their life was snuffed out.

The great Reformer, Martin Luther, was under the constant threat of Rome as the Catholic Church spread it's heresy of salvation by works. After studying Paul's book on Romans, Luther came to understand that there was nothing he could do (and he tried) to merit salvation but he was justified by faith in Jesus Christ alone, by grace alone. Luther called it the Great Exchange whereby I receive the righteousness of God in exchanged for my unrighteousness. But this contradicted the teachings of the Catholic faith and their whole system of works. It also threatened the very lucrative wealth accumulated by the church as a result of selling indulgences for

BIBLE STUDY

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR, STAFF & SPOUSES: WEDNESDAY AT 6:30AM, BREAKFAST SERVED
WYOMING STATE CAPITOL, HERSCHLER BUILDING COMMONS AREA

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salvation. Luther was labeled a heretic and his life was in constant danger. One of his most famous hymns is *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*. The words in one of the verses goes like this, “The body they may kill; God’s truth abideth still!” No one can stop the Word of God. His truth remains through all of time. Isaiah 40:8 testifies to this truth, *“The grass withers, the flowers fades but the word of our God stands forever.”*

Paul powerfully proclaims the absolute freedom and liberty of the Word of God. And it is no different today. In the 1930’s, Stalin ordered a purge of all Bibles and all believers. In Stavropol, Russia, this order was carried out with a vengeance. Thousands of Bibles were confiscated, and multitudes of believers were sent to the gulags where many died for being “enemies of the state”. After the fall of Communism, the missionary organization CoMission sent a team to Stavropol. (The city’s history was not known to them at the time.) When the team experienced difficulty getting Bibles shipped from Moscow, someone mentioned a warehouse outside of town where confiscated Bibles had been stored since Stalin’s day. After prayer, one member got up the courage to go to the warehouse and ask the officials if the Bibles were still there. They were! They then asked if the Bibles could be removed and distributed again to the people of Stavropol. They answer was yes. A truck was obtained, and several Russian people helped load the Bibles.

One of the helpers was a young man—a skeptical, hostile, agnostic collegian who had come only for the day’s wages. As they were loading the Bibles, the young man disappeared. They found him in a corner of the warehouse, weeping. He had slipped away, hoping to quietly take a Bible for himself. What he found shook him to the core. The inside page of the Bible he picked up had the handwritten signature of his own grandmother! It had been her personal Bible. He had stolen the very Bible that had belonged to his grandmother—a woman persecuted for her faith all her life. His grandmother had no doubt prayed for him and for her city.⁴

God’s Word can no more be chained than God Himself.⁵ Paul knew a truth, a certainty...though he was bound, God’s Word was not and never could be constrained by anyone or anything.

This is a simple truth, easy to understand, not complicated. Yet the freedom of God’s Word to convict, convince and compel the sinner to salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is such an incredible wonder! Hebrews 4:12-13 says, *“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”* God’s Word

does a mighty work in the heart of all to heal, convict, convince, transform and restore. Christian, you cannot fail if you share the good news, if you proclaim God’s Word. As Martin Luther said, “Though the body they may kill, God’s truth abideth still.” The prophet Isaiah wrote this about God’s Word, *“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth, and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.”* (Isaiah 55:10-11) God is sovereign and thus His Word is sovereign. It is free to accomplish God’s work and can never be deprived of that liberty.

One word of exhortation to believers. Even though God’s Word is not bound by men, as believers, we are called to be bound by its’ teaching. When the world looks at our life do they see a heart duty-bound to God’s Word and governed by it? Is your life constrained by God’s Word, His precepts for living?

May we have the same unshakable confidence in Jesus Christ as Paul and willingness to suffer for His sake. May His Word be ever in our hearts, on our lips and lived out before a world that desperately needs to know Him. Only by these truths of the gospel message can people be saved and reconciled to God for eternity.

Jesus said this, *“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law until all is accomplished.”* (Matthew 5:18) Later Jesus would also confirm, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.”* (Matthew 24:35) Again Jesus made the point, *“But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.”* (Luke 16:17) The power of the gospel will never be restrained and nothing can ever keep the Word of God from going forth and accomplishing what God intends.

¹Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.188-189.

²MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.58-59.

³MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.59-60.

⁴Wolfe, Andria, *“An Answered Prayer from Stalin’s Times”*. *The Chariot*, (The CoMission Newsletter), 1st Quarter, 1994, Vol. 2, Issue 1, pg.1.

⁵Hughes, R. Kent and Chapell, Bryan, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus; To Guard the Deposit*. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 2000. Pg. 204.