

Motives for Sacrificial Ministry

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[0:00] For those of you who were able to be with us last week, you were witnesses to the Apostle Paul giving helpful and of course inspired counsel to his protege Timothy through the writings of Paul to Timothy and to Titus and to Philemon, which we've already studied.

He gives, continues to give counsel to the church even down to the 21st century. Paul began by commanding Timothy to be strong in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's a life lesson there. The Lord is a God of grace. Be strong in that grace. Let that be your strength, grace, and mercy that he gives to his people.

He went on to give Timothy timeless advice and he drew lessons from four areas of life. And we looked at those. He used as his examples teachers, soldiers, athletes, and farmers.

And I imagine copies of that are up here somewhere. But we used them to draw out the lesson that Paul was trying to tell Timothy.

[1:49] So with that lesson fresh in Timothy's mind, Paul will now instruct his son in the faith on the motives of serving the Lord sacrificially.

And I want you to focus on that word motive or motivation because we're going to bring that around to us. What is our motivation to serve the Lord sacrificially?

Couldn't we just get saved and go sit on a mountaintop and wait for Jesus to come back? This is what the Spirit of God has to say concerning sacrificial ministry.

2 Timothy 2, verse 8-13. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal.

But the word of God is not imprisoned. For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

[3:13] It is a trustworthy statement in a very famous passage here. For if we died with him, we will also live with him.

If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us. If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.

Very famous passage of Scripture. True Christianity demands faithful service, and faithful service has always been costly.

It's always been costly. Some of us in here, Shane, myself, others, we have met with people that have paid. Anthony, you have.

We have met with people that have paid great price for their faith in Christ, have been in prison, seen family members killed, gunned down even in pulpits while preaching.

[4:24] The writer of the book of Hebrews was very clear on this truth. In Hebrews chapter 11, verse 35 to 38, he said, some were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection, and others experienced mockings and scourging, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were tempted. They were put to death with the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated, men of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

And I can assure you that still goes on. That has continued to the 21st century. Now, these words are in lockstep with those of the Apostle Paul, who said, I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I receive from the Lord.

That's a quote out of Acts chapter 20, verse 24. Now, I wrote these several days ago, and here's what I wrote, typed. These words are being typed by me on a computer in the upstairs study of my

home.

It is Wednesday morning, and the time is 2.03 a.m. That's very common for me. I go back to bed about 4, wake Diane up. She gets mad. Finally, she settles down, and I go back to sleep.

[6:07] I have just learned that the city of Houston, Texas, has issued subpoenas to evangelical ministers across that community.

The lesbian mayor wants their sermons reviewed for possible violations of the community's nondiscrimination laws dealing with the treatment of GLBT.

Until recently, I didn't know what that stood for, but it is gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender. If you have any questions about transgender, that's cross-dressers.

They dress up something different every day. By the way, I'm sending her a copy of my sermon notes. That such a law could even originate in the mind of an American is beyond my imagination. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution says that Congress shall make no laws relative to our freedom of speech and freedom of religious expression.

[7:23] The interesting thing is that when that First Amendment was adopted and they said Congress shall make no laws, they've been making laws ever since. That's all they ever do is make laws concerning the expression of religious freedom.

My brothers, we are a long way down the road toward godless anarchy. As a nation, we may lack the knowledge or will to turn around and retreat from these soul-damning initiatives.

I will say this. I will say this. The mayor has backed away because of the national outcry, but it hasn't gone away.

She's retooling and has lawyers looking at it. Now, how will we know when God has given up on a nation?

How will we know that? And please make note, I didn't say giving up on the church. That will never happen. That won't happen in this life or the next life.

[8:33] How do we know when a nation has been placed under the wrath of God? That has been very clear, very clear to us in the inspired writings contained in the first chapter of the book of Romans.

Romans, you need to read that tonight, starting in verse 18 to the end of the chapter, chapter 1. It is very clear. And the interesting thing is the absolute key is when you see women with women flaunting their lesbianism in the public square, being voted in and supported by politicians, by the government.

Why women? Why not men? Women are always the last to fall morally in a culture. And the best description I have for that is the fact they have a mothering instinct.

God built into them this mothering instinct, and they are the last to fall. Well, Paul makes it very clear that they had fallen, and God had given them over to their evil mind.

God gives over a nation to itself. All of this is very pertinent to the situation that Timothy found himself in.

[10:00] Timothy was feeling increased pressure, most likely coming from false teachers that had infiltrated the church.

And we're going to be spending all of next Monday night on false teachers. He was also experiencing persecution that was coming outside the church, so the pressure is internal and external.

That persecution, as is all persecution of the church, satanically inspired. So Paul essentially is telling Timothy, and here's our lesson for us, do not retreat and don't turn inward into self-pity. And that's a good advice for ambassadors of Christ who are living out their lives in the 21st century. I said in the class yesterday, you know, my enthusiasm for the Lord and the church and the future is well-grounded because I've read the end of the book.

I know how it's going to come out. So if you've got any doubts and you haven't read it to the end, go ahead and read to the end. My dad used to buy books all the time. He'd read the last chapter because he didn't want any surprises.

[11:13] So he'd find out who was dead, who was alive. You know, you could picture him doing that. He'd also buy them and say, oh, I already have that and throw it in the trash can. Anyway, how often have we heard weak and erroneous gospel invitations that promise all kinds of good things to those who will accept Christ?

By the way, a term not found in Scripture. All you have to do is to have a personal relationship with the Lord. That term's not found either as far as the word personal.

Put another way, just make Jesus Lord of your life. That's not found in Scripture either, by the way. I have never made Jesus Lord.

He is Lord. He is Lord. He's always been the sovereign Lord. Go back in millennia. Go back billions of years as we measure time.

He's Lord. He's Lord. I've always wanted to give an invitation that says, come to Jesus, and I promise you, you're going to lose some friends.

[12 : 27] You're going to be alienated from some of your family, and God may call you to a remote mission in darkest Africa where you may lose your life.

Now, as the organist plays, just as I am, who will come? And you know what? Some will come.

They will come. Those whom God is drawing to himself will come.

And Christian history is full of examples of men and women who heard that very call. You know, William Carey and a guy named Robert Thomas who went to Korea and got head cut off.

And we could add an arm Judson who gave his life. John G. Patton. We could go right down the list. The Ecuadorian missionaries.

Our days on this earth are brief and full of trouble. That's a promise from Scripture. So what is there that motivates us?

[13 : 33] There's that word again. We're talking about motivation here. I'm getting the depressing time out of the way. So what is there that motivates us to enter into sacrificial service to the Lord?

Paul is going to offer four very powerful motives for the faithfulness of Timothy and all believers in every age.

In every age. Four powerful motives. And I know they're true because John MacArthur and I came up with them at the same time. First on this list is the preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The preeminence of Christ. The Spirit of God says this. Verse 8. Remember Jesus Christ.

Now that would be enough in itself, but he goes on. Remember Jesus Christ. Risen from the dead. Descendant of David according to my gospel.

[14 : 43] Remember Christ. Tradition says that Peter's wife was murdered, martyred before he was.

That he was yelling, remember Christ. Remember Christ. Now that's not in Scripture, but that's tradition. We can remain faithful because we serve the true God who is himself the preeminent one. He is first. He is preeminent. We can serve God with boldness. We can serve him with courage. We can serve him with endurance.

Because the one we are serving, our God, is the incarnate Jesus Christ. God came down to earth, took upon himself human flesh, and dwelt among us.

Pitched his tent with us. Tabernacled with us. The God we serve, the Christ we remember, is creator, redeemer, and sustainer of the universe.

[15 : 54] Verse, and let me say this, without him, no person in this room or anywhere on the face of this earth can draw another breath.

He holds our very breath in his hands. You know, people say to me every now and then, well, if I just had the evidence that there's really a God. And I said, that took about a trillion brain cells to speak those words.

You know? He sends the rain. He created gravity so we don't go flying up. He created air pressure so it will force us to take in oxygen.

He created oxygen. We could go on and on and on and on. Paul begins with the word remember. If we knew anything about the Greek language, and some of you in here do, but not me, we would know that this is an imperative.

I mean, I'm still stumped on your comment. Yes, about English grammar. You made that statement. I looked at Chris Featherby. He looked at me and we went. I mean, I did good or bad in English depending on the girl next to me.

[16 : 58] If she knew English, I did okay. But boys, don't listen to that. He says, remember.

That's an imperative. So what does that mean? The imperative mood is one of command. It addresses the volition and the will. It makes a demand upon the will of the reader to obey the command.

Now, I know all that sounds impressive, but I have to give credit to Dr. Coleman and Google for this information, both of whom I trust implicitly. And actually, I looked up Google first, and then Sunday I grabbed the pastor Sunday and said, Am I on the right track here?

Well, I think so. Well, I have to confirm Google. Now, there are many commands in the New Testament. And chapter 2 of 2 Timothy is filled with them.

You know, we tend to think of commands that are long, you know, fill up that whiteboard. Listen to some of these commands. Here's some examples. Verse 1, be strong. That's a command.

[18:12] An imperative. Verse 2, entrust. Verse 7, consider. Verse 8, remember. Verse 15, be diligent.

Verse 16, avoid. Verse 19, abstain. Verse 22, flee. Verse 22, pursue. Verse 23, refuse.

These are commands. Commands. We should remember when we read a command in the New Testament, it is not a suggestion. It's a command. Commands are not designed to be optional.

Well, let me pick the smorgasbord here. You know, we'll pick these things and put them on our plate. Remember also that commands actually characterize the sinless life of the Lord Jesus Christ. He stands as the supreme example in the universe of the one we should pattern our life after, the one we emulate. John told us this in his first epistle, that we should walk as the Lord Jesus walked.

[19:25] Now, one of the commands that we're talking about is that we should remember. Again, that's an imperative. Remember. Remember. The idea in the Greek language is to keep on remembering or continue to remember.

The fact that our Lord and Savior is the preeminent one should always be at the forefront of our thinking. We talked last week about teachers.

He is the teacher among teachers. Remember Christ, the teacher among teachers. As a soldier, he is the supreme commander of the universe. He fought the greatest battle ever fought and was victorious.

He is the greatest athlete. He ran the greatest race and he won the greatest prize. As a farmer, he sowed perfect seed 2,000 years ago and continues to reap the perfect harvest down to our day.

He is the preeminent one. When Jesus was on earth, he walked a path that led to his eternal glory. But during his earthly sojourn, that path was marked out by pain, sorrow, humiliation, suffering, persecution, hatred, and ultimately death.

[20:52] That's describing the preeminent one in his journey. If we will keep those traits in the forefront of our mind, we won't get caught up in the utter foolishness and the ungodly promises made by the health and wealth gospel.

How can we listen to adherents brag about his Rolls Royce as I did one time or his earthly mansion and criticize his flock for not having such things because of their lack of faith?

I wanted to choke him, but I wanted to choke him.

Jesus perfectly served his father in heaven. Serve to perfection. He was totally sinless.

He was absolutely obedient, even obedient unto death. Yet the father did not give to the Lord Jesus temporal earthly treasures that pass away.

[22:32] Son of man didn't have a place to lay his head. Even foxes and birds had dens in the earth and nests in the trees. If the Lord's perfect service to God did not generate this wealth of earthly treasures, temporal earthly materialism, why should we think that our imperfect service to him is going to generate such temporal treasures that are one day going to be consumed by rust and moths?

They're all going to be destroyed. The writer of Hebrews says that Christ was God's son, but that he learned obedience from the things he suffered.

Hebrews 5.8. How much more should we learn such things as those? We are to remember Jesus as the preeminent one sent from the father.

And the first thing we are to remember is that the preeminent one is risen from the dead. He is risen from the dead. Why do we remember the tomb first?

Paul said to the Corinthians, if Christ has not been raised, our faith is worthless and we are still in our sins. If we have hope in Christ, though he is actually dead, we are men most to be pitied.

[24:04] You can read about that in the inspired version, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verses 17 to 19. We remember and worship a living Christ.

All other founders of religion are dead. Muhammad is dead. Buddha is dead. Confucius is dead. Joseph Smith of the LDS is dead.

Charles Taz Russell of Jehovah Witness is dead. L. Ron Hubbard, who founded Scientology, is dead. Our object of worship is very much alive.

He is seated at this moment at the right hand of the father. Do you ever wake up at 3 in the morning and say, I wonder what Jesus is doing right now?

I do that all the time. I can tell you what he's doing. He's at the right hand of the father, actively interceding for his people, praying for his church.

[25 : 09] Remember in Colossians that Jesus declared the firstborn from the dead. He was so declared so that he could be declared to have first place in everything.

Now, many cults have seized on this, claiming that Jesus had a beginning, firstborn, and therefore was not God in human flesh because he had a beginning.

And they're not talking about just the human beginning. They're talking about a beginning beginning. But being firstborn or having first place means preeminence.

He is the preeminent one. Paul also says, remember Jesus because he descended from David.

And I should point out here that he descended from David according to the flesh.

You ever consider that passage that he's the root and the offspring of David? Interesting. I mean, he's David's offspring, but he's David's root. David came from him, and he came from David in his humanity.

[26 : 16] He descended from David according to the flesh. Is this important, or did Paul just add this in? Well, I came down on the side. It's important.

Through David, the Lord Jesus Christ identifies himself with fallen humanity. It is by the human descent from David, and we read about that, don't we, in Matthew, the genealogies, Matthew and Luke.

But it is by human descent from David that Christ is our sympathetic and merciful high priest. He knows our suffering. He felt our pain.

In all of this, Paul is in perfect agreement with the writer of Hebrews, whoever he was. And why not? They were both ultimately written by the same Holy Spirit. And I got that in.

Note also, that was a payback from yesterday. Note also, did you get my card last night? I did.

Okay. Note also. 14 books. Did I say 13?

[27 : 21] I said 13. Note also that Paul says that all of this is according to my gospel. Now, it should be pointed out that Paul is not referring to his opinion of what the gospel is.

He is talking about the message that was entrusted to him by Christ. He was even proclaimed to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.

That's the very first verse of chapter 1 of 2 Timothy. So, why should we be motivated? How are we motivated?

Remember the preeminent one. But there's more. Here's another motivation. The power of the word. The power of the word.

Verse 9. For which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal. And then Paul adds this.

[28 : 25] But the word of God is not imprisoned. Not imprisoned. What is our motivation for remaining faithful to the Lord? The next one we review is this power of God's word.

When Paul wrote this, he's in a Roman prison. He's in jail. But he is quick to point out that the word of God is not imprisoned.

Today, we live in a world, I think at last count, where 57 nations have placed various restrictions on possessing a Bible, reading a Bible, or sharing with your neighbor the contents of the Bible.

I did include Houston in that. These actions have not kept Bibles out of the hands of God's people.

As I've said before, and this is not original with me.

This is a dear brother in Hong Kong. I've been in his apartment many, many times. Not original with me. The gospel is so powerful.

[29 : 31] It will find a way to penetrate the darkest areas of the world. I've gone to a lot of places, and I always find believers.

I find them. They're there. In dark places, they're there. The word of God is not in prison, not held captive by sinful men.

It continues to spread around the world. Paul was in prison, but he was not ashamed to be in prison.

This is explained by the fact that Paul was in prison for preaching the gospel of Christ. Specifically, he was suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.

We looked at that in 2 Timothy 1, verse 8. Paul had written years earlier that when people suffer for Christ, they find favor with God.

[30:29] 1 Peter 2, 20 and 21. Paul said himself, he was well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties for Christ's sake.

For when I am weak, then I am strong. And that was his message to the Corinthians in the second letter, chapter 12, verse 10. Never in the 20th century was a regime more hostile to the word of God than was the old Soviet Union.

And I would include in that the satellite states that they took over, Romania and Poland and Bulgaria and all those, Czechoslovakia.

We could go on. The Soviets believed they had stamped out Christianity. Now, they did allow the Eastern Orthodox Church to exist, but in a very small role of serving their communist masters. They had to remain in lockstep, and those that didn't got shipped off to Siberia. But something amazing happened when the Soviet Union fell.

[31:46] The church emerged from their underground shelters where they'd been worshiping all along. They'd been there all along.

It was discovered that the church was alive and even vibrant. Not even the gates of hell prevailed against the church.

Seems like I've heard someone else say that in Scripture. Well, let's talk about a further motivation. The purpose of the work of God.

For this reason, I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

A third motivation for faithfulness is the fact that we have God's work to do on this earth before the return of Christ.

[32:53] Guys, we've got work to do. And, you know, some of us in here are getting a little older. I hate to be the one to spring this on you. There ain't no retirement plan except glory.

There's nothing in there that says, okay, you're 69 years old. You can retire. That doesn't exist. We have work to do.

God's work to do on this earth before the return of Christ. For this reason refers back to the preceding verse where we heard about the preeminence of Christ and the power of God's word. Because Christ is preeminent and because there is power in the word of God, the apostle says we will be able to endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen.

That's that word that some denominations go through and take a little razor blade and cut that out, you know, because they don't want that in there. But it's God's word. We have to deal with it. Now, who are the chosen spoken of here?

[34:04] They are the ones whom the father has chosen in his infinite sovereignty to set his electing love upon, but who have not yet obtained the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.

And that should well motivate us. Guys, there may be millions. There may be hundreds of millions of people out there that are going to be saved. And God has given a high privilege to believers in this day, including Highland Park Baptist Church.

Go out there and get them. Give them the word of God. Give them the gospel. Tell them about the preeminent one. Go to Laos. Go to Nepal.

Go to Cuba. Go to these places. Go to the Ukraine and China. They haven't obtained salvation yet. I believe in God's election. I believe God has chosen vessels. I also believe that we should be the most evangelistic church in America.

[35:12] Now, there are some even in this town that say, well, that's an oxymoron. You guys that believe God chooses, you don't believe in evangelism. Well, I beg to differ. Look at our church. Why do we believe in evangelism?

Because there are chosen people out there not yet saved. And God has decided that we are the means to reach them. He uses his church to reach them.

We do so through preaching and teaching of the gospel. That is God's way of reaching his elect with the knowledge of his electing love. That's how he does it. That's how he does it.

And in his sovereignty, God calls every believer into his grace. He demands of them faith to make their calling and election sure.

He then sovereignly calls those who are saved to be his witnesses to those who are not saved. Now, remember this. This is fundamental. We don't have a clue who the elect are.

[36:17] And if you try to figure it out, you're going to be wrong. You don't have that privilege or power. You don't have it. Now, what does that mean for us?

Since we don't know who they are, we witness, preach to every creature. If we could get them all in this room tonight, the whole planet Earth.

First of all, I'd sit down and let the pastor get up here. But we would preach to them. We would preach to them. We don't know who they are. We witness to every creature. And you know what? When one of them gets saved, we can say, wow, that was one of God's elect. He got saved. He got saved. But let me add a little condition here, okay?

We also must never be guilty of using a cheap gospel or a watered-down message to attract people.

[37:22] You will never manipulate men or women into heaven. It will not happen. One person has said that the gospel being presented today is so weak, the non-elect don't have the opportunity to refuse it or to reject it.

It's such a watered-down gospel. I'm often drawn to the rich young ruler. I'm throwing this in for free. I'm often drawn to the rich young ruler. The rich young ruler would have done anything that we, by we I mean the church on earth, usually in the west, that we do in our day, he would have gladly done that.

But pray this prayer. Say these words. Believe it in your heart. Come forward. Take the preacher by the right hand. Go to the counseling room.

Become a tither. Speak in tongues. There's all kinds of things that pass off for true salvation. That's not. You think that guy would have done that if Jesus said, repeat after me?

Of course he would have. And I read Walter Chantry, maybe a name not all of you are familiar with, but a great, great guy, head of a banner of truth. He wrote a great book on this.

[38:49] And he said this. He said, you know, when you read the rich young ruler and you think about modern evangelism, he said, either Jesus wasn't much of an evangelist.

Couldn't he bleed someone to himself? Or maybe we're doing it wrong. Maybe we ought to look closely at how he did it and pattern our evangelism after it.

Now, how did he bleed? How did he witness that guy? He said, so all you have, give to the poor.

Come follow me. You'll have treasures in heaven. You're not saved by philanthropy.

That wasn't Jesus' message. You're saved by trusting and obeying. And that's what he was telling that young man. Trust and obey.

I'm working on a song. I'm trusting for there's no other way. That's what Jesus was telling him. Just trust me. Obey what I'm telling you. You're going to be okay. Couldn't do it. He walked away sad.

[39:49] And it says, and Jesus loved him. Well, that's a sad story. When the Lord rewards those who serve him faithfully. Back up. What is the Lord's reward for those who serve him faithfully in the work of God?

Paul sums this up in the great Romans chapter 8. Verse 16 and 17. The Spirit of himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. Let me back up to that verse 16.

It says, the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit. I used to be really bad about this.

Where I'm really good at manipulating people. And I can get people to pray a prayer. I can do it really easy. And then I would say, now based on the authority of the word of God, I can tell you're a believer.

[40:58] And when you die, you're going to heaven. I have no authority to do that. No one does. Why? Because we don't know that person's heart. Only the Lord knows that person's heart.

But Christ says, if they are genuine, the Spirit, Christ through Paul, the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Now, I'm speaking to somebody here right now, maybe several of you. If you've got any doubts about your relationship with Christ, what's the Spirit telling you? No, you do belong to me.

You're in some tough times, but you belong to me. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit in us that we are indeed the children of God. And then the last motivation we're going to speak of tonight is the promise of eternal blessing.

The promise of eternal blessing. Verse 11 to 13. It is a trustworthy statement. For if we died with him, we shall also live with him.

[42:05] If we endure, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us. If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for we cannot deny himself.

Five times in the Bible we read the words, it is a trustworthy statement. That phrase is only used by Paul and only in the pastoral epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.

That's where you find the five references to it. And then after that comes a long sentence of some 40 words in the English language. I don't know how many in the Greek, probably a lot less because it's so expressive.

But by reading that, you can see a certain rhythm to it. And there is the possibility that this verse may have been sung as a hymn in the early church.

There are some theologians that believe that was true. Paul begins the sentence with the words, For if we died with him. And many people believe that Paul may have been making reference to his own death, which was fast approaching.

[43:21] Soon he would be a martyr. That reminds me of the first church martyr, a man named Stephen, whose death was organized by a man named Saul, who's now named Paul, and who would soon join Stephen, where they will both live for eternity with Christ, thus achieving the martyr's hope.

The martyr's hope is eternal life with Christ, and they number in the thousands, the tens of thousands. We don't even know all of their names.

I have long held that prior to entry into heaven, we should be required to sit down at the pearly gates and read through the Fox's Book of Martyrs before we go in.

By the way, you can do that now. You don't have to wait until then. There is, though, a pattern and a flow here. If we die with him, we shall live with him.

Next is the fact that if we endure with him, we shall reign with him. The word endure suggests a life of great difficulty as one serves Christ.

[44:33] The death of VOM founder Richard Warmbrand, who I was privileged to know, was not that of a martyr in the strictest sense of the word.

He died in his sleep in California. But his life for Christ was one of endurance. And Richard bore the scars of being tortured for Christ.

In fact, when he appeared before the House on American Activities, Anti-Communist Activities, and House Representatives, he boldly took his shirt off. There's a famous picture of that. And he shows the scars that he got in prison for Christ.

I believe the second book that should be required reading is Reverend Wurmbrand's Tortured for Christ. The word endure here indicates a person that is truly a follower of Christ.

The suggestion is that those who do not endure give evidence of not belonging to Christ. Now, one thing is certain. An enduring life is an obedient life.

[45:41] You can't be disobedient and endure. But this in no way suggests that a person can achieve salvation if they endure. Salvation is always by grace through faith and apart from any meritorious work.

We are not saved if we endure. We endure if we are saved. It's a big difference there. And then we come to a couple of negatives.

First, if we deny him, the Lord Jesus, he will deny us. A more literal translation can be rendered if we ever deny him or if in the future we deny him.

The cost of being a true follower sometimes is too high and too costly for some people. In our own church in the last 34 years, we've seen a lot of people walk away.

It's too demanding. It's just too demanding. Quite frankly, all this leaves me a little weak-kneed because we have hanging out there the example of Peter.

[46:52] Peter, the denier. He denied Christ at a crucial moment in time. Did the Lord know he was going to do that?

Yeah, he knew he was going to be sifted like wheat. He'd already prayed for him. He'd already interceded for him. But Peter's example should also bring us a measure of comfort. Obviously, it is possible to fall into temporary cowardice and fail to stand for the Lord.

You know, in small measures, we may all be guilty of that if we shy away from openly declaring our love for Christ in a given situation.

We may all be guilty of that. What captures our attention is not only Peter's denial, but his almost immediate reaction to that denial.

He went out and wept bitter tears of penance. We know that the Lord restored him and he went on to be a great pillar and ultimately a martyr for the church.

[47:58] The key is that Peter's failure was followed by true repentance. Judas failed him. He didn't repent.

He went and hanged himself. But Peter's confession became bold. Bold. And it led to his death. What about that person who denies and never repents?

They give evidence that they are not genuine followers of Christ. Those that deny as a pattern of life bear the evidence of an unregenerate heart.

There are many in history that have entered into such denials. The greatest of these are the false teachers who not only deny the Lord through their teaching, but then lead others astray.

And that's what we're actually going to be studying next week. So the first negative we see is reserved for those that deny him. The second negative is this. If we are faithless, Christ remains faithful for he cannot deny himself.

[49:11] This is very interesting and often misinterpreted. Faithless is a form of the Greek word apostuo. I don't know if I'm getting this right. The Greek word apostuo means to believe or have faith.

Put an A in front, it becomes a negative, not having faith. It is not that they merely have a weak or vacillating faith. The unsaved that ultimately denied Christ never had real faith to begin with.

That's why they're denying him. You know, and this is really one of the proofs of the authenticity of the resurrection. Men will live for a lie, but they won't die for one.

But 11 of the 12 were martyred. John alone, who spent most of his time in exile.

The passage tells us that Christ remains faithful. The question then is to whom does he remain faithful, the lost or the saved?

[50:12] And the answer is to both. To both. Our scriptural support for this comes from the most familiar passage in the entire Bible.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Everybody in here can quote that from memory. And we love to quote it. But how many of us can accurately quote John 3:18?

Just two verses later. He who believes in him is not judged. He who does not believe has been judged already.

Because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God. Christ will never renege on his promise to save those who have trusted in him.

[51:16] Christ will never renege on his promise to condemn those who have not trusted in him. If he did anything else, he would be not denying himself and his very nature cannot allow him to do so.

He is both righteous and just and he will always do what is right and just. When the kids used to wear those wristbands that had the letters WWJD, what would Jesus do?

I wanted to go up and provide them the answer. The answer is JWDR. Jesus will do righteously. He always does right. And that's a great motivator as we serve the preeminent one.