

## **II Timothy - Part 4: Suffer for the Gospel**

*John Stott*

### **I. Introduction.**

- A. Timothy was exhorted to be strong.
- B. The strength that Timothy was to find was that in Christ Jesus—he was not to find strength in himself but that which Christ supplies in his grace.
- C. Timothy was to be strong for the ministry in which he was called.

### **II. Four stages in the transmission.**

- A. He has received the deposit from God.
- B. He has entrusted the deposit to Timothy.
- C. Timothy is to entrust it to faithful men—ministers, elders, preservers of the tradition.
- D. These men were to be competent to teach others also.
- E. This was the only succession of apostolic tradition.
  - 1. This came from the authority of the gospel.
  - 2. It was to be passed down from generation to generation.
  - 3. This is our responsibility today—we pass down what we have learned from the apostolic testimony, which is Scripture.
  - 4. Three metaphors illustrate this transmission in the epistle: the soldier, athlete, and farmer.

### **III. The metaphors of the Christian worker.**

- A. He is a soldier.
  - 1. His dedication includes a willingness to suffer and to concentrate.
  - 2. Soldiers do not expect an easy time—suffering is a matter of course and calling.
  - 3. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits.
  - 4. Every Christian worker is a soldier. No matter the temperament, one cannot avoid the conflict.
- B. He is a law abiding athlete.

1. He is only crowned if he abides by the rules.
2. Every event also is for a prize—the wreath in ancient Rome.
3. The Christian life is like a race in that we have to abide by the rules.
4. The Christian is under obligation to live according to the law. He is not under the law for salvation but as a guide to conduct.

C. He is a hard working farmer.

1. Hard work is indispensable to good farming.
2. The first share in the harvest goes to the hard working farmer and only if he works hard can he see a plentiful harvest.
3. Holiness is a harvest. Our part is discipline and other means of grace.
4. People may be struggling with temptation because they are sluggards. There are no gains without pains in the Christian life.
5. The winning of souls too is hard work—it is not a matter of method alone.

IV. The labor and suffering of the Christian.

A. Understanding Scripture. There must be a balance of devoted thought and prayer.

B. Labor and suffering is the condition of blessing.

C. Experiences to enforce this.

1. The experience of Jesus.
  - a. Christ is the heart of the gospel.
  - b. He is risen from the dead—both as human and deity.
  - c. He was risen to prove the efficacy of His sin bearing sacrifice.
  - d. He came to establish David's line to sit on David's throne.
  - e. Death is the gateway to life, and resurrection is the gateway to glory. Jesus was to be the model for Timothy to endure suffering.
2. The experience of Paul.
  - a. He was bound in prison, yet the gospel was not bound.
  - b. Because Paul was chained the gospel was free. There is a causal relationship here.

c. If we preach the gospel we must suffer for the gospel.

3, The experience of every believer.

a. The Christian life is about dying and enduring with Christ. This is a death to self and a death to safety that occurs in following Christ. It is only if we die with Him that we shall live with Him.

b. If we deny Christ, He will deny us.

D. Blessing comes through pain, fruit from labor, glory from suffering.

1. The Bible teaches no cross no crown, no rules no wreath, no pain no gain.

2. This principle brought Christ to His reign, Paul salvation for the elect, and every believer fruit from hardship.

3. Christian service is a costly thing.

V. The active Christian is...

A. A workman with no need to be ashamed.

1. The Christian's work has to do with teaching.

2. There are two kinds—one with a reason to be ashamed and one without a reason to be ashamed.

3. This has to do with their handling of the Word of truth.

4. Timothy is contrasted with two others.

5. The bad workman swerves from the truth. The truth is pictured as a path that is to be cut straight. The truth is a target to be hit directly. To cut the truth straight or hit it as a target is to be accurate and plain and simple.

B. A vessel for noble use.

1. Only the true members of the house of God prove their reality by their fit for use.

2. This is to be our great desire and privilege—to be useful to the Lord Jesus.

3. The essential condition is whether one purifies himself from what is ignoble.

4. This is to shun youthful passions, which is to flee from idolatry, immorality, materialism and sinful passions. Sin is dangerous to the soul and we are to flee from it.

5. This is also to chase after what is good.

C. The Lord's servant.

1. The Christian is to don the character of Christ, which is gentleness.
2. In doing so he may escape the clutches of the devil.

VI. Conclusion.

**Application questions**

1. What is the main focus of the labor and suffering in this message?

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2. What is the relationship between suffering and spreading the gospel?

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3. Where is your fruit? What are you doing to self-sacrificially spread the Word of God? How is this a real cost to you?

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