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| **Series Title:** Resilient Faith – Lessons from 2 Timothy |
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| **Weekly Title:** Resilient in Life |
| **Date:** Sunday November 24 |
| **Bible Passage:** 2 Timothy 4 |
| **Purpose of Preach:** To encourage people they can make in life with Jesus. |
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| **Introduction:**  [Please reference and use the general introduction to the series to remind people the heart and purpose for the series “Resilient Faith” looking at 2 Timothy.]  As he came to the final days or hours of his life Paul knew he had finished well. In v.7 he says three incredible things; *i) “I have fought the good fight”.* Paul was using here an athletic metaphor, of a wrestling match. But he is not referring to a physical fight. He is says “I have kept going, through all the battles I have faced and did not give up.” *ii) “I have finished the race”* I have finished this marathon race called life. Paul is saying “I did not give up on Jesus or His church when times were tough”. iii) “I have kept the faith” I did not give up on Jesus, Even in this cell I cling to Him. Paul says to Timothy “I have finished well”. How can we get to the end of our lives and be able to say these words? I want us to see four lessons from these verses on being “Resilient in Life”. |
| **1. V.2-4. Always place yourself under the Bible.**  If we are going to fight the good fight then we need to “preach the Word”.  *i) Paul tells Timothy always put yourself under Scripture and not over it.* In these verses he says: “The time will come when people will give up on this Word, they will simply believe and do what they want to and not pursue the Truth. And when people put themselves over this word Timothy you put yourself under it and preach it and stand upon it and never compromise it.”  *ii) And Paul says “coming under this word means we must be ready in season and out of season”.* There are seasons in life. Sometimes everything is amazing, and things just seem to be falling wonderfully into place. However: there are seasons of battle, wilderness and seemingly very little fruit. When God seems to hide Himself and you wonder if He is there at all. When the battles are raging around you and nothing seems to be going right.  *iii) Paul is saying no matter what season you are in come under this word and preach it and live it.* When there is no experience, no presence, no fruit, no encouragement will you still stand firm and come under this word. |
| **#2: v.9 Be Accountable to Trusted Friends.**  If we are going to fight the good fight we need to be accountable to trusted friends.  *i) We need people around us who love us enough to speak truth into our lives.*  Paul surrounded himself with teams of people. If you read the book of Acts we see he had the pattern of returning to Antioch and I think there was real accountability there for him. Paul longs for his friend Timothy to come to him soon. They had a friendship that cheered each other on into all that God had for them.  *ii) If you want to fight the good fight then you will need godly and reliable people who can speak into your life.* We all need two or three people who we are accountable to under God.As Charles Colson puts it:“Though I know intellectually how vulnerable I am to pride and power, I am the last one to know when I succumb to their seduction. That’s why spiritual Lone Rangers are so dangerous – and why we must depend on trusted brothers and sisters who love us enough to tell us the truth.” |
| **#3: v.10-16. Live in Total Forgiveness**  If we are going to fight the good fight we must continually deal with any anger, bitterness and unforgiveness in our hearts.  *i) Paul experienced the pain and the cost of being betrayed and let down by other people*. We see in these verses that he had been totally let down by key people in his team. We see in Philemon that Demas was a key part of Paul’s team and a “fellow worker” for the gospel. They had done ministry together, pioneered together. They had experienced the ups and downs of serving Jesus together for a number of years. But at this time when Paul most needed him, Demas ran away and abandoned him because he feared death and the cost of standing with him. At the time Emperor Nero was killing Christians and to testify for Paul would have been dangerous and possibly fatal. Demas was “more in love with this world” than with God’s Kingdom and so chickened out and deserted Paul. When facing pressure and challenge Demas chose safety and comfort.  *ii) Paul had experienced injustice, hatred and persecution.* Then we read “Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm”.Could be that he is the same man referred to in 1 Timothy 1:20 but not 100% sure as it was a very common name at the time. What is clear is that this man hated Paul and wanted to destroy him. Some argue Alexander travelled to Rome and was a key witness that lied against Paul at his trial and did him great harm in this way. Others argue that he came and tried to divide churches against Paul by spreading lies against his character and ministry.Whatever it was Alexander hated Paul and did all that he could to destroy him.  *iii) Finally we see in v.16 this heartbreaking truth that Paul was left totally alone.*  At his greatest moment of need all his friends abandoned him. Paul had been in church leadership for around 30 years. He had visited at least 50 cities sharing the gospel and planting at least 14 local churches. He would have loved, supported and blessed thousands of lives. At his greatest moment of need not one person from anywhere stood with him. We simply read in v.16 “At my first defence no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me”. Can you now see how easy it would have been for Paul to have become bitter and angry and resentful in his heart. And yet incredibly Paul says “May it not be charged against them!”  *iv) Nothing will slow us down in this fight than unforgiveness and bitterness.*  We need to follow the example of Jesus who taught us how to pray and live:  Luke 11:4 As Someone once said: “Resentment is like taking poison and waiting for the other person to die.” Holding a grudge is letting someone live rent free in your head. |
| **#4: v.17-18. Live in the Power of the Holy Spirit**  Finally, we fight the good fight through being strengthened in Him.  *i) In the midst of the battle and the pain Paul knew the presence and the power of Jesus.*  Even though everyone else had abandoned him Paul knew that the Lord “stood by me and strengthened me”. In the loneliness and the pain he experienced the presence of Jesus.In the weakness, the frustration, and the fear he experienced the power of Jesus strengthening him.  *ii) Paul knew the only reason he was finishing well was because of the power of Jesus that had enabled him*. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 “But he said to me, “my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong”. |
| ***Here are some examples of ways you might want to conclude the message. You could use some or all of them; develop them into different ideas or to fit with the Location***  Place Yourself Under the Bible:   * Commit to a daily time in God's Word, the Scriptures to shape your thoughts, decisions, and actions. * When facing challenges, go to the Bible first to find strength, wisdom, and guidance. * Resist the temptation to only read the Bible when you feel like it or when things are going well.   Find Trusted Accountability Partners:   * Through your life group - Identify 2-3 mature Christians you can be open and honest with about your life. * Meet regularly with them to share struggles, seek advice, and encourage one another. * Be willing to receive constructive feedback and correction from these trusted friends.   Live in Total Forgiveness:   * Reflect on any bitterness, anger, or unforgiveness you be holding onto. * Pray and ask God to reveal these areas, then choose to forgive those who have hurt or wronged you. * Write a letter (you don't have to send it) expressing your forgiveness, and ask God to help you let go. * Rely on the Power of the Holy Spirit - forgiveness is a work of the Holy Spirit * Spend time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh with His power and strength. * When facing difficulties, consciously depend on the Holy Spirit's help rather than your own abilities. Galatians 5:16-28 -16 “So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law”.   **Story from prayer partners - Open Doors. Pray for the persecuted church. *This example can be used within the sermon.***  PRAY WITH ANWAR  When Anwar\* worked with an international missionary team, who were visiting Indonesia, it changed his perspective about sharing the good news. “I truly grasped the significance of the gospel,” he says. “I was embarrassed. I was living with an unreached people group, yet I wasn’t doing anything. I decided to be fully involved in missions.”  Sometimes, people are too afraid to follow Christ. “It breaks my heart when someone wants to believe in Jesus but isn’t prepared to face rejection from their family, so they retreat,” Anwar says. His own ministry also comes with risk. “One time, security guards detained me when they found out I was sharing  the gospel,” he says. “By God’s grace, they did not take me to the police station. Knowing that  God is on my side, I can keep going to serve my people. Please pray that I can boldly continue  to preach the gospel in southern Sumatra.”  Please pray:  » That God would continue to use Anwar and his family to spread the gospel, and protect them  » That house churches will begin to form among the people group that Anwar serves  » For the Indonesians Anwar meets to have courage and strength to commit to Jesus. |