

2 Timothy 2:1–7 - Faithful When It's Hard

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Preacher: Simon Lawrenson

[0:00] Hey, good morning. It's good to see you all. Just got to make sure I'm switched on. Can you hear me?! Woohoo! All right. There you go. Hello. You don't want to hear more of me. Only my wife can say that and get away with it, right?

You don't need to hear me twice, right? Good. And Ollie is the magician on the console. He will sort that out. We are opening the Word together today at 2 Timothy.

So you know that we're going verse by verse, chapter by chapter through 2 Timothy. Less so chapter by chapter at the moment. Because there's only, what, four chapters? So it's more verse by verse. But we are now in chapter 2.

And so if you do have a Bible, turn there or scroll there and we'll read the first seven verses of the text this morning. So Timothy says, verse 1, chapter 2 of 2 Timothy. He says, You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

[1:24] No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuit since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

And he's a hardworking farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say. For the Lord will give you understanding in everything. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your Word.

Lord, we come to it and we come to you, Lord, and ask, Lord, that you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear. Lord, we pray, Lord, that the seed this morning would not fall on rocky ground, Lord, or ground that is quickly taken away.

Lord, we pray, Lord, that you would stir up the fallow ground, Lord, in our own hearts. Lord, that when your seed is planted in us, Lord, it would bear fruit.

Lord, and help us with these things. Lord, some of these things are difficult for us. And, Lord, we want to acknowledge this morning, before we even start to think about these things, Lord, that there are many competing thoughts in our minds.

[2:26] Lord, and we pray, Lord, that we would be able to give you the best of our thoughts this morning. Lord, to help us in these things, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So, last week, you remember that we kind of left on a little bit of a cliffhanger.

Paul had been writing to Timothy, and you remember that Timothy is in Ephesus, and he's pastoring the church there in Ephesus, and Paul is in Rome, in prison. And he's been writing to Timothy, and he's been talking about, like, literally the previous context is about these three men.

Two men who were faithful and one who wasn't. No, the other way around. Two men who weren't faithful and one who was, right? And Philegus and Homogynes, who weren't faithful, and they left, and they kind of let things slip, and they let things slide.

And then this guy, one Ciphorus, who was faithful, and he went out to search for Paul and found Paul. And they both needed mercy. Both the faithful and the unfaithful need mercy.

And he kind of is coming off the back of that kind of statement, that kind of argument. And he's been planting this seed with Timothy to say, you are God's child.

[3 : 39] You are identified with God because you've been made united with God in Christ. That's the kind of the theological context. And so it's not a surprise that he starts verse 1 with saying, you then, my child.

He's reaffirming that to Timothy again. And he said there in chapter 1, I want you to guard the gospel. And that immediately, before we kind of get into the text, it kind of immediately raises a little bit of a question, a little bit of a problem that many of us are quietly carrying.

And the question is this, and I think this is the question that Paul is speaking into this morning in this text. How do you keep going? How do you keep going?

Because guarding the gospel, it sounds noble, doesn't it? Like even the word guard, you know, kind of gives us a role. And it does sound noble until you've been doing it for a long time.

I don't often share personally from the pulpit. But this morning, I kind of felt like as I was preparing yesterday, like, you know, I've been leading the church now for just a little over 20 years.

[5 : 00] And all of that time, I've had another job. And I've sat on the board of another church for the last eight years, sat on the board of a music festival for 10 years, been a church planting coach for five years.

And I'll be honest with you, it's hard work. And when we started, I really believed, and I probably even shared this with Val and Dave right back in the beginning.

I really believed, like, I had so much faith that within five years, the church would be big enough to be able to sustain me and my family financially.

I assumed that faithfulness would eventually turn into momentum. And there's books that you can buy that will tell you that's how it works.

Dodge those books. Because it hasn't happened that way here. There are seasons where I have been tired.

[6 : 07] Not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually. And if I'm honest, there have been seasons where the question isn't so much, do I believe this?

But how long do I keep going for? When the fruit feels slow and the cost feels real. And I say that only because when I come to a passage that we're looking at this morning for years, these words have been a very, very good friend to me.

Because Paul isn't writing to someone who's winning. Paul is writing to someone who's weary. He's writing to Timothy, who has been in charge with this church in Ephesus.

And you remember that as Paul, and we'll look at this briefly later on in Acts chapter 20, Paul had kind of gone on his missionary journey and called for the elders of the church at Ephesus.

And he says, guys, this isn't going to end well. I want you to know that. Some of you elders are going to turn from the faith. I mean, just imagine sitting down with the church leadership and going, you're not going to end the same way you finished.

[7 : 25] And Timothy is now in charge of this church. Later, he would pass off the baton to the apostle John after John had come off of Patmos. Timothy isn't asking in this moment how to grow fast.

He's asking how to stay faithful. That should be our question. Paul doesn't answer with strategies and shortcuts and the latest church growth conference to go to.

And I'm not saying all of those are bad. That's just not how the apostle Paul answers. He doesn't say, try harder. And look, I'm so grateful for that.

He doesn't say, get up really, really early in the morning. Make sure you're doing all of your study. Make sure you're ticking all your boxes. Make sure you're all doing all that. And then, you know, if you do find time to sleep, praise God.

He doesn't say, try harder. He actually says something far more honest and far more hopeful. Look at verse one. He says, strength comes from grace, not self-effort.

[8 : 44] Strength, the ability to keep going and be faithful, comes from grace and not self-effort. He says, you then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

And right there, Paul reminds us again of what we've kind of titled this whole series through 2 Timothy about. Identity in Christ comes before calling.

And it's what sustains us when calling feels heavy. Notice how Paul writes in verse one. Again, when he uses that term, be strengthened.

You will notice, as I'm sure you already have, that it's the imperative verb in a passive voice. And I know that you'd made a note of that before I'd even said it.

So what does that mean? Look, it means it's a command. Be strengthened. It's a command to be strengthened, but it's a command for Timothy to receive strength.

[9 : 51] Now, that's unusual and it's intentional. Paul is not saying strengthen yourself or find inner resolve. He doesn't say go out and, you know, on a retreat and find some strength within yourself.

Right? He doesn't say push through it, be harder, be smarter. He says put yourself in a position to be strengthened. So the command isn't about producing power.

The command is about posture. And look, that fits with Paul's theology elsewhere. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Paul says, by the grace. And look, if you flick there and you've got a pen, you might want to just underline some of this stuff.

Right? He says, by the grace of God, I am what I am. And his grace towards me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that was in me.

Do you notice like, love, how many times Paul mentions the word grace? Three times in one verse. Grace. And he couples it with hard work.

[11 : 05] Did you get that? Like, grace isn't a substitute for hard work. Grace doesn't replace effort. It redefines it. You can't sit back on your couch and be lazy and go, oh man, grace, man, grace, man. No, no, no, no. That's called laziness. But at the same time, you can't ditch grace and go, well, I'm just going to work really, really hard and hope I, you know, I don't pass out.

The passive voice tells us that the source of the grace, or excuse me, the source of the strength belongs to God, not Timothy. It's not Timothy's strength.

Timothy's role is not to generate strength, but to receive it and then walk in it. Because look, if strength comes from you, weakness crushes you.

Right? The moment you're, I can tell you this for absolutely truth, I've been sick since mid-December. And I know for some that's not very long at all. Right? But like if strength comes from you, the moment you are knocked down with illness, you're done.

[12 : 23] What are you going to do? But if strength comes from Christ, weakness and failure humbles you, but it doesn't destroy you. See, Timothy is, is, is, is, and this is, you know, we're going back to two weeks ago.

But if Timothy is already loved by God, and he is already called by God, and he is already trusted by God with the gospel. If that's true, this is why Paul then says, look, live your life from what already is true.

You don't work to the cross, do you? You work away from the cross. And look, that's what it means to live unashamed, isn't it? It means to realize who you are in God because of God.

To live as though that's true because it is. And I think that's where Paul highlights there in verse one, because he, he doesn't just say be strengthened.

He says, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. It's probably true that too often we think of grace only as the doorway or the entrance into Christianity.

[13:31] And in many ways, like, obviously, it is a doorway into Christianity, the only doorway into Christianity, right? You know, Paul said in Ephesians chapter two, for by grace you have been saved through faith, right?

But the New Testament also continually reminds us that grace is also the power source of the Christian life. Like, grace doesn't just forgive failure.

It fuels faithfulness. Second Corinthians chapter 12, Paul writes to the church of Corinth of this experience that he had and how he heard from Jesus.

He says that Jesus said to me, my grace is sufficient for you. Paul was already saved. And the Lord says, you know what you need?

Sufficient for you is grace. That's what you need. For my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, he says, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

[14:39] Grace. Grace. So grace isn't the only thing that, so grace isn't only the thing that provides forgiveness and restoration for the past.

That this grace then invite, this grace in Bill's words from earlier, right? This grace doesn't invite us once to the table and then we're done. This is the grace that is power for the present.

And there is never a time we outgrow it. We just tend to, you know, depend on it, don't we, more deeply.

It was grace that drew Paul and saved Paul and kept him standing. Grace that said, you're not deserving of anything and gave him everything and brought him into his family and started to treat him like his own.

Another example of this is in Paul's letter to the church in Colossae. In Colossians chapter 2, where Paul says, Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus, as you have received, how have we received?

[15:50] By grace through faith. As you have received, so walk in, rooted, built up in him, established in the faith, just as you were taught abounding in thanksgiving. So the same way you receive Christ by grace through faith is the same way you're meant to walk with him.

Which means grace is not the doorway you walk through and leave behind. It's the ground you stand on every single day. Grace is not the starting line of the Christian life.

It's the fuel for the entire race. And that's why Paul can tell Timothy, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Because Timothy, you were undeserving then.

You're still undeserving. You didn't graduate once you were saved. And then in verse 2, Paul moves on to write about faithfulness in ordinary life.

And look, he's comparing the issue of Philegus and Homogenes and then Onciferus with Timothy. This is where he now talks about faithfulness.

[16:52] He says, and what you've heard from me, verse 2, in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men. He will be able to teach others also.

You know, one of the, again, one of the things that I just couldn't shake all week was this idea of faithfulness and actually these three men.

Again, two of them from chapter 1, Philegious and Homogenes who walked away. They didn't crash publicly that we know of. They didn't deny the faith outright that we know of.

They just quit early. And then one Ciphorus, again from chapter 1, who does the opposite. Who hears Paul is in prison and he goes looking for him.

He shows up when it would have been easier and probably safer to stay away. And look, what makes this heavier, as I've been thinking about it, is Timothy knows these three men. Absolutely knows these three.

[17:55] The church probably knows these three men. Otherwise, what would be the point in naming them? Right? Right? And again, when you go back to Acts chapter 20 and you look at Paul's missionary journey, Paul is on his way to Jerusalem.

He wants to stop at Ephesus, the church he's now writing to. But there isn't time. And so he calls for the leaders of the church to meet him in Miletus. That's Acts chapter 20.

And it's very possible, even maybe likely, that all three of these men are in that room meeting with Paul. And the message Paul gives them is super simple.

If you read it, hidden between the lines is the message, don't give up. Be faithful. Like he says, struggles are going to come.

Wolves are going to rise up from among you. Some of you guys who are in this room, he says. But don't quit too soon. And I think this is the most important thing for us to kind of get a grip of and understand.

[19:12] About faithfulness. Are we faithful people? Let me ask you honestly, how many times have you wanted to quit?

Before you answer that, let me help define faithfulness. I think that's important too. Because when Paul is writing, although he's writing primarily to Christian leaders and he's writing primarily to Timothy, he always has ordinary, if I can use that term, please don't be put out by that term.

He always has ordinary believers in mind. Like he's writing to Christian leaders. Yeah, absolutely. But he's also writing to us. He's writing to everyone. So what does faithfulness mean to most Christians?

Right. Well, I think he's talking about overall staying present with God and his people.

And I just kind of thought maybe there's five ideas I thought that faithfulness looks like. There's probably more. Like this isn't a complete dictionary definition of faithfulness.

[20:25] But just like I thought of five things that I thought faithfulness looks like. Just to help us understand, am I being faithful? Number one, continuing to trust Christ when it's hard.

Not understanding everything. There's a difference between trust and understanding. Not feeling close emotionally. Because again, there's a difference, isn't there?

Even airing your doubts. But on the other side of the storm, through the season, you can look back and still be trusting God. Like, do you remember the parable of the sower?

It's said of one seed in Matthew chapter 13. There was sown on rocky ground. This is the one who hears the word immediately, receives it with joy, yet has no root in himself.

And endures for a while. You might say, well, I've been a Christian 20 years. Well, how long is a while? Doesn't tell us, right? So this is a good word for all of us, whether you've been a Christian for six months or 60 years, right?

[21:33] It endures for a while. But when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

Faithfulness trusts God even when it doesn't make sense to. And so, are we trusting Christ when it's hard?

When life is hard? When we don't have all the answers? Maybe when we don't even have the questions? Secondly, faithfulness looks like staying in community instead of withdrawing.

The easiest thing to do is step back. Totally easy. There are a thousand reasons, I dare say excuses, to step back.

But faithfulness, what faithfulness looks like is you keep showing up, you stay connected, and you resist isolation. Hebrews 10.24, let us consider.

[22 : 48] I love how he said that. Let's just think about it. Let us consider. And after we've done considering a little while, he then carries on. He says, let's consider how to stir one another to love and good works.

Not neglecting to meet together. Why? The writer knows that it's easy to step back. Or not get up. Or get up late.

Or whatever it is. Do you know what I'm saying? I'm just speaking honestly. Like, there's a thousand excuses, thousands of reasons why we could have stayed in bed this morning.

Amen? Like, Mike needs prayer. Thanks, mate. But there is, isn't there?

Oh, I know the traffic's going to be heavy. Like, I had a busy day yesterday. I'm just going to relax. Why? I deserve it. And you do. But the Bible says, don't neglect to meet one another.

[23 : 52] And then, for those who are being, I don't even want to say faithful, because none of us are faithful, right? Are we stirring one another up to good works?

This is faithfulness. Thirdly, faithfulness looks like obedience in ordinary hidden places. Like, this is powerful. Why? Because our thought life and our, the worlds that, I'm just going to frame it like this.

The worlds that we build in our mind, right? The imaginations of our mind, Paul would argue. Our attitudes towards work.

Purity when no one sees. Faithfulness. Philippians 4, verse 8.

Whatever is true. Whatever is honorable. Whatever is just. Whatever is pure. Whatever is lovely. Whatever is commendable. If there is any excellence. If there is anything worthy of praise.

[25 : 02] Think about those things. That's it. That's faithfulness. Faithfulness in our thought life. Faithfulness in our thinking. And then, fourthly, enduring without becoming bitter.

Like, how soft are our hearts? Do we refuse cynicism?

Ephesians 4. Paul says, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. He doesn't say dumb it down.

He says put it away. Be kind to one another. Tender hearted.

Forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you. That's faithfulness. Fifthly, not giving up on grace.

[26 : 00] When you fall, when you fail, you repent, you return and you receive mercy again. That's faithfulness.

So while Paul is writing to church leaders, there's enough here for us. Amen? See, look, one of the, and I've said this before, one of the greatest temptations for the Christian is not heresy.

It's weariness. It's not rebellion. It's losing heart. Think about how many times in the Bible you read, be strong, be courageous, don't give up, don't quit. Scripture only speaks that way to people who are close to dropping.

And some of us are probably closer than we want to admit. Tired of showing up. Tired of praying.

Tired of believing that faithfulness matters. Paul says, See, look, the qualification isn't performance.

[27 : 20] Paul doesn't say impress people. He doesn't say build a platform or project your reputation. He says entrust to others. He will be able to teach others also.

And so the flow goes. And if you know your New Testament, you'll notice. It goes Ananias, Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others.

That's the flow of the New Testament. This means your faithfulness matters more than you think. And you may not see the fruit now.

But obedience echoes. And the gospel doesn't end with you. And it doesn't end with me. It moves through you to others. And then verse 3, Paul gets super real.

If he hasn't got super real already, he's like, No, it's time to bring this home now. Verse 3, he gets super real. And he shows us three things that will challenge our faithfulness.

[28 : 26] You're like, Oh, brother. Like, I didn't need that. I don't need any more challenge. Thank you very much. But he's going to look. He says, as a good pastor as Paul is, he's saying, Look, watch out for these three things.

The first is found in verse 3. I'm going to call it soldier isolation. He says, Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

So notice that it doesn't say avoid suffering. You know, that's Buddhism, basically, right? He doesn't say avoid it. He assumes that this is part of the Christian life, just as it is of a soldier.

Suffering. And the suffering he is referring to is the kind of struggle that comes with, you know, when the soldier doesn't get involved in pursuits that aren't his to get involved with.

Meaning, there's a loneliness in obedience. Isn't there? That's what he's talking about. When you realize you're out of step with culture and even sometimes other Christians.

[29 : 43] And you're the only one saying no or you're the only one saying yes. And this challenges our faithfulness as it challenges our identity.

The who you are and where you've come from, which is what we've talked about, the identity that we've been talking about, gets challenged when we are out of step with God. And we start trying to please others rather than the one who enlisted us.

And so when approval becomes identity, obedience becomes optional. This is the problem that Paul is highlighting. Soldier isolation. There's going to be times when your faith is challenged when you're the only one doing the right thing.

You're the only one pleasing God. And Paul's message is don't quit. Don't give up.

Because it's God who's enlisted you. The second example he gives there is in verse 5. Another challenge to faithfulness. He says, An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

[31 : 02] So, this speaks to, you know, those of us sometimes who felt like you're doing all the right things and still losing.

Like playing most board games for me. Like, right guys? Like, I'm doing all the right things. Why am I losing?

And then Joseph comes along and sweeps up, you know, like, I didn't even see that coming. I mean, Hannah saw it coming, but no one else. Like, what? Do you ever get, but in like, in turn, you're like, I'm doing all the right things and it doesn't seem like the formula God knows about.

Right? Because I'm doing these right things and then right things are supposed to happen. You tell the truth and somehow it costs you. You take the high road and then you get criticized.

You honor God and you get overlooked. And this breaks that unspoken deal that we've all made with God at some point.

[32:22] If I'm good, things should work out, right? And when they don't, quitting feels logical. Discouragement whispers, is there even a point?

Your marriage is still hard. Your prodigal child still hasn't come home. Your workplace is still hostile. But listen, faithfulness requires disciplined obedience.

Not shortcuts. Not compromise. The athlete doesn't know shortcuts. Like I'm at the gym, I'm on the treadmill, I'm taking all the shortcuts I can.

But a true athlete doesn't know shortcuts. They're up early in the morning. They're doing exercises that make no sense.

They're eating all kinds of healthy food and not eating the kind of food that we all love. There's no shortcuts. There's no shortcuts. There's no shortcuts.

[33:45] If you want to win. If you want to compete. Because faithfulness isn't about speed, it's about distance. It's not about how fast you get there.

I think this takes a great deal of honesty with ourselves, doesn't it? One of the quiet dangers I think in the Christian life is often not outright rebellion but subtle pretending.

when we learn how to say the right things and we show up in the right ways and we manage appearances while carefully steering around what actually is going on inside us.

And the hardest place to be honest isn't with the people, it's with ourselves. And when was the last time we just stopped when am I being honest with myself? You're like, well, I did five miles on the treadmill.

No, you didn't. Like, you started your fitness watch before you got to the gym. That's not being honest.

[34:58] We settle for shortcuts. Spiritual habits that look faithful on the outside but never touch the heart. And over time, avoiding truth feels safer than facing it. Because truth might ask something of us.

But grace doesn't grow in pretense. Grace grows in honesty. And God isn't interested in our performance as much as He is our faithfulness.

And the most faithful thing some of us could do today is stop managing ourselves and start telling the truth before God again. And the third thing I said to Laurie, I said to Laurie, last week I taught 10 minutes less.

So, you know what that means, right? Yeah. Yeah. The third thing he mentions is what I've called farmer fatigue. Verse 6, it's the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.

And this is often used as an example of, you know, someone in ministry who should, you know, be the first to receive stuff. And I think there's other places in the New Testament which probably justify that, but I don't think it's this verse.

[36:31] The problem is in the word ought. The farmer ought to. But quite how often does that happen?

Well, he ought to. The farmer works patiently, hard, and faithfully. No applause.

No instant results. Just trusting that growth is going to happen underground. And what ought to happen is that faithfulness results in fruit.

That's what ought to happen. I have had so many conversations over the years.

Oh, Simon, you've been there 20 years, and there's only 30 people? You must not be very faithful. To which I answer, yes, most probably.

[37 : 37] but see, look, faithfulness isn't a guarantee that there is going to be fruit. Because Paul says what ought to happen?

It ought to be that way. But it's not always like that. When it's not like that, there is the temptation to quit and to give up.

But listen, if there's anything I've learned about a Christian life, like, if you say to me, Simon, what have you learned about a Christian life? I could probably only tell you one thing. And that is that God does his deepest work slowly.

Like, he is not in a hurry. Like, we're in a hurry. I'm always in a hurry. But God's never in a hurry. Like, he took 39 years, 40 years to teach the children of Israel to trust him.

One lesson, 40 years. He doesn't work in flashy moments or overnight breakthroughs.

[39 : 02] Like, sometimes he does, and we should praise God for that. That's not the normal way that God works. He's patient. He is quietly shaping hearts.

He is quietly molding characters in a way that we often just do not see. The growth that lasts, the kind that transforms our desires and our loves and our courage, takes time.

like a farmer waiting for harvest. The seed of God's work is invisible for a season. And sometimes that slow work feels frustrating, even discouraging, because we long for visible fruit.

love. But the beauty of God's timing is that grace is present in the slow work. He's not absent in that work. He hasn't left.

He's present in that slow work. It doesn't pause because fruit hasn't arrived. And then finally, verse 7, to finish, Paul says that understanding comes as you walk in faithfulness.

[40 : 25] Understanding comes as you walk in faithfulness. He says, and I love these words, think over what I say.

I want you to reflect. I want you to meditate on these things. This is what Paul is saying. Go deep with these things. It's okay.

I'm going to get in trouble for this. It's okay to pause your daily Bible reading in order to reflect on what you've just read. Is that okay to say that?

Why? Because faithfulness isn't a race. It's not about a speed. Right? So Paul is saying, calm down.

Think about these things. Go deep with these things. If faithfulness is that important, don't skip ahead to verse 8 and think like, you know, my Bible reading plan.

[41 : 31] I've got to get to Titus by Tuesday. It is true, isn't it? And we think somehow in our minds that I'm not knocking Bible reading plans, Jen.

I'm not, right? I'm not knocking. I think people should read the Bible. Can I just go on record for that? Okay? But let's not make it about performance.

Okay? make it about performance. Think over what I say for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

Now, the amount of times I've quoted that verse when I'm trying to fix stuff in the house, right? The Lord's going to give me understanding how this bit of pipe goes on this bit of pipe. I don't think that applies to that.

I think it's in the context of faithfulness. And I think what Paul is saying is, look, when you start to step out in faithfulness, you just do the day-by-day-by-day-by-day stuff, the planting, the showing up, the commitment to, and you start walking in that, all of the questions that you have as to why and how and when will come to you.

[42 : 54] But guaranteed, they won't come to you without stepping out in faithfulness. if you're just waiting, like, you're waiting, you're like, what's God calling me to do?

I'm just going to sit and do nothing while I wait for God's call, or you're going to be waiting for a long time. Paul confesses that some of these things are hard, and they need some thinking about.

think and I love this. He says, think along with the Lord. That's the phrase he uses.

It's not like Paul says this one thing and you're now going to go away and think about it. He says, the Lord is going to give you understanding and really if you want to reword that, it is to think along with the Lord.

and the Lord will give you understanding. And so, look, may God help us to be faithful.

[44 : 04] And look to the one who has always been faithful. And it's not us. None of us have been faithful, right? Jesus has been faithful. He's always been faithful. He always will be faithful.

And so we step out in faithfulness because of the one who stepped out of faithfulness for us. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you, Lord, that you are the faithful one.

Lord, and we just want to say thank you, Lord, that you've never given up on us, even though from a human perspective there have been thousands of reasons and thousands of opportunities to say you're done.

thank you, Lord, your word reminds us that you are in heaven right now, interceding on our behalf. Thank you, Lord, that those prayers aren't dictated by our behavior.

Lord, thank you, Lord, that you would be praying for us because you're faithful. You continue to do so. and you never sleep on the job.

[45 : 20] You never get tired. Lord, you see the finished work in us and you never get frustrated by our thought life or our actions.

Lord, we want to live our lives out of that reality. So help us, we pray. Lord, we look to you as the faithful one.

not man, not institutions. Lord, we want to thank you that you are faithful. Lord, help us to be faithful each and every day.

Strengthen us by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.