

2 Timothy 2:8-19 - Standing Strong When Life Feels Heavy

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[0 : 00] Amen. We're making our way through this letter of Paul to Timothy.

And so we've come as far as kind of the middle of verse chapter 2. Verse chapter 2. We've come as far as the middle of chapter 2. And so we're going to begin reading of verse 8.

And then I'm going to pray and then we're going to get into the text. So Paul writes and he says, Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal, but the word of God is not bound.

Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The saying is trustworthy.

For if we have died with him, we will also live with him. If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us. If we are faithless, he remains faithful because he can't deny himself.

[1 : 50] Remind him of these things and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth, but avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene.

Among those are Hermeneus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth, saying that their resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. But God's firm foundation stands.

Bearing this seal, the Lord knows those who are his, and let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. Let's pray. Father, we ask as we turn to your word that you would help us.

Lord, we need your help. And so, Lord, we ask that you would just give us ears to hear. Lord, we pray, Lord, that you would help us to concentrate. Lord, to protect our minds from wandering.

And the anxieties of today and yesterday and the problems of tomorrow, Lord, we again surrender them to you and give them to you. Lord, knowing that they are much better off being with you.

[3 : 04] We are much better off them being with you. And so, Lord, we pray, help us. And Lord, we pray, Lord, that this wouldn't just be kind of head knowledge to us.

Lord, we pray that you would enable us by your spirit to walk these things out. Lord, for your glory and in Jesus' name. Amen. So, last week, when we were looking at the beginning of chapter 2, we were talking about what it means to keep going.

We were talking about faithfulness when obedience feels slow and it feels unseen and it feels costly. And we were talking about how we are to be strengthened by grace that is in Christ Jesus.

How we can be strengthened by grace for the long obedience of faith. And if you were here, you might have left thinking, okay, so I know that that's hard, but what does it mean to actually be strengthened by grace?

Like, what does it mean? Like, I get what it means when it's hard, but what about when it's confusing? Because sometimes, look, sometimes the challenge isn't just weariness, is it? Sometimes the challenge is like disorientation.

[4 : 18] It's like the questions that come, right? You're still showing up. You're still trying to be faithful. You're still believing, but now there's questions. There's tensions. And sometimes it's harder to tell what's solid and what's slipping.

And so, this is exactly where Timothy is in this passage. He's not walking away. He's not rejecting the gospel. The church at Ephesus aren't.

But Paul is super honest and says, look, look, my friend, you have some problems. There are some problems going on in the church and you need to address it. He's just, Timothy is just trying to lead and he's just trying to live faithfully in the moment.

And there is suffering, there's problems, there's challenges, and they seem to be increasing. We certainly get that idea from his first letter. The truth is being contested.

There is a cost to following Christ. And so, Paul doesn't change the conversation at this point. He is deepening the conversation. It's the same conversation as last week or in the first seven verses of the chapter.

[5 : 27] But now it's deeper. And he starts to wrestle with what is really at stake. So, last week, Paul said again, be strengthened by grace that is in Christ Jesus.

And this week, Paul tells Timothy how to get that strength from Christ. And he's going to say, and this shouldn't be a surprise to any of us, he's not going to give us any new techniques.

He's not going to give us a plan, like a 30-day plan for being strengthened, right? He's going to say that the most important thing is not figuring everything out.

Isn't that interesting? He doesn't say, you know what, you need to go and just figure everything out. Once you've figured everything out, you know, put together a plan, and I'm sure you'll feel stronger. He doesn't say that.

But he says in verse 8, he says, remember who Jesus really is. And you remember the kind of the whole theme of this letter is identity in Christ.

[6 : 31] Remember who Jesus is, and then who you are because of him. And remember, we've been talking about identity is who you are before God because of God.

And so that's where we're going today. So the first thing he says about being strengthened, it's on the screen, is remember Jesus who endured. Remember Jesus who endured.

You want the strength to keep going. You want to be strengthened by grace that is found in Christ. It's not to read the latest Be Strengthened book. And I'm not knocking those books.

Like sometimes they can be super helpful. But that's not where Paul goes. Paul says, look, in these verses 8 to 10, actually it's one single sentence in the Greek.

So we should be glad that in the English they kind of divide it up. And in the NIV version, it's actually divided up even more than it is in our ESV. But he says, he's literally going to say, look, you just need to remember the Jesus who endured rather than your problems.

[7 : 39] That's a word for us, isn't it? Because sometimes we get our struggles, we get our concerns, we get our problems. And where do we go? We go internal, don't we? Oh, look at me. Look at my problems. Look at my challenges.

And Paul would say, no, no, no, that's not the way to deal. That's not the way to get through those. That's not the way to be strengthened. The way to be strengthened by grace that is in Christ Jesus is to remember Christ Jesus. And so he says in verse 8, remember Christ Jesus risen from the dead, the offspring of David.

David, the content of what is to be recalled includes not just, you know, this figure, if you like, this historical figure of Jesus.

He's saying, look, you've got to remember two things. You've got to remember Jesus. And he's going to talk about there in the end of verse 9 and the beginning of, excuse me, end of verse 8, beginning of verse 9. Also, Paul's willingness to follow the example of Jesus.

He says, as preached in my gospel for which I am suffering. And so these two ideas together kind of set the stage for what he's going to say in verses 11 to 13.

[8 : 49] So remember Christ Jesus risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel. It would be tempting for Paul to say to Timothy or to tell Timothy that you need to remember your calling.

You know, Timothy, you just need to keep going. And he's talked about his calling before, hasn't he? He's talked about how Timothy was raised by his grandmother and his mother and how he's sure that that calling has come on him.

He's absolutely convinced Paul was that Timothy is where God has him at that moment. But Timothy doesn't say, excuse me, Paul doesn't say to Timothy, what you need to do is remember that God's got you.

God's got you. God's called you. Don't go back to your gifting. Don't go back to your responsibility. Like you just have to dig deep, Timothy, because you have a responsibility. Don't you know?

Instead, he says, remember Christ Jesus risen from the dead, the offspring of David. So Jesus is risen from the dead. Which talks about Jesus having victory over sin and victory over death.

[9 : 52] That Jesus, in Jesus, there is hope and there is power. Because none of us have done any of those things. And that's why he's pointing him back to Jesus.

He calls him the offspring of David. There's a promise attached to that, that title. There is kingship attached to that title. There's fulfillment attached to that title.

And it's easy for us to get kind of abstract and agree, well, you know, he's risen from the dead and he's the offspring of David. And we kind of get that abstract theology.

We go, oh yeah, that's right. That's part of the creeds. And we believe that and then we move on. But look, this isn't abstract theology. This is survival theology. Paul is saying, look, Timothy, don't remember a vague Jesus.

Remember a crucified, risen, reigning king. And when we focus our hearts and minds on that, then the challenges of our life, we become strengthened in.

[10 : 52] Paul is gently pressing Timothy to be honest about something we all do when life gets heavy. When pressure is rising, we don't usually stop believing Jesus.

What we do is shrink him. Right? We magnify the problem and we shrink the problem, the savior. Don't we?

And what Paul is saying, remember that Jesus has got the victory. He is the one who brings hope. He is the fulfillment of the promise. He is the promised Messiah.

He is the one who's coming back. Sometimes we hold on to a safe, vague version of Jesus.

A Jesus who comforts but doesn't confront. A Jesus who soothes our anxiety but doesn't command our allegiance. And Paul knows that a small Jesus can't sustain a weary soul.

[11 : 53] So he says, Timothy, remember the real Jesus. Not an idea, not a memory, not a religious feeling. Remember the Jesus who was crucified. Who entered suffering without shame.

Remember Jesus who was raised. Who proved that his suffering is not the end of the story. Remember the Jesus who reigns. Who was not overwhelmed by weakness.

Paul isn't trying to intimidate Timothy. He's trying to anchor him in Christ. And then Paul gets personal in verse 9.

He says, for which I am suffering. Bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound. Love that, don't you?

Like Paul is writing from prison. Chained, ready to, probably at this point, ready any moment to be executed. And he still has the mind to encourage Timothy.

[12 : 59] To say, even if I end, the gospel, the word of God does not end. The gospel continues. Paul may be chained and in prison, but the word of God is not.

And here, I think, he's probably directly referring to what he's just said. Like, I don't think he's talking about the entire Bible. Right? I think he's saying that the truth about Jesus, who he is and what he's done, frees you.

It doesn't chain you. It frees you. We'll talk about that. Right? The word of God and focusing our heart and mind on who he is and what he's done doesn't chain you.

It doesn't bring bondage to you. So, therefore, he says in verse 10, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

So, something we've said before and it's worth highlighting again, and that is that Paul's endurance, the ability for Paul to keep going, is again, is rooted in the identity he has in God because of God.

[14 : 10] If there was one person in the whole entire New Testament, apart from Jesus himself, who could rely on something else apart from Christ, it would be Paul, wouldn't it?

Like Paul's upbringing, Paul's training, Paul's conversion testimony. You know, all of that. He could go, well, look at this, look at this, look at this. And I could rely on that.

I could rely on my education. I could rely on my heritage. I could rely on this. And Paul says, no, no, no, no. None of that is good enough. He says, for the sake of the elect, that they may obtain salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

He is reminded again that, listen, God has a people. Isn't that encouraging? God has a people.

God is at work that they may obtain salvation. That is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory that God will finish what he started.

[15 : 14] That is a truth that God has a people. God is at work and God will one day finish that work and take us home. God has a people. That's supposed to bring us courage.

Right? And look, the truth is, is that when Paul writes God has a people, he's saying, I'm one of them. And that God is at work.

He's saying, God is at work in me. And he will one day finish it in me. And so. What Paul outlines in those first few verses is this encouragement, this exhortation, if you like, to remember Jesus who endured.

To fix our minds there. When things start to get confusing or disorientating or actually just challenging. Is to put our attention in Jesus.

That's where we get strength. And then the second thing he says there is in verse 11 to 13. And he says, to rest in the gospel that holds.

[16 : 27] So not just to remember Jesus who endured, but to rest in the gospel that holds. Verse 11. The saying is trustworthy for. And now Paul gives us what many, many, many New Testament scholars think is just an early hymn.

An early Christian hymn that they would sing. Don't know the tune. Aren't you glad? That means I won't be singing it to you this morning. Did I get an R?

Yeah, you know, that's a great way to clear the hall. So he says, this is trustworthy. For if we have died with him, we will also live with him.

And so this is talking about what we talked about a few weeks ago. Union with Christ. You know, the whole basis of the reason why we can stand before God because of God.

Is because what Jesus has done, our union with him. And understanding and walking in our God-given identity comes before endurance.

[17 : 31] It comes before faithfulness. It comes before obedience. He says, you died with Christ. You live with Christ.

If we endure, verse 12, we will also reign with him. And so endurance and faithfulness absolutely matter. Amen? But it's participation, not performance.

If we deny him, he will also deny us. And this is, look, this is not about struggling faith, right? This is not, please don't go away, you know, discouraged.

Like, well, you know, I've just been struggling in my walk. There's some things I just don't understand. There's this besetting sin I keep falling into. And, you know, like, God's just going to deny me. That's not what he's saying. He's saying, look, this is about, this here is about settled rejection.

Paul is warning, not threatening. He says, if we are faithless, he remains faithful. For he can't deny himself.

[18 : 38] And look, there is an emotional center in that text, isn't there? You know, Paul doesn't say if we are faithless, he's done with us.

He says, Christ's faithfulness outlasts ours. Why? Well, simply because your salvation rests on his character and not your consistency.

Now, thirdly, look, we see in verse 14, they're the command to handle truth in a way that heals.

So thirdly, not just remember Jesus who endured or rest in the gospel that holds, but also to handle truth in a way that heals. Verse 14, remind them of these things.

And so look, in verse 9, we've been told to remember. Yeah? And then in verse 14, now we are told to make them remember.

[19 : 36] That's what it means to remind them. But with this charge, remind them of these things and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good.

How much good does it do? No good. Right? But only ruins the hearers. Now look, this is not anti-doctrine.

This is anti-ego. That's the flow of this message. Right? Paul is not saying you need to lay down what truth is.

Right? Or you need to lay down doctrine or you need to lay down theology. He's not saying that. He's saying what you need to lay down is pride. He's not warning Timothy against picking apart Bible texts and discussing the words.

Okay? He's warning him of the dangers that happen when truth becomes a tool for self-importance instead of a means for transformation. And sadly, I think we've probably all seen that in the church, haven't we?

- [20 : 46] When doctrine becomes more about winning an argument than causing our hearts to worship. And what happens when we care more about being right than being faithful?
- Right? It stops forming us and starts actually deforming us. This is what Paul is saying. And again, we should look.
- We should love the truth. Right? We should contend for the truth. But Paul is confronting this subtle temptation to use theological precision as a substitute for spiritual maturity.
- He's like, that's not the way that you're going to become spiritually mature by debating words. And in the local church, you know, in our church, the truth, when truth is handled humbly and patiently and in love, it actually creates a community where people can be honest about their struggles without fear of being ashamed.
- That's why Paul is so concerned here. It's not just about that, you know, the church would believe the right things and we should believe the right things. But that truth is stewarded in a way that builds up rather than tears down.
- [22 : 04] When truth becomes sharp and performative and argumentative, it actually fractures the body. But when truth is rooted in the gospel and shaped by love, it matures the church.
- This is exactly what Paul wrote to the church of Ephesus. He says this in chapter 4. He says, speaking the truth in love. That's always a dilemma, isn't it? It's always a problem. Speaking the truth in love.
- Being candid enough to tell the truth. But in a way, that doesn't divide. Builds up. He says, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up.
- I used to hear that on a daily basis when I was a kid. Just grow up. We are to grow up. How do we grow up? In every way into him who is head into Christ, from whom the whole body joined and held together in every joint with which is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.
- So here's the phrase that Paul is saying. He's saying, speak the truth in love. Doing that makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. And so Paul's point is that truth was never meant to inflate our ego.
- [23 : 27] It was meant to crucify it. Verse 15, do your best, he says. Do your best. I wonder how that sits with us this morning. Do your best.
- Do we give God our best? He says, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved. That sentence sounds heavy, doesn't it?
- You know why it sounds heavy? Because it is. It's supposed to be. It probably sounds especially heavy if we don't really fully grasp and understand it.
- It probably feels especially heavy to those already living under the weight of shame. Because shame tells us, again, and we go back to this time and time again, shame tells us that we must hide our weaknesses.
- And manage our appearances. I mean, go, maybe not, but you know this. Go on to Instagram. It's all about managing our appearance, isn't it? But Paul here isn't speaking the language of shame, but the language of grace.
- [24 : 37] Again, how are you strengthened in grace? Because when you compare shame and grace, you know, imagine if there were, you know, two sides, put them side by side.
- Shame says if you fail, you are rejected. You are accepted. So you better do all you can to prove yourself. But grace says because you are already accepted and you didn't earn it, you can't lose it.
- So you can be honest. That word approved means genuine in the Greek. We're not debating words.

I'm just telling you what it means. It means genuine. It's the idea where a metal would go through fire and be tested for any impurities and burn off.

And then the person at the end would go approved. Genuine. It's the idea that after this testing has come. You remain faithful.

[25 : 48] James pretty much said the same thing in chapter 1, verse 12, where he said, Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial.

Same idea. For when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. And so this does not mean flawless performance. That's not what being approved means.

It means living openly before God without masks and self-protection. It is the freedom of bringing your real self into God's presence and discovering that his approval is not earned but given in Christ.

Like we sing, don't we? We sing about freedom all the time and being free in Christ. But that's exactly what this means.

What does it mean to be free? Have you ever thought about that? We're free to love God. We're free to live for God.

[26 : 51] Why? Because we didn't earn his approval or acceptance in the first place. And so if we didn't earn it, we can't lose it.

Because it wasn't based on your performance in the first place. And if that's true, then you can be the most truest version of yourself with him and be honest about your struggles without any fear of being ashamed.

And if that's true, if who you are before God is in that place, then you can be the truest version of yourself and you can be honest.

That's true freedom. Without any worry and any concern about being rejected. Without any fear of being rejected. It means you don't have to curate yourself in his presence.

You don't have to manage your appearance in his presence. You don't have to lie about what's going on in your heart in his presence. You don't have to worry about being exposed in his presence.

[28 : 02] We talked about before, exposure isn't the problem. It's being exposed in front of the wrong judge is the problem. We set up all of these judges all the way throughout our lives, don't we?

And we're concerned about being exposed in front of them. And we should be. But we shouldn't be exposed, worry about being exposed in front of God's presence. Like we don't have to edit our prayers.

We don't have to manage our tone. Or hide the parts of our story that feel disappointing or unfinished. With him, honesty is not a liability.

It's a doorway to healing. You can name your fears without being dismissed. You can confess your failures without being crushed. You can admit your exhaustion without being disqualified.

Why? Because grace means you are fully known and fully loved all at the same time. That strengthens us. Shame says if you're honest, you'll be rejected.

[29 : 09] Grace says you are already received. You are already accepted. Now come into the light. And when fear of shame is removed, pretending loses its power.

And what's left is not performance but relationship. Not striving but rest. Not hiding but healing. And most of the posturing that we see in churches about words and disagreements about nonsense things.

Listen, from my experience, it's about performance. That is all about ego. It's about striving. It's about hiding. If I can show you that I can pass this Greek grammar sentence and I can prove it, then clearly I'm better than you.

Clearly, I've got my stuff together. Clearly, spiritually, I'm on a high. But listen, again, from experience, that will only create division.

And listen, that's not just from experience because Paul says this right in our text. He says, Do your best, verse 15, to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth, but avoid irreverent babble.

[30 : 31] Love that word, babble. Don't you? It just kind of rolls off the tongue. Irreverent babble. Now look, Timothy had already said this before.

He said this in his first letter. So there was a warning to Timothy and to the church in Ephesus previously. And obviously, it's still a problem for the church in Ephesus.

What does that look like? What is irreverent babble? Can I give you some ideas? This isn't a full list. Because I think we'll be here for a while, right?

If it was a full list. Like, bed down, get some lunch. So, some things that, I don't know, from my experience, maybe.

Obsessing over timelines. Hidden codes. Secret meanings of text.

[31 : 38] I've got a book. I probably threw it out. I've got a book. It's a big book. About the secret codes in the Bible. That if you read them backwards and vertically, it tells you all kinds of things about JFK's assassination.

Just irreverent babble. Like, that is good, but only for fire burning purposes. Right? Obsessing over timelines.

Look, the Bible says, And some of these are half-truths, aren't they? Like, we're told to be ready for the return of Christ. You know, right?

But people are camping out on hills, waiting for wolf moons, and super moons, and blood moons, and like now naming dates for when the rapture's going to be. And it's like, How's your soul?

Talking about prayer instead of praying. Ever come across that? Go to a... You go... And look, I'm not knocking this at all.

[32 : 48] Well, I am. Okay, no, I am. No, I am. I am. You know, when you go to a prayer meeting, you expect to pray, don't you? Good. But we don't, do we?

We talk about praying, and then one person prays, and then we leave. And it's like... I didn't pray. Maybe that's just a bugbear on my own.

I don't know. How about discussing holiness and avoiding repentance? Yeah. We should throw some stones out this morning, right?

We talk about holiness, and yet we don't deal with the holiness in our own lives. We're really, really good at pointing the finger at others and go, Oh, look at their faithfulness or lack of it.

And then when someone dares raise our own faithfulness, whew, knowing doctrine, but resisting obedience in ordinary life, highlighting flaws without pointing to Christ.

[34 : 02] Paul says in verse 16 that it will lead people into more and more ungodliness. And their talk spreads like gangrene.

Now, I'm not a medical professional. I have no idea how gangrene spreads, but I don't want it at all. I almost don't care how it spreads.

Just get it away from me. I do know that gangrene smells, and you can smell...

It's just true. But it's true that you can smell those conversations a mile off. And that's why we need to rely on each other, right?

And so then he says, and I'm always amazed by these kind of phrases, Paul says, amongst those are Hymenaeus and Philetus.

[35 : 11] Hymenaeus was mentioned in Paul's first letter. And he was... Hymenaeus and Alexander, I think, they were handed over to Satan by Paul.

This bloke's still around in his second letter, causing trouble. Philetus is the only time he's mentioned in the entire Bible.

We don't know who he is, but he's in trouble. There are 21 individual people mentioned in Paul's letters to Timothy.

21. Paul doesn't write about ideas so much as he writes names. He names names. He names faithful people.

He names fragile people. He names people who quit and people who stayed. He mentions people who have been with him and people who have been against him.

[36 : 12] We'll read about Alexander the coppersmith who did him great harm. We don't know what that harm was, but Paul finds it significant enough to mention his name.

Listen, faithfulness always has a face. Always. It's not an abstract idea. And so does unfaithfulness. Paul not only names the names, but he names the cost.

He's not out really to do damage to these people. He's saying, look, if this continues or this is allowed to continue or allowed to spread, there's going to be a problem.

And he names the problem there in verse 18. He says that these people have swerved from the truth. Saying that the resurrection, and this is the final resurrection that Paul is talking about.

He's not talking about the resurrection of Jesus on the third day. He's talking about the historic, or he's not talking about the historic resurrection of Jesus. He's talking about the coming again of Jesus.

[37 : 25] And he's saying, some have swerved from the truth. And it's almost like, to the extent that they're saying that Jesus has already come back. And the struggles that you are facing, you're going to have to face, and you're going to have to endure, because actually, there is no power over them.

There's not going to be an end to them until you die. And then we're kind of done. And they're upsetting the faith of some. And so look, the lesson is that we are to handle truth in a way that heals.

Fourthly, lastly, we are to stand secure in the identity that God knows. And I love this, and I wish I had time to kind of unpack this a little bit more. But the children's workers this morning will never forgive me.

One of whom is my wife. So that would be a long week. So, Paul is going to say in verse 19 that you need to stand secure in this fact that God knows you.

That's going to strengthen you. So, what is going to strengthen you by grace? Well, remembering Jesus who endured, resting in the gospel that holds you, handling truth in a way that's going to heal you.

[38 : 45] But lastly, standing secure in the identity that God knows. But, he says in verse 19, God's firm foundation stands bearing this seal.

The Lord knows those who are His. If you've got that underlined in your Bible, highlighted, you probably should. That's a great verse. Verse 19, the Lord knows who are His.

And let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. Paul closes with these two quotes to show that what he has said is true.

Okay? So, handle truth in a way that heals. The opposite of that is to handle truth in a way that injures. And so now, Paul uses two, pretty much two Old Testament examples to prove his point.

And in doing so, actually shows us that our approval doesn't come from each other. It firstly comes from God. And God knows that. God is super aware of your position in Him.

[40 : 03] He knows that. He's not wondering like sometimes we wonder. So firstly, he says, the Lord knows those who are His, which is a quote from Numbers chapter 16.

Right? So, in that story, it's a story of Korah. And if you remember, back in Numbers 16, Dathan and Abiram were with Korah going up against Moses.

And they were challenging Moses and led a rebellion actually against Moses and Aaron. and their complaint against those leaders actually sounds pretty legit.

It sounds really spiritual. I mean, look at it. Verse 3 of Numbers 16. They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, you have gone too far for all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them.

So, look, do you get what they're saying? It's like, leave us alone. Stop talking about holiness. Like, we're done with holiness. Can't you see everybody is holy? Why then do you exalt yourself above the assembly of the Lord?

[41 : 14] Like, why are you leading us? We don't need leading anymore. We're mature Christians. We've been around the block. We don't need that. We don't need you. In other words, they accuse Moses of spiritual elitism.

They question God's appointed leadership and they cloak pride in the language of equality and justice, right? So, Moses responds, how? Well, he falls on his face and he says, in the morning, the Lord will show who, whose are his.

I love that. Hey, Moses doesn't go to battle, right? He doesn't call the leaders, the tribes, and says, seize them, let's throw them away, let's get them out of here.

He says, look, this is down to God. This is down to the Lord. The Lord knows. The Lord knows those who are with him and not with him. Moses rests in the identity he has in God and trusts God to know that.

He's like, you know what, in the morning, it's either me or you. And I'm betting it's going to be me because God knows. I don't have to prove that.

[42 : 32] I can stand secure in the fact that God knows. See, it's not enough to believe in your own identity in Christ. That's a really, really good thing.

And for some, that's a lifetime of journeying, isn't it? To believe that. Who you are before God because of God. But you also have to trust that God knows that too.

Because otherwise, what's the point? I mean, you can believe something really, like really kooky, but if it's not true, it's not true. But Paul is saying, actually, you know what?

It's really important that you believe in your identity in Christ. But it's also equally important that you trust that God knows that too. So Moses says, in the morning, the Lord will show who is his.

And in the second quote, he quotes, let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. Actually, it's not a real quote. If I can put it this way, because it appears so regularly in the Old Testament, it's not a quote from one place or one story.

[43 : 42] Most scholars think it closely resembles the idea found in Isaiah 26, which again, we don't have time to unpack. But what that does say is, Lord our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us.

Interesting phrase, isn't it? Other lords besides you have ruled over us. And if we're absolutely truthful, we can say that same thing. There are things in our lives that have ruled over us.

We've allowed to rule over us. But he says, but your name alone we bring to remembrance. I love how he kind of bookends then this phrase, remember Jesus, and then right at the end, but your name alone we will remember.

Whoever names the name of the Lord will depart from iniquity. And so the idea is that, is that calling, is this calling the faithful to keep themselves separate from evil and so showing their allegiance to God.

That's the idea. And of course, this is exactly how we express our identity, isn't it? You know, we don't just say, well, I belong to God because of God and I am who I am before God because of God.

[44 : 51] We don't just say that. But actually, that reality changes our perception of ourselves, our perception of God and how then we behave.

And that's kind of Paul's point. If this is really true and we not only believe that about ourselves, but we believe God knows who are His, then our day-to-day our waking and our sleeping, our working, has a behavior about it that reflects that truth.

We express it through allegiance to God and obedience to God. And look again, this order matters. You don't live faithfully to become gods. You live faithfully because you already are.

And look, as we close, I want you to hear this again. Not as a doctrine, but as an anchor for us. The Lord knows those who are His.

He knows, which means right now, God is not confused about His church. Right? He's not confused. He's not out there scratching His head kind of thinking, what are we going to do?

[46 : 11] He's not anxious about those who belong to Him. He's not surprised by our weariness. He's not caught out by our questions.

He's not wondering about the places where your faith feels fragile. In a moment, we're going to create some space for prayers that the worship team are going to come up, going to lead us in an old song.

I'm so grateful for the song that we're singing this morning. Listen, we're not creating this space for prayer because there's something wrong with you. Right?

But because God meets His people when they come honestly. Right? This is not a moment to be fixed. Like so often, I have seen and I have experienced almost like, you know, prayer ministry at the end of a church service as now I'm going to go and get fixed and I'm going to go out into the wide world and all of a sudden I'll be better.

This is a moment to be known. And so, I want to slow down. Having said I want to speed up because the kids are going to come back, I want to slow down.

[47 : 30] I want to slow down. Let's bring our real selves into the presence of a real God and ask Him again to do what only He can do. Strengthen us by grace.

Steady us in the truth and remind us again that we are His. Father, we come before You because You are the only one that we can come before and lay these things at Your feet.

Lord, we come not without hope because You are the God who knows Your people.

You know our names. You know our limits. You know our struggles, Lord. You know our exhaustion. You know the things that make us short circuit.

You know our questions before we've asked them. You have an answer ready. Even if sometimes that answer is just to draw close.

[48 : 39] Thank You, Lord, that You already see us completely and love us completely. Lord, a paradox that we don't quite understand. how You can love, how You can see all of ourselves, all of our sin, all of our disobedience, all of our unfaithfulness and still love us completely.

Because You love us completely, Lord, we return to You. Lord, we're reminded again, Lord, that You know completely who belongs to You.

Lord, and again, we want to be strengthened in that. And so, Lord, we ask, meet us gently now. Strengthen us when we feel weak. Soften us when we grow guarded.

Give us courage to be honest and faith to keep going. Help us to leave here resting more deeply in Your grace, trusting more fully in Your care and walking forward knowing that You know that we belong to You.

Would You remind us of that, Lord, as we sing? Lord, we do come hungry. Lord, hungry for Your presence, hungry again to be reminded, Lord, that we don't work to the cross, we work away from the cross.

[50 : 03] Thank You, Lord, that You have united us with You. Thank You that we get to call You Father, that You have called us children. thank You, Lord, that You have accomplished for us what You have accomplished on the cross and in the empty tomb that we're now free.

Free to love You, free to live for You, free to be obedient to You. Simply because none of our salvation, nothing of what we have gained is because of us.

our identity before You is because of You. And so we come vulnerable, honest, and ask You again, Lord, know us.

Remind us of how much You know us and how much You love us. Lord, we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.