



*The Marathon is the ultimate endurance race. Have you heard the legend of the first marathon? Imagine what he went through as he neared the finish line. **Incredible example of someone who endured great hardship because he carried a message that had to be delivered.***

As Christians, we've been entrusted with a more important message – the gospel. And we have to endure hardship as we entrust that message to others. There are lots of obstacles. We trip over them. They take us out of the race. But we have a mission. We've been entrusted with THE greatest message

We'll see 2 things in this second passage from 2 Timothy:

1. **We must entrust the gospel to others.**
2. **And we'll have to endure hardship to do it.**

## 1. Entrust the gospel to others

**Read:** 2 Timothy 2:2

This is a key verse in the whole book – you've been entrusted with the gospel, you must entrust the gospel to others

-- Remember Paul's concern in writing: how will the gospel be heard after I'm gone? Paul gives Timothy some crucial instructions for his task:

-- What are "The things you have heard me say"? The gospel, as taught by Paul. Focus on the main thing.

Does this apply to you?? Several potential opt outs...

- **Do only "Men" teach?** No – men and women can teach. 2 categories:
  - 1. Elders who teach the whole church are to be men only (1 Tim 3:2). A crucially important role.
  - 2. Everyone teaches others (e.g. Matt 28:18-20).

-- **"Reliable"** = trusted

-- If you ask me to post a letter for you – am I reliable or unreliable? Depends on whether I post the letter

-- Someone who does what is asked of them. Who can be trusted. And you're already **entrusted**...

-- **"Qualified to teach"** ("But I've got no qualifications!"). Simply means "able to teach"

-- In the Great Commission, Jesus thinks you can teach!

-- e.g. A Parents to kids ("Mum how could Jesus come back to life?")

-- e.g. A friend asks, "How does someone become a Christian?"

-- Think you're not "Able to teach"? Jesus and Paul say: Just pass on what you've learned

-- **"Others"** – How many generations are listed here? How many links in this chain?

-- Will the next generation pass it on?

-- e.g. *Pay it Forward* Movie (2 things were needed – the deed and "Pay it forward")

### Examples:

Student Life guys: (My Dad – Me – Scott T – Sister) (40 years!)

Student Life girls: (Sandra – Kathy – Colleen – Elise)

In our church: Old—young, to kids, to teenagers, in growth groups, to one another, kids alive, conversations after church...

### Questions

- 1 -- Do you believe that you're entrusted? Is that settled?
- 2 -- Are you reliable? That is, do you want to be reliable?
- 3 -- Able to teach? That is, willing to teach?

So -- What chain(s) are you in?

1. Who can you look to as a Paul?
2. Who can you entrust the gospel to?

Or will you be the end of the chain?

Entrusted to entrust. The rest of the passage has a single theme:

## 2. Endure hardship

Straight away we know Paul is a realist:

- Bad example: v15
- Good example: v 16-18 Onesiphorus

-- "**Be strong in the grace**" (The fuel, the basis, the ground of our mission)

- "Be strong" alone would be futile and hopeless
- God gives the command and the means to carry it out!
- "Be strengthened" by God's grace to you! Start & continue by grace!

-- Endure hardship like **a Soldier** (rv3 & 4)

- Does not mean: separating from the world
- Endure hardship, stay focused, please God in our priorities

-- e.g. Aussies in Afghanistan: Hardship, not distracted by media etc...

-- Stay the course like **an athlete**:

- Not only talking about moral living (yes, "called to holy lives")
- Don't take shortcuts

-- Marathon runner who caught a bus to the finish line!

- Don't attempt to skirt hardship
- Lives don't change quickly. Endurance needed

-- Work hard and be patient like **a farmer**:

- Hard Work, no glamour, harvest and reward when the work is done!

-- Short term perspective can be discouraging. Reflecting on God's work through the lives of people we've known

- Remember Jesus Christ (who suffered *death* before he was raised)
- Read verse 10 ("Endure everything..." (and remember what's at stake

-- v.11-12 Encouragement to die to self / endure

-- v. 12-13 Serious, sober warning not to be unfaithful and reject Jesus

### John Paton: Enduring hardship to entrust the gospel to others:

- Perspective: Willing to suffer for the gospel. And suffer he did:
- Tanna. After 5 months: wife died 3 weeks later newborn son died.

- He was desperately sick with the same illnesses
- 4 years of constant threat and opposition
- Driven off the island at spear point
- Back in Australia: Told he was a coward
- He endured for 40 years of ministry -- and raised a mission movement!

**Apply it:** Living to entrust the gospel to others is hard.

Difficulties: **Our own sin:**

-- I've told my good stories, but I also had a hard period in Student Life – motivation went missing. Persevering in the task was hard. By God's grace, my wife, some good leaders, he enabled me to persevere in ministry. (Problem: not "being strengthened, but being busy")

-- **Other people's sin:**

-- People will let us down, will hurt us, will not be willing to make the sacrifices we are making, will disappoint our hopes, will reject Jesus...

-- **The fallen world** distracting us and opposing us. It does not value a life of being entrusted with the gospel, and we can get caught up in that

- "Why am I making all this effort..."
- To persevere with family devotions or bible stories?
- To ring up a friend to encourage them when they aren't interested?
- To stay in touch with non-Christian friends who think I'm a bit weird?
- To spend all this time talking and encouraging this young person, young Christian when I find out they don't want to continue?
- To keep missing the sermon to lead Sunday School or do Creche?
- To rush my evening so that I can go to growth group?

**Living to entrust the gospel to others is hard.**

Paul says: Endure!! Don't give up!

- Be strengthened by God's grace in Jesus Christ!
- Stay focused, don't take short cuts, do the work.
- There's a reward coming at the finish line:

John Piper: "the true usefulness of our preaching will not be known to us until all the *fruit* on all the *branches* of all the *trees that have sprung up from all the seeds we've ever sown* has fully ripened in the sunshine of eternity."

By God's grace, you can sow gospel seeds. And by God's grace, there will be a gospel harvest.

It will be hard. Remember Jesus Christ. It was hard for him:

- Gethsemene... His Trial... Flogged... Carried his cross... Died...

**Jesus endured hardship to entrust us with the gospel... to bring us grace, salvation, even eternal glory!**

**He has entrusted it to us, so that, but his grace, we can entrust it to others.**