

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 6/21/92
II Timothy 2:8-13 "The Heart of the Matter"

Scripture: II Timothy 2:8-13

Intro: Driving across the border into Ohio you see a most interesting sign... "Ohio, the Heart of It All."

Q: What is the Heart of the matter when it comes to Christianity? What's the essence of being a Christian? What must I know if I am to enjoy the Christian life?

Christianity is greatly maligned in our day. Greatly misunderstood. By unsaved people. And by those who identify themselves as Christians.

Illust: Being a Christian is being a person who doesn't...

What is the heart of the matter when it comes to Christianity? We have a problem. We tend to focus on the periphel issues. Major on the minors.

Illust: News reporter demanding person take him up in plane...

Proposition: The Heart of the Matter involves 2 things, according to II Timothy 2:8-13.

- I. The Heart of the Matter involves a Relationship (8-10).
 - A. Focus on the Person of Christ.
 1. His Humanity
 2. His Deity
 - B. Focus on the Work of Christ.
 - C. Focus on the Gospel of Christ.
 1. Results in Suffering for Me (9).
 2. Results in Salvation for Others (10).
- II. The Heart of the Matter involves Responsibilities (11-14).
 - A. Loyalty (11-12a)
 - B. Disloyalty (12b-13)

Context of II Timothy:

Paul was in prison in Rome, awaiting his execution. The last inspired letter he wrote was to his spiritual son Timothy who was leading the church in Ephesus. What was Paul's passion as he thought of leaving this life? Personal regrets? No. He thought of one thing--What will happen to the gospel of Jesus Christ after I'm gone? Who will take the baton and pass it on? Paul thought of Timothy, and people like him.

Paul told Tim to remember 2 things in II Tim:

1:6 "I put thee in remembrance..." = Remember your CALLING!

Tim, God has called you to lead in the ministry of the gospel.

Q: What's involved in being a leader in the ministry?

A: In ch 2, Paul illustrated with 7 images/metaphors of a leader. A leader must see himself as a:

1. Teacher (1-2)
2. Soldier (3-4)
3. Athlete (5)
4. Farmer (6)

5. Workman (15)
6. Vessel (21)
7. Servant (24)

Last week we zeroed in on images 2, 3, and 4. If we're going to be used of God, here's what it takes. We must have the discipline of a soldier, the determination of an olympic athlete, and the diligence of a farmer. Being a leader demands endurance.

Before Paul hits the final 3 images, he focuses on the ultimate example of diligence (Here's the second thing Tim must remember)--v 8 "Remember that Jesus Christ"

I. The Heart of the Matter involves a Relationship (8-10).

V 8 "Remember that Jesus Christ"

Watch carefully. Our whole study today hinges on this first phrase. The first phrase of v 8 is THE heart of Christianity.

Remember, Paul wrote to Timothy in the common language of his day--greek. The English Bible we possess is a translation of that letter.

Key: The word "that" does not appear in the greek text. It was inserted by the English translators to make it read smoother, due to the participle that follows. But it's unnecessary. In fact, it distracts from Paul's emphasis.

Lit.--"Remember Jesus Christ!"

Listen, Timothy. If you are going to be used of God, here's the key--"Remember Jesus Christ!" That phrase is the rallying point of Christianity. It's the heart of Christianity. Remember Jesus Christ! That's what Jesus Himself told us to do--"This do in remembrance of Me."

Q: How do I become a Christian?

A: By entering into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Q: How do I grow as a Christian? How can I serve Him?

A: Remember Jesus Christ!

Illust: Remember the Alamo...

Key: V 8 is the rallying call of Christians--REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST!

Q: What must I remember about Jesus Christ if I am to grasp the Heart of the matter? Vv 8-10 tell me I must diligently focus on 3 things which are fundamental to this relationship.

A. Focus on the Person of Christ.

V 8 "Remember that Jesus Christ..."

Who is Jesus Christ? What must we remember about Him?

1. His Humanity

Two things highlight His Humanity. First, notice the order of His Name--JESUS Christ. Usually Paul uses the reverse order (1:1, 2, 9, 13; 2:1). Yet here he

puts "Jesus" first. Why? Jesus is His name. Christ is His title. Jesus points to His humanity. Joseph and Mary were instructed to call Him "Jesus" (Mt 1:21). "Christ" is not His last name, but His title (a greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Messiah").

Secondly, Paul highlights Jesus' humanity by the phrase "of the seed of David." Jesus was the fulfillment of the OT prophecies. He was the heir to David's throne.

Remember His Humanity.

2. *His Deity*

V 8 "Jesus CHRIST"--Jesus is God. He is the God-man. Never forget that. That's at the heart of Christianity. Diligently focus first of all on the Person of Jesus Christ.

Q: How do we know Jesus is God? What event testifies to His Deity?

V 8 "was raised from the dead"

B. Focus on the Work of Christ.

Quote: E.V. Hill, "Lots of great men left tracks going up to their graves. But only one left tracks on the other side of the grave!"

Q: What did Jesus Christ do?

V 8 He was "raised from the dead"

Listen. The resurrection is THE central doctrine of Christianity. The validity of Christianity either rises or falls on this doctrine.

Quote: Tape by Josh McDowell talking on university campus, "Disprove the resurrection and you can disprove Christianity. Give evidence that the tomb is not empty."

There's the heart of Christianity. Jesus Christ raised from the dead. He's alive. Remember that Timothy!

Think about it: Paul told Timothy, "Remember Jesus Christ." You say, "Remember? How could he forget?" Listen. Paul's not talking about remembering idle facts stored away in Timothy's brain cells. No.

"remember" = present tense, hence a continual responsibility; "to call to mind"

We become a Christian by entering into a relationship with Jesus Christ. The rest of our lives involves getting to know Him better and better.

Illust: Paul's prayer for Ephesians (1:17)

Focus diligently on the Person and Work of Christ. And...

C. Focus on the Gospel of Christ.

V 8 "according to my gospel"

The gospel of Jesus Christ is at the heart of Christianity. The gospel is the good news concerning the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. Our task is to announce to the world Who He is, and What He Did.

Q: What will happen if we focus on proclaiming the gospel?

A: Notice 2 results Paul shared.

1. *Results in Suffering for Me (9).*

V 9 "For which I suffer..."

"for which"--refers back to "the gospel"

Paul paid a great price because of the gospel. Because of the gospel, he "suffered trouble." He suffered in 2 ways:

a. As an "evildoer" = "criminal"; one who commits gross misdeeds or serious crimes (Lk 23:32 used of 2 "malefactors" crucified with Christ)

It's still relatively popular to call yourself a Christian in our day. I fear the day is coming when it won't be. It certainly wasn't in Paul's day. Christians were viewed as criminals when Paul wrote this letter in AD 67. Christians were viewed as an illegal association, a threat to the Roman Empire.

I mentioned weeks ago that a great wave of persecution was connected to an event that occurred in 64 AD. On July 19, a great fire broke out in Rome. It burned for 6 days and 7 nights and devastated the city. Famous buildings perished in the flames. So did the homes of common people. It's likely that Emperor Nero started the fire himself. He had a passion for building, and it was said that he deliberately fired the city so he could build a new and nobler Rome (Barclay).

So guess what the Roman gov't did? They needed a scapegoat, and they found one. They blamed the fire on the Christians. And massive persecution erupted.

Quote: The Roman historian said this about the Christians. He called them a "class of people loathed for their vices." They were the enemies of humanity. (F.F. Bruce, "The Defense...", 63).

So Paul was apprehended and accused of being an "evildoer." He suffered emotionally. And in a second, physical way.

b. "even unto bonds"

We've recounted the setting many times. You know well that Paul was locked in some Roman dungeon, chained like a vicious animal in some hole in the ground. And every time he moved his arm, his chain rattled. And every time his chain rattled, he remembered why he was there. He was a prisoner because he preached the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You say, "Why did he preach? I'd have been a silent witness until the heat was off!" Why was Paul willing to suffer for the gospel? Look what he knew...

v 9 "but the word of God is not bound"

The world can imprison the messenger of God, but not the Message of God! The Word was not bound! The same word "bound" is used of tying weeds in a bundle (Mt 13:30), of binding a corpse with linen cloths and spices (Jn 19:40), and even binding an animal.

Remember Timothy, they can lock me up, but they can't lock up the gospel! God's Word is not bound.

Illust:

The gospel may have resulted in suffering for him. But there was a second set of results...

2. *Results in Salvation for Others (10).*

Paul wasn't afraid to suffer. Listen carefully.

"I endure" = to remain under; to be steadfast under

"all things"--Don't miss the ramifications of those words. Paul's not blowing smoke. Just think of the "all" he could recount if he so desired!

See: II Cor 11

Q: Why did he endure all that? Because his suffering resulted benefited others.

Who benefitted? "the elect's sake"

How did they benefit? "they may obtain salvation"

Did you catch that? We touched on this in ch 1. Many people fear the doctrine of election. Paul didn't. Election is a motivational doctrine. Election is an evangelistic doctrine. Paul knew 3 things for sure:

a. God has chosen a people.

Col 3:12 "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved..."

Tit 1:1 "Paul...an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's elect."

God has chosen a people. Christians are called "God's elect."

Illust: Talking with Don Parsley, saved 2 weeks ago. He said, "It's amazing. You can't believe how things have worked out. It's like God had a plan, and worked it all out...!" That's right! I showed him...

See: Eph 1:3-6

b. God will save those people.

V 10 "they may obtain the salvation..."

"obtain" = to meet, attain, gain, find, experience

c. God will use His Word to reach these people.

V 9 "the Word of God is not bound"

Illust:

Sum: The heart of Christianity starts right here. To be a Christian does not demand I be a religious person. No. Being a Christian demands I have a relationship with Jesus Christ. That relationship effects every area of my life. If I am to be a successful Christian, I must think of Him often, continually in fact. I must focus on His person and work. I must devote myself to sharing His gospel. That's the heart of Christianity.

Illust: Eyes blinking--Did you realize you blink about 25 times every minute? Your eyes stay closed about 1/5 second each time. Think about something. If you take a 10 hour trip, and drive 40 mph, you'll end up driving 20 miles with your eyes closed!

Some people move through life with their eyes closed all the time! They don't know where they're going. They have no sense of focus, no purpose. They're lost in the dark.

Am I describing you?

Q: Do you have a relationship with Christ? How is that relationship?

Tran: The Heart of the matter involves a relationship. Secondly...

II. The Heart of the Matter involves Responsibilities (11-14).

Any good relationship involves responsibilities. Marriage involves responsibilities. So does a solid friendship. Parenting.

Q: What responsibilities do we have in our relationship with Christ?

A: V 11 "It is a faithful saying"

Paul is quoting from something with which Tim was familiar. Perhaps a hymn used in the early church. Perhaps a formula used at the baptismal service. Whatever, he says it's a "faithful" saying. Reliable. Dependable. Tim, here are 4 phrases which sum up our responsibility to Christ.

READ 2:11-13

We could spend much time investigating each. But it boils down to this. The first 2 couplets are positive. They tell us what we should do--Be LOYAL to Jesus Christ. The final 2 couplets are negative. They sum up what we should not do--Be DISLOYAL to Jesus Christ.

A. Loyalty (11-12a)

V 11 "If we be dead" = to die with someone (ie. Christian baptism)

We died to self when we became a Christian. We died to security in this life. We died to safety. We are identified with Christ. He was rejected by the world. Should we expect the world to pat us on the back? No. We are dead. We have forfeited all selfish ambition. What do we do?

"we shall also live with Him"

For me to live is Christ. Notice the repetition of the word "with...with...with." We are identified with Jesus Christ. We have died with Him. Now we live with Him. Our object in life is to be loyal to Him.

What may that demand?

V 12 "If we suffer..." = same word translated "endure" in v 10

Notice the tenses. "Be dead" points to the past. "Suffer" points to the present.

Day by day the Christian life involves saying no to self, and yes to Christ.

Saying no to the world, and yes to Christ. Is it worth it? Yes.

"We shall reign with Him!"

Illust:

B. Disloyalty (12b-13)

V 12b "If we deny Him"

This is a strong warning. The language is strong. The problem was real. Remember 1:15, "All in Asia turned away from me..."

It's tragic, yet true. Some people only identify with Christ temporarily. Then when the excitement is gone, they deny Him. Some people profess Christ, but later the thrills of the world suck them back into their clutches.

Are such people "backslidden"? Maybe. Were they ever really saved? Maybe not. God alone knows the heart. But these words are sobering. Don't water them down. "If we deny Him, He will deny us."

V 13 "If we believe not" = be faithless

Q: What is it that's impossible for Jesus to do? Make a rock too big to lift?!

A: Deny Himself. Listen. A true child of God can never become anything other than that. God doesn't kick out of the family those He has adopted in! Having said that, look carefully at v 13.

If a person "believes not", that is, if a person turns his back on Christ, what does Christ do? He abides faithful. Who is it He can't deny? It doesn't say He can't deny the person who denies Him. It says He can't deny Himself.

Quote: Stott, 64

Key Doctrine: Perseverance of the Saints

1. Genuine Christians persevere.
2. Christ perseveres in behalf of Genuine Christians.

Conclusion:

That's the heart of the matter! A relationship. And responsibilities.

Illust: