

MAKING DISCIPLES REQUIRES ENDURANCE
May 22, 2016 morning service
II Timothy 2:8-13

Jesus said, "Pray this way. 'Lord, let your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'" May the kingdom come among us.

We are in II Timothy during these mornings, talking about making disciples, and today we are in chapter 2 and we'll begin reading in moment in verse number 8. You know, if you're going to make disciples the disciples have to see you. Mirror, live out, and explain the gospel not just with your lips but with your life. One of the greatest teaching moments is when the one you are trying to make a disciple of and mature them, when they see you walk through a situation where you very well may quit and you don't. It's then and there that they say, "There must be something to this." They are watching. They are watching. Everyone you are trying to influence, they are watching.

We kept our grandchildren last night while the kids went on a date. We had a lot of fun. I went out to do some stuff on the porch and I came walking back in. I'd been grilling out. As I walked by, Kathryn was sitting at the table and never misses anything. "Papa, you have a lizard on you." Just like that. "Papa, you have a lizard." I said, "What?" She said, "You have a lizard on you." I said, "Well okay," and I just went on about my business. I turned around and my wife said, "You've got a lizard on you!" So on the back of my shirt was a lizard about this long, hanging on me. Liz came and grabbed my shirt. She said, "Get out of the house! Get out of the house! Get out of the house!" So we went out and dusted off and got it off. I walked back in. Kathryn said, "You don't have a lizard on you. Papa, you're so silly. Why did you have a lizard on you?" I heard that all night long. "Why did you have a lizard on you?"

I'm telling you, they are watching you, not just little eyes but there are others and when you've got a lizard on you they're wondering what you're going to do. You can either quit or you can endure. When they see endurance, oh you've taught a deep lesson. What you've got to do, friend, if you will submit to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master, I'm here to tell you, about 95% of the questions that will come to you are already answered. If Jesus is the Master and what He says goes, then there are some things you don't even have to think about. That's why I can't redefine marriage. Jesus already said a man and a woman. I don't have to debate that. He's my Master. You say, "People don't like it." I'm not here to please them. You'll read in verse 4 of II Timothy, as a soldier has been engaged, he's to please the one that enlisted him, not the other soldiers or the people on the other side. It's the captain of our salvation and if you've bowed to him as Master and Lord, most of your questions are already answered. All that remains is, are you going to trust Him?

So this morning I encourage you, make up your mind. Who's your Master? If it's Jesus Christ, stay with Him, endure, and walk through. II Timothy chapter 2 beginning in verse 8 we find these words:

*Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead [Can I get a witness? Let me tell you, if that right there is true and it is, everything else pales. Jesus Christ, remember Him, risen from the dead], descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal [Paul said, "I've been put in jail."]; but the word of God is not imprisoned. For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. It is a trustworthy statement: For if we 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, for He cannot deny Himself.*¹

Endurance. Who hasn't wanted to quit at some juncture in life? I was in the home of a couple who visited our church recently. I did not know them and as I began to engage them the gentleman said to me, "We were Christians for ten years but we have given up Christianity." I said, "Tell me more." They began to give me their rational reasons. They said at one time they had followed Christ and now they did no longer believe in Him nor His word or that He rose from the dead. Their word was, "We have given up Christianity." I don't find many people that are that forward in their language but I see a lot of people living as if they have given up Christianity. They say, "Well, you know, I love Him but..." But? Are you going to live for Him or not? If you're going to make disciples, endurance is vital. It is required. It is a must.

Paul says that, "I've been to jail and I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, for the people of God, for those that are elect, for those that Jesus has died for and called, for those He's going to save. I endure." *Hupomeno*. *Hupo* and *meno*, two words put together. *Meno* is under; *hupo*, remain. I remain under. I remain under my Master. I'm not above God. I'm below Him. I remain under the load. I remain under submission. I remain. I endure. I stay. I don't quit.

So if somewhere in this sermon today you want to say Amen, don't do it. Just holler out, "Don't quit." That'll help me. If I get to preaching too long, stop saying it. Endurance. We dare not quit. You know, when you endure you have learned to put up with irritating people, situations, and circumstances without becoming bitter and downtrodden. Do you have any irritating people in your life? In the church? Do you have any irritating circumstances in your life? In the church? Any circumstances or situations? I wondered if you were going to get it or not. I'm telling you right now, we all have them, do we not? Yes we do. But we dare not quit. We must endure.

Well this morning I want to just glean out of this text and out of other scriptures what I call four endurance builders, what builds endurance in your life and mine. So let's look at them one, two, three, four. You may want to jot these down because you're probably walking through them right now. Number one, the first endurance builder is tribulation. Here Paul speaks about it. He says, "I've been imprisoned and it's that that

¹ Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

builds me.” That word tribulation found in Romans chapter 5, verses 3 and 4, when you read that he says: *And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about [what?] perseverance [That’s another word for endurance. That perseverance brings endurance]; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character [then gives us], hope.*

Amen. That word tribulation is the word *thlipsis*. Jesus tells us that you’re going to have *thlipsis*. “You will have tribulation but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” And then that’s what the Greek Testament says as *tēs thlipsis* but then there is a period of time that is the *tēs megalēs thlipsis*. Not just the *thlipsis*, the tribulation but then we’re going to go through the *tēs megalēs*, the great *megalēs thlipsis*.

Your eschatology then will determine whether you’re going through the great tribulation or not. You can differ about that but I’m here to tell you, we all go through *thlipsis*. We all have tribulation here.

John Calvin, that great theologian writing in the 1500’s had following after him what became known as the French Huguenots, those French Christians that followed after the teaching of Calvin. Many of them were jailed and died in jail. Most were put in a dungeon and years after that persecution and *thlipsis*, tribulation, had passed, they went into those dungeons and they found one word written on the wall again and again. It was written in French but then for us in English it was this word, “Resist.” Resist. Those that were dying literally for the faith would say to each other, “Resist.” But when they would die, the next group that would be brought in, they would see it and they were saying to them, “Resist. Don’t give up. Endure. It’s worth it. Stay til the end.” Dear God, we dare not quit when tribulation comes. You see, it’s tribulation that will put steel in your soul. You’ll develop a spiritual backbone if you’ll walk through it.

It was 19 years ago this week that I went through the great tribulation of my life. I’ll preach about it tonight. I have been doing it annually and reminding our church of that. I walked through what was a difficult time. I’ll preach that sermon from II Samuel tonight where God delivered me from a tribulation time in my life. I’ll share it with you in the evening service. We all walk through tribulation. It’s an endurance builder but if you let tribulation cause you to quit, then the *thlipsis* has won and has become greater than your Master.

The second tribulation endurance builder is time. Just time. Time builds endurance. It’s what Paul said to Timothy in II Timothy chapter 4. I began reading in verse number 8 here but when you jump over to the fourth chapter and the seventh verse, you hear Paul say this: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.* I fight. I finish. I keep the faith. He said, “I didn’t give up. I’m running all the way to the end.”

Our minister of music is a marathon runner. He’s also arrogant about it. He puts his pictures online. Jon, do you have one of those stickers on the back of your car? Yeah, I thought you did. I saw it. I just wondered if you’d lie to me right here in front of

everybody. You know, you've got those little 26 stickers and 13.1 stickers people put on the back of their car. I have one. I have not put it on my car. It just says 40. It's 40 paces to the refrigerator and back.

If you're going to get in a marathon, it's not that you win. It's that you finish. Right? It's that you get to the end. Well let me tell you, walking with Jesus is no sprint. It's a marathon. It's getting to the end. It's seeing the Master and it's time. I'm telling you, friend, you don't just get saved today and you grow up and you mature. It takes time to come to maturation and in that you've got to fight the good fights. They're plural. You've got to finish the courses and there are many. You've got to endure to the end through faith. Let me tell you, friend, even if you become faithless the word of God says in II Timothy 2:13, He remains faithful. You may quit but I'm telling you, Jesus never quits on you. He is the faithful one and He's trying to build endurance.

I'm amazed at preaching I hear that says there's never troubles and trials for believers. My Lord, you ought to run from that like a snake on a playground. You don't have to live long to have tribulation come and it's in time that you march through. It'll build your endurance. Stay the course. Stay the course. Others will say, "There's something to that."

The third endurance builder that I'd point out to you today, not only tribulation and time, but it's a little different word. You'd say it's the same as the first but it is different. It's trials. Trials. James chapter 1, verses 2 through 4. In James chapter 1 you find that the Bible tells us that we should count it all what? Joy when we fall into what? Various trials. Trials. Knowing that the testing of your faith produces – there it is – endurance. Let endurance have its perfect result so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. There are trial.

Now there are two kinds of trials I want to mention to you. The first one is persecution. Friend, if you stand for Christ you'll be persecuted. If you stand in our culture today, you'll be persecuted. Ostracized, spoken bad about. I was talking to one of our fine, faithful laymen who's got a ministry to coaches. Football coaches mostly in high school but other coaches in basketball, baseball, men and women's sports. They go in and do this ministry. I'm telling you, some of the greatest pushback they get are from administrators that are now scared, some of them that are deacons in local churches but they simply say, "We just don't want anything to do with faith on our campus at all because we don't have money to deal with the ACLU." They just don't want to deal with it so they just say no to all of it. That's the culture in which we are now engaged.

Isn't it amazing how that's changed? Just 40 years ago I was in high school. You could have Bible study right there in civics class. Then prayer exited schools and then when the Obergefell case came, America didn't get on a slippery slope. Let me tell you what they did when they ruled that men could marry men. We went down to the cliff and simply jumped off. We're not sliding anymore, friend. We're in a freefall because if you can make that legal, you can make anything legal. That's where we are. You can

curse the darkness if you want to and back up but I'm here to tell you, somebody has got to endure and stand, and when you stand, I'm here to tell you, the trying of your faith is coming.

The year was 1956. His name is Jim Elliott. You know him. Jim Elliott was a marvelous, marvelous student. He was a student of the scriptures. He believed God had taken him to Ecuador to take the gospel to the Indians. He and four others wound up going to Ecuador and there Jim Elliott in 1956 to the Auca Indians decided it was time to go in. When he did he was bludgeoned to death. They stabbed him with spears until he died. He was just in his 20's and hadn't been married very long. You say, "Oh, pastor, I don't know if I could do that." Many of us probably couldn't but the story really is not about Jim Elliott, I want you to understand. It's about his wife Elizabeth. Now what does she do? She moved to Ecuador. Later in her home she had two of those people that bludgeoned her husband to death in her home to dialogue about the gospel. "If they kill my spouse, I just want to quit." No, no. Elizabeth Elliott that many of you have read, what a powerful pen and speaker, she said, "We dare not stop. We must endure, endure, endure."

I don't know what you're walking through but the trying of your faith comes in varied ways, sometimes persecution. There's a second trial and it's what Jesus spoke of in Matthew 13:22 when he said there was also the trial of prosperity. Ah yes. When he talked about the sower and the seed. *And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world* [Look at this. Here it is.] *and the deceitfulness of [what?] wealth.* The King James says riches. Wealth will deceive you to thinking that number one, you can hold onto it and number two, that you're somebody. Some of us could pass the test of our spouse being murdered but we couldn't pass the test of giving up our toys.

It was Arthur DeMoss that said there are three firsts that you need to learn to deal with. The first hour of the day, give it to God. The first day of the week, Sunday, give it to worship. The first dime of every dollar, give it to the Lord. For some of us our time is our own and we will not give it unto the Lord. You need to learn early in the morning to give it to Christ. Some of us get so busy we can't come to church. I understand work and a thousand other things, but I don't understand sitting on the back patio sipping tea. I have people, scores of them, that thank me for these cameras. Some of them are watching the live feed right now. Others will watch the delayed broadcast. I had three people, I believe it was, even yesterday hugged my neck and said, "Pastor, thank you for having these. I've been in the hospital three months with my husband," going to the funeral yesterday. She said, "I've watched you every Sunday."

I ran into a man over at Gander Mountain. My wife wanted to go in and look at guns and I went in with her. While she was shopping a preacher walked up to me and said, "I'm no longer active in a pastorate but I thank you, thank your church for that live feed. I see it almost every week." It's a great ministry, it's good, but it's what I say to them like I say to all of those that watch. "Thank you for watching. We're grateful that

you do that but if you're able to get in a church, get in it because while you can hear and see online, you can't feel the wind blow. There's something about God's people. If you're able to get there, you ought to get there on the first day of the week." Sometimes we say our time is so important.

Then the first dime of every dollar. People get hoarded up with that. You should honor God and trust Him with a tithe of your income. I got a precious email last night of a person teaching a new believer. When they asked about tithing, they laid all that out and they emailed it to me and said, "Pastor, did I leave anything out?" I thought, well, you wrote a letter longer than Jude. I can't think you'd left anything out. It was a marvelous exposition just saying, "Trust the Lord," and then a wonderful testimony. "This is what we've done, our kids have done, we did it as college students, we do now." If you're not careful, the trial will be your prosperity. People say, "Pastor, you know, I know kind of what I ought to do but I'm just struggling. I'm struggling with that. I'm struggling." Could it be that the word struggle is simply Latin for postponed obedience? Now the Latin for struggle is not postponed obedience. Don't write that down. But could it be that your use of struggle is just postponing what you know you ought to do?

Don't give up. Don't give up. Don't give up. Don't dare quit. Somebody is watching you. When you endure, they'll say, "She's got the real stuff." Tribulation, time, trials, but there's one more endurance builder that I want you to see and it's so important. It's the word team. Team is an endurance builder. Now take your Bible and go with me to Hebrews 11. I want you to look at this. Hebrews 11, verse 24. Everybody turn there. It'll come up on the screen here in a little bit but I just want you to look in your Bible because you're going to want to remember where you saw these verses. Hebrews 11, verse 24. *By faith. Look at this. By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.*

Now stay right there. Keep your Bible open. Notice what Moses did. Rather than being Pharaoh's daughter's child – you know the story. They brought him out of the bulrushes, fetched him out of the water, drawn from the water, raised with a silver spoon in his mouth. When he grew up he decided I'm going to say no to Pharaoh and yes to God's slave children. He got on the right team. Hallelujah.

You know what will help your endurance? If you get on the right team. You ought to join Olive Baptist Church and get in a small group. You ought to meet some men or some other women you can hang out with because I'm telling you, they'll build you up and when you think you can't make it when you're down and you say, "I'm going to quit," somebody comes by and says, "I missed you." They'll build you up. Team. Everybody needs a team.

Folks talk about, you know golfers, they're all by themselves. Well golfers are not by themselves. They've got a team. They've got somebody helping them work out. They've got a coach telling them to turn it just so far. When they get out there they're by themselves but they've still got a team. Basketball's got a team. I was watching a little

bit last night. I don't watch much basketball until it gets down to the end with professionals. It's a team. Football's a coming. I can look right there at my phone at the countdown clock and tell you how many days it is. You've got to go over there to the T-O countdown right there. I know when it is. It's a team. You see, one side of the team will get weak but the other will lift it up. It's a team.

I'm part of a great team here at Olive. There's a staff team, a leadership team. This morning three of my teammates came as they do every Sunday morning. Three deacons come lay hands on me and pray over me. They asked me this morning, they said, "Pastor, how are you feeling physically?" I said, "I'm nervous as I always am on Sunday. It's game day." I don't know if you've ever played sports or not but it's common practice to throw up before you play. Sure it is. You're nervous. My preacher friends across town sent me a text this morning and said, "Praying for you. How are you doing?" I said, "I'm nervous. It's game day." He emailed me back and he said, "It is, isn't it?" I said, "Yeah. I'm praying for you." I said, "Don't forget. We're on the same team." You see, team, team. That's what Moses did. He got on the right team. Some of you need to get on the right team. You need to get in a small group. You need to get with some people to pray. Some of you need to join this church today. You need to come down here and put your life in this church. You need a team.

Don't stop right there. Look what happened. Verse 26. He said: *Considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.* Verse 27. *By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured [look at this last line], as seeing Him who is unseen.* You can't see Him but He's there. Moses said, "I'm going after Christ." Jesus, He hadn't appeared yet but Jesus was. He always has been. He just came in flesh. Moses endured the reproach of Christ. He counted it as greater riches than everything in Egypt because he's looking by faith to the reward. He didn't fear the wrath of the king he could see. Hallelujah. There's where American Christianity is today. We're fearing the wrath of a king we can see rather than seeing Him who is unseen. Why, God can do more in a moment than we can do in a lifetime. We've just got to learn to trust Him and endure. We have a lot of people say to me today. "I'll go to jail." I'm not interested in you going to jail. I'm interested in you having guts enough to stand up while you're out of jail. We may go to jail. Don't worry about that. Stand up now while you're free.

You see, here's what going to happen. If something doesn't happen to change the culture then someday someone is going to have a great job at the Southern Company and they're going to want to join Olive Baptist Church but they're going to pass a law that says, "If you preach the gospel and you call sin 'sin' you're a hate group and therefore you can't work at our company and be a member of that church. It's a hate group." Now we're fixin' to find out who the real dudes are. You'll either fear that king that you can see or you'll serve the One that you can't see but you know He's there. It's called endurance and trusting God for your welfare.

I could use a thousand other companies for that. I could use Navy Federal or the school system or wherever. We're not there yet but you know as well as I know without

great change that's where we're going. Are you going to endure? Don't quit. We may be right, right on the precipice of sin, when the glory of revival comes. Wouldn't it be a shame to quit before we saw God move?

I always hear this phrase that the darkest part of night is right before dawn. My wife and I, we don't believe that. I was out there this morning at 5:40 and daylight was 5:55. It was pretty bright at 5:40 but I know what they're saying. You're just getting ready for the burst but it's those that endure that one day are going to live and see the burst of God's glory. If you quit, people will say, "He didn't have the real deal." Don't quit. Don't quit. Don't quit.

There's one more verse I want you to see. It's the verse of our great King. It's the verse that says it more than anything. It's Hebrews 12, verses 1 and 2. I want you to see it. It's going to come up on the screen. I want you to read it out loud with me right now. There are two screens to this so let's read, everybody out loud with gusto right now. Here we go. *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

He went to the cross. He endured, endured. He endured. Aren't you grateful for the cross? Aren't you glad He went all the way, that He died? Every time He'd breathe a little bit more, death had gone out and He couldn't get oxygen. Finally He said, "*tetelestai*." It is finished. Everything that needed to be done for your salvation was done. Amen. He endured. He gives you Holy Ghost power to endure yourself. Why, enduring to the end of a Relaunch Campaign, that's nothing. Amen? Enduring to the end of a sermon? That ought to be a piece of cake. Enduring to the end of the year. Enduring til death takes us home all the way to the finish line. Wow. Don't quit. Don't quit.

I'm far from done. My sweet friend, Chloe Channell, is going to come sing. She's coming right now. You can clap if you want to. That's good. Now you've got that Relaunch card and if you're saying like Ted and Liz Traylor, "We're going to stay right where we are. We made a commitment." Then you just write your name on there and then just right across it, bold, same, faithful, endurance, whatever. But if you need to make a change then you mark that on the card and let us know you're going to make a change. If you've never made a commitment and today's your day of making a commitment, then you take that card and you fill it out and put it in that envelope, seal it. We're going to take it up in a few minutes. You say, "Pastor, I need to just pray a little bit." That's fine. You can mail it back to us. It's got an address on there and that would be good.

So here's what we're going to do. Chloe's going to begin to sing and when she sings, you're listening. You're getting your card ready. Then I'm going to go sit right

over here and about halfway through this song I'm going to stand up. When I stand up then the ushers are going to pass the plate and you can put your Relaunch card in there. We're going to give you a little bit of this song to fill it out if you haven't done it yet.

I asked Chloe to sing for two reasons. Number one I like her and I'm a fan. She and I follow each other on Twitter and aggravate each other every now and then. She's on Periscope too. I pop in every now and then and see how she's doing. She's got a little live deal on there. I love this little girl. She's a middle schooler but not for long. This is a middle school building we're building out here and it won't have a lot to do with this sweet singer's life but it will with all of those that are coming out of that children's ministry and to there. A building won't make it but the ministry in it will get it done.

You fill out your card. Gentlemen, when I stand we'll be ready then to take the offering at that time.