

## STUDY GUIDE

**PLEASANT RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**BUILDING HIS CHURCH**  
**GOSPEL HOPE IN SUFFERING**  
**2 TIMOTHY 1:8-12**  
**01/21/2018**



### MAIN POINT

We can be certain that when we suffer, the power of God can carry us through.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Do you have any personal goals or ambitions you are currently striving for (i.e., lose a certain amount of weight or read a certain book)?**

**What does it take to meet these kinds of goals? How hard are these goals to achieve?**

**What role does hope play while we are trying to meet our personal goals?**

Disciplining ourselves to do almost anything is rarely fun. What keeps us going day after day is the hope of attaining our goal. Seeing progress, even if it is small, is enough to keep us going until we reach our objective. The Christian life is very similar. When we suffer through persecution or sickness or grief, we can hold onto the hope that God is with us and that He is working through us. We can rest in the knowledge that our difficulties do not catch the Lord by surprise. We can continue by the power of God's grace, knowing that He is able to guard us and care for us even through the most difficult trials.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 TIMOTHY 1:8.**

**Paul told Timothy to not be ashamed of his testimony about the Lord. Why might Timothy have been ashamed instead of afraid?**

**What is the benefit of sharing in suffering for the gospel? How does one rely on the power of God during suffering?**

Paul was in prison for his testimony about the resurrection and hope that is found in Jesus Christ. That fact alone would be enough to make most people pause before they witnessed about Christ, and Timothy was no exception. Therefore, Paul urged him not to be ashamed of Jesus and not to fear imprisonment himself.

In Romans 8:17, Paul wrote that “we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.” We have a steadfast hope that if we suffer for Christ’s sake, we will be richly rewarded by God. Jesus told His disciples, “Everyone who has left houses, brothers or sisters, father or mother, children, or fields because of My name will receive 100 times more and will inherit eternal life” (Matthew 19:29). If we suffer loss for Christ’s sake, our troubles will be richly rewarded by Him. This hope is how we persevere in the face of loss and suffering.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 TIMOTHY 1:9-10.**

**When was God’s grace given to us, according to Paul? Why is it important to understand that God’s grace is not earned by works?**

**How do these things help us during times of suffering?**

God’s purpose for us did not begin the day we were saved. According to Paul, God’s plans for us extend all the way back to before time began. If we keep that in mind, we can remember that our salvation and God’s purpose for us are secure.

The book of Hebrews teaches us that Christ Himself was made “perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10). Also, Hebrews teaches us that Jesus “for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame” (Heb.12:2). Suffering made Jesus the perfect sacrifice for our sins, and the joy of providing salvation for His people helped Him to endure suffering to the end. In the same way, the joy of our salvation in Christ and the certainty of eternal life can give us the hope we need to endure to the end.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 TIMOTHY 1:11-12.**

**What made Paul unashamed of the gospel in difficult times?**

**What things had Paul been entrusted with? How does Jesus guard these things on our behalf?**

Jesus gave Paul a great many gifts as a herald, apostle, and teacher. We may not have as many gifts as Paul, but we are all gifted by God to be of benefit to the church and to others. Paul wrote, “There are different activities, but the same God activates each gift in each person” (1 Corinthians 12:5). You have a purpose and a gift, and if we suffer in life, our purpose and gifts are not diminished because we operate in God’s power and not in our own.

Even when we are mourning, or suffering, or having a trial of any kind, if we endure with our hope in the gospel, then we will have an encouraging effect on our brothers and sisters in Christ, and we will have an excellent testimony for those who do not believe. Also, when we are weak, we can have confidence that our personal weakness does not disqualify us from the faith. Jesus, after all, is the One who guards us. We do not guard ourselves! Because of this, we can have the same confidence that Paul had as he looked forward to the great day of judgment.

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Do you know anyone who is suffering? Do you think that you could take time this week to encourage them by visiting with them and telling them what their testimony has meant to you personally?**

**What gifts do you believe that God has given you? Have you been actively using them to encourage others in their walk with Christ?**

**Could you take time this week to pray for those who are now suffering persecution for Christ’s sake?**

## PRAY

Close with a time of group prayer. Ask the Lord to help us be bold for Christ's sake. Pray that God will strengthen us to tell others the good news about Jesus Christ. Ask the Lord to be with those in your fellowship who are suffering, and pray that our Father will comfort those who are suffering persecution. Close by thanking the Father that Jesus endured the cross for our sakes with joy so that we might be saved.

## COMMENTARY

### 2 TIMOTHY 1:8-12

1:8. Paul had just rehearsed the power inherent within each believer—power to do whatever God calls us to, power to love God and others, and power to think wisely and clearly. With these in mind, the apostle commanded, “So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner.”

The Christian is faced with three basic ways of public identification with Christ. The first is through speech and lifestyle—our affirmation of God's work in us and our agreement with him. Paul's charge for us not to be ashamed to testify is a command to openness. Shame often shows itself through silence. We simply do not say anything about Christ; we keep everything to ourselves. It is not that we live a wicked and self-indulgent life. We simply go along with the way everyone else lives, with no difference in our ethics, moral positions, values, or ambitions.

Another way we identify with Christ is through solidarity with his people, especially those who suffer on his behalf. The people we associate with often reflect on us. If someone is admired, our ties with that person will grant us acceptance by people we do not even know. Everyone enjoys approval, but we must be careful where we seek it. Avoiding those who are controversial because they take a bold stand for Christ or steering clear of helping Christians are signs that we are ashamed of God's people. Our first loyalty and duty is to the household of faith.

The third means of identification is with the message, the proclamation of God's truth and Christ's life. To refrain from speaking about God's truth, to hold back from living it, is to regard the gospel with shame and dishonor. Paul urged all believers to join with [him] in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. Jesus foretold persecution for his disciples (John 15:18–21), and Paul guaranteed it in this letter for all who live for God (2 Tim. 3:12). But enduring suffering for Christ is never accomplished by the force of human will. We gain strength to overcome persecution by the power of God as we depend upon his strength and place confidence in his judgments.

1:9. To endure, we must know the object and purpose in any enterprise. We are not called to witness and suffer just because God thinks it is a good idea. Many Christians, however, have little idea of the overarching goal of Christian living. God has saved us not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. We are delivered out of the worst of disasters because of God's initiative toward us. It is one of the great imperatives of the Christian life that we realize the source of all our goodness and forgiveness—it is God, in Christ.

People throughout the world are consumed in the struggle to find significance and acceptance. All world religions require of their followers some method by which they attain favor with a god or acceptance and good standing in the spiritual hierarchy. Christianity alone puts all the work and effort upon God for salvation. Often, this very grace becomes the stumbling block for some people. It is hard to admit absolute need and powerlessness, yet this is what God requires of us.

But initial trust, the step into salvation, is only the beginning. God has called us to a holy life. This is our life purpose, the call which gives structure and substance to all our choices and everything we think, do, or say.

All this stems from God's grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. God's purposes and plan existed before creation, intended in Jesus Christ. We cannot limit what God has done or the extremity of his grace just because we do not understand how it works. How can we comprehend it or condense it to a system we can quantify and classify? We must accept with gratitude what Paul declared, keeping in mind that God's grace is undeserved.

1:10. God's grace, though eternally purposed, has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus. The appearing of Christ Jesus is the manifestation of God in the flesh (John 1:14).

This incarnation of grace has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. The Greek word *katargeo*, translate here as “destroyed,” means to make something ineffective or powerless. We can see that death has not been obliterated, but for the Christian it has been rendered impotent.

Death is no longer a terror for those who are in Christ. Instead, it is a doorway into a new existence of beauty, joy, and fulfillment. When physical life ceases, we are immediately present with the Lord. Even death's ally, sin, has no power over us in this life because God's Spirit enables us to overcome Satan's trickery. Spiritual death has been overcome by the power of God's life. We have been given true life in this world and immortality in the world to come.

God established his purposes in the beginning, put them into effect in history through Christ's death and resurrection, and extends his life to all through the gospel.

1:11–12. It is this gospel to which Paul was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. Once again Paul drew attention to his calling by God. His missionary work was not his idea; he was appointed. As a herald, Paul proclaimed the gospel; as a teacher he instructed others in faith and life; and as an apostle, he spoke with authority. Paul's appointment resulted in beatings, loneliness, imprisonment, hunger, shipwreck, violent attack, criticism, misunderstanding, and rejection. Even so he was not ashamed. Paul could state. "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16). He endured with courage and honor because his trust was in the person of Christ. He had no faith in religious systems or in his own personality or ability. His confidence was in God, sovereign of creation, giver of life, conqueror of death.

Paul was able to endure suffering because he was convinced of God's trustworthiness. Paul had an unshakable confidence that God would keep safe whatever he placed in his care. Whether it was his life or ministry, these treasures were safely deposited in God's protection. This does not suggest that God protects us from all harm. But God does protect that which is eternal when it is given without reserve into his keeping: our soul and our work. These are held safe until the day of judgment.