

# 2 Timothy 2:11-13

Instructions to Timothy  
Guiding, Growing, Guarding!



**A Trustworthy Saying**



Most people in the early church could not read. Public education didn't exist. Perhaps the wealthiest individuals could pay to have their children tutored, but the average person could not read or write and neither could their children. Today, we take for granted that everyone can read and write. But our modern day public school system in the west is only a brief historical blip in the scope of human history. For thousands of years, reading and writing was a great luxury! Christianity begins with a very particular body of knowledge, and the apostles obviously saw the value of writing that Knowledge down to keep it accurate. They wanted it spelled out to combat the many false narratives that Satan and His willing accomplices were concocting to compete with and replace the truth. But few could read, so in the early church, it was the people that **could** read that would read for everyone!



That was not a readily available source of truth. So the church leaders compensated with creeds and sayings, hymns, containing statements that encapsulated important truths in a clear, concise, and declarative manner. These sayings were a *“here is what makes us Christian”* declaration. (See also 1 Tim. 3:16; Ph’p 2:6-11; Eph. 5:15)

Our text this morning is a good example of an early Christian “saying”. This one has four basic pillars, or elements, that would easily find a place in the head and heart of the early Christian, once they heard it, or said it enough times.

***“If we died with Him, we will also live with Him”***. This is a direct teaching of Jesus, carried on by the apostles and the Christian pastors and leaders that partnered with them from across the cities and towns Europe and Asia. We obviously do not know who made this clever saying, but we do know where it originates from. **[Mark 8:34-38]**. Jesus taught that in order to follow Him, His followers must die – die to themselves. Everything about them much change! **[Galatians 2:20]**

Dying to ourselves is part of our salvation process. Many Christians these days do not understand **this** concept, and neither do they apply it! That is why I continually differentiate a Christian from a Christ-follower! A Christ-follower is a person that has given their life over to Jesus, lock, stock, and barrel – the whole kit-and-caboodle - everything **including** the kitchen sink! Then we become a life-long work in progress – an ongoing work of God! Our job is to turn over our values, priorities, opinions, judgments, choices, and even our emotions, to this God who is busy remolding us into someone who is increasingly resembling His Son Jesus! But for that to happen, our old defining characteristics have to go! It cannot happen without making room for it to happen! \*It's like moving. You clean out the house, every room, every closet, the attic, the basement, garage, sheds. It all has to go. And then those spaces get filled up again by the new owner, right? The new owner has the right to fill the house back up with **their** stuff. Likewise, in the life of a Christ-follower, the old furnishings are given up so that they can be replaced by something more compatible with the preferences and the tastes of the new owner, Jesus Christ! Sometimes, cleaning out the house is quick and painless. But there are usually some old furnishings that have been a part of us for a long time and are hard to let go of. So it turns into a back-and-forth tug of war between God and me – until God ultimately wins – or – until I do! But if *I* win, I lose! When He wins, it is not because He ever forces Himself upon me, but because I WANT Him to win! I know when He wins the tug of war, I win! I'm convinced of that! I abhor my own self and admire Him. I covet His life as my own! I have to say here, that this is NORMAL Christianity! This approach to the Christian life is our best assurance of salvation! It is not my claim to having prayed "the sinners prayer" when I was a kid, or at any other time. Neither can some magic ritual do it for me! No, it's when cleaning house begins the process, and then when Jesus' stuff starts showing up in my inner rooms, it is the is proof that Jesus has me – that He is in me, (the new owner), and that I have given Him the title of my life! In that way, my old life is gone – like it's dead – nothing but a dim memory I am dying to my own ego and coming alive to His! It makes a **huge** difference in my approach to... well... **everything!** Take for instance **[1 John 3:14; 4:16-18]**. If this is happening, I will live with Him one day!

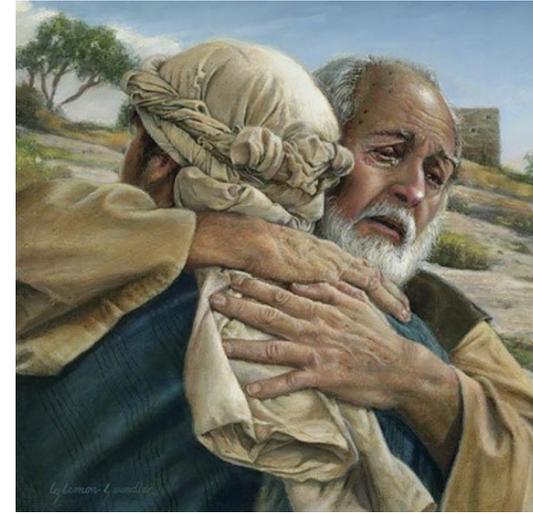


The **2<sup>nd</sup> PILLAR** of this saying is; ***"If we endure, we will also reign with Him"***. Of course we have to endure. We have to finish well. You can't start with Christ and then give Him up when it gets hard to follow Him, or serve Him! More on that in a minute. A key teaching of the apostles (and therefore of Jesus) is that there is an approaching day for this sorry, dark, God-rejecting world, when Jesus will return! And when He physically comes back, He will come with an army of angels. He will no longer be the suffering Servant Savior, but the Conquering King! The earth will resist Him tooth-and-nail! Kings will form alliances, even with their former enemies (*"the enemy of my enemy, is my friend"*) and they will join forces to make war against this ***new and bigger*** threat to their own sovereignty! They want the Creator to do the things only He can do – like make the world go around, and the rain to fall and the sun to shine, and the proper seasons to come and go, but they want to run it! They will die before giving up what they consider their rights! So,.. they die! Jesus comes in judgment, next time, and rebels die! You see, everyone dies! But there is a choice – a real choice with real consequences or real benefits! A person can either die outside of Christ and under judgment – a nasty, nasty affair – or you can die "in Christ". The person that dies "in Christ" will enter into life eternal with God in His heaven! AND, when Christ rules the world, He has promised that we will rule with Him. We will be the government of the rule of God. We will rule with justice and equity, with kindness and consideration, without corruption, cronyism, or self-promotion. Now isn't that a novel idea for a political platform? If we are faithful in serving Christ in this life, He will entrust us with the best jobs in the next life, especially in the New Heaven and New Earth! We all will be employed, but how we are employed seemed based on our faithful service here



The **THIRD PILLAR** is ***"If we disown Him He will also disown us"***. I will say this about that – no one EVER, who has truly been in the possession of Jesus – has disowned Him! Not and meant it! Peter did, remember, outside the trial of Jesus. He didn't mean it. Many have tasted of the goodness of God in Christ, but did not swallow, did not fully surrender – well, there have been a lot of **those** who have disowned, or divorced themselves from Christ! This part of the saying is there simply to remind people to not be one of them! But Christ knows those that are His own from the very beginning and those that are not. He tells us that at harvest time, he will separate **the wheat from the tares** – the real thing from the look-alikes! Doubling down, He says that at the final judgment, he will separate the **sheep from the goats!** Jesus also spoke of those who come before Him and cry ***"Lord, Lord, I did this and that for you"***, and He will say to them, ***"Depart from me, I NEVER KNEW YOU"***

Finally, the **FOURTH PILLAR** - ***“If we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself.”*** This is a testimony to the faithfulness of God. If we are really His, and we have surrendered ourselves to Him, and we have let Him clean house in us, and He is moving His best “stuff” (like agape love) and the other ***“fruit of the Spirit”***, like ***joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*** into the inner rooms of our person. We are becoming Christ, and He is becoming **US!** But we are a fallen people, and fallen people are notorious for getting discouraged, or getting depressed, or for having a time of doubting, or of self-pity, or of getting distracted from what is important, or of getting lost. But remember the parable that Jesus told of the lost sheep, where the Good Shepherd goes out of His way to seek, find, and rescue. He does not abandon us when we are hit hard by human weaknesses, or even by our own special ones. In our misery He is faithful to us, loving us, comforting us when we let Him, providing assistance that we often don’t even know He is giving! He remains there waiting for us to return like the prodigal son, who ran away, squandered his inheritance, ended up tending pigs and to keep from starving found himself eating their slop. And when he came to his senses, he came back home to throw Himself at the mercy of His father, expecting to be criticized and ostracized and perhaps even thrown out. But his father ***“saw him afar off”***, (like he was at the window longing and looking for his wayward son’s return). And the father ran to his ragged, thin, worn-down son and welcomed Him back with great joy, cleaned him up, clothed him in fine clothing, re-instated him back into the family, and threw him a big “Welcome Home” party! That is the way God is with His own. In our moment of weakness, when we are weak in our commitment to Him, He remains strong in His commitment to us! Even when we do not know our own heart, He does! He knows those that are His own. We are “in Christ” – a part of Him forever! But the difference between those that disown Jesus and those that stumble and fall, are that the true ones come back to their senses, humble themselves, repent, and return. But that is a hard and unnecessary path to trod. Avoid the detours. They hurt, and they are not worth it. The repercussions live on, and are real! Avoid that by staying true – endure to the end – remain faithful! Be the authentic Christ-follower



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