

May 8, 2022

Fan Into Flame – (week 3) Be Strong

One of the things I love about Verde Valley Christian Church is our purpose.

It's our purpose to help each of us take steps from wherever we are to where God wants us to be.

If you are IMPERFECT, welcome. Way back in 64–Not 1964, but AD 64–the church was filled with imperfect people then also!

PERFECT STORM: 3 elements: 1) Imperfect people 2) a fallen world, 3) Wave upon wave of dark difficulties!

Perfect storms **AMPLIFY** imperfections! And **cups of gunk are spilled!**

True in AD 64-66. True in 2020-2022.

It is important to “Be Strong” in a particular way **PARTICULARLY** during perfect storms.

I. **Be strong in the GRACE**

*2 Timothy 2:1 (NIV) You then, my son, **be strong** in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

STRENGTH

- Paul describes a supernatural strength accessed through Jesus.
- This is not an achieved strength but a received strength.

in the GRACE

- “BE STRONG IN THE GRACE...”
- GRACE in Christ Jesus is a GIFT.
 - It is strength that we need to do what we are called to do.
 - We usually only think of grace as the gift of forgiveness.
 - GRACE is bigger than that.
 - It is EVERYTHING we need for life and godliness.

- It comes through the POWER of the cross and resurrection.
- **It's available to you as a gift!**
 - Only for those who want his gift
 - Only for those who ask for his gift.
 - Only for those who trust Jesus and want Jesus.

Then Paul tells us **FOR WHAT PURPOSE WE MUST BE STRONG.**

II. Pass the BATON

2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV) And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

Step one. Let these truths change you!

Step two. Pass the BATON of these transformative truths to others!

2 Timothy 2:2 is THE MENTORING verse. **Make disciples who will also make disciples.**

Somehow we have to make disciples instead of inspiration junkies.

Don't let a baton pass be just words! Show them your transformed life. A closer proximity in relationships is required for the BATON PASS. It's not to be thrown.

BATON FIRM GRASP METAPHOR: All five fingers!

1. Love God wholeheartedly
2. Do First things First
3. Don't do life alone
4. Saved People serve people.
5. Followers Say Follow me.

WARNING: MIXED METAPHORS AHEAD!

Just for fun, I will mix the 3 with this first one for a total of 4.

Pass the Baton ...mixed metaphor....

A. Like a SOLDIER

Picture a Roman soldier running the first leg of a 4x400 relay. Got that picture. It will help the picture stick!

2 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV) Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. † No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.

- **Stay focused with single-minded devotion to Jesus Christ, who is our commanding officer! Don't get distracted or sidetracked!**
 - **Some only enlisted to get to heaven. They are not soldiers. They are looking for a cruise ship.**
 - Jesus Christ's kingdom is still at war with the kingdom of darkness.
 - **Before you enlisted, you were told this was not your own little "walk in the park".**

Next picture. Pass the Baton ...

B. Like an ATHLETE

2 Timothy 2:5 (NIV) Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules.

- **Stay focused on winning according to the RULES!**
 - Stay in your lane.
 - That's the **RULES of the NEW COVENANT**, it comes with A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE YOU. "Love one another as I have loved you." That's the rules! Not powering down with rules and authority.
 - **NOT POWERING DOWN BUT SERVING UP.**
 - Love as Jesus loved you! **THAT's the rules, that's our weapon! Loving and serving!**

Next picture. Pass the Baton ...

C. Like a FARMER

2 Timothy 2:6-7 (NIV) The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. ⁷ Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

- **connect the dots: HARD WORK → HARVEST:**
 - Farmers know: Hard work comes before a great harvest.
 - Farmers know: My part and God's part.
 - FARMING requires FAITH and WORK for faith to work toward harvest. It's a covenant with GOD!
 - This is Kingdom seed planting.
 - Grace is for the DAILY GRIND...but FOCUS on the HARVEST RESULTS
- This requires being **STRONG** in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
- **That's the New Covenant partnership!**

III. Remembering will help you ENDURE

2 Timothy 2:8-10 (NIV) Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, ⁹ for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. ¹⁰ Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

- **Remember Jesus Christ (2:8)**
 - **Remember**...his sacrifice and **Resurrection** (He's fully God)
 - **Remember**...he descended from David (He's fully Man)
 - **Remember** the fulfillment of all the Messianic prophecies.
 - **Remember** his Kingdom and his eternal reign.
 - **Remember** The price HE paid.
 - **Remember** His call and CO-Mission
- When you suffer (2:9) **Remember** His Victory

- **Remember** that your suffering honors him.
- **Remember** He suffered to save you, now love others like he loved you!
- **Remember** the gospel is unstoppable... (2:9) *God's word is not chained...*
- **Remember to endure for others sake (2 Timothy 2:10)**
 - ... **endure** everything that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory

2 Timothy 2:11-13 (NIV) Here is a trustworthy saying: *

* **Was this Paul's saying? Paul's song? or an early hymn?**

Perhaps YOU should memorize this to help you endure in YOUR ordeal. You decide.

If we died with him, we will also live with him;

¹² *if we **endure**, we will also reign with him.*

If we disown him, he will also disown us;

¹³ *if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.*

- **Our Lord Jesus remains faithful even when we falter.**
 - If you are struggling, Jesus is the answer.
 - If you are struggling, humbly seek Jesus.
 - When you falter and yet humbly look again to Jesus, He is absolutely committed to give more grace.

"I am strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus!
Grace is God's gift to me today!"

Talk It Over

FAN INTO FLAME (Week 3) Be Strong

SMALL TALK

1. Describe a skill you learned with the help of a teacher, coach, or mentor? Describe the learning process.

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ 2 Timothy 2:1-13.** What have you learned about the *cost* of following Jesus since the time you first started following him?
3. What does it mean to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:1)? How does being strong in this way work?
4. What does this way of being strong (2:1) have in common with a soldier? (2:3-4) An Athlete? (2:5) A farmer? (2:6)
5. For what purpose is this strength (2:1) to be used (2:2)? Why is this kind of strength mission-critical? Why is passing the gospel baton mission-critical?

GETTING PERSONAL

6. Under what kind of circumstances do you find it difficult to live strong and be faithful to Jesus, his mission, and his church?
7. What have you learned about the cost of following him since then?

MAKING PROGRESS (THIS WEEK)

8. How are VVCC’s 5 core statements related to the concept of passing the gospel Baton? Has anything from this series moved the needle for you on any of these

statements? Which statement is God prompting you to strengthen this week? What will you do to be strong and faithful this week?