

“Shaped To Endure”

Transcribed using turboscribe.ai

Sermon Preached: Sunday 12th October 2025

Preacher: Pastor Jason Sander

Location: St Peter's Lutheran Church, Loxton

Sermon Text: [2 Timothy 2:8-15](#)

Hello my friends, grace, mercy and peace to you in the name of our Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ. This morning, as I said at the start of the service, we're continuing our sermon series looking at Gospel-Shaped Living and the theme for today is Shaped to Endure. At the start of the service I showed, well this is a different angle of a picture of a library in Hereford, Hereford Cathedral in England and it's one of the oldest libraries in Europe.

As you can see, there's something a bit unusual about it and that's the chains. Each book is actually attached to the shelf with these chains that run up and down through the book. It looks strange but it was actually common practice back in the medieval times because books were precious, they were often hand-copied, expensive and easily stolen because they were worth a lot of money.

So they were chained up, literally locked to the shelves so people couldn't take them away and steal them. It's an image of wisdom controlled perhaps, of precious truth, it's restricted. I look at this picture and I can't help but think of the Apostle Paul writing to Timothy from his Roman cell, prison cell.

He's chained, confined, but then he says something remarkable. He says, I'm suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal but God's word is not chained. Paul might be locked away but the gospel isn't.

The word of God cannot be restricted, silenced or stopped. It lives within Paul, it sustains him, gives him courage to keep going even when life hurts. And that's the same gospel, the same word of God that continues to shape you and me as followers of Jesus today.

Let me pray. Loving Father, as we hear your word this morning, we pray that your Holy Spirit will work in our hearts to shape us by your grace to endure. May your Holy Spirit transform us into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Holy Spirit, may the words that I speak be pleasing to you. Guide my words as I share them with your people here this morning. Amen.

Do you remember those first words that Paul spoke at the very beginning of his letter? I know it was a little bit before in the service, you might not recall, but his first word was remember. Remember Jesus Christ. Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead, descended from David.

Sounds simple enough, doesn't it? But it's the key to everything else that he's going to say. Because when we struggle in life, when life is hard, when faith feels costly or a bit too much, what is it that we often remember? Perhaps for many of us, most of us, we replay the pain.

We remember the people who hurt us, the situations that perhaps drained us, the failures that embarrassed us.

But Paul says, remember Jesus. Remember the risen Lord, raised from the dead. Remember the promised king, descended from David, the Messiah.

In other words, remember the gospel story itself. Remember the gospel. Jesus suffered but was raised.

He was humiliated but is now exalted. And it's that gospel that keeps Paul going. It's the story that shapes his life.

It's the story that gives him hope, gives him the ability to endure. It's really interesting that Paul, before he tells Timothy and us how to endure, he starts with who we remember. The one who breaks the chains of sin and death, who frees us and calls us friends.

And that means that endurance doesn't start with our own determination or inner strength. It starts with our hearts and our minds focused on Jesus. So when hardship comes, then it will.

We know it does. Our first instinct is often to focus inward or backwards. But endurance comes when we look outwardly and towards Christ.

And so Paul says, I'm suffering, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. You can hear that resolve in his voice, his hope, his strength.

Paul's imprisoned. He's lost his freedom. His reputation's probably taken a bit of a beating too, but he knows that the gospel is still going forward.

He's confident. He's confident that the gospel will continue to do its work. He may be silenced, but God's word keeps speaking.

He may be confined, but God's word breaks down walls. You may know that throughout history, that's been true over and over. Even right in the early church times, the church was growing under Roman persecution of Christians being martyred in the Colosseum, fed to lions, hung upside down on crosses.

Missionaries too, in more recent times, have carried the gospel to new lands despite opposition. They trust that the gospel will keep going. And even today, the church in places like China, the underground church, places like Iran, North Korea, the church continues to flourish underground.

As hard as the authorities try to stop it, ban Bibles, ban meetings, but yet the church continues to grow. Every attempt to chain the word of God has failed. Why is that? Because the gospel doesn't depend on human power.

It's living and active. It carries its own authority, its own power, its own life. It's the living Jesus bringing life, the word who became flesh.

You know, those old books in that cathedral, they may look impressive, but they also remind us of something the gospel refuses to be. So you can chain a book, you can chain a preacher, but you can't chain the living word of God. Jesus has broken the chains of sin and death.

Sometimes we feel like we are chained up, we are people chained. And we may feel stuck, limited by health, the stage of life, by circumstances, by mistakes, whatever it may be. And you may think, well, what difference can I make? And it's where Paul says God's word is not chained.

Because even when we may feel confined, when we may feel that there's limits on what we can do, the spirit of God is still at work through us, through you. We can be in a hospital bed, and the gospel can still flow through our prayers and our witness, even those who are quiet and unnoticed. Faith can still speak volumes.

We can be weak and weary, but God's word is never weak. Because endurance comes from knowing that the power doesn't rest on us. It rests on God's unchained word, Jesus.

And that's why Paul can say to Timothy, therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. It's quite moving what Paul is saying there. Paul's not just enduring to prove a point or to feel strong.

He endures for others. For the sake of those who will one day hear and believe the gospel. So when we talk about endurance as Christians, it's never self-focused.

As Christians, we don't just grit our teeth and try to survive. Rather, we keep going so that others might see the grace of God through us, through you. What might that look like? What would that look like for you? Perhaps as a parent, you pray faithfully for a child who has drifted from faith.

Or you show an enduring prayer life to your family as a witness of faith. Or a believer who bears suffering yet still testifies to God's goodness. Endurance that strengthens others.

Or a small church that just keeps on loving and serving their community even when it feels hard. That's endurance that bears witness to Jesus. Here's the thing that when endurance feels tough, remember that your perseverance may be the very thing God uses to bring someone else to faith.

It's humbling to think that our suffering can become someone else's salvation story. That's how God can work. That our endurance becomes an act of love.

That's the power of God working through us. The heartbeat of endurance is the confidence that our future is secure in Christ. Paul gave this little summary of gospel hope, perhaps an early Christian hymn.

He said, if we die with him, we'll also live with him. If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will disown us.

If we are faithless, he remains faithful, but he cannot disown himself. That's the heartbeat of endurance. That's the confidence.

Because we've died in him, and I believe Paul's talking about baptism here, that dying with Christ and rising to life through the baptism waters. Because we have this identity, if we endure, we will reign with him in that promise. And then he says there's this call to faithfulness.

To not turn away from Christ when things get tough, when you suffer, when things don't go your way. We endure because we have the assurance that even if our faith wavers, he, Jesus, remains faithful. He never turns his back on us.

And the ability to endure rests not on our perfection and what we can do, but on his promises. So there'll be times when our strength runs out, when our courage falters, when our prayers feel worthless. But God's faithfulness never wavers.

When you can't hold on, he holds onto you. Paul was literally chained up, but the gospel was free. And the word of God continues to move across generations, languages, across continents, transforming lives, healing hearts, saving sinners.

The gospel can't be chained. It's just as we saw with the kids here before. It lives in our hearts, and it lives in your hearts too.

It's not about what we remember or what we can say. It's that the knowledge of that faithfulness of God, he is within us. And the truth can shape the way that we live.

So we dwell in the truth of God. We immerse ourselves in the gospel, in the word of God, to learn it, to know it. Because it gives us courage to endure.

Not just to survive, but to keep bearing witness to Jesus too, for the sake of others. At Hereford, those chained books remind us of how people once tried to protect knowledge by restricting it. The gospel's different.

The gospel's not meant to be locked up. It's meant to be lived, shared, set free. So we keep on going, remembering Jesus, trusting his word, enduring.

What does that look like for you in your life at this moment? For the gospel to be set free? Are there people that you can share the gospel with? Through acts of love, service, through telling the word, through living out faith, so that they can also be set free, to let the gospel live in their lives too. So as we continue to reflect on this word, and we take it with us into this week, remember the gospel is never chained. It lives within you.

That's Jesus Christ. Let that truth shape the way that you live and serve this week. And may the peace of God, which passes our understanding, may it guard your hearts and minds.

In Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Transcribed by [TurboScribe.ai](https://www.turboscribe.ai).