

October 9, 2016

*II Timothy 2:8-13:* **“All Squealing Aside”**

*I. The Unending Requirement to Remember.*

*II. About Discomfort.*

*III. A Trustworthy Saying.*

*Pilgrim Lutheran Church  
2155 North Oakland Avenue  
Decatur, Illinois 62526*

## II Timothy 2:8-13

Dear Friends in Christ,

Do you remember the story about the roly-poly pigs? Well, in case you've never heard it, here it is:

A farmer had a herd of swine that was highly admired by other farmers. They were sleek and roly-poly. When it came time for feeding, the farmer would go to the edge of the pasture and knock sharply with a stick on the trough that was filled with grain. Scattered throughout the pasture the pigs, hearing the farmer's knock, would lift their snouts and then run in the direction of the sound, squealing all the way. This went on for some time. All was well until some woodpeckers began to make their homes in the dead trees scattered all over the pasture. The pigs mistook the pecking on the dead trees for the farmer's knock on the trough. They would run, squealing all the way, from one dead tree to another. Soon, the roly-poly pigs became weak and scrawny.

So, you're wondering, "Where is he going with this and is he implying that we are pigs." Well...I'm not saying that we are pigs, but there is the reality that our spiritual lives can easily become weak and scrawny chasing after a lot of things that are...well...just that: nothing more than things! A serious illness, the death of a loved one, a threatening national or international catastrophe can quickly test our spiritual health. In reality, that's happening on a very serious level. This morning . . .

### ALL SQUEALING ASIDE

#### I. The Unending Requirement to Remember.

Our text begins, "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel." (vs. 8) Paul says "remember Jesus Christ." Some might say, "How could we forget?" Oh, friends, there's a long line of people who have become, or are becoming, so distracted that Jesus and what He gives fade!

And for those who say "Once saved, always saved!", Scriptures don't teach that. They teach: "For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come, and then have **fallen away**, to restore them again to repentance..." (Heb. 6:4-6a) The only people who can fall away are the people who were there - in the faith - in the first place.

And the writer of Hebrews is also instructed to say, "For if we go on sinning deliberately (how about squealing after this world's wants, desires and thinking?) after receiving the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins but a fearful expectation of Judgment..." (Heb. 10:27) Once saved, always saved? That's not what Scriptures say.

And, then, some will cry, "Yes, but, what about Jesus' words, 'I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand?'" (Jn. 10:28) Well, there's no argument there. However, while no one will be able to snatch us from Jesus' hand, we can, of ourselves, walk away. The term is **fall away**.

Thirteen years ago, David R. Andersen presented this excellent insight in an article entitled, *Luther on Galatians*: "Religion, whether medieval or modern, always succeeds in focusing attention on our worthiness and the law. It always triumphs in focusing attention on individual sins and thus ignoring completely the depth of our sinful predicament." (Modern Reformation, Vol 12, no 5, September/October, 2003, p. 26) Hence, the pop Christianity that says, "If you do this and that for God, God will do this and that for you." The reality is that God did and does everything for us in Christ while we were and still are sinners.

And with that in mind, Moody Monthly once gave this description of modern living: "A senseless whirl which has been spelled in three words - hurry, worry, bury." We spend too much time squealing for our wants and craves. I would say that one of the most disturbing things I hear church people say is something along the lines of, "Well, I hope I get to see and do and experience this or that before I die!" Once again the question: Really? Does anyone here really think heaven will be less enjoyable because you didn't get to do, see, experience this or that of this horribly fallen world??

I see weak and scrawny Christians. They're everywhere. We all have our moments. There is this unending requirement for us to, as Paul says, "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead." - that constantly. The One Who has removed the guilt of our sin, loves us and promises everlasting life.

## II. About Discomfort.

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. (vss. 8-10)

That's a tough one, isn't it? American Christians will suffer up to a point. We have said, for many years, that the Church in America has never been tried. That's rapidly changing. The next Presidential election will determine whether or not freedom of religion, freedom of religious expression, freedom of worship will remain free or fall under government supervision, intrusive monitoring and consequences for those who refuse the supervision. We may very well find ourselves homeless in our "home sweet home". Paul says, "I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal." Oh, that can't happen to us, right?! History says otherwise. The present is heading that way!

In the third verse of 2 Timothy 2, Paul writes, "Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." And Jesus bids every disciple - all - to take up their cross and follow Him. P. E. Kretzmann wrote:

The fact that the apostle endured all sufferings so steadfastly should serve for the encouragement of the Christians for all times; it should cause them to become so sure of their salvation in Christ Jesus that even the greatest afflictions and persecutions would not cause them to doubt the fact of their being children of the heavenly Father through Christ. For their salvation is in Christ Jesus; it is earned by Him, it rests in Him, it is grounded in Him. There can be no doubt therefore that the believers will obtain that eternal glory which is connected with this salvation. (P.E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary of the Bible, New Testament, Vol. II., p. 405)

The streets were lined with crowds, cheering the marching troops about to leave for overseas. A recruit, who had watched the crowd for some time, asked, "Why are all these people cheering?" A veteran standing next to him replied, "They are the people who are not going."

We're not cheerleaders for Jesus, brothers and sisters. We're part of His army. You know, "Like a mighty army, moves the church of God." Not an army to spill blood, but the army proclaiming the love of God in Christ to a world headed for eternal darkness. "...we are treading where the saints (those of the past who suffered for Christ) have trod." That moment is here. Paul goes on to say . . .

## III. A Trustworthy Saying.

The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have 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. (vss. 11-13)

I ask you to listen carefully to one more insight from P. E. Kretzmann:

....If we are faithful to the Lord, even unto death...then we shall also become partakers of the reward of mercy which He has reserved for us in heaven... If we are faithless, if we are not true to Him...if we lose the faith of our hearts by neglecting the Word and Sacraments, God will be faithful to His threat of punishment, for He cannot be untrue to His essence; He is the Eternal, Immutable (that is, without change). (Ibid, pp. 405-406)

Salvation is ours. We struggle with sin, suffer its consequences in this life - the consequences of bad decisions, misspent years, hasty words and actions with little thought of outcome. Yet, Jesus has paid for our debt of sin on the Cross. Removes our guilt. Forgives and loves us. And, in spite of the on-going struggle, shepherds us to eternal life.

We could love others no less, regardless of how they see or understand us - regardless of their hatred and warring madness to violate God's Word in every way. We've spent much of our lives running and squealing for this world's trough of grain. It's passing away. God help us! All squealing aside!

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott