

Guest Preacher Rev. George Macaskill

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Preacher: Rev. George Macaskill

- [0 : 0 0] Let's turn in our Bibles to look at a verse in the chapter which we read, which was 2 Timothy chapter 1.
- And as God would help me, I'd like to concentrate on verse 12. That is 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 12.
- Which is why I suffer as I do, but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.
- Especially the words, I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.
- Now, prisons in general. Paul wrote this letter from prison. Prisons in general.
- [1 : 2 3] Condemned cells in particular. Must be about the last place on earth. Where you would expect a letter of inspiration.
- It seems, according to chapter 4, verse 6, Paul, in prison, has just heard the news that he will never get out of prison.
- According to secular history, which we have no reason to question, a few days after he wrote this letter, he was beheaded.
- Now, when such information comes to you, that usually debilitates you, doesn't it? It usually weakens a person, disheartens them.
- Certainly low-key. But here's Paul. He's so vibrant. He stirs up Timothy in this last letter.
- [2 : 3 4] He stirs up Timothy to be diligent to do what? To do exactly what was costing Paul his life.
- Verse 6 and 7. For this reason, I remind you. He had said this before to Timothy. And he said, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying of my hands.
- For God gave us a spirit, not of fear, but of power, of love, and of self-control. And if you turn over the page in your Bible to chapter 4, verse 2, listen to him.
- Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Preach the word. Hey, why is Paul in prison?
- Why is Paul going to lose his head in a few days? Because he wouldn't stop preaching the word. And here he is speaking to his, I think we can say his successor.
- [3 : 5 7] Timothy, preach the word. In season, out season. How can a man, how can Paul be so positive in such situations?
- How is Paul so strong? So reassuring? So optimistic? What's the answer? What's the explanation? The answer is the words of our text.
- I know whom I have believed. That's the explanation. That's the answer. That's why Paul can live the way he lived.
- That's why he can live that way. Listen, that's how he can die that way. He says, I know whom I have believed. So, as God would help us, let's look a bit more carefully at these, at the words, or the main words of our text.

I know whom I have believed. Note carefully. Paul does not say, I know what I believe.

[5 : 24] He says, I know whom I have believed. Have you got it? Christianity is not a system whereby we accept certain code of practice.

That's involved most definitely. But Christianity at the heart is a relationship with a person. I know whom I have believed.

Paul believed in Christ. But he did more than that. He did more than believe Christ.

He knew him. You see, there are different levels of knowledge. There are different kinds of knowledge.

We know our spouses in a slightly different way, on a slightly different level, than we know our enemy.

[6 : 36] We know our spouses more than we know our boss. We know them both, but at different levels, different kind of knowledge. Do you believe in Christ?

That's good. Your soul is safe if you believe in and on Christ. But tell me, how well do you know him?

Do you know him well enough to confess all your sins freely before him?

I tell you, he'll understand. He paid for them if you're a Christian. If you believe in Christ, he paid for your sins.

He knows all about them. Don't be afraid to confess your sins to Christ freely. Tell me, do you know Christ well enough to ask him to forgive you all your sins for nothing?

[7 : 51] For nothing. You have to be honest with God. You have to be honest with Christ. I can't pay you back. But please forgive me everything I've done wrong.

Do you know Christ well enough to do that? Believing in Christ is one good thing.

One excellent thing. But knowing Christ is a further dimension of that relationship. Believing instantly saves your soul.

Believing in Christ instantly forgives you everything you've ever done wrong. Believing in Christ. Believing in Christ secures your salvation forever.

That's good news. That is good, good, good news. But knowing Christ. Knowing Christ helps us to live down here on earth at a different level.

[9 : 11] Here's the apostle Paul. Here's the apostle Paul. He's just heard devastating news.

But he seems to get spiritually stronger. That's interesting, surely. Eh? I know whom I've believed.

But it is interesting. Paul knows who he believes. But that does not mean he knows the future.

It doesn't mean you know everything to know Christ. You think of Paul. Paul didn't know everything.

In Romans chapter 1, verse 13. He says, I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you.

[10 : 22] But thus far have been prevented. Romans 1, verse 13. You say, hey, I thought you were sent by God.

How don't you know where you're supposed to go? You've made many false attempts to go to Rome. Are you a man of God, Paul? Yes, he is. To know Christ doesn't mean you know everything.

It doesn't mean you know the future. We have a letter in the Bible. The second letter to the Corinthians.

Paul wrote that letter effectively to prove he was a genuine apostle. Because Paul had said to the Corinthians that he was going to come to them and going to deal with this man that was committing incest.

But he never turned up. He made apparently several attempts, but he never turned up. The Corinthians said, ha, an apostle.

[11 : 27] How does he not know the will of God? He's not a real apostle. He's not the same level as Peter, James, and John. So he writes the second letter to the Corinthians trying to justify, trying to prove to them he is a genuine apostle of God.

But here's what we need to know. Knowing Christ does not mean we know everything. But it does mean you know all you need to know to live a proper life.

To lead, indeed, a peaceful life. If we know Christ, we will have constant peace. And this is what Paul had.

And he gets this letter from the governor, the prison governor. You'll be dead in a few days. And he's got peace. And he can write a letter to Timothy.

Timothy, don't stop doing what I did. You preach the word in season, out of season. If we know Christ, we'll trust Christ.

[12 : 42] Christ is at the right hand of God, controlling everything that takes place on earth. Do we trust him? If you know Christ, you'll trust him.

If you know Christ, you'll love him. If you know Christ, you'll follow him. That's a message, that's a lesson we can learn this morning from these words.

I know whom I have believed. And I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

I am convinced. That original word that's translated convinced, it implies a change of mind.

It implies a change of mind. He's now convinced about Christ. Do you know, in his early life, Paul had other convictions of Christ.

[13 : 55] He was an imposter. Paul, originally, in his days as a Jew, believed Christ was an imposter.

The original word here implies a change of mind. And one lexicon I refer to said it means persuaded by words.

Paul's arm was not twisted to become a Christian. No one's arm is twisted or at least no one's arm should be twisted to become a Christian.

But we should try and persuade them. We should try and convince them. And Paul, the Bible tells us here, was convinced through sheer evidence, sheer reasoning, sheer logic.

Most of you will know the story of his conversion on the Damascus Road. And no sooner was he converted than we read that he went for three years to Arabia.

[15 : 12] And we don't know anything about that. But most of those who, most scholars believe he was studying the scriptures. You see, he was brought up to teach this man, Jesus.

Forget about him. He's an imposter. But now he's been convinced by words. He is the saviour of the world.

By sheer logic, reasoning, he went away as it were to study, so the scholars tell us, to study what he was, what's this I've discovered.

How does it line up with what I've been taught all my life? How does it line up with my past? And having studied it, he's now convinced Christ is exactly who he says he was.

the saviour of the world, the son of God, the messiah the Jews looked for all their lives.

[16 : 18] I am convinced that he is able to guard, to keep.

Until that day, that is the great day of judgment, what has been entrusted to me. He is able to guard, to keep.

now, what has been entrusted to me? In the context, it seems, well, what is he referring to here?

Obviously, Paul had entrusted the keeping of his soul to Christ, obviously. but that's not what's referred to in the text here in context.

He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me. What was entrusted to him? The church. You see, at this point, I personally think that it was probably no other time in history when the church looked so vulnerable and when it looked as if the church was going to disappear.

[17 : 39] He says, you see, Demas has forsaken us and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galicia. Titus has gone to Dalmatia.

The only one that's left is Timothy. Here was Paul, the greatest, strongest preacher of the gospel in the whole world, I think we can see, definitely at that time, if not even up to this day.

And he was about to lose his life. And there was no one left but this Timothy. I tell you, the church has been written off by this world for 2,000 years.

They've said, there's no last. There's no last. There's only Timothy. And we do know Timothy was unwell.

Timothy was a weak Christian. Well, we read there in verse 6, fan into a flame. Get going, Timothy. We know you've got a timid nature. That's why he says to them, God didn't give us a spirit of fear.

[18 : 50] He gave us a spirit of power and love. Yes, constitutionally, we might be weak. Constitutionally, we might be timid.

But spiritually, spiritually, there's a power in the gospel. There's a power in salvation. And Paul has to stir up Timothy to take over, to take control.

I don't think, as I said, it's personal. I don't think there was a moment in history when the church possibly looked more vulnerable. And you say, this church is not going to last.

But what says the scripture? What did Christ say? I am building my church and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

The gates of hell was a Hebrew terminology for authorities. All the powers and authorities in hell are trying to get rid of the church, but they can't succeed.

[20 : 09] Because Christ said, I am building it and I am God. God. But what I want to look at for the rest of our time is these three words.

I'm not ashamed, for I know whom I've believed, and I'm convinced that he is able. He's convinced that Christ is able, because Christ is God.

God. Now, that term, he is able, is used several times in the Bible, and I'd just like to look at a few of them.

It's used even in the Old Testament. Remember Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, thrown into the fiery furnace. Remember what they said when they were told, bow down to that idol, or you're thrown into the fire furnace.

What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego say? Our God is able. Our God is able to deliver us.

[21 : 28] But if not, we will not bow down. You see, that's faith. our God is able to deliver us.

But not again. They don't know if God will. Because God hadn't revealed it to them. Oh, he wonderfully delivered. But they didn't know that then.

See the nature of faith? I believe God is able to deliver. But we're not sure if he will. But whether he does or not, we're not going to bow down to a pagan idol.

Wood, stock, stones, bronze, gold, diamond, whatever. We're bowing down and worshipping the God in heaven who made everything by speaking.

That's faith. Do you believe God is able? Our God is able to deliver.

[22 : 33] Not knowing the future that we're prepared to face the fire. And that's what they did. They faced the fire. They were thrown in and the people who thrown them in were burnt.

And the three who went in believing in God, there was not a hair of their head singed. He is able.

Can we live down here as if knowing Christ is able. Not sure what he's going to do but we know he's able.

If it's his will, if it's for his honour, his glory, his good, the good of the church, he is able. He knows what is best.

We don't know what's best. God knows what's best. Have we that faith? He is able. But if not, we're still serving Christ.

[23 : 43] It's used, he is able, three times at least, in the New Testament. Hebrews 2.18. And we can apply this to ourselves.

When tempted, he is able. to help those who are being tempted. God never tempts to sin.

He'll never tempt you to sin. But he will put you in a situation where you are tested so that you can show your faith.

In the original language, the word tempt and the word test is exactly the same. So we have to be careful here. God tests the strength of your faith because he knows you have that germ seed that can grow.

The kingdom of heaven is as a grain of mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds, but yet grows to be the largest. He knows if you've got that grain, and that grain, if used properly, if exercised properly, will grow.

[25 : 09] God tests to strengthen our faith. He puts us into difficult situations so that our faith will grow through the trial, God.

But Satan's involvement is to tempt you to sin and grieve God. Satan hates obedience, but we're strengthened by obeying God.

I remember somebody saying to me, it's a dangerous thing to pray for more faith, because you're praying for more trials, you're praying for more tests, you're praying for more dangerous situations.

Be careful. Do it. Do it. Because we have to grow in faith. But remember, it's through testing. God knows that we can do some things, and we let him down.

We fail. God doesn't throw us in the scrap heap when we fail. God's not into that. Once he saves, he saves forever.

[26 : 33] He is able to help those who are being tempted. Later on, we read, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him.

Now, listen, never, ever run away from God, especially when you do something wrong, sin, especially when you sin.

Never run away from God. Run to him and tell him everything you've done wrong, and he will forgive if you only believe.

He's a forgiving God, a God who delights in mercy. were to draw near to God through him, through Christ.

He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him.

[27 : 53] Come in the name of Christ and whatever you've done that's wrong, you can come and ask for forgiveness. However wicked, however wrong, come and he will forgive if you only believe.

There are another wonderful text about again, he is able. He is Ephesians 3.20. Paul again, earlier in his life, said he is able to save to the uttermost.

Sorry, he is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think. That is an astonishing verse.

But, it's about God. It's about Christ. All power is his. He's able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think.

That's a tremendous verse. All that you ask. Now, I don't know about you, but sometimes I'd love to ask for something, but I haven't the nerve.

[29 : 16] Well, do you know what Ephesians 3.20 says? If you can think about it, God can do it. If you can think about it.

All that we ask or think. Not just some of the things you think, but our Bible is saying, all that we ask or think, God is able.

is that what it says? No, no. More than you can ask or think. Is that it?

Finished? No. Far more abundantly. He is able to do far more abundantly than all that you ask or think.

Now, it's always wise to finish the verse. How does Ephesians 3.20 finish? According to the power that works within us.

[30 : 32] He can do all that depending upon how much this power is working in us. And what I find so encouraging is this.

That power according to the original text is that power is already working in you. It has not achieved its maximum but it's already working in you.

There's encouragement. The power if you're a Christian, if you believe in Christ, there's a power working in you.

And God is able to do far more abundantly than all that you ask or think.

Now, we're finished. Paul could say that because Paul says, Paul wrote that to Ephesians and he's telling us here, he's saying, I know whom I believe.

[31 : 40] And he can say all that he says because he knows Christ. Jeremiah chapter 9, verse 23 says, let the man that boasts boasts in this that he understand and knows me.

Knows me. Now, my last question, how can we know Christ like Paul knew Christ?

Well, our time is up. Do you remember King Manasseh? what a wicked, wicked king he was. I'm going to read to you, I'm sorry, just to read to you.

When Manasseh, King Manasseh, who was such a wicked king, when he was in distress, he entreated the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.

He prayed to him and God was moved by his entreaty, a wicked man, a wicked, evil king.

[32 : 54] God was moved by his entreaty and heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Now, here's the bit, the last sentence in 13, the last of Cynthia.

then, then, then, then, Manasseh knew that the Lord, he was God. Then, when, when, when he prayed and was forgiven, you can't know God until you first tasted his forgiveness.

forgiveness. That's the beginning. The beginning is not, oh, I better sort my life out. I better sort myself out and then we'll begin praying and then maybe God will hear me because I sorted myself out.

My friend, you'll never sort yourself out without God. You need God first. Go to him and ask for forgiveness. That's why Christ said, come to me.

He didn't say sort out yourself first. Come to me and I will give you rest. I end with this. Psalm 91 verse 14.

[34 : 19] Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him. I will protect him because he knows my name.

do you want to know his name? Love him. Love Christ. Tell him all your problems. Spell out all your sins to him.

And he'll make you a new person in Christ. And you'll be able to say with Paul, I know whom I have believed. I'm convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

May God, the Holy Spirit, make his truth, his word, effectual to every one of us. Let's bow our heads. Our Father in heaven, be pleased to take the things of Christ and make them ours here in this place.

Be pleased, gracious God, to unite us to your Son in living faith because we pray in his name alone for your glory.

[35 : 38] Amen. Well, let's conclude our service of worship by singing from the Scottish Psalter in the blue book, page 209 of the blue praise book, page 209.

Psalm 9 and verse 10. Psalm 9 and verse 10. And they that know thy name, in thee their confidence will place, for thou hast not forsaken them that truly seek thy face.

We sing right down to verse 13. Lord, pity me, behold the grief which I from foe sustain, even thou who from the gates of death dost raise me up again.

Psalm 9 verses 10 to 13. And they that know thy name, in thee their confidence will place, for thou hast not for same can them that truly seek thy praise.

O sing ye praises to the Lord true That join h be upon his days we have oar thee said
When he inquireth after blood He then remembereth them The humble folk may not
forgive

[38 : 21] That call upon his name Lord, that he may behold the gleam Which I from foes sustain
Even thou who from the gates of death Does with me up again The grace of the Lord
Jesus Christ And the love of God And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with us all Now
and forevermore

Amen