

"REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST"
2 Timothy 2:8

Intro: Let me give you a verse for the new year: 2 Timothy 2:8.

— This was what would surely have to be considered one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of all of Paul's parting exhortations to Timothy.

This was a personal exhortation to Timothy, and I give it to you as a personal exhortation. I take it for myself as a personal exhortation. It is not something that we can take or leave; it is a personal obligation that we have to God, to Jesus Christ Himself, and to the Holy Spirit Who led Paul to write this. We must all, all of us who know the Lord, "remember Jesus Christ." We are commanded to do so. So not to do it is to be disobedient to the Members of the Godhead.

The word "remember" means that we are to remember continually. It is not something that we do just at certain times, e.g., at the Lord's Table, but we are to live this way, continually remembering "Jesus Christ."

— "Jesus" means that we are to think of Him in His humanity, to think of Him as a Man. But it is also a Name which bears the imprint of Deity. It is the equivalent of Joshua in the OT, and it means Jehovah is Saviour, or salvation.

"Christ" speaks of the position or office which our Lord held, and continues to hold--that of the Anointed One of God, the Messiah. But this Title also speaks of His Deity: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16), is what Peter said. And the Apostle John wrote, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20:31a).

So we are to think of Him as the Son of God, Who became man, "of the seed of David," the Saviour, the Messiah.

To assist us in this life of remembering our Lord we have the infallible resource given to us in the Old and New Testaments.

But Paul also said to Timothy, lit., who has been raised from the dead "according to my gospel."

— Now we have John 10:17, 18 where the Lord spoke of having the authority to raise Himself from the dead, but here in 2 Tim. 2:8 Paul was speaking of "Jesus Christ" as having been raised from the dead by someone else. The participle is in the passive voice. It is not hard to find out Who that Person was; actually there were Two Persons involved. Rom. 6:4m says that "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." 1 Peter

3:18 says that our Lord was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit"--made alive by the Spirit, or raised from the dead by the Spirit.

This is the emphasis that Paul was making with Timothy: he was to be continually remembering this One, the God-man, who had died, but Who had also been raised from the dead by both the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Whenever you find the Members of the Godhead uniting to do a work, you can be sure that you are dealing with something that is of the greatest importance.

But let me add a couple of other things from 2 Tim. 2:8.

When Paul put the participle in the perfect tense, he meant to indicate that this Person, "Jesus Christ," had not only been raised from the dead in the past, but that He continued to be alive at the very moment when Paul wrote.

And in Rev. 1:18, words spoken by our Lord long after Paul wrote 2 Timothy to Timothy, we read,

I am he that liveth, and was dead;
and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen . . .

So Paul wanted Timothy to be continually thinking about Jesus Christ, not as One Who was dead, but One Who was alive, and Who would never again die!

This is the message of the Gospel--the message of "Jesus Christ" Who died, but Who has been raised from the dead, and is alive now, and will never again die!

But what does it mean to "remember"?

It means to think about Him. It means to call up from your memory what you know about Him, what you have learned about Him. It means to have your thoughts, your affections, centered on Him. We tell our loved ones, "You are always in my thoughts. I think about you all of the time."

Now it is painful to remember some people, and some things. But it is total pleasure to remember those we love. And it should be the greatest pleasure to all to think about our Lord Jesus Christ. That should be the most delightful thing that we ever do--thinking about the Lord!

The Lord's Table is to assist us in this, but our remembrance of the Lord is not to be confined to a service like this tonight. Being here should give us renewed desires along this line, but remembering the Lord is to be a way of life to us.

May 1987 be a year in which you and are are continually turning

our thoughts to our Lord.

But let me give you some suggestions along this line which I hope will be helpful to you.

- I. IF WE ARE COMMANDED TO DO THIS CONTINUALLY, THEN IT MUST MEAN THAT THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WE CAN DO WHEREVER WE ARE, AND WHATEVER ELSE WE MIGHT BE DOING.

We can do it before we get out of bed in the morning.

We can do it as we drive to work, or go to school--whatever the means of transportation might be.

We can do it during spare moments we have throughout the day.

We can do it as we eat.

We can do it while we are waiting for someone.

We can do it when we are sick just as we can when we are well.

We can do it at home, or away from home--even traveling in some other part of our country, or even in another country.

Think about any of your circumstances, and see how much of 1987 you will be able to redeem by thinking of the Lord, by remembering Him.

And if you are continually thinking about the Lord, you are going to find that you will be talking about Him more than you do now. Make it your goal in 1987 to "remember Jesus Christ."

But let me add to this . . .

- II. SPECIFIC TIMES WHEN IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO "REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST."

- A. When we receive mercies from the Lord, whether they are daily, or special times of blessing.

- B. When trials and afflictions come our way.

Note what Paul wrote to Timothy in the verse following our text: 2 Tim. 2:9.

- C. When we are tempted to sin.

- D. When we read our Bibles.

- E. When we gather as a church to hear the Word, and to worship the Lord.
- F. When we meet at the Lord's Table.
- G. When we are depressed and discouraged.
- H. When we are irritated by little things.

Once we begin to examine our lives we can see how miserably we have failed to "remember Jesus Christ." Perhaps we eventually turn in our thoughts to Him, but how much more wonderful it would be if we turned to Him FIRST, and were always thinking of Him.

One more thing:

III. WHAT SHOULD WE THINK WHEN WE THINK OF HIM?

- A. Already we have seen in our text that we need to think of Him both as God and as Man. As God He is sufficient for all of our needs, whatever they may be. As Man He is able to sympathize with us in our needs; He knows exactly what we are going through.

- B. Also, since He is alive, think of Him in that way.

And, since He is God, think of Him as being ever-present with you--seeing what you do, knowing where you go, hearing what you say, even knowing what you are thinking.

Often when we need human help, we have to go some place else to get it, or hope it will come us us. Not so with the Lord. He is always with us.

- C. When things are going wrong, think of His purposes, of His wisdom, and of His love.
- D. The Lord specifically told His disciples to learn that He is "meek and lowly in heart," so they would find rest for their souls.

In short, we need to read our Bibles to learn of Him, and we need to think of Him as He is revealed there, not as we, or others, might imagine Him to be.

- E. Most of all we need to think of Him in His death.

Cf. 1 Cor. 2:2, "For I determined not to know . . ."
This is not to think of Him as still dead, but of the meaning of His death.

F. Finally, we need to remember the promises which He made to us--the promise to keep us, the promise to bless and use us, and the many, many other promises--ESPECIALLY THE PROMISE OF HIS RETURN.

Will it be in 1987? The Lord has not told us when. He wants us to be ready all of the time--remembering Him. But it could be this year.

Concl: I close with a promise related to "remembering Jesus Christ." It is Isa. 26:3, 4.

You will not have a new year without trouble, trials, and afflictions of various kinds. But you can have a new year of continuing peace if you will be careful to "REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST" as we have seen that to mean tonight.