

**MT. OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH, 3500 Edwards Mill Road, Raleigh, NC 27612**  
**NEWS & EVENTS – December 2023**

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

I love to receive gifts that I am going to need. Many of the gifts I receive are wrapped and hidden from view. I can imagine what it might be and open it later or begin to explore and examine it. When I open it, I get a quick glance as I remove the wrapping, and later carefully inspect it. In the short sentence before us, we are given a quick glance that is worth our careful consideration. This sentence of Scripture was given to me in a season of life when I needed to hang onto something I could recall easily. It was a verse to memorize for an immediate moment when my faith in Christ was tested. Memorization of Scripture is an amazing spiritual asset for careful, methodical, and timely reflection. Timothy is told by Paul that since he has received a gift from God, the Holy Spirit, it is given so that he will be able to use what he has received...the grace of God. If you have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, we do not often know all that there is to know about the gift of God's grace. Maybe we have not taken the time to think about this gift. We may not understand what God has in store. But be assured that whatever life with God brings into our lives, His grace is surely sufficient. More than enough.

Timothy is exhorted to *be strong...in the grace...that is in Christ Jesus*. We are taught that when we study the Word of God, especially Paul's writing, we are to explore the things we see before we encounter the word *therefore*, and rightly so. The way I heard it was *when you see the word therefore...see what it's there for*. Let's expand on the examination of this scripture, to flesh it out, as they say. In this case, let us examine what follows this sentence. Why does Timothy need to *be strong...in the grace...that is in Christ Jesus*? Consider the gift...take the time to meditate upon it.

*You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. (2 Timothy 2:1-9)*

Timothy will need to be strong in grace to teach what Paul set forth. He will need grace to entrust these things to faithful teachers. He will need the grace of someone who suffers hardship, presses onward, while looking upward. He will need grace to serve as a soldier of Christ...fighting many battles that often look like lost causes, vigilant to keep from being distracted and entangled. He will need grace to stay out of the everyday traps that would distract his ministry at the least and entrap and destroy his ministry at the worst. Timothy will need grace to compete as an athlete, training for the contest. He will need the grace that a farmer receives when a harvest has been produced from his labor...the farmer knows he didn't make it grow. Finally, he needs the grace of remembering the Lord Jesus, risen from the dead, a descendant of David. We need the grace to remember these things about Jesus...and to be strong in it. As we celebrate the birth our King, remember our King died for us...raised to glory...and reigns as King. Be strong today. Remember how much you need the grace of God. And be strong in it when you see your weakness and see the weakness of others in Christ. Jesus is Lord. What a gift to give to others...Jesus in you. Unwrap it today. The world needs a peek.

Christmas Blessings to you,  
Pastor Sam

**(If you are unable to attend Mt. Olivet's 11 AM Sunday worship service in person, can go to website [www.mobc.org](http://www.mobc.org) and click on "Worship Services" for live streaming or prior messages.)**