

Worship Material
Unchained!
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 12th October

Begin with an opening prayer

We humbly gather in God's presence,
our creator, redeemer and sustainer.
We thank you, God, for the breath that sustains us
and the community that surrounds us.
Let us come and worship you with hearts thankful
for all your blessings to us.
Amen.

Read 2 Timothy 2:8-15

Bible notes

The passage opens with slightly more of the content of 1:10's 'sound teaching'. Verse 8 looks like a very slender statement of Paul's Gospel (found also in Romans 1:3-4), but it compresses his faith perfectly. By holding together Jesus' birth and resurrection, Paul insists that neither his earthly nor his heavenly story is sufficient: the one depends on the other. And if his earthly story accentuates his Jewishness, his heavenly story underlines his significance for all humankind.

Timothy is to explain this 'word of truth' (v.15) associated with the chained and imprisoned Paul without any sense of shame. Paul's chains symbolise the freedom denied him because of his service of Christ. In the eyes of the world, he is no better than a criminal. Yet what looks like humiliation is actually his participation in Jesus' dying and living. He is confident that by persevering in the gospel he will come to share in Christ's heavenly salvation; abandoning his calling could only mean condemnation on the day of judgement. The 'sure saying' in verses 11-13 may have been part of a hymn or creed in the Early Church. It closes on a note of divine abundance: God's abiding faithfulness has the last word in this pithy summary of the 'word of truth' (the 'sure saying' phrase occurs throughout

the Pastorals, but not elsewhere in Paul's writings, as a series of summaries of Paul's gospel: see 1 Timothy 1:15, 3:1, 4:9; Titus 3:8).

Paul's slender statements of his Gospel contrast sharply with other 'words' in his sights (v.14). These are not the debates aired among Jewish rabbis and Greek philosophers, whose give and take explores the mysteries of truth. Ruinous 'wrangling' over words is like the prisoner's chains that chafe the skin and constrain bodily movement. The liberating truth of the Word of God is found in brevity.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for your Word.
Help us to spend time reading it
and show us your truth through it,
so we can share it with others.
Give us opportunities to unchain your Word for others
so they can be free in you.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Go with the love and power of God,
to be the best that you can be
and to be God's faithful servant in the weeks ahead.

Amen.