

1 Timothy 4:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

Analysis

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach (εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ κοπιῶμεν καὶ ἀγωνιζόμεθα, eis touto gar kai kopiōmen kai agōnizometha)—'for to this end we toil and strive.' Kopiaō means to labor to exhaustion, work hard. Agōnizomai means to struggle, fight, compete (as athletes). Some manuscripts read 'suffer reproach' (oneidizometha) instead of 'strive.' Either way, Paul describes strenuous, costly ministry.

Because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe (ὅτι ἠλπίκαμεν ἐπὶ θεῷ ζῶντι, ὃς ἐστὶν σωτὴρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, μάλιστα πιστῶν, hoti ēlpikamen epi theō zōnti, hos estin sōtēr pantōn anthrōpōn, malista pistōn)—'we have set our hope on the living God, who is Savior of all people, especially of believers.' Elpizō means to hope, trust. Sōtēr means savior, deliverer, preserver.

Paul's motivation for exhausting ministry: hope in the living God who saves. God is 'Savior of all people' in that He provides common grace (preserves life, sends rain, shows patience), but 'especially believers' who receive salvation unto eternal life. The distinction: God benefits all humanity, but saves eternally only those who believe.

Historical Context

Paul's ministry involved constant hardship—beatings, imprisonments, shipwrecks, opposition (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). What sustained him? Hope in the living God who saves. Unlike dead idols worshiped in Ephesus, the Christian God is alive, active, powerful to save. This living God's saving purpose motivates costly ministry—we labor because people's eternal destiny is at stake.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What motivates exhausting, costly ministry—how does hope in God fuel perseverance?
2. How is God 'Savior of all people' yet 'especially of believers'—what's the distinction?
3. What role does belief in God's saving power play in sustaining difficult ministry?

Interlinear Text

εἰς	τοῦτο	γὰρ	καὶ	κοπιῶμεν	καὶ	ὀνειδιζόμεθα,	ὅτι
therefore	G5124	For	and	labour	and	suffer reproach	because
G1519		G1063	G2532	G2872	G2532	G3679	G3754
ἠλπίκαμεν	ἐπὶ	θεῷ	ζῶντι	ὃς	ἐστίν	σωτὴρ	πάντων
we trust	in	God	the living	who	is	the Saviour	of all
G1679	G1909	G2316	G2198	G3739	G2076	G4990	G3956
ἀνθρώπων	μάλιστα	πιστῶν					
men	specially	of those that believe					
G444	G3122	G4103					

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 2:4 (Salvation): Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

1 John 2:2 (Parallel theme): And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

John 1:29 (References God): The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

1 Timothy 2:6 (Parallel theme): Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

1 John 4:14 (Salvation): And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

John 4:42 (Salvation): And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.