

2 Timothy 2:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

Analysis

Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Paul explains consequences of gospel faithfulness. "Wherein" (en hō, ἐν ᾧ) refers to the gospel—proclamation of Christ's resurrection brings suffering. "I suffer trouble" (kakopathō, κακοπαθῶ) means endure hardship, face evil treatment. The specification "as an evil doer" (hōs kakourgos, ὡς κακοῦργος) indicates Paul is treated like a criminal—kakourgos denotes malefactor, wrongdoer, someone deserving punishment. Luke uses the same word for the thieves crucified with Jesus (Luke 23:32-33).

"Even unto bonds" (mechri desmōn, μέχρι δεσμῶν) refers to Paul's chains—he writes from harsh Roman imprisonment awaiting execution. Roman authorities viewed him as criminal endangering public order. Yet Paul triumphantly declares: "the word of God is not bound" (ho logos tou theou ou dedetai, ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ δέδεταί). The perfect passive dedetai (δέδεταί, "has been bound") ironically contrasts Paul's chains with the gospel's freedom.

This paradox reveals gospel power. Authorities can imprison preachers but cannot silence the message. Throughout church history, persecution spreads rather than suppresses gospel. Martyrs' blood becomes seed producing more believers. God's sovereign word accomplishes His purposes regardless of human resistance (Isaiah 55:11).

Historical Context

Roman criminal justice treated certain offenses—treason, promoting illegal religions, inciting rebellion—as capital crimes punishable by execution. Christianity's rapid spread, exclusive truth claims, and rejection of emperor worship made it politically dangerous. Authorities viewed Christians as atheists (rejecting Roman gods), traitors (refusing emperor worship), and social disruptors. Paul's arrest likely involved charges of promoting unauthorized religion and causing disturbances.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. When facing opposition for gospel proclamation, do you trust that God's word will accomplish His purposes regardless of human resistance?
2. How can you support Christians who are literally imprisoned for their faith, and how does their testimony encourage your own faithfulness?
3. In what ways might God use your suffering, limitations, or opposition to advance the gospel beyond what comfortable circumstances could achieve?

Interlinear Text

ἐν	ὧ	κακοπαθῶ	μέχρι	δεσμῶν	ὥς	κακοῦργος
Wherein	I	suffer trouble	even unto	bonds	as	an evil doer
G1722	G3739	G2553	G3360	G1199	G5613	G2557
ἀλλ'	ὁ	λόγος	τοῦ	θεοῦ	οὐ	δέδεται·
but	the word	of God	not	bound		
G235	G3588	G3056	G3588	G2316	G3756	G1210

Additional Cross-References

Acts 28:31 (References God): Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Philippians 1:7 (Parallel theme): Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

2 Timothy 1:8 (References God): Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

Colossians 4:3 (References God): Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

2 Timothy 4:17 (Parallel theme): Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

1 Peter 2:12 (Evil): Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Acts 9:16 (Parallel theme): For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

Colossians 4:18 (Parallel theme): The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

Ephesians 3:1 (Parallel theme): For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

1 Peter 4:15 (Evil): But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.