**2 Timothy**

**“Living differently in an age of deformity”**

**I.) 1:1-5 Introduction:**

 **1. 1:1-2 Greeting**

 **2. 1:3-5 Thanksgiving**

**II.) 1:6-12 Statement of Purpose: “Stay the course”**

**III.) Vs. 1:13 - 4:18 Main teaching:**

1. **1:13-18 BE BOLD *Hold fast the course of sound words***
	* + 1. **1:13-14 The course formed**
			2. **1:15 The course forgotten**
			3. **1:16-18 The course followed**
2. **2:1-21 BE STRONG *Be strong in the grace that is in Jesus***
	* + 1. **2:1-6 Recalling three examples of grace**
			2. **2:7-13 Remembering the example of Jesus’ grace**
			3. **3:14-21 Reminding people of the dangers of rejecting grace**
3. **2:22 – 3:17 BE WISE *But know this, in the last days perilous times will come***
	* + 1. **2:22-26 Know what to run from and run too**
			2. **3:1-9 Know the days your living in**
			3. **3:10-17 Know how to walk in the word**
4. **4:1-18 BE READY *Be ready in season and out of season***
	* + 1. **4:1-5 Preach the word**
			2. **4:6-18 Poured out for the word**

**IV.) 4:19-22 Closing “*Come before winter*”**

 **2 Timothy 1:1-2**

 **“Not shopping for Jesus”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 1 No regrets**

**II. Vs. 2 Three gifts to keep you**

**I. Introduction**

Around the year 66-67 AD the apostle Paul had been rearrested and imprisoned in Rome, confined to a little 20 foot in diameter prison cell awaiting his death by the hands of Caesar Nero (who himself would die in 68 AD). Paul writes what would be his last will and testament to Timothy who is still across the Aegean and Adriatic Seas in Ephesus. As Paul was facing his final hour he wanted Timothy to know how to remain strong in the midst of a society that was collapsing. His emphasis is upon **staying the course**, not altering or diverting from the course but rather staying on it despite the present outcome. He will write to Timothy **four ways in which we all can** **“Living differently in an age of deformity”.** Those four phrases formthe division in this letter as each become a subject that Paul explains to his son in the faith.

1. The first phrase is found in chapter 1 verses 13-14 where Timothy is told to “*Hold fast the pattern of sound words*”, simply put Timothy is being told that the time in which they are living is a time for the believer to “**BE BOLD**” in the teaching of the word of God.
2. The next phrase appears in the letter in the 2nd chapter verse 1 where Paul tells Timothy to be “*strong in the grace that is in Jesus*”, in other words the times they were living was a time when the believer needed to **BE STRONG**, fit in the grace that is only in Jesus.
3. The third phrase that Paul gives Timothy is found in chapter 3 verse 1 where he writes “*know this*” as Paul tells Timothy that the time requires the believer to **BE WISE**.
4. Finally Paul gives his final phrase in chapter 4 verse 2 where he says, “*Preach the word*! Be ready in season and out of season”, this final phrase is one in which Paul says to **BE READY**.

I suppose it depends upon your world outlook if you consider this to be an “*age of deformity*” or not but ill regardless of that I believe that these four phrases (**BE BOLD, BE STRONG, BE WISE and BE READY**) to be the marching orders of the church at any age.

**II. Vs. 1 No regrets**

Vs. 1 This is not only one of Paul pastoral letters it is also one of his prison letters as he writes this letter while under incarceration for his faith in Christ. Tradition tells us that shortly after this letter was sent that Paul was taken outside the city of Rome on an April morning and was beheaded. There is a vast difference between this letter and his first letter to Timothy. When Paul wrote his first letter he had just be released from jail after his first trial before Nero. Since that time (four to five years) Nero had burned a third of Rome to the ground in a drunken rampage and to save faced blamed it upon the Christians of which no one in all the world was more visible then Paul. So he had been rearrested and placed not under house arrest but in the darkest jail in all of Rome awaiting his execution. Paul wrote this letter with the full knowledge of his soon departure from this life. The furry of Nero’s persecution had left the church on the brink of extinction.

During this time Christians were called idolaters, atheists, cannibals, and revolutionaries. They were the Bain of all society everywhere hated by all in the world. They were hunted down, lit on fire as human touches to light Nero’s dinner parties, used as entertainment in the roman theater for gladiators and lions to devour.

 Yet despite these dark day, Paul’s letter is bright with hope, no regrets, and no thoughts of deviating from the course set out by God. Had Christianity been a myth, a fraud, a hoax, then this would have been a great time to deny the faith but instead Paul doubles down and not only for himself but for all believers tells them to stay the course. There is little doubt in this letter that not all so called believers stood fast the truth concerning Jesus as Paul will remark in this letter in chapter 1 verse 15 that those in Asia had turned away. In chapter four verse 11 he says his good friend Demas walked away. Paul anticipates with prophetic clearness that having stayed the course of faith in Christ the outcome was soon to be his death. What would you do if you were faced with such a choice as Paul or those in Iraq and other places in the world?

 Listen to how Paul describes his circumstances to Timothy: “*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Jesus Christ*.”

* With regards to the course of his life, Paul listed being sent out to be Christ’s ambassador the highest most privileged course he had ever know.
* With regards to where that course had taken him, Paul considered it the “*will of God*.” Paul did not see himself as a victim of Rome but rather as a champion of Christ’s.
* With regards to the outcome of this course he was not facing “*certain death*” he was facing “*certain life*”! There is no sound or tone in those words of a man with great regrets in his life with how things have turned out. Instead there is an anthem of praise and thanksgiving that he had been chosen to run such a race.

To Paul life as not soon ending, it was soon beginning and he had actively waited for such a time as this. He didn’t write to Timothy about the act that he was going to lose his head, no he wrote as a man that was soon going to gain his life. It is one thing to live like triumphantly when you are facing no trails in this life and another to live victoriously when the world and everyone in it is falling apart. The doubters and atheists can deny all they want but they cannot deny the truth lived out in our lives. Here was a man who according to the prevailing thought in society was insane at best and a criminal at worst, judged by society to not be worthy to breath the same air on this planet and his response to such was, “*Man am I ever blessed*!” Saint’s there is nothing the world or anyone in it can do to a person who despite the situation or circumstances stay steadfast upon the promises of life in Christ.

**II. Vs. 2 Three gifts to keep you**

Vs. 2 In the 2nd verse we have the necessary gifts from God that produced such heroic faith, “*Grace, mercy and peace*”! Over the years I’ve noticed that there is a difference between believers in the early church to many in the church today in the way they view their faith. **Many view their faith in Christ as something they place in their life**. One day while at a grocery store I witnessed the perfect example of how many in the church look at their faith. Many of today’s Christian’s go to the shelf of Jesus and get a 3oz package of Jesus and put him into their shopping cart. Others use Jesus a little more and they prefer the 8oz Jesus. Then there are those super saints who use Jesus a lot and prefer the jumbo Jesus and get the 32oz package. All these “*Jesus shoppers*” tend to think they are better than the other shoppers because they are adding Jesus to their diet, where others aren’t. The 8oz Jesus users think that they are better than the 3oz users. The 32oz jumbo users are far better than the 8 and 3oz users. But in truth all of these folks are just consumers, some are just adding more of Jesus then others. They all place other products in varying degrees that they believe are essential to life and Jesus is just one of the “*many products*” that each person places in the shopping cart. But the *the early church* ***didn’t*** *add more of Jesus to their shopping cart than we do*. **No the difference is not in the amount of Jesus the early church had in their diet it is that they didn’t shop for Jesus at all, as He wasn’t “*In the shopping cart, He was the shopping car”*!** He was their life and what they added to Him was always in accordance to what He desired for each person. Nothing was ever added to Him that He didn’t ordain! **The healthy spiritual diet is not to be found in how much Jesus you put into your life it is rather to be found in whom you allow to do the shopping!**

When Jesus is my Shopping cart, He will give a healthy dose of “*grace, mercy and peace*”. The great part of these three things is that they will be able to sustain you no matter what you are facing in life. There are a great many people who though have added Jesus to their cart are munching on other things expecting to have “grace, mercy and peace” but when their life is depleted do to adversity they realize that what they have been feeding on just won’t suffice. I love the fact that in this greeting Paul says from experience, that these three ingredients that will sustain and stabilize you and they will always and only be found in “*God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord*.”

* ***Grace is the consciousness of God’s love and presence***. His Goodness towards us that not only forgives our sins but enables us to experience the truth that we are a part of His family. It’s this reality that gives the believer the sense of power to obey God’s word and choose Him rather than our fallen flesh. There are all apart of grace which we don’t earn by works but rather by His work that works.
* ***Mercy withholds that which we do deserve***. It’s God’s mercy that tempers the trails of our lives and adjusts them to our weakness of faith and flesh. Jeremiah said it this way in Lamentations 3:22 “*Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassion fail not.*” Because we struggle with our fallen flesh and live in a sin cursed world everyday ought to be complete and absolute chaos but the truth is those things are tempered by His mercy.
* ***Peace is that inner sense of well-being***. It occurs when we realize that, no matter how dark and dismal the circumstances may be Jesus will never leave you or forsake you and He is not only in control He is going with you through the trial. This inner calm that causes us to be panic proof.

These are the three ingredients of “***the promise of life***” which is in Christ Jesus. These are the three that were being experienced as Paul wrote this letter filled with such hope while he lived in the darkness of deformity. The very purpose of this letter is given us in chapter 1 verse 6 “Stir up the gift”. The season of dysfunction is not the time to retreat but to advance.

**2 Timothy 1:3-7**

 **“Unforgettable”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 3 Prison of prayer**

**II. Vs. 4-7 Four marks of living in joy**

**I. Introduction**

The second part of the greeting is what is called the “*thanks giving*”, aptly called this as most often the writer would put down the things that they were thankful towards as it related to the recipient of the letter. Most of Paul letter begin with a section of thanksgiving, many of those were written during times of great difficulties but one could argue that Paul still had the hope of things turning around. But here in this letter the sentence has been handed down, he awaits his beheading on a chilly spring morning with not a friend in sight. There will be no appeal, yet Paul praises God and prays for a friend. Let the critics malign, let the deniers hate, but whatever possessed Paul to live the way he did with thanksgiving and concern for others all the while dealing with the worst of man’s in humanity to their fellow man while his only crime was a belief that differed to theirs; I want, give me a full dose if what Paul had! I want his mantle at whatever the coast. Furthermore if the church would join me in this we will change the world as he and others did in the early church. Dear ones the world has reduced our happiness to only occurring when situations and circumstances meet of our fickle expectations. It’s because of this that there are few of us happy for any length of time as seldom do things meet our expectations. In Christ it is perfectly normal to be ecstatic when everything is falling apart because our happiness isn’t based upon life meeting our expectations.

**II. Vs. 3 Prison of prayer**

Vs. 3 Paul turned his dungeon into a prayer room in verse 3 as he prays for Timothy. He saints how about it, do you feel imprisoned, trapped in a situation or circumstance, why not ***turn that into a prayer room instead a complaint department***? Take those things that are driving you nuts and allow them to drive you to the throne! There is no greater need today than those who are committed to praying night and day for others. When a believer has the opportunity to know that their time on this earth is short they, like Paul, evaluate their life not by what they accumulated or accomplished but rather by their faithfulness and obedience to Christ. What matters most at the end of our days is not what we have, or what we have done but WHO we have walked with!

 Paul says, “*I have joy in God*”. ***One of our problems when it comes to experiencing lasting happiness is that we place experiencing joy in such small objects, that it has little chance of achieving any lasting happiness.*** Paul says, that this joy is secured because it is in God but also because he has a “*pure conscience*”. The word “*pure*” here is a word that can also mean “***cleansed***” which I believe is the right translation. Our joy is established from being found in God with a “*cleansed conscience*” one in which we have owned our failure and allowed the Lord to correct us. Our mistakes, our failures need not to keep us from lasting joy, Paul tells Timothy. Just agree with the Lord about such shortfalls and you will regain joy through a clean conscience.

**II. Vs. 4-7 Four marks of living in joy**

Vs.4 A quick character study on Timothy will reveal that he often battled health issues, that he fought being timid and here we see that he was on the sensitive side as he weep when Paul was rearrested. Timothy was not your prototypical “man’s man” but in 1 Timothy 6:11 Paul calls him a “*man of God*”. God has only one mold for Godliness and it is His only Son Jesus. He takes great delight in calling the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. ***Paul looks out over the years of a joy filled life that he and Timothy shared and he records four unforgettable marks that living in joy produced in Timothy***.

1. **Legitimate Love**: “*Being mindful of* ***your tears****, that I may be filled with joy.*.”: Having Christ as the sole source of happiness had produced “LOVE” and the love that it produced was not a self-love but that a love of others and Paul had personally seen and experienced Timothy’s love towards him. Paul’s heart was fixed on the genuine demonstration of love that Timothy had shone in his tears as Paul’s was rearrested. When our joy is in our relationship with God our tears are not primarily shed upon our miss fortune but rather upon others. Our heart ought to break for the sufferings of others more than our expectations of being meet.
2. Vs. 5 **Fixed Faith**: “*I call to remembrance the* ***genuine faith*** *that is I you*..” When Timothy had young believer in his teens Paul had witnessed a genuine faith in Lystra. Throughout the years Paul continued to observe a steady growth and maturity in Timothy’s relationship with Jesus. Along with the love of others, we will see ***Christian maturity as a mark of a person who has made a relationship with God the basis of a joy-filled life***. Living with God as your source of joy will produce a steady maturity in our faith and I believe a lack of that maturity is evidence that our joy is not fixed in our relationship with Jesus but rather upon situation and circumstances meeting our expectations.
3. Vs. 6 **Growing Gifts**: “*I remind you to stir up the gift of God…*” We aren’t given the exact time when leadership came together and prayed over Timothy as they laid hands upon him for the gifts that God would give him inn his calling to service. But it is clear that there was such an occasion. Paul reminds Timothy of that time and that this needs to be “*stirred up*” cultivated and challenged periodically in our lives. When our joy is fixed upon Christ we will to be passive in our growth we instead will be active desiring to go further inn our usefulness, not content to maintain the status quo. We aren’t certain what area or areas Paul had in mind for Timothy, perhaps it was in the area of evangelism as later in this letter he will be reminded to “*do the work of an evangelist*”. Timothy lacked nothing, he didn’t need more education, some new spiritual tool or more experience to be more effective in his service. NO he need only to stir up what was already in place. Timothy need to “Fan the flame” so that he would catch on fire! If we have all the ingredients to combust but fail to do so all we need to do is stir up the embers!
4. V. 7 **Sound In The Spirt**: “*God has NOT given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*.” The final unforgettable mark of a joy-filled life in Christ is a constant and consistent contact with the indwelling Holy Spirit. Paul lists two ways in which the continual work of the Holy Spirit will impact a person who finds their sole source of joy in a relationship with God:
5. ***Negatively***: We won’t have a spirit of fear! When Christ is our joy we won’t be anxiety ridden worry warts! Those fears aren’t from God and they reveal that our focus is upon our situations and circumstances meeting our expectations. The words “*Fear not*” appear 100’s of times in the bible one can quickly get the impression that fear is forbidden in the bible. Jesus said, “*Let not your heart be troubled*”, thus we need to be sound inn the spirt so that our hearts don’t get weighted down in fear.
6. ***Positively***: In contrast to fear our hearts when filled with the Holy Spirit will be demonstrate three positive characteristics.
7. **Power**: Where the spirit of God is at work in our lives not only will there be an absence of fear there will be a manifestation of power. Consider the time in Jesus life just prior to His death when instead of fear ruling His life we saw the demonstration of power when He said that no one takes His life He lays it down and He will raise it up! This power of the Holy Spirit is released upon those who obey despite the consequences. You won’t necessarily feel more powerful but strength will be imparted as we walk in obedience to Him.
8. **Love**: Next where the Holy Spirit is present there will be a spirit of love which as we read in 1st John, casts out fear. We won’t be experiencing anxiety over our lives we will be manifesting love towards others. There is perhaps no greater evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit then a loving concern for somebody else’s situation above our own!
9. **Sound mind**: The final evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in a joy filled life is a sound mind. The phrase speaks of a spiritual sobriety that manifests its self in a steadfast momentum that understands the real situation but does the right thing without regards to the present outcome. The Holy Spirit is not the author of confusion nor is He the author of convenience, He will not have us opt for what is expedient and beneficial to our self-interests. Instead He will give us a sound mind and a firm judgment!

There ae a lot of things being passed off as the work of the Holy Spirit that possess none of these three traits mentioned by Paul as being positive attributes to the work of the Holy Spirit. I tend to believe that if what is being passed off as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit and it doesn’t have these three characteristics than it is not a manifestation of the Holy Spirit it is rather a work of the flesh! These words were meant to encourage Timothy to “*stay the course*”, to not grow weary in doing good works, nor allow the enemy to divert us off the course. Throughout his life Paul found the secret of a joy filled existence, SERVE CHRIST!

 **2 Timothy 1:8-13**

 **“Standing strong in a wilting world”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 8a Do not be ashamed**

**II. Vs. 8b-10 Two words so we will not wilt**

**III. Vs. 11-13 Two things to remember about your life**

**I. Introduction**

In every generation, be that in a family, a business, or a church an event will take place about every 25 years. If this event is not done successfully than whatever the institution is it risks a bleak future that could spell out its own end. Ah but done right and it will accomplish more than it had done through the previous leadership. The event is the passing of the torch to a new generation. Paul’s “Last will and testament” to Timothy is just that passing of the baton as in chapter 4 verses 6 -7 he will say, “*The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith*.” Though the circumstances of Paul’s end was discouraging, he didn’t want that to hinder Timothy’s race. Paul has two phrases of encouragement in this section the first one is placed in the negative the second one is spoken in the positive:

* Vs. 8 Do not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord
* Vs. 13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words

**II. Vs. 8a Do not be ashamed**

Vs. 8a Based upon this passage there are ***three things*** ***that Christians have a tendency to be ashamed of with regards to their Christian faith***. This tells me that Paul himself had experienced these same three things as they are common to all of us.

1. “*Testimony of our Lord*”: When we speak to people about our love and devotion to Jesus, folks have a difficult time understanding this. Why would we have such passion for someone, in their opinion, we have never met? They observe our life with great skepticism and wonder as they can’t fathom anyone devoting their lives around a dead peasant religious figure that died 2000 years ago. They watch us speak of Him, they hear us talk to Him and they don’t see or hear Him. At times the “***invisibility***” of our Lord to those who are our critics causes us to be silent about our faith and we become ***Closet Christians***. Most of us, have experienced this embarrassment when around those in the world or our unbelieving family and friends. Paul will offer those of us who have gone through this an answer to our critics with regards to Jesus’ visibility.
2. “*Of me His prisoner*”: The second embarrassment is being associated with other Christians who have become in the eyes of the world “*extremists*”. The world will say things to us like “*I’m glad you aren’t one of those weird Born Again freaks, they are trouble makers and the world would be better off without those religious fanatics*.” I not speaking of believers who behave badly but faith like Paul’s that caused him not to be politically correct with the majority of the Roman Empire. He was viewed by the leaders to be a subversive and destructive in society. Paul will also address how to overcome this shame as a believer.
3. “*The sufferings for the gospel*”: Finally Paul speaks of the shame and embarrassment we can experience for what he calls the sufferings for the gospel. The gospel revolves around the embarrassing simplicity in the message that doesn’t attract the intellectual pride that people are prone to boast in. Paul experienced this when he spoke on Mars Hill to the professors of his day about the unknown God and the hope of the resurrection which they mocked. At the center of the gospel message is that man is hopelessly lost and not “*basically good*” as society loves to brag upon. This offends our pride and we are not comfortable telling folks that we are helpless and hopeless, left to our own devices. Paul will also address this embarrassment for believers.

**II. Vs. 8b-10 Two words so we will not wilt**

Vs. 8b-9 Paul reminds Timothy of two truths that counter our embarrassment:

* Vs. 8b “***The power of God***”
* Vs. 13a “***The pattern of sound words***”

Paul’s argument against these three sources of embarrassment is very logical as he says you have nothing to be embarrassed when what you believe works! Each of these three areas are answered when you consider the **four ways Paul says that Jesus proved he has power**:

1. Vs. 9 ““*Who has saved us*…”: The power of God was on display at our conversion. Every new birth is evidence that trusting in God works. Every single believer is a living walking miracle, a demonstration of the power of God to transform lives. Folks can debate the validity of ancient documents but they cannot debate the countless numbers of everyday individual lives who have been transformed by trusting in the risen savior.
2. “*And called us with a holy calling*..”: The power of God is also evident at our continual growth throughout our life through our sanctification. Every believer is living demonstration that the power of God continually transforms us degree by degree more into the image of Jesus. The power of God is always on display as people con see us becoming better and better instead of bitter and bitter!
3. “*Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace*..”: The power of God is on display as it cannot be attributed to our work. Yes we chose to obey the word but it is not our work that works it’s trusting in His work that works as it is “*according to His own purpose and grace*”. Paul says that not only is His power on display according to His own purpose it has been operating before time began. God alone knows how to work His power through and in the weakness of man that His purposes ae clearly visible.
4. Vs. 10 “*has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*.”: Paul writes to Timothy that the power of God was visible two ways in Jesus:
5. *Abolishing death*: Jesus alone conquered death as the grave could not hold Him. I love this phrase as Paul was awaiting his own death and writes to Timothy that Jesus “ABOLISHED DEATH” The word in the Greek means to “*nullify or bring to nothing*”. Jesus didn’t just eke out a narrow victory of the grave he destroyed its undefeated streak by shutting out death, it didn’t even come close to holding Jesus in the grave. I read of a story where a doctor told a patient that was in hospice that he wouldn’t make it through the night and the fellow became so excited that He would be rid of his dying body and in his glorified body that his old body released so much adrenaline that he lived for two more weeks.
6. *Bringing life and immortality to light*: There are two things that go unnoticed in this verse: ***The first*** is the word “*life*” which in the Greek refers to the change in the human heart when a person becomes a believer. The word speaks of a new “quality” of life that has imparted to us, a visible change in the quality of life that causes others to stand up and take notice. ***The 2nd*** is the phrase “*immortality to light*”. Paul is saying that this visible change in the quality of life does not end when this body ceases to function, it continues on and is expanded as we will no longer be hindered by this world. In heaven will we be able to say, “*The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak*.”

**III. Vs. 11-13 Two things to remember about your life**

Vs. 11-12 Paul moves from the work of Christ and the work of the gospel to the work of the servant and why he need not be ashamed and be tempted to pull back. Paul’s preaching and teaching was against what the society advocated and that was the reason for his suffering. Had Paul only gone with the flow of world thought he would have had no problems, but he didn’t as he followed the Master. Success for the kingdom and suffering go hand and hand because our work is not that we would have it easy but rather that people would know the love of Christ. ***Paul was not ashamed because he understood two great things about his calling: His work and his resource for that work, therefor he was not looking at the present outcome but rested in the eventual victory***!

Vs. 13 Listen to Paul’s words to Timothy at a moment of crises not for Paul (he had settled this) but rather a moment of crises for Timothy and the Church, “***Hold fast the pattern of sound words***…” Despite the tendency to pull back as things were working against Paul, he forged ahead as he was not focusing on his outcome by on Christ’s victory. There is an all-out assault on truth and Christianity and people have compromised and watered it down to such a level many Christian lives bear no resemblance to New Testament believers at all.

**2 Timothy 1:13-18**

 **“Let lose the lion”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 13-14 Hold fast to God’s word**

**II. Vs. 15-18 Keep the Word by staying connected to God’s people**

**I. Introduction**

In what amounts to Paul’s last will and testament he wrote to Timothy who might be tempted to look at the adversity that Paul had gone through as an ambassador for Jesus and determine that the way Paul had approached his faith didn’t need to be so radical. So Paul came right out with it and spoke of the three things that believers have an inclination to be embarrassed by with regards to our faith:

* The invisible nature of our relationship with Jesus (unbelievers can’t see or hear Him)
* The radical nature of our fellow Christians who live their life 100% for God
* The simplicity of the gospel that offends man’s pride of accomplishment

Paul went on to describe two antidotes to those embarrassments:

1. The Power of God
2. The pattern of sound words

The progression of Jesus’ Church has not only survived but advanced because of men and woman who “*Held fast the pattern of sound words*” while the enemy threw all he had at them. They did so when it would have been convenient and personally beneficial to compromise. Paul was just such a man and now he encourages Timothy to carry on inn that tradition. He tells him two ways that this needs to be accomplished.

**II. Vs. 13-14 Hold fast to God’s word**

Vs. 13-14 ***Be loyal to God’s word***: God had deposited His truth to Paul and Paul had deposited that same truth to Timothy, now Timothy needed to “*hold fast*” and “*keep by the Holy Spirit*” the truth that had been given to him so that he could pass it along to others. That great English Pastor Charles Spurgeon was once asked the best way to defend the scripture, his famous reply was, “*Scripture is like a lion. Who ever heard of defending a lion? Just turn it loose; it will defend its self*.” ***Paul gives two admonitions describe just how a person turns loose the lion of scripture***.

1. Vs. 13 **Hold fast**: Paul tells Timothy, HOLD FAST the pattern of sound words. Notice that Paul says of scripture that it is **THE** pattern of sound words, not **A** pattern of sound words! The word “*pattern*” in the Greek describes an architect’s sketch. This tells us that there is a definite “*blueprint*” of the truth as found in the early church, it is what all succeeding generations ought to use as the plum line when it comes to the Word of God. It is equally clear that this standard of truth was not to be cold orthodoxy as Paul says that it was to be held in “faith and love” the measure of which are found in Christ Jesus. **We give far too much credit to the limit of the human mind and not enough credit to the limitless wisdom and truth of the Divine.** Some new theory quickly becomes a fact that dislodges the truth as we are impressed and dazzled with tidbits that will soon be disproved by some other tidbit a few short years later. Looking out at the landscape of the human mind throughout history is like viewing a desert where the only things that have survived throughout time are the things planted by the Intelligent Designer. Saint’s, we have in the word of God, that which is ultimate reality! It is **THE** life line and **ONLY** fixed point of reference in a constantly changing world. To let go of “***the pattern of sound words***”, is to cut the tether that keeps us attached to the living God. ***If God’s Word can’t be trusted as truth, than why would we believe that what He created (mankind), that has BECOME clearly flawed, can be***?
2. Vs. 14 **Keep by the Holy Spirit**: Paul speaks here of an outward action of guarding the TRUTH by the Holy Spirit. English author Dorothy Sayers once said, “***The test of any religion is not that it pleases us, but that it is true***.” This is most visible in the gospel accounts when the people heard Jesus say, “*You have heard it said, but I tell you*….” And the folks would respond by noting that He taught as one having authority. The Bible speaks to our experience, to our unarticulated unconscious and when we hear the truth of the Word of God we say, “***YES, that’s right, that’s the truth***!” It is what caused the religious leaders of Peter and John’s day in Acts chapter 4 verse 13 to note that though they were “*uneducated and untrained men, they marveled and realized that they had been with Jesus*.” That is where true education must come from: Not from the desks of the great world universities but from the feet of the Great Master, Jesus! It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that works illuminating the words He gave the author, He brings it home to the heart. ***It is His work that makes the scriptures “LIVING WORDS” and not just words to live by***! Far too many folks in Church are looking for inspirational words and not the transformational word of God. The Word of God by the Spirit of God does not only enlighten the mind it pierces the heart as Hebrews chapter 4 verse 12 reminds us that the “*Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*.”

**II. Vs. 15-18 Keep the Word by staying connected to God’s people**

Vs. 15-18 ***Be loyal to God’s servants***: Paul gives two personal examples of what he meant:

1. Vs. 15 **Negative**: Amazingly even after the incredible revival that had transpired in this region where 7 church had been planted around Ephesus during the 3 years Paul was in there during his 3rd missionary journey he now writes “*all of Asia have turned away from me*.” The bold brand of living for the truth that was utilized for their salvation was now an abomination. We don’t know exactly who Phygelus and Hermogenes were but apparently they were well known leaders whom Paul had expected would “*hold fast the pattern of sound words….that had been committed to them*.” According to the 4th chapter verse 10 even Demas had forsaken him and false teaching abounded. I recently watch a video of a well-known evangelical pastor say that he now believes that you can be a born again practicing homosexual. I wondered if he would say that you can be born again and practice immorality on any level. Is there any need in his eyes to turn away from any sin mentioned in the Bible, such as murder or adultery? Could you be a practicing adulterer and still have fellowship with God, or a practicing murder; or is it only homosexuality that gets a pass? The question is not whether or not someone can PROFESS to know Jesus and habitually practice sin, I’m certain that people are doing that all the time. NO, the question they need to ask is whether they can habitually practice sin and have fellowship with God. I think it best to ask Jesus that question and see what He has to say and as you know He has already answered that question in Matthew chapter 7 verses 21-23 where He said, “*Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who DOES the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*!”
2. Vs. 16-18 **Positive**: The bad news was there were those who had failed to “*hold fast the pattern of sound words….that had been committed to them*.” But that wasn’t the only news as Paul turns his words to those who had held fast the pattern of sound words and was committed to them. Onesiphorus traveled from Ephesus to Rome and diligently looked for Paul so he might minister to the prisoner's needs. Onesiphorus name means “bringer of help” and apparently he had lived up to his name. He seems to have been a wealthy businessman that was prominent in Ephesus while Paul ministered in that city. He had come to Rome after a great amount of effort and at great risk to himself and his livelihood he found Paul to minister to him. Onesiphorus, was reaching out to an enemy of Rome and specifically Caesar Nero, Paul mentions what a blessing he had been and prays a blessing over him. The word “refreshed” in verse 16 in the Greek means to be “cool again” and is saying that Onesiphorus was like a breath of fresh air. ***Here is how you hold fast the pattern of sound words, here is how you keep by the Holy Spirit the Word of God….you live it out no matter what the earthly consequences***.

Imagine how your life, the life of those around you, our community, our state, our country and the world would be different if believers lived out what they say they believe! But why just imagine, why not start today “*hold fast the pattern of sound words….that had been committed to YOU*.”

**2 Timothy 2:1-6**

 **“Dedication, discipline and diligence”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 1-2 Three ways to pass the baton**

**II. Vs. 3-6 Threefold wining attitudes**

**I. Introduction**

The Christian life was never designed to be a self-centered life, one characterized by self-indulgence. The business of the Christians of every age is to guard the truth which has been entrusted to them. That is what Paul told Timothy in chapter 1 verse 14. In chapter 2 the word “Therefore” in the first verse 2 ought to have an arrow attached to it pointing up to what Paul had just spoke of with regards to “*letting lose the lion of the word of God*”. There will be some “marketing believers” that will say, “*If you do that you will never grow a large megachurch*”. But quantity must never have on the altar of sacrifice quality! Jesus set the goal in Matthew 7:13-14 when He said, “*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*.”

**II. Vs. 1-2 Three ways to pass the baton**

Vs. 1-2 Paul gives three keys to be effective in passing on what was entrusted to us:

1. Vs.1a “***You*** *therefore, my son,* ***be strong***..”: The point Paul is making is that you cannot pass on what you don’t possess! The great truth about God’s truth is that it isn’t intellectual truth or head knowledge, it is truth that must be personally applied. If we want to strengthen others we must first strengthen ourselves, Paul tells Timothy.
2. Vs.1b “***In the grace*** *that is in Christ Jesus*”: One of the peculiar truths about **grace** is that it **is never available to strong people!** That’s why it is difficult for us to appropriate the grace that is in Jesus, we must come to the realization that we are weak in order for Him to be strong. The best way that I know of to come to the realization that you are weak is read the bible, when you do you will be driven to the grace that is in Jesus. This isn’t about making up one’s mind it is about true confession of our weakness and appropriating His strength. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission once said, “*The easiest positions He must give me grace, and in the most difficult positions, His grace is sufficient*.”
3. Vs. 2 “*the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses,* ***commit these to faithful men*** *who will be able to teach others also.*”: Truth is CAUGHT not TAUGHT and people need to see it as well as hear it. Timothy had traveled extensively with Paul and he not only heard Paul speak the word of God he saw Paul live out the word of God. He saw the lives transformed by the truths and he had also witnessed the horrible way those who rejected God’s word treated Paul and others and how Paul continued to pray and love those who rejected the truth. But what do faithful people look like? Ray Stedman described 4 traits of a faithful person:
4. **Searching mind**: This describes a mind that wants to learn, a person with a searching mind loves to learn, they haven’t tuned out turned on; they aren’t looking to be entertained. No they are constantly looking to feed their mind, they love to dig into truth.
5. **Humble heart**: A person who knows that they don’t know! People who are faithful have set aside their egos as they know that knowledge isn’t given to us so that others will be impressed with what we know. A faithful person wants truth more then they want a reputation.
6. **Evident gifting**: Paul didn’t want ***intellectual hoarders***, who wanted to keep secret the mysteries so that folks would be impressed with them. He cultivated people who couldn’t wait to give away what had been entrusted to them.
7. **Faithful spirit**: The fourth characteristic is a person who has a track record of the above three qualities. These are the kind of people that aren’t looking to climb the latter, looking for something better, neither are those who are only interested when it is convenient to them.

The best way to pass the torch on to the next generation is to make sure that those of us who have the torch now are running with it, so we can pass it on. ***The Christian life isn’t just to BELIEVED it is to be LIVED***! In 1950 China kicked out the missionaries and folks felt that the church would disappear under the reign of Communist rule and they were amazed to find that the church had grown 7 fold during the 30 years that there was no window into China.

**II. Vs. 3-6 Threefold wining attitudes**

Vs. 3-6 Paul uses three metaphors to describe the commitment of the Christian that will hold fast the pattern of sound words. These **three metaphors** tell us that it will take the, **DEDICATION OF A SOLDIER, the DISCIPLINE OF AN ATHLETE and the DILIGENCE OF A FARMER**:

1. **DEDICATION OF A SOLDIER**: Vs. 3-4 “***As a good soldier of Jesus Christ***”: **Paul describes two things that makes a “*good soldier of Jesus Christ*”**:
2. ***Endure hardship***: As soldiers of Jesus Christ we are not on parade we are in a battle. We have a realistic attitude with our duty that understands that to advance we must endure hardship, forgo the pleasures that this life says we deserve. The author of Hebrews describes a host of those who have gone before us enduring hardship as he write specifically of Moses in verse 25 that Moses, “*choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked forward to the reward*.” We are called to enjoy life in CHRIST, but that doesn’t mean that life in this world will always be enjoyable!
3. ***Untangled with this life***: A soldier also understands that they can no longer afford becoming entangled with civilian pursuits as their aim is to please the One who enlisted them to service. Interviews with surviving soldiers of the Omaha Beach invasion at Normandy revealed a powerful truth as to why those hero’s facing almost certain death on the beach and as they climbed the cliffs, still nonetheless continued forward. They listed two reasons for the selfless actions that day: Respect and appreciation of their commanding officer and love of their fellow soldiers! ***The Christian life is not a way of doing special things; it’s a special way of doing everything***. Whatever we are doing we do for His honor and glory, as we seek to please Him. Far too many in the church have confused this and have sought at all cost to make this temporary home our permeant residence.
4. **DISCIPLINE OF AN ATHLETE**: Vs. 5 “***In athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules***”: With an athlete we have a different type of motivation which is “biblical ambition”. Every athlete learns to deny themselves certain things they want or even crave because they want to win more than indulge their temporary pleasures. In the Greek games the judges were stickler in enforcing the rules: Each competitor had to be a citizen of his nations, with a good reputation. In their preparations for their event, they had to follow specific standards, if the athlete was found defective in any manor they were disqualified from competing. If after they competed and won but were found to have broken some rule they were stripped of their crown. Paul knew that there was a crown that awaited him, he had finished his race and was waiting to hear the words of THE JUDGE that would say, “*Well done, good and faithful servant enter in*!”
5. **DILIGENCE OF A FARMER**: Vs. 6 “***The hardworking farmer, must be first to partake of the crops***”: There are three practical truths about the farmer:
* **The farmer has to work**: If you leave a field to its self all it will produce is weeds.
* **The farmer needs to exercise patience**: The harvest is not at the end of the service or even at the end of the year, it is at the end of the age and we may very well not see the fruit of our labor until we see our Master face to face.
* **The farmer has earned the right to share in the crop**: The laborer is worthy of his reward, just like a farmer so to the servant of Christ. Of even greater value is that the person who shares the word is always the first to be blessed by it.

Far too many Christians have quit serving because they were doing so to get “BLESSED” instead of realizing they had already been blessed. Then when they aren’t “BLESSED” according to their expectations and timing they quit and decide to just sit on the sidelines and watch others. Being a Christian take long hours and hard work. Like the farmer we rise before the sun and aren’t home until after it sets and our expectation of a harvest for the most part isn’t in this season it is in the one to come.

Having looked at these metaphors that Paul used to speak to Timothy about staying the course of the faith may cause a few of us to want to rethink what we signed up for. Many churches in America have “soft peddled” the faith and now offer “Christian LIGHT” where their moto isn’t “***It’s all about HIM***” instead it is “***All about ME***!” I’m blessed to be a part of a fellowship that isn’t like that as you continue to demonstrate a faith that has the **DEDICATION OF A SOLDIER, the DISCIPLINE OF AN ATHLETE and the DILIGENCE OF A FARMER.**

**2 Timothy 2:7-19**

 **“The worker in the Word”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 11-13 Five encouragements**

**III. Vs. 14-19 A battle of words**

**I. Introduction**

Paul had just finished with the three metaphors of how to “*Hold fast the pattern of sound words*” when the world is falling apart all around you. If the believer is to leave a lasting impact upon the people around them they will need:

* ***The dedication of a soldier***
* ***The discipline of an athlete***
* ***The diligence of a farmer***

Having said that Paul addresses yet another tactic of the devil and that has not so much to do with “*keeping the* ***WORD***” but with the “*conduct of the* ***WORKER***”. Without giving our enemy too much praise he is a master at strategy to defeat Christians and he employs several different tactics to defeat us. With Paul in prison only a few weeks away from being beheaded he offers Timothy encouragement to keep going the right direction as well as things to avoid so as to not get side tracked.

**II. Vs. 11-13 Five encouragements**

Vs. 7-13 Remember that Paul is written a personal letter to Timothy as we can see the five very personal encouragements that he offers Timothy:

1. Vs. 7 **Look Again**: Paul wants Timothy to chew on those three examples. Dear ones it’s not only important to know the truth, it’s important to know where the truth fits in your life. The word of God offers more than answers, it offers answers rightly fitted to your life just when you need it! We have heard that it is “***The early bird that gets the worm but don’t forget also that it is the 2nd mouse that gets the cheese***!” This is why Paul says, “*Consider what I say*” and “*may the Lord give you understanding in all things*.”
2. Vs. 8 **Look Up**: Paul sets this encouragement up by reminding Timothy that Jesus was the “*seed of David*”. There are two truths with regards to this statement:
3. First, Jesus was the fulfillment of promise to David, that he would have this heir always sit upon the throne. But this promise didn’t look like it was going to be fulfilled as Jesus the promise died before ever making it to the throne. Yet it was this defeat that it His reign forever more possible. Saint’s sense Jesus conquered death to fulfill forever the promise how much more can we be of great courage that whatever we are facing now will be conquered as well.
4. 2nd this reminds us that Jesus was fully man and as such knows exactly what we are going through on every level. When all the doubt and despair comes in like a flood we need only look to our Savior who has gone before us.

***Light works best in a dark room! And Jesus resurrected power is most visible in a cemetery!*** Nothing I know of can sustain me in seasons of doubt and despair as much as remembering the resurrection of Jesus.

1. Vs. 9 **Look Out**: We can all suffer from spiritual myopathy as we focus exclusively at our circumstances or situations. ***We must not ascribe the limitations of our situations and circumstances to the truth and work of Christ***. To do so is to adopt a defeatist attitude to the work of Christ because we often see the work of God limited by what limits us. Paul couldn’t move outside the dungeon he was I the Word of God was not hindered by the same cell. Saints the word of God by the Spirit of God is not bound, it is turned lose upon the world we live in and it will not return void.
2. Vs. 10 **Look Upon**: Paul tells Timothy that his circumstances were so that others would be blessed. Paul was a syringe in the hand of the Master. The things we go through are part of how the truth must be distributed. For some the truth must become harassed and agitated, shaken and broken for it to have its full effect. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “***Grace is free to all of us, anybody can take it, but somebody has to be involved in the suffering that made it possible***.”
3. Vs.11-13 **Look on Him**: The fifth encouragement comes in the form of an early Christian hymn which is a statement that the earthly difficulties are no match to the heavenly victory won us by trusting in Jesus. Some folks use Jesus as a “good luck charm” only to become disillusioned with Him when He didn’t meet their expectations. ***We are being refined to see if what we see we believe is truly what we believe.*** Ah but don’t become discouraged because being a faithless at times is different than being a fake. When we are faithless, dear ones Jesus remains faithful. Life is a great test track to see if we are willing to let go of ourselves and this world and trust in only Him. These times will require us to have: ***The dedication of a soldier, the discipline of an athlete and the diligence of a farmer***.

**III. Vs. 14-19 A battle of words**

Vs. 14-19 There is a great division I this letter to Timothy right here as Timothy focuses more upon the worker and how our enemy tries to keep us off balance. Reading these verse gives me two general observations:

1. These tactics are aimed at those who are “*in the game*”. Satan isn’t concerned with those who are apathetic. I can only surmise that he isn’t interested in them because they purpose no threat to his self-absorbed kingdom.
2. These tactics ***have to do with communication***: (vs 14 *not to strive about* ***words***, vs. 16 *shun* ***profane*** *and* ***idle babblings***, vs 17 *their* ***message*** *will spread like a cancer*.) Paul even calls this tactic “*word battles*” as that is the literal translation of “*not to strive about words*”. Our enemy is into getting the church to squabble about words, after all he is the prince of the power of the air and the author of confusion and the father of lies. So it shouldn’t surprise us that he seeks to cause miscommunication.

Paul gives Timothy ***four things to do about word battles***:

1. Vs. 14a ***Avoid disputing words***: Paul makes no reference about whether these words are false or true. Satan wants people to dispute and argue different aspects of what they believe because when people do it keeps them from speaking about Jesus. We get all caught up in when He will return and for get to talk about Him. We don’t have to change our position nor do we have to convince our opponent all we have to do is “stop”. The story is told of Brittan’s Admiral Nelson as he came across two of his officers arguing to the point of about to come to blows when Nelson stepped in between them and said, “*Stop*!” Then he pointed to the French fleet and said, “*There is the enemy*!” Paul says that if you don’t avoid this you can count on ***two casualties***:
2. **No Profit**: Truth will be the first casualty! There will be no advancement of truth no gain for the Kingdom. This doesn’t produce unity it only produces division.
3. **Ruins the listener**: The listener will be the 2nd casualty as all the disputes and arguments just closes people’s hearts to want to hear truth all together.
4. Vs. 15 ***Seek God’s approval not mans***: The problem with word battles with people is that we are putting all our energy in trying to convince people instead of working hard to have the Word of God transform us. The “*Worker in the Word*” is employed to win arguments but to be transformed by the word personally. The phrase “*rightly dividing*” is a Greek word that means to “*cut straight*” and as a leather worker Paul knew well the importance of “*cutting straight*” fabric or leather. I’m not a seamstress but I’ve been told that the key to making a garment fit properly is in the cutting; if you cut to short below the line it won’t fit right and pull, but if you cut to large it will droop and sag. Ah but cut it right and it will fit together and look right. When handling the word of God “*cut it right*” don’t cut it short so that you have to pull it or stretch to fit over the things in your life. And don’t cut it to long so it bags over you and no longer resembles the word of God. We need to cut straight the word of God so
5. Vs. 16-18a ***Don’t get involved in empty words***: Paul uses the word “*shun*” in the Greek means to “*walk around*” and implies not to get involved idle chatter that leads to arguments. Idle babblings refers to folks who just shot their mouths off, using lots of emotionalism to cover up their ignorance. This kind of thing will spread like a cancer among the church. Paul offers Timothy an example of a cancer that spread in the actions and words of Hymenaeus and Philetus. Hymenaeus we already read about back in Paul’s 1st letter to Timothy where Paul said that he delivered him to satan in order that he may learn not to blaspheme. It appears that the cancer of false teaching had not been completely cut away as it had spread to Philetus who was now spreading the same lies.
6. Vs. 19 ***Take a stand on the solid foundation of God’s word***: There will always be people and the enemy that will try to get you off tract but there is the solid foundation of God that will keep us in tract. The truth of the word of God will never be altered but Jesus. Paul quotes Numbers 16:19 about the rebellion of Korah during Israel’s wilderness wanderings. Korah, Dathan and Abiram wanted the power and popularity of the people and challenged the authority of Moses. So Moses took the problem before the Lord and suggested they and their families come before the Lord and the people to be examined and when they did the ground opened up and down they went, as God in essence told the people “***Any questions***!” John said in [1 John 2:19](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=1%20John+2:19&t1=en_nas), “*They went out from us that it might be evident that they were not of us, for if they had been of us they would have continued with us*.”

 **2 Timothy 2:20-22**

 **“Vessels of honor”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 20-21 A great house**

**III. Vs. 22 House cleaning**

**I. Introduction**

Last time we were together we spoke of the “***Art of holding fast the pattern of sound words***”. Paul spoke to Timothy about the kind of effort he would need to put forth to accomplish this as he used the three metaphors:

* Dedication of a soldier
* Discipline of an athlete
* Diligence of a farmer

Next Paul spoke about the importance of right communication and how to avoid getting pulled into wrong communication. Paul continues this topic as he wants Timothy to be all that God want him to be. There are tons of self-help books aimed at getting the reader to get the most out of their life by diet, exercise, financial planning etc. but here Paul is telling us how we can be more useful to the Master. Dear ones this is not a selfish ambition from God, He has created us to be useful and He knows that we will attain the maximum fulfillment, excitement and satisfaction when we are operating as our Designer intended us too. Paul again uses a metaphor to describe what it will take to be useful to the master. As I read through verse 22 of this passage my mind went back to that old 1978 Kenny Rodgers song the Gambler and the lyric that said, “*You got to know when to hold them and when to fold them*”. Saints if we are going to be useful to the Master we will need to know what to FLEE and what to PURSUE.

**II. Vs. 20-21 A great house**

Vs. 20-21 As you look at this metaphor some see that Paul is speaking exclusively of the Church at large but I’m of the opinion that Paul is not writing to Timothy about the church but rather of humanity as every person has been designed as a vessel for God’s use as that was His design from the beginning. That’s not to say that every person if fulfilling their design willingly and that seems to be Paul’s point. The amazing truth is God is so far ahead of all His creation that He can and does use even those in His creation who are at war against Him and determined to destroy the knowledge of Him at every turn. God even used satan to accomplish His purposes as well as his cohorts throughout history. In Romans chapter 9 Paul develops this fact even more clearly saying that not only was Moses an instrument of God so too was Pharaoh who was used by God so that God would show His power was above that of the strongest ruler of the time. God is not limited in His use as He has and will continue to use people to bring about His purposes both in honor and dishonor. In Jeremiah 27:6 God calls Nebuchadnezzar His servant and in Isaiah 45:1 the Lord calls Cyrus King of Persia His anointed. The question isn’t whether or not you are going to be used of God, the question is how are you going to be used of God? What is God going to be using you for if you are willing it will be for a ***noble purpose*** if you are unwilling it will be for and ***ignoble purpose***. People learn both ways, there is always a before picture to demonstrate the benefits of the after picture! The world is full of bad examples in fact you could make the argument that there are far more bad examples than there are good examples and to be quite frank we all have been at times on the “*bad example*” photo. Paul goes on to say to Timothy that God has two purposes in a “great house”:

1. **Vessels of gold and silver…some for honor**: These are utensils to serve, to bless and feed, their material suggests permanence and value as the Owner of the house sees them as His treasure and plans on keeping them to use over and over to bless others by His continual use!
2. **Vessels of wood and clay…some for dishonor**: These are instruments in the Owners hand as well but their material composition suggests a more limited use, one in which He does not display them and in time will dispose of them. Wood and clay were the paper and plastic of that day.

By this we learn that God sees all humanity as useful but some are for good purposes and some are lessons to the rest of humanity and it is the individual’s free choice to determine what kind of instrument they are. It’s clear they have a choice based upon verse 21 as Paul says, “*If anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor*..” That’s interesting ***we have no choice as to whether we are going to be used of God but we do have a choice as to how we are going to be used of God***. God’s will not set aside a person’s choice and if the person does not purify themselves then they will be used according to their choice. I find it interesting to talk to folks who have been used for an ignoble cause as they often make their ignoble use someone else’s fault but the truth is they made a choice to be used the way they did. And the same is true that a person who is a vessel of honor has made a choice to purify themselves so to be a vessel of honor. There are those that come to Church hear the clear and concise teaching of the Word and though they have heard the scriptures exhortations they don’t apply the truths they have heard and when their life is falling apart they blame God and His church saying, “*I’m, a Christian, I go to church I don’t understand why I’m not enjoying the blessings and promises of God, why I don’t have more joy*.” You cannot expect good results when you don’t apply the word of God. You will never inherit the promises of God, never see the activity of God the way He wishes to release His power in your life until you come to Him to be purified! We must choose to say no to the disobedience before God will say yes to the obedience. You have to reject the philosophy of those who are urging you to live for yourself. You cannot go on living as a vessel of dishonor if you wish to be a vessel of honor, hence the words “*cleanse himself*”. Yes God will use an unclean vessel but only for dishonor not for honor. The way to honor and usefulness is sanctification as Paul declares that “***we will then be useful for the Master, prepared for every good work***.” I love the truth that not only will be useful but for “*every good*” work, that implies a life time of adventure in God’s abundant variety of ways in which He can use a person. All of this hangs upon the believer being willing to turn away from wrong attitudes and philosophies and actions.

**III. Vs. 22 House cleaning**

Vs. 22 Paul moves on to **three specifics of cleansing one’s self to be a vessel of honor**. These are all found in verse 22:

1. Vs. 22a “***Flee youthful lusts***”: **The first step is don’t allow yourself to behave wrongly**! When we read the phrase “*youthful lusts*” are minds immediately think of sexual urges that living in a sexually saturated society like we do would certainly fit the Greek meaning of the phrase but ***it doesn’t exclusively mean that***. Paul is speaking of ALL youthful passions that often propel the youth to be impulsive and impetuous in their actions and attitudes. Often those passions are not only wrong they are hurtful, destructive and evil in the sight of God. One commentator put it this way, “*This refers not only the sexual temptations and appetites of a young person but also to pride, conceit, dogmatism the false sense that they are the center of their own universe that also permeates the immature mind*.” Timothy as a young pastor was facing an explosive situation in the false teaching and rejection of Biblical truth that was at the church in Ephesus. What Paul was warning against was acting impulsively when he dealt with it. ***It is never enough for the servant of God to be right that is only the basement, the penthouse is that as we stand on the Bible for our being right we allow that same truth to dictate our behavior in behaving right as well***!
2. Vs. 22b “***Pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace***”: The second step, is the direct opposite of what Paul had just said in **FLEE**, as he now encourages Timothy to **PURSUE** four characteristics of maturity. Each of these four things is well presented in scripture as each of them as you will find many of them in Galatians chapter 5 and the fruit of the Spirit, which tells us that these all come from God and the He wants to gift them to each of us. The word “pursue” means go for it or go after it.
3. **Righteousness**: The word means “*right behavior*” life boils down to choices and one of those choices is “*right behavior*” trust in God not in yourself.
4. **Faith**: Again this is a choice not in whether we will exercise faith or trust but what the object of our trust is in. I have determined in myself that most often my two choices are either God and Hos Word or myself.
5. **Love**: We must choose love even when our flesh is screaming at us take revenge, make him pay, get even. Choosing love can also mean that we need to confront a person who is grieving God.
6. **Peace**: You also must seek peace and reconciliation which encourages and promotes restoration. To not do so is to give place for the enemy to take not only the other person captive but you as well.

Paul says that we need to make those 4 characteristics something that we go after and pursue.

1. Vs. 22c “***With those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart***”: The third and final step of cleansing oneself to be a vessel of honor is to surround yourself with those who practice these same things and encourage you to do so as well. Paul call’s them those that are of “pure heart” and by the use of this word he is not saying they are sinless. The word “*pure*” means “*cleansed*” and suggest that they knew they were not clean hearted but also knew what to do about it. These are the kind of people who see themselves not as better than others but those that know that they are sinners in constant need of transformation. That why they are good to be around as they are quick to make a long record of rights and a short record of wrongs so that they can help us get back on tract. We must keep company with people who are going the same direction.

**2 Timothy 2:23-26**

 **“Tongue twisters”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 23 When to talk, when to not**

**III. Vs. 24-26 Six guidelines of behaving right while being right**

**I. Introduction**

As Paul wrote this letter awaiting his death, he understood that the world that he was leaving behind for his son in the faith Timothy was going to become far worse for all believers. Timothy not only was facing adversity from the outside he was facing it from the inside as well as the church was no longer into practicing the truth instead as Paul tells us in chapter 3 verses 1-5 they would have a form of godliness but deny its power. That’s the backdrop to the section we are looking at his morning. How to live in a world of filled with conflict and in a church filled with controversy.

 If we were to take a poll as to what the hardest things to do in our ministry to others I’m pretty certain that keeping our cool with those who are losing their cool towards us has got to be in the top 5. Paul is going to address this difficult challenge in chapter 2 verses 23-26, so if you are like me and find this a great challenge then you make want to take some notes.

**II. Vs. 23 When to talk, when to not**

Vs. 23 The first issue Paul takes up is how to handle what he calls “*foolish and ignorant disputes*” in the church. I like how the Revised Standard Version describes this as “*stupid, senseless controversies*.” This clarifies what we believers should avoid doesn’t it? There are those who are so passive who think that this passage is saying to not get involved with any kind of biblical controversy, never take a side on any issue if it creates an argument. Recently an Episcopalian church made headlines as they not only allowed a Muslim Community to hold worship services in their building they also allowed all Christian symbols to be covered or removed as the Imam complained that they found them offensive. In 1 Corinthians 11:19 Paul says that “*There must be factions among you (the church) that those who are approved may be recognized*.” I other words when controversy breaks out you can tell a lot about who is truly mature and who isn’t. These controversies have help clarify what truth is and what is important as we see in the book of Acts Chapter 11 when Peter spoke on gentile believers not first having to become Jewish converts before accepting Christ. Paul describes two types of disputes to avoid:

1. **Foolish**: The word here in the Greek is the root word for our word moron, which suggests that these controversies are on trivial matters which no matter how long and passionately they are debated they do nothing to advance the Person and work of Christ. People argue over things like the indication of the person who will be the Anti-Christ and have the number 666. These foolish disputes though interesting do nothing to further the person or work of Jesus, instead they just divide the body of Christ and give ammunition to those who are looking for a reason to reject Jesus on the grounds that believers can’t get along.
2. **Ignorant**: The word translated “*ignorant*” is the appropriate translation as it describes a dispute that comes from ignorance. These are the kind of disputes that are based upon ignorance and folks making an argument out of something that we cannot know for certain. These kind of disputes are common in Israel when considering the exact geographical location of certain events in the Bible. Unless there is archeological evidence that proves a location the best we can do is come up with conjecture. Yet Church’s divide over location. These are senseless disputes that we should just avoid, that go along the same line as which translation is the best.

It is important that we understand that discussion is fine but disputes and division is not!

**III. Vs. 24-26 Six guidelines of behaving right while being right**

Vs. 24-26 But what about biblical areas where there are attacks on the validity of the word of God, or moral and social issues addressed in God’s Word? How are we to deal with issues that we cannot just disagree agreeably with? Paul gives Timothy ***6 guidelines of how to behave right while being right (1 negative 5 positive)***!

1. Vs. 24b “*A servant of the Lord must not quarrel*..”: This one is put in the negative and speaks to what we shouldn’t do even if we are right, we must not be argumentative. ***We are not out to win arguments, we are called to be involved in winning souls***. We need to be willing to listen, examine and discuss not put down and discredit
2. Vs. 24c “*Gentile to all*”: The next 5 are put in the positive, starting with the exhortation to be gentile or kind to ALL. ***We must treat people that disagree with TRUTH with respect and kindness otherwise the truth that we possess will get lost in our wrong actions***. The word “*gentile*” comes from a word that is translated “*approachable*” and that is what we must make sure we are when handling the truth. I wonder how many times in my life has someone rejected the TRUTH of God’s Word not on the merits of the TRUTH but rather upon the harshness of my actions.
3. Vs. 24d “*Able to teach*”: This deals with the skill full art of communication. The gift that allows a person to communicate truth passionately and purposefully yet not get sided tracked into feelings, and experiences. Gifted communicators keep people fixed upon facts not diving into fantasies. Stories and illustrations are salt and pepper to the meal but they never taste good if they become the meal!
4. Vs. 24e “*Patient*”: A person that can keep their cool when someone is deliberately bating them into a fight. My grandfather once talked to me about my habit of getting into name calling saying, “*Son, you should never get into a soccer match with a one legged soccer player, because even in winning you look foolish*.” That’s what Peter said of Jesus in 1 Peter 2:23 saying that, “*When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; but He trusted in Him who judges rightly*.”
5. Vs. 25a “*In humility correcting those who are in opposition*”: This guideline is a summation of all the above. Paul reminds Timothy that the best way to correct others is in humility and brokenness, where the attitude is not superiority but rather that you are the worst sinner you have had the displeasure of knowing. The phrase “*who are in opposition*” is rendered elsewhere as “***those who oppose THEMSELVES***”. When we oppose TRUTH we are in opposition against our self. That’s why you can’t convince someone intellectual of truth they have to be at a place by the Holy Spirit that they are open to hearing. One of Jesus’ favorite phrases to say to people with regards to truth was “he who has ears to hear” which is found some 33 times in the gospels. The word correction is word employed elsewhere in the Greek language as “*child training*”. The idea is not just telling a person they are wrong but teaching by demonstration what is right.
6. Vs. 25b-26 “….*that they will repent and come to know the truth…escape …the snare of the devil….captured by him to do his will*.”: This is perhaps the most important guideline of all as it deal with ***four important things that will keep us focused on the goal of our conversation when we are in a dispute against those who disagree with TRUTH***:
* **The GOAL of the conversation**: “*That they will come to know the truth*”. When engaged in this kid of dispute we must realize that ***our goal isn’t in winning the argument but in being used to preset the truth.*** The fact that Pal says “*that they will come to know the truth*” is very suggestive as it tells us that such understanding may take time and that will require an investment from us. Many times we are in too big of a hurry to listen and we just start thumping our bibles as if we are in a speeding reading championship. I’m a strong proponent of “***friendship or relational***” evangelism as it I by far the most effective form of communicating truth.
* **The MOTIVATION behind getting involved in a dispute**: “*That they will escape the snare of the devil*”. We must remember that a person who is in error in regards to Biblical truth has been caught without their knowledge the in a web of lies carefully crafted by the enemy of their souls. We know this to be true because we also at one time were caught in this same web. Far too often we forget this and instead of seeing ourselves as liberators we see ourselves as commandos and kill those who are hostages instead of being involved in setting them free.
* **What to KEEP IN MIND with the person who is in error**: “*That they are captured by him to do his will*”. This third thing to remember is difficult because those who are captured become combative against the truth in the same way a person who can’t swim fights against the very people who have come to rescue them from drowning. Satan has been a master at getting believer to fight against the wrong enemy, as we attack the very people we are called to rescue. We will need to exercise patient as we wait for them too tire of the fight and come to an understanding that their enemy is the lies they are defending not the truth that will set them free.
* **The DIVINE POSSIBLITIES**: “*That they will repent*”. The last thing to remember is that this whole dispute aim is getting them to change directions and this is always a spiritual battle not merely an intellectual battle. If acceptance of truth was merely about education we would only need to hand folks a Bible of a gospel tract. No it is fundamentally a spiritual battle that must be fought in the power of the HOLY SPIRT and not the energy and strategy of the flesh.

**2 Timothy 3:1-5**

 **“Sunday Saints”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 1-4 18 characteristics of the religious**

**III. Vs. 5 Form without power**

**I. Introduction**

With all the events that are happening globally, no wonder people are becoming increasingly convinced that the world is coming to end. According to a 2013 Omni Poll 4 in 10 or 41% of Americans believe that we are in the “Last Days” and an October News Week Poll suggests that the vast majority of Christians think that it will play out like the Bible said it would. Paul too thought that the end of the world was at hand, as he describes the conditions that will be upon humanity at the end of the world. If we want to take a closer look at what predicated the end of the world we need only go to God’s word prior to the destruction of the world by flood in Genesis chapter 6 verse 5 where we are told that, “*The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that* ***EVERY*** *intent of the thoughts of his heart was* ***ONLY*** *evil* ***CONTINUALLY***.” Prior to the flood wickedness had increased to a point where the people’s only thought and action was rebellion and sin. I’m not sure that we have risen to this level yet but there is little doubt that we are increasing towards it. In this section Paul describes the condition of humanity in the last days, and surprisingly they are very religious. Paul mentions three facts about the religious:

1. Vs. 2-5 Their Characteristics
2. Vs. 6-7 Their Converts
3. Vs. 8-9 Their Captains

We will only look at the “18 characteristics” of the religious this morning.

**II. Vs. 1-4 18 characteristics of the religious**

Vs. 1-4 As I watched the riots break out in Ferguson after hearing the Grand Jury’s decision not to indict the police officer in the Michael Brown shooting, this passage came to mind. I mean clearly this describes the “*perilous times*” but it can describe many times from many different era’s. What is interesting is that the phrase “***Last Days***” doesn’t refer to a specific time just prior to Jesus’s return but rather biblically it refers to a whole time period between the first coming and His 2nd coming, so in truth ***we have been living in the “LAST DAYS” for 2000 years***! Peter described this as well in Acts chapter 2:17 at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in which 3000 got saved, he quoted the event as what was spoken by the prophet Joel saying, “*And it shall come to pass in* ***THE LAST DAYS****, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh…*.” Clearly according to the Word of God the “LAST DAYS” started at Pentecost and has continued until today. When Paul wrote to the believers in Rome in the 11 chapter verse 25 he said, “*I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in*.” We are currently living in a time of the Gentiles until the last of us becomes a believer than we will move into the great tribulation that deals with Israel and judgment upon the Christ rejecting world. Finally in Hebrews chapter 1 verse 1-2 the author again says, “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has* ***in these days spoken to us by His Son****, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds..*” Again the “LAST DAYS” are the days in which Jesus become the fulfilment of the prophet’s words.

 That gives us a great back drop as too what the “LAST DAYS” that Paul characterizes a repetitive cycles of distress and perilous times that he will give an outline of the human heart. These words are not a prediction of the last days for the Church but rather the cycle of days that will keep coming and at some point in time will culminate in THE LAST DAY, of which is best described! What Paul wanted Timothy to know and understand is the “*Times must not dictate the character and attitude of the believer*”. That’s why Paul starts with the phrase, “But know this….” There will be times and have been times for 2000 years where we will witness the worst in humanity, they will be dangerous times, times of great suffering, times when our trust in Christ and His word will be pushed to the limit, times when we the Church will be under constant threat. Times in which people will be noted for these ***18 characteristics.*** One of the things I notice is that the chief characteristic of the religious is “*love*” but in the religious their love is directed at themselves instead of God and others. As one has said, “*The heart of every problem is a problem of the heart.*” They are as Isaiah described in chapter 5 verse 20 “*calling evil good and good evil*”.

Those that study high-school aged academics globally tell us that American students are dropping globally in Math, Science, as well as other subjects at a rapid rate but there is one area that these experts have said that U.S. students are the at the Top of the Class globally while their studies are failing. They are number 1 in the category of “Self-Esteem” in other words we are failing but we feel great about ourselves while doing so! Our education system has done an outstanding job in telling our students that they need to love themselves and be proud of doing so but obviously such instruction has done nothing to raise the level education standards. Going back up to the awful list of 18 characteristics you can see that they are put into four groups:

1. ***Lovers of themselves***: That is the basic sin of humanity “self-love”! In the church this “self-love” is exhibited in a “*me centered*” society that focuses only on its rights, needs and views. Its only concern is “*What am I going to get out of this*?” Christians, aren’t to be “lovers of self” living a self-centered existence. When people are lovers of themselves is it any wonder that we find them to be Lovers of money, materialist in their expression? Instead of using what God has blessed them with to respond to human suffering we will use it to indulge ourselves in a more luxurious lifestyle. ***Saints it’s never persecution that destroys the believer its prosperity***! Paul says that this will lead to people being boasters, proud or arrogant people. The church will equate is health of its prosperity and even boast upon its abundance of nickels and noses. It is contemptible how the Church brags and glories in everything thing but Jesus! The self-righteous display of contempt for those who are trapped by the same sins that the church as enslaved too. By their actions they have become blasphemers and abusive.
2. ***Disobedient to parents***: Insultive to parents, the breakdown of the home, rebellion against parental authority which finds its way into all of society. Paul describes these characteristics of the breakdown of the family as the UN: Thankful, holy, loving and forgiving. They manifest a sense of entitlement, and say that there is no need to be thankful as they deserve better and demand more of everything they want. This progresses to a lack of common decency, where people not only engage in immorality they flaunt it and demand that you participate in it. Unloving means that they lack civility to a point that they become inhumane, no longer have the normal affections for their loved ones and become cruel west beast like behavior. Finally they become unforgiving and the word means beyond reason, unappeasable so bitter and unrelenting that they cannot soften in any way.
3. ***Slanderer’s***: This third group moves to interpersonal relationships. The word slanders in the Greek is “Devils” those people who are ungovernable, who only want to satisfy their on lusts and passions and become fierce and savage people, lacking self-control they are brutal and haters of anything good. They are reckless people, who are treacherous and impulsive without fear of consequences, swollen with conceit who not only think only of themselves they think highly of themselves.
4. ***Lovers of pleasure rather that lovers of God***: It is this last grouping that Paul indicates in verse 5 have a form of godliness but deny its power. **Sunday saints, but weekday sinners**, exposed to the Bible but also exposed by the Bible they hear on Sunday’s. How is this possible? Well it’s because they deny the power thereof! Jesus said in Matthew 16:24 that “*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me*.” ***How tragic it is to see the church only wear the cross of Christ instead of die daily upon it***! Until we Christians are willing to say “No” to what the cross has denied, what it has put to death within us, we cannot enter into that eternal life that is available to us now. Unwilling to deny self means that we are unable to experience life from God.

**III. Vs. 5 Form without power**

Vs. 5 As awful as those 18 character traits, the worst part of them is that according to verse 5 they will at times make up the church of Christ as well as they will “*have the form of godliness but deny its power.*” They will have made a ruin of faith in Christ and reduced it to:

* Form without power
* Outward show without inward reality
* Religion without morals
* Faith without works

The reason for such cycler behavior in society is that the Church of Christ remains unchanged in their lives. They will not “WALK THEIR TALK”. Jesus warned in Matthew 5:13 “*You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men*.” If the church will no longer be an antiseptic, a preservative, then its only usefulness in society will be for something the world uses to get a better footing to keep going in the wrong direction. The prophet Amos said in chapter 8 verse 11 that “*the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD*.” There is a growing ignorance of the word of God where folks no longer want to hear and apply the word of God in their lives and this willful ignorance has led to and increased immorality and hardening of the heart that manifests its self in ungodly behaviors. We are prone to think that only the secular, atheistic society is out to get Christians but Jesus said that most of our opposition will come from the religious, as religion has always be at war against relationship!

**2 Timothy 3:6-9**

 **“Phony faiths”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 6-7 Gullible, guilty and gathers**

**III. Vs. 8-9 Infiltration and imitation**

**I. Introduction**

Having looked at the 18 characteristics of religious people that will cycle through the last days, we now move on to see:

* Vs. 6-7**Converts**: ***Three traits that cause people to gravitate towards religion***
* Vs. 8-9 **Captains**: ***Two tactics employed by the religious to captivate converts***

Paul outlines for Timothy two tactics that satan employs when he attempts to get the church and people to become religious. Paul says that, “***Those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts.***” What Paul is speaking of is the tactic that goes after people who have grown frustrated by the morally corrupt and hypocritical church and have abandoned corporate fellowship with believers. Instead they were staying away remaining at home. We need only look at the present day theological cults of Jehovah Witnesses and Mormon’s as 25% of the converts to them come from those who used to attend another church.

**II. Vs. 6-7 Gullible, guilty and gathers**

Vs. 6-7 Paul lists **three traits that can cause a person to gravitate towards religion and away from a relationship with Christ**:

1. ***Vs.6a Gullible***: The word “*gullible*” in the Greek is “*little women*” but in the Greek is in the neuter gender tense which suggests more the vulnerability of people then it describes their gender. Paul is telling Timothy that those that succumb to these religious people are gullible like young girls. It is the gullibility that makes people accept religion instead of investigating to see if what a person is saying is truth. I believe that one of the great assets of people is to investigate and use critical thinking. Just because someone in authority says that what they are telling you is true doesn’t mean it is. We need to separate:
* **True skepticism**: Where a person is looking for the truth in order to believe
* **False skepticism**: Where a person is looking for reasons not to believe

I love to investigate and read views that differ from my own especially where I can see where they have come to their conclusions. It has never weakened my faith it has strengthened and refined it.

1. ***Vs. 6b Guilty***: Paul also says that a person is more vulnerable to religion when they are aware of their own failures as they are looking for a way to escape their own conscience. No person can escape a wounded conscience, they will either need to:
* ***Numb it*** through self-indulgence
* ***Appease it*** through works
* ***Sear it*** through continual abuse
* ***Crucify it*** through faith in Christ’s work

And as you can imagine only one of those options truly sets a person free from guilt and shame. The religious prey upon people who are looking to escape from the bondage of their freedoms and are especially open to so called “*truths*” that offer alternatives to trusting in God and His word. They “*creep into households*” by offering something that they can’t provide in exchange for loyalty, money and service making them far worse than they were prior. They still have the same problems and gained a far worse one “religion” where they are duped into believing that all is well. No wonder Paul warns Timothy in verse 5 “*From such people turn away*”.

1. ***Vs7 Gathers***: The religious look for those who like to collect information, pseudo-intellectuals who are on a continual quest for more information so they can appeared to be learned but never seem to apply what they say they know. There is nothing wrong with education but if all it produces is a continual search for more information that never transforms the person it is an empty search. The religious prey upon people like this as they can continue in small increments pass on little tidbits of “*higher knowledge*” that makes their student far superior to the common truth seeker. Of course this truth search makes them also twice as arrogant and prideful, a well it keeps them hooked on the information instead of the Word of God by the Spirit of God.

**III. Vs. 8-9 Infiltration and imitation**

Vs. 8-9 From the **18 characteristics of the religious** to the **three traits that make a person gravitate towards religion** to finally looking at **two tactics employed by the religious to captivate converts**. In looking at these two tactics we will need to go back to verse 6 to see the first one.

1. **Vs. 6 Infiltration**: “*Those who creep into households*”. Paul says of them, “*For of this sort*” which is a direct reference of the 18 characteristics mentioned and specifically of what he said in verse 5 that “*they have a form of godliness but deny its power*”. ***Religious people seek to prey upon people who are disfranchised from religion that masquerades as Jesus’ Church and are looking for another way to elevate the guilt of sin, preferably by self-effort and works so that they can claim superiority above the religious they have left***. Even when religious people have been disenfranchised with the church they will still seek meaning and purpose to handle the despair and emptiness of life. These people become extremely vulnerable when they are not consistently in fellowship and the word of God become sheep without a shepherd. The prophet Jeremiah described the condition of Israel during the captivity to Babylon in chapter 50 verse 6 as a “*lost sheep, as their shepherds have led them astray*.. ” Jesus also had compassion on the Jewish people as they were like “*sheep having no shepherd*.” Religious leaders target the vulnerable, and supply lies to as instruction.
2. **Vs. 8 Imitation**: “*As Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth..*” : Exodus chapters 7-9 reveal the contest between Moses and the Egyptian magicians mentioned here by Paul as *Jannes and Jambres*. Though Exodus doesn’t reveal their names apparently their names were well known in Jewish tradition as Paul tells Timothy the story including their names. These two men opposed Moses and the truth by imitating what he and Aaron did to convince Pharaoh that the God they represented had the authority and power to command Pharaoh to let His people go free. ***But in the end all they could produce is more snakes, more blood and more frogs. In other words all they could do is MAKE THINGS WORSE, they had no ability to make things better.*** Saints, there is power in religion but only in making things worse never in making things better. Satan can imitate but he can’t create, as he is only a counterfeit. Paul says that religious leaders do the same as they have a “***phony faiths***” to appeal corrupt minds that already are looking for an alternative to faith in Jesus alone. They claim to offer what only Jesus can give peace, identity and security but the cost is commitment to the group instead of a relationship with Christ. They have learned to use the same words and phrases as true faith in Christ but the meanings and practice is different. Many folks fall into these ***phony faiths*** and will even tell you that they are Christian’s as well but they haven’t surrendered to the same Jesus who died upon the cross, they have surrendered their lives to an organization. In the end *Jannes and Jambres* were exposed and made fools by the truth and judgment of God. Paul says they can only “*progress*” to a point then “*their folly will be manifest to all*”.

Vs. 9 Having seen the kind of folks that will be susceptible to the two types of deception of “**infiltration**” and “**imitation**” Paul shares that the “***phony faiths***” will not get the better of the true faith in Christ, God’s work will always “swallow up” the counterfeit. Evil always has a limit and inevitably satan over plays his hand and those who have followed an organization instead of a person realize that the imitation is no substitute to the real Person of Jesus. The truth is that the greatest opportunities to speak of Jesus’ greatness happen during seasons of the greatest stress and trials; that being the case then our opportunities are becoming greater every day. Until Jesus comes back we will continue to have the religious, who just make things worse and can never make things better. Paul says these are indicators that we are in the last days as we have been for over 2000 years but this doesn’t discourage me. Here is why:

1. **Dark times are made for people who are in the light**: When things increase in darkness it makes the light all the more attractive to those who tire of stumbling around. You all know how diamonds are formed…..Heat and pressure! The darker the times the more Christ in us sparkles and the more precious He becomes.
2. **People who are in the light are made for dark times**: Take a casual look around your Bibles and you will see folks like Daniel and his three buddies Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, four guys who God placed to stand up against Nebuchadnezzar. Than you have the young queen Ester a gal who the Lord used to stand up against Haman and his edict to destroy the Jews. God always has a remnant and we are called for such a time as this!

So the darker our world gets, the certainty we know that God has called us stand up and shine. In the diamond business color is graded or judged against a white background but the diamond is best enjoyed and appreciated next to dark colors as there it truly stands out. Our grading comes when we stand next to Him who is Perfect, Jesus but our enjoyment to the world is best seen when everything around us is getting darker and darker.

**2 Timothy 3:10-13**

 **“A pound of the eternal in a paper sack”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 10-11a Follow his example**

**III. Vs. 11b-13 Follow the Word**

**I. Introduction**

I start this message with a disclaimer: Preparing a weekly message through a book of the Bible where you approach each study as you are the most important person who needs to hear this message often doesn’t allow me to go further in the text as He has given me all I can apply. I also run the danger of being so specific that the text meant for me may not apply to those I have the privilege of sharing what the Spirit has given. So I apologize upfront, I have left in the personal nature of this conviction as I have no other way to communicate it if I made it less specific.

The 3rd chapter started out with Paul telling Timothy the signs of the times referring to them as the “last days”. Paul then described what the enemy will do as he will have his counterfeits sown among the real thing. In this part of the letter to Timothy, whom he left in Ephesus, Paul offers encouragement concerning pastoring and living in a world that has abandoned faith in Christ for religion. The most difficult of which has less to do with the temptation to become religious and more to do with a “*hard hearted cynicism, bitterness and resentment*” against those who are pursing religion. That’s the subject that Paul will cover for us today, a he will share two things Timothy can do:

* Vs. 10-13 Follow his example
* Vs. 14-17 Follow the Word of God

**II. Vs. 10-11a Follow his example**

Vs. 10-11 The word “*followed*” in the Greek is a word that describes walking in another’s footsteps and it seems odd to me that Paul would remind Timothy first to follow his example before he mentions to him to follow the Word of God. But Paul’s example was of a man who first followed the Word of God and Timothy had a first row seat to that as he had been with Paul observing how to live by the Word of God when living in a world that had no connection to it. In the Greek the phrase “*you have carefully followed*..” “*You came right along with me*”. Paul says, “*You accompanied me through all that life through at me, you saw how to live life, so don’t forget that now*!” We often forget the context in which most of the New Testament was written, we tend to think that Paul and others didn’t have to endure hardship. The letters of the N.T. weren’t written in a theoretical classroom or think tank; they were writing for the most part in prison cells. **Paul reminds Timothy of five facts that he learned during watching Paul concerning truth that works**:

1. **Observable** Vs. 10a “*You have carefully followed*..: Timothy had heard many messages of Paul’s about living the Christ centered life in a godless world, but more than just hearing the message Timothy saw that message lived out daily as there was no “*do as I say, not as I do*” in the life of Paul no matter what the adversity. Paul not only pointed out the fallacies of religion he lived out the riches of Christ and the superiority of a relationship with Jesus. I believe that every Christian ought to be able to teach the truths of the Word of God without ever opening their mouths by simply being a living demonstration.
2. **Verifiable** Vs. 10b “My doctrine..”: Paul told Timothy that he could always check out his teaching next to the Word of God. ***Far too often teaching is graded on delivery not content and teaching must never be received as truth on how well it’s packaged***. Saints our life is not lived out in a vacuum, life happens in real time and what we say we believe what our purpose in life will be witnessed not when things are going according to plan but rather when our lives are coming apart.
3. **Visible**: Vs. 10c “*Manner of life*..”: Paul gave more than he received, served more than he was served, stood up for truth even if it cost him friends. Paul’s life was that of a servant of Christ not a celebrity. Timothy had witnessed how Paul had controlled his temper, continued to love those who hated him and continued to do so over time. Man reading this makes me very convicted, what a great truth we see in Paul’s example as we recall as admonition in 1 Corinthian’s 11:1 “*Imitate me as I imitate Christ*.”
4. **Purposeful**: Vs. 10d “*purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance*..”: There was never a question as to the purpose in Paul’s life and ministry. His desire was to finish the work Christ had given him to do, he trusted the Lord to enable his to do this, and he was patient and loving towards people who continually attacked for the work.
5. **Demonstrable:** **Vs. 11a *persecutions, afflictions***: Paul ministry was not done in a library or laboratory but rather in the operating room and battlefield of life. His ministry was not a thesis or a theory it was first and battle tested and came through the fire proving the truth.

The word of God put into our lives and lived casts out fear as John wrote in 1 John 4:18. There is a web site called the Phobia list that says that there are 530 Phobia’s or fears everything from “A” to “Z” as in Zemmiphobia “*the fear of the Great Moll Rat of Eastern Africa.*” And in case you didn’t see your particular “fear” you can always claim that you have “*phobophobia*”, the fear of phobias. But it doesn’t matter what fear you when Jesus’ love casts out the fears. Paul lived with an overriding truth: ***That whatever he did and said in this life would either bring glory to Jesus, of grief the Spirit of God***.

**III. Vs. 11b-13 Follow the Word**

Vs. 11b-13 Paul reminds Timothy, “*You were with me during many of those times of persecution. Remember how at Antioch I had to leave town lest my life be taken, how at Iconium I was driven out by a lynch mob, and how at Lystra I was stoned and left for dead outside the city walls*.” Then Paul adds, “*And out of them all the Lord delivered me*.” ***Timothy wasn’t in the class room with Paul, he was in the crucible with Paul***. Paul’s life was an accident, he wasn’t a victim or an innocent bystander. Paul’s life verse were the words delivered by God to Ananias in Acts chapter 9 verses 15-16 “…*he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For* ***I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake*.**” Our focus in that calling is the conditions of his service which we understand in part are “***he must suffer***..” but it’s unfortunate that we leave out two phrases, “***I will show him….for My name’s sake***”. Embedded in the Lord’s calling of Paul is two promises:

1. “***I’ll show him***”: That’s a wonderful promise that where ever he is at, and whatever the journey, “*The Lord will be with Him, as it is He that will show him*.” As long as we are going on the journey through out our life that Jesus has sent us on, ***every turn and twist****,* ***he will be revealing to us personally, hand in hand***. There will never be a word from our Jesus saying, “*I’ll catch up to you around the bend*.”
2. “***For My names sake***”: The second promise is that the purpose is always “*for* ***HIS*** *name’s sake*”. Our struggle comes when we can’t understand the purpose and I suggest to you we are trying to find the purpose in the wrong place. The purpose is not to be found as it relates to ourselves, no the purpose is to be found in His name sake, not ours. I can realize that though I can’t understand the purpose of the twist and turn one day we I see Him face to face that twist and turn will make perfect sense and fit for His glory.

That’s the secret that we need to lay next to verses 12-13:

* Yes, “*All those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*.” But Jesus is with you and will never leave you or forsake you and your suffering is accomplishing His purpose, it’s not just random suffering with no purpose.
* Yes, “*Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*.” But, Jesus is right next to me through this and even their wickedness has no consequences on His purpose and plan.

Paul is revealing to Timothy as well as us that Christianity is always going to be a “***counter-culture movement***”, it’s always going to be going against the popular trends and grain of society. The Church was never designed to be popular in this world, it was never to be the center of what’s happening where folks gather at Church to have a Big Mac and a cup of Starbucks. Dear ones, ***The Church that stands for nothing, never stands for anything***! Paul’s words to Timothy are reflected in a sarcastic and convicting poem of Ray Stedman:

*I would like to buy $3.00 worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul, or disturb my sleep, just enough to equal a cup of warm milk so I can take a snooze in the sunshine. I don't want enough of Jesus to make me love my enemies, or to serve the afflicted. No I want ecstasy, not transformation. I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy just $3.00 worth, no more*.

This brand of Church, though increasingly popular, is nonetheless worthless! It does nothing to stem the tide of corruption. These are our “***last days***” and it is up to each of us to decide what kind of Christian and church we want to be. Do we want to make our life count or are we looking for a pound of the eternal in a paper sack? If you want to heed your calling then do what Paul did: ***Practice what you preach and teach the truth!*** You will be unpopular at times but don’t let that dissuade you, walk in the Lord, love Him with all your heart, live in His presence moment by moment.

**2 Timothy 3:14-17**

 **“Paper people”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 14-15 People of the Book**

**III. Vs. 16-17 A book for the people**

**I. Introduction**

As we have now officially entered a new year with all the uncertainties how are we going to make it through? Reading through Ray Steadman’s comments written 30 years ago caused me to realize that this isn’t a new concern as he asked: “*How can a Christian survive during stressful and pressure-filled times? In a world gone insane with hate and passion, amidst a race that is destroying itself with moral filth and shameless self-indulgence, in a church which 'maintains the form of religion but denies the power thereof,' how can a Christian maintain his integrity against the current of the day?*” Several weeks back we were given part of what Paul told Timothy was the key of how to live victoriously, ***follow a person who follows the word of God***. In chapter 3 verse 10 Paul wrote that Timothy had already observed Paul’s life living through the “*last days*”, “*perilous times*” in which people will continue to manifest themselves as “*lovers of themselves*”. This morning Paul tells Timothy that to stay the course he will need to be ***single minded in what he learns***.

**II. Vs. 14-15 People of the Book**

Vs. 14 We are living in the communication and entertainment age and there is an increasing emphasis upon these two things as being of primary importance for the Church. But I’m of the opinion that what is of primary importance for the Church is Jesus and the truth He taught us in His Word. There are those that would see my point of view as worshipping a “***paper pope***”, a “*book*”. I like John Wesley’s words when he said, “*I am a spirit come from God and returning to God. I want to know one thing: the way to Heaven. God himself has condescended to teach me in that way: He has written it down in a Book. O, give me that Book. At any price give me the Book of God. Let me be a man of one Book*.” Paul outlines for **Timothy two ways we can continue to be** “***people of the book***”.

1. Vs. 14a **Learn what the Bible says**: “***Continue in the things which you have learned***”. When Paul wrote this to Timothy he was speaking of an incomplete scripture. They had the Old Testament, maybe the gospels of Matthew and Mark and the letters that Paul had written this being the last of those. Yet even with that incomplete list Timothy is being exhorted to continue to read and study the Word of God. If we are going to be able to be victorious in these perilous times we are going to need to be daily in his word, studying the scriptures. The Bible contains the thoughts of God about life, ourselves and others, moral, ethics, right and wrong. Reading the Bible will reveal to us that God is not in tune with the secular philosophy of the world. **When we learn what the Bible says three things begin to happen**:
2. Vs. 14b “…*And have been assured of*…”: **The bible will change the way we think and the way we live**. There is no area of human life that won’t be altered when we study the scriptures. The more I study the Word of God the more I become convinced of its truths and the more it makes sense to live the way it tells me to. ***The complaints against Christians don’t come from people who are living out the truths but against those who claim to be followers of the book but don’t live it out.***
3. Vs. 14c “…*knowing from whom you have learned them*..”: **We will see that the bible has changed people we know and respect**. A lot of people will tell you that they have read the Bible form cover to cover many times and that’s quite a feat but I’m far more impressed with a person who has practiced it from cover to cover. It the Bible is easier to believe when we see what it has done to people we know. When Timothy was young he learned the word from his Mother Lois and Grandmother Eunice who were living examples of the truth. When Timothy was older he learned from Paul who taught him the same truths that his mother and grandmother had taught him.
4. Vs. 15a “..*that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures*..” **We will be convinced of the need of the Bible to be taught at an early age**. In times past the Bible was the book children learned to read with, it was the book that children were read stories from. People are the most impressionable as children and it is the parent’s responsibility to train up a child in the way they should go.
5. Vs. 15b **Grow in what the Bible says**: “…*which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*.” The effect of the Bible in our lives is **NOT knowledge but transformation**, it is able to make us wise for salvation by trusting in Jesus. It was not the Bible that saved and transformed Timothy it was the Person whom the Bible revealed, Jesus. I wouldn’t have known the Bible except for Jesus but I wouldn’t have grown in that relationship with Jesus except for the Bible. Barnhouse described once the danger of merely reading the Bible and not hearing from Jesus like a person who describes looking out their window at the ocean but all they speak of is the window and not what it allows them to see, the Vast Ocean! The joy of the window and the Book is what it enables you to see, JESUS. The most important aspect of the Bible is not what you believe Who you believe!

**III. Vs. 16-17 A book for the people**

Vs. 16-17 The final two verses of this chapter Paul writes of why the Bible is able to do what it does in our lives as he speaks of the uniqueness of the word of God. There is an unfortunate translation here from the Greek to the English as it says that “*all Scripture is given by* ***INSPIRATION*** *of God,…*” The word that is miss translated is the word “***inspiration***” which is a compound Latin word that means to “***breathe IN***” or **inhale** but that is not the Greek word as it means to “***breathe OUT***” or **exhale**. All scripture is **NOT** given by “**INHALE**” of God but rather as the Greek says all scripture is given by “**EXHALE**” of God. ***Just as God breathed into the dust of the ground and made a living person, he breathed into that transformed dust His Words so that all who hear these words move towards life!*** Paul goes on in this verse to tell you that the “God breathed out” ***Bible will do four things for everyone who reads it and believes it***:

1. **Profitable for doctrine**: The word of God will instruct your mind with truth about yourself that no one else knows anything about. I love that about the Word of God as it reveals to me, ME, like none other. It also answers the great mysteries of life like what happens to us after we die. It answers the question as to our own creation and if there are any other creations outside of our world. It’s a great guide for the living as it is the only book that can tell you how to keep on living even after you leave this world behind. It’s a book that tells us what’s happening to this world we live in and why it’s such a mess. But more than tell us why it tells us of the antidote to what ails mankind.
2. **Profitable for reproof**: The word “***reproof***” is a word that means to “***convict***” and speaks the bibles ability to let us know that something that we are doing is wrong even though we may had never thought it wrong before. ***The Bible makes you aware that in order to be truly FREE it is you that will need to change not the situation or circumstance, not society or the government, not some other person but YOU***!
3. **Profitable for correction**: The bible not only makes you aware of your need to change ***it provides a way to be free***. The Bible never shows you your need to change without enabling you and showing you how too. That’s the amazing testimony about this book it leads a person to freedom and life.
4. **Profitable in instruction in righteousness**: This phrase suggests that ***the Bible has the power through the Holy Spirit to enable you to walk day by day in a right way, a way that leads to more peace and joy in your life***. In Psalm 23 David wrote of the Lord that “*He leads makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His names sake*.” That’s what the Bible does for those who apply its truths, it enables us to have the ever-expanding experience of right living.

Vs. 17 The personal practical description of what the Bible will accomplish in our lives is given us here: ***The person of God will be perfect or complete, fully equipped or ready for every good work***. The Bible is sufficient with the power of the Holy Spirit to do this. ***The secret of becoming a whole person, of finding one’s self is the word of God by the Spirit of God***. This book enables the reader to more than handle life, it enables the reader to become a victorious individual as it works out our kinks and quirks becoming the person God created me to be. I have read many religious books throughout my life both prior to becoming a Christian and after becoming a follower of Christ, I’ve dedicated my life to studying this book and teaching this book and I have never found it more exciting than I do today and I believe that I will say the same thing tomorrow. I could do without many things, many of which would enhance my life not diminish it but without this book constantly in my life I would cease to live life, my life would soon become a ruin. ***This is the book that understands me and because of it I understand life and love the God who first loved me***!

**2 Timothy 4:1-4**

 **“Do you swear to tell the truth?”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 1-2 Preach the word**

**III. Vs. 3-4 Hearing aid**

**I. Introduction**

We now coming to Paul’s final words in his last letter to his beloved “son in the faith” Timothy. From the loneliness of his prison cell, awaiting his execution after having for nearly 30 years labored preaching the word being ready in season and out of season and now in these his last recorded written words he admonishes Timothy to do the same. Two thousand years have come and gone and we are still living in the “*last days*” where people are “*lovers of themselves*” and this extremely personal message is still relevant today. Of supreme interest to me is what Paul says was Timothy’s **primary DUTY** to a broken world, “*preach the world*”. When ungodliness is on the increase and the needs of society were abundant Paul didn’t say, protest, change the government or feed the hungry. In John Pollock's biography of Billy Graham he records an incident when President Lyndon Johnson asked Billy, who he had been friends with for years, what position Billy would like to have in his administration. Without a moment's thought Billy said, “*Sir, I believe that Jesus Christ has called me to* ***preach his gospel****. To me that is the highest calling any man could have on earth*.” According to a recent evangelical church poll only 3% of fundamental evangelical churches in America have weekday services, it sounds like we are in the times when the people will no longer have a desire for sound teaching. This too is our challenge and our ***duty*** is to a dying world, “***Preach the word***!”

**II. Vs. 1-2 Preach the word**

Vs. 1 The words “**I charge *you***” (the “*you*” being added in the English), in the Greek the verb means a “***legal oath***”. What we would do in our courts to a witness saying, “*Under oath to God, swear to me Timothy that you will preach the word*”. Though this is aimed at Timothy in this letter in a general application it is applicable to every follower of Christ everywhere.

 ***These words would have encouraged Timothy who may have thought his actions in Ephesus would not have made much of a splash in the ocean of corruption that was in Ephesus let alone in the world***. It is easy to fall into the thought that proclaiming truth to people has about as much affect as a whisper does at a championship football game. To this oppressive discouragement Paul reminds Timothy that his exhortation of verse 2 is first and foremost coming from the perspective “*before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom*.” The weight of that sentence to Timothy and to us is twofold:

1. **The outcome wasn’t in doubt or jeopardy**. A whisper would have more of an effect in the hands of God than the prolonged shouts of all the world. ***God’s word will not return void***, it will bring life unto life and death unto death. There is nothing more encouraging to understand when we fall into doubt that “preaching the word” will make little difference than to ***realize that it makes all the difference to God.*** There will not be a person who can claim to Jesus that no one told them the truth, as we are called to “Preach the Word”. Saint’s our obedience to speak the truth in love must never be ***observable*** results oriented, we serve at the privilege of our Master, one day we will see what He accomplished through what He had called us to do and Paul tells Timothy that this will be at His appearing.
2. **There is no more effective endeavor we could be engaged in that will transform the decaying society we live in then “*preaching the word*”**. Remember this exhortation is from Paul who is looking at the seeming ***outward futility*** having spent 30 years of his life doing just that. Even though soon he would be put to death, writing to the person he is closest to in the world, encouraging him to do the same thing that has given him a death sentence ***clearly indicates that Paul thought this was the most important activity anyone could be engaged in***. Let the gravity of the context saturate these words and you will be convinced as Paul was of the power and absolute victory of, “*preaching the word*” as it has the **singular uniqueness of transforming people and society**. Had Paul any doubt, any lingering apprehension his final letter to Timothy would have added to this or suggested another course, but he doesn’t!

Vs. 2 In chapter 3 verses 14-17, Paul spoke of Timothy’s responsibility to be a student of the word but his responsibility didn’t end there he was to believe and obey it, guard it and preach it to others. The words “***be ready***” literally “***be on standby***” which ***eludes to both alertness and eagerness.*** ***We are called to advance Jesus’ kingdom, to see to it with our last breath that His work and word is proclaimed to everyone on this world***. Paul’s words are **NOT exclusive** this exhortation is not only for the professionals, the pastors and evangelists. Instead this exhortation is universal, made to each and all believers in Christ. The word “*preach*” in the Greek means to “*announce, proclaim or make known*”. Look for hearts that are open, seeking, longing or hurting and to those folks where ever you find them make Him known. The people of this planet have an emptiness, a longing to be filled that is only in the truths concerning Jesus. Paul next tells Timothy that “***making Jesus known***” **will require three things each start with a “P”**: **Persistently, Passionately and Patiently**

1. **Persistently**: Paul not only says to Timothy, “***make Jesus known***” but adds “***be ready in season and out of season***”. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3:15 “*always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear*..” There is nothing that can liberate an imprisoned life other than the truth of Jesus, so be ready. There must always be a sense of urgency when it comes to making Jesus known to others. Richard Baxter wrote, “*You cannot break people’s fleshly heart and appetite by joking with them, telling them a good story or giving people your opinion*.”
2. **Passionately**: Notice the variety of approaches that Paul mentions here: “***Convince, rebuke, exhort***” the common denominator is **each of these three is that they are all done with a great amount of “*passion*”**! I’m of the opinion that these are not three different approaches but rather three components of the same approach all spoken with passion of making Jesus known.
3. ***Convince***: ***Some who have continual doubts need to be convinced by sound arguments***. This word deals with our mind as too reason with a person, removing the intellectual arguments that a person has that can be explained. This is suited for a person who has doubts that can be reasoned away with a logical explanation.
4. ***Rebuke***: ***Some who are in the captivity of persistent sin need to be challenged to repent***. There needs to be words spoken about sin that is destroying a person’s life. Just like a doctor who has to speak to a patient about habits or practices that is taking life from them in order to treat them. The patient may not like the truth but the truth will save their life.
5. ***Exhort***: ***Some who are paralyzed by fears need to be encouraged to come to peace and joy***. Sometimes the encouragement is spoken with passion about our own decision and the fears we faced in making the decision for Christ and how we can now see that those fears were unfounded.
6. **Patiently**: With that said Paul has made it plain are responsibility is to ***preach the word not manipulate the response***. The results to our preaching the word are the responsibility of the Holy Spirit and the person who has heard the truth and we must wait patiently. Sometimes we see the church employing gimmicks to get people to respond to truth with emotionalism and bribes. Instead we are to continue in explaining truth to those that are seeking answers as to why they need to trust Jesus.

Vs. 3-4 The single characteristic that Paul states about people is that people **cannot bear the truth** stated two ways:

* *They will not endure sound doctrine*
* *They will heap up for themselves teachers…who will tickle their ears*

The signs of the times is that not only do they refuse to listen to the truth, they look for people who will tell them what they want to hear. The phrase “***itching ears***” is a Greek expression or figure of speech describing a person who has an insatiable appetite for some new flavor of information, something that will be novel and hip. This itch is satisfied by messages of new teachers, thus ***they judge teaching not if is it TRUTH, but rather did it satisfy my taste.*** The temptation will be for God’s servants to adapt the truth so people will be more inclined to receive it. The populace will look for teachers who will teach them what they want to hear. Those who have this disease turn away from truth and embrace fables and myths that as he already said in chapter 3 verse 5 have a form of godliness but deny its power. These myths circulate through out time:

* We are all basically good
* There is no consequences for sinful behavior
* There is no day of reckoning

Sometimes they come out in other religious teaching like “*reincarnation”* that says, *“If at first you don’t succeed, die, die again*.” You cannot believe in reincarnation and resurrection at the same time you will have to hold only one of those views. It is to these people that we are called to make Jesus known the world will “not endure sound doctrine”.

**2 Timothy 4:5-8**

 **“Emmanuel’s Land”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 5-6 Four ways to be faithful**

**III. Vs. 7-8 Finishing well**

**I. Introduction**

Charles Spurgeon had a young pastor come to him and complain that he didn’t have as big of a church has his talent warranted. Spurgeon asked, “*How many do you teach too*?” and the pastor replied, “*Oh about 100 per week*.” To this Spurgeon replied, “*That will be enough to give account for on the day of judgment*.”

If you have ever sat through a school graduation you know the excitement and enthusiasm that fill the air with speeches from selected students. Usually there is a good amount of congratulations for the hard work of the past few years and words about the bright new future that they are about to embark upon but while those words are still heard in the back of every student is the reality that they are about to take life out of the class room and into the real world. What soon displaces excitement and enthusiasm is good old fashion fear and apprehension. The interesting part of this passage is that the excitement of Paul’s “graduation” is causing Timothy apprehension as he will need to take over. How do you replace a Paul or a Peter, etc.? These words of the graduate Paul to his student Timothy answer that question.

**II. Vs. 5-6 Four ways to be faithful**

Vs. 5 In verse 2 of this chapter Paul placed Timothy under oath to make Jesus known in word, he gave him the “**Three P’s of Proclamation**”: ***Persistency, Passion and Patience***! Timothy was called, as every Christian, to the most significant work taking place at any time in the world, making Jesus known. ***Paul had said people won’t always want to hear the truth so our resolve will need to be bigger than our rejection***! Verse 5 summarizes what can be our experience as it says we may need to “endure afflictions” and Paul goes on to tell Timothy **four ways in which to be faithful** when people aren’t applauding your words they’re attacking your person.

1. **Steady**: “*Be watchful in all things*…” He uses the word “*watchful*” and by this he is speaking of consistency in our commitment. We need to be “READY” in making Jesus known and “STEADY” as well. We know who our foundation is and He is our ROCK and enables to stand up against the storms, pressures and shaking of our lives. We have a living Lord who steadies us, imparts His truth to us and the power to live.
2. **Sustain**: “..*endure afflictions*..” Throughout Paul’s letters this has been a frequent admonishment as he had faced many difficulties and persecutions that would have caused many to quit. Interesting that Paul doesn’t say to “*smooth things out*” he says instead “*endure afflictions*”. Many Christians feel as if something is wrong if they have any sort of trouble, but Paul admonishes Timothy to endure when there is trouble. I suggest that instead of pray for escape from difficulties we ought to be asking for endurance through them! James would write in James 1:2-4 to “..*count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing*.”
3. **Social**: “..*do the work of an evangelist*…” This admonition by Paul needs to be placed into the context that makes up both to whom it was being said, “***Timothy***”; as well as the situation, “***persecution***”. There is nothing in all the letters with regards to Timothy that suggests that he had the gift of evangelism. In fact it would appear that he was somewhat withdrawn and timid in nature. This is further bolstered by the words “*do the* ***WORK*** *of an evangelist*”. Second, Paul was awaiting his death along with the increased reality of persecution for making Jesus known, reveals that Christians would by nature be more inclined to with draw from society to instead be more social with the society we are called to reach. **The “WORK” of an evangelists is verbal but requires us to be around people to make Him known in the first place**.
4. **Succeed**: “…fulfill your ministry.” Paul encourages Timothy to succeed which is to keep at it until either you are finished or He is finished with you. There was not a sense of “*retirement*” with Paul only a sense of “*recycling*” as what we may have been called to do in this life has finished its course and now we have been moved by the Holy Spirit to do what He has called us to do elsewhere.

Vs. 6 Timothy will never be Paul and he isn’t being asked too, instead is being asked to run the race that Christ has given him to run. Paul boldly declares, “***I am already***”! What wonderful declaration this is when he is but a few weeks away from being put to death. Paul declares his life is, “..*already being poured out as a* ***drink offering***…” The “*drink offering*” is a reference to the Day of Atonement where at the end of all the sacrifices a jug of wine was poured out upon the altar. Wine in the scripture is a symbol of joy and Paul clearly saw his 30 years in ministry as a sacrifice of pure joy. The word “*departure*” describes what a person does when they break camp by “*pulling up the tent pegs*”. In Greek the word would be used of a ship that loses its moorings and sets out to sea. What a wonderful way of viewing our departure as we have be tethered to this life, earth bound but at the time of our departure we will be let lose to sail and do what we have been designed to do worship.

**III. Vs. 7-8 Finishing well**

Vs. 7 Paul uses **three phrases that looks back upon his 30 years of service** and what had been accomplished:

1. “***I have fought the good fight***”: He doesn’t say he fought “**A**” good fight but “**THE**” good fight. The importance was not the FIGHT but that the fight was given Him by the Lord. There are a lot of folks that go down swinging but many are taken the fight to windmills instead of what the Lord has called them too. In Ephesians chapter 6 Paul said that battle was not against flesh and blood, people. No it was in the spiritual arena! Satan is forever trying to get us to drop THE FIGHT for A FIGHT which will keep us from fighting what we should have been fighting all along.
2. “***I have finished the race***”: In Philippians chapter 3 verse 14 Paul talked about this race when he said “*he pressed towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ*”. The race is the Christian life lived moment by moment, step by step. Every moment of our Christian life is engaged in this race and the finish line is our death where we will be given the prize of eternal life in glorified body.
3. “***I have kept the faith***”: Paul is speaking of the whole body of truth, the Word of God, what he called in 1 Corinthians 2:7 “*The hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages….*” Paul is on his final hours, looking back upon 30 years and the journey that God had placed him upon, with all the twists and turns. And he says to Timothy, “*I have kept the faith.*” When others did not and turned away Paul stayed with truth. When others tried to beat the truth out of him, they found and in exhaustible supply. When some had tried to distort or mistreat the truth, Paul was the standard bearer of truth.

Vs. 8 This verse deals with ***four expectations Paul had upon his graduation***:

1. ***Crown of righteousness***: There is a misunderstanding with our righteousness, it doesn’t happen at the end of life, it happens the moment we trust Jesus as he declares us right. This “***crown***” was NOT Paul waiting for righteousness, ***it is the waiting for is the manifestation of authority and glory which accompanies our righteousness.*** In 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 17 Paul spoke of it this way “*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*..” Peter said in 1 Peter 5:4 that those who have served faithfully will be given “*a crown of glory*”. John said in 1 John 3:2 “*now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is*.”
2. ***Which the Lord, the righteous Judge***: Paul expected that this crown would be given to him by the true King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He had stood before kings and judges and even Caesar Nero, all who examined him and found him guilty and sentenced to death. But Paul had the great expectation that he would appear before the only true judge Jesus who will pronounce him innocent and grant him eternal life! Very soon he would look into the eyes of the very person who had died for him, and he would take from those nail scared hands the crown of righteousness!
3. ***Will give me on that day***: Though this “DAY” is vague as too its location in time it is not vague as to its certainty. God has been moving all of creation to this “DAY” when all that is invisible, every mystery, and every uncertainty will be made known. It will when TIME will give way to ETERNITY as Revelation 10: 6 says in the King James Version “*that there should be time no longer*”. We will no longer be stuck waiting for something to happen and everything that we experience we will be fully equipped to receive it.
4. ***Not to me only but to all who have loved His appearing***: Paul has the expectation that he won’t be alone, as there will be multitudes sharing the same above three expectations. Some think that what Paul is saying is **ONLY** for those who are **awaiting his soon return** but if you look at the words “***HAVE LOVED***” they are in the ***past tense*** which means that Paul isn’t referencing Jesus 2nd coming but rather His 1st coming where Jesus “***abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel***”, according to 2 Timothy 1:10. Do you love His appearing? Does your heart leap for joy at His conquering death? That this is speaking of you and me. All of God’s people living together for all eternity, can’t wait!

**2 Timothy 4:9-22**

**“Come before winter”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 9-13 Come quickly**

**III. Vs. 14-15 The coppersmith**

**IV. 16-18 The Lord stood with me**

**V. 19-22 The Lord be with you**

**I. Introduction**

If you were to list the top 25 people who have left the greatest impact upon human society throughout history it would be hard to imagine that list NOT having the Apostle Paul’s name, in fact one such site had Jesus #1 and Paul at # 12. The fact that he is on this list while for the most part spending a good portion of this behind bars is even more remarkable.

**II. Vs. 9-13 Come quickly**

Vs. 9 As we close out this very personal letter we get a glimpse into the very human side of Paul, in verse 9 he tells Timothy to “*Be diligent to come to me quickly*” and again he writes in verse 21 “*Do your utmost to come before winter*.” Paul expected Timothy to leave Ephesus and come to Rome, traveling across land not by ship across the Mediterranean Sea. Timothy would have to go north and cross over to Macedonia at the Dardanelles the narrow strip of water bridging the Black Sea Mediterranean Sea. From there they would have taken the Egnatian Road that crossed the Greek Peninsula which would have been over 350 miles. From their they would have sailed from the Greek port of Dyrrachium across the Adriatic Sea and the Roman port city of Brindisi on the heel of the boot of Italy. Then they would have traveled another 350 miles across the Italian mountains to Rome. A rough estimate makes this journey from Ephesus to Rome at over a three month journey and would have involved two water crossings one way. Assuming they avoided winter from the point of the letter being sent would take 3 months and the journey back to Rome another 3 months or over ½ a year before Timothy would have arrived. Most likely Paul was already home with Jesus prior to the letter arriving.

Vs. 10 Paul request Timothy as Demas who had been Paul’s companion and fellow worker had forsaken him. Demas was “*in love with this present age*”; his name is short for Demetrius and there are several Demas in scripture. In Acts 18 one was a silversmith in Ephesus and led a riot there against Paul. He later became a believer and accompanied Paul and in his letter to the Philippians he is called a “*fellow laborer*”. It seems that he had turned back and went to Thessalonica a very prosperous city and he apparently longed for an easier life. Demas perhaps grew tired of the problems, poverty, and persecution that accompanied Paul. That would be the end of the story except for the Apostle Johns third letter where he mentions many years later that a person named Demetrius (Demas) has a “*good testimony from all, and from truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true*.” Why does John mention his testimony and support him so, if not to counter his past failure under Paul? Though this all is very speculative it would suggest that God is not finished with us even after we turn away and go back to the world.

* Crescens, is mentioned as going to Galatia at Paul’s request and when you read the letter written to them you know that the church’s in this area were easily influenced which suggests that Crescens was a solid believer.
* Titus, is another familiar name and like Timothy a man who Paul referred to as his son in the faith. He had become the center of attention at the Council d at Jerusalem, when some of the Jewish believers demanded that the Greek convert’s first become Jews by submitting to circumcision before they were recognized as true followers of Christ. This faithful brother was sent to Dalmatia which boarders the Adriatic Sea in what we call to day Croatia.

Vs. 11 Only Luke remained with him, and we know Paul a Roman citizen, was allowed to have two slaves with him and after Demas left Luke alone remained to care for Paul. The mention of Mark and Paul’s desire that he accompany Timothy is quite heartwarming. In Acts chapter 15 verses 36-41 Mark had been the cause of a heated dispute between Barnabas and Paul when Mark proved a bit flakey and the mission team was split at that time. Some 25 years has passed since then and Mark had gone down to Egypt and ministered there. Paul had him come to Rome with him as we are informed in Philemon verse 24. Here we are told that he was serving in Ephesus alongside Timothy. I like the way the NIV renders Paul’s comment about Mark saying, “*Get Mark and bring him with you, because* ***he is helpful to me in my ministry***.”

Vs. 12 Tychicus, is the guy to replace Timothy and he seems to be used quite often as a letter carrier as he was used for that purpose both in the letter to Colossians as well as the letter sent to the Ephesians. The reason for this was that he was most likely well known and received by the churches thus Paul could trust him to do the right thing.

Vs. 13 Timothy is given further instructions which indicate that Paul’s re-arrest was unexpected while he was in Troas as he had no time to gather his belongings. In chapter 1 Paul said that he remembered Timothy’s tears as he was dragged off to Rome too face his 2nd trial before Caesar Nero.

**III. Vs. 14-15 The coppersmith**

Vs. 14-15 Paul writes “*Alexander the coppersmith*” and links him to the phrase “*did me much harm*”. That phrase is often used in the Greek for an “***informer***”. He was the person who betrayed him into the hands of the Romans at Troas. Many believe that this is the same “Alexander” mentioned in Paul’s 1st letter to Timothy as we read in chapter 1 verse 20 that Paul turned him out of the church along with Hymenaeus that they may learn not to blaspheme. Paul mentions these two men who rejected trusting and obeying the truth and have become stranded and alone away from truth. Hymenaeus and Alexander were not men who didn’t know nor hadn’t obeyed the truth for at one time they were. They were men who stopped doing so and had become lost! Hymenaeus taught that the resurrection of the believers in Christ had already happened. Their departure from truth was not a sudden compulsive act but rather a slow abandonment, a course of spiritual deterioration that has taken a great deal of time. Paul also warns Timothy in verse 15 to also watch out for him as he will come after you if he gets a chance. Now this warning is not to take vengeance as Paul says the Lord will take care of him.

**IV. 16-18 The Lord stood with me**

Vs. 16-18 Paul gives Timothy an update on his situation and trial at Rome and starts with a sad note when he was first brought forward at his hearing no one stood with him. It was a dangerous time in Rome under Nero and if any person went against his wishes they could lose their life. Yet with that said no believer was willing to stand with Paul who had ricked everything to share with them the truth. But amazingly Paul has no vindictiveness and instead prayers for them. The fact that now one stood with Paul could have led to his immediate execution but Paul says that “the Lord stood with him” which indicates that the Lord still wanted to give Paul to speak. In Hebrews chapter 13 verse 5 the author tells us that God has literally promised to, “*never, never, ever, under any conditions leave you nor forsake you.*” In that Greek he uses six Greek negatives and then in light of that says, “*What, then, can man do unto me*?” That’s what Paul says to Timothy here. Then Paul goes on to say that **the presence of Jesus with him accomplished two things**:

1. “*That the message might be preached*”: Facing the death penalty the Lord gave Paul the strength to make Him known to all who would hear him.
2. “*I was also delivered out of the mouth of the lion*”: The practice of giving Christians to the lions in the Roman Coliseum isn’t a possibility as it for another 3-5 years not to mention that as a Roman citizen it would have been against the law. Most likely this is a reference to satan, who had worked in those to turn him over to the Roman’s and caused believers to not stand in testimony to Jesus. Paul was safe in Jesus’ hands until he had finished his race.

**V. 19-22 The Lord be with you**

Vs. 19-22 Paul finishes the letter with 9 people that Timothy knew:

* ***Prisca or “Priscilla” and Aquila***: A Jewish couple that were tentmakers or leather workers like Paul. They had met in Corinth and the church met in their home. They moved with Paul to Ephesus and had a church in their home there as well. They had gone to Rome and you guessed it had a church in their home as well. Now they were back in Ephesus with Timothy no doubt with a home church.
* ***Onesiphorus***: According to chapter 1 verse 16 he was the person who ministered to him while in chains in Rome.
* ***Erastus***: We are told in Romans was a city treasure in Corinth, no doubt why he stayed in Corinth.
* ***Trophimus***: According to Acts chapter 20 verse 4 he accompanied Paul to Asia and later to Jerusalem and was the gentile accused of being with Paul as they entered the temple which caused the riot, Paul’s arrest and imprisonment. Here we are told that he was left in Miletus ill, and that is quite an amazing revelation as apparently not every person is healed and it has nothing to do with a lack of faith.
* ***Eubulus***: This is the only mention of this person’s name and we know nothing about him.
* ***Pudens, Linus and Claudia***: These three all have Roman names and Paul says that they greet the Christians in Ephesus. One of the early church writings mentions Linus as Paul’s successor in Rome and the fact that his name appears between Pudens and Claudia has given rise to speculation that he was the son of these two. Linus is called in these early church documents as the bishop of Rome and the Roman historian Tacitus refers to a Roman nobleman named Pudens who married a princess from a British king. In the city of Chichester in England is a plaque with his name on it. This makes a close tie to Christianity and the British Empire of which we Americans inherited our faith.