

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 18TH, 2019 // 2 TIMOTHY

TO FAITHFUL MEN (2 TIM. 2:1-2)

Paul began his exhortation to Timothy by alluding to the examples of the defectors in Asia and how Onesiphorus was the faithful exception.

- Timothy is to follow the example of Onesiphorus and be faithful and stay strong.
- But how can he stay strong? He's to be "strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus"

God's grace not only saves us, it sustains us and empowers us to be obedient.

- Grace is not simply a license to sin or stay spiritually stagnant, it is the sustaining force God gives us to stay faithful when we don't feel strong or capable on our own.
- When you're humble, you're a good candidate for grace (James 4:6).

Timothy is told to entrust the message of the gospel to "faithful men"

- Why do we learn more of God's Word or grow in His truth or train ourselves in greater godliness? One of the reasons is to pass on the truth of the gospel to others who are willing and capable of also passing it along.
- Spiritual maturity is measured by a willingness and ability to reproduce.

Those that Timothy is called to entrust the gospel to should be "faithful"- their lives should be that of godly character.

- They also should be men who are "able to teach"- in other words, they're to be men who show potential to be clear and bold communicators of the truth of God's Word.
- Discipleship looks different for all of us, but it's crucial and it's not optional (Matt. 28:19-20).

SOLDIERS, ATHLETES, FARMERS (2 TIM. 2:3-7)

To inspire and instruct Timothy in the importance of faithfulness in serving God, Paul uses three very simple but powerful images: the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer.

- These three professions all require dedication, discipline, and diligence.
- What's he's getting at is this- following Jesus and serving God is most definitely NOT a life of ease, comfort, and convenience.

The Soldier (vs. 4) A soldier doesn't "get entangled in civilian pursuits"- a warrior on the front lines that's getting shot at doesn't concern himself with the same kinds of things a civilians do.

- A soldier is fighting to "please the one who enlists him"- he's devoted to his King, to his Lord, and not to other things-a soldier is single-minded and focused. The truth is, we're in a war.
- As followers of Jesus, we're soldiers that have been enlisted to fight for the honor of our King.
- Therefore, we're to take great care to make sure that we're not getting distracted and entangled by the cares of this world.

We're to be committed, devoted, focused, and single-minded in our lives.

The Athlete (vs. 5) An athlete only receives his reward (a championship ring, a medal, a contract, etc.) if he competes according to the rules.

- The "rules" are two-fold- 1) training and keeping the body fit and capable of competition, 2) lawful competition without cheating.
- You don't win a gold medal if you don't train to make the team or if you cheat.

Paul is NOT talking about rule-keeping to earn salvation- he's talking about the desire of every true believer: to walk in godliness in accordance with God's Word.

- We can't take shortcuts or "cheat" by redefining or disobeying God's truth or lowering His standards for our lives. If we want the rewards of faithfulness, we must compete according to God's standards by His grace and strength.

The Farmer (vs. 6) A farmer who wants to enjoy the "first share has to be hard-working.

- Planting and harvesting are only small parts of the job.
- All of this requires discipline, care, patience, diligence, and endurance.

Fruit produced in the landscape of the soul requires discipline, patience, diligence, and endurance.

- Spiritual change in people most often does not happen overnight- it takes years of careful, loving, and diligent nurture.
- Spiritual care and spiritual growth both for ourselves and others is NOT glamorous- it's often done in private places or quiet times.

All three of these require dedication, discipline, and diligence- but they also all promise great rewards.

- **The Christian life is NOT the path of least resistance, but it is the life that will ultimately be worth it in the end.**
- Paul says, "think over what I say" (vs. 7)- Reflect on that all things of value come with a cost.

SUFFERING & BLESSING (2 TIM. 2:8-13)

The motivation to work hard, live honestly, and endure difficulties comes when we remember "Jesus Christ, risen from the dead" (vs. 8). When we think of Christ and His resurrection, we remember His example.

- He suffered extreme agony and death on our behalf, for the "joy set before Him" (Heb. 12:2).

When we think of Christ and His resurrection, we're also given hope and courage because we've been promised the same resurrection He experienced, if we continue in the faith.

- When your tank is empty, remember that the tomb is empty and the throne is occupied!
- A lofty vision of the person and work of Christ will keep us going.

Even though Paul is suffering with "chains as a criminal" (vs. 9), the Word of God cannot be bound!

- God's plan cannot be stopped- regardless of the suffering we might endure.
- Therefore, Paul is willing to suffer whatever he has to in order to see more people "obtain the salvation that in Christ Jesus" (vs. 10).

Once again, Paul shares a trustworthy saying. "If we have died with him, we will also live with him"- when we trust in Christ, we die to sin, to the world, and to self. God then raises us up to a new kind of life as part of His wonderful work of regeneration. "If we endure, we will also reign with him"- the Christian life is one of continual struggle, suffering, and hardship to bring glory to Christ: not simply to use God to meet our problems and our needs.

- "If we deny him, he will also deny us"- Paul had in mind those who profess Christ, and then turn away, denying the faith that they formerly claimed.

"If we are faithless, he remains faithful- for he cannot deny himself".

- Our determination to remain faithful to Him- will waver and wobble from time to time.
- Even when we struggle in our ability to remain faithful, He Himself will NEVER waver in His promise to never leave or forsake us and to complete the good work in us (Phil. 1:6).

A WORKER APPROVED BY GOD (2 TIM. 2:14-26)

Timothy is told to "remind them of these things" and tell them "not to quarrel" about words (

- Once again he's encouraged to instruct his congregation to focus on the truth of Scripture, the nature of God, and the necessity of holy living- not simply debating fringe theology.
- He's told to "rightly handle" the word of truth- the word used is orthotomeo, to straighten.

Part of Timothy "rightly handling" the Scriptures as "a worker, approved who has no need to be ashamed" (vs. 15), involved avoiding "irreverent babble" (vs. 16).

- Two individuals were leading these fruitless discussions- Hymenaeus & Philetus.
- They were claiming the resurrection had already happened.

Some false teachers during this time claimed that the resurrection Christ promised for His followers was only that of a spiritual nature. Spiritualizing the resurrection diminished the sacrifice of Christ, removed the necessity of enduring hardship, and it promoted immoral living.

- In this way, these teachers were "upsetting the faith of some" (vs. 18).

But "God's firm foundation still stands", and the "Lord knows those who are His" (vs. 19)- if the gates of hell will not overcome the church (Matt. 16:18), neither will false teaching or apostasy.

- Paul then uses a very interesting word picture.

Houses have a variety of utensils in them- some of "gold and silver", but some of "wood and clay"

- Some are for "honorable uses", some for "dishonorable".
- We don't use china to feed the dog, and we don't eat out of the dog bowl for Christmas dinner.

What's Paul saying? In the same house (the "church"), there might be mixture of people.

- In this mixed group, some belong to the Lord, others are simply impostors who think they do because of some religious activity (Matt. 13:24-30).

- **But how a person uses their lives reveals the kind of vessel they actually are.**

If any one who is using their life for dishonorable purposes wants to be a vessel for honorable purposes, they can! (vs. 21). But we can't let the presence of tares amongst the wheat or goats amongst the sheep discourage us- God knows those who belong to Him.

- Timothy is told to "flee youthful lusts" and pursue Godly character while having nothing to do with foolish controversies (vs. 21-22).

Young men ("youth") tend to be argumentative and hot-headed, but Paul encourages Timothy to not be quarrelsome, but kind and to "correct his opponents with gentleness" (vs. 25).

- Correcting them in kindness and gentleness may lead them to truth and to escape the "snare of the devil" (vs. 26).
- **Arguments don't win people -arguments usually lose people, even if they're won.**

"Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried."

- G.K. Chesterton