

II TIMOTHY 2:14-26

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Timothy chapter 2 as we continue our study through the Word of God, and we finish up this chapter we began last week.

Keep in mind that this is Paul's last letter that he wrote before he was martyred for his faith in Christ.

And he writes this letter to his son in the faith, Timothy, encouraging Timothy to fight the good fight of faith, to continue on in the work, don't give up.

In a sense, Paul was passing his ministry on to the next generation, and Timothy was part of it!

Last time, as we began in II Timothy chapter 2, we saw that Paul used the example of a teacher and he wants Timothy to pass on what God has given to him to others. And in sharing with others, instilling the things of God with others, it is not going to be easy and Paul gives to him these three examples to encourage him in the work.

The first example is that of a soldier in II Timothy 2:3-4. And we saw that a soldier has to be **FOCUSED**, enduring hardships and not entangling himself with the things of this world as he is serving his commander.

Then he moves to the example of an athlete in II Timothy 2:5. And we saw that the athlete must follow the rules. In other words, he is **OBEDIENT**.

And he then concludes with the example of a farmer in II Timothy 2:6. And a farmer is a person who works hard and is **PATIENT**. You have to work the ground, you have to plant the seeds, you have to care for the land, and you must wait, and wait for the fruitful harvest to come in.

Then we saw that Paul dealt with what Timothy was to remember and never forget, and, of course, it is all about Jesus. And we will deal with that once again this evening because Paul is going to tell Timothy to remind them of these things.

This evening, as we finish up this chapter, we are going to be looking at:

The Diligent Worker - II Timothy 2:14-19.

The Sanctified Vessel - II Timothy 2:20-23.

The Gentle Servant - II Timothy 2:24-26.

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in II Timothy chapter 2, starting in verse 14, and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

II TIMOTHY 2

VERSE 14

I find it interesting, that some of the problems that Paul had in his day regarding the church, we have the same problems. Things really don't change because the enemy doesn't have to change. We still fall prey to his lies, these doctrines of demons!

It is amazing how fast the church can get tempted off the message that is important, the message that really matters and they end up being an entertainment center, or maybe just a social service agency, or just a place to gather to share things.

But that is not what the church is to be about. Remember what Paul said to Timothy back in I Timothy 3:15, **“but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground [foundation] of the truth.”**

The church, the place where God's people gather, is to be the pillar and the foundation of the truth and that truth is from the Word of God, not experience or feelings!

Thus, we must resist those temptations to be more like the world, to water the message down, to change the message. In other words, the church should constantly remember these things!

What was Paul instructing Timothy to make a regular practice, reminding the people of what things?

What is the main thing we talked about last week?

Paul wanted Timothy to remind them that it is all about Jesus, the Gospel message, that is what he is to be speaking forth, that is what he was to keep on sharing, the Lord with people, building people up in the faith.

Paul said in II Timothy 2:8, "**Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.**"

Also, remember what Paul said in II Timothy 2:11-13, "**This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.**"

Paul is speaking of all believers who have died in Him. They have died to the old life, they are living for Him and in the end, these physical bodies will die but we will go to be with the Lord!

Next Paul speaks of those who endure, those who are faithful believers; they will receive an eternal reward. We will reign with Christ in the Kingdom Age! Thus, in this life we are being prepared for the next life, for resurrection life with Christ!

But here is a warning. If you deny Christ, He will deny you!

In Matthew 10:33 Jesus said, **“But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”**

You see, count the cost, and don’t make an empty profession of faith so that as things get tough, you deny the Lord.

I don’t believe those that deny the Lord were ever saved for their failure to endure and hold onto their relationship with Christ shows they were never saved in the first place.

Now we all fall into denying the Lord when we fail to stand for the Lord, as happened with Peter.

The thing is, it is not a continual denial but a temporary one. But if your life is given over to denying Jesus, then you are lost!

And in the end, when all is said and done, all that the Lord is, is not based upon our faithfulness or what we have to say.

Just because some deny the Lord doesn’t change anything about the Lord, He is who He is!

And these were the things that Paul wanted Timothy to remind the believers in Ephesus. In fact, in the Greek it is, ***“Continually put them in remembrance of these things.”***

As I have said, I truly believe this is something the church is lacking today, giving people the Good News, teaching them the things of God.

Churches have turned into entertainment centers, they present a social gospel and people are losing faith because, **“... faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”**

Now that is what Timothy was to stay focused upon and keep reminding the people about.

But then Paul says, “**... do not strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.**”

Paul is warning Timothy to stay focused on the things of God, but he is also warned not to focus on the things that are not important, things that don't matter because if we start to focus on these unprofitable things it will be the ruin of those that are listening, it will be a catastrophe to them!

First of all, don't let silly debates, don't be distracted by unprofitable things. Keep the main thing the main thing – Jesus!

This is so important because as Christians become less and less familiar with the Scriptures, they open themselves up to all kinds of garbage.

Thus, keep focused on the profitable things and don't be distracted by the unprofitable things.

But that is not Paul's point here, as true as those points were. Paul was not speaking about small things, or non-foundational issues here.

In the Greek the point that Paul is bringing forth is that of “*waging a war of words with false teachers.*”

Who are these false teachers that Paul is speaking about?

As we get to II Timothy 3:7 next time, we will see that they are those who are “**always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**”

And Paul is saying that there is absolutely no profit in debating with people who are blatantly antagonistic to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to the truth of God's Word.

And I have experienced this with people that should have known better. When I showed them their error, they refused to see it and believe me, it was not profitable for me to continue on. They made up their mind and that was it. It is as Paul says in II Timothy 2:23, “**But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.**” How true that is. Just move on, let them go and pray that the Lord will open their eyes and draw them back!

In regard to this, Calvin tells us, “Let us notice first that teaching is rightly condemned on the sole ground that it does no good. God’s purpose is not to pander to our inquisitiveness [curiosity] but to give us profitable instruction. Away with all speculations that produce no edification!”

It is as Paul said in II Timothy 3:16-17, “**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**”

You see, God’s Word builds up, corrects us, it helps us while the other things are of no profit to us!

Remember the focus of II Timothy 2:14-19, *THE DILIGENT WORKER!* That is what we are looking at and thus, a diligent worker is to remind them of these things and not get into disputes with these false teachers who are really not interested in the truth!

VERSE 15

Again, we are looking at being a diligent worker and that is how Paul starts out this verse, “**Be diligent to present yourself approved to God . . .**”

And the idea with this word “**diligent**” is that it speaks of a “*zealous persistence to accomplish a certain objective.*” So this is someone who is zealous and persistent in teaching the Word of God!

And isn't this interesting? As you teach God's Word correctly, you are presenting yourself as approved of God. And the idea here is that you are standing before the Lord and you are presenting yourself for inspection. Kind of like a soldier would do before a commanding officer.

And as you do, you are “**approved**”, or you are accepted after testing. The Lord has inspected what you have presented to Him and you are worthy to continue serving the Lord in ministry!

Now here's the thing. Being a pastor is not a popularity contest. I look at the prophet Jeremiah, a spokesperson for God and yet no one listened to what he had to say, no one repented and got right with God.

Many today would look at a ministry like that and see it as a failure. But God was pleased with Jeremiah because he was faithful in service, he was a God pleaser rather than a man pleaser. Thus, the people hated him because they didn't like what he was saying to them, but God was well pleased!

Please don't misunderstand me here. I am not here to please you. I know, that does not sound good. But let me explain.

I am here to please the Lord, to stand before Him with what I have and to be approved by Him.

“But what about us?” you might say.

Again, listen carefully. If the Lord approves of what I am doing, guess what? You will be blessed by it because it is what the Lord has for you!

If He is not pleased with what I have presented to Him, then no matter how much I am a man-pleaser, no matter how much you may like me and what I am saying, it is worthless to you and you are not being blessed.

So you may not like what I have to say, but you do need to hear what I have to say because it is the Lord, it is His Word, and you need to take it in and apply it to your life.

The problem today is that we have so many false teachers out there that are “*men-pleasers*” and all they are interested in is telling people what they want to hear so they can remain popular. Maybe before man but not before God!

Paul made that point in I Thessalonians 2:4-9, when he said, “**But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness - God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.**”

Did you see that? Not as pleasing men but pleasing God. That is what Paul did and that is what he was admonishing Timothy to do, preach the Word, the whole counsel of God, it is what they need. And when you do bring forth the Word of God, do it correctly. We will look at that more in a moment.

Also, we see Paul say this again in Galatians 1:9-10, **“As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”**

Here’s the thing. You are either going to serve man or you are going to serve God. You can’t do both. And you can’t truly serve man, help man unless you are serving God! That is just how it works. Man is helped by the pastor serving God!

Make no mistake about it, all of us, as Christians, will have to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Bema Seat, not for punishment, but for rewards. And our works will be examined, they will be inspected by our King, Jesus!

And He will determine the rewards we will receive for faithful service.

I like what one author wrote, ***“It is embarrassing to do a job poorly and then to have your work examined. The Bible warns us that the work of each Christian will be examined at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). Therefore we have another motivation to work diligently for the Lord, so we will not be ashamed when our work is examined.”***

So we see here that Paul is telling Timothy to work hard, to be diligent in the work he is doing.

As I have said, there are times when people should be ashamed at the work they are doing because it was done poorly.

But that should not be the case in our service to the Lord, and as a pastor, Timothy was to **“rightly divide”** God’s Word or *“to cut straight.”*

The Geek word, ORTHOTOMEIO, (or-thot-om-eh’-o) was used of a craftsman cutting a straight line, or a farmer plowing a straight furrow, or a mason setting a straight line for bricks.

Thus, there is a right way to teach God’s Word, to share what it means, and a wrong way!

Let me share this with you to show you where we have come from and where we are at in regard to moving away from the truths of God found in the Word of God. We are told,

The church in America, like its counterpart in Europe, has forsaken and deserted the fundamentals of their faith – indeed, we have become a post-Christian people.

In all my years as a believer, I have witnessed significant changes in the evangelical church – changes that have undermined our beliefs and our need for dependence upon God’s word.

Satan, as the deceiver of mankind, continually plants seeds of doubt in the minds of individuals. Using false teachers and poorly equipped bad teachers, Satan distorts, twists and outright lies to corrupt our understanding of the Word of God.

Few churches today teach verse-by-verse to give a faithful interpretation of God’s Word. Most mainline and the new mega churches have abandoned the sound doctrinal teaching, replacing it with subjective and experiential content (feelings-oriented beliefs). This drift has been a major contributor to the demise of biblical discernment. Churches, pastors, and believer’s all bear partial responsibility. The following are major movements within the church that have led to the displacement of Biblical discernment.

During the late 1970s to early 1980s, the Church Growth Movement took shape. This movement was and remains an attempt to increase church membership through self-oriented programs designed to meet the “felt needs” of its membership. In opposition to God’s way, the church has embraced “the way that seems right unto man”. Rather than a place of worship, the church has become a business. Its “church-marketing” efforts have been a major factor in ushering man’s so-called wisdom into the church and distancing it from the Scriptures.

Aiding and abetting these self-oriented felt-needs programs, enter Christian Psychology or Counseling. Many formerly conservative Bible teaching churches and seminaries have allowed humanistic doctrines of self-love and self-esteem to infect their churches. After all, how can one possibly love God or one another, unless we first learn to love ourselves. This is psychoheresy! The self-oriented integration of worldly psychology alongside the Bible has destroyed the Biblical doctrine of the sufficiency of the Scriptures. Man is now dependent upon self, rather than humbly seeking to be God-dependent.

For the last several decades, many conservative Charismatic and Pentecostal believers have also drifted away from the objective, written Word of God. They have embraced “subjective experience” over the “objective truth” of the Word. Many churches have fallen under false teaching that says: God speaks to believers today with the same or greater authority than is found in the Bible. Self-appointed modern apostles thus declare their teachings to be above the Word of God. The result is that churches embrace a false gospel of health and wealth, name and claim it, man-centered spiritual warfare, and some even literally roar like lions.

Apostasy is further revealed in the non-believer oriented Seeker Sensitive Movement, which has at its core the belief that the church should avoid at all costs to offend the one who is “seeking” (i.e., a non-believer). Preaching of sound doctrine is to be dumbed-down, to a level that the unbelieving world can understand. However, an unbeliever does not seek, but is drawn by the Spirit to faith. The work of the believer is to evangelize. The work of the church, using gifted believers, becomes one of rooting, building-up, and establishing its sheep in the faith (Col 2:7). Entertaining is not a work. The church is to convict its sheep of sin, not to overlook their sins and desensitize its sheep to the world’s system of sin.

Moving down another level of apostasy, the youth-oriented Emerging Church Movement is an attempt to reach the youth culture for Christ by emulating an ungodly and worldly culture. According to emerging church leaders, “the church must be re-imagined” in order to accommodate man’s debased thinking. They regard the Bible itself as the chief obstacle to reinventing Christianity. But that’s no problem, through Satanic deception, they simply distort the Word of God.

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Again, here me out on this. If you are not rightly dividing the Word of Truth, the Bible, then you are not approved of God. If you are making the Bible say what you want it to say instead of what God has said, then you are not approved of God!

Let me show you what I mean how people can distort the Word of God. In John 18:1-6 we are told, **“When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, ‘Whom are you seeking?’ They answered Him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am He.’ And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, ‘I am He,’ they drew back and fell to the ground.”**

Those who are into being slain in the Spirit will use this verse as evidence to support this practice. The power of God is so strong it will knock you to the ground, some are even glued to the floor.

That is not rightly dividing the Word of God.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus was arrested, those men who fell to the ground were not saved, they were not believers.

When Jesus said, **“I am”** I do believe it was the power of God that knocked them down, but not a practice we see with believers or even with unbelievers. You don’t see it practiced in the book of Acts, nor do you see it in the Epistles.

You see, rightly dividing the Word of God doesn’t mean you make it say what you want it to say, but what God does say!

Another example is that of a young woman who posed nude for a pornographic magazine, supposedly she was a Christian. She even used the Scriptures to support what she did as she claimed this experience of posing nude for these pictures had drawn her closer to God.

She quoted the first part of James 4:8, to justify her actions, giving her Scriptural support for what she was doing.

That verse says, “**Draw near to God and He will draw near to you . . .**” Sounds good but that is not rightly dividing the Word of God, for if she would just read the rest of that verse she would see that her actions are wrong. It says, “**. . . Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**” James 4:8b.

Don’t twist God’s Word to make it say what you want, to use it to justify your sin. God means what He says and says what He means, and we must not only proclaim it but also live by it!

Now when you talk with some Christians and you share the Word of God with them, they may say things like, “*Well, that’s just your interpretation!*”

In other words, what they are saying is we can all interpret the Bible the way we want and that is fine, you see, we can never really know what it means! Are you kidding me? Of course we can and God is very clear on this!

Why do I think my interpretation is correct? Because it is not really my interpretation of the Scriptures, it is what God has said. The Bible does not mean what anyone wants it to mean, it is very specific in what it is saying.

Listen to what Peter tells us in II Peter 1:19-21, **“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”**

This verse can be better translated, **“We also have the more sure prophetic word.”** In other words, God’s Word is more sure, it can be trusted more than what Peter saw with his own eyes on Mount Hermon in Caesarea Philippi, the transfiguration! (II Peter 1:16-18)

Thus, experiences will come and go but God’s Word will last forever. Experiences may pump us up for a time, but God’s Word will transform our lives!

And Peter is not just speaking of prophecy, but the entire Word of God. And it is not for our own private interpretation, these are the Words of God and what God has spoken, we can’t change or take away. And yet, we see so many who are not rightly dividing the Word of Truth, and in the end, they will be judged for what they are bringing to people. And teachers are far more accountable before God for what they are teaching.

And I will close this verse here in II Timothy with these words from Spurgeon, “Swords are meant to cut and hack, and wound, and kill with, and the word of truth is for pricking men in the heart and killing their sins. The word of God is not committed to God’s ministers to amuse men with its glitter, nor to charm them with the jewels in its hilt, but to conquer their souls for Jesus.”

May we **“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”**

VERSES 16-18

It is always amazing to listen to the garbage some teachers are teaching and the following they have.

Paul warned Timothy to shun, avoid, don't listen to their message, why?

Because it is "**profane**," not meaning dirty words but anything that is taking away from God's Word is not holy, it is filthy! Why is that?

Because it is nothing more than "**idle babblings**" or "**vain babblings**" there is no substance to them, there is nothing substantial to them.

Paul, in Colossians 2:8-10 warned, "**Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.**"

May we be wise and understand that what God has for us will make us complete!

So Paul is basically telling Timothy, and us, "*Timothy, when people come up with these doctrines, don't get caught up in them, keep plowing a straight furrow through the Word of God.*" That is what I am trying to do as we go through the Word of God!

Let me say this. This kind of teaching we are seeing today many times is not rightly dividing the Word of God, it doesn't make a person more holy, but it moves them more and more down the path of un-holiness. You see, you are not being drawn into the presence of God with these teachings, but into the person who is teaching them. They are following a man and not God!

Interestingly enough, Paul likens the teachings of these false doctrines, these unscriptural lessons to that of cancer, spreading quickly.

I witnessed the effects of cancer and how quickly it can spread in my dad's life. He was diagnosed with colon cancer, had part of his colon removed. There was no evidence that the cancer had spread anywhere else in his body at this point, although over 95% of the lymph glands they did a biopsy on had cancer. Within 9 months his cancer spread to his brain, his lungs, and his liver and he died!

I am amazed at how quickly false doctrine can spread, to the ruin of its hearer.

I have seen relationships destroyed because of this, and it truly saddens me.

Remember when the Toronto blessing was so popular. People came into the airport at Toronto from all over the world to receive this anointing, to bark like dogs, laugh uncontrollably, be drunk in the Spirit and-so-on, and their message spread like cancer! It is not building people up in the faith but weakening their faith with junk food instead of the solid meat of God's Word!

And here we see that Paul names two men, probably leaders in the church at Ephesus at one time, who were not rightly dividing the Word of God but teaching heresy!

In I Timothy 1:20 Paul tells us, **“of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”**

Hymenaeus rejected the faith and now, here in II Timothy he still didn't learn his lesson, he didn't repent and now he is with Philetus spreading these profane and vain babblings. They must have been popular, had a strong following, but they were in error and leading others down that same path.

Now they started out correctly, but then they strayed from the truth. One of the things they taught was that the resurrection was over, that it is past.

Are they speaking of our physical resurrection? It seems like it. Maybe they only saw a spiritual resurrection and denied any physical resurrection, a kind of early Gnosticism you might say.

But, by denying our physical resurrection they were denying the resurrection of Jesus in bodily form.

Paul makes that point in I Corinthians 15:12-19, **“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up - if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”**

If Paul ended there, that there is no resurrection for us, if Christ did not rise from the dead, then we are still dead in our sins, we are lost, and how hopeless our faith would be. But he didn't end there. He goes on to say, **“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.”** I Corinthians 15:20-

24.

Because He was raised from the dead, since He conquered death, then one day we too will be raised in glory, our bodies will be resurrected like His! Do you see how Scripture refutes false teaching!

Also, please understand that this doctrine was not all the heresy they taught, no doubt. If they were wrong with this fundamental doctrine, chances are they were also wrong in other areas, had many other “*goofy beliefs*” as they were moving away from Jesus.

Thus, they have destroyed the faith of some as they listen to this garbage. These lies chocked out any leanings towards Christ and kept them in spiritual darkness, spiritual death.

Thus, Paul’s warning is to shun them, avoid their heresy, to not associate yourself with them!

Important words for us to heed in the days we are living in and yet, so many refuse to listen!

VERSE 19

Now if Paul is speaking of the Word of God being the foundation that stands, we do know that is true. In Isaiah 40:8 we are told, “**The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.**”

God’s Word will stand because it is a solid foundation. Cancer eats away, destroys life like false doctrine.

But the Word of God brings forth life, abundant life!

In spite of these false teachers, in the end God will win, these men and their doctrines will be cast in the Lake of Fire!

Our responsibility is to teach people the truths of God from the Word of God so as these false doctrines come blowing in, God's Word, like a cancer fighting drug, will destroy it!

Even though that seems to fit, I don't think that is Paul's point here.

What we see here is that Paul is speaking of believers and unbelievers, and thus, true believers, the church will stand.

Thus, he is tying this foundation to those who believe in the Lord! And that would explain why Paul said that we have this "seal", it is the church that has the seal of God upon it, we are sealed in Christ and the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of this seal!

That is what Paul said in Ephesians 1:13-14, "**In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.**"

Let me ask you this. How do we know we are saved?

Because God has given to us His Spirit not only showing us that we are saved but also, He is the guarantee that the Lord is coming to receive us into glory.

The word "guarantee" speaks of earnest money or a down payment made which will ensure that He is coming back for us!

That word can also speak of an engagement ring, which I like.

The Holy Spirit is our engagement ring given to us by Jesus and as He goes and prepares a mansion for us, a new home for our spirit and soul to dwell in, when He is ready, He will return for His bride, the church and we will be with Him forever!

Folks, you can take that to the bank, it is going to happen!

As one writer put it, “When the Holy Spirit seals believers, He marks them as God’s divine possessions, who from that moment on entirely and eternally belong to Him, The Spirit’s seal declares the transaction of salvation as divinely official and final.”

We are secure in Christ and the Holy Spirit guarantees that what the Lord has begun in us, He will complete, we will be with Him for eternity!

Now, because you are His, and you know that you are as Paul tells us in Romans 8:16, **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,”** then let us live lives apart from iniquity, lives that are holy!

If you are living an immoral life, living with your boyfriend or girlfriend, having intercourse outside of the marriage relationship, if your speech is filthy, if you can lie and cheat saying ***“It is all covered by the blood!”*** are you still a Christian, are you really His?

I don’t believe you are, I don’t believe you ever were, you are deceiving yourself!

Peter admonishes us to, **“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’”** I Peter 1:13-16.

Now our good works don’t save us, but they do show that we are saved. And if you can live an immoral life with no conviction, the evidence is not there that you are saved! You see, it is not just a short-term fall, but it is your life that you are now living in sin that shows you are not saved!

And Jesus said in John 8:34-36, “... **‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.’**”

May we stay focused on the Lord and His Word and we won't have to worry about our faith being overthrown!

As we move into II Timothy 2:20-23 Paul is going to deal with ***THE SANCTIFIED VESSEL!***

VERSES 20-21

Now is Paul speaking of believers – gold and silver; and then carnal believers – wood and clay?

Some see it that way and it could be.

He could be saying that those carnal Christians seem to be receptacles for gossip, false teaching and other kinds of worldly trash and defilements – wood and clay.

But remember what we have been looking at. The false teachers or unbelievers and the believers who have been sealed by God.

So I think that the believers are the gold and silver and the unbelievers that Paul is speaking of are the wood and clay!

And Paul starts out by saying that there is a large house of great importance, we might think of it like a palace.

And within this house are many vessels, or there are many different kinds of people.

And within this house you have believers and unbelievers co-existing, side by side you might say. We do see that in the church, believers and unbelievers.

This is why pastors who are rightly dividing the Word of God are so valuable today, just like back then. They can build people up in the faith. While false teachers with their false doctrine will destroy a person's faith.

Warren Wiersbe put it like this,

A faithful pastor is like a gold or silver vessel that brings honor to Jesus Christ. The head of a house displays his costliest and most beautiful utensils and gets honor from them. I remember the first time I viewed the crown jewels of England in the Tower of London, along with the priceless table vessels and utensils. I was overwhelmed with their glory and beauty.

That is the kind of beauty God gives to his servants who faithfully handle the Word of God.

False teachers are not valuable; they are like wood and clay. They are utensils to dishonor, no matter how popular they may be today. Wood and clay will not survive the test of fire. It is worth noting that the name Timothy comes from two Greek words which together mean "God honoring."

Paul was encouraging Timothy to live up to his name!

- Warren Wiersbe

Now, in II Timothy 2:21 Paul says, "**Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter . . .**" what is his point?

He is telling Timothy and us that the only way he was going to be a vessel of honor, the only way we will be vessels of honor for God is to *cleanse ourselves from the latter*, latter what?

Again, look at the context here. The latter is a reference to the vessels of dishonor and that word "**cleanses**" is a Greek word from which we get our English word "*catharsis*" from.

Paul is saying that the only way to remain vessels of honor is to remove, cleanse the defilement that comes from hanging out with vessels of dishonor in the church.

In other words, false teachers with their false doctrine, those who are living in sin with no remorse, cleanse yourself from them!

VERSES 22-23

How does a Christian *“prepare”* for every good work in the service of God? I guess another way to put it is like this, *“How do you stay clean?”*

The way you stay clean is you don’t play with dirt. And if you are involved in the things of this dirty world, and we all are, then we need a washing of the Word of God in our lives!

And Paul is telling us here that we are to flee these things, flee the dirt, those things that will hurt us!

From the Greek word **“Flee”** we get our English word *“fugitive”* from. And the idea here is that you are on the run so that you can escape capture, you are continually on the run! And doesn’t that speak of the Christian life? You bet it does!

Make no mistake about it, we are continually on the run from sinful passions. And if we don’t take this seriously, we will be taken captive!

So we prepare ourselves for being useful to God by running from certain things and running toward other things.

You see, we are to run after righteousness, faith, love, peace with a pure heart and fellowship with others who are doing the same.

Why is that?

Because you will help keep each other accountable in your walk and spur each other on in service.

We have over ten billion cells in our brain, some have a little less, and the majority of those cells are used for memory. At least I think they are. Just kidding.

You see, everything that goes into our brain we retain, although at times it may be hard to extract.

Thus, what you put in your mind is there.

If you put garbage in, you may not remember it for years and then all of a sudden, there is that garbage coming up again because it has always been there. Don't play with fire because you will get burned!

I like what Paul tells us to do in Philippians 4:8-9, "**Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.**"

Fill your mind with the things of God, don't put anything in there that will hurt you!

And then, in II Timothy 2:23 Paul tells us not to get caught up in foolish arguments, avoid them, walk away from them, don't add fuel to the fire!

They don't cause any good, they only cause trouble, so don't get involved in them. That is just being wise!

So, if you want to be used by God, flee the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

Don't get caught up with foolish disputes.

Draw close to God and manifest the fruit of the Spirit in your life from a pure heart!

As we conclude this chapter and look at II Timothy 2:24-26, Paul shows us *THE GENTLE SERVANT!*

VERSES 24-26

This is just the opposite of what the world teaches.

They teach that you have to fight for what you want, claw your way to the top, step on whoever you have to so you can achieve your goal. Just do whatever it takes!

Jesus tells us that you need to be a servant of all if you want to be great in God's Kingdom!

In Matthew 20:20-28 we see Jesus show His men and us this principle.

We are told, **“Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.’ But Jesus answered and said, ‘You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?’ They said to Him, ‘We are able.’ So He said to them, ‘You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.’ And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your**

servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

We need to be servant leaders, to follow our Lord’s example!

For a pastor, like Timothy, his power must be under control like a wild horse that is broken.

He must be able to teach, rightly dividing the Word of God.

He must be patient with people, allowing them to grow in the Lord.

He must be able to correct those who are in error with a humble spirit, not a haughty one!

It is as Calvin said, “Paul’s meaning is that gentleness should be shown even to those who least deserve it, and even if at first there is no apparent hope of progress, still the challenge must be accepted.”

Now if someone is bound in this demonic deception, they need to be set free.

Listen to what Paul said here. **“... so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”** II Timothy 2:25-26.

The word **“come”** is describing someone who is coming out of a drunken stupor.

Think of it like this. Satan has come and made people drunk with his lies.

Thus, the servant of God is to come and sober them up in a sense, rescue them from the clutches of Satan with the truths of God found in the Word of God.

Paul warned Timothy and us in I Timothy 4:1-3, **“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.”**

I believe we are in that period of time right now. And thus, share the truth in love, don't argue with them, but pray that their eyes would be open to the truth and that they would come to their senses.

As I conclude tonight, may we desire to be vessels of honor, to be used by God for His glory.

May we be available for His use, cleansed from immorality.

May we grow strong in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, rightly dividing the Word of truth and with the love of Christ share it with others!