

2 Timothy 2:8-26

Verse 8:

--***Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,***

--Paul tells Timothy, look to Christ and ***remember*** Him. But how was Timothy to remember Jesus Christ? As suffering and dying on the cross? No. As the reigning and risen Christ!

--As ***the seed of David***, Jesus was the royal Messiah (**2 Sam. 7:12; 1 Chron. 17:11-14; Ps. 89:3-4+34-37; Jer. 23:5-8**), and the rightful recipient of the prophetic promises of an eternal kingdom. *King of the Jews!*

--Again, He is our ultimate and perfect example of passing *through* earthly suffering into eternal glory and reward. *Phil. 2:5-11*

--And Jesus ***was raised from the dead***. . . or out from among the dead, never to return. The disciples were eyewitnesses of a resurrected Jesus Christ and preached a living hope in Him!

****1 Peter 1:3: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,****

--What if we were resurrected to some other type of life? It wouldn't be the same good news.

--***According to my gospel***, as distinct from other gospels.

Verses 9-10:

--***for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.***

--(9) All of the suffering we face should be for Him and in Him. We shouldn't create our own suffering by disobedience or wickedness. ****1 Peter 4:14-16****

--Paul says he suffers as ***an evildoer***, the Greek word meaning *a criminal*, is used only here and in **Lk. 23**, describing the two thieves crucified on either side of Jesus Christ. Like Jesus (**Jn. 18:38; 19:4-6**), Paul was treated as a criminal despite the fact that people were openly declaring him as innocent!

****Acts 26:31-32: and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."****

--Paul could be bound, but the Word of God never could.

****Isaiah 40:8: The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.****

--(10) Paul is in jail, looking at the end of his life, and viewing the history of his past and present suffering. As he does, he is thinking of those unknown to him, but well known to God—the elect!

--Paul was willing to endure in love so that his heavenly family could experience eternal glory in Christ Jesus.

--The assurance of the Word's success gave Paul courage to endure. What if he had not endured? *Think of all this man endured: loss of career, lifestyle, reputation, culture, people, home, comfort, persecution, beatings, injustice, imprisonment, stoning, slander, false teachers, false friends, false gospels, demonic opposition, governmental opposition, religious opposition, etc.!!*

--Paul didn't endure for his own salvation. He was not only interested in his own salvation. Do we live satisfied in our own salvation, unconcerned with the eternal state of others? Like Christ, Paul accepted suffering so that others would obtain salvation!

--Who will go now? Who will be the first? Who will make the path easier for those following? Who will take the heavy oar? Will we suffer for the eternal glory that is in Christ Jesus?

Acts 5:41: So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

Verses 11-13:

--(11) ***This is a faithful saying:*** Most commentators believe this was an ancient hymn. It seems to be written for those on the way to martyrdom.

--***For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.***

--First, we are presented with Christ, who literally lived, died, and lives again. As He lives, so will we! The context here is not the baptism of **Romans 6** but that of literally suffering for the testimony of Jesus Christ and the gospel. The martyr's death is in view.

--This hymn was active theology. It wasn't sung to memorize a creed. Christian martyrs could sing it while being nailed to the cross or tied to a pile of wood about to be set aflame.

--(12) ***If we endure, We shall also reign with Him.***

--Not all Christians are called to be martyrs, but all are called to endure. ***Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (3:12).***

--Christ literally suffered on this earth, and He will literally reign over it. We will share in His reign when the humble servants of this present world become the ruling class of heaven. The first shall be last! (**Rev. 3:21; 5:10; 20:4**). *Jesus had to live here as unrecognized and veiled in glory. We do the same, waiting for His revelation and glorification to come first, and ours rightly follows.*

--***If we deny Him, He also will deny us.***

--Practically and contextually, this line makes sense. As a martyr's hymn, denial would be the present temptation. Denial was what could free Paul from prison or sufferings, and denial of Christ and Christ's message can save us from having to endure as well. Denying our relationship to Jesus is a denial of the connection that binds us to heaven's promises of reigning in glory.

--I honestly don't know what His denial of us means. I only know Jesus Christ never warns idly. There is danger where the Holy Spirit warns of danger.

Matthew 10:32-33: *Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*

--(13) *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*

--Paul is not speaking about unbelief here. He is warning about our lack of loyalty.

--There are three ways commentators interpret this last phrase:

1) As a warning. Paul is saying God will be faithful to His promises of reward and judgment.

2) As a promise. God will be faithful to keep His promises to us no matter how much unfaithfulness we display.

3) (I think this is the correct view) As an encouragement. Though some prove faithless, their faithlessness does not disprove or taint His character, promises, or eternal kingdom. Man's failures are not God's failures.

Verses 14-15:

--(14) *Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.*

--Who are the **them** Paul is referring to? From the rest of the context, it becomes clear Paul is speaking about the faithful men of **2:2** who are teachers.

--Paul gives Timothy three things all good Bible teachers should remember.

1) **Remind them.** . . We all need to be reminded of things that we already know. Verbal reminders are a necessary part of faithful preaching. We don't always need "new" information. We need pertinent truth, not "fresh" material. ***Mt. 4:4***

2) **charging them before the Lord.** . . Faithful Bible teaching is directed *to men* and dictated *before God*. It is His Word, and anyone who stands speaking for Him will give a stern account.

How do we speak about people online Vs. Standing in a room with us?

3) **not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of hearers.** Faithful Bible teaching doesn't involve useless word battles that subvert hearers. It keeps the main thing, the main thing.

--(15) *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

--Right in line with the previous charge, Timothy was to diligently work to stand before the Master approved, having done His will. How? By **rightly dividing the word of truth.**

--The Greek word for **rightly dividing** (*orthotomeo*) literally means *to cut straight*, and is used only here in the NT. It gives us the sense of giving each part of the Word of God its proper place or due respect. Rightly dividing is in contrast with false teachers mentioned before and the profane babbling that follows.

--There is a non-shameful, right way to handle God's Word, and there is a shameful, wrong way to handle God's Word. It is God's Word—not ours! It should retain the meaning and message He gave, not our own spin or interpretation.

2 Peter 1:20-21: 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.

--All faithful teachers should remember they are standing before Him now, because they will all stand before Jesus Christ on that Day.

James 3:1: My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

Verses 16-18:

--(16) But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

--Part of rightly handling God's Word is rejecting nonsense. Sometimes, the proper response is not dispute, but distance. Every crazy, godless bit of babble doesn't deserve an apologetic response. ***Titus 3:9-11***

--Paul says these religious progressives are only progressing in ungodliness!

--(17-18) And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

--False teaching increases in ungodliness, feeding on souls and lives like a rotting gangrene, and in the end destroys faith in God's foundation.

--Paul has no problem naming names of false teachers. Hymenaeus was no doubt the same as was mentioned in **1 Tim 1:19-20**. We don't know anything else about Philetus.

--**their message** was a cancer, in contrast with *God's message* of spiritual life and health. They were teaching that the resurrection was already past—for all believers (Maybe on the basis of **Mt. 27:51-53?**). The resurrection was either denied outright or spiritualized away. ***Beware of those who do the same with the rapture, second coming, millennial reign, hell, etc.***

--Paul's summary of them was that they were now walking outside of the truth, and their false teaching was turning upside down faith in the truth of the resurrection.

Verse 19:

--Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

--Christ Himself (**1 Cor. 3:10-12**) and the teachings of the apostles and prophets (**Eph. 2:20**) are pictured as foundations in the Scripture. I think Paul is using the term generally here to describe the truth of the faith he is encouraging Timothy to hold onto, and others are leaving.

--**Nevertheless. . .** In the face of those leaving, denying, and mishandling the truth, God's foundation stands sure. Their attacks and defections don't change God's truth. His foundation remains no matter what.

--Joshua cursed the gates of Jericho (**Josh. 6:26**), and some 500-600 years later, Hiel of Bethel loses both his sons by laying the foundation and gates (**1 Kings 16:34**). The time, distance, and cultural changes didn't matter. It all happened **according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.**

--Paul says God's foundation has a twofold **seal**. Seals in those days reflected ownership, authenticity, and security.

--The first seal being, **The Lord knows those who are His.**

--The fact that the Lord's knows His sheep was meant to be an encouragement to anyone confused and disturbed by the apostasy of well-known individuals like Phygellus, Hermogenes, Hymenaeus, and Philetus.

--It is the lesson of Peter and Judas repeated in every group of disciples down through the ages. There was a point you couldn't tell the difference between them, but Jesus knew all along who was truly His and who was not.

John 6:70-71+15:16: Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve. . . You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

--The second seal being, **Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.**

--Here is an exhortation for anyone who truly is the Lord's. Those who name the name of Christ are those who are saved (**Acts 2:21; 9:14; Rom. 10:13; 1 Cor. 1:2**).

--To **depart** is to actively withdraw yourself from iniquity. Departing from evil is the proper practical response all who are truly Christ's must follow. These exhortations are repeated throughout Scripture (**Isa. 52:11; Mt. 7:21-23; 2 Cor. 6:17-18**).

--The Scriptures give numerous examples of godly separation such as Levi turning against his brethren, Joshua and Caleb at Kadesh-Barnea, Moses and Korah, etc.

1 John 2:3-6: Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk just as He walked.

--I cannot be sure of my spiritual life with Jesus if I do not keep His commandments and walk as He walked.

Verses 20-21:

--But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

--Paul is using the illustration of **a great house**, not necessarily *the* great Household of God (**Eph. 2:19**), where everyone is saved. This is an illustration of the visible professing church, what is seen and claimed on man's side, which contains life and wheat, as well as ravens and tares, and honorable and dishonorable vessels.

--**Therefore**. . . brings us to Paul's main purpose in the illustration, which is still an exhortation for anyone truly the Lord's, to cleanse themselves by separation from sin to the Master's purposes, which are never sinful.

--Notice the cleansing is **from the latter**. . . dishonorable wood and clay, or those who spread **their message** or are **of this sort (17)**. Paul is exhorting a clear separation from false teaching and teachers that increase in ungodliness and overturn faith. *Sadly, this type of holy separation is rarely heeded in our day of large churches, crowds, conferences, and concerts!*

--Satan is no fool. He knows a separated and clean vessel, a life set apart for God's holy purposes, is useful to the Master.

--Our lives will be used in the Master's purposes either way. We will all be a vessel of His. But I would rather be an honorable vessel prepared for every good work than be a dishonorable vessel like Pharaoh, Ahab, or Judas!

--Remember who was writing this. A man who could remember being a vessel on either side.

Acts 9:15: But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel."

Verse 22:

--Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

--Paul now personalizes this exhortation to holy life.

--**Youthful lusts** are more than sexual. They are fierce, emotional, and immature desires. It is always sad to see non-youths controlled by youthful lusts. We call this a mid-life crisis!

--Youthful ebbs and flows, immaturity, and ups and downs are natural for kids, but unnatural for adults. Mature individuals should not be dominated by desires for sex, friends, fun, and acceptance as teens typically are.

--What should Timothy do instead? **Pursue** godly virtues with godly company!

--Mature Christianity requires negative and positive responses. Fleeing and following. For most of us, I believe the following should typically receive greater emphasis than the fleeing.

--Here are two very practical questions:

1) What are we doing to follow righteousness?

2) Who are we doing it with?

--Don't go at it alone. Seek to run with the foremost of your generation. Are you in fellowship with the godliest people you know? Timothy did so with Paul! Can you keep up?

--What do these people look like? They are following Jesus with **pure** hearts, not perfect hearts. There is more love and sincerity than form and profession. *Peter's confession*

--Seek to make friends with these types of people. You choose your own company. Better to be alone with Jesus than welcomed in the devil's company.

Acts 4:23: *And being let go, they went to their own companions. . .*

Verses 2:23-26:

--(23-24) *But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,*

--Paul again encourages Timothy to avoid certain types of disputes, but also encourages him to bring a certain type of character into any controversy. This is what God's servant will *be* like.

1) **Must not quarrel:** We cannot be contentious or press. We don't fix anyone, Jesus does!

2) **Gentle:** We must not be irritable or gruff. Our gentleness will not always be reciprocated.

3) **Apt to teach:** We must be reasonable and explanatory (**1 Tim. 3:2 + 2 Tim. 2:2**).

4) **Patient:** The Greek word (*anexikakos*) is used only here in the NT and means *enduring of ills* or *forbearing*. We cannot hold resentment with those we correct. *It is a beautiful thing when they come back around and are warmly welcomed!*

--(25-26) *in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their sense and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.*

--Think of the gentle and humble character displayed by Jesus Christ correcting the disciples, the religious leaders, and His general crowd interactions. Think of Paul and his patient, gentle character, correcting various churches, such as those in Galatia, Corinth, or Thessalonica.

--Our patience and gentleness will be helped when we see those we are correcting as ensnared by the devil, captives to his destructive will. I don't correct because someone is in opposition to me, but in opposition to God and themselves.

--The goal of humble correction is repentance and acknowledgment of the truth. Embracing the truth of God frees a person from the will of Satan! There can be no heart change without acknowledging the truth. *Who will love enough to speak the truth!?!*

--This repentance is more than just intellectual understanding of truth, but a moral heart bowing to The Truth! The heart takes God's side against itself and condemns not only the actions but the entire heart and life that brought those actions into being.

--The devil numbs our consciences and confuses our minds like an intoxicating drink. The repentant person is coming back to their senses, to spiritual sobriety. *Prodigal son coming to himself*

King (2 Timothy: To My Son, 154): *"Men don't like traps, but they do like cheese—and there lies the tragedy."*

--Paul knew personally what it was to escape from Satan's will to follow God's will. He was this recovered man! His heart was for others to know the joy of ***the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.***