

2 Timothy 3:1-15

Verse 1:

--***But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:***

--***but know this.*** . . assures Timothy this warning is not a passing situation but a settled reality.

--Paul informs Timothy about the nature of the ***last days***, which, biblically, describes the church age. The times from Pentecost on to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, as is made clear in **Acts 2:17** (speaking of **Joel 2:28**); **Heb. 1:2: *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. . .***; **1 Jn. 2:18: *Little children, it is the last time.*** . .

--Paul cannot *only* be referring to the times immediately before the return of Christ, because he clearly warns Timothy to ***turn away (5)***, assuming they are in the last days.

--The last days will be ***perilous times!*** The Greek word for ***perilous*** (*chalepos*) is only used one other time in **Mt. 8:28**, where Matthew describes the demoniacs as ***exceedingly fierce*** (*chalepos*).

--The Greek word for ***times*** is *Kairos* and not *Chronos*, thereby describing the quality of the times and not just the literal chronological length of time.

--Why is Paul saying this? He is warning Timothy that the charge he has been given will be both hard and necessary.

--The Bible repeatedly makes it clear that the times at the end of Christendom's age will be perilous, not glorious. Christianity does not get the victory. Christ alone prevails. Things are going to get worse, not better. ***2 Thess. 2; 2 Tim. 3:13; 2 Peter 2-3; etc.***

--(Post-millennial theology, which claims the church will "christianize" the entire world and hand it back to Jesus, is totally unbiblical. There isn't a single verse in Scripture that describes the last days as anything other than perilous, hard, deceptive, or like fully-grown evil/tares.)

Luke 18:7-8: *And shall not God avenge His own elect, who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*

--The right Biblical emphasis is so needed because understanding the perilous times we live in will give us the right focus. Paul's charge to Timothy is what we need in these last days.

Faithfulness to the gospel and healthy doctrine, as well as an acceptance of endurance and suffering.

Verses 2-4:

--Here we have a description of the perilous times which will grow worse and worse. Notice, Paul's warnings are much more focused on moral and spiritual dangers rather than bodily harm.

--***Lovers of their own selves:*** (*philautos*) in the Greek, and used only here in NT. It means being fond of oneself, too intent on personal interests. The self-life is our most deep-seated problem.

2 Corinthians 5:15: *And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

*Flavel (Keeping the Heart): "Man, by the apostasy, is become a most disordered and rebellious creature, opposing his Maker, as the *First Cause*, by self-dependence; as the *Chief Good*, by self-love; as the *Highest Lord*, by self-will; and as the *Last End*, by self-seeking. Thus he is quite disordered, and all his actions are irregular. But by regeneration the disordered soul is set right; this great change being, as the Scripture expresses it, the renovation of the soul after the image of God, in which *self-dependence* is removed by faith; *self-love*, by subjection and obedience to the will of God; and *self-seeking* by self-denial. The darkened understanding is illuminated, the refractory will sweetly subdued, the rebellious appetite gradually conquered. Thus the soul which sin had universally depraved, is by grace restored."*

--**Lovers of money:** Greedy for material things and money.

--**Boasters, Proud, Blasphemers:** High thoughts of men cause low thoughts of God.

--**Disobedient to parents:** Is evidence of ungodly homes. God has ordained the family unit and the obedience that is learned within it. What are we told of the child Jesus (**Lk. 2:52**)? What does the Scripture say pleases God (**Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20**)? *Any parent who is not trying to teach their children obedience, who allows their children to run wild, is not a godly parent.*

--The meltdown of family structure leads to disregard for all authority. If you cannot learn loving obedience at home with a father and mother who love you most, why obey anyone else?

--This characteristic proves broken, ungodly family structures. Children are growing up with no concept of loving authority.

--**Unthankful:** Those who ignore good from God and man. They have no use for God or others when everything is going their way, and only blame for God and others when things don't go their way.

--The only other use of the NT Greek word (*acharistos*) used here is:

Luke 6:35: But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.

--**Unholy:** Disregard of anything sacred. No fear of God.

--**Unloving:** Means destitute of natural love. The breakdown of natural societal bonds: husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, friend, teacher, boss, etc. *Abortion; Homosexual marriages; No marriages; Sex trade; etc.*

--**Unforgiving:** Your Bible might say *trucebreakers*. The idea is of someone incapable of being reconciled to a fellow human because of their own sin.

--**Slanderers:** Speak evil and accuse like the devil.

--**Without self-control:** Describes someone powerlessly enslaved to sin. *How many in our culture have become thralls of sexual sin? The prevalence of deviant child pornography and sexual abuse proves this reality.*

--**Brutal:** Savage or untamed. Here we have a warning of bodily violence.

--**Despisers of good:** A contempt for all that is good—to God—and those that would hold those things as true.

--**Traitors:** No true loyalty, save to self and pleasure.

--**Headstrong:** Describes a recklessly plowing forward toward calamity.

--**Haughty:** Describes someone who thinks highly of themselves.

--**Lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God:** It isn't that they love God, some. They love self rather than God. Self-pleasure is the true aim, goal, and motive. *Am I seeking to please myself without displeasing God?*

--It is a cold world out there now, and it is only getting colder. May God, according to His great grace, continually make it warmer with holy love in the fellowship of the saints!

Verse 5:

--***having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!***

--Paul ends with an important point. He is not describing the godless pagans of **Romans 1**, but professed Christianity! These are people who, on some level, claim God's favor and would probably be offended if you called them something other than Christian.

--But how will they prove their religion? They will immediately point to some type of religious **form**. They maintain a superficial and outward appearance of religion. Just enough to keep their consciences lulled to sleep.

--They don't want to live without a **form of godliness**, but they do want to live without a life of godliness! Paul says they have the **form**, but they deny the **power**. Their religious actions have no power to change their selfish character as described in **2-4**.

--We have seen this in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions. In mainline Protestant denominations. And we are seeing it in low church evangelicalism.

Revelation 3:1: These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."

--Does our religious life come from new life, new birth, new creation? Or does our religious life mask the fact that we have no new inner life?

Matthew 7:21-23: 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!'

--May God save us from the self-deception of religious games. God isn't playing religious games. The death of His Son was not play-acting. Christianity is eternally serious to God.

--What happens when we find this type of person? Like Jesus Christ, if they ignore our plea as in **2:24-26**, Paul is clear, ***from such people turn away!***

Verses 6-9:

--(6-7) ***For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.***

--***For of this sort.*** . . Paul is speaking of false teachers who seek to make converts of their outwardly formal but inwardly powerless religion.

--Paul describes them as ***those who creep into households.*** . . which gives us a sense of their devious and deceptive tactics. They are not forward and truthful. Similar language is used in ***Gal. 2:4: false brethren secretly brought in. . . + Jude 4: certain men have crept in unnoticed. . .***

--What do these creepers do? ***And make captives of gullible women.*** . . Your Bible may say *silly women* or *unstable women*. Some translators even translate the word *womanlings*.

--The idea is that these are not godly women. They lack the solidity and virtue of God's true design of womanhood. They are vulnerable prey, and like Satan, these false teachers sidestep Adam to get to Eve.

--Why are these women vulnerable? Because they are ***loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.***

--Sin is on their conscience like a heavy burden, but despite their guilt, they are controlled by their desires, and desperately only want to hear what they want to hear.

--False teachers preach to the crowd, and the crowd eats up what they want to hear. This is not a new phenomena.

****Jeremiah 8:11-12: For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed, nor did they know how to blush.****

--These women want to be intellectual, but not truthful (***Acts 17:21***). They like learning anything but the truth! Having a PHD tell you why your sin is okay makes it seem so much better. ****Why people turn to scholarship, philosophy, science, and psychology over the Bible!****

--(8-9) ***Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.***

--Late Jewish literature marks Jannes and Jambres as the names of the Egyptian magicians who resisted Moses. Paul is not saying these false teachers will use magic, but they will oppose the truth of God's Word as these two opposed Moses. A bold-faced opposition.

--But, just as Jannes and Jambres were exposed, so too the false teachers will be ***disapproved***—tested and found wanting—***concerning the faith.*** ****Ex. 7:11+22; 8:7****

****Exodus 8:18-19: Now the magicians worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God."****

Verses 10-11:

--But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.

--In the face of these terrible times, Paul reminds Timothy of hope in the Lord, and begins with the personal example of his own life and ministry.

--**But you.** . . is in contrast to the false, powerless, disapproved, creepers.

--**have carefully followed.** . . Timothy was familiar with Paul's life and ministry. He knew it and had joined it. There is an unmistakably sad undertone here as well, because there is an acknowledgment of parting. Paul knew their paths, long and faithfully joined, were soon diverging. Timothy had run with Paul step for step, but now he had to remind him about their past journey, because their time together would be over shortly.

--What does Paul want Timothy to remember?

--The language here makes Paul's **my** stand before each statement:

1) **My doctrine:** Paul's gospel and teaching. The deposit he exhorted Timothy to treasure, guard, and pass on to other faithful men!

2) **My manner of life:** Paul practiced what he preached. His changed life witnessed to the reality of Christ's life in him. As should be true of us all!

--Our message has little power without life! ***Acts 20:18-21; 1 Cor. 4:16-17; 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:1-12; 2 Thess. 3:6-12; etc.***

Philippians 3:17: Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

3) **My purpose:** Paul was a slave of Jesus Christ.

Acts 27:23: For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve,

4) **My faith:** In God, as seen practically in his faithfulness.

5) **My longsuffering:** With people. How many give up after just a few criticisms, let alone actual wrongs done to them?

6) **My love:** To God. To the Body of Christ. To Israel. To enemies.

7) **My perseverance:** Endurance through circumstances. How he had seen God work through imprisonment in Philippi, shipwreck in Malta, etc., circumstances that seemed against him, that God worked for good!

8) **My persecutions:** This word seems to describe more of the outer trials, like literally being pursued by mobs, stoning, lack of food, theft, etc. ***2 Cor. 11:21-33***

9) **My afflictions:** Seem to describe more of the inner or emotional challenges such as: the deaths of loved ones, defections, sorrows, false teachings, cares of the churches, etc.

--Timothy would be particularly familiar with the challenges Paul faced **at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra.** . . as those were likely his earliest memories with Paul.

--And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Paul's triumphant declaration here is reminiscent of Joshua's wonderful testimony before the children of Israel at the end of his life in **Joshua 23-24**. Paul was more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus. None of those afflictions separated him from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Verses 12:

--Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

--Paul wants Timothy to know that they were not "special" Christians who faced "special" sufferings. Every Christian will suffer for loyalty to Jesus Christ!

--Every Christian who *wills* (not just desires as a wish). We must make an intentional choice to live godly and not worldly. Why?

1) Satan. The devil cannot ignore a godly Christian. When the divine life is evident in a Christian's tongue, hands, feet, heart, and life, they become a direct and painful reminder of the devil's powerlessness to stop God. He will stop at nothing to stab at God through us.

2) World. The world will hate us because we are not of it. It will tempt us to compromise, but if we resist temptation, we become the fragrance of death and a constant witness against its ways. Seeing in us the end of its ways, the world will do its best to rid itself of us as it did with Jesus.

3) Flesh. Our old man wants to be his own master and serve himself. The old man lives for the throne and hates the cross. That is why Jesus told His disciples that if they wanted to follow Him, they would have to deny themselves and take up their crosses.

--What is Jesus' heart in all of this?

John 17:15: I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

1 Peter 2:21: For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

--Jesus will keep us, deliver us, and crown us no matter what the enemy throws our way. What do all the old stories tell us about godly endurance (Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Daniel, etc.), but that God is good, His Word never fails, and faithfulness is so very much worth it!

Verse 13:

--But evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

--The progressive nature of evil and deceit is part of the reason **12** will be true till the end of the age. Evil men will only grow worse and worse, using deception and being deceived themselves.

--People don't stand still in sin. They progress! *We give in to temptation, only wanting a little bit of sin, but then Satan ensnares us with sin, and we end up enslaved to so much more. How did I ever get here?!*

Verses 14-15:

--(14) *But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,*

--Paul was encouraging Timothy to abide in the truth. Don't advance away from the things you have learned, but advance deeper into them! Doubt will assail us all! Go deeper into God's faithfulness, power, truth, grace, and life.

John 8:31: *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are my disciple indeed."*

--True spiritual learning should increase assurance in God. *Prophets and apostles, Paul and Timothy, came answering questions, not asking them in false humility!*

Augustine (The Confessions): *"My heart is deeply stirred, O Lord, when, in this poor life of mine, the words of thy Holy Scripture strike upon it. This is why the poverty of the human intellect expresses itself in an abundance of language. Inquiry is more loquacious than discovery."*

--Timothy had already tasted and seen that God was good. He had learned truth, lived truth, and had truth revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.

--Who did Timothy learn from? Paul, his grandma Lois, and his mother Eunice. Recognizing a faithful and loving source of truth is important. *Verses a professor, friend, or worse yet, Youtube.*

--(15) *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

--Timothy couldn't remember a time he didn't know the Scriptures. What a blessing!

--The ***Holy Scriptures*** could be translated *sacred writings* and is a specific reference to the Old Testament. Not Jewish traditions, but the bible! (**Gen. 18:19; Ex. 10:2; 12:26-27; 13:14-16; Deut. 4:9-10; 6:7-9; 11:19; 32:46; Isa. 38:19**).

--Why is it such a blessing for children to grow up abiding in the Holy Scriptures? ***Which are able.*** . . Who "are able"? Parents? Paul? Jewish tradition? Priests? No! The Scriptures!

--The Scriptures are able to make us wise to salvation. They are incorruptible seed with their own quality of eternal life!

1 Peter 1:23: *having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*

--The Word of God tells us all we need to know (not all we would like to know) about salvation. Through the Scriptures, the Lord provides all the wisdom we need in this life.

--What more is required? Faith in the Word of God. ***Through faith which is in Christ Jesus.***

Psalm 19:7: *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*

**Dallimore (Spurgeon: A Biography): "Despite, however, the parents' interest in their children's academic progress, they were more concerned about their spiritual welfare.*

*Since the father was so busy, the task of bringing up the family fell largely to the mother. She was an exceptionally devout and gracious woman, and the son James stated, 'She was the starting point of all the greatness and goodness any of us, by the grace of God, have ever enjoyed.' Charles looked back on her with deep affection and gratitude, and he tells of her reading the Scriptures to her children and pleading with them to be concerned about their souls. 'I cannot tell how much I owe of the solemn words of my good mother. . . ' he wrote. 'I remember on one occasion her praying thus, "Now, Lord, if my children go on in their sins, it will not be from ignorance that they perish, and my soul must bear a swift witness against them at the day of judgment if they lay not hold of Christ." That thought of my mother's bearing a swift witness against me pierced my conscience. . . How can I forget when she bowed her knee, and with her arms about my neck, prayed, "Oh, that my son may live before Thee!"'""**