

OUTLINE OF 2 TIMOTHY

I. PAUL'S SALUTATION (2 Tim. 1:1-2).

II. EXAMPLES FOR TIMOTHY'S ENCOURAGEMENT -- WITH EXHORTATIONS (2 Tim. 1:3-18).

Notice the people who are mentioned in this section. Paul, by his faithful ministry, by the message he preached, by his prayers for Timothy, and by his great love for Timothy (see vv. 3-4, 8-10, 11-12), was a great encouragement to Timothy. Also the "forefathers" in the faith were an encouragement. Although Paul did not mention any by name, he must have had in mind Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, the godly kings, the faithful prophets, and many others (1:3). The remembrance of Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice could not help but encourage him (1:5). Our Lord Himself was Timothy's greatest encouragement (vv. 8-10). Finally, there was Onesiphorus (vv. 16-18).

III. ILLUSTRATIONS OF WHAT A SERVANT OF THE LORD IS -- WITH EXHORTATIONS (2 Tim. 2:1-21).

A witness-teacher (2:2), a soldier (2:3-4), an athlete (2:5), a husbandman (2:6), a workman (2:15), and a vessel (2:20-21).

IV. WARNINGS OF DANGERS TO BE AVOIDED IN SERVING THE LORD -- WITH EXHORTATIONS (2 Tim. 2:22-3:17).

Here Paul mentioned a number of dangers along with the safeguards which need to be taken against them, such as, youthful lusts (2:22), foolish questions (2:23), arguments (2:24-26), and the perilous times of the last days (3:1-13).

V. PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY (2 Tim. 4:1-8).

In 1 Timothy Paul gave several charges to Timothy -- some for himself; some that he was to give to others. But in 2 Timothy there is only one charge which Timothy was to give to the people (2:14), and one charge for Timothy himself, to preach the Word.

VI. CONCLUSION (2 Tim. 4:9-22).

Paul was very desirous that Timothy come to him in Rome immediately. See 4:9, 13, 21. Various people are mentioned, as was customary with Paul -- some in a bad way, but most in a good way. It shows how thoughtful he was of others when he was facing the greatest crisis of his life.

-- L. Dwight Custis
Trinity Bible Church
Portland, Oregon
January 1996

The Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Timothy

Introduction and Outline

January 1, 1996

I am sure that you all would be very disappointed with me if I did not begin by asking you to be reading this short epistle while we are studying it together. As I usually do, I timed myself reading it aloud, and not trying to hurry through it, and it took me just a little less than 13 minutes. I don't give you the time so that you can try to beat me; I am sure many of you read faster than I do. No, my purpose is not to encourage you to get through it as fast as you can, but just to let you know that you can read it thoughtfully and prayerfully in less time than you think. We all ought to read more of the Word of God than we do. Reading any book of the Bible over and over will be blessed by the Holy Spirit in helping us to see the message of the book, but also to see how it applies to our lives. The Holy Spirit intended that this epistle would be just as much for you and me as it was originally for Timothy. And so read it like it was written especially for you, and seek to make its teaching a part of your lives.

As you should know by now, this was the last of the Apostle Paul's letters to be included in Scripture. 1 Timothy and Titus were written very nearly at the same time, about 63 A.D., and 2 Timothy was written about a year later. Paul was a free man when he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, but he was back in prison again when he wrote the second time to Timothy. Cf. 1:8, 16; 2:9. He knew that the hour of his death was near. This is clear from chapter 4. But there is no panic in the epistle, no frantic appeal for Timothy to do all that he could to get him set free. Instead, we see that Paul's purpose was to encourage Timothy not to be afraid of the consequences he might face in preaching the Gospel, but to give himself wholeheartedly to the work for which he had been ordained. He didn't promise Timothy an easy time; in fact, he indicated that the way ahead was full of trials. But Timothy was to expect trials. The world of that day stood opposed to the preaching of the Gospel, and teaching that led to godly living. But Paul encouraged Timothy to be faithful regardless of the consequences. In a sense, Paul was "throwing his mantle" upon Timothy. Richard Lenski made this comment about 2 Timothy:

It is Paul's last will and testament for Timothy, his great legacy for the rest of Timothy's life. In the shadow of death Paul lays the work into Timothy's hands so that he might carry it forward as his worthy successor in the field where God shall place this beloved assistant of his (p. 739).

In Paul's first epistle to Timothy the emphasis was upon how Timothy should conduct the work of the Lord; in this last epistle the emphasis is upon how Timothy was to conduct himself as a servant of the Lord. The theme of the epistle is found in chapter 1, verse 8. For Paul to be in trouble actually meant that every servant of the Lord could face the same fate, and so quite naturally everyone must have been apprehensive. The tendency would have been to tone down the message, and to back down on the outreach. But such attitudes were not in the Apostle Paul's blood. He felt that Timothy should be just as diligent and faithful in serving the Lord as he himself had been.

We notice the same idea in 1:12, where Paul was speaking of himself at that moment when it seems that death was near. We have this same word "ashamed" appearing in 2:15. But the emphasis is seen throughout the epistle. And when Paul exhorted Timothy not to be ashamed, he meant that he should courageously continue on in the ministry of the Word regardless of what the consequences might be. Tradition has it that Paul was beheaded on the Ostian Road just outside of Rome (ISBE, IV, 2287). We don't know what the charges were, but anyone who was with Paul was endangering his own life. It is very likely that Luke and Timothy were with Paul when he was killed, and may have witnessed his execution. It is supposed that this was in the late sixties, probably 67 A.D. is a reliable date.

So these were very serious days for the servants of the Lord, and Paul could only anticipate that things would get worse, not better. But he was equally confident of the sovereign power and purposes and faithfulness of God, and so he was like a commander in the army urging his men to press forward and to expect nothing but

ultimate victory.

2 Timothy is an excellent epistle for us today. While most people seem indifferent to the Gospel, and there is a predominance of the live-and-let-live feeling, yet underneath all of the apparent indifference is a strong antagonism toward the Gospel and toward the people of God. So we need encouragement wherever we can get it. And there is no better place to get encouraged than in the Scriptures.

If there is one more emphasis in this epistle that we need to notice in addition to Paul's exhortations that Timothy should not be ashamed, it is what we have in 1:13, 14. See also 2:2, 14-15. And note the warning against false teaching in 2:16-18. See also 2:23-26; 3:10 with its emphasis on Paul's "doctrine." And then see 3:14-17; 4:1-8, as well as Paul's request for the books and parchments in 4:13. It does no good to be courageous unless we are being courageous for the truth.

William Hendriksen has a very simple but accurate four point outline of this epistle in which he recognized the importance of sound doctrine. He divides the epistle by chapters. I want to pass this on to you. Here are his points with the particular verses that he used to support each one:

I. Chapter 1: HOLD ON TO IT -- 1:13.

II. Chapter 2: TEACH IT -- 2:2, 24.

III. Chapter 3: ABIDE IN IT -- 3:14.

IV. Chapter 4: PREACH IT -- 4:1, 2.

If you keep these points in mind, they will help you in getting the message of the epistle.

Let me give you an outline with a little more detail to it, and yet recognizing the points which Dr. Hendriksen has included in his outline.

I. PAUL'S SALUTATION (2 Tim. 1:1-2).

II. EXAMPLES FOR TIMOTHY'S ENCOURAGEMENT -- WITH EXHORTATIONS (2 Tim. 1:3-18).

Notice the people who are mentioned in this section: Paul, by his ministry and by his prayers for Timothy and by his love for Timothy (see vv. 3-4, 11-12); the "forefathers" in the faith -- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, the godly kings and the faithful prophets -- and many others (1:3); Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice; our Lord Himself (vv. 8-10); and Onesiphorus (vv. 16-18).

III. ILLUSTRATIONS OF WHAT A SERVANT OF THE LORD IS -- WITH EXHORTATIONS (2 Tim. 2:1-21).

A witness-teacher (2:2), a soldier (2:3-4), an athlete (2:5), a husbandman (2:6), a workman (2:25), a vessel (2:20-21)..

IV. WARNINGS OF DANGERS TO BE AVOIDED IN SERVING THE LORD -- WITH EXHORTATIONS (2 Tim. 2:22-3:17).

Here Paul mentioned a number of dangers along with the safeguards which need to be taken against them, such as, youthful lusts (2:22), foolish questions (2:23), arguments (2:24-26), the perilous times in which they were living (3:1-13).

V. PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY (2 Tim. 4:1-8).

In 1 Timothy Paul gave several charges to Timothy -- some for himself; some that he was to give to others. But in 2 Timothy there is only one charge -- to Timothy himself: to preach the Word..

VI. CONCLUSION (2 Tim. 4:9-22).

Paul was very desirous that Timothy come to him in Rome immediately. See 4:9, 13, 21. Various people are mentioned, as was customary with Paul -- some in a bad way, but most

2 Timothy -- Introduction and Outline (3)

in a good way. It shows how thoughtful he was of others when he was facing the greatest crisis of his life.

(Conclude the hour, if there is time, by reading the epistle.)

The Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Timothy

2 Timothy 1:1-2

January 8, 1996

I. The Salutation (2 Tim. 1:1-2).

A soldier who is a prisoner of war is still on active duty, and must continue to do everything he possibly can for the safety of his fellow soldiers and to pursue the objectives of the war in which he is involved. He is just as responsible to be involved in his duties (to the extent that he can) as if he were free.

The Apostle Paul was a prisoner of war, a prisoner of Rome, but more accurately, as he said in verse 8 of this chapter, he was His prisoner -- the prisoner of Jesus Christ. This is what he called himself in Eph. 3:1; 4:1, and in Philemon, verses 1 and 9. He also mentioned his "bonds" in 2 Tim. 2:9. This must have been in his mind when in 2:3 he exhorted Timothy to be "a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

1:1 However, he did not speak of himself as a prisoner here in this introduction; nor as a soldier; he spoke of himself a "an apostle of Jesus Christ." This means that he was very conscious of the important place that he had in the ministry, and that, even though he was a prisoner, he was on active duty and unashamed of the place that he had in the work of the Lord. He was "an apostle of Jesus Christ." He loved his work, but this title always was an indication that he was writing with apostolic authority, and it added special importance to what was to follow.

Guy King, a British pastor, who wrote a delightful little commentary on this epistle, said that we probably should feel a little guilty that we are reading Timothy's mail until we make the discovery that this letter was for us, too! Paul was and is an apostle to us as well as to Timothy. The instruction that he gave Timothy is instruction that we need. The work of the Lord has not changed in 2,000 years. And so the requirements for those involved in the work remain the same as well. God's will was directly involved in Paul becoming an apostle. And the message to which Paul devoted his life, "the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus," the Gospel, is the same message which has been committed to us. Perhaps you remember that when Paul began his letter to Titus he declared himself as an apostle of the Gospel which God had "promised before the world began." (Read Titus 1:1-3.) The Gospel from start to finish, from justification to glorification, was the message for which Paul was about to lay down his life.

"The promise of life" -- This is divine life. This is eternal life. And it is only to be found and received in Christ Jesus. And it is a life which remains in Christ because in receiving Christ we receive this life, and when we have this life we have Christ. No person ever delighted more in the Gospel message than the Apostle Paul did. And Paul was overwhelmed with the idea that he had been saved and had been appointed an apostle and had been given this glorious message to proclaim all because it was "the will of God." We might feel that there is a certain similarity to Paul's greetings, but you and I can be sure that they never were ordinary to him. Even in prison he was reveling in all that God had done for him "in Christ Jesus."

1:2 Verse 2 gives us the name of the one who originally received this letter. How Timothy must have treasured this final word from Paul. And how unworthy he must have felt to be called, "my dearly beloved son." We know, of course, that Timothy was not Paul's son in the flesh. As far as we know, Paul never married. But he was Paul's son in the Lord! Timothy had heard the Gospel from his grandmother and from his mother, as we learn from 1:5, but evidently it was under Paul's ministry that Timothy had actually come to know the Lord. But Paul was not taking the glory for himself; he was rejoicing in the way the Lord had used him in Timothy's life. There is always a special bond between a father and a son in the Lord, or a mother and a daughter in the Lord. Sometimes it is a father and a daughter, or a mother and a son. "Dearly beloved" is the translation of one word in the Greek: ἀγαπητός. This is the word that God the Father used when at the baptism of Christ He spoke from heaven, and said, "This is my **beloved** Son, in whom I am well

pleased" (Matt. 3:17). It would take too much time to point out all of the times this word is found in the NT, but it was a word which was used frequently by the people of God in the first century. It is often translated, beloved. The trouble that the early Christians had in the world, facing hostile Jews and unbelieving Gentiles, drew them closer to each other and bound them together in a strong bond of love. This is how Paul felt about Timothy.

And then we have Paul's usual prayer for those to whom he was writing, but to "grace" and "peace" which he used with churches, he added "mercy" in writing to Timothy and Titus. The only other time these three words appear together is in 2 John 3 where John was addressing "the elect lady and her children" (v. 1), and he said this:

Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love (2 John 3).

Remember that these words of greeting were actually a prayer. Charles Erdman said that "these three together appear to include all that Paul could wish for Timothy in this world and in the next" (p. 88). We all need the enabling grace of God to live for the Lord each day. We need God's mercy as we face the trials of our lives, both big and small. And we need the peace of God, as Paul told the Philippian believers, to guard our "hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). It is probably the universal desire of every human being that we all desire peace. But so often it is a case where people claim to have "peace, peace" when there is no peace. There is only one place where any of us can find true and lasting and satisfying peace, and that is from God "through Christ Jesus." Since "grace, mercy, and peace" come "from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord," the supply is inexhaustible. There is enough for you, and for me, and for every child of God who has ever lived, and for all who are yet to be born into the family of God.

Let me emphasize again that the frequency with which we find prayers like this in Paul's epistles ought to remind us to pray this prayer for each other more than we do. There is not a day that any of us lives but what we need the grace of God, the mercy of God, and the peace of God. And when we have asked the Lord for these, there is hardly anything else that we can possibly need. And let us remember also that all three, grace, mercy, and peace, were purchased for us when our blessed Lord died on the Cross. All three are Gospel words. And we can say that we have in these words an equation for the Christian life: grace + mercy = peace. How thankful we should be that the Lord has anticipated our every need, and made full provision for us.

The Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Timothy

2 Timothy 1:3-18

January 9, 1996

II. Examples for Timothy's Encouragement -- with Exhortations (2 Tim. 1:3-18).

There never has been, and there never will be, a child of God who is not in need of constant encouragement. Each day brings its own peculiar trials, but a new day usually has some trials which have carried over from the previous day, or days. God is known as "the God of all comfort," or encouragement. He encourages us with His presence in our lives. He encourages us with His Word. The daily ministry of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter, is a ministry of encouragement. Our Lord Jesus is our Advocate, our Comforter, Who ever lives to make intercession for us. But it is also a part of our fellowship with each other that we are to be fellow-encouragers in our daily walk and in the service which we render unto God. Paul was an encourager of the churches, but he was also an encourager of his fellow-servants in the Lord. And it is with Timothy's encouragement in mind that Paul began this second epistle to Timothy.

Some make verses 3 through 5 a part of his salutation, or greeting, in this epistle, but I have chosen to make it the beginning of his message to Timothy since it flows very naturally into the rest of the chapter. What could be more encouraging than to know that the Apostle Paul was thankful for you, and that you were in his prayers "day and night"? This is how Paul began.

1:3 You can see from this verse that Paul was not just thankful for Timothy, but he was thankful to God that God had burdened him to pray for Timothy "without ceasing." The love that Paul had for Timothy, and his faithfulness in praying for Timothy, were both gifts from God. It is easy for us to take credit for our prayers for others, but we need to remember that it is God Who moves us to pray, Who burdens us to pray, Who keeps us faithful in prayer. And so to Him we must give our thanks. Those three words, "I thank God," ought to be constantly in our thoughts and on our lips. Everything that we do that is pleasing to God gives us the opportunity to praise the Lord.

"Whom I serve from my forefathers" -- This statement means several things. It means that he served the same God Whom his forefathers served. It means that he was saved with the same salvation that they had. But it also means that it was, in part, because of their faithfulness to the Lord that the Gospel finally reached him. Paul felt a deep sense of gratitude in his heart toward men and women like Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and on down the line. Much of Paul's encouragement came from them. And it should be the same with us. They were Paul's forefathers in the flesh as well as in the faith. With us it is only in the faith, but that is the important part.

"With pure conscience" -- When God created us, He gave us a conscience. Every person has a conscience. We might call it a *moral regulator*. A person makes a most serious mistake when he violates his conscience. It is a child's conscience which makes him want to hide the fact that he has done something wrong. It is possible for a person to violate his conscience until, as the Scriptures say, it is "seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:2). This means that such a person lives like he has no conscience. And then he is like the person whom Paul described in Eph. 4:19:

Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Thayer, in his Lexicon, describes conscience in this way: It is that which distinguishes "*between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other*" (p. 602).

A Christian knows that he needs to feed his conscience on the Word of God. Fausset, in the Jamieson, Fausset,

and Brown commentary, said, "Conscience without the Word of God is a lamp in which the candle is apt to go out, or, by its glimmering haze, mislead" (VI, 502). An example of a corrupted conscience is found in John 16:1-2:

- 1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.
- 2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

The Apostle Paul had been like that before he was saved. But when he was saved he became a new creation in Christ, and his conscience started functioning as it never had functioned before. So it is possible for the consciences of people to be restored and sharpened, but only when they experience the transforming power of Jesus Christ through the Gospel.

When a person becomes a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God (2 Tim. 3:4), his conscience has been defiled. When a man can take guns and a knife into the KOIN Tower in downtown Portland, and start shooting people, his conscience isn't working anymore.

On the other hand, listen to what Paul said about his conscience in Acts 24:16:

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

When Paul said that he served God "with a pure conscience," he meant that he was serving the same God in the same way that his forefathers had served the Lord, not following conscience alone, but following a conscience enlightened by the Word of God.

We could spend much more time talking about the conscience, but I hope we have seen enough to make us aware of how important the conscience is. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9.

With two expressions Paul emphasized how much he prayed for Timothy: (1) "Without ceasing"; (2) "Night and day." But notice, if you will, that Paul thanked God that he had prayed as constantly as he had. We need to remember that the One Who burdens us to pray, and the One Who makes and keeps us faithful in prayer, is God. And so, whatever God may see fit to accomplish in answer to our prayers, let us remember that the glory all goes to our great God and heavenly Father. No Christian will ever be faithful in prayer apart from the enabling grace of God. Sometimes when I have prayed for certain people for many years, I am inclined to feel that they are not going to be saved, or they are not going to be changed (whatever the circumstances might be), and so I am inclined to quit praying for them. And sometimes I do. But invariably I feel guilty, and soon return to praying for them again.

So we can't take the glory for the praying we do. We must thank God that we pray, and that we pray faithfully for those for whom we pray. This is a very important point to notice in this epistle.

Wherever there has been great blessing, there has been much prayer. In our day with our infatuation with entertainment and programs, very little attention is given to prayer. And yet it is through prayer that we seek and obtain the blessing of the Lord. And we can see from this epistle that to the end of his life Paul continued to seek the Lord, and to bring before Him, not only his own needs, but those like Timothy who could only prosper in the work of the Lord as the Lord saw fit to bless him. When we realize how weak and needy we are, and how impossible it is to do the work of the Lord if we don't have His blessing, then we, too, will pray like the Apostle Paul did.

1:4 Paul longed to see Timothy. He yearned to be with him. He remembered how Timothy had wept at their last parting. And it evidently had been hard for the Apostle also. But he knew that he would be "filled

with joy” when Timothy came to see him.

But what was it that had endeared Timothy in such a great way to the Apostle Paul? Verse 5 will tell us.

1:5 It was his “unfeigned faith.” What is this? It is genuine faith. It was not a hypocritical faith, but Paul was assured not only that Timothy knew the Lord, but also he could see in his life the reality of his faith. Timothy was a man who was really trusting the Lord day by day.

I have pointed out before that Paul did not wait for some crisis to arrive before he prayed, but we often see that when he saw the blessing of the Lord in a person’s life, he became even more fervent and faithful in his prayers. Timothy walked by faith. And he had been encouraged in such a life by the faith of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. How thankful Timothy could be not only that he had the Apostle Paul as his example, but both his grandmother and his mother had been used in his life to teach him what it means to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

January 15, 1996

The idea of an “unfeigned faith,” a genuine faith, suggests the possibility of a feigned faith. Sometimes a person might intentionally pretend to be a Christian when in fact he is not, but it is possible for a person to have a feigned faith without really being aware of it. This often happens with children who are raised in a Christian home and who have gone to church all of their lives. They mentally accept the Gospel, but there has been no transformation of their hearts and lives. Or people can have a feigned faith who have responded to an invitation to receive Christ, but who have never experienced the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing them to true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is a work of God in our hearts; it is not something we cause to happen by going forward in a service, or signing a card, or by trying to live a Christian life. Salvation is not the same as church membership. It is not the result of being baptized, nor of observing any other so-called ordinances or sacraments which some churches teach. Salvation is never a reward for anything that we do. It is a work of God, and when God works in the hearts of people, they are changed, and changed permanently. They are not perfect, but changed—changed into a child of the living God. Paul had seen in Timothy’s life the evidence that his professed faith in Christ was real! He was “persuaded” of this. This means that he firmly believed, was absolutely confident, that Timothy really knew the Lord as his Savior.

This is too of an important subject for us to be in doubt about it. We are taught in Scripture, as Paul exhorted the Corinthian believers in 2 Cor. 13:5a, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” The Apostle Peter told the believers to whom he was writing his second epistle,

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall (2 Pet. 1:10).

To do this we need to test our love for the Lord, our desire to be obedient to His Word, our deliverance from sin’s power, our love for the people of God. Make sure that your faith is “unfeigned.”

1:6 In this verse we come to the first of Paul’s many exhortations for Timothy which are given in this epistle.

“Wherefore” ties together verses 5 and 6. Paul meant that in view of the fact that Timothy’s faith was real, he was to “stir up the gift of God, which is in” him “by the putting on of” Paul’s “hands.” Notice that the basic requirement of any servant of the Lord is that he must be saved! What a difference this would mean today if it were always required of men before they are ordained to the Gospel ministry. But beyond this, it is necessary for men in the ministry to be constantly stirring up “the gift” which has been given to them by God for the work they are to do. In Timothy’s case it was when Paul laid his hands upon Timothy. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:14 and 1:18.

Today it is customary for an ordaining council to lay hands upon a man being ordained to the ministry, but they do not confer gifts on the candidate. It is in recognition that the one being ordained has truly been called by God into the ministry and that he possesses the ability to carry out the duties of that office. But with the apostles it was different. Paul evidently was used by God to confer on Timothy the gift that he needed to become a servant of the Lord. But, that gift needed to be stirred up! What did Paul mean?

The verb is ἀναζωπυρεῖν. It describes what we all have done when we stir up the coals of a fire in a fireplace and throw more wood on those coals to get the fire burning again. A person can be very gifted, but he needs to stir up whatever gifts he has. His desire to please God needs to be constantly stirred up. He needs to strengthen his faith. He needs greater love for people. And this is done through prayer, through reading and studying and meditation on the Word of God. It is done through self-examination to make sure that the Spirit of God is not being grieved in anyway. A minister's personal fellowship with the Lord is that which determines his usefulness. This stirring up is a daily responsibility not only for pastors and teachers of the Word, but for every child of God. But a congregation is not going to be stirred up if their minister is not stirred up. So you can see the great responsibility which rests on men in the ministry.

I have in my library a book which has been a great blessing to me in connection with my own ministry. It was written by Charles Bridges, an Englishman, who was born in 1794 and died in 1869. His book is called, The Christian Ministry. It is a book which every pastor needs to read and re-read. I would hate to be without it because books like this one are not being written today.

Mr. Bridges cites ten reasons why ministers are ineffective in the ministry, and they all have to do with his character. Let me list them for you.

- 1) Lack of entire devotedness of heart to the work of the ministry.
- 2) Conformity to the world.
- 3) The fear of man.
- 4) The lack of self-denial.
- 5) The spirit of covetousness.
- 6) Neglect of retirement -- time alone with God.
- 7) Spiritual pride.
- 8) The absence of defect of personal religion.
- 9) The defect of family religion -- which he defined as the failure to connect his family with his work.
- 10) Lack of faith.

Note what Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12-16.

All of this is important for the minister, but remember that the minister, or pastor, is not only to be careful about his life in order to please God and to have God's blessing, but he is to be an example of what the Lord's people should be.

A pastor has an awesome responsibility, and no pastor is really sufficient for what he is called upon to do. But we can be thankful that we can say what Paul said, "Our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament" (2 Cor. 3:5b-6a). It is only by the grace and mercy and peace of God that we can even begin to measure up to what God wants us to be. And all that we are and have needs to be daily stirred up! People today are concerned about physical fitness. Pastors and the Lord's people need to be concerned about spiritual fitness. The fires of renewal need to be constantly burning in our hearts. Paul wanted Timothy to remember this. Nothing was more important for Timothy, and it has been the great priority in Paul's life.

1:7 Here Paul mentioned what needs to be stirred up, and actually the gifts with which he has endowed His servants, and also His people.

“God hath not given us the spirit of fear.” It probably was the case with Timothy that he was timid by nature, shy and fearful. We probably would not have considered Timothy to have been a strong candidate for the ministry. Regretfully, it has become the practice of some evangelical seminaries and mission societies, to give their applicants a “psychological test” to determine their fitness for the work of the Lord. Timothy would probably have flunked such a test. Paul was concerned about what Timothy was by nature, but he was not discouraged by it. He knew that the Lord was sufficient for any weakness that Timothy had. We are all inclined to be fearful by nature. You will remember that the list that I gave you from Mr. Bridges included the fear of man! Paul told Timothy that he did not get that from God. Timothy already had it. It was a part of his nature -- as it is with all of us. It was one of the results of sin.

What has God given us? Three things in this list.

The first: “Power.” The Greek is *δυνάμειος*. This power is identified with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Cf. Acts 1:8. Fear causes us to be in bondage. Cf. Rom. 8:15,

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

You will remember that when Peter and John were released from prison according to what we learn in Acts 4, they went immediately to meet with the church, and they had a prayer meeting. They had been told not to speak or teach any more in the name of the Jesus. This is part of their prayer:

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus (Acts 4:29-30).

This is how God answered:

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

Every child of God is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. And it is the Holy Spirit who empowers us to be bold and courageous in spite of the threats which men may make against us.

The second gift is “love.”

This, too, causes us to go back to the Holy Spirit. “The fruit of the Spirit is love...” (Gal. 5:22). We are to serve God because we love Him. We are to serve the people of God because we love them. And we are to seek to win the people of the world to faith in Christ because we have a love for them. I have been speaking on Sunday nights from 1 Cor. 13, and we have seen in the first three verses how indispensable love is. (Quote.) It is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts which renders our living and our service not only pleasing to the Lord, but fruitful and effective under His blessing.

The third gift is “a sound mind.”

The Greek word which Paul used is *σωφρονισμόυ*. This is the only time that this word is used in the NT, but we have the adverb which is formed from the same root in Tit. 2:12, where it is translated “soberly.” Although grammarians differ a great deal as to the meaning of this word, “a sound mind” seems to be as good a translation as we can get. The Bible has much to say about the thinking of an unbeliever as compared with the thinking of a believer. Or to state it another way, the wisdom of the world as compared with the wisdom of

God. It is only when our minds are renewed that we think straight about things. And God has given us that ability. It is a discipline which the world lacks. The mind of an unregenerate person is incapable of right thinking. A believer, while he does not know all of the truth of God, yet he has been given the capacity to see where he has been wrong, and where God is right. And it is this ability of a "sound mind" that enables us to preach the Gospel to the world, trusting the Lord to use us to awaken people to the realization that they are headed for eternal destruction because their thinking is wrong. So with "power" and "love" we out of transformed minds are to minister to the Lord's people as well as to the people of the world. They believe a lie; we, by the grace of God, have the truth.

In speaking of what God has given us, Guy King spoke of "the Gift" (spelling it with a capital G). He did this because he believed (and I agree) that the power, love, and sound mind are ours in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Nothing that we have as Christians is ever given to us independently of one or all of the Members of the Godhead. Salvation itself is always in a Person: our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, in view of all of this, Paul gave Timothy a second exhortation in verse 8.

1:8 In the light of what Paul had just written, here Paul told Timothy what he must not be, followed by what he should do. (Read the verse.) Notice that this exhortation is twofold: it has a negative side and a positive side.

Timothy was not to be ashamed of "the testimony of our Lord." In verse 12 Paul said that he was not ashamed. In verse 16 he said that Onesiphorus was not ashamed. And so Timothy was not to be ashamed. This is the same word that Paul used in Rom. 1:16, but let me read the adjoining verses to that familiar verse:

13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:13-17).

Do we have any reason to be ashamed of the Gospel? Is it not the message that everyone needs to hear? Is it possible for any person to be wrong because they believe the Gospel? Can a person believe the Gospel and not be saved? That is, does the Gospel raise false hopes? Is anything else needed to make a person fully acceptable to God? Is there any other solution to the guilt of sin, or to the power of sin?

Paul's point is that God has given us all of the resources that we need to proclaim the message, and we have the only message of salvation that there is, a message which everyone needs to hear. So what is there for us to be ashamed of "the testimony of our Lord"? The Gospel is a testimony about our Lord. We can't preach the Gospel without preaching Christ. It has to do with Who He is, what He did, dying on the Cross, and why. To be ashamed of the Gospel is to be ashamed of Christ, and the very thought of such a thing is repulsive to any true child of God. People are not looking for such a message. And most people will not accept it when we first go to them. But this is our privilege and our task, and God has given us all of the spiritual resources through the Holy Spirit to make us effective and fruitful in this ministry for His glory.

It follows that if we are not ashamed of the Gospel, and not ashamed of Christ, then we are not going to be ashamed to identify ourselves with one like Paul who was imprisoned because he was doing the very thing that God wanted him to do. In those days people who stood by Paul placed themselves under the danger of being

imprisoned like Paul was, and possibly of being condemned to death like he was.

Oh, that the Lord would give us the courage and boldness which the people of God had in the first century as they refused to count their lives dear to themselves, but wanted, as Paul did, to fulfill the ministry which they had received from the Lord. We have the same ministry today, and we need to be just as zealous and just as faithful as they were.

Perhaps as we have been thinking about being ashamed of our Lord and the Gospel, you have been reminded of that old hymn which we often sing, but perhaps not often enough! The third verse goes like this:

Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend on Whom my hopes of heaven depend!

No; when I blush be this my shame, that I no more revere His Name.

The next verse says this:

Ashamed of Jesus! yes, I may, when I've no guilt to wash away;

No tear to wipe, no good to crave, no fears to quell, no soul to save.

Guy King suggests that we all pray the prayer that is found in the last verse:

Till then, nor is my boasting vain, till then I boast a Savior slain;

And O, may this my glory be, that Christ is no ashamed of me.

We all would do well to think about those words of the Lord Jesus where He said,

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels (Mark 8:38).

Two other verses which apply are Matt. 10:32, 33:

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

These verses suggest that one reason some people are ashamed of Christ and the Gospel is because they do not know the Savior. This brings us back to what we considering a short time ago about feigned and unfeigned faith.

In verse 9 we see why the testimony about our Lord is nothing to be ashamed of. But before we get to that, let us notice the positive side of this exhortation which we have been considering.

January 16, 1996

The positive side is: "But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." Timothy would not necessarily suffer as the Apostle Paul did, nor to the same extent, but "afflictions" await all who live for the Lord and who proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice what Paul wrote in 2:3 and 3:12. (Read.)

Note also Peter's word in 1 Pet. 4:12-14:

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

So what God has given us, “power, and...love, and...a sound mind,” not only equip us to proclaim the Gospel fearlessly, but also prepare us for the troubles which usually accompany the ministry of the Word whether it be from a pulpit, or in personal conversation with others. That is why Paul said to Timothy here that he was to be a partaker “of the afflictions of the gospel **according to the power of God.**”

William Hendriksen wrote:

Timothy must be willing to *bear ill treatment* (cf. II Tim. 3:2) *along with* Paul. He must be willing to take his share of persecution; and this not in his own power, which would be impossible, but “according to (the) power of God.” That power is infinite. It will enable a person to endure even unto death” (p. 232).

At this point Paul went on to explain why we have no reason to be ashamed of “the testimony of our Lord. But the Apostle also is pointing out the resources we have in God which will enable us not to be ashamed of the Gospel. This takes us to verse 9.

January 22, 1996

1:9 It is interesting to see how often the Apostle Paul in his writings refers to the Gospel and to the great truths which make up the Gospel of the grace of God. Here we have an illustration. Charles Simeon made an interesting comment on this fact in a sermon he preached on this text. This is how he began:

The deepest truths of our religion were familiar to the mind of the Apostle Paul. *He introduced them, on all occasions, as the most forcible motives to obedience* (italics mine). Amongst us their practical efficacy is denied, and their importance questioned. The very maintaining of them is not unfrequently deemed a crime; but we must not conceal the truth, because some reprobate it as error. We will state it cautiously; and it will commend itself (Vol. 19, pp. 6-7).

In a footnote Simeon said this: “The consideration of God’s electing love is here urged as a motive to induce Timothy to constancy and perseverance in the path of duty (Op. cit., p. 6).

The very nature of our salvation is described in the words with which this verse begins, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.”

Here we are told that salvation is a work of God, and that what God has done in Paul and Timothy’s hearts (and in the hearts of all believers) that Paul can speak of it as a finished work (although there was still much to be done in both of their hearts -- and in ours). This work is called salvation because that is what it is: a deliverance, a rescue. We are saved from the judgment of God. We are saved from the penalty of our sins. We are saved from the power of our sins. And we are guaranteed that ultimately we will be saved from sin forever! God has done this. He has done it through the sacrifice of Christ Who paid in full the penalty of our sins, and won for us full acceptance with God.

But since we were dead in our sins and incapable of coming to God, and unwilling as well as incapable, God has called us to Himself. This is an effectual call. And He of necessity must give us life before we can hear His call, and come to Him.

I am not speaking now of the call we issue when we preach the Gospel and call people to come to Christ. That is a general call, a call which we are authorized to issue by the Word of God. What Paul was writing about here is a call that comes from God Himself to His elect, an effective call, which always results in the called person coming to Christ. It is not an audible call, but it is a call which we are conscious of in our hearts, a compelling call, an irresistible call, a call which brings us to Christ and to God.

This call is referred to often in the Scriptures. As Paul began the book of Romans he spoke of the Roman believers as “the called of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:6). In the next verse (7) he spoke of them as “called to be saints.” We find the same statement in 1 Corinthians 1:2. We all are familiar with Romans 8:28, and should be just as familiar with the two verses which follow:

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are **the called according to his purpose.**

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, **them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified:** and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Rom. 8:28-30).

In 1 Cor. 1:9 we learn that we have been “called into the fellowship of” God’s “Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” And at the end of 1 Corinthians 1 we have that classic passage on the calling of the people of God. Let me read it to you and remind you of what Paul said, and notice in these verses that Paul links the call with God’s choice of those who are being saved:

26 For ye see **your calling**, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, **are called:**

27 **But God hath chosen** the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; **and God hath chosen** the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, **hath God chosen**, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:26-31).

When Paul wrote to the Galatian churches he said this about them in Gal. 1:6-7:

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from **him that called you** into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

And then a few verses later he said this about himself to indicate how he was changed from being an unregenerate Jew into a true child of God:

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, **and called me by his grace** (Gal. 1:15).

Let me give you one more passage: 2 Thess. 2:13, 14:

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14 **Whereunto he called you by our gospel**, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So it is very clear that we have been saved because God in His grace sovereignly called us to Himself. But, returning to 2 Tim. 1:9, please notice that the calling we have received is “an holy calling.”

This means that God has called us to holiness; He has called us to be holy. And this sets the direction of our lives as Christians. It is away from sin in every form, and toward all that would make us like God, and like our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the object of our election unto salvation. Paul stated that very clearly in Eph. 1:4:

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him.

Paul said in 1 Thess. 4:7, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." The Apostle Peter, quoting Lev. 11:44, said that we are to be holy because the Lord is holy. All of this means that God's purpose in our salvation is to make us like Himself, to make us like the Lord Jesus Christ. That work begins the moment we receive eternal life, and it continues progressively throughout our lives, and finally will be completed when we see the Lord as He is. Cf. 1 John 3:2.

This does not automatically happen. It comes about as we surrender ourselves to God, to do His will by living in obedience to His Word. The Members of the Godhead are all involved in our sanctification, but we definitely have responsibilities which we, of course, can only fulfill by the grace of God. The writer of the book of Hebrews said,

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).

In the NKJV and the NASB the word "follow" is translated pursue. This is why Jerry Bridges said in his book, The Pursuit of Holiness, that "holiness is not an option." It is the very purpose of our salvation. We had this in our study of Titus. Let me read for you Titus 2:11-15. (Read.) Those are verses we all should memorize and repeat frequently so that we will never forget why we have been saved.

But so we will add to our understanding of this wonderful salvation we have, Paul continued in our text (2 Tim. 1:9) by saying that all of this salvation was "not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Now remember that Paul was speaking by revelation from God. He would not have known this if it had not been revealed to him, and we would not have known it either if it were not written down in our Bibles.

Our salvation, our calling, our election, was "not according to our works."

One reason that it is "not according to our works" is because it was impossible for us to do anything that we "good" in God's sight before we were saved. We are told in Rom. 3:12b that "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Therefore, they could not have been the reason God saved us. None of us was capable of doing anything that God would call good. Neither could it have been that God foresaw that we would do good works because our good works are the fruit of our salvation, not the cause. Cf. Eph. 2:8-10. If our works have contributed in any way to our salvation, then we would have reason to boast before God, and some of the glory of our salvation would belong to us. And so as one writer has said, "God has repeatedly and expressly declared, that" our works "never operated in any respect or degree as inducements with him to confer upon us his converting grace (Simeon, Charles, Vol. 19, p. 8).

Instead of our salvation being a reward for what we have done, it was "according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

When we talk about God's purpose, we are talking about God's will -- God's sovereign will. We read in Rom. 8:28 that we are "the called according to his purpose." As difficult as it may be for us to believe it, God determined who would be saved before there was any creation. Eph. 1:4 teaches us that we were "chosen" in Christ "before the foundation of the world." Most of us have been taught that our salvation was our decision, that we determine our own eternal destiny. But that is not true. God is working out His eternal plan which was decided upon by the Members of the Godhead in eternity past.

And, as our verse declares, it was by "grace." Grace means two things. It means that God does not give us what we deserve; that is judgment, eternal judgment, eternal separation from God. Instead, His grace has made it possible for Him to give us what we never could or would deserve. And every Christian knows in his heart

that this is true. Cf. Tit. 3:5-7:

- 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;
- 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;
- 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Be sure to notice that our salvation was given to us **“in Christ Jesus before the world began.”** We have no salvation without Christ, and never would have had any salvation without Him. This leads us to verse 10.

1:10 The past purpose of God has now been “made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

The advent of Jesus, the Messiah, Who came from heaven as the Son of Mary, to be our Savior, makes it very clear that salvation never could have been a reward for human works. The fact that God sent His Son was a clear message for all who have ears to hear, that this was the only way that anyone could be saved. We all need to understand this about the appearing of our Lord on earth as a Man. His coming showed the hopelessness of man, on the one hand, and the love and grace of God, on the other hand. And His coming was not an afterthought; it had been planned from before the foundation of the world.

What did our Savior do?

He has “abolished death.” The Greek word translated “abolished” is the same word which Paul used in 1 Cor. 15:26 where we read, “The last enemy that **shall be destroyed** is death.” It is also used in Heb. 2:14 where we read of our Lord “that through death he **might destroy** him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” In both of these latter verses the verb is not used to describe something which has already taken place, but something that is certain to take place in the future. Death is not yet “destroyed” because people still die. The devil is not yet destroyed because he still is very much alive, still very powerful, still seeking to doom and damn the souls of men. So we must take our text in the same way. Death is not yet abolished, but death was conquered by our Lord at the Cross by His death and resurrection. And there is no question but that spiritual death and eternal death have already been conquered for those who are saved. But even saints still die. However, eventually physical death will also be abolished. Like our glorification, death is spoken of as already abolished because the death and resurrection of our Lord have made it certain that it finally will be abolished. It is the last enemy to be destroyed, according to 1 Cor. 15:26.

Death -- physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death -- are all God’s judgment upon sin. It was by one man that sin entered into the world. Cf. Rom. 5:12. And sin reigns! “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” And Paul concluded Romans 5 by saying in verse 21,

That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

So our Lord has assured that death will be abolished, and He did this by His own death and resurrection. He conquered death. He has not only put away our sin, but He has put away the effects of sin. And instead, he has “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” -- as verse 10 concludes. “Life and immortality” are the opposite of death. A better translation would be, it seems, “life and incorruption.” Hendriksen says that the two words together added up to an incorruptible life, or an imperishable life, that is, a life that will never decay, nor will it ever end. It is life eternal.

This has been brought to light through the Gospel. Robertson suggests that our Lord by His death has turned the light on! It is through the Gospel that we can see how sin and its consequences have been defeated, and we also see what God has given in place of death. Cf. John 3:16, and notice the contrast between perishing and

having eternal life. Also Rom. 6:23.

Speaking of bringing things to light, cf. 2 Cor. 4:6:

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

To quote Charles Simeon again:

What obligations we owe to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him we owe both the light that has discovered these things, and the salvation that renders this discovery so delightful. To what purpose would the eternity of rewards and punishments be made known to us, if a way to avoid the one, and obtain the other, had not been revealed? It would have only been to "torment us before our time." In truth, there are none more miserable than they, who being assured of the immortality of the soul, are ignorant of the way in which they may obtain acceptance with God. Glad would they be, if there were no future judgment. Glad would they be, if, when the time of their departure from the body arrives, they could be annihilated altogether. What is it that makes the very mention of death so painful to the generality of men? It is the dread of an hereafter, which offers to their view no prospect but of "wrath and fiery indignation to consume them." But to you who believe in Christ, and look to him for the remission of your sins, all this gloom has passed away, and "glory and honour and immortality" present themselves to your view as your assured portion! O! Bless that adorable Saviour, who by his own death has abolished death, and by his own ascension to glory has shewn to you the felicity that awaits you. Only hold fast your confidence firm unto the end, and his crown shall be your crown, his kingdom your kingdom, his glory your glory, for ever and ever" (Op. cit., pp. 12, 13).

January 29, 1996

1:11 So far the Apostle Paul had given Timothy two exhortations. Many more were to follow. The first is in verse 6. (Read.) The second is in verse 8. (Read.) Paul exhorted Timothy not to be ashamed of "the testimony of our Lord," i.e., about our Lord. Nor was Timothy to be ashamed of Paul, the Lord's prisoner. But he was to move ahead in his own ministry not frightened nor discouraged by the afflictions which would come upon him because of the Gospel. And then Paul gave a brief statement as to what the Gospel is. See vv. 9, 10. Then, coming to verse 11, Paul said, "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles."

The "whereunto" points back to the Gospel. "Appointed" is the common Greek verb for putting or placing. It is the verb τίθημι. But the verb carries with it here the idea of a divine appointment, or an ordination to a particular task. Paul did not put himself in the ministry. No person has the right to do that. Appointing men to the ministry is God's work. Paul had received this divine appointment as a sacred trust, a work which made him "a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." Cf. 1 Tim. 2:7. (Read.)

Not many expositors try to distinguish between these three titles which Paul gave to himself here, as describing the ministry to which he had been appointed. But distinctions there must be. As "a preacher" he was responsible to proclaim this message, to make it known wherever he was. It does not suggest speaking before many people. A servant of the Lord is preaching if he is only telling one other person at a time, the message of the Gospel. Paul's position as "an apostle" indicated his authority. As we see in his epistles where he used this title, it was not only his God-given ministry to proclaim the message, but it was his ministry to defend the message of the Gospel against every attempt to corrupt it. This was the purpose Paul had in many of his epistles. He was also "a teacher of the Gentiles."

There were two main reason why Paul was so hated by the unbelieving Jews. One was, as we see in 2 Tim. 2:8, 9, because he proclaimed a risen, living Lord Jesus Christ. The other was that he was preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. "A teacher" goes beyond preaching although it is impossible to preach without doing some teaching. But a teacher of the Word is one who explains in detail the meaning of the Gospel. Or we can say that his ministry includes all of the Word of God. But in this very brief verse Paul made it clear that his ministry was limited to the Gospel message. But it is probably wrong to use the word limited in connection with the Gospel because it is a message of such depth and of such vast proportions that it actually encompasses in one way or another all that God has given us in His revealed Word.

Paul did not make this statement about himself in a proud and boastful manner, but with the deepest humility and with the greatest thanksgiving to God. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:11-16. Even during those days when he was facing the conclusion of his ministry, he continued to be overwhelmed that God would confer upon him such a high place of honor, actually the *highest* place of honor!

Now it is important to notice in this connection what Paul did not say. He did not consider himself to be a political activist. He did not feel that he was to try to harmonize the thinking of that day with what God had revealed in the Word, as many of our so-called "Christian psychologists" and "Christian psychiatrists" are seeking to do today. He did not consider himself to be an entertainer, nor an administrator of churches. The glory of his ministry was that he had been ordained by God as a messenger of the Word of God. And he knew that this was a message of such great and eternal importance that it was worth all of the suffering that he might be called upon to endure.

In this day when it is often hard to distinguish between some preachers and Hollywood celebrities, it is hard for many to understand the dedication, the commitment, of the Apostle Paul to the message which he summarized in 1 Cor. 2:2,

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.
And let me remind you of what Paul said to the Ephesian elders when he met with them at Miletus when he was on his way to Jerusalem:

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:22-24).

Oh, that the Lord would give us the same kind of courage today. Perhaps seeing again how Paul felt about his ministry, we will be encouraged to be more bold and more faithful in telling others about the Savior. And keep in mind that this was meant to be an encouragement to Timothy who would soon be left without the Apostle Paul to carry on his own ministry.

1:12 "For the which cause" dips back into the preceding verses for its meaning. Paul meant that it was because of the tremendous importance of the Gospel, and also because of the commission he had received from the Lord to make Christ known, he was willing to suffer, and he was not ashamed of any tribulation that he might experience as a preacher of the Gospel. But there was also another reason, as we learn from the latter part of this verse. The reason begins with the Lord, "for I know whom I have believed."

When I was a child growing up in Tacoma, Washington, my parents took all of us to the Temple Baptist Church. My Dad was the head deacon in that church for, if I remember correctly, more than thirty years. We

had a pastor who started the church who loved 2 Tim. 1:12. And he used to point out to us that Paul did not say, "I know in whom I have believed," but that he said, "I know WHOM I have believed." Paul believed many things about Jesus Christ, and he had believed in Jesus Christ, but his relationship was much more personal than that. He knew the Lord Himself. He was personally acquainted with the Savior. His faith was not in a Person Who lived on earth before He was saved, and all of his knowledge of Christ was like his knowledge of Abraham, or his knowledge of David, or any of the other great men and women of God in OT times. Paul was personally acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ. And so he said that one more reason he was so dedicated to preaching the Gospel in addition to the importance of the message, and in addition to the commission he had received to proclaim the message, was that he was personally acquainted with the Lord Jesus. Paul walked daily with the Lord. The Lord's presence was just as real to Paul as that of any of his co-workers. "I know WHOM" which was the equivalent of saying, "I know HIM."

This was not a relationship which was reserved for Paul because he was an apostle. This is a statement which we all should be able to make. I have had the privilege of sitting under many godly men during my life. One was a man who came to Dallas Seminary each year to teach Bible. He was a member of what they called their visiting faculty. And he said one time that one reason he knew that the Lord was alive was because he had had fellowship with Him that very morning. That might sound like mysticism to some people, but I am sure that many have experienced such an intimate relationship with the Lord that the Lord has been as real to them as any member of their family.

You remember that Paul was not saved when the Lord was on earth, so he did not have the same opportunity to know the Lord personally like the twelve did. But Paul had a relationship with the Lord which may only have been equaled by Peter and John.

There are many people who know about the Lord Jesus Christ, who cannot say, "I know Him." And there are many who have really believed in the Lord Jesus who cannot really speak of much of a personal relationship with Him. It was because Paul knew the Lord and loved the Lord and so completely trusted the Lord that he not only was willing to suffer for the Gospel's sake, but he counted it an honor to suffer for such a Savior.

Now it was because Paul could say, "I know whom I have believed," that he could also say, "and am persuaded..." It is one thing to know the doctrine of the eternal security of all believers, but it is a much more powerful thing to say that "since I know the Lord, I am fully convinced that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." It is the Person of our Lord which gives us the doctrine of eternal security. It is because "He is able" that we can rest in our salvation. It is because He holds us in His hands, that we can never be lost. It is because He is praying for us that we are saved to the uttermost. You see, the truth comes to life when we relate all doctrine to the three blessed Members of the Godhead.

I heard of a young Christian who was having trouble with his faith, and he told an older, more experienced Christian that he was having trouble believing. The older Christian said to him, "*Who* is it that you have trouble believing?" So often we are more concerned about what we believe instead of Whom we believe. Our problem so often is that we fail to remember the Lord.

Paul used the word "persuaded." It means to be absolutely convinced, or to be fully assured, that the Lord is able to keep what we have committed to Him "against that day." This is very similar to what Paul said about Abraham in Rom. 4:20, 21,

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Paul had had the Gospel committed to him by God. What had Paul committed to Christ?

Paul had committed himself to Christ. And he firmly believed that whatever the Lord might have to do to bring him to heaven and to glory, He was able to guard that which Paul had deposited with Him until that day when Paul would be forever with the Lord. Paul did not believe that his salvation depended upon his faithfulness to the Lord, but he believed that his salvation depended upon the Lord's faithfulness to him. Paul did not say that he was able; he said the Christ was able. Our salvation is fully insured and insured because we have a powerful Savior.

Remember Jude's wonderful benediction in which his heart went out to the Lord in worship? You will find it in Jude 24-25:

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

HE IS ABLE! This is the glory of our salvation. This is why we need never be ashamed of it. And this is why it is worth suffer for. And it is wonderful to see that Paul, right on the threshold of heaven, was just as convinced as he ever had been, that his salvation was secured by an all-powerful Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. What a testimony this was to Timothy, and what encouragement! It is that which lifts us above even the fear of death.

Then, in the light of these glorious words, we have Paul's next exhortation to Timothy in verses 13, 14.

1:13 Having said all that he, Paul, had said about his personal relationship with Christ, Paul went on to exhort Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound words." "Hold fast" means that Timothy was not to depart from the teaching of the Apostle Paul, truth which Timothy knew so well, and truth, much of which had been committed to writing by the Apostle Paul in his epistles. It would all be completed eventually when the NT was finished. But statements like this make us know that the doctrine of Scripture was already taking shape, and was well known by Paul and Timothy through Paul. For Paul to hold it fast indicated that the teaching he had received would not change. It was the truth of God. "The form" suggests an outline. Matthew Henry suggests that there may have even been at that time a catechism, a summary of the Christian faith, or what we would call a doctrinal statement. "Sound words" are healthy words, as opposed to the sick words of false teachers. People who hear "sound words" will become and remain spiritually healthy -- and there is no other way that they could continue to grow in grace. Paul's teaching was the pattern which Timothy was to follow since he said, "which ye have heard of me." Cf. 2 Tim. 2:2.

No teacher has the right to depart from the teaching of the Scriptures. And we do not need to feel that we need to prepare people for the Word of God by giving them a lot of extras. We need to believe that the early church believed, and we need to preach what they preached.

And, when you think of it, this is quite an amazing statement. The Gospel has been preached throughout the world since Paul wrote these words. It has gone where people speak different languages and where they observe different ways of life. It has gone where many different religions have gone before. And all of this generation after generation. Even with all of the changes that take place within a culture, the message of the servants of the Lord is always to remain the same. And it is the responsibility of the church and its leaders in every nation and in every age to make sure that the truths of the Word of God are proclaimed as it has been revealed in Scripture. The church today needs to be reminded of this. It is not only wrong to change from what the early Christians did, but it is dangerous. There is a terrible price people will have to pay who have in any way ignored or altered what God has given us in His Word.

But notice another thing that Paul said in this verse which is much needed today.

When you put the first part of this verse together with the last part, you can see that the holding fast is not to be done in a harsh, arrogant, critical way, but “in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” Cf. a similar statement in 1 Tim. 1:14 which Paul made with regard to his own salvation.

When Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, he spoke of “speaking the truth in love,” and he indicated that this is the way the church would be edified. Paul told the Corinthian church that “the letter killeth” (2 Cor. 3:6). Let me read the passage in which that statement is found:

- 1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?
- 2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:
- 3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.
- 4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:
- 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;
- 6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit:
for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (2 Cor. 3:1-6).

The word “spirit” which appears twice in verse 6 ought to be capitalized because it refers to the Holy Spirit.

The word is to be taught “in faith.” That is, we are to trust the Lord to use His Word. It is our responsibility to proclaim the Word, but we have to depend upon the Lord as to how and where and with whom His Word is going to take root and bear fruit unto eternal life. Our confidence is not to be in our ability to present the truth, nor in our knowledge of the truth, but our confidence for blessing is to be in the Lord.

At the same time the word is to be taught “in...love.” This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote what he did to the Ephesian church, the statement I referred to a moment ago. Paul explained what this means in the last three verses of chapter 2 here in 2 Timothy. (Read 2 Tim. 2:24-26.) We teach because we love the Lord. We teach because we love His Word. We teach because this is what He wants us to do. And we teach because we have a loving concern for people and want to see them saved.

This is an unbeatable combination: the teaching of the Word of God “in faith and love.” With all of our emphasis on methods today, no one can improve on this! This kind of a ministry will always see the blessing of the Lord. But there are three words which I have not yet explained. They are the words, “in Christ Jesus.” Regarding this verse, Geoffrey Wilson said this in his commentary on it, speaking of the manner in which we are to teach the Word:

But this must be done in that spirit of faith and love, *which is the fruit of living in union with Christ Jesus* (italics mine). For without the enlivening presence of faith and love, even the purest teaching is bound to degenerate into a dead orthodoxy (The Pastoral Epistles, p. 134).

How wonderful it would be if we were always careful to do the work of the Lord in the way the Lord wants it to be done. Instead we think that we are wiser than He is. Consequently, we can have a lot of activity with very little or no lasting fruit. Let us make sure that we take this verse to heart. It is just as important for us today as it was for Timothy almost two thousand years ago! God gives His blessing when we do His work in His way for His glory. Paul made that very clear for Timothy. It is for our guidance today.

1:14 In verse 12 Paul had assured Timothy (and us) that God is able to guard the deposit which we have

committed to Him. Now in this verse he tells Timothy that he needs to guard the deposit which God has committed unto him. What it is “good thing” which Paul had in mind? It has to be the Gospel. It has to be the Word of God. Paul was responsible to God for the way he proclaimed the truth, and Timothy was just as responsible to be faithful as Paul was. In every age and in every nation where the Gospel has gone, the truth has Charles Erdman called its false friends and its open enemies. As Paul told the Ephesian elders, the truth would be attacked from the outside, but also from the inside. And as Paul told Timothy in the last chapter of this epistle, the time would come when people would not endure sound doctrine. They would look for teachers who would tell them what they want to hear instead of the truth which they need to hear. But whatever pressures Timothy might face from people, he was to guard the deposit of truth which had been given to him.

But, again, will you notice, as we saw in the preceding verse, Timothy would not be able to do this in his own strength. The battle would be far too severe for his meager strength. Where could he find the strength and the wisdom and the perseverance that he would need? He would find it only in “the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us.”

So verse 13 tells us that it is in and from the Lord Jesus Christ that we will find the faith and love that we need to minister the Word with power and blessing, and now here in verse 14 we see that it is only the Holy Spirit who can keep us faithful, and make us fruitful, in the ministry of the Word of God. There is no reason for any of us to fail when you consider the resources that we have in God our Father, in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit. God has given us a task that is far greater than we can accomplish. Our Lord told His disciples that without Him they could do nothing. Cf. John 15:5. The same is true for us. We are not waging a war with people. People are involved in it against us, to be sure. But our conflict is with angelic and demonic principalities and powers, and for this we need to be armed with the Word of God, and we need to move forward on our knees. This is what Paul made clear in Ephesians 6. Our chief weapon is the Word of God, but let us remember that it is “the sword of the Spirit.” We use the Word, and through prayer and humility before God, we earnestly seek His blessing. How thankful we should be that God, in giving us the most glorious work in all the world, has also through His Son and through His Holy Spirit, has given us all of the resources we will ever need to be faithful and to be fruitful in serving Him.

Timothy could not help but be encouraged, not only by the life of the Apostle Paul, but to have Paul point out to him that Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit would guide and bless Timothy just as he had blessed the Apostle Paul in so many ways.

As we leave these two verses (13 and 14), let us be careful to see that we have a great responsibility before God, and yet at the same time God has placed all that is in Christ and all that is in the Holy Spirit as the means by which we can fulfill the work that the Lord has given us to do.

February 5, 1996

1:15 As we come to these last four verses of chapter 1, this is a good time to remind ourselves that in this first chapter Paul was giving Timothy encouragement for the work that the Lord had called him to do. He had spoken of his own prayers for Timothy, of Timothy’s grandmother and mother who were believers, of the Gospel, of his own ministry. And Paul had also given Timothy several exhortations which were intended for his encouragement. He was to “stir up the gift of God” in him (v. 7). He was not to be ashamed of the Gospel nor of Paul His prisoner (v. 9). And he was to “hold fast the form of sound words.”

In these last four verses of the chapter Paul mentioned two men who had turned away from him: Phygellus and Hermogenes. But he also mentioned a third man who had stood by him: Onesiphorus. Timothy was familiar with all three men as Paul indicated in verse 15 when he said, “This thou knowest,” and at the end of verse 18

where he said, “thou knowest very well.” From these expression we can see that Timothy was familiar with what Phygellus and Hermogenes had done, but he may not have known them. A change in the word for know in verse 18 suggests that he had been personally acquainted with Onesiphorus, and had seen what Onesiphorus had done. What we need to ask, is this: Did Paul mean for these references to be an encouragement to Timothy? If so, how could they be?

I believe they fall into the pattern Paul had in chapter 1. It is good for us to know as we engage in the work of the Lord that not everyone is going to accept us; not everyone is going to want to work with us. We must be prepared to face opposition from within as well as from without. I don’t know if there is any significance to the fact that Paul mentioned two men against him and one for him, as though there might be more against us than for us, but it surely indicates that one man for us can be of more positive help than two (or more) who are not on our side. It is good that we should be prepared to find both kinds as we serve the Lord. It will strengthen us when we find the bad, and it will cause us to be thankful when we find helpers.

It seems that Phygellus and Hermogenes were a part of a larger group in Asia where Timothy was serving in Ephesus. What the issue was in which they had “turned away from” Paul, we do not know. Guy King suggested that Paul may have been arrested in that part of the world, and that there were hardly any who stood with him. It is possible that Paul was talking about two men whom he had led to Christ, with whom he had enjoyed much personal fellowship, and therefore, their refusal to stand by him and help him was a great disappointment to him. And yet, as our Lord said,

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also (John 15:20).

Paul’s experience was like that of his Lord. When the Lord was arrested “all the disciples forsook Him, and fled” (Matt. 26:56). So Paul would have known that the Lord knew exactly what he, Paul, was going through, because He, the Lord, had been tested in the same way. Cf. Heb. 4:14-16. The Lord knew what it was like to be forsaken by those who had been the closest to Him in His earthly ministry.

But let us go on a happier theme. It has to do with Onesiphorus.

1:16 Notice that Paul did not say here just “Onesiphorus,” but “the house of Onesiphorus.” The same is true in 4:19 where we read about “the household of Onesiphorus.” The wording in both verses is the same. This has led many to believe that Onesiphorus was dead, and that Paul was expressing concern for his family. But it seems that Paul would have mentioned his death if that were the case. Others feel that Onesiphorus may have been arrested because of his association with the Apostle Paul, and that his family in Ephesus (if that is where he lived) had not been able to learn anything about where he was, or what condition he was in. The fact that Paul said in the next verse that Onesiphorus had had to search diligently to find the Apostle Paul, is an indication that the whereabouts of prisoners was not easy to find out.

The truth is that we don’t know the details about Onesiphorus. We do know that because of the faithfulness of Onesiphorus in standing with the Apostle Paul, the Apostle Paul knew that he could pray for mercy upon them with the assurance that it was the will of God.

One of the verses in our memory work for this week is Prov. 20:7,

The just man walketh in his integrity: **his children are blessed after him.**

David said this in Ps. 37:25-26:

25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

26 He is ever merciful, and lendeth; **and his seed is blessed.**

Paul knew, because it is taught in the Word, that when a man lives a godly life, as Onesiphorus did, blessings would come to his family from the Lord.

Paul said that Onesiphorus had not just helped him once or twice, but that he had “oft refreshed” him. This word lit. means that Onesiphorus had helped him to breathe easier. He had had the kind of a ministry with Paul that a person would have who finds a friend exhausted and thirsty, and gives him a drink of refreshing water. Onesiphorus had “refreshed” Paul not only physically, but spiritually as well -- many times! He was “not ashamed” of Paul’s “chain.”

1:17 When Onesiphorus got to Rome, he had a difficult time finding Paul. As I mentioned earlier, the whereabouts of prisoners was not always easy to find, and even when you would find out where they were, access was often denied. Why Onesiphorus had a difficult time finding Paul, is another thing that we cannot explain, but whatever the obstacles were, Paul could say that he “found me.” Onesiphorus was not discouraged by the difficulty, but he persevered until he was successful.

1:18 Some who take the references to the “house” of Onesiphorus, or to his “household,” take it from this verse that Onesiphorus was dead, and that this justifies prayers for the dead. That is not necessarily the case. In fact, if this verse justifies prayers for the dead, it is the only verse which does. My own conviction is that Onesiphorus was still alive, and that Paul was simply expressing his prayer that the Lord would bless Onesiphorus in the day when Onesiphorus stood before the Lord. This is not different from the prayer we pray when we say to someone, “The Lord bless you.” Paul knew that he could never repay Onesiphorus for all of the things that he had done for him. Onesiphorus’ kindness was not just something that he did in Rome, but Paul reminded Timothy here that Onesiphorus had done the same for him in Ephesus. He was a man who was given to good works.

“Thou knowest very well” could be translated, thou knowest better than I. Timothy knew of ways in which Onesiphorus had helped Paul which Paul himself did not know. He had probably told Paul what Onesiphorus had done for him. This is another good point in Onesiphorus’ favor. He did not do his good works to be seen even by the person for whom he did the work. It was enough for him that the Lord knew. Cf. the Lord’s words in Matt. 6:1-4:

- 1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.
- 2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
- 3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:
- 4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

It seems that Paul mentioned these three men, Phygellus, Hermogenes, and Onesiphorus, to let Timothy know that while he could expect his Phygelluses, and his Hermogeneses, the Lord would always have His Onesiphoruses to stand with him. And that is always true. And when it is impossible for anyone to stand with us, it will always be true, as Paul would say in 4:16-18, that the Lord would stand by him, as he did with Paul. He has promised that He will never leave us, nor forsake us.

David had this to say about the help the Lord gives:

When my father and my mother forsake me; then the Lord will take me up (Psa. 27:10).

Let us all take encouragement from what Paul told Timothy. Be thankful if you can remember a godly father and/or a godly mother, and godly grandparents, who would rejoice in your fellowship with the Lord.

Remember how essential the message is which we have to proclaim. Remember men like Paul and Timothy who were faithful in their generation. Thank God for people who have prayed for you, and for those who still do. And be thankful for those dear friends you have now whom the Lord uses for your spiritual refreshment. It may be a husband, a wife, or your children, and even your grandchildren. Possibly it is your church family -- those who write letters, or give you words of encouragement.

But regardless of how many you have and whoever they are, let us always remember the Lord. He stands by us, and all of the blessings which come to us through people, come to us through HIM. And so to Him belongs all of the glory!

The Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Timothy

2 Timothy 2:1-21

February 13, 1996

III. Illustrations of What a Servant of the Lord Is -- With Exhortations (2 Tim. 2:1-21).

The first part of this section (2 Tim. 2:1-13) was taught by Pastor Gary Custis on February 13, 20, and 27. The divisions he used were:

- 1) Paul's Word to Timothy (2 Tim. 2:1-7)
- 2) Paul as an Example (2 Tim. 2:8-10).
- 3) Paul's Word for Us (2 Tim. 2:11-13).

March 4, 1996

Beginning with 2:14 we find Paul, as Matthew Henry said long ago, directing Timothy concerning his work. Here he exhorted Timothy concerning the importance of continuing to remind the believers of what he had just been writing as well as warning them about the dangers of false teaching. The best defense against false teaching is a thorough knowledge of the truth, and the truth is impressed upon our minds and hearts by constant repetition.

2:14 "Of these things put them in remembrance" -- What things? The best answer to that is to consider the context, and it is most likely that Paul was speaking of the immediate context. But there are those who think that Paul was referring to everything that he had said from the beginning of the epistle.

Look back to verse 6 of chapter 1 you will see that this is what Paul did to Timothy: he repeated what they had talked about before. A true servant of the Lord will not hesitate to repeat himself. This does not mean that we are to repeat sermons which our people have heard before, or that we should teach books of the Bible which we have taught before, but not do fresh study. That will only bring reproach on our ministries. But the repetition of truths and the repeated application of the truth to the lives of the Lord's people, is a very essential part of the ministry.

Our Lord repeated Himself during His ministry here on earth, and we know that there never was a greater teacher than He was. Cf. Matt. 16:21. Then see Matt. 17:22, 23. Then go to Matt. 20:17-19. Then see what is recorded in Matt. 26:1, 2.

There are other examples of the Lord using repetition.

We also have the ministry of the Holy Spirit to consider when we speak of repeating ourselves in ministering to others. Cf. John 14:26.

Peter realized the importance of this. Cf. 2 Pet. 1:12-15. See also 2 Pet. 3:1, 2. Cf. Jude 5.

Actually, the constant reading of the Bible emphasizes the importance of repetition. Many of us have been reading the Bible every year for a long time, and yet every time we read it we understand things which we have not understood before, or we are reminded of truth that we have forgotten.

Let me read you a section from a sermon which John Calvin preached long ago where he was emphasizing the importance of repetition:

When any person comes to the sermon, let it not be to hear something that tickles the ears, or that gives pleasure; but let it be to make progress in the fear of God, and in humility, and to excite to prayer, and to confirm him in patience. If we have heard an exhortation to-day, and if

to-morrow it is repeated to us, let us not think that this is superfluous, let us not be annoyed at it; for every person who carefully examines this subject will find it to be highly necessary for him to be reminded of the lesson which he had learned, that he may practise it well. If, therefore, God refreshes our memory with it, he has conferred on us a great favour. That is what we have to remark on this passage, when Paul says, 'Remind them of these things.' For undoubtedly he intended to prevent what we frequently meet with, when it is said, "We have heard this before. Is not that a very common remark? Where is the little child that does not know it?" Such things are said by those who wish to be fed with useless questions. But here the Holy Spirit desires that what is useful should be brought forward every day, because we have not sufficiently understood it, and because it must be put in practice (Calvin's Commentaries, Vol. XXI, p. 220, footnote).

The "them" to whom Paul was referring in this verse must have been primarily the elders in Ephesus, but the application is to all who teach the Word of God. And Paul's expression, "before the Lord," shows how serious it is to depart from the simple teaching of the Word of God. Paul was not minimizing the importance of a thorough examination of the Word of God, but he was condemning those who would use words here and there to build their own set of doctrines. The ministry of some men is purely argumentative. They like to show off what they pretend to know about Scripture, and that is their purpose rather than seeking to build up the people of God in their understanding of Scripture. Instead, people are subverted.

The word that Paul used which is translated "subverting" is the Greek verb from which we get our English word catastrophe. It speaks of a demolition, or an overturning of the faith of the people of God. Cf. 2:23. See also 1 Tim. 1:3, 4; 4:1-5; 6:3-5.

Some teachers like to introduce things which are not in Scripture. Others put their own interpretation on the words of Scripture. Believers and unbelievers alike are only going to find profit in the true interpretation of Scripture. Those who teach in our churches are responsible to God to teach the Word, all of the Word, and nothing but the Word. To do anything else is to invite the judgment of God. Any teaching which does not produce what is good in the sight of God is to be condemned for that very reason. Some people are always looking for something behind what is written, but they ignore the plain meaning of the Word of God.

Paul followed this warning with a very important exhortation for Timothy, but also for all of the Lord's people.

2:15 In chapter 4 Paul mentioned that the time would come when men would look for teachers who would give them what they wanted to hear, not what they needed to hear -- which is the Word of God. Paul here reminded Timothy that in his teaching he was not to aim at what would please people, but at that which was pleasing to God. In every part of the ministry, but especially in the teaching of the Word, we need to seek to be "approved unto God."

Cf. 1 Thess. 2:4 where the word "allowed" is the same word we have here in 2 Tim. 2:15, and which is translated "approved." "Put in trust" is a translation of the familiar word for believing, πιστεύω.

We need to remember what James wrote concerning teachers:

My brethren, be not many masters [teachers], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation (James 3:1).

It is a solemn work that teachers of the Word have to do. And we are to "study," meaning to be diligent, not to have the approval of men, but to have the approval of God.

Here we have another description of a servant of the Lord. Before we have seen that he is a witness-teacher, a

soldier, an athlete, a husbandman. Here he is “a workman.”

Illus: Those of you who have not heard my illustration of what a paper-hanger said to me when he found out I was a preacher, will enjoy what he said.

But we are workmen. It is a tragedy that the ministry has dipped to such a low level in the eyes of the world that preaching is considered to be a task which requires no work. Timothy was to show himself to be “a workman.” He was to put forth every effort to acquaint himself with the Word of God so that in his handling of it he would have no need to be ashamed. But what is the emphasis here? He certainly would not want to be put to shame before the people to whom he ministers. But that is not the primary point in this verse. The main thing that Paul was talking about was that Timothy would show himself “approved unto God.” Therefore, it would seem that when Paul went on to speak of not being ashamed he was thinking especially about not being ashamed before God! Not being ashamed when he would stand before the Lord to be judged for his work.

So a minister of the Word must never forget that his primary objective in ministering is to please God, to have God’s approval, to labor in the Word so that he will not be ashamed when he stands before the Lord. Such a ministry, of course, is only possible through the enabling grace of God. God enables us to be faithful, and then will reward us as though it were all our doing. Calvin translated the expression, “that needeth not to be ashamed,” as meaning, “that doth not blush” (XXI, 221).

What Paul was charging Timothy with here was *a life-long, diligent, prayerful study of the Word of God*. Since Solomon said that “much study is a weariness of the flesh” (Ecc. 12:12), the servant of the Lord must be prepared to spend time to the point of physical weariness in his desire to understand the Scriptures as thoroughly and as clearly as he can. It is a rewarding work, but we cannot ignore the fact that it is work.

The word “workman” is the same word in the Greek that the Lord used in Luke 10:2 when He said this:

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but **the labourers** are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth **labourers** into his harvest.

And this word means to work for wages, not the wages that a church may pay their pastor, but the wages that the Lord will give when the time comes for us to stand in judgment before him.

We all need to remember Paul’s words in 2 Cor. 5:9, 10:

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

“Good or bad” to whom? To God!

“Rightly dividing the word of truth” -- “The word of truth” is the Bible. “Rightly dividing” means to handle it correctly and directly (Thayer, p. 453).

2:16 However, after saying what he has said about the importance of knowing the truth, and teaching the truth, Paul felt it necessary to repeat for Timothy’s benefit what he had said in his first epistle. Cf. 1 Tim. 6:20, 21 -- the last two verses of the epistle.

Sometimes those who start out teaching the Word become more concerned about how they are saying what they are saying instead of putting the emphasis upon what they are saying, and the purpose of their ministry. “Profane and vain babblings” are talk that are more inclined to impress than to edify. Many kinds of speech fall into this category. It can not only be speech inclined to display one’s gifts, but it can be a mixture of divine truth and human wisdom. “Profane” can mean worldly, or even heathenish. What a tragedy it is when human

philosophy and human psychology are mixed together so that people have difficulty knowing what is really the truth of God, and what is not. The servant of the Lord is to “shun,” stand far off from, any attempt at the mere display of his knowledge, and focus entirely upon the truth of the Word so as to please God first, and to be a spiritual blessing to the people who hear him secondly. And it is not just because “profane and vain babblings” are worthless, but, as Paul went on to show Timothy in verse 17, such teaching is dangerous. It increases unto “more ungodliness.” “Profane and vain babblings” are ungodly in themselves because they do not come from God. They are not the Word of God; they are the words of men that men would like to pass off as the Word of God, but they are not the Word. And so instead of drawing people closer to the Lord, they are led astray. Bad seed has been planted, and it usually produces a wild crop. Calvin described such teaching as a whirlpool which sucks people in. They are pulled farther and farther down. In Paul’s expression he indicated that they would “increase,” or advance, but all of their progress was away from God, not toward God. Hendriksen said that Paul was using a bit of irony here, and he was.

2:17 And so all teaching has its effects. Good teaching, under the blessing of God, has good effects. It glorifies God. It builds up the people of God. It is the means the Holy Spirit uses to draw people to Christ.

But bad teaching also has its effects. Here Paul said that “vain and profane babblings ... eat as doth a canker.” Commentators differ as to whether the word “canker” means gangrene or cancer. The NIV says “gangrene.” The NASB says “gangrene” also, but lists “cancer” in the margin. The NKJV uses “cancer.” The Greek word is γάγγραινα from which we get our word gangrene. Thayer in his Greek Lexicon (p. 107) describes it this way:

A disease by which any part of the body suffering from inflammation becomes so corrupted that, unless a remedy be seasonably applied, the evil continually spreads, attacks other parts, and at last eats away the bones” -- which, of course, would result in death.

The point the Apostle Paul was making was that false teaching, or even teaching which primarily is designed to win the applause of men, is deadly. It may have just a little influence in the beginning, but if not corrected, will grow and ultimately lead to the eternal death of the people who are affected by it.

And then Paul mentioned by name Hymenaeus and Philetus as examples of the kind of teachers he was talking about. I believe that here we have the authority of Scripture to mention by name those men, or women, who are guilty of spreading false teaching. Paul mentioned Hymenaeus in 1 Timothy, but not with Philetus; it was with Alexander. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:20. The fact that Hymenaeus is mentioned first both times may indicate that he was the main culprit. What happened to Alexander, we do not know. But the reference in 1 Timothy seems to suggest at least that these men, especially Hymenaeus and Alexander had at one time professed faith in Christ, because 1 Tim. 1:19 says that those two men had put away their faith, meaning that they had renounced their faith. Paul said that they were spiritually shipwrecked. Paul had delivered them to Satan. Just what that means, we do not know, but it is an indication that their teaching was blasphemous and deserving of the worst kind of judgment from the Lord.

But as we come back to our text, what were they teaching?

2:18 Paul said here that they were “saying that the resurrection is past already.” And, as a result, the faith of others had been overthrown.

Paul had mentioned the resurrection of Christ in verses 8 and 9 of this chapter, and had indicated that he had suffered because this was such a vital part of his ministry. In fact, this had led to his imprisonment. We know from 1 Cor. 15 that the resurrection of Christ is what assures our resurrection, and that the doctrine of the

resurrection is essential as far as the future blessedness of the people of God is concerned. So to say that “the resurrection is past already” was equal to denying that there would be any bodily resurrection for the people of God. This would leaven believers in the condition described by the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 15:19 that they are of all men most to be pitied. To deny the resurrection is to deny Christ’s resurrection, and to deny His resurrection is to deny the very foundation of the Christian faith. It seems incredible that anyone would believe such teaching, but history shows that however ridiculous certain teachings may be, there are always those who will believe them. So we must never underestimate the potential for evil that can be produced by any false doctrine.

Perhaps this is a good time for us to be reminded of the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:12-26. (Read.)

What did Paul mean by the statement, “and overthrow the faith of some.” How can the faith of true believers be overthrown?

It can’t! I believe that what Paul was saying here that it overthrew the faith of some who professed to know the Lord, but their faith was not a genuine faith. There are always those who are numbered with the people of God who profess, but do not possess. One of the heartaches of the ministry is to see some whom we have felt really knew the Lord, and who seemed to be making real progress in the things of the Lord, suddenly, for any number of reasons, turn away from the Lord and His church, and walk no more with Him. The Lord had “disciples” who did this. Cf. John 6:66 says this: “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” This means that they left the Lord, and they did not come back! They were disciples in name only. They followed the Lord for a time, but the teaching of the Lord became too much for them, and then by their departure they showed that they never had been saved.

We always hope that any who are not genuinely saved will be saved, but that is not always what happens. It was not always the case in the early church, and it does not always happen today. This might have left Timothy and the believers at Ephesus fearful about the future of the Lord’s work, and that is why Paul went on in the following verses to give them encouragement by turning them to the Lord.

March 11, 1996

2:19 So instead of thinking that a true believer can be in salvation, and then out, we have this encouraging word from the Apostle Paul. When we speak of the work that the Lord does in the hearts of His people, we are speaking of a solid work which never fails. Long ago Solomon had this to say about the work of the Lord:

I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him (Ecc. 3:14).

What is “the foundation of God”? Surely we have the answer in 1 Cor. 3:9-11:

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

What Paul meant by these verses was that he had gone into Corinth preaching the Gospel (which means preaching Christ), and the people who had been saved as a result were built upon Christ, “the sure foundation” (Isa. 28:16). The whole verse where that expression is found reads like this, and I am reading it in the NIV:

So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious

cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.
The KJV renders the last statement of the verse, "He that believeth shall not make haste."

Ephesians 2:20 does not change the meaning at all. In fact, it supports what I have been saying. There Paul wrote, beginning with verse 19:

- 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;
- 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;
- 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:
- 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22).

Every person who is saved has his or her salvation resting on Christ. There is no other foundation. It is sure, solid, and safe. During the recent rains here in Oregon we heard of houses that had been washed off of their foundations, and in some instances whole foundations were washed away. But that can never happen to the One Who is the foundation of our salvation. We are totally and eternally secure in Christ.

And it is secure not only because it is Christ, but because it has "this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." This may be a quotation from Nahum 1:7,

The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

Lenski says in his commentary,

This is a seal which, *once* affixed to God's foundation, guarantees permanency, makes dissolution impossible. It was affixed in eternity and read, "Ἐγὼ Κύριος ὄντας αὐτοῦ, i. e., in all eternity the Lord knew with appropriating and effective love all that are his in all the ages of time, from the first one who is his to the last one at the last day. A tremendous seal! God knew them, knew them in eternity, these who are his. That settles the matter forever (p. 804).

Then he said that the Church Fathers were right when they quoted John 10:28 with our verse here in 2 Timothy:

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

And then Lenski added:

Here is comfort, indeed, for all "who are his," ... the comfort of God's effective knowledge which saw us from birth to death and from the first instant of faith to its triumph in the hour of death, embracing us as his own. This seal stands with the foundation; the ages of the world never change a single letter of it (pp. 804, 805).

So what Paul was actually talking about here is the great doctrine of election. He chose us before the foundation of the world. This is the equivalent of saying that He knew us. So our security rests in the fact that the Lord knows us, and has known us, from all eternity. The Lord "never knew" those who fall away. This is the seal of our faith, the guarantee that true believers will never fall away.

But it is one thing to profess that the Lord knows us, and that He has known us from all eternity, but what is the proof. It is given to us in the latter part of this verse: "**And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.**" The word "depart" means lit. to stand aloof from iniquity. Thayer says that the word used here for "iniquity" (ἀδικία) means "unrighteousness of heart and life" (p. 12). A true Christian does not try to get as close to sin as he can without getting caught, but he stays as far away from it as he can get.

Illus: Those of you who have read Jerry Bridges' book, The Discipline of Grace, will probably remember his story about the lady who wanted to hire a chauffeur. To test them out she would take them up on a mountain road that had a sharp precipice on one side. All of them would drive as close to the edge to impress her with their ability to drive. Finally a man came along, and in his test he drove as far away from the edge as he could. He was the one who got the job. She wanted a good driver, but one who would drive as safely as he could.

This is the meaning that our word "depart" is meant to convey to us. Verse 22 of this chapter emphasizes the same attitude when Paul said, "**Flee** youth lusts." A true child of God is not going to play with sin. He gives evidence of his election by God by staying as far away from sin as possible. And this applies to what we think, what we say, what we do, and where we go. Some of are learning in our memory work for this week, Prov. 24:9. The first part of the verse says this: "The thought of foolishness is sin." Proverbs is full of warnings to "the fool," but even the thought that he has before he does foolishly is sinful in the sight of the Lord.

The Apostle John had this to say about a believer and sin:

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9 **Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother (1 John 3:7-10).

Cf. also what we had in Titus 2:11-15.

Some day the Lord will deliver us from even the possibility of sinning. But until that day comes, we must seek His grace to keep ourselves as far away from sin as we can possibly get.

2:20 Paul here gives us an illustration of what he is talking about. And yet it is not an illustration which is explained the same way by all who attempt to expound this epistle.

I think we have to remember that the Apostle Paul was really seeking to do two things in writing this letter to Timothy:

- 1) He was warning Timothy about false teachers and their teaching. He was making it clear that the greatest dangers from false teaching arose when the false teachers were men who identified themselves with the church.
- 2) He was challenging Timothy to seek to be of the greatest usefulness in the hand of the Lord. The Lord places each one of us where He wants to use us, but we have great responsibilities in our relationship with the Lord as to how useful we may be. It seems to me that Paul is speaking in this illustration primarily about the second of his two purposes for writing to Timothy, i.e., of encouraging Timothy to seek to be the most useful servant of the Lord that it is possible for him to be.

The illustration: "In a great house," and it would have to be a house of some means, you find vessels of gold and silver as well as of wood and earth. The gold and silver are those which are treasured the most, and the ones which are used on those very special occasions. We tend to display the gold and silver, but keep the wooden and earthen vessels in the kitchen. So, as the NIV and the RSV have it translated, some vessels are for noble use, and others for ignoble.

Obviously a vessel is lifeless and really has no responsibility as to what it is made of, nor how it is to be used. But Paul here is talking about people as vessels. And it would seem that this "great house" is the church, probably the local church. The problem in Paul's illustration is, who did he have in mind when he spoke of the vessels of wood and earth? Was he speaking of the false teachers, or was he speaking of people in the church who are not as useful as others are. Was he thinking of the mixture of believers and unbelievers which we usually find in any church, or was he talking about the difference that you often find among believers?

I'm inclined to say that he was thinking about the latter -- about the difference that we often find among believers. He is not saying that the preacher is gold and that the deacon who runs the vacuum is wood or earth, and that the deacon ought not to be satisfied until he is in the pulpit. That certainly would be contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Sometimes it is the lady who would faint if she ever had to speak in public, but who is faithful day after day in prayer, who is solid gold, while the preacher may be more like a wooden vessel or a clay pot.

Paul's point is that you find both kinds in the church, those who are really walking with the Lord, who are doing their utmost to avoid grieving the Lord in any way. But you also find others who are at church all of the time, and are serving in some capacity, but who rarely pray, who are not faithful in reading their Bibles, or, if they do read, they don't really pay much attention to what they read. If you followed them through their week, you might be surprised to see how they spend their time.

Remember that what prompted this illustration was the statement at the end of verse 19. (Read.)

You know, there are those who say that there is no such thing as a carnal Christian. I agree that we have people in our churches who profess but do not possess, and we certainly can't say that they are Christians. But Paul told the Corinthian believers that they were carnal. And he did not mean that they were unsaved. They were just not walking with the Lord. He didn't tell them that they needed to get saved, but he did tell them that it would be possible that they might be saved "so as by fire." Their works could be burned up even though they might be saved.

This seems to be the point that Paul was making with Timothy. Was he going to be a useful servant of the Lord, or one who was not fruitful? Was the church at Ephesus going to be a church known for the way they loved the Lord and followed Him faithfully and diligently, or would the day come when the Lord would have to tell them that they had lost their first love.

What about you? What about me? Can we think of times when we loved the Lord more than we do now? Can we think of times when we enjoyed reading the Word, and enjoyed the preaching of the Word more than we do now? Can we think of times when we read the Word carefully to find out what God wants us to know, what He wants us to be, what He wants us to do, and what He does not want us to do, or to be? Can we think of times when it was easier for us to talk about the Lord than it is now? Can we think of times when sin bothered us more than it does now? If so, we are in need of a revival in our souls. We have been walking too far away from the Lord. We need to seek a restoration of our fellowship with the Lord.

This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote verse 21.

2:21 The Puritans have been called physicians of the soul. They were especially gifted of God in ministering to the sicknesses of believers. I am not speak of their bodies, but of their souls. We need physicians for our bodies, but we also need physicians for our souls -- and what a blessing it is when you find men who are both!

Paul was a physician of the soul. Here he was ministering to Timothy's soul, and through Timothy, to the souls of the people to whom Timothy would be ministering. Timothy should never be satisfied with anything but being of the greatest usefulness in the hands of the Lord. And neither should we be. What did he need to do?

"If a man purge himself from these" -- "These" what? There are three possible answers as I see it.

- 1) He could have been speaking about "these" false teachers.
- 2) He could have been speaking about "these" vessels of wood and earth -- those believers who were not really walking with the Lord.
- 3) He could have been speaking about "these" sins -- the "iniquity" mentioned in verse 19.

Paul probably had all three in mind, but they all were to be classified as sin from which men (and women) who desire to be useful instruments in the Lord's hands must "purge" themselves.

The word "purge" means that any one of the three can defile us. Sins not only need to be forgiven, but we need to be cleansed of the effects of sin. Sin never makes us better; it always makes us worse. Sin makes us dirty; it is only by the blood of Christ that we can be cleansed of our sin. But a part of staying clean is to "depart," stand away from sin in every form which has its defiling effects.

The only other time this form of the verb to purge is used in the NT is in 1 Cor. 5:7. Paul as writing about sin in the church at Corinth. A man was involved immorally with his stepmother. And Paul warned them that a little leaven, a little sin, could leaven the whole church. And so this is what he told them to do:

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5:7-8).

The verb that Paul used in 1 Cor. 5:7 and 2 Tim. 2:21 really means to purge it out and away. How do we do this? It means that we must not only confess, but also forsake whatever the sin is, and never let it back into our lives again. It is only by the grace of God that any of us can do this because so often the thing that we are guilty of is something that we like, or at least we have gotten to the place where we excuse ourselves for it. We feel justified in feeling about the Lord the way we do.

Listen to what Solomon said about the confession of sin:

13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief (Prov. 28:13-14).

And listen to what the Apostle John said about the confession of our sins:

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9).

Now what is the promise?

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, **he shall be a vessel unto honour.**" You see, it is sin in our lives which keeps us from being vessels unto honour -- which means, vessels which are used to bring glory, honor, and praise to the One Who is pleased to use us in His service.

So the first thing that Paul mentioned as a result is what we become.

The second thing is that we are “sanctified,” made holy. He did not mean completely sanctified, but he did mean that we would be making real progress toward the goal for which we have all been saved. A useful vessel is a Christ-like vessel. We never need to purge ourselves from Him; sin defiles, but it is Christ Who makes us holy. To speak of the words which Jerry Bridges has made so well known, when we purge ourselves of sin we are pursuing holiness. And it is not all negative. We put off some things, and we put on other things which we have been neglecting.

But there is a third thing: We shall be “meet for the master’s use.” Some time ago I was studying this passage, and beside the verse in the margin of my old Bible I have written these words: “Highly useful, very profitable.” That is what it means to be “meet for the master’s use.”

Isn’t this what we all want? Don’t we want to be a blessing to people? The greatest grief I have is that of ministering to people, and praying for them, only to see some go farther away from the Lord instead of getting closer to Him.

Notice in this expression that it is the Master, it is our Lord Jesus Christ, Who uses us. He uses us when and where and how and for as long as He chooses. Is there any greater blessing than being an instrument of blessing in His hands.

The last result is that we will be “prepared unto every good work.” Thayer said that this means prepared, kept in readiness to accomplish something.

Paul wanted Timothy to know that there was more to being prepared to serve the Lord than having his messages prepared. He needed his heart kept in readiness, too. Both are equally important. But the danger every preacher, or teacher, faces is that of having his notes prepared, but not preparing his heart. Oh, how we need to pray constantly the prayers of Psalms 19:14 and Psalm 139:23, 24. Let me read them to you before I close.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer (Psalms 19:14).

Psalm 139:

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalms 139:23-24).

And then let me add to David’s prayer the wonderful advice given by his son, Solomon, in Proverbs 4:23: “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

Concl: We have seen some wonderful truths in this passage, truths which I trust the Lord has written upon all of our hearts. What a wonderful thing it is to know how secure we are in the Lord Jesus Christ. But let us make sure that we are in Christ. If we are, no one is going to get an argument out of us when we are told that we need to depart from sin in any and every form. And then, because of what the Lord has done for us, let us seek to be of the greatest usefulness to Him as His servants. Let us keep ourselves purged from sin, and let us give ourselves to all that we need to do in order to pursue holiness and to be like our Lord Jesus Christ. This is what the Lord wants, and this is what every true child of God should want, not that we would become famous as the servants of the Lord, but that we would be used for the blessing of people and for the glory of our gracious God and heavenly Father.

The Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Timothy

2 Timothy 2:22-3:17

March 18, 1996

IV. Warnings of Dangers To Be Avoided in Serving the Lord -- with Exhortations (2 Tim. 2:22-3:17).

When we say that 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are Pastoral Epistles because they were written to young pastors, telling them what they need to be, and how they should do the work of the Lord, it might be easy for you who are not pastors, and never expect to be pastors, to feel that epistles like these are only of secondary importance to you. But that is not true. We need to remember, in the case of Timothy (but the same would apply to Titus), that these young pastors were to be “examples to the believers.” See 1 Tim. 4:12. This means that they were not be considered as some kind of a spiritual elite, above the rest of the saints, but they were “to set the pace,” so to speak, for all believers. They were to be examples which all of the people of God could safely follow.

Even if we take Paul who was an apostle, the same principle applies. Note what Paul said to the Corinthian church in 1 Cor. 11:1: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” And then we have another example of this principle in Phil. 4:9:

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

So we can say that there was not one kind of a life for the apostles, and another for the people of God. The apostles were to be examples which the people of God could wisely and safely follow if they wanted to please God.

This is actually the purpose every child of God should have. We are not to go around “parading” ourselves, but we are all to live for that we will not be a stumbling block to others, but will be an example to them. Parents should be examples to their children. Even in the case where we have two friends who are believers; they should be examples to each other.

So this makes the Pastoral Epistles of importance to every child of God. But let me say that it is extremely important that those who are leaders in the church need to be examples to the flock. Let me give you one more passage to show this: 1 Pet. 5:2, 3:

- 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;
- 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

2:22 This verse actually follows from what Paul had just written in the preceding verses. Being “a vessel unto honour” necessarily involves fleeing from sin in every form and following after “righteousness, faith,” and so on.

Let us look, first, at the two main verbs in this verse. They are “flee” and “follow.”

Both are in the present tense, and both are in the imperative mode. This means that they are commands which are to be continuously obeyed. Timothy was never to stop fleeing from his youthful lusts, nor was he ever to stop his pursuit for a more holy life.

Now Timothy, like every other believer, had two natures. He had his old sinful nature which was always attracted to sin and the things which would please himself, but he also had a new nature which was attracted to holiness and the things which would please God. That is true of me, and it is also true of you. All of our lives we are in a battle against the flesh as we seek by God's grace to please Him. And so, on the one hand, we need to keep fleeing; on the other, we need to keep pursuing. We have to do both. If we fail in the one, we will fail in the other.

Now what is involved in fleeing?

It obviously means to run away from youthful lusts. This is what Joseph did when Potiphar's wife was seeking to seduce him. He ran away. He was a very young man at the time. Hendriksen estimated that Timothy was probably in his late 30's or early 40's when Paul wrote this second epistle to him, and so it shows that "youthful lusts" can still bother us late in life. The battle against sin will not be over for any of us until we are with the Lord. But it seems that younger men show more of an attraction toward the sins of the flesh than men do as they get older. But no one, not even the oldest servant of the Lord, can ever afford to let his guard down.

What did Paul have in mind when he spoke of "youthful lusts"?

Well, we can be sure that he was speaking of sexual immorality. This was a problem to a very godly man like King David of Israel -- and he was not what we would call a young man at the time of his sin with Bathsheba. We all need to be careful in this matter. Failure here has put an end to many a preacher's otherwise effective ministry.

But there are other lusts that can ruin a ministry, or the life of any Christian. Paul referred to one in 1 Tim. 6:10, 11. (Read.) A man's love of money can ruin him. It is, as Paul said, the root of all kinds of evil. I find it very disturbing that some seminaries are encouraging their graduates to make certain financial demands upon churches who might want them to serve as pastors.

A third lust which can ruin a ministry is pride. Peter was obviously referring to this when he said that elders were not to be "lord's over God's heritage." James and John showed their inclination to this when they asked to sit at the right hand and left hand of the Lord when he came into His kingdom. But we see it also in Peter when he was so sure that although all of the other apostles would forsake the Lord, he would not! Or when we try to attract attention to ourselves by being entertaining instead of edifying. When we are constantly before people there is always the tendency to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think.

Jealousy, impatience, a critical spirit -- and many other sins are those which we need to guard against, and "flee" from any inclination that we have to satisfy these desires that are in all of our hearts. Obviously this involves inner struggles of the soul, and we must stay just as far away from all of them as we possibly can.

Every servant of the Lord has to face these issues in his own heart, and to seek by God's grace to avoid the pitfalls that each one of these puts before us.

Now we need to know that there is more to the ministry, and more to the Christian life, than simply avoiding "youthful lusts." We must follow, or pursue, other things. And Paul is more specific about what we are to follow than he was about what we are to "flee" from. Perhaps this is because of all that he had already said about things to be avoided. The servant of the Lord should never stop growing, and neither should any Christian. All of our lives we need to be fleeing and following.

I have already indicated that this word "follow" means to pursue. The writer of the book of Hebrews used this word when he said in Heb. 12:14,

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Paul used this word in writing to the Philippian church when he said of himself,

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but **I follow after**, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 **I press** toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12-14).

And using this same word Paul told the people in the church at Rome,

Let us therefore **follow after** the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another (Rom. 14:19).

Strangely, this word (διώκω) is most often used in passages where it is translated, to persecute. Just as the enemies of our Lord pursued Him to put Him to death, and the enemies of the Apostle Paul did the same, this kind of determination and intensity is to characterize our pursuit of those characteristics which are pleasing to God, and which make us a holy people.

Let us look at the words which Paul has given us here. There are four.

First, “righteousness.” This word was also mentioned first in 1 Tim. 6:11. What Paul probably had in mind here was practical righteousness which is the result of obedience to the Word of God. A righteous servant of the Lord always is an obedient servant of the Lord. A righteous Christian is always an obedient Christian. Practical righteousness can only be attained by obedience to the Word of God. And such obedience is only possible through the empowering of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The important thing that we all have to face in every situation is, What does the Lord want me to do? What am I to do, or not do, if I am to please the Lord? Only the Word of God can give us the right answers to those questions. Therefore, we need to be very careful every day in reading the Word that we pay attention to the practical exhortations of Scripture.

Second, “faith.” Peter spoke of “the trial of your faith” (1 Pet. 1:7). The writer of Hebrews said this about faith:

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Heb 11:6).

So our faith is manifested by how we come to the Lord daily for guidance, with our burdens, with our praise. And since “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17), if our faith is to grow, we must spend much time hearing and believing and acting upon the Word of God.

None of us trusts the Lord as much as we should. We must always be seeking to trust the Lord more, and it should not surprise us when the Lord puts us in situations where that is all that we can do. It is faith which brings rest. Faith is a gift from God, but we must use the means that He has given us for the strengthening of our faith, i.e., the Word, prayer, patience, and so on.

Third, “charity.” This is our familiar word ἀγάπη. And since Paul did not limit it either to God or to man, we must take it as applying to both. We need to cultivate our love for God. We need to love the Lord’s people even more than we do. And we need to love our neighbors as well as our enemies. Love is one of the greatest distinguishing marks of a Christian, and therefore its leaders should be examples in manifesting love in all areas of life.

Fourth and last, “peace.” A few moments ago I read to you from Heb.12:14. Let me read it again because it has to do with peace:

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Paul wrote to the believers at Rome where such an exhortation must have been sorely needed at times, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18). Abraham’s treatment of Lot in Genesis 13 is an example of this very principle of Scripture.

I believe that the last statement of this verse applies to all that the Apostle Paul has mentioned here. That is,

we are to flee youthful lust with others who call on the Lord out of a perfect heart. We are to join in pursuing righteousness with all who call on the Lord out of perfect heart. Follow through the verse the same way. And this means that we are to help each other in our pursuit of holiness. The fellowship of the saints is intended by the Lord to be of help to all of us in our avoidance of sin and our pursuit of holiness. We are not headed for heaven by ourselves, but we are members of the family of God, the body of Christ, and to avoid the fellowship of the Lord's people is to deprive ourselves of one of the most powerful of all the means that the Lord has given us to be strengthened in our stand against sin, and for all that is pleasing to the Lord. And pastors and elders and deacons need this fellowship as much as anyone else, and possibly more, because of the added need they have to be examples to all of the people of God.

Geoffrey Wilson, in his commentary on The Pastoral Epistles, had this to say about this verse:

The exhortation thus shows that character is more important than charisma. As Fairbairn well says, 'A sound moral condition is able all things essential to fitness for effective ministerial service in the divine kingdom. One things may more or less be helpful, *but this is indispensable*' (p. 147, italics mine).

2:23 It would be wonderful if everyone who claims to belong to the Lord would be interested primarily in what Paul mentioned in verse 22. But unfortunately that is never the case. And it seems to have been a major problem in the early church because of the times Paul has referred in one way or another to "foolish and unlearned questions."

Paul had referred to 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 6:4; Titus 3:9, 10. There are always people who will either not be satisfied to stay by the Word of God, or they will want to emphasize things in Scripture far beyond the place they are given in the Word of God. They cause strife. They do not edify. And so they are to be avoided. Paul was anything but complimentary in his description of them. Those to whom he was referring would always appear to know more than anyone else, but Paul called them dull and stupid, and their teaching absurd.

The next three verses give us one of the best descriptions of what a true pastor should be. As Paul often did, he began on a negative note, and quickly moved to more positive statements.

2:24 "The servant of the Lord must not strive." The word "strive" is a word which has to do with warfare.

The Christian life and the Christian ministry are both warfare, but that does not mean that we argue and dispute and quarrel about the truth. If a man strives, he shows that he is more interested in winning an argument than he is in coming to an understanding of the truth. If people are interested in knowing the truth, questions can be asked and answered, and there can be very profitable discussion. But arguing about the Word must not be tolerated.

Instead, the pastor or teacher of the Word should manifest the characteristics that could be seen in our Lord Jesus Christ, and which was shown by the great prophets of the OT and the apostles of the NT.

Not that in verse 24 and the first part of verse 25 we have the teacher described in his work. In the latter part of verse 25 we see what a true teacher of the Word looks for God to do. And then in verse 26 we see what the repentant sinner will do.

How is the teacher described with reference to his work?

Positively he must "be gentle unto all men." The only other time this word (ἡπιος) is used in the NT is in 1 Thess. 4:7. And there we have a good description of what the word means after first indicating what it does not mean. (Read 1 Thess. 2:4-12. The word is in verse 7.)

Paul makes two statements to illustrate a gentle person. One is in verse 7, “as a nurse cherisheth her children.” The other is in verse 11, “as a father doth his children” -- exhorting, comforting, and charging. The manner of the pastor and teacher goes a long way under the blessing of the Spirit in convincing people of the truth of the Word. As I have indicated, our Lord was a perfect example of a gentle Teacher, and the Apostle Paul was one who followed in the Lord’s footsteps.

March 19, 1996

“Unto all men” -- The word “all” means here, all kinds of men. The Greek simply says “all” -- i.e., all men, all women, all children. That is, the servant of the Lord must be gentle to those who are receptive, and to those who are either indifferent or opposed to the Gospel.

The second characteristic is “apt to teach.” The only other time that this word is used in the NT is in 1 Tim. 3:2. It is one of the qualifications for an elder. The Greek word is διδασκαλικός. It does not just mean that he has an inclination to teach, but that he is qualified to teach. Hendriksen says that it means “capable of imparting counsel and instruction” (p. 275). Not everyone who wants to teach is capable of teaching.

This word shows that teaching is a major part of the work that a servant of the Lord is called to do. Paul referred to pastors in Eph. 4:11 as “pastors and teachers,” as it is rendered in the KJV. But it probably should be translated, pastors-teachers. The pastor is not primarily an administrator, and certainly not an entertainer. He is a teacher. He is to teach the Word of God. Studying the Word must be his delight, and his desire should be to instruct people in the truth of the Word of God, the area of truth of which people by nature are totally ignorant.

This, in the third place, calls for a great deal of patience. The word that Paul used here is different from the usual word for patience. It is ἀνεξίκακος, and this is the only place that it appears in the NT. Thayer suggests the word forbearing. It speaks of being patient in a hostile situation. It portrays the fact that people are not going to be receptive to the Gospel. In fact, they may be very opposed to the Gospel. The servant of the Lord must be prepared for this, and therefore patient as our Lord was.

The Lord demonstrated this kind of patience on the Cross when He prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). And Stephen demonstrated this kind of patience when he prayed, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge” (Acts 7:60).

When Peter was addressing those who were servants in society, he said things which had their application to a servant of the Lord. Let me read to you what he said.

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps (1 Pet. 2:18-21).

Now we move on to the next verse.

2:25 “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves” -- The servant of the Lord does not quit when he runs into opposition. If it is possible he continues to teach because of an attitude of meekness he has in

his heart even toward those who “oppose themselves.” They do not realize it, but people who reject the Gospel are their own worst enemy. But the servant of the Lord serves with his trust in what the Lord may do, not in his own ability to change the heart of the one to whom he is witnessing.

While we call upon people to repent, will you notice here that repentance is actually a gift from God? Let me give you some other references which also teach this about repentance. For example, Acts 5:31-32. When Peter and the apostles were defending their ministry to the Jews in the temple, they told the high priest and the members of the Sanhedrin, speaking of Christ,

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, **for to give repentance to Israel**, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Along the same line, when Peter was defending the fact that he had taken the Gospel to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, he concluded by saying this:

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, **Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life** (Acts 11:17-18).

Another example is found in Heb. 12:17 where the writer was speaking of Esau, and this is what we read:

For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, **he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.**

Everything about salvation is a gift from God. Even our faith is God’s gift to us. Cf. Eph. 2:8-9. Nevertheless, we must preach the Gospel. We must tell people of Christ and His work on the Cross where He died to save us from our sins. We call on people to repent and to believe. But we know that the only way any person will ever come to Christ is if God grants them repentance and faith, and draws them to Christ. That is why, even when people oppose the Gospel, we continue to witness to them, and to pray for them, trusting that it might please God to move upon their hearts and save them.

Cf. John 6:44:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

See also Eph. 2:4-7, leading into verses 8 and 9.

The word translated “repentance” is the Greek word, *μετάνοια*. It means more than a confession of sin and a feeling of deep regret for all that one has done that is displeasing to God. It also includes the idea of a change. A person who truly repents can never be the same again. He or she becomes a new creature in Christ. And this involves “the acknowledging of the truth.” When God does a work in a person’s heart, his (or her) former opposition to the truth is taken away, and that person recognizes that the message which he had formerly despised is really “the truth,” i.e., the truth of God.

This is what we all long to see. This is why we witness to others about Christ. And while we approach people in the manner described in verses 24 and 25a, yet we know that only the Lord Himself can bring people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. What we are is important. And what we do is important. What we say is important. But it is always God Who takes what we say and uses what we are to bring sinners to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:26 When God grants us repentance, we are like a person recovering from being in a drunken stupor. We see that the Gospel message is true, and we believe the Gospel, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. But Paul

mentions a factor here in the lost condition of sinners which we do not always recognize, and that which makes it even more impossible that we could save anyone. It is this: People without Christ are held in “the snare of the devil.” A snare is a trap. Before we are saved, we are dead in trespasses and in sins. We are blinded to the truth. We are in hopeless rebellion against God. And to make matters even more hopeless, we are held captive by the Devil. Only God is sufficient to meet our needs, and He always does it through the preaching of the Gospel. People need to be brought to faith in Christ, and God does this through His Word. Cf. Rom. 10:17.

Summary: Now the important thing for all of us having seen what is here in these verses, is to seek by God’s grace to be what the Lord wants us to be, to do what the Lord wants us to do in making the Gospel known to those who do not believe, but in it all to be trusting the Lord to use His Word through the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish His will in bringing His chosen ones to Himself. Originally this was written to Timothy, but it applies just as much to pastors and all of the people of God today. And we need to remember that if we are to see the Lord’s blessing, we need to do the Lord’s work in His way and for His glory alone.

March 25, 1996

Chapter 3

3:1 Up to this point in the epistle Paul had been placing his emphasis upon the importance for Timothy to be diligent as a servant of the Lord. He was not to be ashamed of the Gospel (1:8), nor was he to be ashamed of Paul because of the sufferings Paul was experiencing because of the Gospel. Instead, he was to “hold fast” (1:13) to the truth, and let nothing turn him aside from preaching the Gospel.

In chapter 2 we have seen how Paul used certain illustrations to bring out the importance of diligence and faithfulness in the work of the Lord. He spoke of Timothy as a teacher, a soldier, a farmer, a workman, a vessel, and then at the end of the chapter, as a servant.

But, as we move from chapter 2 to chapter 3 Paul was speaking prophetically about the future prospects of the Gospel “in the last days.” The picture that he painted for Timothy was not a bright one. He said that “the last days” would be “perilous times.” The word “perilous” means *difficult, hard to bear, even dangerous*. They would be days which would present special dangers for the Lord’s servants as well as for all of the people of God. And this would make it all the more important for the Lord’s servants to do and be what Paul had been saying in chapters 1 and 2.

But what did Paul mean by “the last days”? Down through the years this expression has been interpreted in different ways by the Lord’s servants.

For example, we have a completely different picture given to us of “the last days” by Isaiah the prophet. Listen to what we have in Isaiah 2:

- 1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
- 2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.
- 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
- 4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD (Isa. 2:1-5).

This doesn't sound at all like 2 Timothy 3, does it? But Isaiah's prophecy has led many godly men to expect that while there might be difficulties in the last days, the final end would mean that the world would eventually be won to Christ. But we certainly do not find such a hope presented to us in the NT. Do we have a contradiction here between the OT and the NT? Certainly not. The Bible is all the Word of God, and God never contradicts Himself. The Bible is one harmonious book from Genesis to the Revelation.

How then can we explain this difference?

It has to be that Paul and Isaiah were speaking of "the last days" referring to two different times. Isaiah was looking ahead to the last days for Israel and Judah. This will come after the return of our Lord to the earth. He will establish His kingdom over all of the earth, and there will be no more war. This is not a period brought on by the church, but by the triumphant appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Paul, on the other hand, was speaking of "the last days" for the church, days immediately preceding and leading up to the time of the Great Tribulation, a time of suffering without equal in the history of the world. The church will be taken out before that time actually starts, but the church will experience many of the difficulties which will be intensified during the Great Tribulation.

But we still haven't defined "the last days" specifically as it applied to Timothy, and as it applies today to us. Was Timothy in "the last days"? Are we in "the last days"? I think we can answer both of those questions in the affirmative. Let me tell you why I believe that. Please turn to Heb. 1:1-2. Here we read:

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 **Hath in these last days** spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

This verse seems to indicate that "the last days" began with the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and that they will continue on to the end of time. But, for the present, while there have been times of great revival on the earth, we cannot expect to see the world turn to Christ. God is certainly going to accomplish His purposes, but these "days" in which we live are going to continue to be difficult days as far as the ministry of the Gospel is concerned. And further, I believe that Paul was saying that the closer we get to the coming of the Lord, the more difficult the days will become. It has been so bad so many times, and people have often felt that they were going to see the coming of the Lord, and yet the troubles have subsided and things have not been as difficult as they were. Things are very difficult right now, and people are beginning to ask again, "Don't you think that we are nearing the time when the Lord will come?" I can only say that I hope so, but we can't be sure. Paul wanted Timothy to know that these "last days" would be difficult and dangerous for the church because there were, and there will continue to be great problems which the church will have to face *from within* as well as *from without*! This is what Paul told the Ephesian elders when he was with them for the last time. Let me read to you Acts 20:28-31:

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that **after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you**, not sparing the flock.

30 **Also of your own selves shall men arise**, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

We see the same emphasis here in 2 Timothy 3. When Paul spoke in 2 Timothy 3:5 of people “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,” to whom could he have been referring but people within the church. Obviously the conditions described in the first four verses were in the world, but it seems that whatever is in the world also finds its way somehow into the professing church. Don’t we have pastors today supporting homosexuals, and don’t we have homosexual churches? And can’t we see in church people many of the characteristics described here in 2 Timothy 3? There is no question but that we can.

So Paul wanted Timothy to know that the work of the Lord would never be easy, and this side of glory it will never be pure. This is the reason that even today we must not lose sight of the need for all of us to be as godly as we can be, and not follow the world in its made pursuit of sin.

So when Paul said that “in the last days perilous times shall come,” he meant that this whole age can be described as “perilous,” but that the closer we get to the end and the coming of the Lord, *the worse it is going to be!*

How did Paul describe these “last days”? See how it pictures the days in which we live.

3:2 “For men shall be lovers of their own selves.” I can shorten that expression down to two words. Paul was saying that *self-love* would prevail. And don’t we have this in the church today as well as in the world. This is the only time this expression is used in the NT, and, as far as I know, in the OT. When we hear today that we need to learn to love ourselves, what this means is that we want people to become not only *proud*, but *selfish*! And it also means as Paul said later in this passage (in v. 4), we become “lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.”

We don’t need to be taught to love ourselves; that is a part of our old nature. To a certain extent, this is God-given. It is this which causes us to protect ourselves, and to care for ourselves. But it can so easily get out of hand and we find ourselves loving ourselves more than we love God, and loving ourselves more than we love our neighbors. So we will seek things for ourselves and ignore the needs of others. This is sinful, and since Paul mentioned this first, it seems that this is a sin which is basic to and the foundation of many other sins.

“Covetous” -- This was forbidden by the tenth commandment, and yet every day the ads of television appeal to our tendency to be covetous. In Col. 3:5 Paul said that covetousness is idolatry. Those of us who have a few years behind us have seen this tendency toward covetousness grow immensely during the years of our lives. A covetous person is a dissatisfied person. It leads to unhappiness because we are inclined to think that if we have just a little more than we do have, then we will be happy. But things never bring either happiness or satisfaction. Paul said in Rom. 1:29 that we are all “full of ... covetousness.” We can see this in ourselves, and we need to do everything possible with the help of God to keep our covetous hearts from running away with us. Why has debt become such a great problem to so many people? It is because of covetousness.

Here again we are thinking of ourselves, not about God, nor about others we might be able to help.

“Boasters” -- One of the verses we are learning in our memory work is Prov. 27:2:

Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

“Boasters” is another word which speaks of pride, and is contrary to everything that makes for humility.

Psalm 10 gives us an excellent description of a boaster. (See vv. 3 ff.)

How different are David’s words in Psalm 34!

1 I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2 **My soul shall make her boast in the LORD:** the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.

James describes a boaster with an illustration of a sin that most of us have been guilty of many, many times.

Cf. James 4:13-17:

13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16 **But now ye rejoice in your boastings:** all such rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Remember Prov. 27:1: "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

Peter boasted that he would stand by the Lord even though all others would forsake Him. And we all know what happened. He denied the Lord worse than any of the others with the exception of Judas Iscariot.

Guy King, a pastor in Britain, spoke of this passage as "a mirror of the last days." At one point he made this very important comment:

We observe them here in the Glass (the mirror), and we cannot but be struck, in not a few instances, by the remarkable resemblances to our own times. Indeed, as we watch, let us beware of any ungodly censoriousness, or unhumble superiority--for it maybe that even we ourselves personally, individually, Christians though perhaps we be, are not altogether immune from some of the undesirable traits here depicted (To My Son, p. 88).

That is a solemn thought, and we all need to heed that warning.

But let us go on in this list which shows what Guy King also said was *behavior that was all wrong*.

"Proud" -- We have seen that pride is a part of most of the characteristics which Paul mentioned here, so why mention it by itself? Because he was using a word which speaks of *the height of arrogance*. Thayer, in his lexicon, describes it this way:

The characteristic of one who, with a swollen estimate of his own powers or merits, looks down on others and even treats them with insolence and contempt (p. 641).

He stands out as one who considers himself to be superior to everyone else. The Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like other men, is an example of the man Paul was describing here. **Cf. Luke 18:9-14.** (Read.)

"Blasphemers" -- This is a word which is usually used to describe a man's contempt for God, and for everything that is good and holy and decent. Have you noticed that people are no longer censured on TV and radio when they take the name of the Lord in vain? I heard an actor say just recently that the one in whom he lived and moved and had his being was his director. To take expressions like that which can only apply to God is blasphemy. One of the worst things that people are doing today is to speak of God in the feminine gender. In 1 Timothy 1:18-20 Paul indicated that Hymenaeus and Alexander had blasphemed God by turning away from the faith.

So people who love themselves, and are covetous, boasters, proud, inevitably get to the place where they are also blasphemers -- and it usually is very fast in coming.

"Disobedient to parents" -- We see evidence of this every day, don't we? And this has become a blight in many Christian homes. Not always, but often it is due to a failure on the part of parents to do what they Word

of God says that they should do in raising their children. Again, two of our memory verses apply here:

13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (Prov. 23:13-14).

But even in well-ordered, well-disciplined homes, we see disobedient children. Often our courts support children in their rebellion so that parents are afraid to discipline their children. We are not to beat up on our children, but spanking is Biblical. To show how important obedience to parents is to the Lord, this was the first command in the Law to be given with a promise attached to it. Many, many children are dying in their childhood and early teens today, and the reason is their disobedience to their parents. There is no question but they are dying as a judgment from God.

“Unthankful” -- This is a person who has no feeling of gratitude either to God or to men for any good thing that comes his way. Nine out of the ten lepers whom the Lord healed were “unthankful.” And the Lord asked about them. Cf. Luke 17:11-19.

We as Christians fail miserably in giving thanksgiving to God. This is one thing that we are to do continuously, day after day. It shows that we recognize the goodness of the Lord to us, and that we want to glorify Him for all that He does for us. And usually the person who characteristically glorifies God, will be grateful to people also when they do good things for him.

“Unholy” -- Many translators of this word say that it speaks of *irreverence*. Nothing is sacred to such a person. He can jest about the things of God. It is to be feared that the hilarity that often goes on in some church services today can be charged with being *unholy*. People who can blaspheme God never have respect for the things of God. They will joke about baptism and the Lord’s Supper. They will use Scripture in their jokes. They speak of God as though He were just another human being.

3:3 “Without natural affection” -- This is the person who does not show love for the members of his own family. Paul was thinking about the breakup of the family, parents who show no love for their children, and children who show no love for their parents. We have examples today of parents who will go so far as to kill their children, and children who will kill their parents. And then there are multiplied examples of neglect and abuse in families -- husbands who abuse their wives and/or who refuse to support their families. This is one of the most tragic of social problems which we face in our country today, and it seems to get worse continually. The NKJV translates this word, *unloving*.

“Trucebreakers” -- This is not really a good translation of the word Paul used. The word actually speaks of a person who is “irreconcilable” (NASB), a person who would rather let a dispute continue than to settle it. He seems to enjoy a broken relationship. He will not be persuaded to make matters right. The NKJV translates it, “unforgiving,” as does the NIV.

March 26, 1996

“False accusers” -- The NKJV renders this, “slanderers.” In 1 Tim. 3:11 a wife who was a slanderer would disqualify her husband from serving as a deacon.

This is the Greek word *διάβολος*, and is translated many times, *the Devil*. He, according to Rev. 12:10 is “the accuser of our brethren” who “accused them before our God day and night.” When people become “false accusers” they are taking the part of Satan in his role against God and against the people of God. And usually this is done to cover up not only a wicked heart, but wicked behavior. When the Devil accuses the people of God before God, it appears that he is taking God’s part against bad people. But just the opposite is true: he is

opposing God by bringing false charges against His people.

“Incontinent” -- Such a person is lacking in self-control. Again let me refer to the book of Proverbs, chapter 25, verse 28,

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. Matthew Henry said that such a person is “soon fired, upon the least provocation” (VI, p. 844). By nature we do not have self-control. True self-control is a part of the fruit of the Spirit. Cf. Gal. 5:22-23. Such a person, according to Prov. 25:28 is totally defenseless, and will be a prey to any temptation that comes along. The lack of this strong quality is what makes men prone to the seductions of the harlot, again, according to the book of Proverbs. The person lacking self-control often gets himself into trouble by the use of his tongue. Proverbs 21:23 says, “Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.”

“Fierce” -- This goes with “incontinent.” Such a person doesn’t get better, but becomes more savage, and like a wild animal. This is what we see when people get angry and suddenly may kill someone -- and often at the slightest provocation.

It is easy to see how in this list of sinful characteristics, one leads to another, and it would appear that Paul intended to tell us that it is all based upon the first thing that he mentioned: self-love!

“Despisers of those that are good” -- Is there any better example that we have of this than the way people treated our Lord while He was here on earth? You would think that such a holy, compassionate Person as He was, would have drawn forth the greatest love and trust of people, but unfortunately that was not the case. King Saul was jealous of David and hated him because he could see that the blessing of the Lord was on David.

One who despises good people is usually hostile to anything that is good and right in the sight of God. This describes most homosexuals. They not only persist in something which they know is not right (or have known it), but they often become violent against those who point out that what they are doing is sin. Such a person often resorts to violence. A Christian on a job can often become the object of the most cruel remarks.

But the list is not complete yet. Calvin did not see that trying to define these words was worthwhile because he felt that their meaning was very clear. But I think we can all see that in seeking to define these words we find interpretations that we don’t normally associate with these words.

3:4 “Traitors” -- This is what Judas is called in Luke 6:16. The Lord spoke in Matt. 10:21 of times when one brother would deliver up another brother to death, when fathers would do that to their children, and when children would deliver their parents to death. So a traitor is not concerned about the closest human ties. We hear a lot these days about “family values,” and yet we see many illustrations of this very thing. Men will become traitors to their own country for the sake of a sufficient reward. Relationships mean nothing to the traitor.

“Heady” -- This is the person who is *rash*. He says things and does things without giving thought to what he is doing, nor to the consequences. A spoiled child is an illustration. Dennis Rodman in the NBA is a good example of a “heady” person. He is uncontrollable if he does not get his own way, and repeatedly he makes a fool out of himself.

“Highminded” -- This person thinks more highly than he ought to think, and his actions betray how he feels. And because of his great conceit, he is inclined to look down on everyone else as being less important, usually *far less important*, than he is.

Paul gave Timothy an example of a “highminded” person in 1 Tim. 6:17-19. And in Rom. 11:20 Paul warned the Gentiles against thinking that they were given the Gospel because they were better than the Jews. Thus, a “highminded” person can be a racist or a sexist. Highmindedness is very common in America today. The ACLU is motivated by highmindedness.

“Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God” -- This describes our country. On a given Sunday during the football season, how many people would you say attend the NFL games as compared with the number of people who go to church -- who go to any kind of a church. People will pay thousands of dollars to attend games, or to buy all kinds of sports equipment, who never even think about giving to the Lord. Paul described those who are “lovers of pleasure” in his letter to the church at Philippi in these words:

18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things (Phil. 3:18-19).

Matthew Henry said,

When there are more epicures (pleasure lovers, originally being very fastidious about food -- explanation mind) than true Christians, then the times are bad indeed. God is to be loved above all. This is a carnal mind, and is full of enmity against him, which prefers any thing before him, especially such a sordid thing as carnal pleasure is (VI, 844).

And then we come to the last characteristic that Paul mentioned as being prevalent “in the last days.” For this we move on to verse 5.

3:5 With all of the sinfulness, gross sinfulness, of “the last days,” there will be no shortage of “religion.” It will have “the form of godliness,” i.e., *the outward appearance of that which is concerned about holy living, pleasing God, etc.* And yet at the same time *there will be a denial of that which makes the Christian faith unique: the Gospel.*

The word “godliness” is very prominent in 1 Timothy (I hope you remember). It is found in 1 Tim. 2:2, 10; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11. It is found only here in 2 Timothy, and once in Titus 1:1. The form of the words is not always the same, but the meaning carries through. *Remember that it speaks of a person who has been attracted to God, who has a desire to please God, and even to be like God. Such a person will exhibit a real love for the Lord, and his or her life will be characterized by worship and piety.* We all should be godly, but what a tragedy it is when people are satisfied with “the form,” but deny the power of godliness.

This word “form” suggests that the outward appearance is not consistent with the inner condition of the heart. It is the worst kind of hypocrisy. And yet millions of people are satisfied to go through the motions of worship whose hearts have not been changed. The form means everything to them; a vital relationship with God is something about which they know nothing. And the Gospel of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ is often looked upon as narrow and inconsistent with kindness toward others.

People are inclined to believe that a church is a church, and that all pastors are devoted to the ministry of the Word of God, but that never has been the case, and the deception will be even greater “in the last days.” There will be a denial of what the Bible teaches about Christ, and a denial of the Bible itself -- claiming that Jesus was a great man, but not the Son of God; that the Bible is a great piece of literature, but not the Word of God; that the Holy Spirit is some kind of an influence, but not that He is a real Person and a Member of the Godhead.

Most of us have seen an increasing evidence during our lives of what Paul was saying here. The move away

from God and Christ and the Bible and the Gospel has not been overnight, but at the present time it has gone farther than any of us expected that it would years ago. Who would ever have thought that there would be those in professing Christian churches who would defend abortions, and defend homosexuals, even ordaining some of them to the ministry?

But please note that Paul did not encourage Timothy to try to reform such people. He was to “turn away” from them. Many sincere Christians have tried to stay with their apostate denominations in the hope of changing them back, but they always find that this is not possible. It is too bad that they didn’t turn to the Word to find out what to do; it would have saved them a lot of time and dashed hopes. What we need to do is what Paul told Timothy in the latter part of chapter 3 and the beginning of chapter 4. He was not to contend with the false teachers, but he was to continue obeying the Word in his own life, and to continue to preach the Word which he had been commissioned to preach. And this is exactly what we need to be doing today. We can’t do away with the enemy. God will do that in His own time. But we are to preach the Word, trusting the Lord to use it for His glory in the salvation of the lost and the building up of the people of God.

April 1, 1996

However, such a statement as this (along with all of the other statements which precede it in verses 1 through 4 should cause us to search our own hearts to make sure that we are as devoted to God and to Christ and to the Holy Spirit as we want people to think that we are. Is our faith in Christ real? Is it a growing faith? Are we really devoted to God and to His will? To use the word which Paul has used, is “godliness” the primary desire of our hearts? Living in “perilous times” means that we need to be constantly on guard against anything that would cause our love for the Lord to decrease in any way and for any reason.

3:6 Obviously Paul was thinking of the Jewish teachers he had been describing throughout these pastoral epistles, men who taught a relationship with God which depended upon works and even family background, but who had no place for Christ in their teaching, nor for the Gospel of the grace of God. But one thing Paul could say about them was that they were diligent. But they were also deceptive. He said that “they ... creep into houses.”

The word “creep” goes along with the idea of the “form” Paul was speaking about in verse 5. This actually is a word which was commonly used for *putting on a garment*. It suggests that they get into people’s homes under false pretenses -- like cult members today who don’t begin by telling you that they are Mormons or Jehovah’s Witnesses. And most of the time they won’t tell you unless you ask them. They hope to win your interest first. They “creep” in.

What is their primary target? “Silly women.” Lit. it means *little women*. It is hard to know exactly what Paul meant when he used this word, but we know that the Devil in the beginning attacked Eve with his subtle suggestions questioning the Word of God. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians he had this to say about Eve:

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11:3).

But notice that in the case of the women that Paul was speaking about, they were “laden with sins.” This means that they were women who were carrying a heavy load of guilt because of their sins. They had been “led away with divers lusts.” This made them especially susceptible to any religious teacher who might come along. And it seems to be one of the tricks of Satan to get to the men through the women.

But what was the result? We see it in verse 7:

3:7 They were “ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” There is only One who can cleanse us from our sins. There is only One Who can forgive us and cleanse us from all that has defiled us. That One is God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is Christ Who has put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. See Heb. 9:26. A false teacher will teach many things, but he never brings people to the truth. And this is the great tragedy of it all. Paul was suggesting here that “the last days” will be “perilous times” to a major degree because with the increase of ungodliness in its many forms, there will also be a flood of false teaching that will lead people farther and farther away from the truth. And these false teachers will continue on in their folly even though many of them have had some exposure to the truth, and some have previously followed the truth, but only as a “form.”

3:8 Paul’s illustration of what he was talking about is seen in two men who are not mentioned in the book of Exodus, nor anywhere else in the Old Testament. However, Geoffrey Wilson has this to say about these two men in his commentary:

Although their names are not given in the Old Testament record, they were preserved by Jewish tradition, with which Paul was familiar through his rabbinical training under Gamaliel (p. 153).

And so it is thought that verses like Exodus 7:11 and 22 were speaking of Jannes and Jambres:

Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments (Ex. 7:11)

And then after Moses and Aaron turned the water into blood, we read this in Ex. 7:22:

And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.

These men “withstood Moses.” They took a stand against Moses. They opposed him. It was not that they had no contact with the truth. They knew Moses. They heard what he had to say. But they had no place for the truth in their hearts. *They were reprobates!* What does this mean? It means that they were rejected by God, castaways. They stood condemned by the truth. They were “men of corrupt minds.” They were depraved in their minds and incapable of understanding the truth. Paul gave a true picture of Jannes and Jambres in Eph. 4:18-19:

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

It takes a work of God to enable anyone to understand the Gospel, but when people have been exposed to the truth and then turn away from it, the light that they have had becomes darkness, and the darkness is impenetrable! Cf. Matt. 6:23b: “If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

3:9 The time came when Jannes and Jambres could not do what Moses and Aaron did. And in no case were they able to undo what Moses and Aaron did. They only made the judgments worse when they could do what they did. But the time came in the contest Moses and Aaron had with Jannes and Jambres when it as evident that God was with Moses and Aaron, *and the truth of the Lord prevailed.*

This statement was intended to be an encouragement to Timothy. It might look for a time like error will prevail, and it does with some people. But ultimately it is the truth of God, the truth of the Gospel which prevails. Remember what Paul said in 2 Cor. 13:8: “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.” And many years before Solomon wrote in Prov. 21:30, “There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.”

Paul’s own experience was proof of this. Even though he had been one of the greatest enemies the Gospel ever

had, yet he finally was overcome by the power of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. And with this Paul again used himself as an encouragement to Timothy and as a basis for what he would tell Timothy to do as he brought this final epistle to a close.

3:10 There was a great deal in Paul's mind when he made the statement that he did at the beginning of this verse. It was not just that Timothy had made it his business to know all that he could about the Apostle Paul, but that he had made it his business to follow the Apostle Paul in his own life and ministry. Paul was Timothy's example of what it meant not just to be a servant of the Lord, but of what it meant to be a Christian. There are not many of us who would feel that we could say that Paul said to the church at Philippi in Phil. 4:9: Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

The more I think about that statement, the more amazing it is to me. Paul certainly would not take credit to himself for what he was; he always gave all of the glory to God. But nevertheless, he had followed the Lord well and had served him well. Could we tell those whom we teach that if they believe what we believe, and if they become what we have become, and if they will live as we live, that "the God of peace" shall be with them? We can probably say that about what we believe, but what about the other two points -- what we are, and the way we live? We need to be continually sharpening our understanding of the truth, but also seeking by the grace of God to be as much like the Lord Jesus as we can so that our lives will demonstrate how much we love the Lord, how much we are trusting Him day after day, and how much we want Him to be glorified in our lives.

To Timothy Paul was saying, "You have listened carefully to all that I have taught. You have seen how I live. You have clearly seen what my purpose in life has been." This word is usually used in Scripture to refer to the purpose of God. And so we must assume that Paul was saying, "You have seen how I have made the purpose of God, the will of God, my purpose and my will."

And then Paul went on: "You have seen how I have trusted the Lord throughout my life. You have seen how longsuffering I have been. You have seen how I have manifested love to both my friends and my enemies, and most of all to God. You have seen my patience."

Archbishop Trench has a lengthy discussion of the words "longsuffering" and "patience" in his book, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, pp. 195 ff. He says that "longsuffering" has to do mainly with people, but that "patience" has to do with our reaction to trials. A longsuffering person does not give way to anger. He is "not easily provoked," if provoked at all. We have this word appearing in 2 Tim. 4:2. "Patience," on the other hand, speaks of the person who does not lose heart or give way to discouragement as he faces the trials of his life. Trench says that David was an example of "longsuffering" (μακροθυμία); Job of "patience" (ὑπομονή). Timothy had looked for and found both of these qualities in Paul's life.

The remainder of the list is found in verse 11.

3:11 Timothy had seen Paul in times when he was being persecuted, and when he was under "afflictions," or pressures. We do not live in a world where we are sheltered from troubles and trials, but they come to us as they do to everyone else. And we have to deal with them. The question is, how will we deal with them?

Perhaps the reason Paul saved these to the last was because we can only behave in a godly way when we are being persecuted and when we are under the pressure which afflictions bring upon us, if the preceding traits of character have been properly developed in daily living.

Paul mentioned Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra as places where the Lord had taught him some of his greatest

lessons as a child of God. What happened in these places?

- 1) "At Antioch" (see Antioch in Pisidia, Acts 13:45-49). Here Paul, instead of becoming angry with the Jews, realized that the Lord was opening the door to the Gentiles.
- 2) "At Iconium" (see Acts 14:1-7). Here they say the hand of the Lord indicating that they should go on to Lystra and Derbe.
- 3) "At Lystra" (see Acts 14:19-23). The persecution was the worst in Lystra, but this led to a return to Iconium and Antioch where they confirmed the souls of those who had been saved as a result of the work that had been done in the two preceding places where they had been.

From the way that Paul spoke of the outcome of his persecution and afflictions in those places, it would seem that he survived and was able to persevere because of the hand of the Lord upon him. And then Paul made a further statement in verse 12.

3:12 Godliness is pleasing to God, and it is desirable to every true child of God -- although more desirable to some than to others. Our hearts have been drawn to the Lord. We love Him, and we want to please Him. And we want to be like His Son which is the goal of our salvation. *But godliness is not favored by the world.* And note that Paul was not speaking here about those who have just "a form of godliness," as in verse 5 above, but of those who "live godly in Christ Jesus." It is their relationship to Christ Jesus with which the world has the most trouble. The more we seek to please the Lord, the more we will displease the world. And believers will not be able to go and leave the persecutors behind, but those bent on doing away with the Gospel will *pursue* the Lord's people to persecute them (pursuing is an idea inherent in the word persecute). But what can we expect? Will the situation improve with the advance of the Gospel? The answer to that question is given in verse 13. (Read.) According to verse 13 things will not get better throughout "the last days," but it will get worse, and then worse yet.

3:13 "Evil men" are the opposite of *righteous men*. The book of Proverbs gives us many statements about evil, or "wicked men." For example, listen to these words:

14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence (Prov. 4:14-17).

The word that Paul used here for "evil" is a word which means that the effect of what they do is bad, harmful. It indicates that they are morally degenerate, and the passage in Proverbs describes perfectly their attitude toward life and people. It is hard for the majority of people to understand how some people can take such pleasure in harming and killing others, but we have to face the fact that there are people like this in the world. This kind of activity is going to continue, and it is going to increase, right through "the last days." "Evil men" are not just men of violence, but they are deceivers who themselves are deceived, whether they know it or not. False teachers are "wicked men." They are "seducers." There is the idea in this word that *sorcery* may be one of the major problems the people of God will have to contend with in "the last days."

All of this prepares the way for the Apostle Paul to say what he has to say about the Word of God, about Timothy's relationship to the Word in his own personal life, and the primary place that the Word of God is to have in his ministry. The tendency even among many who claim to be the people of God is that such terrible conditions call for types of ministry which are different from what we read that the apostles did in the early church. But Paul's words to Timothy clearly indicate that what we need is not a new approach, but we need to continue on, and to improve, in what the servants of the Lord have always done. So let us move on now to verse 14.

April 8, 1996

3:14 Having said what he had said about false teachers, the translation of this verse could very accurately begin, "But as for you..." Timothy was not to be turned away from the Word of God by anyone!

Cf. 1:13. Here it would seem that Paul was exhorting Timothy to "continue" living as he had been living as well as to continue believing and teaching what had been his message up to this time. How wonderfully the Lord had prepared Timothy. Paul did not have any change to suggest to him. And that which was to be a constant source of encouragement to him was to remember those who had taught him. This would have included not only the Apostle Paul, but also Timothy's mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. And we do not know how many more had contributed to his understanding of the Holy Scriptures. Most of us can thank the Lord when we remember those who have taught us anything from the Word of God. And we need to remember this as far as those who are younger than we are in age and in the Lord. The Word of God survives from generation to generation, but God has ordained that one generation teaches the next. May God enable us to be as faithful as men and women have been who have taught us. And we have a special reason to praise the Lord if we have had parents who faithfully taught us the Word of God, and who took us to churches where others could teach us as well.

A word of warning is fitting here. When we speak of churches, we always need to be careful that those who are teaching are children are people who are teaching them the Word of God.

3:15 If it is true (as it seems to be) that Timothy actually came to Christ under the ministry of Paul, yet we cannot overlook the importance of what his grandmother and his mother had planted in his heart. The word "child" here can mean *an infant*, but for sure it means that as a very young child Timothy's mother and grandmother had taught him the Word of God. So he had had it all of his life. He was well acquainted with the OT Scriptures and the truth which they contained even though he may not have been saved until later in life when the Holy Spirit used Paul to bring him to the Savior.

We need to remember this in teaching our children today. We need to pray and teach and pray and teach, and as we pray and teach we need to trust the Spirit of God to do His work in the hearts of our children. It is only through the Scriptures that anyone is made wise unto salvation. No one is ever born again except by the Word of God. Cf. 1 Pet. 1:23. And so it is absolutely imperative that we teach our children (and everyone else) the Word of God. Children's Bible story books have their place, but there is no substitute for the Word of God itself. And as we teach, we need to teach what Timothy's mother and grandmother evidently taught him, followed by the ministry of the Apostle Paul, that no one is saved who has not believed "in Christ Jesus." The Name of the Lord that Paul used here speaks of both His Deity and His Humanity.

Timothy did not live in days of Bible schools and theological seminaries. Much teaching was done in the homes, and it was continued in the churches. And there were not a lot of books available to help them in their understanding of the Word, such as we have today, and so a great deal of emphasis was placed upon the reading the Word of God. You may remember that in 1 Tim. 4:13 Paul wrote these words to Timothy: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." People did not have Bibles in those days, and so they were inclined to pay special attention to the public reading of the Word of God. "Exhortation" and "doctrine" followed. We have a suggestion in this verse of what took place when people gathered in local churches. The Scriptures were read, first of all, then explained, or taught, and finally applied. The application was the exhortation. And even though we all have Bibles today, we probably need to get back to more of the public reading of Scripture. God intends that we get our greatest blessing from reading the Word itself.

Now, having said that, Paul went on to say why the Word of God is so important.

3:16 The one fact that gives the Bible its power and its endurance is that it is “given by inspiration of God.”

These five words are the translation of one word in the Greek: θεόπνευστος. Lit. translated it means, *God-breathed*. This means that all Scripture is the Word of God. The words we speak are breathed out by us. I can say that your words are you-breathed, and you can say the same to me. What I am saying right now I am breathing out to you.

However, when God speaks it is a different thing. Sometimes He spoke directly, and we have His words as direct quotations in both the Old and New Testaments. The same is true of our Lord’s words. But much of what has been written have been given to us as words from Moses or David or Isaiah, or, going into the NT, through Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and all of the other NT writers. And this is what gives the Word of God its power.

Many years ago now a book was written by a professor of systematic theology in Geneva, Switzerland. His name was Gaussen. His book does not carry his first name, but the initial was “L.” The title of his book was *Theopneustia*, and the subtitle was, *The Plenary Inspiration of The Holy Scriptures*. It was one of our texts when I was in seminary, and as far as I know it is still the leading book on the subject of the inspiration of Scripture. I believe that it was originally written in French, and it has been translated into English and into many other languages as well.

Guy King quoted from *Theopneustia* in his commentary on 2 Timothy. I looked for the quotation in my copy of *Theopneustia*, but could not find it (it is a rather large book), and so I am going to quote from Guy King’s book. But the words are from Dr. Gaussen. This is the quotation. Speaking of the writers of Scripture, this is what he said:

Whether they recite the mysteries of a past more ancient than creation, or those of a future more remote than the coming again of the Son of Man, or the eternal counsels of the Most High, or the secrets of man’s heart, or the deep things of GOD--whether they describe their own emotions, or relate what they remember, or repeat contemporary narratives, or copy over genealogies, or make extracts from uninspired documents--their writing is inspired, their narratives are directed from above; it is always GOD Who speaks, Who relates, Who ordains or reveals by their mouth, and Who, in order to do this, employs their personality... They give their narratives, their doctrines, or their commandments, ‘not with the words of man’s wisdom, but with the words taught by the Holy Spirit (Quoted by Guy King in *To My Son*, p. 106).

And Guy King himself made this helpful comment:

God’s word is GOD-breathed, through human instrumentality, conditioned by the shape and size and sort of the human medium. Whatever inspiration is, it does not abrogate the personality and peculiarity of the channel. It is always GOD’s breath, GOD’s Word, but shaped by man’s gifts and qualities--Moses and Amos are so utterly different, the style of Paul and John could never be mistaken for one another, yet each of these, and all of them, are but the vehicles of GOD’s voice, GOD’s message (pp. 105, 106).

The Bible really makes no attempt to explain just how all of this happened. It states here that it is a GOD-breathed message, and leaves it at that. The Apostle Peter did add to our understanding of the inspiration of Scripture when he wrote,

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21).

And what these men have said in seeking to explain the meaning of θεόπνευστος applies equally to all parts of the Bible, and down to the very words that the writers of Scripture used. The Bible itself is one of the greatest of God’s miracles, and is different from any other book that has ever been written, different also from

any other book that shall be written in the future. I trust that there is no hesitation in any of our hearts about believing that the Bible is the verbal, plenary Word of the living God.

Cf. Heb. 4:12,

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

It is no wonder that Paul rejoiced over the reception that the church in Thessalonica had given to the Scriptures. Notice his words in 1 Thess. 2:13:

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

“And is profitable.” We should not be surprised to read this after Paul has said what we are to believe about the Scriptures. What did he mean that the Scriptures are “profitable”? Calvin said that God has given us His Word “to do us good.” But it must be used for the purposes God intended it to have when He gave it. And, Calvin added, we must use it in a profitable manner if we are to please God. He said that God did not give His Word to us to satisfy our curiosity, nor to make us proud, nor just to provide something for us to talk about, but “to do us good.” It does us good in this life, and it does us good for eternity. No one is ever made worse by the Word of God unless they reject it; it always will be profitable for us when used as God intended for it to be used.

Here Paul mentioned *four uses* that the Word is to have which make it profitable for us. And I want you to notice that one of the four is doctrinal; the other three are practical.

- 1) “For doctrine” -- That is, for *teaching*. In Paul’s letter to the church at Rome, chapter 15, verse 4, he had this to say about the OT Scriptures:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written **for our learning**, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Any pastor who knows 2 Tim. 3:16 will never feel that he has to apologize to anyone for teaching the great doctrines of the faith. The Bible is our source of knowledge about God, about all of the Members of the Godhead. We have been reminded in our recent Bible Conference how important it is to know the attributes of God; or, as Frank James described them, *the perfections of God*. We learn from the Bible that God is sovereign in all things, and that He is working all things out in accordance with His own will. It brings peace to our hearts as we dwell upon the greatness, the majesty of our God. The Scriptures tell us about His holiness, His power, His wisdom, His grace, His love, His faithfulness, His eternal and unchanging nature.

The Bible tells us about ourselves. It shows us our spiritual need, our need of salvation, our need for the forgiveness of our sins. And what blessings await us as we learn the great doctrines of our salvation: justification, sanctification, and glorification. We see in the Word our need to grow in grace once we are saved. It shows us the hand of God in the past, the present, and the future. We are not going to understand the practical exhortations of Scripture unless we have a good foundation in the great doctrines of Scripture.

Fausset said in his commentary on 2 Timothy, “Thus, theology is complete in Scripture” (VI, 511). We must not go beyond Scripture, nor can we neglect any part of Scripture. And the more “the man of God”

gives Himself to the Word, to know it, to believe it, and to live by it, the more he will find himself prepared for the work that the Lord has called him to do. Doctrine is the foundation upon which godly living is to be established.

- 2) "For reproof" -- The Bible explains to us what sin is. It shows us what is displeasing to God. It also helps us to see when our beliefs are in error. Thayer says that the Scriptures *censure* us both concerning false doctrine and ungodly living. It tells us when things are not right in our lives. This is one major reason that the Word is "profitable."
- 3) "For correction" -- The Word does not just tell us what is wrong in our lives, but it shows us how to get things straightened out. It restores us to a right state in our faith, in our lives, and even in our character.
- 4) "For instruction in righteousness" -- Paul here must mean practical righteousness. The word for instruction is παιδεία. Thayer says that it takes in "*the whole training and education of children*" (p. 473). But it also applies to the cultivation of our spiritual lives as long as we live. There is everything to learn when we first are saved. Often the Lord has to chasten us. Paul used this word in Heb. 12:5, 7 ff. We often have attitudes toward others which need to be corrected. We can so easily be proud, and we need to be humbled. The result of Job's trials brought him to see the Lord as he had never seen him before, and to abhor himself and repent in dust and ashes. And it is the Word which helps us to understand the ways of the Lord, and to be able to see, at least in part, why He does what He does the way He does it. And parents are instructed in Eph. 6:4 to bring their children up "in **the nurture** (the same word) and admonition of the Lord."

Timothy was to teach all of this to others about the Scriptures, but the emphasis here is upon Timothy, his life and his character as a child of God. He was to make the application always primarily to himself. If his ministry to others was to be powerfully used by God, he had to turn the Word upon his own heart first, learn what the Lord was seeking to teach him, and then to make whatever changes in his life that needed to be made.

The object is even more clearly stated in the last verse of chapter 3, which we come to now.

3:17 In 1 Tim. 6:11 Paul called Timothy a "man of God." This was a very common expression in the OT for the prophets, but it is only used twice in the NT, and both of them were used by Paul in referring to Timothy. It was the Shunemite woman who paid the highest compliment to Elisha that can be paid to anyone when she said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually" (2 Kings 4:9).

What does it mean to be "a man of God"? Obviously it was used of the prophets of the OT to describe them as men who were devoting their lives to serve the Lord, but it also can be applied to any believer. But for it to mean something, this title would describe a person who lives in such a way as to show that he belongs to the Lord, that he wants to live for the Lord, and that he delights in serving the Lord. And yet the Lord's work in the heart of one who is truly a "man of God" never ends.

April 9, 1996

He needs to be "perfect." The Greek word is ἄριστος. The NKJV translates it as meaning *complete*. And this is the meaning given to it by Trench who has made the following comment on the word:

If we ask ourselves under what special aspects completeness is contemplated in ἄριστος, it would be safe to answer that it is not as the presence only of all the parts which are necessary for that completeness, but involves further the adaptation and aptitude of these parts for the ends which they are designed to serve. The man of God, St. Paul would say (2 Tim. iii. 17), should

be furnished and accomplished with all which is necessary for the carrying out of the work to which he is appointed (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, p. 77).

The great truth that Paul expressed here concerning the Word of God is that by the Word of God a man is thoroughly equipped and trained to use all that he will find necessary to live the life and to do the work that the Lord has called him and appointed him to do. We must look, not upon the man of God himself, but upon what God has done and will do in his life through the Word of God. The Holy Spirit works in our hearts through the Word of God, and He also equips us to use the Word of God in ministering to others.

Perhaps I could explain what I understand to be the meaning of what Paul wrote here by this kind of an illustration. If a man is going to be a cabinet maker, he not only needs to have the right tools, and good tools, but he needs to know how to use them. The same must be said about an electrician, or a man who is putting in formica or linoleum. You can have the finest tools, but if you don't know how to use them, what good are they? A craftsman of any kind has not only to have the right tools, but he has to know when and how to use each one.

God has given us the most perfect tool that it is possible for us to have. It is the Word of God. The main difference about the Word is that it is through the Word that we are prepared to be what we should be, and to know how to do the work of the Lord, and then to do it. The Word of God is absolutely indispensable for each one of us. It teaches us, it reproves us, it corrects us, it is always giving us further instruction in what it means to be a righteous person and to do the work of the Lord in the Lord's way. How important it is, then, that the Word of God should be read every day. We need to carry it in our hearts so we can be thinking about it constantly. We need to be obedient to the Word. It is through obedience that we become holy. And it is holy people God uses to do His work. But it is interesting that our ability and our equipment are both to be derived from the Word of God. We don't need to go beyond the Word.

It is through the Word of God and prayer that God equips us and prepares us for whatever He has for us to do. This is the greatest need today. It is tragic that we all are so prone to forget this basic truth. God has given us the equipment to serve Him. He has given us a Book which is not only to be preached to others, but which is to affect us and the way we live. *And it is all to be found between the covers of this precious book which is the only book which can be described as the Word of God.*

At the risk of being accused of saying the same thing over and over, let me remind you again that while the Pastoral Epistles are very valuable for any man going into the ministry, yet he (in this case, Timothy) was not just to learn all of this for himself, but his life was to be an example for the people to follow. He needed to know doctrine; the people under his ministry needed to know doctrine. He needed to submit to the reproofs of Scripture, and so did the people under his ministry. He needed to submit to the correction of Scripture, and lead his people to do the same. And finally he needed to continue to learn all of his life, and to encourage his people to do the same.

And so, while these are pastoral epistles, they are also for every child of God. Paul was seeking to guide Timothy so he would know how to lead his people wherever he might be. And what we have here has never been revised. It is still as vital for the work of the Lord today as it was almost 2,000 years ago. And so it is important for all of us to remember that if we are to see the blessing of the Lord, we must do the Lord's work in the Lord's way, and it always has to be for His glory.

The Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Timothy

2 Timothy 4:1-8

April 15, 1996

V. Paul's Charge to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:1-8).

It is very apparent, as we come to this point in the epistle, that the Apostle Paul had reached the high point of his epistle, and was just about finished with what he had to say to Timothy. He had instructed Timothy as to the nature of his ministry as well as the dangers to be avoided and some of the trials to be expected. The force of Paul's words would lead us to feel that Timothy was not as courageous as he might have been. This did not disqualify him from the ministry, but made it necessary for him to seek by God's grace to measure up to all that would be required of him as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so this last chapter begins with a *charge*.

4:1 "I charge thee therefore..."

What is a *charge*?

As Paul used the word here, it was a solemn command by which Paul was laying upon Timothy the responsibility of fulfilling the work to which God had appointed him. *Paul was speaking here with apostolic authority.* We have seen that Paul had used this word before in his letters to Timothy, but this was the most solemn of all. It would forever remove from Timothy's mind any idea that he might have of introducing something new into the work of the Lord. Paul was putting him under a solemn obligation to do the Lord's work in the Lord's way. The oath that the President of the United States takes to fulfill his office as the constitution requires is a very solemn oath to take. But that is nothing compared with the charge a servant of the Lord receives. This is the highest and holiest calling that can ever be given to a man. It would be interesting to know how these words affected Timothy as he read them.

When Paul said, "I charge thee," that would have been enough to make Timothy realize how important it was to do the Lord's work in the right way. Paul, the apostle, as he said in his letter to the Galatian churches, "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead" (Gal. 1:1). So Paul was under authority just as he was placing Timothy under authority, and that authority was not to any group of men, nor to any single man, but to "Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead." Paul was responsible to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ to charge Timothy to do the will of God just as much as it would be Timothy's responsibility, by the grace of God, to carry on the work of the Lord doing what Paul had done: the will of God.

But Paul was not just charging Timothy *on behalf of* God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, but *in the very presence of* God, and the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the idea in the word "before." God is very concerned about the ministry of His servants, and the Lord Jesus Christ shares His concern with Him. So Paul was seeking to impress upon Timothy's mind that his primary responsibility was not to Paul the Apostle, **but to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ.** The presence of these two Members of the Godhead was a very great reality to Paul even in his confinement in a Roman prison. God was not only looking on, but He was listening to the charge, looking into the heart of Timothy to see his response.

These three words, "before the LORD," are used over and over again, especially in the earlier books of the OT. For example, when Aaron the priest was told to put on the breastplate, this is what was said,

And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in **before the LORD:** and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart **before the LORD** continually (Ex. 28:30).

Here is another illustration. When the children of Israel brought a burnt offering to be sacrificed to the Lord, this is what Moses told them:

If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation **before the LORD** (Lev. 1:3).

April 16, 1996

This phrase is used some 272 times in the OT, most of which have to do with being in the presence of the Lord, recognizing that He is always with us, and we that we are to do what we do each day knowing that the Lord is *with us*, and that His eye is always upon us.

So Paul was giving Timothy this charge “before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” In 1 Tim. 5:21 Paul added “the elect angels” when he was charging Timothy concerning his own obedience. It is to be expected that the holy angels were also observing the charge given here in 1 Tim. 4:1. The Apostle Peter said in his first epistle about what the OT prophets had written, that “the angels desire to look into” them. Cf. 1 Pet. 1:12. And notice also what Paul wrote to the Ephesian church in Eph. 3:8-10:

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

10 **To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.**

If the charge to preach the Word of God is attended to by God the Father, by the Lord Jesus Christ, and even by the elect angels (too numerous for any of us to count), what an awesome event this was, not only in Timothy and Paul’s lives, but even for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It would seem that there is no event on earth that is more solemn, nor more significant, than when a man called of God is receiving a charge to “preach the Word.”

The solemnity of this charge is brought out by the fact that Timothy and all others who are called to preach the Word (even the Apostle Paul) will one day stand before the Lord to give an account to Him of the way we have served Him. The Apostle Paul says that the Lord will “judge” us, all of us, “the quick and the dead,” the redeemed and the unredeemed. But one thing to which the Lord will give special attention in that day, will be how we have handled the Word of God, and the place we have given it in our ministries. The idea of judging is that the Lord will examine the evidence of our lives, and that He will either reward or not reward, depending upon the nature of a man’s ministry.

This is a good place to remind ourselves of what the Holy Spirit said through James in Jas. 3:1:

My brethren, be not many masters [teachers], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

The NASB translates it this way:

Let not many {of you} become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.

Paul did not attempt to be specific here about the order of the judgments, but simply and very solemnly to set before Timothy, and all of us, that there will be a judgment when the Lord comes, and He is the One Who will determine the value or the unprofitableness of our work.

The same thing applies to all of us as the people of God. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:9-10:

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Such statements in Scripture are not intended to frighten us, nor to keep us from serving the Lord, but to make us more diligent, and so we will make sure that we are doing the Lord's work in the Lord's way for His glory. As I have said before, *none of us has the right to make the work of the Lord what we think that it should be; we are to make it what the Lord intends that it should be.*

The Lord is sovereignly ruling now in the affairs of all men -- in both the world and the church. But the day is coming when He will come to reign upon the earth, and then everyone, will recognize that He is the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

But what is the charge? For this we go to verse 2 of this fourth chapter of 2 Timothy.

4:2 When we have ordination services today where we set men apart for the work of the ministry, it is customary to give the man being ordained *a charge*. That practice arises out of this passage. And every ordaining council needs to make sure that we give the same charge today that Paul gave to Timothy so long ago. And I would point out to you that the charge is not just limited to the first three words, although they are extremely important. The charge includes all that we have here in verse 2. Let us look at it in detail.

"Preach the Word" -- Notice that this is *a command*, and not merely a suggestion nor just a good idea as one possibility for a man in the ministry. Nothing is ever to take the place of the preaching of the Word of God. The emphasis is upon the public proclamation of the Word of God. This is the preacher's message: the Word of God. He is not to be an entertainer. He is not to be a political activist. He is not to delve into human psychology or philosophy (except to expose the error of all that is contrary to the Word of God. *He is to be a preacher, a preacher of what God has revealed to us in His Word.*

And if a servant of the Lord is to preach it, he must know it. And there is no other way for him to know it than to be diligent in studying it under the direction and teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. No servant of the Lord has ever known all that it is possible to know of the Word of God. That is why every servant of the Lord can look forward to a life-long study of this precious Book. Nothing is ever to replace the Word. I don't think many realize how tragic it is, nor how alarming it should be to all of us, that it is getting harder and harder to find churches where the Word of God is preached. Thayer said in his lexicon that this charge is always to be accepted and carried out "with a suggestion of formality, gravity, and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed" (p. 346).

When Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthian church, he had much to say about the ministry which God had given to him. Let me read what he said because it is extremely important that in the church today we do what he did. (**Read 1 Cor. 1:17-25; 2:1-13.**)

But let us go on with Paul's charge to Timothy. The Word of God is to be preached, and it can be done if just one other person is the audience, or hundreds of people. It is not the number of people which determines if a preacher is obeying his charge; it is the message which he proclaims. People need to know the Word, and that knowledge is to be conveyed to them by preaching.

And this preaching is to be done "in season, out of season." And Paul used the verb, "be instant." This suggests that the servant of the Lord should be ready, should be prepared, and that with a feeling of urgency, to preach the Word, not just on the Lord's Day, nor just when services have been planned, but *always*, "in season,

out of season.” This means, when it is wanted, and even when it is not wanted. When it is not wanted, the Lord’s servant may not have much time to say what he has to say, but he needs to say it anyway.

You will remember that in chapter 2, verse 5, Paul likened the work of a servant of the Lord to a runner. Think of sports for a moment. We have a season which we call *the track season*. We are just now at the beginning of *the baseball season*, and we are finishing up with *the basketball season*. As we get on toward the Fall we will be facing another *football season*. All of these have their time during the year. But this is not true of the preaching of the Gospel and the teaching of the Word. There may be times when men want to hear it, or when they do not want to hear it, but there is never a time when the servant of the Lord should not be ready, prepared, eager to preach and teach the Word of God. *The preaching and teaching of the Word of God is “in season” three hundred and sixty-five days out of every year, and twenty-four hours out of every day.* The people of the world (some of them) will tolerate speaking about the birth of Christ at Christmas, but the rest of the year it is “out of season” for them. They may tolerate hearing about the death and resurrection of our Lord at Easter, but it is “out of season” the rest of the year. But for the church and for the servant of the Lord, *the preaching and teaching of the Word of God is always “in season.”*

So, in times of peace and in times of war, in times of prosperity and in times of scarcity, in times of health and in times of sickness, it is not only right to minister the Word, but absolutely imperative that the Word be preached.

And in so doing, the Word *rebukes*, and so the servant of the Lord needs to rebuke. The Word of God *reproves*, and so the servant of the Lord must reprove. The word of God *exhorts*, and so the servant of the Lord must exhort. And all that he does he is to do “with all longsuffering and doctrine. Let us make sure we understand what Paul was saying here.

We learned in verse 16 of chapter 3 that the Word of God is “profitable...for reproof.” The Word convicts. This is one of its many purposes. It shows people their sins, and calls upon them to change. The servant of the Lord is to “rebuke.” This amounts to a warning. Both believers and unbelievers need to heed the warnings of Scripture. The disobedience of Christians can provoke the judgment of the Lord, such as, sickness and death which could be the penalty for coming to the Lord’s table in the wrong way. Or think of the eternal consequences of rejecting Christ and the message of the Gospel. Rebuking is never pleasant, but it is very necessary in the ministry of the Word.

All of this is not to be done in a harsh and vindictive way, but “with all longsuffering and doctrine.” The word that Paul used here for “longsuffering” is the Greek word, μακροθυμία. Newport White says in his commentary on 2 Timothy in The Expositor’s Greek Testament, Vol. Four, p. 176, that “all longsuffering and doctrine” “qualifies each of the three preceding imperatives.” He translates the four words as meaning “*with the utmost patience and the most painstaking instruction.*” We are always to minister in humility; never in pride. Nor are we to give people the idea that we take any pleasure in God’s judgment upon the wicked, nor upon His discipline of His people. We need to have tender hearts remembering our own frailty and how prone we are to displease the Lord. Paul’s word to the Corinthian church on this point is a good word for all of us to take to heart. He was speaking of the judgments that God brought on the children of Israel on their journey from Egypt to Canaan. This is what he wrote:

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:11-12).

So we need to couple what we have in this verse with what Paul had written earlier to Timothy in chapter 2, verses 24-26. (Read.)

Great wisdom needs to be exercised when it comes to reproof and rebuking, and it always must be done in a spirit of love. What Solomon said about rebuking is good for us to remember. Here are some of his words:

Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee (Prov. 9:8).

A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke (Prov. 13:1).

Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die (Prov. 15:10).

How important it is for all of us to be submissive to God and to His Word. It is in listening to the Word of God that sinners will learn about salvation, and, hopefully, in the providence and grace of God, come to Christ. And it is in listening to and obeying the Word of God that believers will experience the greatest fellowship with the Lord and the outpouring of His blessings from day to day.

But every servant of the Lord needs to remember that this is *the charge* for all who have been called by God to serve him in the ministry. May God cause all of us to be submissive to His Word, and ready to make the changes in our lives that the Word of God teaches us to make.

April 22, 1996

4:3 The foregoing instruction and charge for Timothy in view of what Paul knew was going to happen. It would be wonderful if people would always be receptive to the truth, but that was not the case then, and it is not the case today. However, when Paul said that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine," he was speaking of a time in the then near future when it would become a major problem in the Lord's work. People would not "endure," *not put up with*, sound doctrine.

With a little thought we should be able to see that Paul was actually admonishing Timothy to take advantage of the situation they were facing in those days before the opposition to the preaching of the Word would increase. How thankful we all should be when the hearts of people are receptive to the Word of God! Such a situation does not always remain, and so we need to take advantage of good times for the Word because bad times will most always come.

What is "sound doctrine"? "Sound" is a word in Greek which is used to describe a healthy body. So sound doctrine is doctrine which is free from any mixture of error. And to be free from error, teaching has to be in full agreement with the Word of God.

We have this same word in 1 Tim. 6:3 where we find these words:

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to **wholesome** words, even the words of our Lord

Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness.

So this gives us a better idea of what Paul had in mind. The truth of the Word of God, or, as in 1 Tim. 6:3, "the words of our Lord Jesus Christ," are teachings which produce godliness in the lives of those who hear and believe and submit to the teaching. Unhealthy teaching produces unhealthy lives, ungodly lives. A man's teaching may sound very religious, but if it is not in agreement with Scripture, it is unhealthy and corrupting.

And here is a very strange situation. Paul anticipated the time when the students would tell the teacher what to teach. I had a man say about me several years ago, "If Dwight won't teach what we want him to teach, let's get somebody who will!" This is the attitude that Paul was speaking about. Anyone who hears the teaching of Scripture should seek to be discerning, but once a person knows that what is being taught is Scripture, then there should be full acceptance of the teaching. If people are not willing to accept the teaching of the Word of God, then they are perfectly free to move on. But Paul was speaking of people who were not satisfied with the Word and, instead of moving on, were intent on changing the teaching of the church. When this happens, you

have an increase in the number of teachers who, as Chrysostom said, who have been “elected by their disciples.”

The word “heap” suggests that the people who do not want the truth will have no trouble in finding teachers who will teach what people want them to teach. There are always crowd-pleasers around. They are often motivated by a desire for money, or for the popularity which usually brings money. I am afraid that a minimum of people go to church today to learn what the Word of God teaches. They go for the excitement, for the entertainment. They go where the preacher is going to make them feel good about themselves. And there are lots of men who will cater to that sort of a desire. Church becomes more a matter of pleasing people than it does of pleasing God. But it is interesting to see, as Guy King said in his commentary on 2 Timothy, that “there is not much to be expected from a congregation that deals thus with doctrine and with the truth--all you *can* expect is the very lowest level of behaviour” (p. 112). Impure teaching and pure living never go together. But the teaching of the Word produces godly people, and only godly people can live godly lives.

People who turn away from the truth may impress us with their “itching ears,” but the sad fact remains that they do not have *hungry hearts!* It would be far better to have five people with hungry hearts than to have five hundred people with itching ears.

Let us not overlook the phrase, “after their own lusts.” One thing about the ministry of the Word that offends people and drives them away from the truth, is the condemnation of sin. Matthew Poole said in his comments on this verse, “The disease of lust in their souls brings forth an itch in their ears, that they will have a mind to hear only such as will by scratching please them” (Vol. III, p. 798). People not only do not want to be condemned for their sins; they want to be made to feel comfortable in them.

But what happens to people when they turn away from the Word of God?

4:4 They “shall be turned unto fables.” “Fables” -- remember that this is the Greek word for *myths*. A myth is something which exists only in someone’s imagination. No one has ever yet gotten right with God through a myth. A myth has never been responsible for the forgiveness of anyone’s sins. A myth is not truth. It sound like good moral teaching, but it has no power to make a person acceptable to God. And this is what the truth is all about. Myths are the works of men; the truth of Scripture is the work of God. Myths are dead; Scripture is living and powerful and sharper than a two edged sword. Myths give us a false idea of God, and often encourage us to believe in *gods*. But in Scripture we have the revelation of the one, true God. People can believe myths and go to hell. But those who believe the Gospel of the grace of God are on their way to heaven.

Please turn back to what Paul said about this in his second epistle to the Thessalonians. I want to read to you 2 Thess. 2:7-12. (Read.)

God does not sit idly by watching men cast His Word aside, even in small ways. If people do not turn to the Lord and seek repentance from Him, He will give them over to their delusions so that they will believe the lie and suffer the eternal consequences for their rejection of the truth.

In verse 5 Paul again exhorted Timothy as to what he should do when he faced conditions like this.

4:5 “Watch thou in all things.” This exhortation seems to have two prominent ideas that Paul wanted to impress upon Timothy. In the first place he was to stay awake and to be alert to what was going on. He must be continually be on guard, especially for the people of God who were under his care. But secondly he was to remain calm. He was not to panic with the increase of ungodliness in the world, nor with the increase of

ungodliness in the church. It is easy for us to forget the Lord when we see those who appear to be successful in opposing the truth. Only the Lord can keep us calm and confident in such a trying situation. The Lord is sovereign. He will never allow His work to fail. He often uses error to expose those who are not true believers, but He also uses error to lead His people deeper and deeper into the truth of His Word. In such times much depends upon the attitude and behavior of the servant of the Lord. He needs to be not only thoroughly confident in the message of the Word, but He needs to be confident in the God of the Word. God convicts and convinces through His Word, so as matters get worse in the world, and even in the professing church, the true servant of the Lord must be aware of what is going on, but steadfastly continue ministering the Word as He would if he were living in better days.

“Endure afflictions.” These two words are the translation of one verb in the Greek. It is a word which is often used in Greek literature to speak of enduring the hardships of warfare. The Lord never promised that the lives of His servants would be easy. The Christian life is a warfare, and the same is true of the Christian ministry. So trouble are to be expected, and endured. A true servant of the Lord cannot be pressured to give in to the current trends of the day. He refuses to turn aside from the ministry of the Word. Paul was a tremendous example throughout his ministry of one who endured afflictions. Not even imprisonment and the threat of death could make him back down and away from the ministry that the Lord had given to him.

“Do the work of an evangelist.” An evangelist is one who preaches the good news of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the very message that people often object to because it brings up the unpopular subject of *sin*. That was not to deter Timothy. Paul had in mind the extension of the kingdom of God. Dr. Chafer used to tell us in seminary that the original idea of an evangelist was one like Paul who did *pioneer* missionary work. With all that Timothy would be required to do in ministering to the saints, he was not to forget the world outside and their need to hear the Gospel of the grace of God.

Finally, Paul told Timothy, “Make full proof of thy ministry.” Timothy was to serve the Lord with such faithfulness and zeal, in spite of all of the opposition he might face, so that no one would be able to question but that he was a man called of God into the work, a true man of God. No part of the ministry must be neglected. He must be faithful in prayer. He must be diligent in seeking to understand the Scriptures more and more all of the time. He must remember that the foundation of his ministry was his own perfect fellowship with the Lord, and his personal obedience to the Word of God. He must seek to care for the sheep. God had given him a ministry. He was to be faithful in doing all that would make him a faithful servant of the Lord. It ought to be Timothy’s objective in life to be able to say what Paul said in verse 7. That was fulfilling the ministry, his ministry.

April 29, 1996

4:6 The “I” here is emphatic, and appears to be in contrast with οὐ at the beginning of verse 5. The need for Timothy to “preach the Word” and to do what Paul had just exhorted him to do, was intensified by the fact that Paul’s ministry was just about over.

Probably the best translation of the first part of this verse would be, as in the NKJ and the NASB, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering.” Evidently plans were already in motion for the execution of the Apostle Paul and he did not anticipate that the Lord would intervene for his deliverance. There seemed to be no fear of death in what he said. Instead, he looked upon his death as a sacrifice that he was making of his life to the Lord. Whether or not this means that his captors had given him the opportunity to be set free if he would discontinue his ministry, we do not know. But we know that he would not have accepted such a deliverance if it had been offered to him.

He knew that “the time of” his “departure was at hand.” In this way his experience was like that of the Apostle Peter. We have his words in 2 Peter 1:13-14:

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

The Lord doesn’t usually do this with us, but He obviously did with both Peter and Paul.

Paul spoke of his death as a “departure.” Paul had told the Philippians (1:23) that “to depart, and to be with Christ...is far better.” In fact, of the two possibilities, staying or going, Paul would have chosen to go. However, he knew when he wrote to the Philippians that his work was not done; here he knew otherwise. And it was because of this that Timothy needed to know how important it was for him to be faithful in his ministry. Nobody lives forever in this life, and so one generation of the Lord’s servants must “pass the torch” on to the next generation.

4:7 Here Paul, by the grace of God, could say three things about his ministry.

First, that he had “fought a good fight.” The ministry of Paul had been a warfare. It included not only preaching, but also praying. Paul used this same verb in Col. 4:12 of the praying of Epaphras, and we know that prayer was just as important to Paul as preaching was. “Good” means that it was good in God’s sight. He had done the Lord’s work in the Lord’s way. It was not the way that he had fought as an unsaved Pharisee. He had to learn that the Lord’s work was to be done in an entirely different way. And he could be satisfied as he came to the end of his life that he would not have done differently if he had his ministry to do over. That must have been a great comfort to his soul. On the other hand, what greater regret could a servant of the Lord have than to come to the final hours in his life and to realize that he had sought to serve the Lord in the flesh rather than in the Spirit.

The second thing Paul had to say was that he had “finished” his “course.” Paul had used this word when he met with the elders of Ephesus in Miletus. This is what he said at that time:

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, **so that I might finish my course with joy**, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:22-24).

His “course” was his ministry. It was the work that the Lord had appointed him to do. Timothy’s ministry would not have been the same, but it was the “course” that the Lord had laid out for him. We don’t choose our own course; the Lord does that. It often has many turns and twists that we did not count on. It might take us to places we never thought that we would go. But we can all say with David, “As for God, his way is perfect” (Psa. 18:30a). We can also say, “He leadeth me beside the still waters” and “in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake” (Psa. 23:2, 3). And let us not forget what our Lord Himself said in John 10:3b, 4 when He was speaking of Himself as the Shepherd of His people:

3b ... and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

Paul had “finished” his “course,” and he knew that the Lord Jesus Christ had been with him the whole way!

The third thing that he said was that he had “kept the faith.” Remember, as we have seen before, that “the faith” was the truth that had been committed to him, the truth of the Word of God. He had not added to it (except as the Lord had used him to complete the Word of God). He certainly had not taken anything away from it. He told the Ephesian elders,

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27).

To depart and to be with Christ is far better, but to depart from the Word of God, either in doctrine or in practice, is the worst thing that can happen to a servant of the Lord. The Lord marvelously protected the Apostle Paul so that he never preached any heresy, and he never dishonored the Lord by falling into sin. He “kept the faith.” By the grace of God, may that always be true of us. And let us remember that it is just as important to be faithful to the Word of God in the way we live as well as in what we teach.

Paul’s words sound triumphant, don’t they? But should they since he was facing death because of his ministry? Yes, because he knew that he had finished the work that the Lord had given him to do. He did not feel in any way that the Roman government or the unbelieving Jews were bringing an end to his ministry. He knew that he was in the hands of the Lord, and that the Lord was even then in full command of his circumstances, as He had always been.

So what did Paul have to anticipate as far as the future was concerned?

4:8 Paul had “a crown of righteousness” “laid up,” *reserved, held securely*, for him. It was where thieves could not break through and steal it.

Perhaps you remember what Paul said about crowns in 1 Cor. 9:24-25:

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

Paul was not talking about a king’s crown, but a victor’s crown. *Paul was a winner! His reward was a reward for righteousness.* Do you remember that in both 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy Paul told Timothy to “follow after righteousness,” or *to pursue righteousness*. He was to pursue righteousness in his teaching, that is, to teach nothing but the Word of God. But he was also to pursue righteousness in his daily life. His life was always to be brought into conformity with the Word of God. A righteous life is a life lived in obedience to the Word of God.

Nothing is ever said in Scripture about how many people the Apostle Paul led to the Lord during his life of ministry. We can be sure that there were very many, but no record is ever given. In none of his epistles do we find him even thinking about numbers. But he did say this in his first letter to the church at Corinth:

1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:1-2).

It is wonderful to be used by the Lord to point others to Christ. And it is equally wonderful to be an instrument in the Lord’s hands for helping people to gain a greater understanding of the Word. But how the Lord uses the Word through us, is His to determine; what we need to be concerned about is our faithfulness to Him and to His Word. This brought great comfort to Paul’s heart at this point in his life as he faced death.

When would Paul get his crown? “At that day.” What day is that? It is “that day” when the Lord returns for all of us. Cf. 2 Tim. 1:12, 18. Paul has been with the Lord a long time, but he still does not have his “crown of

righteousness.” But it is being held for him, and “in that day” he will get it! It will be *his reward for righteousness*.

But notice that it is not a crown for apostles, but for “all them that love his appearing.”

What does it mean to love the appearing of the Lord? The church has lost something here because of the many different ideas that believers have about the coming of the Lord. We are hesitant to talk about it because we don't want to create an argument, or to stir up controversy. But we all need to realize that the Lord is coming, and that He can come at any time. According to what Paul told Titus, we are to be “looking for that blessed hope...” It is a blessed hope, a happy prospect. When somebody we love is coming to visit us, we all count the days, and we make great plans about what we are going to do when they are here. What about the coming of the Lord? Do you love His coming? Of all of the things in the future that you are looking forward to, is this the one that you love the most?

How can you tell that you really love His appearing? Let me suggest two ways, and I will take a Scripture passage for each of these two ways.

First, we show that we love the Lord's appearing when we are living each day like we want to be living when He returns. Cf. Tit. 2:11-14.

Second, we show that we love the Lord's appearing when we are diligently serving the Lord to finish the work that He has given us to do. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-58.

And will you notice that the emphasis upon loving the appearing of the Lord is not just upon a prophetic event, but upon the coming of a Person, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Can you and I possibly imagine what it is going to be like to see Him? Do you think about it? And are you careful about the things which Paul emphasized here in writing to Timothy? Fight a good fight. Work to finish your course. Keep the faith. If we do, then if the Lord does not come before He calls us home, we, too, will be able to face death and eternity with the same kind of peace and anticipation which filled the heart of the Apostle Paul as he penned these wonderful words to Timothy so long ago.

The Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Timothy

2 Timothy 4:9-22

May 6, 1996

VI. Conclusion (2 Tim. 4:9-22).

The main message of the epistle has been finished, but Paul at this point turned to several matters of importance to himself and to the work which was so much upon his heart: the work of the Gospel. In the verses which follow Paul mentioned 16 people, most in a good way, but a few in a bad way. In addition he mentioned two groups: (1) "the household of Onesiphorus" (v. 19); (2) "all the brethren" (v. 21).

It is apparent that Paul was interested in people, that he needed those who were faithful to the Lord, and that he delighted in their fellowship and support. On the other hand, he was always grieved when any turned away or opposed the truth. His great hope, of course, was that Timothy would come to him soon, "before winter." He mentioned this twice in these verses. See vv. 9 and 21. While the comments in these verses were very personal, yet let us remember that they were "given by inspiration of God" just as much as everything else that Paul had said in this epistle up to this point.

Now let us notice what Paul had to say.

4:9 Paul used the same verb in verse 21 that he did here. It means that he wanted Timothy to do all that he could, and as quickly as he could, to come to Rome. It may have been partly due to the fact that he did not know how much time he had, and he longed to see Timothy once more before he would lay down his life. This shows not only how much Paul loved Timothy, but also that Timothy was a great joy and blessing to him. See what he said to Timothy in chapter 1, verses 2-5.

We might ask the question, Why did Paul write this letter, and the previous epistle which was also addressed to Timothy, if Timothy were to come to see him? If he were going to see him, would it not have been just as suitable to tell him in person as to write it all down in these two letters?

The answer, obviously, is no, and for at least two reasons:

- 1) I call your attention to what the Apostle Peter said with reference to his second epistle. Cf. 2 Pet. 1:12-15, especially verse 15. Peter was writing things which he had told them about before. And he intended to keep telling them whenever he had the opportunity to minister to them. However, in addition to all that he said that he would "endeavor that" they might "be able after" his "decease to have" those "things always in remembrance." How would he do that? By writing it all down for them so they could read it over and over again. Our memories are not sufficient to remember all that God wants us to know and to remember, and so it all has been written down for us in our Bibles. That is one big reason why Paul wrote his epistles (speaking from his own personal standpoint).

This ought to be an encouragement for all of us to write letters to those we love, and for whom we are concerned. After we are gone they will still be able to read what we want them to remember. This means also that we should seek to minister when we write letters -- not preach, but minister in loving and personal ways.

But there was another reason that Paul wrote to Timothy.

- 2) It was not just for Timothy alone that he wrote, but for the people of God in all future generations until the Lord comes. How priceless these epistles are to us today! They tell us how the work of the Lord should be done, and by whom. It would have been a great loss to the church in every generation if we did not have Paul's epistles to Timothy and to Titus. There would have been many things about the work of the Lord

that we would not know if we did not have these epistles. The church in many places is far off the mark set for her by the Lord, but conditions would certainly be worse than they are if we did not have these epistles.

These are just two reasons why it was important for Paul to write to Timothy -- and to Titus.

Verse 13 also tells us another reason why Paul wanted Timothy to come to him, but we will get to that in a few minutes.

4:10 Another reason Paul wanted Timothy to come was because of the tragic departure of Demas. Demas is only mentioned three times in the NT: Col. 4:14; Ph. 24; and here. We don't really know anything about him except that he was with Paul during his first imprisonment, and a fellow worker, and with Paul also during part of his second imprisonment, but then he left Paul. The reason given: he loved this present world, or *age*. Paul did not use the familiar κόσμος here, but instead the Greek word, αἰών. Archbishop Trench pointed out in his *Synonyms* (pp. 217 ff.) that this word signifies "all which exists in the world under conditions of time." It speaks of the "course and current of this world's affairs. But this course and current being full of sin, it...acquires presently, like κόσμος, an unfavorable meaning." And then Trench added this helpful explanation:

All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral, atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale,--all this is included in the αἰών, which is, as Bengel has expressed it, the subtle informing spirit of the κόσμος, or world of men who are living alienated and apart from God (Trench, *Synonyms*, pp. 217, 218).

So for Paul to say that Demas left him, "having loved this present world," means *that Demas has turned his back upon God and Christ. He had renounced the faith.* It was a complete and final departure. Our Lord had His Judas; Paul had his Demas.

There are two statements in John's first epistle which apply to Demas. They are 1 John 2:15-17 and 19. Nothing could ever have been written about Demas that would have been more tragic. He is one of those many who professed faith in Christ, and who seems to have deceived not only himself, but also those servants of the Lord with whom he was associated, and yet never was saved! That had happened before, and it happened afterwards, and we see it happening every once in a while even today. Remember what Paul said in his letter to Titus:

15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

16 **They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him,** being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate (Titus 1:15-16).

We can be sure that Demas did not go to Thessalonica to help in the church there, but he left mainly to get away from the Apostle Paul. Paul wrote, "Demas hath forsaken **me**." He had abandoned Paul, deserted him, and seemed to care nothing for the terrible situation he was leaving Paul in.

The two other men Paul mentioned in the latter part of verse 10 had gone in separate directions, but it seems that their purpose was to minister. Paul could not go, and so they went in his place.

This is the only place Crescens is mentioned in the NT. Titus we are familiar with. Dalmatia is thought to be Illyricum, which was across the Adriatic Sea, east of Italy, and mentioned in Paul's letter to the church at

Rome as the farthest point west of his ministry at that time (before he went to Rome).

4:11 Here we find more encouraging words than we had at the beginning of verse 10.

“Only Luke is with me” -- Paul’s beloved doctor friend, and his faithful co-worker. In Col. 4:14 Paul called him, “the beloved physician.” It is generally agreed that Luke wrote both the Gospel which bears his name as well as the book of Acts. He was with Paul during some of his missionary journeys, and went with him from Jerusalem to Rome after Paul was arrested. He was with Paul in Rome during both of the Apostle’s imprisonments. It is generally agreed also that Luke was a Gentile. Paul’s comment here indicates that Luke stayed with Paul, and did not leave him for any reason.

However, as much as Paul must have been comforted by Luke’s presence, he still wanted Timothy to come, and he wanted Timothy to bring Mark with him; that is, John Mark. You will remember that Mark left Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. When Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them on their second journey, Paul refused, and that is when Paul and Barnabas split up. Barnabas took Mark with him, and Paul took Silas. The account is given in Acts 15:36-41. John Mark was Barnabas’ nephew – Barnabas’ sister’s son according to Col. 4:10.

However, something had happened to John Mark. He who before had been *unprofitable*, had become *profitable*. He had been with Paul during his first imprisonment. We learn this from Col. 4:10. He obviously had learned from the mistake he had made in leaving Paul and Barnabas on their first journey, and there had been a restoration of fellowship between Paul and John Mark. “Profitable” means not only that John Mark was *useful* to Paul, but that Mark was *easy to use*. This word tells us that John Mark was humble, adaptable, and eager to serve the Apostle Paul and the Lord in any way that he could.

This ought to encourage all of us. There may have been times when we were not useful to the Lord nor His people. Or we may know others who have been a disappointment to us on previous occasions. It is easy to think of people who have failed as nothing but a failure. But we must never underestimate the grace of God, and what God may see fit to do in the hearts and lives of his people. Cf. Phil. 1:6. Even King David spoke of how the he expected the Lord to work in his own heart. We find his words in Psa. 138:8:

The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever:
forsake not the works of thine own hands.

We may give up on others, and at times despair even of ourselves. But if we truly know the Lord we can be sure that the Lord will never give up on us. Cf. Jude 24, 25.

4:12 Paul was sending Tychicus to Ephesus where it seems Timothy was. He would carry this epistle with him, and replace Timothy so that Timothy would be free to go to be with Paul in Rome.

Tychicus had served the Apostle Paul before in delivering letters which Paul had written to the church at Ephesus, the church at Colosse, and the personal epistle to Philemon. Paul trusted him because over and over he had shown himself to be a faithful servant of the Lord. The work in Ephesus would not suffer under the leadership of Tychicus. Paul was very careful not to let the work of the Lord go without proper leadership just so his own desires could be fulfilled. Nor was it a reproach on Tychicus that Paul would commission him with such an errand while bringing Timothy to Rome. Paul’s epistles to Timothy showed that he was preparing Timothy for a larger role in the work of the Lord, and he certainly wanted to have additional time with Timothy before his own departure for glory.

4:13 Troas was located in the Roman province of Asia, on the Aegean Sea, to the north. All we know about him is what we have here. He quite evidently lived in Troas, and was a believer.

May 7, 1996

From Paul's statement in verse 21 of this chapter, we assume that Paul was writing in the Fall of the year, and that he was concerned about the approaching winter with its bad weather. But he was not just concerned about his physical comfort and health; he also requested "the books, but especially the parchments." We don't know exactly what Paul had in mind, but it seems that we are safe in speculating that "the books" had to do with copies of the OT Scriptures, possibly in Greek. Wilson suggested that they might have been collections of the Lord's sayings which Paul wanted to give to Luke for his writing of his Gospel. Parchments were used for writing. We can't be sure what "the books" were, but what we do know was that Paul continued to study and to grow and to write as long as he lived. What an example this would have been to Timothy. No servant of the Lord (or any other believer, for that matter) should ever stop reading the Word. We should never stop studying and learning and seeking by the grace of God to become more like the Lord than we are.

Matthew Henry reminded his readers that in his first epistle to Timothy (4:13) Paul had reminded Timothy to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." His reference here to "the books" and "the parchments" is evidence that *Paul practiced what he preached*.

4:14 In Nelson's Bible Dictionary we are told that there were five or six men in Scripture by the name of Alexander. But they may not all have been different men. Some scholars think that the Alexander mentioned here may be the same Alexander whom Paul mentioned in 1 Tim. 1:19-20, and that he also may have been the Alexander in Acts 19:33 who was present at the time of the uproar in Ephesus over the threat that Paul's ministry had presented to the worshipers of Diana.

Hendriksen does not think that this Alexander was any of those previously mentioned. He believes that he was a resident of Rome who had testified against Paul and had been instrumental in getting the death penalty for Paul. The truth is that we really do not know. It appears that he probably had been a professing believer, like Demas, but that he had turned against the Lord and against Paul, and so had been able to do the Apostle "much evil," or *damage*. The word that Paul used to describe him does not mean just a "coppersmith," but a man who worked with any metals.

However, we are not primarily interested in how Alexander earned his livelihood; his name has gone down in holy Scripture as an enemy of the Apostle Paul, and as a great opponent of the Gospel. (See verse 15.) When Paul said that "Alexander...did me much evil," he meant that he did it openly, not secretly, and that what he did could not be described as anything but *sinful*. And notice the word, "much." So Paul was probably not referring to a single incident, but repeated things which Alexander had done of an evil nature in order to do harm to the Apostle Paul. He may have been like the false witnesses who were brought into court to testify against our Lord Jesus Christ.

Instead of seeking to retaliate against Alexander, Paul was willing to leave him in the Lord's hands -- *another of the many evidences in Paul's writings that he believed in the absolute sovereignty of God!* And Paul was also showing his belief in the Word of God. Earlier he had written to the church at Rome,

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written,
Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord (Rom. 12:19).

In that passage Paul was referring to Deut. 32:35.

4:15 However, Paul felt it necessary to warn Timothy to beware of what Alexander might try to do with him. And Paul mentioned in particular that "he hath greatly withstood our words." So Alexander had not only attacked the character of Paul and his intentions in his teaching, but he had resisted the teaching itself. He had been one of Paul's greatest opponents, denying and taking a stand against everything that Paul had to say.

Alexander was an enemy of the truth. John Calvin pointed out that Paul could have accepted an attack against himself, if that had been the extent of what Alexander had done. But when Alexander attacked the truth of God, or “sound doctrine,” as Paul had been calling it, then indignation rose up in Paul’s heart. And that is the reason that Paul called down the judgment of the Lord upon Alexander in verse 14. In this situation Paul was like his Lord about whom it is written in Psa. 69:9, “The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.” Calvin went on to point out that in verse 16 where men forsook him, Paul sought their forgiveness. But with Alexander, ...because this man rose against God with malice and sacrilegious hardihood, and openly attacked known truth, such impiety had no claim to compassion” (2 Timothy, p. 268).

Paul was directed by the Holy Spirit in what he said here, and therefore we must assume with Calvin that the truth of God is very precious to God, and that men face the severest of judgments when they take a stand against God’s Word. People today are walking on dangerous ground when they oppose and deny the great doctrines of the faith, such as, the total depravity of man, election, the bondage of the will, the sovereignty of God in salvation, and the perseverance of the saints. The same judgment awaits those who attack the verbal inspiration of Scripture, the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and even the Deity and personality of the Holy Spirit. Alexander was a man who had shown that he really hated the truth, and had wanted his position to be known by all.

We need to be careful not to pass judgment on others. It is easy in the heat of controversy to be unwise in our judgment of others, but we can be sure that Paul had seen more than once that Alexander was an enemy of the truth, and that he had done much damage to the work of the Lord.

Paul went on to speak of those who, like Alexander, had either turned against him. We have his words in verse 16.

4:16 When Paul spoke here of his “answer,” he was speaking of his attempt to defend himself against the charges which had been brought against him. Those he expected would support him, failed to do so. And it seems that this may have been out of fear of what would have happened to them if they had publicly sided with the Apostle Paul. Paul felt it necessary to exhort Timothy to stand with him. Cf. 2 Tim. 1:6-8, and he commended Onesiphorus in 2 Tim. 1:16-18 because he had stood with Paul.

Here Paul, like our Lord, and like Stephen, prayed “that it may not be laid to their charge. *This is meekness* which Paul had told Timothy in 1 Tim. 6:11 that he needed to pursue. It is natural to want to see our enemies punished. It is natural to want to give them what they have given us, and to rejoice when the hand of the Lord is against them. But we as the people of God are not to respond as we might have before we knew the Lord, or like men in the world would respond. The Apostle Paul heard Stephen’s prayer in Acts 7, and there is no way for us to say what an influence that may have had upon him in those days before he knew the Savior. It is only as we are “strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:1) that we will be able to follow the example of the Apostle Paul when we face the opposition of men. King David suffered greatly from what others did to him, but we see his meekness also when, although he prayed against them, over and over again he left the vengeance in the Lord’s hands.

Be sure to notice the different attitude that Paul had when comparing what he said about Alexander to what he said about those who forsook him. If it were against the Word and against the work of the Lord, Paul was severe in his denunciation, as was the case with Alexander. But when it was against him, as with the men who had forsaken him (perhaps out of fear), he sought their forgiveness.

May 13, 1996

4:17 “Notwithstanding” means *but*, or *nevertheless*. In verses 14-16 we see the unfaithfulness of men; here we see the faithfulness of God. “The Lord stood with me” means that the Lord was present to help him and to comfort him, but more than that, the Lord “strengthened” him. And the object of the strengthening was that by Paul “the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Hear what? Hear the Gospel. Paul could see that in spite of what men were doing to him, the Lord overruled the whole situation for His glory, and it became one of the greatest opportunities for preaching the Gospel that the Apostle Paul had ever had.

We find some similar statements in the book of Acts regarding Paul’s ministry. In Acts 23 we are told about the night before Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem when we are told that **“the Lord stood by him,”** and this is what the Lord said:

Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome (Acts 23:11).

Then during the storm which Paul and those who were on board ship with him as he was being taken to Rome, Paul said this to them:

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee (Acts 27:23-24).

The Lord does not forsake His servants, nor will He let His work die. But He often removes all of the human support that we have had, and feel that we must continue to have, in order that we will lean more heavily on Him, and see that, as He has promised, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

Let me give you a quotation from Calvin on this point:

Though the church at Rome had failed to perform its duty, he affirms that the gospel had suffered no loss by it, because, leaning on heavenly power, he was himself fully able to bear the whole burden, and was so far from being discouraged by the influence of that fear which seized on all, that it became only the more evident that the grace of God has no need of receiving aid from any other quarter. He does not boast of his courage, but gives thanks to the Lord; that, when reduced to extremities, he did not give way nor lose heart under so dangerous a temptation. He therefore acknowledges that he was supported by the arm of the Lord, and is satisfied with this, that the inward grace of God served for a shield to defend him against every assault (*Op. cit.*, p. 270).

And then Calvin added this word:

It was no small confirmation of his ministry, that, when the whole world foamed with madness against him, and on the other hand, all human assistance failed him, still he remained unshaken. Thus he gave practical demonstration that his apostleship was from Christ (*Ibid.*).

So right from the start of Paul’s trial it was evident that the Lord was on his side. Lenski quoted Conybeare in his commentary who described what was very likely the scene when Paul was on trial. These are Conybeare’s words:

At one end of the nave [the main part of the building where the people assembled] was the tribune [platform], in the center of which was placed the magistrate’s [a civil officer empowered to administer and enforce the law] curule [the chair where the magistrate, the highest officer, sat] chair of ivory on a platform called the tribunal. Here also sat the council of assessors, who advised the prefect [another word for the magistrate] upon the law though they had no voice in the judgment. On the sides of the tribune were seats for distinguished persons as well as for parties engaged in the proceedings. Fronting the presiding magistrate stood the prisoner with

his accusers and his advocates. The public was admitted into the remainder of the nave and aisles [there were two of them down each side of the building], which was railed off from the portion devoted to the judicial proceedings, and there were also galleries along the whole length of the side aisles--one for men, the other for women. The aisles were roofed over as was the tribune. The nave was originally left open to the sky. The basilicas [another word for a nave] were buildings of great size so that a vast multitude of spectators was always present at any trial which excited public interest. Before such an audience it was that Paul was now called to speak in his defense. His earthly friends had deserted him, but his heavenly Friend stood by him. He was strengthened by the power of Christ's Spirit and pleaded the cause, not of himself, but of the gospel. He spoke of Jesus, of his death and His resurrection, so that all the heathen multitude may hear (Lenski on 2 Timothy, p. 877).

What an audience the Lord gave Paul to preach the Gospel--and that is exactly what he did! Although it looked like Paul was standing alone, he was not! The Lord was standing with him, caring for him, and guiding him in all that he had to say. Surely that was a fulfillment of our Lord's words in Matt. 10:19-20

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

God in His sovereignty, and to fulfill part of His purpose in the arrest of Paul, enabled the Apostle Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, to speak to probably a greater audience than he had ever spoken to in all of his years of ministry before. It is amazing how the Lord makes the wrath of men to praise Him. Cf. Ps. 76:10, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

I am told that during wartime, if a member of our armed forces is taken captive, *he must still consider himself to be on active duty*. This means that he must remain loyal to his country, must seek to gather any information that would be of benefit to the unit to which he is assigned, and should take advantage of any opportunity to escape. Paul demonstrated that he was on active duty. He was a preacher of the Gospel, and he knew that the Lord had spared him, not just so he could go on living, but so he could continue to preach the Gospel. And that is what he did, not in a corner, but by "preaching" -- the public, vocal proclamation of the truth.

The verse ends with Paul saying, "And I was delivered from the mouth of the lion." Although many different interpretations have been put on this statement, the simplest seems to be that Paul was delivered from certain judgment and death by the mercy of God, and that was the reason he was not thrown to the lions..

4:18 How important it is to see that through all of the trials of Paul's last days, his confidence was in the Lord.

The Lord had preserved him thus far, and He would continue to do it until the Apostle's work on earth was finished. Here Paul attributed to God his own ability to persevere under the most trying circumstances. And even though Paul probably was martyred because of the preaching which he did, yet even there he was delivered -- delivered from this life, and taken into the very presence of the Lord Whom he had loved so much, and had served so well.

Do you suppose that Paul thought of himself in past days when he spoke of what his enemies were doing as an "evil work"? Once he had engaged in those evil works, trying to do away completely with those who knew and loved the Savior. Do you suppose that a part of his compassion expressed in verse 16 was due to the feeling he had that many of them were doing what they were doing because it was "ignorantly in unbelief"? Cf. 1 Tim. 1:13. What an evidence it is of the depravity of man, that he would oppose to the very limit the only message which can mean the difference between eternal life and eternal death!

He believed not only that the Lord would continue to deliver him (even though his final deliverance might be

through death, he also believed that the Lord would preserve him “unto his heavenly kingdom.” This is essentially what Paul said in the twelfth verse of chapter 1 in this epistle. Paul knew that no one could possibly defeat the Lord. His ultimate victory is assured, and to Him belong many victories along the way. Perhaps Paul drew much comfort from the words of the Lord Jesus found in Luke 12:4-5:

4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Paul had declared Abraham’s faith in the Lord to have been unshakeable when he wrote in Rom. 4:20-21 that

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

“To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” When we are all gathered together with the Lord in heaven, and for all eternity, there will never be the slightest thought on the part of anyone that any of the glory belongs to anyone but to the Lord.

“For ever and ever” is lit. in the Greek, *unto the ages of the ages*. It is hard for us, even impossible, to think in terms of eternity. Lenski said, “The human mind, having no conception of timelessness, is compelled to use expressions of time” (p. 881). So Paul took the word age, which in terms of length of time, is undefinable, makes it plural, and then makes a superlative out of it. The end result is a period which itself is immeasurable, and regardless of how many ages we might add to it, we will never find “the glory” given to anyone but God and His Son Jesus Christ, for all of the great and mighty things that have been accomplished in and for and through His people. “Amen” – so let it be!

That being the case, we need to recognize that, as we sing so often, “to God be the glory” here and now.

4:19 Paul was outstanding in his remembrance of people. The first two mentioned here, husband and wife, perhaps better known as Priscilla and Aquila, were especially dear to Paul. They are first mentioned in Acts 18:2, 3 when Paul went to Corinth. They had moved there recently from Rome because Claudius had compelled all Jews to leave Rome. They were tent makers like Paul was, and this is what seems to have drawn them together. Some feel that Paul led them to Christ at that time, and that is a real possibility. When Paul left Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla went with him, and he left them in Ephesus. When Paul wrote to the church at Rome, Aquila and Priscilla were there. Cf. Rom. 16:3. Later they returned to Ephesus, and this is where they were when Paul wrote his last letter to Timothy. In commending them in his epistle to the Roman believers, he said this:

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

5a Likewise greet the church that is in their house (Rom. 16:3-5a).

Just exactly what Paul was referring to when he said that they had “laid down their own necks” for him, we do not know, but that is an expression which means that they risked death itself to save his life, laying down the neck being an expression for delivering him from “imminent and violent death” (Lenski, Romans, p. 904).

And Paul included here “the household of Onesiphorus.” Cf. 2 Tim. 1:16-18. It seems that Paul spoke of “the household of Onesiphorus” because, when Onesiphorus went to Rome to find Paul and to minister to him, the family of Onesiphorus was in full agreement with his trip even though it could have cost Onesiphorus his life. It is wonderful to see in Paul’s epistles, not only how he ministered to others, but how others ministered to him. Even in his last confinement, it was a blessing to Paul to remember how the Lord had blessed him, and spared

him, through the way others had ministered to him.

4:20 As Paul continued, he mentioned “Erastus” who was staying in Corinth. All we know about him is that in Acts 19:22 Paul sent him and Timothy to Macedonia from Ephesus while Paul remained behind. When Paul wrote his epistle to the church at Rome, he mentioned Erastus and called him “the chamberlain of the city” (Rom. 16:23), that is, of Corinth. This probably meant that he was the city treasurer. Here in 2 Tim. 4:20 we learn that he was still in Corinth, evidently in the same capacity, and we would assume that he was living a life that was pleasing to the Lord.

The reference to Trophimus is very interesting. Paul had left him at Miletus, sick. We know that Paul had the gift of healing earlier in his ministry, but apparently he no longer had it. If he had, he undoubtedly would have healed Trophimus, and taken him with him. This is a strong passage in proving, against the claims of the charismatics, that some of the spiritual gifts which were given to men in the early days of the church, were temporary, and were actually withdrawn before the NT was completed.

Trophimus was a Gentile believer. He went to Jerusalem with Paul at the end of Paul’s third missionary journey. When the Jews and Jerusalem saw him with Paul, they assumed that Paul had taken Trophimus, an uncircumcised Gentile, into the temple, and that is what started the uproar in Jerusalem at that time against Paul. Cf. Acts 21:28-29. Paul had not done this, but the Jews were sure that he had, and so they tried to kill him. Only by the intervention of the Roman soldiers was Paul’s life spared at that time.

4:21 Paul repeated here what he had already written in v. 9. Obviously he was very anxious for Timothy to come. Sailing was treacherous during the winter, and so if Timothy delayed until winter had set in, he probably would have had to wait until spring --*and for Paul that might have been too late.*

In conclusion Paul mentioned four people who were with him, besides “all the brethren,” and said that they wanted to be remembered to Timothy.

This is the only time in the NT that Eubulus is mentioned. He seems to have been faithful to Paul and to the Lord to the very last of Paul’s life. Pudens also is only mentioned in Scripture here. The same is true of Linus, although there is strong historical evidence that Linus was one of the original elders in the church at Rome. Claudia, of course, is a woman, and some have suggested that Paul put Pudens, Linus, and Claudia together because they were a family, Pudens, the husband and father, Linus, the son, and Claudia, Pudens’ wife and Linus’ mother. But we can’t be absolutely certain of that. Even though material is lacking about all of these people, Paul knew them, and the Lord knew them, and we can expect to meet them when we get to glory. The Lord has had many, many people about whom we know very little or actually nothing. But their names are written in glory, and in the Lord’s own way they were used as servants of the Lord, but their works will not be known until what Paul called, “that day.”

4:22 What a precious conclusion Paul gave to a very loving epistle. What more could Timothy want, and what more could he need than to have the Lord Jesus Christ with his spirit, and to have the grace of God continually present in his life.

Some of the Greek MSS read, “The Lord be with thy spirit,” but clearly Paul meant “the Lord Jesus Christ” which is the reading in some MSS.

In concluding let me quote from Matthew Henry. His comments on this last verse of Paul’s last epistle, seem to catch the meaning of what Paul must have had in his mind and on his heart for Timothy. This is what MH had to say:

We need no more to make us happy than to have the Lord Jesus Christ with our spirits; for in Him all spiritual blessings are summed up. And it is the best prayer we can put up for our friends, that the Lord Jesus Christ may be with their spirits, to sanctify and save them, and at last to receive them to Himself; as Stephen the proto-martyr prayed, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, Acts vii. 59.

And then concerning Paul's last prayer, MH said this:

And if grace be with us here to convert and change us, to make us holy, to keep us humble, and to enable us to persevere unto the end, glory will crown us hereafter: *for the Lord is a sun, and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee*, Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 12.

How fitting it was, and how characteristic of Paul, that he would conclude this epistle to Timothy by prayer. After all that Paul had written to Timothy, and after all that they must have talked about together, the only thing that Paul could do, and the best thing, was to commit him into the hands of the Lord, trusting the Lord to continue His work in Timothy's heart, to guide him, to bless him, and to use him, all for the glory of our great God and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Concl: How thankful we can be for these last three epistles from the heart and from the pen of the Apostle

Paul, as he was directed by the Holy Spirit. And we need to remember that what Paul said to Timothy about the work of the Lord in the first century is just as applicable to us today as though it were written for the twentieth century. God does not change. His Word does not change. People do not change. Their needs today are exactly what they were 2,000 years ago. And the remedy is the same. So let us be just as faithful in proclaiming "sound doctrine" today as Paul wanted Timothy to be in his day and generation. The world still is not a friend of God. In fact, it is still at enmity with God. But God has promised to bless His Word and to send it forth to accomplish His purposes. It is our responsibility, by the grace of God, to preach the Word. It is up to God to use it as He pleases.