

2Timothy 24-10-27a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the 27th of October, 2024. We're in 2 Timothy chapter two and a critically important section.

This is the heartwood of this letter to Timothy. Everything that has led up to this point has laid a foundation. Paul is now talking about the foundation and he is going to move forward to build on that foundation for describing Christian faith and practice, which is the seminary way, the theology way of saying, he is now going to give us really practical help in living the life we are supposed to live in our circumstances.

We're just people, we have responsibilities, we have jobs, we have opportunities, we hold conversations, we have relationships. People the world over wake up in the morning, face the day and what happens with the capital that is the time dispensed for that day has eternal consequences. It is either expended in a way that quickly dissipates and is lost in the ether of history or it is invested and it redeems the time and buys something that has eternal value and eternal substance.

So this is Paul's subject. He is at the center of his theme and he is exhorting Timothy on this topic because Timothy is to in turn emphasize it to the people who attend the church, the fellowship in Ephesus. So we're going to pick up this morning here in the center of chapter two.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and investigation and we'll begin. Father, it never ceases to be an awe inspiring concept that we can enter your throne room by the new and living way, the torn veil of the body of the Lord Jesus through his work on the cross. We have been entered into your family.

We are your sons and daughters and as such we have the privilege of representing ourselves directly before your throne. Always aware that the Lord Jesus is seated at your right hand and it is through his accomplishing of your plan and purpose that we in him and through him can exercise this tremendous privilege. We are grateful for your grace, your faithfulness toward us and we ask that as we look at your word together this morning that the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts in a meaningful and effective and convicting way that we will see clearly how we can apply it, how we can live a life that is more closely conformed to the example of the Lord Jesus who lived his life not to please himself but to please you and to accomplish your purposes.

We represent him on this earth and in ways both known and unknown, those of which we are aware and those that we're not, we bear witness, we have opportunities to reflect your glory and we know that the means of accomplishing that is through your word and through your spirit. So as we seek to dine on the manna from heaven that is represented here in this letter, we ask for grace, we ask for understanding, we ask that we can

remember it and see its pertinence and application in the days ahead. We ask all these things in Jesus name, amen.

Let's begin by reading our passage. We will pick up here in verse 14 where the poetic expression of the sober purpose and the sober realities that Paul rehearses for Timothy beginning in verse 11 is to be reviewed. Paul says, remind them of these things.

What are these things? You look up at verse 11 through 13. If we shared dying, we shall share living. And you remember the rest of this and I'm not going to do an extended review.

We've seen it and we've reviewed it a few times, but I want to draw that particular phrase to your attention. It is first and this subject is going to come up again in verse 18. If you're unclear about what's going on in verses 11 through 13, you can move up the list of the second Timothy lessons.

We've covered it in great detail. Most importantly, how it begins with shared dying and shared living. Bear in mind when you get down to verse 18, what is the error? Here's a pop quiz without looking down at the page, everyone look at me, without looking at the page, what is the error of Hymenaeus and Philetus? What is the thing that is going to spread like gangrene and increase ungodliness? What is it? They have arguments.

What is the nature? This is one of the few times that Paul identifies one of the prevailing heresies that Timothy is battling in the Ephesian church. He invades against false teachers throughout these letters, but here is a specific false teaching. Do you remember what it was? Look back down at verse 18.

Hymenaeus and Philetus saying that the resurrection is already passed. The resurrection. We're going to return to this, but Paul lays a foundation for this back up in verse 11 by reminding them of this.

It could be a hymn lyric, it could be a poem, it could just be a beautifully condensed summary, but if we shared dying, we shall share living. What does shall tell you about the tense of the verb? It's future. Well, we'll have more to say about this in a moment, but how important is the resurrection in our thinking to understand it rightly? Because as with so many things in scripture, there are two that apply to us.

There are two Adams. There's the first Adam and the last Adam. There are two lives that we live.

There is such a thing as the second death because there is a second life. There is the first life, which in almost all cases ends in death, unless you're in the rapture generation. And then there is a resurrection for the purpose of evaluation and judgment.

And then for those who are not written in the book, whose works do not achieve the

standard of righteousness that is required for eternal life, and of course, none do except those that are in Christ, there is the second death. If there's two deaths, that tells you there are two lives. So there are many things of which there are two, and there are two resurrections.

You can look at resurrection in different ways. We're going to see the way that Paul has in mind shortly. So remind them of these things that have just been described in the previous three verses, charging them before the Lord not to argue about words to no profit.

One of those words could be resurrection. Hymenaeus and Philetus could be arguing about anastasis, the Greek word for resurrection. Remember when Paul went to Ephesus and people thought he was preaching new gods, plural, because he was talking about Iesus and anastasis.

And they thought, well, this is a deity couple. This is Iesus and his consort, anastasis. But he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

But we have Anastasia, remember the long lost daughter of the Tsar of Russia, her name was Anastasia, I believe. And they thought he was talking about a divine personage when he was talking about the concept of resurrection. But the word resurrection was being used and argued and parsed and understood in different ways.

And Hymenaeus and Philetus are named by Paul as those who are among the interlocutors and the prosecutors and the purveyors of false teaching related to the resurrection. So remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord, not to strive about these. Come to an understanding, ask, seek, knock, rely on authenticated teachers, authenticated apostolic teaching that you can confirm in the scriptures.

And once you have arrived at that understanding, don't argue, don't get distracted and deflected into trying to win an argument instead of trying to live in the light of that truth. What happens if you have a false understanding or you spend too much time arguing and because you think you have won an argument, you think you are in the right? Many times, someone can out-debate or out-argue or out-wit someone and they seem to have won the argument. And if you win the argument, that means you're right.

You've silenced your opponent. Therefore, you must be right. All that means is you're a better debater.

You're a better person at argument or at marshaling points or persuasive appeals to emotion or authority or whatever else it might be. Many people are persuaded by fallacy, by false arguments. And you see this all around us today.

The fact that someone is persuasive doesn't mean they're right. The fact that someone wins a debate doesn't mean they're right. The fact that you get into a discussion with

someone and they bring up six points and you've only got one or two and they seem to carry the day and people who overhear the conversation are nodding their heads in agreement with them and looking at you with disdain and well, you're obviously not well-informed.

You're obviously not right. And you may actually be in the right. Remember, I will remind you of these things.

Do not rely on the outcome of arguments for your faith. It isn't the best argument, the one that carries the day that necessarily represents truth. It is what is communicated in the word of God, affirmed and enabled and empowered in our hearts and in our souls by the Holy Spirit.

That's what makes something right when it conforms to God's standard. Human beings appeal to logic, reason, experience, emotion, authority, science, any number of things. And there is knowledge that puffs up.

There are great swelling words. People have itching ears and those who develop a knack for scratching that itch, sometimes with humor, sometimes with an attitude, you want to be in the in group or the cool kids or whatever it may be. And this doesn't make their position right.

There is one standard of right or righteousness and it isn't the assembled opinions of a group of people. It is the authority of the word of God. And it is affirmed, confirmed.

It makes a foundation in our soul in the hands of the Holy Spirit. And Paul is moving in the direction of describing that foundation as we move from verse 14 into verse 15. So remind them of these truths.

If we shared dying, we shall share living. That's future tense. There is a coming life that isn't here yet.

Don't strive about words when there is no profit. You can certainly argue, you can certainly present the case, but if it turns into strife, you can tell the difference between someone offering a point of view or communicating what scripture has to say on a subject, what our own experience reflects in terms of these truths. But at the point that it turns into conflict, at the point that someone is no longer interested in hearing what you have to say, they want to defeat you.

They want to pull the rug out from under your feet. They want to cut you off at the knees. They don't want to hear your point of view.

And it turns into contention. It turns into strife. Paul says, that is the point to stop talking.

If it appears as though the room is convinced and you feel, but I can't leave people

thinking that this is right when I know it's not, that is not the basis. Paul doesn't say keep arguing until you convince a majority of people in the room. He says, do not argue about words.

And this word, as we saw, *lagos* in the plural, *lagoi*, this means issues. You can understand the ethics and the morality and the principles from the word of God that apply to various situations, various circumstances, various topics. And we are encouraged to express God's viewpoint, the scriptural take on those.

And that's it. Not to argue it. As long as someone is receptive, they are not going to strive and contend.

If they say, well, but what about this? If you can maintain an ironic conversation and exchange ideas and have point and counterpoint when it is cordial, when it is respectful, when there is an obvious interest that someone has in trying to understand why we believe what we believe, if they're asking us a reason for the hope that is in us. By the way, do you see the connection between hope and the resurrection? Remember 1 Corinthians 15, when we went through that letter? If there is no resurrection, Christ is not raised. If Christ is not raised, you are yet in your sins.

We are of all men most miserable. The resurrection is intrinsic. It is central.

It is necessary. A future physical bodily resurrection is at the very center. It is foundational to Christian faith and therefore Christian living.

Anyone who spiritualizes the resurrection, anyone who says the resurrection has already passed is eviscerating the basis for Christian faith and practice because you are turning Christ into a nice guy who had some good things to say, not the Lord of glory, not the resurrected son of God, not the one in whom we have life and we have that sevenfold menorah of privileges and blessings that you find in Ephesians chapter one. So this is why resurrection is going to be woven through this context as central. Your understanding of the biblical teaching on resurrection is essential to your life.

To remember the resurrection, to be reminded of it and to be motivated by it, to have your hope fueled by it is very necessary. And we sometimes sort of shuffle off that future hope as well, of course, I hope to, you know, people will say, I'll go to heaven when I die or everybody will be happy over there, but it doesn't have traction in our daily experience. And it needs to, we do what we do with the expectation that there is a tomorrow where we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

We will have opportunities to live in the kingdom of the son. And after that, the kingdom of the father and the resurrection is central. It is essential to defining our priorities, our goals and our values now.

If that future reality does not define them, they will be false. They will be faulty. They will

be unbiblical.

They will be earthly, temporal, human. And these are people who wind up on the outside of the door saying, Lord, Lord, in your name, I was doing all of these wonderful things. That picture, when the Lord looks back and says, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you workers of iniquity. When they believe that they've defined themselves as workers of good, in your name, we did these good things. That's a picture in the resurrection.

There is a resurrection and there will be an accounting for why we did what we did, by what standard it was measured and whether or not we were asking and seeking and knocking for understanding to meet God's standard and not our own. It's easy to set a bar for ourself and then meet it. It's easy to set a goal that we know we can reach, reach it and then pat ourselves on the back.

It is quite a different thing to have a standard set for us. Anyone who has gone to school, I would like to think, well, I listened to the lecture and I did the reading, so I know the subject. I consider myself to be educated on that topic.

That isn't the standard. The standard is, can you pass a test that is constructed by the authority, the instructor? Sometimes there are certifications and qualifications that are not granted until you pass a certain test. You're going to be a lawyer, you've got to pass the bar.

You can't just tell people, you know, I've been doing all kinds of reading in law books, so let me go practice in a courtroom. Let me go represent your cause before a judge or a jury. You have to be proven by a standard outside yourself and telling yourself you're good doesn't make you good.

We would love for it to be so, but it's not. That is what is at issue here. So don't strive with people trying to get them to affirm or recognize a standard that comes from God.

There is a doctrine of resurrection. There is solid, straightforward, unequivocal teaching in the word of God about the resurrection. If someone wants to argue that that's not really what the Bible says and you are certain that it does, don't argue.

It is not profitable. Instead of presenting ourselves to people with persuasive arguments, what does verse 15 say? Be diligent, bend every effort, is our translation here, to present yourself approved to God, not to people. It's so tempting.

You see expressions of opinion about issues that seem salient and pertinent and that are causing people to decide what they are going to do, how they're going to vote and so on. And we want to influence them. We want to get them to see it our way.

We want them to be on our side. And so we try to persuade. Persuade.

Paul says, feel free to express your understanding of the truth, but do not let it turn into contention, strife, argument. There is no profit in it and it will ruin the hearers. You're not going to help the hearers.

You're going to ruin them. Why? Why? What do we know about the truth? Let's go back to a very basic understanding. I think all of you can fill in this blank.

The power of God comes into the life of the believer by what? There are two components, the spirit of God and the word of God, right? What activates and makes the word of God real and influential and powerful in our hearts and souls? Us personally, we're looking at the word of God. We're coming to an understanding of it. What is going to activate it and give it power to change our thinking, to correctly order our goals and values and priorities, to enable us and empower us to live? What does that? We have the word, what is required for it to be effective? It is the sword of the spirit, right? So now think about this in the context Paul is talking about.

There are issues in this context. It's the resurrection. So Timothy and others will speak the truth in love with gentleness, with humility, and say, this is the truth about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and about our gathering to him, everything that you see in 1 Corinthians 15.

So you express that truth. What is going to activate that truth for the people who hear it from a believer who understands it? Whether he's a teacher or someone else in the room, we can speak the truth to one another in love. What's going to activate it? Is it the power and persuasion of your arguments? Is it the examples that you adduce? Is it the weight of conviction? Is it how passionately you present it and how agitated you get in anyone disagreeing with it? Once the truth is expressed calmly, humbly, with the goal of helping the hearer to understand what the word of God says, what's going to make it powerful for them? Well, I can tell you what won't make it powerful for them is argumentation, excitation, strife, emotion, wrangling, contending, creating no profit and the ruin of the hearers.

Why? For the same reason that I can't take the word of God and turn it into something for myself. I can't read a bunch of secular authors or inspiring philosophers or people from the past who have a pithy quote. I can't take the word of God and then activate it for myself or anybody else by quoting people.

What activates it for me? It's the Holy Spirit. Once we speak the truth to others in love, what is going to push it across the finish line and persuade and convict and make it useful and helpful to them? Not me. I can only present the word.

I can't do the Holy Spirit's job. We are not to try to convict others of sin, righteousness

and judgment. Whose job is that? What did Jesus tell his disciples in the upper room about the Holy Spirit and what his mission would be? When he comes, he will convict the world of sin, what is moral and what is immoral, of righteousness, what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is untrue, and judgment, the consequences of rejecting what is right and rejecting what is true.

That's the Holy Spirit's job. We have to discipline ourselves. This is why Paul says, remind them of these things and charge them not to argue.

Charge them not to strive to no profit. We are privileged to speak the truth. We are never told to go out and convict people of their error, of their sin, of their wrongheadedness, of their problems with the truth.

We speak the truth. The other half of the equation is now the Holy Spirit. He knows which hearts are receptive.

Even someone who seems indifferent, who seems to not be listening, who seems to be rejecting what we say, God, the Holy Spirit, once that seed of truth is planted, the Spirit can come at the right time and in the right way and bring his own persuasion to bear, divine persuasion. Divine influence that is infinitely more effective than anything we think might help drag someone in the right direction. We have to be disciplined.

We have to be clear on what our role is, which is on the truth side, to live it, to speak it, to be people of the truth. What did Paul tell Timothy about the church in his first letter? What is the church? How does Paul describe it? It is the pillar and ground of the truth. It's not the pillar and ground of persuasion.

It's not the pillar and ground of conviction. It's not the pillar and ground of all of those things that the Holy Spirit does. Do not elbow the Holy Spirit out of the way and try to convince someone that they are wrong, that they are immoral, that they are out in the weeds.

That is not our job and we will fail. We will become enemies. We will be part of the problem instead of part of the solution.

We will strive to no profit. We will ruin the hearers trying to do the Holy Spirit's job. Don't try to persuade.

Don't try to convict. Don't try to correct, rebuke, and instruct. Speak the word and let God the Holy Spirit do those things with His sharp two-edged sword.

The word is the Holy Spirit's sword. It's not our sword. Isn't that interesting that when you think about the full armor of God in Ephesians 6, put on the full armor of God, shield of faith, breastplate of righteousness, helmet of salvation, feet shod with the gospel of peace.

It's a gospel of peace, not a gospel of argument, not a gospel of strife. And having in our hand the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. It's not having your sword with which you can go and hack and slash.

That sword, it's like Excalibur. If you think about the King Arthur legend, remember the sword in the stone and only the right guy can pull it out. The sword knows when to let go of the stone and when not to.

It can only be wielded by a righteous man and a righteous cause. And the sword knows when to cut and when to be effective and when to be a dead and useless thing in this myth. The sword of the Spirit is similar in that it works and is effective when the Holy Spirit is guiding it, when the Holy Spirit is keeping it sharp and directing its movements and its contact.

It's not our sword, it's the Holy Spirit's sword. So do not strive, do not contend. It will ruin, there is no profit.

Instead, as we speak the truth, as we endeavor to live the truth and be examples of the truth, we bend every effort not to present ourselves to people as justified in what we believe. And, well, I'm knowledgeable, I'm competent, I know all of your arguments and I can counter them. No, present ourselves formally to God approved.

God is pleased. God sees our self-control. God sees that we have bridled the tongue.

God sees that we have maintained humility and sensitivity in presenting this truth. The humility is going to come up down in verse 24. Just glance down there.

A servant of the Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle, able to teach, patient. Do you want to serve the Lord or do you want to serve ego? Do you want to serve self-justification? Do you want to serve self-interest? Do you want to be vindicated and respected by people? Nowhere in the word of God does it say, be diligent to present yourself approved to the people around you. We are to, as much as it is possible, as much as it is up to us, live peaceably with all men.

We endeavor to not let our good be spoken of as evil. And the quickest way to have our good spoken of as evil is to try to impose it on others. What is the world's argument with the church at large? What is secular America's distaste and dislike with Christianity? You're trying to impose your standards on me.

And we are not to impose. Christian nationalism, we're going to take the nation back for God and pass laws that are going to force people to be immoral, has no biblical foundation. There is a city whose founder and builder is God, and it's not on this earth.

It isn't here yet. And to try to take God's place and try to build a nation or a city and impose Christian values. We can represent Christian values.

We can vote for Christian values. We can defend Christian values, but a servant of the Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle, be humble, able to teach. When someone says that can't be so, we say, well, here's how it can be so.

In humility, verse 25, correcting those who are in opposition. This is a tricky thing to correct someone, but do it with humility. We can use ourselves as an example.

This is one way to do it. You know, I used to think that way until I saw from the word of God that my concept, my understanding didn't match God's word and God's will and God's way. I once, Paul does this, remember? We too once walked in the ways of the world until the grace of God appeared and we were rescued and we were enlightened and illumined.

We were taken out of the kingdom of darkness and entering into the kingdom of light. But we too once went astray. We were prisoners of the flesh.

We were captive to sin. We were slaves under that hopeless and helpless condition. But God in his grace sent his son.

You know, I used to think like that, but let me tell you that I came to a new and better understanding. Be gentle, be humble, offer a truth, don't shove a truth. And once you've offered it, let the Holy Spirit take it and penetrate to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow.

It's his sword, not ours, that divides. Each person has to deal with the truth from God via the Holy Spirit, not via well-meaning, well-intentioned and poorly instructed believers. Well, this is our calling.

This is what we have been chosen for. When Paul talks about I endure all things for the sake of the elect, elect for what? It's not elect for salvation. It is chosen to represent the Lord Jesus in his absence.

That's what we have been chosen for. We are called, we are chosen. This is our opportunity, this is our mission.

This is what we have been thoroughly equipped for are these good works. Thoroughly equipped for every good work. So this is a point to ponder.

We can make some very good practical application as we consider those with whom we converse, those that we interact with on social media, those that we talk to on the phone, that we visit with at work or in the home or wherever it may be, friends, relatives, acquaintances, clients, whatever it may be, we should be gentle, humble representatives of God's truth. The power isn't in our presentation. The power is intrinsic to the truth itself.

The word of God is alive and powerful, not the presenter of the word of God. It's not the power of the teacher or the pastor or the believer who is speaking the truth. The truth carries its own authority and its own power and God, the Holy Spirit will wield that and direct it and use it with divine omniscient grace.

All we have to do is represent it. Well, we'll pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're gonna pick up at that point and move forward to see the point that Paul makes, having built this foundation, how does he take us forward talking to Timothy in chapter two? We'll see that when we come back.