

2Timothy 24-12-01a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the post Thanksgiving, December the 1st, 2024 gathering. It's wonderful to be with you all this morning and to continue our study in 2 Timothy 3, such a telling description of what perils will exist in latter days, not only chronologically in the age in which we live, but also as we progress and as we learn and grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior, our senses are exercised to discern good and evil, as it says in Hebrews chapter 5. And because of that, we become aware and we perceive and can detect the difference between what is genuinely good, what is genuinely true and right and proper.

And those things that have a semblance or an appearance, a form of godliness that lacks the power of God. That is the section that we're in. We're going to finish up a few final observations out of the first nine verses here, and then move on to the contrast.

And it is such a wonderful thing. The negatives begin this chapter, and then Paul turns the corner and says, but you, Timothy, and then we're going to see the nature of true discipleship. What is it to be a disciple? There are a lot of ideas about discipleship, about discipling, about the relationship between Paul and Timothy.

And it's going to be beneficial to us to look at these descriptions and then look at ourselves and see how we're doing. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship, our time of study, to ensure that our hearts and minds are conditioned by the Holy Spirit to understand these things that can't be understood by the fleshly mind, the carnal mind. And having done so, that we can then remember them and apply them in the days ahead.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, we are grateful for this time of fellowship, for the up-building that takes place when we spend time speaking the truth to each other in love, catching up on circumstances, enabling us to pray, intercede, and give thanks more intelligently for our fellow believers, the ones that share our enthusiasm for your word, for the life that you have granted to us, your provisions, your blessings, the challenges that you give us to help us to grow, the discipline and the correction that you provide to us so that we can make use of the time that you've granted to us in a more meaningful and purposeful way. We thank you for the Lord Jesus, his suffering on our behalf, his glorification on our behalf, and his intercessions and representations at your right hand on our behalf.

We pray that as we look closely at this portion of your word, that God, the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts in an effective and meaningful way, help us to see what it means and to live in that light in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen. Looking at our passage, Paul, of course, begins this chapter talking about the dangers that will characterize latter days, the latter days.

And it's easy to say, well, look at all of those rascals living out there doing all these terrible

things. But it is fascinating to look at these descriptions and to then look at ourselves and make sure that these things are not creeping up. I was looking at this list, depending on how you count them, there are about 18 descriptive words and phrases here about the perilous times.

We begin in verse two with the, blasphemers, this was the ones who commit the sin of insult. These are insulters. When it's directed toward God, we say it's blasphemy to take the name of God in vain or whatever, but this can be aimed in any direction.

And you see this all around. People have tried to play it for humor. You may remember Don Rickles was an insult comic.

There was a poor strategic move made recently at one of Mr. Trump's events where one of his staff, he didn't know and had no part in the planning, but somebody engaged an insult comedian and they started talking about Puerto Rico being a floating island of garbage or whatever. And that was an insult comic and people will play it for humor, but there is a lot of it that is for real. And the insults that were being flung in both directions in the political arena are a mere shadow of what takes place in the personal realm.

And people will talk behind each other's back and gossip is not just the revealing of information, but it is this insulting, demeaning, tearing down and tearing apart, trying to raise oneself by diminishing others. There is a lot of bitterness and acrimony in much of this. You hear it in public commentary about public figures, but you see an awful lot of it in social media.

I saw a review last night in some context of how many suicides have been committed and why some countries are outlawing social media for children under a certain age because of suicides. And it is this blasphemy that causes peer groups to ostracize and inundate some hapless person in their periphery with this horrific, insulting, demeaning, degrading speech. And young girls get such a poor self-image, they don't think their life is worth living and they have taken their own lives because the old adage that sticks and stones may break by bones, but words will never hurt me.

Well, in an age where so much of life is words via the internet and social media, the words do hurt and they do wear away someone who doesn't have the strength of God, who doesn't have a relationship with God, who doesn't find their value in the precious blood of Christ that purchased them and what they mean in God's eyes and what they mean to the Lord Jesus and what they mean to a healthy group of fellow believers who are practicing the one and others. And without that, suffering the slings and arrows, the suicide is up among the greatest cause of death in people under the age of 30. And this is one of the reasons why.

We want to be careful to monitor our speech, to endeavor, to avoid this consciously or unconsciously in our own conversation, the sin of insult. The Jewish rabbis, as I mentioned, placed this high on the list of sins, blasphemy, the sin of insult, they use the Hebrew word for it, but the insult that comes from anger, you can have a momentary disparaging remark that you make, you fling out something in the heat of the moment, but there is a cold insult that comes

from arrogant pride. And people don't just mean it in the moment, they mean it all the time.

It reflects their consistent view. And that is horrific in its power. And it's unforgivable when not acknowledged and not confessed and abandoned.

But then we have this disobedient to parents idea here. And in the disobedience, this is actually one of these alpha privative words because it is a patho, the word disobedient here is lacking the proper loyalty and deference and respect and consideration. It is a lack of something that creates this situation.

And when you look at the Old Testament, what do you see? Deuteronomy 21:20, there was a death penalty for teenagers. And the parents, I don't know that this, there are no records of it actually happening, but it is in the law of Moses. Parents could take a rebellious and disobedient teenager to the elders of the city.

And in Deuteronomy 21:20, they shall say to the elders of his city, this son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey our voice. He is a glutton and a drunkard.

Notice how this lack of respect for structure and authority spills over into other areas of life. And the penalty for this was stoning by the people. The parents would bring him and the community would stone him to death.

Similarly, in Deuteronomy 27:16, cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt. And all the people shall say, amen. This is in that amen section where there is a line by line, phrase by phrase agreement on the part of the people.

We saw this in Proverbs. It's mentioned several times. One of them is Proverbs 15:20.

A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish man despises his mother. Proverbs 30:11, there's a generation that curses its father and does not bless its mother. That's what we have today.

There is a lack of appreciation for family structure. There's a lack of consideration for the parents that raised you. The parents themselves don't respect each other.

They often don't stay together. And it is an enormous problem. You see it summarized in Micah 7:6, when Micah is describing the degenerate state in Israel.

Son dishonors father, daughter rises against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. The man's enemies are the men of his own household. And the Lord Jesus will quote this over in Matthew chapter 10.

Jesus excoriated his own generation in Matthew 15:6, that the Pharisees were teaching that a man need not honor his father or mother. Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. So even the religious establishment was making the word of God of no effect.

And you see that reiterated in its parallel in Mark chapter seven, verses 11 and 12. When Romans chapter one, Paul is giving the description of those who suppress the truth and unrighteousness and who do not glorify God. They are in Romans 1, 30, back biters, haters of God.

You remember our list concludes with lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. These are haters of God in Romans 1, 30, violent, proud, boasters, same combination that we have just above here, proud and boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents. Ephesians chapter six, verse one is the positive side of this, the exhortation.

The command for children is to obey your parents in the Lord, this is what is right, Ephesians 6, one. And of course our passage, we saw it in Titus chapter one, verse six, a man is blameless husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of dissipation or insubordination. There's a responsibility for parents to ensure that there is obedience in their household.

And there's a responsibility for the children to respond and to submit. So that is the first of our alpha privative. This is what is lacking.

There needs to be something within us to accomplish respect for one another, especially respect for parental authority. But notice this says, anthropoi will be disobedient to parents. And this is beyond obedience.

This is the respect and consideration that is their due. That is a part of the structure that God has built into the family and ultimately into society. Even adults have a responsibility to look out for and give consideration to their father and mother.

Honor your father and mother. And this is dishonor as well as disobedient. And you can put dishonor out in the margin here.

It is honor at any stage in life. Then of course you have these, even in English you can see the uns that are coming up. I used to make a t-shirt when some of us were at Annapolis decades ago because it was a military academy and 7-Up had a funny commercial where they were calling themselves the Un-Cola because it's clear and didn't look like Coke or Pepsi.

And they said, 7-Up, the Un-Cola. And so there was a t-shirt that circulated for a while that said Navy was the Un-College. So much of what you would find at a civilian college wasn't there.

The parties, the fraternities, the excesses, none of that played at a service academy. But here we have the uns. And the first one here is unthankful.

Unthankful. The word here is thankless, a caristas. And this is failure to recognize a debt that you owe to God and to others.

This characteristic of ingratitude. And you see this throughout. You see teenage children who have this sense of entitlement and cultivate an attitude and an identity of victimhood, not

appreciating how much they've been given and how much they enjoy, especially compared to other people of a similar age around the world who don't have anywhere near.

Even having a full set of senses and failing to appreciate you've got eyesight, you've got hearing, you've got physical strength. You are not incapacitated. You're not crippled.

You look at these wonderful children that they care for at St. Jude's or at Shriners. And you see the commercials on TV and these little children are overcoming tremendous deficits. Those who are born whole and relatively healthy, there's just a lack of appreciation.

All they can focus on is what they want that they don't have. And they don't begin from a place of appreciation of what they do have. This is something we have to watch for in ourselves because the older we get, the more we start to see the loss of things that we took for granted perhaps when we were younger.

And it is a conscious effort often needed to look at what we still do have. What can we accomplish? What can we exercise? What can we avail ourselves of in the service of our heavenly father, in consideration of our fellow believers and those around us? What do we still have on the positive side? To be ungrateful for what we still have, what God provides in some cases in lieu of things we might've enjoyed before. This is glass half full.

This is whatsoever things are true, honest, noble, of good report and so on. If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things. So thanklessness, lack of appreciation and we often see this in others before we see it in ourselves.

You can knock yourself out. You do a whole load of laundry. You wash a whole kitchen full of dishes after Thanksgiving.

You have labored in a loving and caring way and you feel a sense of disappointment when it seems to be unnoticed or unappreciated and you're not asking for a ticker tape parade, but it would be nice if someone noticed that you've put yourself out and then we have to have the discipline to say, I do what I do as under the Lord. The Lord knows I did it. I don't need this, but it is still nice if we enjoy the blessings that come from the reciprocity that we've discussed so many times in the one and others.

The one and others, one of the ways we know the sphere of one another love is that it is reciprocated and we have to change the setting on our love for neighbors because neighbors are often not capable of reciprocity. This is a different kind of love and it is a more of a one-way love and we have no expectation. In the one another realm, there needs to be reciprocity and if we are a part of a one another group, our family, our church, our marriage, our fellow believers who need to know better and ought to know better, we are one of those and we've got to concentrate on being appreciative and not being ungrateful, not lacking karistos.

And one of the things this does, when we look around to see what have my fellow one another believers done that I can appreciate, this is an intrinsically objective exercise. It takes me out of

the subjectiveness of eyes on self or only looking at the disappointments and the shortcomings and the criticisms I can make of other people. We can have eyes on others that is not subjectivity.

It's not unhealthy. It is eyes on others in an appreciative way. Paul is going to talk about this in our second session this morning.

We're going to see Paul encouraging Timothy to look at him in an appreciating and healthy way. This is a part of being a disciple is looking at others who are successfully practicing discipleship to Christ and looking at them in a positive way. This is eyes on others that doesn't tear down, that doesn't distract, that doesn't promote sin, that doesn't degrade and stymie and limit the grace of God and the love of God quite the opposite.

But we have to first see if in our latter days in the dangerous times, if we have unconsciously become ungrateful. Gratitude means take a little time to look around, look at the quiet ways in which someone who is not a braggart and is not arrogant is putting a shoulder under the load. They are quietly doing what they do as unto the Lord.

And wouldn't it be wonderful to express gratitude to them, to let them know that the love of God in our heart is directed toward them because of their love expressed in what they do. Being grateful, being appreciative, being thankful for what God does among us and does for us through fellow believers is an outward looking, healthy, grateful attitude. And it is perilous to let a lack of appreciation.

I'm always looking at the glass half empty. I know you did this, but look at what you didn't do over here. And that is not true, honest, noble, lovely virtue, praise, those things that we are supposed to be focusing on so that the peace of God that passes understanding preserves our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord. Wouldn't it be great if children looked at their parents and focused on what their parents were doing right and not on what they did wrong, their lack of self-discipline on some occasion, their flash of anger, their impatience, their shortfall in some area of parenting. If children have an appreciation and overlook that and concentrate on I'm so grateful for all the things my parents have done right and done in love and done to communicate the grace and the provision and the nurture and admonition of the Lord for me.

Well, we want to have that attitude all the time. So this acaristos is a lack, it's a deficit, it's a shortcoming that is endemic and intrinsic to a fallen human nature and something that God gives us the ability to cultivate, practice and express. So we want to watch for this.

Yes, the age is gonna be terrible just before the antichrist appears, but these are perilous times now. And we do not want to be victimized by these trends, these human failings, thanklessness. And there is a sense of indebtedness that we should recognize and endeavor to remember and repay.

Try to be as great a blessing to someone else as they are being to us. We have to, first of all, recognize what a blessing they are and focus on that, concentrate on that. The next one is on Osias.

And it's translated in the New King James, unholy. But this on Osias doesn't so much mean that they break written laws as that they will offend the unwritten laws. This is in the area of ethical behavior, moral behavior.

The unwritten code that we have in our culture is our conscience. You have to sear your conscience with a hot iron because God has put the knowledge of himself in the heart of every man. And there are things that are known to be right intrinsically because we are in a pattern that reflects the image of God.

The image of God was lost, but there are remnants and echoes of it that remain even in the unbelieving world. So even the Greeks and the profligate rife nature of their immoral culture, the sexual promiscuity and temple prostitutes and so on, but they even recognize that it was on Osias if someone died and you did not bury them. To leave the dead unburied, that was just wrong.

Even in the Greeks mind, to marry your own sister, even the Greeks profligate as they were, immoral as they were in many ways, they knew that incest was wrong. To marry your son or to marry your mother, Greek culture recognized that as wrong. So if you're on Osias, you offend against the fundamental decencies of life.

To wantonly destroy someone else's property for no good reason. To spray graffiti on someone's house or their car. This is an almost conscious rebellion against the decencies, the rightness, the ethical things.

It's just intrinsically wrong and nearly everyone recognizes it. But when people become ruled by their passions, when they allow their impulses to take them wherever that may lead, they will become shameless in the gratification of those passions. And this often happens when the normal pleasures of life, the things that ought to be gratifying, this just doesn't do it for them anymore.

They build up a resistance to just enjoying a sunset or sitting at a beach or appreciating beauty in nature or in works of art or sculpture. You see teenagers who will go and break the fingers off of statues and tear limbs off of trees that have been planted in public parks and public places and will just wantonly break windows and deface possessions and key someone's car just for the fun of it. And these no longer give them a thrill or give them a perverse pleasure and they have to graduate to even worse things.

This results in rapes and in robberies and in self-gratification that has to keep accelerating and multiplying. The next word here is a-storgos, a lack of storge. And this is without human affection.

We have it translated unloving, but this isn't a lack of philo in the Greek. This is a-storgos. Storge is loyalty.

This was the dedication that was expected of men in the military, in the Greek or the Roman army. To be storge was to be loyal. It was family love, the love of a child for a parent and the parent for their child.

And self-centeredness, you're not loyal to anything. You're no longer patriotic. You're not loyal to your country.

You'll perversely find that any kind of appreciation for the country is, oh, that's Christian nationalism. All I wanna do is focus on what's wrong with the country, not what's right, not its Christian foundations, not the Judeo-Christian values that are still reflected in our constitution and in much of our law code. And people say, no, the country bad, it's all empire.

It's all oppression. It's all the privilege. It's all intrinsically racist.

And this is a divisive and disloyal lack of appreciation for structures that reflect divine values, even if they are secular in their foundation. And these kinds of ties to loyalty to your family, loyalty to your parents, this is a lack of fealty of when you plight your truth in a marriage, you take that lightly or dismiss it altogether. This doesn't make me happy, so I no longer have any respect for it.

And the next one, as we go to the break here, is a spondos. Sponde in Greek is the word for a truce or an agreement. You have committed to a thing.

You have made a promise. You have signed a contract. You have entered into an arrangement, either verbally or formally.

And this is contract love. This is the love God has for Jacob and not for Esau. It's not an emotional love or a filial love.

This is love in the sense of, I have entered into a covenant. I have agreed. My integrity is on the line to fulfill my side of a bargain, an arrangement, an expectation.

My integrity is on the line. I said I would do a thing, so I'm going to do it. A spondos means someone is so bitter, they've become disenchanted and embittered to the point that they're unable to reconcile.

You hear about this and you sometimes see it and even experience it. Somebody becomes offended and they are irreconcilable. There is no apology.

There's no approach you can make that will bring them back to the previous relationship. You're cut off. You're gone.

You are no more. You are dead to me. I'm not talking to you.

I'm never going to see you or visit you. I won't acknowledge you. This is the, you are dead to me, irreconcilable bitterness.

It isn't a policy based on, I've got to touch not the unclean thing. I have to do this for my spiritual self-preservation. I want to do this lovingly and kindly, but I've got to maintain a distance.

This is, I hate you and I'm going to punish you because you disgust me. That's a spondos. I cut off all rightful and proper relationship with you because I hate your guts.

It can also mean that you become so dishonorable that you break the terms of an agreement. This is an aspect of disloyalty and adultery in a marriage and you become so enamored of something else. You just want to get disentangled and you just forget about and conveniently abandon prior commitments and prior obligations because you're interested elsewhere.

So it's either reaction against the other party in this agreement, contract, arrangement, or covenant, or you are so attracted to something else that you're willing to throw that over. There's a new excitement over here. I'm going to throw out the bath water and the baby, and I'm never coming back to the house and goodbye.

I'm over here now. And so we're always going to have differences. There are always going to be things that we wish were better, different, more pleasing to us, but to encourage and exaggerate these differences in our own interest and to say, well, this peccadillo here, this little shortcoming, this failure, this is reason for me to jump ship entirely.

I'm going AWOL and I'm never coming back because I didn't like that. This is a very common kind of sin that we commit. And we stop listening, we stop praying, we stop looking for that which is true and honest and lovely and noble and of good report.

We no longer look at class half full, and we use this as an excuse to disappear from an obligated relationship. Well, that brings us to the close of our first session. And we come to the next one, which is slanderers.

And this breaks the pattern right in the midst of a sea of alpha privatives here, words that start with a negating A, we have diabolos. What does it mean for us to be? In the latter days, men will be devils, diaboloi. Can you and I, as believers in the Lord Jesus, can we be devils? Can we be a devil to others? What does it mean? We'll see that when we come back from the break.