

2Timothy 24-12-08a

Good morning. Welcome to the Sunday morning service here at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is the 8th of December, 2024.

We continue our study in 2 Timothy 3, and we are picking up here at verse 10. But you contrast between the false teachers, those who are practicing evil and leading others astray. There's a sharp, definite contrast.

Having looked at the negatives, having seen the pitfalls and the perils of the latter days, whether it is the latter days of the age or the latter days, as we grow in grace and knowledge of Christ, we become more experienced, we become more useful and fruitful to the Lord Jesus in the prosecution of the Father's purposes here on earth, we also encounter more opposition. We are becoming increasingly important in the conflict. Believers who aren't making a difference don't get the attention of the enemy.

But when we begin to be effective representatives of the Lord Jesus, this can cause us to become the targets of opposition. This is not a bad thing. This is a good thing because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood.

It is a spiritual conflict and we have spiritual resources. God sustains us. It's exciting.

It is gratifying to be useful in the service of the Lord. And we look forward to this opportunity. It is nothing to be afraid of, nothing to shy away from.

It just means that God is at work in us to will and to do for his good purpose. That is what Paul is talking about here in 2 Timothy chapter 3. We'll continue at verse 10. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and we'll begin.

Father, what a wonderful potential we have in Christ. You have rescued us from the kingdom of darkness, transferred us to the kingdom of the Son of your love. We are secure.

We are held in your hands. We are enabled. We are protected.

We are lifted up and strengthened by the gifts that you have distributed, by the presence and power of your Holy Spirit, the example of the Lord Jesus, and the wonderful truth we find in these apostolic writings in particular in the New Testament. We pray that as we look at this portion together, that your Holy Spirit will help each one of us to understand what it means to see clearly how it pertains in our own lives, to make application and to be those who are useful in service, both now and through our growth and experience, useful in the ages to come. We pray it in Jesus name.

Amen. We have read the preceding perils and most recently, these who have a form of godliness, but deny its power. These are pseudo Christians.

They are wolves in sheep's clothing. Some of them, I think many of them don't even realize that they are wolves. They don't realize that they are teaching as doctrines, the traditions of men.

They don't grasp that they have strayed from the truth and have embraced, uh, human ideas of spirituality. This was the problem of the Pharisees. The Pharisees didn't wake up in the morning and twist the corners of their mustaches and say, what evil can I perpetrate today? They consider themselves and each other to be bastions of righteousness and keepers of the flame and protectors of the tradition and of the law of Moses.

And they were self-important. They felt significant. They wanted others to be aware of their status, their accomplishments, their education, their superiority in understanding and quoting selected portions of scripture.

And yet the Lord Jesus said they were whitewashed tombstones. They looked good on the outside, but inside they were like sepulchers full of dead men's bones. And this should scare us all to believe that we are right to believe that we are on the path to believe that God is pleased with us when in fact it is quite the opposite and we are a detriment and we are a bad influence on fellow believers.

Uh, even as we endeavor to be helpful is a sobering potential. And that is why Paul labels it perilous times. New believers don't typically fall into this trap.

It is in the latter days when we become, uh, long in the faith, we've learned the word of God, we've been around believers. We've professed a Christian identity for some time. And in the latter days, there is a danger of being led astray by our nature.

If we are not diligent, if we are not praying Psalm 51 and first John one, all of the time, if we are not examining ourselves to see if we are in the faith, if we do not have the humility to be correctable, this can happen. And of this sort are those who creep into households. It infiltrates where it shouldn't have influence.

And it talks about, uh, silly women, gullible women, but as you know, they are just put for anyone who is susceptible. Anyone who is influenceable, anyone who is, uh, in danger of their authority structure, not protecting them. There is an authority structure in a household.

And if someone is coming into the household, when the husband is not there and leading the wife astray, this is a picture. It is an example of what happens when the authority of the word of God is set aside and it becomes the authority of those who can write pithy aphorisms or, uh, influential and popular books and, uh, introduce something as though it was new and we have a new trend and it's, we've, we've listed these many times, things that have happened just within my own lifetime with which I've, uh, been familiar, things that have come and gone in terms of, uh, popular trends and well, Oh, here's the new key to Christianity. We didn't know that it was this, or it was that.

And it gets into the household and the proper chain of custody of the father's truth through the

Lord Jesus to the apostolic and prophetic witness in scripture that in the hands of the Holy spirit is ministered to our hearts and souls, this gets seductively and perilously set aside and a different influence comes in and leads astray. Those who are trying to get rid of some guilt. It typically leads with guilt.

Your traditional Christianity is insensitive to the poor. You're not having an effect on society. You're you've allowed Christian nationalism or you've allowed legalism or you you've allowed, uh, other religions or you've, you've somehow, uh, been maintaining bad traditions in talking about morality and those things that God condemns and prohibits.

Uh, you've been unloving and you've been uncaring and you've, you're not getting at the essence of the sermon on the Mount and, and the commands to love. And you're, you're too restrictive. You are too selective.

You are, uh, perceiving and, and exercising discretion in who you associate with or who you support. And that's wrong. You've not allowed the law of love.

And, and these things come in and set aside the authority of scripture and set aside the actual plans and purposes of God, the father in the person of Jesus Christ, which we are to be paying close attention to. So, and it is subtle. It is a demonstration that seems to have power.

This is why he mentioned Janice and Jambres. Those wizards in Egypt were persuasive, look rods to serpents. And if you don't keep watching, if you say, well, that's all I need to see Janice and Jambres, they're, they're the guys they've got it.

Look at that. They're that Moses isn't doing anything that they aren't doing. The God of Israel isn't any more powerful than the gods of Egypt.

And if you don't keep watching, if you don't pay attention and stay informed, you can check on an issue. Make a snap decision based on those who have crept into the household and led astray. Someone who isn't well-informed, isn't diligent, isn't constantly praying for wisdom and insight light on the path.

Doesn't have the humility to be corrected. If they start down the wrong road, sometimes it's hard to reverse course. You sort of make a commitment in a direction.

You start to realize that maybe it's not all it's cracked up to be, but it's too embarrassing to admit that you got fooled and, you know, you stick with it. They will progress no further. Their folly will be manifest to all just as the Egyptian magicians eventually were shown to be powerless in the face of God Almighty's power in delivering his people.

So then we come to verse 10, but you have carefully followed my doctrine. This is such a well-structured section that we are embarking upon. Paul is going to name, let's count them.

Doctrine one, manner of life is number two, purpose, number three. So you've got doctrine is

number one, two, manner of life, three, purpose. Number four is faith.

Number five is long suffering. Number six is love. Number seven is perseverance.

Number eight is persecutions and number nine is afflictions. Now, these are going to fall into a very helpful grouping, and you can look at this a couple of different ways. It begins with characteristics of Paul's apostolic ministry, which are also characteristics of any good teaching of the gospel.

Paul's apostolic ministry is a teaching ministry, and that is expressed in three terms. So Paul says, what you have observed carefully, this, by the way, is the same word that Luke uses in chapter one of his gospel when he says, I have carefully followed, I have sought out the information when he's talking the introduction to Theophilus, the same word is used, to be a diligent student of, to observe and respect and give full weight to a thing. So you have carefully followed.

It is a form of discipleship that indicates more than just knowledge. There is an investment. There is a belief in and a commitment to the thing that is the object.

So there are three terms here that characterize Paul's ministry. The first is his doctrine, his teaching, the didaskalia. This is what a poimenikai didaskalos, a pastor and teacher, is supposed to transmit.

Don't have to make up new stuff, don't have to be inventive or creative or somehow innovative. This is the teaching, it is the faith, it is contained in scripture, and it isn't a matter of trying to come up with something new, it is a matter of understanding and carefully following the established teaching and faith found in the scriptures. And that is what Paul leads with.

This is the foundation for everything else. Because the didaskalia, the teaching, the doctrine, this is the truth. It is the truth of Jesus Christ, who is the truth embodied.

You will know the truth. The truth will set you free. The church is to be, and believers in the church who form the church and constitute the church, this should be the pillar and ground of truth, as we saw in the first letter.

So, you have carefully followed my teaching. What is the content of the teaching? It is God's own truth. Not human traditions, not humanly manufactured elaborations, accretions, additions, extensions, interpolations, extrapolations.

It is the core teaching. This is the only thing the Holy Spirit is going to bless to the nourishment of our souls, is God's truth. Second one is manner of life, his walk, the example that he sets.

And Paul will allude to this over and over again, that there is a pattern of life that can be observed. In Greek, this is the word agoge, and you know this word. Think for a minute.

Where have you ever heard agoge? Synagogue. Very good. Synagogue.

This is the assembly. This is where people agoge with each other. You could just take some of the letters out and it's go.

This is how you go. You go together. You live together.

You adopt a common faith, a common life, a common walk, a common fellowship. But this is the word without the sun, because this is manner of life. We as believers in the Lord Jesus, who are like minded, who share an enthusiasm for the word of God and for the plans and purposes of God, the wonderful hope that we have in Christ, we will be living together.

We will be pursuing this life and these opportunities and the wonderful grace that is in Christ Jesus. The strength that comes from that grace together. And Paul is an example of this.

And those who are in the sun agoge, which becomes the ecclesia, those who are called together, this is the word that is translated manner of life. But as soon as we think agoge, we think, you know, this is not the lone ranger. This is not the isolated individual trying to trudge along alone.

We do this together. There is a mutual edification and building up in the body. So that is the second word, manner of life.

And the third one is purpose. The word purpose here. And this is the word from which we get a prothesis.

If you've ever heard in logic or in argumentation, someone is going to advance an idea. And so there is the prothesis and then there is the apotheosis. If this is true, this is what I'm putting out as my thesis and pro means I'm putting it out in front of us.

This is my idea, my prothesis. And if this is true, if I can demonstrate that this is true, the apotheosis, this is what comes after. This from it, apa, from that prothesis comes the conclusion.

If this is true, then this is how we should then live or think or act or believe. So my prothesis, what I advance, what I claim is the basis on which we should draw conclusions and live our lives. So these first three are the characterization of Paul's life, his ministry.

So his teaching, his way of life, and his leading, what he claims is the basis on which we should live. The concept of this latter one was expressed in 1st Timothy, chapter four, verse 12. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity.

Paul here tells Timothy, you've seen my example. You've seen the way I conduct the ministry as an apostle. You should do the same as a pastor.

That's what he said in 1st Timothy 4, 12. And we, by extension, all of us as believers, the reason there is an example is so that it can be followed. The Lord Jesus was an example to us.

He learned obedience through the things that he suffered. So do we. Paul the apostle was an example.

Timothy followed that example and he was charged with being an example. You and I are all charged with living an exemplary life, something that is an embodiment of that pattern, that reality when the power of God is present. Can you imagine trying to contain the power of God and the glory of God under a bushel basket where it isn't seen and isn't known when, as Jesus said, the lamp is not placed under a basket, but it's put on a lamp stand so that its light shines and can be beneficial and a means of guidance and illumination for many, many other people.

Let your light so shine that others will see that light and will be drawn to the Father. So these first three things, this is Paul's ministry, three terms. Remember, we've got a total of nine, right? So the first three are dedicated to his ministry, which he is encouraging Timothy to follow.

Timothy will not be an apostle, but Timothy as a pastor is encouraged to continue to be a follower as he has been in the past. And what this tells us is it doesn't matter what your spiritual gift, your role, your function is. You can be young, you can be old.

These are ubiquitous. These apply to any person who is a believer in the Lord Jesus and wants to live a life that pleases God, wherever you are, whatever you're doing. You can be paying attention to the teaching.

That's what Paul leads with. That's what defines and informs everything else. Without the teaching, forget the rest of the list.

We have to know whom we have believed. We have to be persuaded of that truth and that he will keep what we commit to him against that day. It's what fuels our hope.

It's what strengthens us so that we can love as God loves and express and reflect divine care and concern. So those three terms, my doctrine, my manner of life, this is the application of that teaching, the living out of that truth. You have to know it and then you have to do it.

You can take piano lessons, but if you don't practice, even though you know how to identify the notes that are on the treble clef or the bass clef on the sheet music, you know that, well, the next note that should be played is an F sharp and below that should be a D and above that should be an A. I know exactly what ought to happen. But when I sit down at the piano, if I haven't practiced and if I haven't put it into effect, if it has not become a part of my manner of life on the piano, I know what should happen, but I can't make it happen. Because I'm not investing in the experience of it.

I am not performing it. I am not making it my manner of life. It would be a wonderful thing if you could just buy a guitar book and then you could play the guitar.

And this is how much of the music publishing industry works. I am in people's homes all the time and there are stacks and stacks of music. But when I ask the person there, so do you play?

How much do you play it? Oh, I, you know, I took lessons when I was a kid and all of us do this.

I have done this. I can show you a nice stack of guitar books. There's lots of knowledge in there.

I've read the books. I know what's supposed to happen, but I haven't sat down and put in the time to make it a part of my experience and to have it become muscle memory and become natural and something I can do with just minimal effort. That is the difference between teaching and manner of life.

Manner of life means now it is a part of my practice. And then thirdly, you have the purpose. It is now out there as an argument.

It is a foundation. Others can look at it and see that there ought to be conclusions drawn. I've got to ask that person a reason for the hope that is in.

They look at, look at what they believe and look at how they live. What is the hope that is in them? Your life becomes an argument, becomes a, a force to be dealt with. It's a persuasive prothesis, a proposition.

If this proposition is true, it forces certain conclusions. There must be a God in heaven because no one could be that good. That happy in those circumstances, unless there's more to it than meets the eye.

Those are the first three, his ministry. The next four are general characteristics of a believer's life of faith. So faith, long suffering, love, and perseverance.

Do you notice how often you find these things grouped together? Patience is macro Thumia macro. You know, that means something that is big or extensive. And that's why when we say long suffering, we're talking about, you know, suffering, the Thumia is the suffering part.

Macro means there it's extensive. You suffer long. Love suffers long in first Corinthians 13, love suffers long.

So this is long suffering. We saw this in, uh, first Timothy chapter one, verse 16. When Paul is telling Timothy, um, for that very reason, I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his long suffering.

His unlimited patience. I was the worst. I was persecuting the church.

I was a self-important, self-righteous, self-centered, misguided, arrogant Pharisee, and I was persecuting believers in the Lord Jesus. I can't think of anything worse. I'm the worst of sinners.

Paul says, but that's the very reason I was shown mercy so that God could demonstrate in me, in a worst case, his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. If the Lord Jesus can forgive, cleanse, repurpose, bless Paul, the chief of sinners, he can certainly do it for me. That was first Timothy one 16.

Paul is going to exhort Timothy in the next chapter, second Timothy four two, to preach the word, to transmit the teaching, to be faithful in ministry, to be ready in season and out of season, to convince, rebuke, and exhort, how? With all long suffering and teaching. The same two words he uses here. You have seen these in me.

And he's going to tell him in chapter four, this needs to characterize your function in your pastoral calling, your teaching gift. And by extension, all of us, whatever our gift may be, need to be ready in season and out of season to exercise and practice our gift. If we have been given through the Holy spirit sensitivity to the needs of others, we need to be ready and be watchful for opportunities to exercise that gift.

For Timothy, it was to convince, rebuke, exhort, and teach all of us, whatever our function, whatever our niche, whatever our area of service, whatever way God uses us to bless others is going to require patience, long suffering, macro Thummia. This is a characteristic of a Christian life that is faithful and reflective of the Lord Jesus. The second one is love.

We saw this. You remember well in first Timothy chapter one, verse five, what is the goal of our instruction? What is the goal of the commandment? The goal is the purpose, right? What should the outcome be? What should the effect of the prodigies of the proposition of the teaching, the faith, the life, what should it be? What is the outcome? The purpose of the commandment first Timothy one five is love. Well, I sure wish I could love, but I'm really struggling with it.

There are too many obstacles. The person I'm supposed to be directing this love at or the people. They're too difficult.

They're too obstreperous. They are too hard to love. They don't have qualities that make me want to love them.

I am constantly distracted by what I consider to be failures or shortcomings. I have criticisms. I have disappointments.

I have whatever other obstacles there are, but the purpose, the goal of the commandment is love. So how do I get that love when it's difficult? Well, it has to come from a source. Remember what is the merit of faith? Where is the merit? Where is the good? It is in the object.

Faith is only as good as what you believe in. If you trust something that's untrustworthy, it's going to fail and you're going to be disappointed. You're going to lean on a reed.

It's going to snap and stab you in the hand. That's an old Testament figure. The merit of faith is in the object, but the merit of love is in the subject, in the one expressing the love, not in the object.

God loved us when we were yet sinners and we had nothing to commend us. Nothing redeemable, nothing worthwhile whatsoever, but God loved us. And this is divine love and its merit is in the subject.

It doesn't mean that we just love everything indiscriminately because part of the merit of love is knowing when to express it, how to express it, and toward whom to express it and what kind of love it needs to be. Is it one another love? Is it neighbor love? Is it those who are outside love or is it enemy love? These have different qualities, different expressions, different limitations, different conditions. And to express God's love, we need to be godly.

This is agape, the purpose of the commandment. This is the measure. This is how we know that faith and hope and the teaching and accomplishing the purpose and receiving God's grace and being strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus as we saw at the beginning of chapter two of this book.

The goal, the outcome, the manifestation is love, but it comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. I cannot redeem or repair people who are going to be the object of one of those areas of love. I can't fix my neighbor.

I can't fix somebody who's outside. I certainly can't fix an enemy. I can speak the truth to one another in love and hope that God will bless that truth if I am careful and humble in humility, correcting those who might be in opposition so that God has the opportunity to grant them the fruits of repentance as we saw at the end of the preceding chapter, but I have to be smart, I have to be knowledgeable.

I have to have taken care of myself first so that as someone who expresses love, I am qualified and enabled to do so. So love isn't about finding somebody lovely. Love is about becoming someone who can love.

So I cultivate a pure heart. If I'm having relationship trouble, I don't need to go fix the other person. I need to examine myself and claim God's grace.

And wash my robes in the blood of the lamb and be transformed by the renewing of my mind so that I have a pure heart, a good conscience, a conscience that can genuinely discern and tell the difference. This is a time to love. This is a time to separate.

This is a time to embrace. This is a time to refrain from embracing. This is a time to gather stones.

This is a time to scatter stones. Think of Ecclesiastes, the times and the seasons. You have to have discernment to know which is which.

This comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, a rehabilitated truth and error discernor, right and wrong discernor. Morals and ethics are not codified by a consensus of human beings on the outside. They are established in our heart by God's word and God's spirit.

And then a durable, genuine, sincere faith, genuine faith. That's 1st Timothy 1.5. So when Paul tells Timothy here, you have been a disciple who has invested in, observed and endeavored to follow my teaching, the way I express that teaching in life, my behavior, my pattern of life, my

purpose, the reason I'm here to be a light that reflects the glory of God, to be a conduit for truth, to be the means by which the Lord Jesus is represented on this earth and others are drawn to the father through him. That's my purpose.

That's my, that's my persuasion. Then these concepts that are involved in a healthy Christian life, the first of which is the faith, then the long suffering, then the love. Do you see something that reminds you of something else here? What's our, what's our trinity of Christian virtues? You can say them out loud, faith, hope, and love.

Do you see two or the three, two of the three here? What does he say? I've got faith, long suffering, and love. Faith, long suffering, and love. You will notice that many times in Paul, these virtues, there's one that, that is interchangeable.

You always have faith and you always have love. You always have pistia as faith. You always have agape as love, but hope is often synonymized.

It is expressed with a different term and it is patience, hope and patience are often interchanged in Paul. There is a collection of verses to which we can appeal to see this and we will do it after the break. But remember, when you think of hope, it isn't pie in the sky by and by.

It's not, when is the rapture? When do I get my halo, my robe, my crown, my streets of gold, my pearly gates, my mansion, we tend to think of hope as something that happens after the rapture, after the return of Christ, something that happens in heaven, but Paul over and over again does what he does here. There is faith, long suffering, where hope might be expected and then love. So what does this mean? What is the nature of our perseverance, of our patience? We'll see that when we come back from the break, but remember these things that Timothy has observed in Paul, Paul has told Timothy to be an example of to all the believers in his congregation.

So this is an example worthy to be emulated, worthy to be followed by each and every one of us. We have things that are a part of our spiritual gift. We have things that are part of any healthy life.

And then the last two here are afflictions and persecutions. And this will be common, this pushback, this opposition and resistance in the world will also be common to all of us. It will take different forms, but that's your remaining two.

You have three that are a part of ministry, a part of gift for us. We have four that are at the core of Christian character and Christian living. And then we have the final two, which are what you can expect in the world by way of opposition, so fascinating, so helpful and practical.

And we'll continue to look at them when we come back from the break.