

2Timothy 24-12-08b

We're ready to resume our study here, a very fascinating portion of 2 Timothy 3, beginning at verse 10. And this second section of four descriptions, four characteristics that Timothy is aware of in the life of Paul and has, as a follower, as a disciple, observed and endeavored to emulate, that he's not a follower of Paul, but if you want to do a thing well, this is how many people have how-to-do-it shows on television. You have cooking shows or home project shows to see someone else do a thing and do it well.

A lot of us now will go to YouTube if we have to fix a car. Someone has already done what you're trying to do on that particular make and model or something very similar. And so they say, now, the first time I did this, this broke and I had to go get another one.

And you observe them and learn from their example. You're not a follower of them. You're trying to accomplish an independent purpose that they have also tried to accomplish, and you benefit from their example and their experience.

So we are not disciples of the apostles. We are not looking to them as our mentor per se. They are fellow travelers.

They are believers who, by reason of provision from the Lord Jesus, serve as examples. And we as co-disciples benefit from fellowship and from their example and what they have been through and how they have exploited the resources that are in Christ Jesus to persevere and improvise and adapt and overcome. And we see them, and it encourages us as followers of the Lord Jesus.

That's what Paul is setting forth here. So we have already seen that there is these three-fold emphasis at the beginning on doctrine, manner of life, and purpose. Now these next four, we see faith, long-suffering, and love.

We do understand that the triad of Christian virtues that we've seen many times in the past, faith, hope, and love. We have other passages that talk about God not forgetting. This happens in Thessalonians, for example, where Paul says, God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith, your labor of love, and your patience of hope.

That was in 1 Thessalonians 1, verse 3. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope. And many times we find these are grouped together in a like fashion. So 1 Corinthians 13, 13, these three remain faith, hope, and love.

That's our primary passage. Galatians 5, 6 tells us that faith expresses itself through love. Colossians 1, 4, and 5, Paul says, we have heard about your faith, you believers in Colossae, your faith in Christ Jesus, and your love for all the saints, the faith and love that proceed from the hope stored up for you in heaven.

Hope as the motivation of which you have already heard in the word of truth, the gospel. This is the teaching, the foundation. The statement Paul makes in Romans 5, verses 2 through 5, the Lord Jesus, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we stand.

And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings. This is what's coming up at the end of this list, the persecutions and afflictions.

We rejoice in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance, long suffering. Perseverance produces character and character produces hope. And hope does not disappoint because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1, 15 and 16, Paul says to those in the target areas of this circular letter, we call it Ephesians, but we think it was probably originally Laodiceans. But he says, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. And then he goes on in the rest of that chapter to talk about the expectation, the hope of coming to understand the deeper things of God.

He mentions the work of faith in 2 Thessalonians 1, verse 11. And even Peter talks about this in 1 Peter 1, 21 and 22, talking about the Lord Jesus, through him, you believe in God who raised him from the dead and glorified him. And so your faith and hope are in God.

Isn't it interesting? We talk about faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is certainly true and meaningful. But Peter says, through Jesus, you believe in God who raised him from the dead and glorified him. So your faith and your hope are in God, God, the father.

And the Lord Jesus says, I am the way to the father. Since you have purified your souls by obedience to the truth, so that you have a genuine love for your brothers, love one another deeply. And he says the very same thing Paul said, in 1 Timothy 1, 5. The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart.

Peter repeats that here. You have purified your souls, this is a pure heart, through obedience to the truth. This enables you to have a genuine love for your brothers.

So the exhortation and the command from Peter in 1 Peter 1, 22 is, love one another deeply from a pure heart. If we're having trouble maintaining love, maintaining patience, maintaining peace with others, we look at ourselves. It isn't a matter of trying to fix the object, it is a matter of remembering that this isn't faith, where the merit of faith is in the object, this is love, and I need to become someone capable of expressing and reflecting the love of God.

I must cultivate a pure heart. I must cultivate a good conscience, and I must cultivate a sincere faith. That is the potential where the love of God will be shed abroad in my heart, and I will have the power of God enabling me to express the love of God.

And it doesn't require efforting, it doesn't require work, it doesn't result in failure and shortcoming and disappointment, inconsistency, because I'm trying to do it in my own

strength. I can only be made a source of love by God creating in me a clean heart, by God restoring to me a good conscience, and by I myself choosing to express a consistent and sincere faith. That's where love comes from.

And with that, we can love the unlovely, we can love with patience, we can love with endurance, we can love with consistency. If there's a problem in a love relationship, the only way to fix it is to look to ourselves and make sure that our love. And look, if we express love and it is not reciprocated, the person on the other end isn't able to do the one another, guess what? Now we're in a different category of love, okay? This isn't one another love because it isn't being reflected back to me by someone with a similar desire to accomplish the purposes of God.

So now I shift my ground and I understand that there is a different quality, a different set of conditions, different limitations on neighbor love than there is for one another love. One another love is reciprocal. If the other person is not reciprocating, I adjust the expression, the conditions, and the limitations on my own love.

And it is still up to me to express the proper love. This is part of what having a good conscience means. I have to know the difference between one another love and neighbor love, or outsider love, or enemy love.

Each of them has different expressions and limitations. And we covered this when we went through 1 Timothy in detail. This is something we need to cultivate.

We need to ask God the Holy Spirit to give us discernment. We need to concentrate on ourselves. We always want to concentrate on the other person.

Love, read 1 Corinthians 13, it's all about the qualities of the lover. It is patient, it is kind, it is self-sacrificing. It doesn't say it seeks out people who are lovely.

It is all about the nature of the one expressing the love. So Hebrews chapter 10, verse 22 through 24. What's the first requirement? If the goal of our instruction is love, where does it come from? How are you able to have it? What's the very first thing? Peter and Paul both say this, pure heart.

What does Hebrews 10, 22 through 24 say? Let us draw near to God because a new and living way has been opened into the throne room by the torn veil, the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can now enter into the Holy of Holies. Let us draw near, Paul says in Hebrews, let us draw near with a sincere heart, a pure heart in full assurance of faith.

Our hearts having been sprinkled, cleansing us from a guilty conscience. That's the pure heart. The heart has been sprinkled.

That makes it a sincere heart. A sincere heart can express a sincere faith. It's all about fixing ourselves to approach God.

We have to avail ourselves of the grace of God. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins. Sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

It is a metaphor. We are spiritually cleansed. We are rehabilitated.

We are washed. It's obviously a metaphor. In Revelation, time and again, you have a reference to those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Bloodstains have traditionally been one of the hardest things to get out of white cloth. And yet the blood of Jesus Christ renders linen spotless and glowing white because it's a metaphor. So Peter says we purify our souls and our hearts by obedience to the truth.

That enables us to have a genuine love for our brothers. And we can respond to the call to love one another deeply from a pure heart. Hebrews chapter 10, we have our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and our bodies.

This is our walk. This is our accomplishment of purpose. This is our prothesis.

Like Paul says, our bodies are washed with pure water. Again, the body is a metaphor. This isn't a bath or a shower.

This is our presence in the world. Our walk, our reflection of Christ, our testimony is washed with pure water. This is the water of the word.

So let us draw near and let us hold resolutely in verse 23. Let us hold fast to the hope we profess for he who promised is faithful. It's interesting.

You look at faith, the merit is in the object, love, the merit is in the subject. Hope is a blend of the two. We are to hold fast to our hope because the one who has promised is faithful.

Hope is where the two meet. It's the knot in the center. Faith is expressed in a worthy God.

Love is expressed by a worthy person, but the knot in the center that ties them together, the motivation, the foundation is hope. And we hold fast to our hope because God is faithful. So we are resolute.

We express perseverance and durability in our character because God is faithful. Let us hold resolutely, Hebrews 10, 23, to the hope we profess for he who promised is faithful. And then in verse 24, and let us consider how to spur one another along, how to encourage one another to love and good deeds.

Love first. The good deeds express love, and we can encourage one another in love. Part of that encouragement is by example.

That's what Paul is talking about here. You have been a disciple, well aware, closely observing, being invested in my teaching, my manner of life, and my prothesis, my purpose, my argument

put forth by my life in these four areas of Christian character, faith, long suffering, which is intimately connected with hope. You don't keep on suffering with a good attitude unless you have an expectation that it will be worth it, that it accomplishes something, that God will bless it, whether to us or to someone else.

And love, agape, sacrificial to self, beneficial to others, love that is sourced in a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith, and perseverance. You think, well, isn't long suffering and perseverance, aren't those sort of two sides of the same coin? But endurance, hupomone that we already talked about, this is to bear up under, literally. It is the grace to bear up under.

It is steadfastness. And so you find this in Romans 5, verse 3 and 4. We glory in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance. Perseverance produces character, and character hope.

It isn't so much that they generate it as they are expressions. One leads to the expression of the next. So when you hit hard times and testing, this is the opportunity to express.

I wouldn't so much say knowing that tribulation produces, tribulation is the occasion to express perseverance, hupomone. And hupomone produces character or gives the expression. This is an other elements of character, and that character expresses hope.

It is a reflection of the motivation and the expectation, and our confidence is in God. We know that He's faithful, and what He says by way of promise will be fulfilled. And so we're confident even in adversity, even in persecution.

Romans chapter 15, verse 4, whatsoever things were written before were written for our instruction, for our learning, so that we through patience, through hupomone, and comfort from the scriptures might have hope. He who promised is faithful. So what's written in the scriptures is going to happen.

These things were written for us so that through patience, not without patience, through patience, with the comfort of the scriptures, we have hope. The next verse, Romans 15, 5, now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another. This is the expression.

This is how we bless each other, through our spiritual gift, through our fellowship, through speaking the truth, through our example, through our prothesis, our purpose. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to, reflecting Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus. And this is in the context, if you look up at Romans 15, 3, the reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.

This is rejection and criticism and resistance and opposition from other people. So there is hostility in nearly every case where you see Paul, especially using this word hupomone. It is in a context where there is hostility and opposition directed against the Lord Jesus or against those who follow him, the trials and hardships that you have to endure as a good soldier of Christ

Jesus.

So we saw that in Romans 5, we saw it in Romans 15, in 2 Corinthians 1, 6, if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. Notice Paul says, when you see us afflicted, this is so you can look at our affliction and find comfort, because when we are comforted, it is also for your consolation and deliverance.

You look at us and it should stimulate your hope. We are sharing in the sufferings of Christ Jesus. We share in enduring opposition and hardship because we are fellow disciples.

2 Corinthians 6, 4, in all things, we commend ourselves as ministers of God. Same thing he's talking about to Timothy here in chapter 3. In everything, we commend ourselves as ministers of God in much patience in tribulations. We have patience in tribulations, in needs, and in distresses.

We hupomone, we bear with, bear up under. 2 Corinthians 12, 12, Paul talking to the Corinthians and he says, truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all patience, hupomone, perseverance, signs and wonders and mighty deeds. 2 Thessalonians 1, 4, we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.

And they are enduring these things because they have professed faith in Christ, in Thessalonica. In 1 Timothy 6, 11, we saw this, you, O man of God, flee these things that were listed above and pursue righteousness, godliness. This is another one of our passages, faith, love, patience, patience of hope, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.

1 Timothy 6, 11, central passage in this regard. 2 Timothy 3, 10, which is our passage, this is the difference. There are two kinds of patience, endurance, hupomone, which we've just seen, and long-suffering, which is slowness to wrath.

You find them combined in Colossians 1, 11, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power for patience and long-suffering with joy. That tells us they are not the same thing. They are not synonymous.

So we endure adverse circumstances. We show long-suffering or patience toward people. We have circumstance issues, health issues, financial issues, national and international things that can change the face of our lives, what happens at the store, what happens for opportunities to learn or to live a life.

Circumstance is we endure, we bear up under things that are beyond our control. Long-suffering is people-related and we need both. When the slings and arrows of what Shakespeare called outrageous fortune oppress us, we need endurance.

When people are the problem, we suffer long. Love suffers long. Notice long-suffering is an

expression of love.

You don't love bad circumstances, reverses in the economy, reverses in health especially. These are things that are outside our control. Health issues are not a people problem.

It's the breakdown of our physical being, inaccessibility of care for our health problems, transportation issues and other circumstances that we have to overcome or bear with. That requires circumstantial patience. Long-suffering is people-patience and we need both.

If one of them trips us up, we will tend to stumble and fall in the other. If we get frustrated with circumstances, we will take it out on people. If we become upset with people, we will lose our patience with circumstances.

So we need them both. So we endure. It is perseverance and it takes courage when things seem to be against us.

So that's why Paul mentions both of them here. As a part of the character of a believer, you have faith, hope, long-suffering. Hope is what gets us through people problems.

Long-suffering. Love suffers long. Love is patient.

Love is kind. And we persevere in the face of adversity that's not necessarily people-related. But having done so, you come to verse 11 and this is the final two out of the nine issues.

And this is a result in many cases. And the virtues and the positives of Paul's ministry and way of life that are detailed in the first seven descriptions that Timothy has carefully observed as a disciple, endeavoring to be as faithful and avail himself of the same resources that Paul has used to persevere, to be patient, to deal with people problems, as well as oppression from Rome and health issues and so on. But in verse 11 here, we have persecutions and afflictions, which happened to me.

And this follows hard on when he says faith, long-suffering and love. This is in the area of people, right? Then he goes to perseverance. This is endurance in circumstances.

So now he's going to expand and talk about those circumstances, persecutions and afflictions, which happened to him at Antioch and Iconium and Lystra. The persecutions that he endured and out of all the Lord delivered me, he says. For Antioch, if you want to know what happened to him at Antioch, you can go to Acts chapter 13, 48 through 52.

This is the great famous passage in Acts where it says, as many as were appointed unto eternal life, believed when Paul spoke, the Gentiles responded, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And those who had been put there to hear that word on that day made the decision to place their faith in it and believe it. And they were appointed to eternal life.

And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against

Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from their region. So they shook the dust from their feet against them and came to Iconium and the disciples were filled with joy.

So what happened in Iconium? Well, you go to chapter 14 verses one through seven of Acts and Iconium having left Antioch where they were driven out by irate people. They went to the synagogue of the Jews and spoke and a great multitude of Jews and Gentiles believed, but the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. They stayed there a long time speaking boldly in the Lord who was bearing witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be performed by their hands.

Both the multitude of the city was divided, part sided with the Jews, difficulties arose and you can read the rest of that story through verse seven. Timothy probably heard about these experiences, but he personally observed what happened in Lystra which is the next place Paul mentions and that is hard on the heels. You would think how discouraging must this be to Paul.

He goes to Antioch and irate people drive him out. He goes to Iconium, irate people drive him out. So he goes to Lystra and in Lystra one of these signs and wonders take place.

There's a man with no strength in his feet, crippled from his mother's womb, had never walked. He heard Paul speaking. Paul observed him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed.

This is Paul's discernment. It is not a ubiquitous, unconditional healing of everyone. Paul has observed him.

He can see in his face that he is responding to the message. He observes that he has faith and this is a condition on which Paul is going to direct the power of God toward this individual. So Paul says in verse 10 of chapter 14 of Acts, he says with a loud voice, stand up straight on your feet.

The man leaped up and walked. Can you imagine? Crippled from birth. Not only is the deformity corrected, but he's got balance, he's got muscle tone, he's got coordination, he's got the brain programming instantly to not just arise.

He can jump up and down. He can walk around. This takes babies months to learn.

He has it instantly granted to him. When people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices saying in the Lycaonian language, the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men. So they called Barnabas Zeus and they called Paul Hermes.

And so they're trying to co-opt and interpret this in terms of their own Greek gods. And you can read from there. You can also go to Acts chapter 16 verses one and two, to see that Timothy had come to Paul at Lystra.

When he gets to Lystra, a certain disciple was there named Timothy, son of a Jewish woman who believed his father was Greek. And he was well-spoken of by the brethren who were at

Lystra and Iconium. So Timothy is in those circles and known to those people.

And evidently Paul and became acquainted during this time. This is why Paul can say, you well know what happened to me at Antioch and Iconium and Lystra, what persecutions I endured and the Lord's deliverance out of all of them. I was preserved.

Yes. Verse 12, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution, will suffer affliction. There will be those who take umbrage at our faith, who will be critical, who will say you're wrong.

You ought to be doing it differently. What's the matter with you? Here's our standard of righteousness. Here's our standard of acceptance.

We'll accept people that you reject. We're better than you. What's the matter with you? That you won't fellowship, you won't embrace, you won't bring to your table people in a certain category or people who embrace a certain lifestyle.

You're holier than thou, you're judgy, you're critical, you're not Christ-like. And we are. And you will suffer affliction and persecution, certainly in the social sense.

And in many parts of the world, we're grateful to be in America where we are seldom, if ever, persecuted for our faith physically. But you look in other parts of the world, people in Africa are being murdered daily because of their Christian faith. South America, from the past until now, the Shining Path and others who are trying to take over in the less well-traveled regions of South America will kill people because they are Christians and for no other reason.

They will drive them out. They will burn them out. They will try to destroy their communities.

And we tend to be uninformed about this. So Paul says, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. Verse 13, evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse.

He's circling back around to, in the latter days, perilous times. Evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. And this is the sad thing is so many of our fellow believers are being deceived.

There is a way that seems right. And they become not only proselytes to these false views of Christian faith, but they recruit others. They try to influence others.

They lead others down this path of deception, deceiving and being deceived. So you must continue in the things which you have learned. What was the first thing in the list in verse 10? You have carefully followed my teaching.

Carefully follow what you have learned. Hew to the scriptures. The word of God is alive and powerful.

All scripture is God-breathed. You must continue in the things which you have learned and

been assured of, because you know the reality of their truth and their power, having observed the person you learned them from. Paul is summarizing Timothy's knowledge.

He has seen God's miraculous power at work in and through Paul. Not just the healing miracles, but the grace of God in comforting, encouraging and strengthening Paul in all of these persecutions and afflictions. In seeing him give Paul a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Timothy knows by observation that the power of God is manifest in the life of faithful believers. And you must carefully follow the teaching so that you yourself can be a similar example, have a similar outcome, a similar presence and power of God in your own life. The key is to continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, because you know their source.

What is the source? It is God the Father. It is God the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the apostolic witness under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, preserved in the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God.

So what is the conclusion of the matter? This section is the positive side. Paul started by outlining the pitfalls, the dangers of deceivers and false teachers, the nature of the opposition, the nature of the deception is summarized and distilled in the false teachers that he describes in the first nine verses of this chapter. But you carefully follow the positive example that he has witnessed in Paul, the teaching and everything that stems from that teaching, the function of spiritual gift, the witness of Christian character and the deliverance of God through persecutions and afflictions.

So you are always going to have evil imposters. They are going to go from bad to worse. There will always be opposition.

There will always be persecution and affliction. But you must continue in the things which you have learned. And coming to Bible class week by week is a wonderful start.

It is essential, but it does not end there. To receive the teaching, to understand it, to believe it, to get it written down is one thing. But to continue in it, to live it out, to be a disciple that does not just talk the talk and assent to the truth, but who walks the walk, lives it out, becomes an example of faith and patience.

As Paul has described here, that is the key to continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of is not just to hear them and believe them, but to apply them. That's our goal. That's our purpose.

How do we do that? We'll pick up here in verse 14 next time. So with that, we'll close in prayer and we'll look for you Wednesday. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the wonderful ways that you have provided for us. And we ask that the Holy Spirit will minister these things to our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.