

2Timothy 24-12-15b

We're ready to pick up our study here in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 15, and from childhood you have known the holy scriptures. You recognize that in Timothy's childhood the New Testament had not been composed, had not been written, the Gospels were not yet circulating, the epistles of Paul and John and Peter were not yet collected and made available. So when Paul says you have known the holy scriptures ever since you were a child, these are the Old Testament scriptures.

And what's interesting about that is these holy scriptures are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ. First, the Old Testament scriptures make you wise for deliverance, for salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. So the Old Testament scriptures, and remember the Lord told the Pharisees, you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and it is they that testify of me.

The Old Testament scriptures were sufficient to bring someone to faith in Christ Jesus when He came. That is why in the early chapters of Acts, before there is any New Testament, before there is any written post-Pentecostal truth set down, 2,500, 3,000 people come to faith. Turn back with me to Acts chapter 2, we like to think of Pentecost as the birthday of the church.

You notice that it is important that there be the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. So Jesus told His disciples in chapter 1, verse 4 and 5, the twelve being assembled together with Him. You see this in verse 2. This is important.

We are going to do a special study on this in the near future, probably right after the New Year. Jesus in verse 3 of Acts 1, presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs to the apostles whom He had chosen, underline it, put a star by it. The Lord Jesus presented Himself alive to the apostles and He gave them commandments.

This is in verse 2. The Lord gave commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen. This is the chain of custody of divine truth, which is codified for us in the New Testament scriptures. Jesus spoke truth to the apostles that isn't in the Old Testament.

He didn't gather them together and start quoting Ezekiel or Isaiah or Daniel or the Psalms. The Lord Jesus gave New Testament truth to the apostles, appearing to them and verifying that He was indeed the risen Christ by many infallible, incontrovertible proofs. And He was seen by them during 40 days after speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Things pertaining to the kingdom of God. We are well aware of these truths that pertain to the kingdom of God. That is the bread and butter, that is the content of our hope.

We are not currently in the kingdom of God. We are not currently resurrected. We have not received our new body.

We have not put off this mortal flesh. We have not escaped our sinful nature. We are in a transition period, but we are preparing for the kingdom of God.

This is a momentary light affliction. This life, as long as it may seem to us, is brief and momentary. We are preparing for eternity in the kingdom of God.

This is the kingdom of the Father. This is our long-range view. You may be in school.

You may be taking training. You may be working at a certain level, but you expect promotion. You expect advancement.

You expect to be prepared and to move into a field of endeavor or an occupation or some other future situation for which the present is useful. I'm learning. I'm gaining experience.

I'm an apprentice. I'm an intern. I am learning, sometimes even without pay, or I am paying to be trained because I am looking ahead.

So the fact that Jesus is speaking to his apostles, the things concerning the kingdom of God, doesn't mean that the kingdom of God has been inaugurated and is underway and that we are kingdom people doing kingdom work and that Jesus is the king. This is anticipation. We are driving toward a goal.

Do you notice that when Jesus says, strive to enter by the narrow gate, wide is the way and broad is the gate that leads to destruction and many are on that road. Narrow is the way and straight is the gate that leads to life and few there be that find it. And we are on a journey.

We are in a process of learning. We are endeavoring to build our faith, to lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven and inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled laid up for us in the future kingdom of God. We are practicing.

You can be a private in boot camp. You can be a midshipman or a cadet at a service academy. You can be an ROTC individual.

You can be in all kinds of situations where you will be put in circumstances that anticipate the future. We're going to make up a fire team or a squad and we're going to posit that there is a hill that needs to be taken and you are in charge. So use your training, implement the procedures and the principles that you have learned and we're going to have a mock attack.

We're going to set up a defensive perimeter. Let's see if you know how to set up interlocking fields of fire, how to place your machine guns and how to position your troops so that they are mutually supporting and you're not going to get flanked. What are your communications with your units to the right and to the left or that are behind you or that are in front of you? It isn't what you are ultimately going to be doing, but it is very similar in the sense that you are gaining practical experience.

You are turning your gnosis into epignosis so that when the actual thing comes, you're not

surprised, you're not thrown off your balance, you have a kind of experience that serves when it is for real. The future kingdom of God is the for real. This is our training period.

This is our time of building and learning and growing and also for qualification. Anybody that's been in a training program knows that they will often watch for those students who excel and they will be granted special privileges. In Marine Corps Boot Camp, the honor man in a platoon will get a promotion to PFC right out of boot camp where other privates have to wait.

There are special opportunities that are granted to those who make really good grades. You get scholarships, you get fellowships, you can go on to grander things because you have shown yourself approved and diligent. That's what we are doing here.

The overcomer blessings that are detailed in Revelation 2 and 3 are for those who recognize the importance of God's truth, God's word now. So notice in Acts chapter 2 that after the Lord Jesus has ascended into heaven, the last half of chapter 1, the Holy Spirit has not yet come upon the apostles. Jesus has breathed a temporary endowment upon them, but he told them, you have the Father's promise, John baptized with water in 1 5, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

Even in the presence of the Lord Jesus, even as he is presenting himself to them and giving them commandments, they have not been baptized by the Holy Spirit. They do not have that resident presence and power that is going to come not many days hence. So what should you do when you are not yet blessed with power from on high? You wait.

You sit still. Jesus said in verse 4, he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait. It is so important that we wait.

Wait on the Father's timing. Wait on the provision to be fully in place before we rush in where angels fear to tread. Wait for the promise.

What did Jesus not say? So many times it is just as important to know what scripture does not say as what it does say. How many apostles is he speaking to? 11. Judas has gone off the reservation.

He is not a part of the group anymore. Jesus is speaking to 11 apostles. He did not say, while you are waiting, see if you can find a 12th guy to replace Judas.

But Peter, in a not atypical fashion, decides that they need to elect a guy. And so they confer among themselves and narrow the field down to two. And then they basically flip a coin and ask God to guide whether it is heads or tails.

God is now limited to either choosing justice or Matthias. And after all of this justification that Peter gives, and he quotes a scripture, but he takes it out of its context. And after praying, they choose Matthias rather than justice, poor justice, who is a nice guy.

He's an almost apostle, but you actually have to say poor Matthias because the Holy Spirit is not in the choice. Peter and the group get ahead of God's plan. Who is the 12th apostle? It's Paul.

God had it figured out. Paul comes at an unexpected time. He says, I'm like a baby that's born out of time.

It's unexpected. It isn't when you would think. But that's God's plan, God's work, God's timing, God's choice.

And to get ahead of God only gums up the works. And neither justice nor Matthias, despite this half a chapter of agony here from verse 15 through verse 26 is a complete waste of time. All it does is hurt people's feelings, creates a distraction, doesn't accomplish anything in God's plan.

But in chapter two, when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. Who is they? The 11. The 12 disciples minus Judas.

They are all together in one place. These 11 guys. Suddenly there was a sound from heaven as a rushing mighty wind.

It filled the whole house where they were sitting. The 11 are inside a house. They're sitting in the living room.

Probably kind of crowded. Not that different from the upper room. After Judas left.

There are 11 of them. They are sitting in the room. Just the 11.

This is not 500. This is not 1,500, 2,000, 2,500, 3,000. There are 11 guys that have this experience.

There appeared to them. Who's them? Pronouns are important. Biblical pronouns are important.

There appeared to the 11. When the house is filled with a rushing mighty wind, there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire and one set upon each of them. How many tongues of fire appear? 11.

There are 11 tongues of fire. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. Pop quiz.

How many people on the day of Pentecost spoke with other tongues? 11. 11. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

When this sound occurred, the multitude came together and were confused. Where did they come together? They heard the sound of that mighty wind. It's this gigantic rushing noise.

They can hear it all over town in Jerusalem. Jerusalem, even at that time and in that day, was a relatively large town. But there is this roaring noise, this rushing mighty wind noise.

And people are interested. And God puts it in their heart to go find the source of the noise. These who are devout Jews, they are already related to God by faith in the Old Testament sense.

That's what it means to be a devout Jew. They love God. They go to synagogue.

They are steeped in the Old Testament scriptures. And when they hear this rushing mighty wind noise, they head for this house where the noise is centered. And when they get there, they are immediately confused because they are from all over the place.

Look at verse 9. These guys are Parthians and Medes, Elamites. Some of them are from Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia. So, dialects of Greek, dialects of Aramaic, dialects of the Elamite language.

I don't even know what they speak in Elam. But it wasn't Hebrew. And it wasn't Greek.

But they are all amazed and marveled in verse 7, saying to one another, Look, are not these who are speaking Galileans? If you have any doubt of how many people were blessed with the gift of tongues on this occasion, to speak and be heard by three different guys in three different languages, and you're only saying one sentence, this is a supernatural work of God that the Galileans, who are the Galileans? These are the eleven, right? Not the assembled multitude. There weren't 500 people speaking in tongues. There were eleven.

And by the way, if you have more than eleven people speaking at one time, you're not going to be able to discern anything anyway. They evidently are speaking in turn, or they have gone to different corners of the house, or different sides of the house. They've moved a short distance away, and different clumps of people.

Peter is speaking here. James is speaking over here. John is speaking over here.

And eleven men are perfectly capable of addressing this large multitude in groups. If you've ever watched The Chosen, one thing I thought they did well is the Lord Jesus is speaking to a crowd, and as he would deliver sentences, you would hear the disciples at a distance repeat what he said, so that those who were too far away to hear his voice could understand. And you get the idea that this kind of practice served them on this day.

So the words that the Holy Spirit is giving them to speak are delivered to a subset of the crowd, so that they can hear and understand. But they're not divided by language. It's a mixed multitude, but when John speaks, each one hears John in his own language.

Peter is heard by each one in his own language. God the Holy Spirit is the power by which the Lord Jesus gave hearing to those who were deaf, and sight to those who were blind. And not only could they register vibrations in the atmosphere, but they could immediately understand vocabulary and sentence structure and the meaning of words and phrases.

This was put into their minds. It is the same Holy Spirit who allows each one, at the point that these men are speaking, to have those words produce meaning and understanding in their hearts and in their minds, regardless of the actual Aramaic that's being spoken by these Galilean disciples. It is translated.

This is what the Holy Spirit does with our prayers. What we pray, He brings to the throne of grace with words that we can't utter. We say one thing, the Holy Spirit causes God the Father to hear in God's language, in God's terms.

And He did the same thing on this occasion for these assembled, devout Jews. Are not all these who speak Galileans? How is it that we hear each in our own language, in which we were born? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Judeans, Cappadocians, those from Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya, adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes. Notice they are either born Jews and are devout, or they are proselytes to Judaism and are devout Jews by choice, rather than by birth.

They are all Jews. They have all come to Jerusalem for this assembly feast of Pentecost. That's why they are there.

Cretans and Arabs, we hear, notice the space that is given to these different languages. It takes three verses to detail them all. Verse 11, Cretans and Arabs, we hear them speaking in our own tongues.

What? What is the content? The wonderful works of God. The works of God. These are the Old Testament works, such as Stephen is going to rehearse coming up a few chapters ahead in Acts.

Acts chapter seven, you have Stephen's rehearsal of Old Testament history and the wonderful works of God. You also have the eyewitness testimony of these 11. They have been with the Lord.

Peter understood this. He's misguided in the application by trying to elect a 12th apostle, but he understood that the witnesses were those who had been with him from the beginning and could testify to the wonderful works of God accomplished in and through Jesus Christ. They were not secondhand witnesses.

They are eyewitnesses. They have been with the Lord. They have seen these things take place.

They are uniquely qualified to be apostles. The Lord Jesus entrusted this witness, both before and after his ascension, to these 11 men. Paul, as one born out of time, is going to become the 12th, and the Lord Jesus is going to personally train him, personally teach him, personally give him truths from the third heaven, some of which can't even be uttered.

And there are things that are heard by the apostles that cannot be uttered. It is for them alone. Remember the thunders for the apostle John in Revelation? John heard them.

John understood it, but he's not allowed to communicate it. It's the truth for John alone, and I think there's a reason for that, and you know my reason. It goes back to, can you drink my cup and be baptized with my baptism? But here, they hear, not just in their own language, isn't that something? I can understand what these men are saying.

It's what they are saying. It's the content. And this gets to our point from the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy chapter three.

You have known from your youth the holy scriptures which are able to make you wise for deliverance through faith in Christ Jesus. The wisdom contained in the word. It isn't a formula.

It's not a mantra. It isn't a, well, just repeat the prayer of Jabez. Just chant the Magnificat or the Hail Mary or some other, just repeat these words.

When we talk about the holy scriptures, when we talk about the word of God, it is the content of the truth. It is the wonderful works of God, promises, principles, doctrines, that which is designed by its truth to correct, to instruct, to rebuke, to give us doctrine that modifies how we think and how we speak and how we act. It is not enough to come to Bible class and have the word of God flow over us.

It has to strike a willing and receptive target in our heart and the concepts, the propositional truths make a difference. This is what God has said. Therefore, this is how we should live.

I need to change the way I speak. I need to change the way I think when I am interacting with others. I need to examine myself and see if I am in the faith, not do I exceed or assent or agree to some creed or some formality with regard to, oh, it's a pre-millennial, pre-tribulational rapture.

I believe in a literal kingdom. I believe in real commands to Joshua to slay the Canaanites. I believe in an actual flood.

No. What does the word of God do inside me to deliver me from myself, my fallen nature, to deliver me from the attacks of the principalities and powers with which we wrestle on a daily basis, to deliver me from the devil who roams the earth looking for vulnerable people who are not well defended? This is like viruses in the internet milieu. If you're not careful, if you don't have good defense on your computer, you will get infected.

Your machine will be co-opted. You will lose data. It will lock up.

You will be attacked with ransomware. And enormous companies with million-dollar IT budgets have had to pay additional money to retrieve medical records, legal records, and other vital financial data from their clients and customers because they were not diligent to defend themselves from attack. Not diligent enough.

And it only takes one vulnerability, one poorly informed and uncaring secretary who gives her

password. And in her account, she's got access to her boss's account. And from the boss's account, you have access to stuff that is guarded by fortresses and gates and bars and all sorts of countermeasures.

But one person is fooled by a phone call where someone says, this is IT. I just need to check your account. Let me have your password.

She says, oh, here it is. Or he says, oh, here it is. And that is the Achilles heel by which the entire corporation is brought down to the tune of millions of dollars.

Millions of dollars of lost business. Millions of dollars of lost trust and confidence. Because one person wasn't well-trained, wasn't careful, wasn't watchful.

That's what it takes. The best hacking is done on the humans who run the systems. It is the same in our fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ.

If we are co-opted, if we are misled, if we are deflected, if we go down a bad road, we can have an enormously bad effect on fellow believers. Unwittingly, inadvertently, we would never stick up our hand and say, sure, I want to be the source of confusion and frustration and loss of faith and loss of confidence. I want to be the one that diverts people down a bad road.

I want to confuse them and cause them to question their faith. Nobody would ever volunteer for that. But we have to pay attention to ourselves.

Examine ourselves. Be diligent to present ourselves. I cannot emphasize enough that the reason we are a Bible church and the reason we are looking at these scriptures that emphasize the importance of the Word of God is the effect of the Word of God on our hearts and our souls, our thinking, our speech, our expressions of faith and of love have to be constantly conditioned and impelled by God's Word.

Not just I carry a Bible, I've got a notebook, but it gets into me and it causes me to think in a way that is pleasing to God. It causes me to be Abel and not Cain. It causes me to be the Apostle John at his best and not the Apostle Peter at his worst.

To be the beloved disciple who's got his head on Jesus' breast, hearing what the thunders speak and being obedient enough to keep it to himself. The Apostle Paul, hearing goings-on in the third heaven, having this imparted to him and having the discipline to keep it to himself. It's not the right time.

It's not the right audience. You have been privileged to hear it and see it. You're not allowed to speak it.

And that information is entrusted to those who have shown themselves to be trustworthy. We want to be those people. I would love to be in the Bible class where Jesus hands out the hidden manna.

Better than being in the upper room and having Jesus break the bread and share the cup. I would rather be in the hidden manna class. But why is it hidden? Why doesn't it just get distributed? Why doesn't the hidden manna rain down from heaven on the entire group of believers that comprise the body of Christ the way manna fell on Israel in the Old Testament? What good did the manna do for those who were in the wilderness 40 years? They all died short of the fulfillment of promise.

They all fell in the wilderness except Caleb and Joshua. What good did the manna do them? Because they didn't cross the finish line. We want to be those that know enough and love the Lord enough to work on ourselves.

Don't need to fix society. Don't need to take back the country for Christ. Be wonderful that the country moves in the right direction.

We can certainly shine as lights where we are. But our mission isn't to fix everybody else. Our mission is to let God fix us.

And He does it through His Word in the hands of His Spirit and in no other way. That is why on the day of Pentecost, the inauguration day for this age, for you and me, the apostles, in the power of the Holy Spirit, are speaking the wonderful works of God. This isn't a day where Peter starts his own denomination and John and Andrew and Philip and Bartolomeo and the other Simon and James the Less, they all start little personal followings.

Well, you all come along with me and I'm going to build you into a group. Let's all split up and we'll each have a little group that we cultivate and bring along. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, the mighty works of God are communicated and these people are converted and the Holy Spirit enters into their hearts and souls.

They were all amazed and perplexed in verse 12. What could this mean? Others mocked. Notice, divine words from heaven are being spoken in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and there are people who dismiss it as the utterings of drunks.

Remember on the Damascus Road, Paul hears the voice of the Lord Jesus. Everybody else heard thunder. Same thing at the baptism where God speaks from heaven and says, this is my beloved son.

John hears him clearly. Here's the Father speak. Others heard thunder.

Yeah, these guys are drunk. If you're not seeking even divinely delivered words of the mighty works of God in the immediate presence and power of the Holy Spirit who has descended like tongues of fire on the speakers. Nothing wrong with the deliverance, the delivery of these words.

Nothing wrong with the messengers. It's the Holy Spirit speaking and people hear it and dismiss it as drunken ramblings. You cannot move someone who isn't interested in moving.

You cannot speak to someone who isn't interested in hearing. They are going to dismiss you as a rambling drunk. Metaphorically speaking, they're full of new wine.

But Peter stands up and you know what happens as that follows. We are here to take in the Word of God and in the hands of the Holy Spirit be transformed. We don't transform ourselves.

We seek God's transformation. It's His Word and His Spirit and we work on ourselves. As soon as we start looking at somebody else, it's fine to discern.

We are called to discern. Hold fast to that which is good. Separate from that which is evil.

You have to discern to do that. But as soon as we begin to think I can help that person. I can fix that person.

I can change that person. I'll just share with them my understanding and it has been so meaningful to me. I know it will be meaningful to them.

No, it won't. You cannot divert someone who is not seeking. We can be a wonderful instrument of God like these 11 men who under the presence and power of the Holy Spirit can speak the truth of God to people who are willing to hear it.

Later on they are going to be cut to the heart and say, what can we do? Because they are seeking. They are devout Jews and they are seekers. Others are going to be dismissive.

They are going to be a part of the opposition. This is why Peter and John are going to end up in prison. But you cannot change someone from a non-seeker to a seeker.

You can only be ready to speak the truth with the Holy Spirit's guidance and enablement to those who want to hear it. You will just be a babbling drunk in any other circumstance. We have to watch.

And as soon as we detect that there is pushback and there is resistance and opposition, Paul tells Timothy over and over again, do not wrangle, don't dispute. It is grievous and ruinous to the hearers. You are going to make things worse in your efforts to make things better.

Let God pick the time and the words and bring the truth to those who are seeking. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. That's the word of God and we need to respect it and follow it.

And concentrate on being a seeker ourselves and looking for ways that we can more closely conform ourselves to God's truth, to reflect the glory of His wonderful works, especially those that He has accomplished in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. So important. That is why there is this regular, repeated, ringing emphasis on the word of God and the truth that that word communicates.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. We'll be back on Wednesday. Father, thank you for the

truth of your word.

Thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit to enable us to understand it and to be changed by it. We want to be those who rightly divide the word of truth. We want to be those who produce the fruit of the Spirit from love to self-control and everything in between.

We pray that as we reflect on what we've seen this morning in your word, that your Holy Spirit will impress it on our hearts, make us into those vessels of honor that are useful to serve both now and in the ages to come and reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus as his representatives on this earth. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.