

2Timothy 25-02-16b

We're ready now to pick up our study in 2 Timothy chapter 4. And over these preceding weeks, we have seen the emphasis on motivation, looking ahead to the evaluation that will come at the Lord Jesus, at His appearing, and at His kingdom. And what happens if we fail to maintain that hope, and that expectation, and that anticipation? If we turn aside, we will be led astray. It's up to us to guard our souls, to pay attention to who we are and why we're here, and to be self-starting in that regard.

It begins with our decision to either seek the truth and live in the light of the truth, or allow ourselves to be carried away with some other wind of doctrine, someone who tells us what is pleasant, serving it in a way that it is tasty, it tickles the ear, it sounds great, it's uplifting. I don't want to go to church to be rebuked. I want to go to church to be wafted away on flowery beds of ease.

I want to come away feeling good about myself. I don't want to have to take a hard look at myself. I don't want to have to try to figure out how to make corrections.

I don't want to be made aware of my shortfalls, where I am failing to avail myself of God's grace, and I'm operating in my own strength, and things are going badly. I have plenty of other places I can shift that blame. I do not want to be led by the Spirit of God.

I want to be led by my feelings. As long as I feel good, this is the path. That's what is being described here.

This is what we are charged by the appearance of Jesus Christ, and the coming of his kingdom, and the judgment that attends those events. Pay attention to the Word of God. If you're a preacher, preach it.

If you're a believer who hears it, be corrected. Be rebuked. Be instructed.

Be changed. Pay attention day by day. Don't wait for a test.

Today is the test. You're in the test right now, and at any given moment, you can look at your watch, or look at the time on your phone, and whatever time it is, that's test time. The test is now.

What am I thinking? What is motivating me? Who am I trying to please? We can either live to please ourselves, or we can live to please the Lord. And there's really only one other alternative, and that's trying to live to please others. I just want so-and-so's good opinion.

I want so-and-so to be happy, or be happy with me. So I will do whatever it takes. That is not the measure.

The Lord Jesus is not going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and say, Wife, did you make

your husband happy? When I talk to him, he's got some bones to pick. You never learned to cook very well. You never quite met his standard of keeping the house clean, or you didn't do this, or you didn't do that, or you got busy, your hobby carried you away, and you weren't there with what he wanted when he came home from work, or whatever.

That is not the measure at the judgment. Nobody is going to ask, How well did you please some human being? Because we are all flawed. Our correct and right detector is very often broken.

We do what we do heartily as unto the Lord. This was my dad's favorite verse. This is what he wrote in the front of the Bible I was given when I left home at the age of 16 or 17.

Whatever you do, do heartily as unto the Lord and not unto people. The standard is the appearance. The standard is, are you qualified for service and function in the kingdom? The standard is God's judgment.

Any other message is a fable. The Twinkie of self-gratification. I'm eating this Twinkie, and boy, does it taste good.

Love that creamy center. Love that sugary cake on the outside. Boy, does this high fructose corn syrup make this food taste good.

Boy, look how, I love the texture of this, and it's full of gluten that is a poison for all human beings. It makes the texture good. It's like, remember, both Old Testament and New, you have one who is partaking of the word of God, and it tastes good in the mouth, but it's bitter in the stomach.

Many foods taste great, but you pay for it later. And gluten gets into any human body and creates inflammation. Your histamines respond.

This is like a low-level dose of pollen in your sinuses, but you don't sneeze because it's in your bloodstream, and it's in your tissues. And that inflammation is what creates arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, digestive issues, circulatory issues, muscle and tissue issues, connective tissue issues, tissue issues. It's a poison, but it pleases the mouth.

How much more so in the spiritual realm? The time will come. They will not endure healthy food. It's not as tasty.

It doesn't last as long. I have to pay more for it. It's harder to prepare.

It takes longer. Well, how invested are you in your physical health? That's the extent to which you will shop, prepare, and eat wisely. Same thing in the spiritual realm.

If we do not endure sound doctrine, but according to our own desires, because we want our senses to be pleased, we want short-term gratification, they will heap up to themselves teachers. Notice, teachers. These are people who know how to pitch a concept, who know how to get across a point, who know how to tell anecdotes and pithy stories, and a little bit of

humor, and a little bit of personality.

And there's some charisma. And you feel like you're part of a crowd that is all very appreciative. And we're all on board.

And oh, isn't this fun? I just love coming here. I always get an uplift. I come away feeling good about myself and good about others.

We talk in the parking lot and laugh and so on. It's not healthy. What did Paul say Timothy is to do in verse 2? Preach the word, ready or not.

Ready or not, here I come. Many times when we're unprepared and get caught flat-footed, it's unpleasant. Convince, persuade, rebuke, exhort with patience and with teaching.

Because there will be other teachers pitching a different message. And they, people who have heaped up these wonderful message, tasty food purveyors, will turn away from the truth. It's a responsible choice.

It is a choice that has consequences. And one of those consequences is they will be turned aside to falsehood, to deception. You have family members and in national policy or politics or what ought to happen by way of law or what happens in society and people's personal lifestyles and so on.

And you have a point of view and you have others in your periphery and they are completely different. They think what we find abhorrent is great and worthy of celebration. And you think, how can you not see what I see? Let me just tell you what I see and how I see it.

It will convince you because it's so bleeding obvious to me. This, this and this. A plus B plus C is D. How can you draw any other? How do you get Q down here? A plus B plus C is not Q or L or G or B or T or any of the other alphabet soup things.

All of the stuff under the plus. What does the Word of God say about morality, about propriety, about what a marriage is, what a family is? For this reason, you can't get out of Genesis. For this reason, shall a man leave father and mother, a man and a woman who were their progenitors, and cleave unto his wife, he's a man marrying a woman, they too shall be one flesh.

One man, one woman, that's a marriage. All through the Bible. How can you possibly justify anything else and call yourself a Christian and say that you love Jesus? I don't see that.

But if you turn your ears away from the truth and turn aside to fables, check the internet. There are tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of believers who believe that that kind of thing is okay, and people who don't see it their way have misunderstood the scriptures. They have the scriptures right.

Those who are old-fashioned conservatives think one man, one woman. They're wrong. How do they get there? It doesn't begin with an opinion on some issue.

It isn't, oh, they've been co-opted and subverted by the community that's pitching these arguments. That's not the problem. They are being led astray and they are turned aside to fables because there was a previous decision to reject the truth.

They have turned their ears in the same way that Pharaoh hardened his own heart and the consequence was he was led into decisions where God could reflect his glory. Now we come to the positive side. I'm finished talking about the hard side.

But you, every once in a while I think I ought to just make a big sign and stick it on my mirror, stick it on my refrigerator, put it on my dashboard. But you, you are not they, you are not them. You be for things.

These are very fascinating words. And I'm going to give you a little bit of Greek here. But you be watchful.

Remember Gregoreo? We've seen, you know, people with the name Greg or Gregory. Gregoreo is watch, you know, watch and pray and so on. It's Gregoreo.

That is not the word here. This is the word Nepho, N-E-P-H-O. And it isn't a reference to observation with the eyes and being a lookout.

This is translated in other places, be sober. This is about self-control. In Greek, this was always the opposite of drunk.

In English, are you drunk or are you sober? And, you know, you could be, we have other words for what's in between, you know, buzz drink, buzz driving is drunk driving. But in scripture, you're either drunk or you're sober. Be not drunk with wine.

The opposite of that is be Nepho, be sober. What does it mean to be sober? It is the opposite of intoxicated. What does intoxication do? It limits, it debilitates.

And so figuratively speaking is what we're talking about here. It isn't so much saying, although we have other scripture that says be not drunk with wine, but to be sober doesn't mean don't go drinking, you know, avoid hard liquor. In the New Testament, this word is always used in the figurative sense.

And so you have Acts chapter two, verse 12. Remember Acts chapter two, the Lord has just ascended into glory. And Peter is standing up and preaching.

And people are amazed in chapter two, verse 12. They're amazed and perplexed. And they say to one another, whatever could this mean? Others were mocking them saying they are full of new wine.

Peter, this is right after the Pentecost revelation of the Holy Spirit, Acts chapter two, day of Pentecost. And there's people hearing the speakers, each in their own language. The sound is changing from when it escapes the lips of the apostles to when it is heard by those who are in

the crowd.

So Peter stands up in 214 of Acts, stands up with the 11, raised his voice and said to them, men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, remember the exhortation of the Lord Jesus, you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. So who is on hand at Pentecost? Jerusalem and Judea, men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and heed my words. These are not drunk, as you suppose.

It is only the third hour of the day. This is what was spoken of by the prophet Joel. This is not drunk with wine wherein is excess.

This is the presence of the Holy Spirit. What is the metaphor here? These people are motivated, enabled, empowered and informed not by alcohol but by the Holy Spirit. To be sober is to be in control, not led astray, not turned aside to fables, not having itching ears and heaping up false teachers.

This is the opposite. And in this context, the opposite of turning away from the truth, you know, you can make poor decisions when you're under the influence. Your reflexes are slowed.

Your judgment is clouded. Your memory is impaired. Your thinking is impaired.

And you're in the grip of how you feel and what your body is doing to your mind with alcohol in your bloodstream instead of being clear, being stable, being level, being objective, having a grasp. So this isn't be watchful. This is be sober.

Don't be influenced by something that shouldn't be present. Be not drunk, either physically and especially not spiritually. Be sober.

Be sober in everything. While I'm doing well, you know, in eight out of ten areas of my life, but in two of them, my feelings just run away with me. I've got worry.

I've got fear. I've got excessive amounts of concern. It's something I just can't take to the foot of the cross and leave it there.

I can't boldly approach the throne of grace for help in time of need. I just, I've got this like a bone and I can't turn loose of it. And my emotions are too much in play.

Be sober. In many cases in the spiritual realm, the wine is emotion. And it overwhelms our intellect.

And it's upside down. Emotions are a wonderful thing when they are kept in check, when they respond to the right things. God gave us our emotions.

The Lord Jesus had emotions. Jesus wept on more than one occasion. He had sorrow.

He was a man of sorrows. He was acquainted with grief. What's the difference? Did Jesus have

emotions and yet he was sober? Jesus was not controlled by grief in the garden.

When he said, not my will, but thine be done. He was not controlled or swayed by fear or by anticipation of a dark circumstance in the near future. He was objective.

He was sober. Even as he wept, even as he prayed that the cup might be taken from him. Jesus asked that if it was within the preview of the Father's will, let this cup pass from me.

Wouldn't it be a different thing if we didn't have the record of that prayer? Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me. I'm not eagerly. This is not glory and triumph.

I am not ascending a golden staircase in the company of choirs of angels to gracefully and elegantly lay myself on a golden altar. And with ceremony and pomp and glory and power, I'm going to let myself expire for sin and then await the word of the Father. And then I will suddenly gasp for breath and return and be resurrected.

That wasn't the nature of his death. It was ugly. It was horrific.

It was painful. It was denigrating. It was a disgrace.

It was a criminal's death. It wasn't glorious. Where were the angels that sang at his birth or that chanted at his birth? Glory to God in the highest.

Where were the angels at the cross? Nowhere to be seen. Angels at the birth. No angels at the cross.

The glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds. There was a bright light at night. They're keeping watch over their flocks by night and suddenly there is light and there is glory and there are angels and the communication of this wonderful glory statement.

At the cross, where's the light? It disappears for three hours. It is dark. There are no angels.

The Lord Jesus knew what was coming and he wasn't happy about it, but he did not let his emotions, he did not let his anticipation alter his sobriety, his self-control, his willingness to live in and through the will of the Father. Thy will be done. If this is what your will is, I'm in.

I'm all in. 100% willing to stake my life on it, willing to give my life for it. It isn't an occasion of joy and glory and light and song, but the valley of the shadow, if this is my path, I will walk it.

Why? Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, what happens? What does David say? I do not give in to fear, which is an emotion. I will fear no evil. Why? I have a truth.

I have a promise. You are with me and your instruments of guidance and correction comfort me, your rod and your staff keep me on the path, even when it's dark. I can't see the way, but if I start to stray, there's a tap from the rod.

If I start to fall down an embankment, there is the shepherd's crook to deliver me and get me

back to safety and get me back on the road. I'm in the darkness and I can't see, but I am guided by your presence. You're with me and you're using your rod and your staff and it comforts me.

I have comfort in darkness. So, you be sober. That's number one.

That's the first imperative. The second one is endure afflictions. This is not two words in Greek.

It's one word and it's made up of two parts. It's kakopatheo, pathos. Patheo is to feel, to experience.

We talk about the pathos, the noun form that comes into English as the pitiful part, the part that you would empathize with or sorrow with or have an emotional response to. Something that is pathetic is something that engenders sympathy. Sympatheo, to feel with, to experience with.

If you sympathize with someone, if you empathize with someone, empathéo, in the feeling, in the experience. Sympathy, empathy. Well, this is patheo, but the prefix is not soon and it is not end.

It is kakos, kakos. That's the word for bad, for evil. Kakopatheo.

And as one of the pathos combination words, it is used, for example, in the Septuagint when you get to the book of Jonah and Jonah chapter four, verse 10, and he's already preached 40 days and it will be destroyed. They repent in sackcloth and ashes. God cancels the destruction.

Jonah goes out. He was sitting on the hill waiting for the destruction. It didn't happen.

He planted the gourd and it blooms up and gives him shade and then it withers and dies. And he says, kill me, kill me now. What's the point? You've made me out to be an idiot.

Why did I go to all this trouble? So the Lord comes to him in Jonah chapter four, verse 10. The Lord said, you had pity on the plant for which you did not labor. I think I said he planted it.

It just grew up and he was grateful for it. You had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow. It came up in a night and perished in a night.

You had pity. When they translated the Hebrew into Greek, you kakopatheo. And it meant you did not exert yourself over it.

You didn't enter into the labor of growing it. And you didn't enter into causing it to die. That happened outside of you.

So when it says for which you did not labor, it means to go to trouble, to enter into hardship for it. You didn't have to work for the plant. Kakopatheo.

In the Maccabees, it was used. We look for, it's not a very common word in the New Testament. But in 2nd Maccabees 2.26, it says, us who have undertaken the toil of abbreviating these

events.

It is no light matter, but calls for sweat and loss of sleep, just as it is not easy for one who prepares a banquet. And seeks the benefit of others. Nevertheless, to secure the gratitude of many, we will gladly endure the uncomfortable toil.

The kakopatheo. It is toiling in a way that involves enduring hardship for a cause. So it isn't just, well, when you feel affliction, you know, just hang in there.

This is for a purpose. The toil that the Lord spoke of to Jonah was in service of growing a plant that would provide shade. You didn't put in the toil of planting so that you could have a benefit later.

In Maccabees, preparing a banquet, you know, or putting in the toil to summarize events so that someone else will come to understanding. There is a purpose. This isn't just random affliction.

It isn't just abstract hardship. When Paul tells Timothy, kakopatheison, which is the imperative of this verb, you toil for a purpose. When your toil gives you sore muscles, when your toil creates some pain, when your toil is hard and you're tempted to quit, keep on going.

Be sober, be durable, even when it costs you. You're going to feel bad. Don't quit when you feel bad in the service of your function.

You're here for a purpose. As you accomplish that purpose, you've got to be clear. Don't let your emotions divert you.

Don't let hardship, distraction, pain, or affliction divert you, slow you down, deflect you. It's much more than just endure affliction. Your path is going to involve hardship.

Don't let emotions deflect you. Don't let hardship deflect you. Well, my dad used to say, when it's getting too tough for everybody else, it's getting just about right for me.

And the notion there is, yeah, this is difficult. Yes, this is costing me. Yes, I don't feel good in the process.

And if it were God's will, I would gladly exit stage left. But there's a purpose. Yes, it's hard.

Yes, it hurts. Yes, it costs. Yes, there is friction.

There's pushback. There's opposition. But I'm going to keep on keeping on.

It may be too tough for everybody else. It's just about right for me. I am ready to push through the difficulty.

That's the charge. This is the imperative. Push through whatever difficulty is involved in the execution of this function.

In the exercise of your spiritual gift, it doesn't always go great. Sometimes you are self-sacrificial. You're generous.

You put yourself out. You commit. You invest.

And you get negative feedback. You get some pain. You get some lack of gratitude.

You get some friction that makes you say, well, maybe I ought to quit doing this. Paul says, no. If you're in God's will and you're doing what you're supposed to do, in Timothy's case, preach the word in season, no season, rebuke, exhort.

If you get kicked back, if people start resisting you, just remember the hardship you've seen me endure. Remember he said that earlier in Timothy. You have been a... And he tells others in some of his letters, he says, Timothy has been a co-worker with me in the preaching of the gospel.

We're going to get to the gospel here soon. But these imperatives are true for all of us. Number one, be sober.

Don't let an outside influence sway you off the path. When you get drunk, what happens? You stagger. You make bad decisions.

You've got poor reflexes. You've got impaired judgment. You say the wrong things.

You listen to the wrong things. You do the wrong things. You wake up the next morning in a cold gray light of dawn with regret, with consequences, with wishing you had been sober and not drunk.

Hangover is often the least of your problems. So be sober. Push through hardship.

That's what *kakopetheo* means. If you're feeling bad, don't let that stop you. Pain, affliction, push back.

Don't let it stop you. The third imperative here says, do the work of an evangelist. This is going to take a lesson unto itself.

What is doing the work of an evangelist? Is this, go out there and give somebody the gospel. Tell them Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Let's do the Roman road. Okay, I've shared the gospel with you. You've got to make a decision about Jesus Christ.

Will you place your faith in him as your Savior? Will you come to the Father through him or not?

We tend to think in modern Christianity, well, that's the gospel. In the same way that there are so many things going on under the banner and under the steeple of Christianity that have nothing to do with scriptural guidance for believers, our notion of the gospel is woefully not fleshed out. Is the good news of Jesus Christ and salvation in him and relationship with the Father through him, is that the gospel? Absolutely.

But when Paul tells Timothy, do the work of a gospel preacher, this is the verb form of the noun euangelion or the verb euangelizo. Right in the heart of that, you see the word angel. Angel is messenger, right? So there's a message involved.

An angelos is a messenger, often a heavenly messenger, but not always. Eu is the word for good. So the euangelion is the good message.

We will see when we study this next time, the uses of it in the New Testament and what it tells us. But each of us should be sober. Each of us should push through whatever hardship may come in the course of staying in God's will and executing our functions and living our lives in light of the judgment and the appearing.

And each of us should do the work of an evangelist. With this is ergon. Ergon is the word for putting in work.

There is work involved. Many times people say, oh, I know somebody who's an unbeliever. I'm going to hand them a tract.

They've got a really good gospel tract here. It's short. It's pithy.

It catches attention. It's got a great picture on the front. That's not work.

And that's not the gospel, not entirely. It is an aspect of the gospel. But we will see next time what this word actually means.

Then we will know what it is to do the work of a good message presenter. Literally, this word means do the work of a good message communicator. And there are many good messages.

Central, of course, is the work of the Lord Jesus that saves us and makes possible eternal life and relationship with the Father. But that does not exhaust in any way the gospel. And then finally here, fulfill your ministry.

This is one of the Plero words. Plero foruo. Pleros is to fulfill.

When it says be filled with the Spirit, this is plero, be filled. And the plero foruo is a compound that means bring to full measure. Bring to fullness.

You've begun a good work. He who has begun a good work in you will complete it unto the day of Christ Jesus. Be filled so that we can fulfill.

Fully enter into. Don't just start it, but finish it. So many of the times we're 90 percenters.

We get a project completed, but we didn't put away our tools. We did the yard, but we left out the rake. We got that put back together, but we left out the glue.

We cleaned up the mess, but here's the spray and the rag. We cleaned up and put all the trash in the trash can, but we didn't take the trash out. We swept the house, but we didn't clean the vacuum cleaner.

We, you know, finish. This is what Paul is going to say. I have run my race and I have finished.

Look at verse six and verse seven. I fought the good fight. I have finished my race.

I didn't just run and get close. It doesn't matter how fast you run or how gracefully you run or how much you impress people with your start and your ability to leave the field behind you in the distance. If you don't cross the finish line, what was it for? If you spend three hours making a dish for a banquet and you get all the right ingredients and you mix it and you form it and you prepare it and everything is just right and you put it in the oven, but you don't take it out soon enough and it burns, what was the rest of it for? You can work, work, work, work, work, and then spoil something at the end.

This fulfill means finish it, push through to the end, get it completely done. Not just kind of done, not mostly done, not, well, basically done, fully, fully done. You look at that.

It is what Jesus said on the cross. It is finished. Tetelestai, finished.

To do that, you have to fulfill your work. Well, we'll pick up here next time and we're going to see what it means to do the work of an evangelist. Can I do it without finding somebody and giving them the gospel? Can I do it without a wordless book or the Roman road? Can I do it without a tract or a quick summary of what Jesus did as you find in Corinthians? What does it mean to do the work? This is a charge to us in light of the judgment of the coming kingdom.

We need to know what it means. We'll find that out next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you that we are made aware and warned about the possible dangers of being misled, of being distracted, of turning our ears from the truth. And we also see the positive side, what is possible, what we are enabled to do by the presence of your spirit and the power of your word. We pray that as we reflect on this passage that your spirit will give us clarity, help us to be sober, to be mindful, to not be dissuaded by difficulty, but to run our race and finish our course as the apostle Paul so elegantly puts it in this passage, so that at the judgment and at the appearing of your son, the Lord Jesus, we can stand and be among those who by faith and patience inherit the promises.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.