

(Through the Bible) 2 Timothy 3-4

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a godly life and trusting the whole Bible, despite the challenges and persecutions that come with it.

Duration: 1:13:30

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Matthew 25:40, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Timothy 4:1-3, Revelation 20:12

Topics: "Christian Living", "Biblical Preaching"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the contrast between Christians and the world around them. He highlights how the Christian lifestyle should stand out as the world becomes more corrupt. The speaker expresses concern over the deterioration of a person who once had a legitimate ministry but has now become crude and blasphemous. He emphasizes the importance of preaching the Word of God and warns against the prevalence of preaching psychology and other topics instead. The speaker also references the Scriptures and encourages Timothy to continue in what he has learned from them.

Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to 2nd Timothy chapter 3. Paul said to Timothy, this know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. It is interesting that the Scriptures in many places speak of the last days and in every case where the Scripture speaks of the last days you find that it is an apt description of the day and the age in which we live. And so Paul is warning Timothy of certain things that will be transpiring in the last days and as we go down the list it's like reading the afternoon newspaper.

Perilous times shall come. The cause of the perilous times are found in the things that people will be doing and at the top of the list men will be lovers of their own selves. Have you ever seen an age when people were more conscious of their own selves? Everything today is, you know, for the body beautiful.

The emphasis of so many people is just on being beautiful. Lovers of themselves. Narcissism is at an all-time peak.

But with lovers of yourself comes covetousness, that desire for more, for after all I'm worth it. You know, I mean, talk about lovers of yourself, look at the advertising. Oh, I know it costs more, but bolsters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.

Each one of these words in the Greek is an interesting word study. We don't have the time to devote to it this evening, but I would suggest that you get a good Greek lexicon and do a word study on these particular Greek words that Paul uses to describe the attitudes and the actions of people in the last days. Without natural affection, as I read the things that are happening in our modern cultured Orange County, as I read the reports from the social department on the child abuse, I just shake my head in disbelief because a person could not possibly do these things unless they were without natural affection.

There is just a certain natural love that would keep people from doing a lot of the things they're doing today. All you can say is that they are without natural affection. God has put in our heart a certain natural love as a parent for a child.

There is instinctively, I think, within persons that love of a parent for a child or an adult for the child because we realize the helplessness of a child, the dependency that they have. And for a person to take advantage of a child is unthinkable. And yet it is becoming in this hedonistic society commonplace, all too commonplace, tragically commonplace.

I am reminded of the prophet of God who spoke concerning Israel and he said, they have sown the wind and now they must reap the whirlwind. I'm afraid that that is also true of us. We have sown the wind, now we're gonna reap the whirlwind.

Truth breakers, how many people who have stood before God and have pledged for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until death do us part. And yet again, the high divorce rate. Truth breakers, you've made a covenant and there are so many broken covenants.

Some of you here are victims of broken covenants. Some of you are separated, not by your own desire or wish, but because someone was a truth breaker, they did not keep the covenant that they made. Again, it is startling how appropriate that truth breakers is for this day.

False accusers, incontinent, that is without any sexual restraints. Boy, I'll tell you, I don't know, we are living almost in a Sodom-Gomorra atmosphere and environment. My wife and I eat out quite a bit.

We usually try to avoid it on Friday evening if we can, but sometimes our schedules are such that we just don't have time to, she doesn't have the time to prepare the meal on Friday evening and we'll go out on Friday night, but I can't believe what I see in some of these restaurants over here in the Irvine Industrial or Business Center. Friday evenings, you know, everybody out looking for their weekend companion, incontinent, no sexual restraints. Fierce despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, and then lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

The pleasure mania of the United States, we've just experienced a tremendous demonstration of that in the Los Angeles Basin in the last couple of weeks. The numbers of people who flocked to the various athletic contest, loving pleasure. Now, there's nothing wrong with enjoying life.

I believe God intended that you should enjoy life. There's nothing wrong with having pleasure. I believe that God intended you to have pleasure.

But when it comes before God, it means that it has become your God. And it makes a very poor God to worship or serve. Good to have pleasure, but don't make it your God.

They love pleasure more than they love God. That's the indictment. It has become their God.

And thus, they are guilty as those in the Old Testament who were worshiping mammon, who are rather Molech, who was the God of pleasure. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, they still, you know, pay their respects, but they deny the power thereof.

Paul said to Timothy, from such, turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women, laden with sins and led away with diverse lust, ever learning, never able to come to the knowledge of truth. So, the Greek word that is used here to describe these that are going around leading captive the silly women is the same Greek word that was used to describe quackery.

And that's probably they're quacks, as Paul is saying. The kind of guys that went around selling snake oil or cure-alls, deceiving, defrauding people. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth.

They are men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. Now, when Moses appeared before Pharaoh and he threw down his rod and it turned into a snake, you'll remember that Pharaoh's magicians threw down their rods and they also became snakes. But Moses' snakes swallowed theirs.

Jannes and Jambres were the names of the two magicians that withstood Moses. Now this is not given to us in the Scriptures, but there are other what are known as apocryphal books in which these two fellows are named. And that is, it doesn't tell us in the Scripture in Exodus that that was their names, but Paul gives us their names here.

Jannes and Jambres who withstood the truth and they were able to imitate the workings of God up to a point and then they came to the place where they were backed down by Moses. But men of corrupt minds, they reprobate concerning the faith. The Bible tells about God giving people over to reprobate minds.

Men who resist God and the truth of God, their minds become corrupted and they ultimately become reprobate concerning the faith. I watch very little, but with horror and dismay, the deterioration of a man who probably at one time had a legitimate ministry. But I've seen the gradual erosion of this person on television just right before my eyes.

Until the man has become crude, blasphemous, ranting and raving, a disgrace to Jesus Christ who said, by this sign shall men know that you are my disciples, that you love one another. And there's such a complete, total absence of love. The thing that amazes me is that he can attract people who will support him.

Men of corrupt minds. The Lord said it's what comes out of the mouth of a man that defiles a man. For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

And when a man's language becomes filthy, obscene and crude, it shows that there's something wrong within. Reprobate concerning the faith. But Paul said, they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men as Jannes and Jambres also were.

In other words, you may go along for a while, but ultimately it's going to catch up with you. You may be able to deceive people for a while, but ultimately it's going to catch up. Even as it did with Jannes and Jambres.

There came that place where, hey, Moses performed a miracle of God and they backed away and said, hey, this is the hand of God. We can't touch this. And so there comes that point where they will proceed no

further.

Their folly becomes manifest to all men as Jannes and Jambres also was. Jambres. But thou has fully known, now in contrast to this.

Boy, what a contrast the Christian is to the world around him. And more and more you know, more and more your lifestyle is different from the world. More and more the Christian is a marked person.

Because the more corrupt the world becomes, the more the Christian stands out. The more the person who lives godly and righteous in Christ stands out. And so Paul said to Timothy, you have fully known my doctrine and my manner of life, my purpose, my faith, my long-suffering, my love, and my patience.

You know the persecutions and the afflictions which came unto me at Antioch and Iconium and Lystra. What persecutions I endured, but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Timothy was from Lystra.

Paul met him on his first missionary journey. At that time, Timothy was just a very young boy, probably in his mid-teens. And yet he was attracted to Paul the Apostle because of the message that Paul bore.

Timothy had been schooled in the Scriptures from his early youth by his mother and grandmother. And so as Paul began to, with the Scriptures, prove that Jesus was the Messiah, with Timothy's background he could see the truth of it. And he embraced Christianity.

But he was probably standing there in Lystra when the people in the city stoned Paul until they thought he was dead and drug him out of the city. And he was probably in the company of those that were standing around sort of crying as they saw Paul's limp body on the ground. Suddenly, of course, their tears were changed because Paul began to breathe and move and he stood up and he said, well, let's go back in and preach some more.

Paul said, you know what kind of a life I've lived. You know the persecutions that I experienced, but the Lord delivered me out of them all. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

Paul's life contrasted with the world. Christian life is a life of purpose. The world just exists.

No real goal. No real meaning. You're just existing.

Paul's life one of faith. Paul's life one of long-suffering. One of love and one of patience.

Now you'd think that the world would treat a person like that very cordially. It is interesting when Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount described the Christian in the Beatitudes. After having described the traits of the Christian in the Beatitudes, you'd say, my, a man like that who is a peacemaker, who is merciful, who is hungering and thirsting after righteousness, who is meek, who is poor and spare.

Surely, you know, the world would respect such a man. But after giving the characteristics and traits of the godly man, Jesus then in the final Beatitudes said, blessed are ye when men shall persecute you and revile you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. The world really doesn't admire true Christian traits.

Why? Because the true child of God brings the worldly person under conviction. They just are irritated by your love and by your patience and by your goodness. Because they feel guilty.

Look what they did to Jesus. And Jesus said, if they persecuted me, they're going to persecute you. Don't expect the world to admire your godly stands.

Don't expect the world to applaud when you speak out against evil. They'll say crucify him, rather than applaud. And so Paul, you know how I've lived, my faith, my long-suffering, my love, my patience and the persecutions and afflictions that came to me.

Yea, one of my most unfavorite promises in the Bible. And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Quite a promise, isn't it? I've never found that in one of those little Bible promise books, I mean promise things yet.

That's not the kind of promises we really enjoy, is it? My God shall supply all of your needs. Oh yea, I like that one. They that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

You're in an alien world. You're a stranger. You're a pilgrim here.

This world is in rebellion against God. And if you align your life with God, you're going to find yourself out of alignment with the world and persecution will come. Beloved, consider it not strange concerning the fiery trials which are to try you as though some strange thing has happened to you.

So don't expect the world to speak well of you or to applaud you for your living a godly life and taking a righteous stand. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse deceiving and being deceived. In other words, it's not going to get better for a while.

It's going to get worse before it gets better. It will be getting better a little further down the road. But evil days are going to wax worse and worse until the Lord takes His church out.

And then God judges the world for its unrighteousness and ungodliness. And then Jesus will come and establish God's righteous kingdom. But by then, those that will remain will be saying, oh, God help us.

Blessed is he who will come in the name of the Lord. I mean, people will have had it with the unrighteousness of the world. Look at the rapid deterioration of our society.

Can you see what's happened even in the last 25 years? Look at the magazines that were once really under-the-counter kind of stuff and sold illegally. Now they're right out where little kids can go in and pick them up and leaf through them. Look at our attitudes towards morality.

Look at the lackness. Look at, of course, all of these other things that have come along as the result of it. The deterioration, rapid deterioration.

So that a mother has to worry when she sends her little child to school because she doesn't know what some kinky character might do. Exposing themselves to that beautiful little child. Or even worse, God help us.

If the Lord doesn't come soon, we're going to destroy ourselves as we just sink in the filth. We're going to drown in our own corruption. Evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

I think we've gone just about as far as we can. I think the next major event, Revelation 4.1, but continue thou in the things which you have learned and has been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned

them. And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Now, it is interesting that as Paul is referring to the Scriptures here, he is, of course, referring to the Old Testament Scriptures. The New Testament had not yet been canonized. So he's referring to the Old Testament Scriptures, those which Timothy knew from the child, and he called them the Holy Scriptures, which they are.

And they are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus. In other words, there is within the Old Testament so much concerning Jesus Christ that through the understanding and the study of the Old Testament, you should logically be led to Jesus Christ. Jesus said, you do search the Scriptures because in them you think you have life, but actually they are testifying of Me.

Again, He said, lo, I have come in the volume of the book. It is written of Me to do thy will, O God. The volume of the book, the Old Testament, it's all about Jesus Christ.

The whole concept of redemption is wrapped up in the Old Testament. The promise of the Messiah, the details of the Messiah, they are all there. And Paul said, you've known the Holy Scriptures able to bring you to a faith in Jesus Christ, salvation through the faith in Jesus Christ.

For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Not as some would lead you to believe, some Scriptures are given by inspiration of God. And as we pointed out, the danger always of saying some Scriptures, not all Scriptures, is the loss of authority.

And when you lose authority, you have anarchy. Every man going his own way, every man doing his own thing, or every man believing as he wants, you have no authority. So if I tell you that some Scriptures are not really inspired of God, then I become the authority, not the Bible anymore.

Because you can't just read the whole Bible and trust it, because not all of it is inspired. So I become the authority if I make such a affirmation to you. And I will tell you what Scriptures are inspired and which ones aren't.

Now you get out your, you know, your green and blue pens. And for the inspired ones, we'll underline those with blue. And we'll use red maybe to underline those that are not inspired, you know.

And so here I am. I'm the authority. Well, the next liberal comes along and he says, well, no, no, no, no, he was wrong on that one.

He said that one is inspired, obviously inspired. He was wrong on that, you know, get out your pen and take out the red and put the blue under that one, you know. Well, soon your Bibles will be so messed up, you wouldn't be able to read them.

And why read them anyhow if they're not inspired? All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Don't start messing with it. Don't start trying to cut out certain stories because they don't fit your schema.

Because you have a little hard, you have a hard time sort of believing that. The story of Jonah has provoked a lot of problems for people only because of their concept of God. If you can read and buy the first verse of the Bible, you should have no problems with the rest of the Bible.

If your God is big enough to create the heavens and the earth, then no problem. But you see, we stumble on the very first verse and that's what creates the problems all the way through. Our God is much too small.

And God prepared a great fish and it swallowed Jonah. You have a hard time with that? And man has prepared a great fish and they've powered it with atomic engines. And a hundred and fifty men can board it and they can submerge and go under the North Pole, under the Arctic ice.

And come up a hundred days later and be deposited at a port. Do you have a hard time accepting that man can build a great fish that can swallow men and keep them underwater for several days and deposit them later at a port? Hey, hey, wait a minute then. How big is your God? Man can do it, but oh, but I don't, you know, I have a hard time with it.

Would you find it easier if the account said, and a submarine surfaced and the captain got out on deck and, you know, they hauled Jonah in and they submerged again and headed towards Joppa and let him off at the port. But you see, if you start whacking away at the story of Jonah and say, well, no, no, I can't really buy that. Oh, watch out now, because Jesus bought it.

One day they said to Jesus, show us a sign. He said, a wicked and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Oh, Jesus, you mean you believe that story? Didn't you know that's just a myth? You know, that's just fable. How is it that you could be deceived, Jesus? I thought you were, you know, the Son of God and smarter than that. Noah, the earth was really flooded.

Noah escaped. Jesus said, as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man. Confirm that Noah was a real person and it was a real event.

So you have to be careful when you start chipping it away at one side, because the whole thing will come down on you. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Now, when you have difficulty in your understanding of a Scripture, rather than setting that aside and say, well, God really didn't say that, just say, hey, I really don't understand that yet.

I have many Scriptures that I don't understand yet. I've got a file up here that says, wait for further information, and I've filed many Scriptures in that file. Now, I'm not about to say God was wrong.

I'm just saying, hey, I am stupid and I lack an understanding. God is right. I don't know exactly yet what He said, but when I find out, I know He's going to be right.

For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and as such, they are profitable. And how profitable is the Word of God to us today? What a blessing! They're profitable for doctrine. What am I to believe about God? What am I to believe about man? What am I to believe about sin? What am I to believe about angels or the future or life or death or life after death? The Scriptures are profitable to establish the foundation of my beliefs.

They're profitable for doctrine. I can base my beliefs upon what God has said, because it is indeed God's Word. I have great difficulty with these people who develop doctrines that are contrary to what Jesus said,

as though they understand more than Jesus about what's happening in the future.

The Jehovah Witnesses seeking to develop their doctrine concerning hell, and that it is a place of oblivion. No consciousness, no awareness. And they use the book of Job as their proof text.

When Job was talking to his friends, and they were talking to him about the future, and Job said, oh, I wish I were dead. You know, where it would all be over. Where, you know, the miseries would all be gone.

What's the first thing God said to Job when God came on the scene and entered the conversation with his friends? He said, who is this who is talking all these words without knowledge? Job, tell me, have you been beyond the gates of death? Do you know what it's about? Well, Jesus has, and he told us what it's about in Luke the 16th chapter. Now, are you going to, you know, take the Word of Jesus? Or are you going to develop a doctrine that is diametrically opposed to what Jesus said? The Word of God is the foundation for doctrine. What I believe, I believe because God has said it.

And my whole doctrinal concepts are premised upon the Scriptures. God said it. They are profitable for reproof, for correction.

And how often the Word of God has brought correction to my course of life. Easy, it seems, to get sort of distracted and off course. And the Word of God comes, and it brings a balance.

It brings a correction. It brings a correct perspective. It's profitable for instruction in righteousness.

And righteousness is just actually the act of being right, or doing right, or living right. It's instructing you on the right kind of life. This is the right thing to do.

It's instructing us in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect. And the word perfect, of course, is always that of completeness.

God wants you to be complete. The Greek word literally is fully matured or of full age. Fully matured.

That the man of God might be fully matured. Thoroughly furnished unto all good works. In other words, the Word of God is that which thoroughly prepares me for any work that God might have for me to do.

Now many people have a legitimate and proper desire to be used of God. Oh God, I want you to use my life. Good.

That's proper and you should have that desire. But God prepares the instruments through which He works. And the most important preparation is through the Word of God.

That is where you become thoroughly equipped to do the work that God has designed and ordained for you. So if you want God to use your life, then thoroughly equip yourself in the Word of God. The study, the understanding.

That's why we're here tonight. Just to go, you know, line upon line, precept upon precept. Plotting right straight through the Word of God.

The whole idea is that of thoroughly fitting you as an instrument that God can use. And you will find as God's Word becomes a very part of your life and you begin to be guided by the Word of God, that God will begin to use you in very exciting ways. But we so often make the mistake of going out ill-equipped or

running without a message.

So God's Word, Scripture, given by the inspiration of God and is profitable. Of course, this morning we pointed out that the inspiration of the Bible is proved by internal evidences such as its total accuracy with known facts of science when it happened to cover scientific subjects. Now, though it is infallible, inerrant, and inspired, I did make a mistake in my message this morning on the speed of Arcturus.

It's 12,000 miles a second. I think I said 12 million. It's 12,000 miles a second, but that's pretty fast too.

So you see, I'm not inerrant and all, but the Scriptures are. Paul said to Timothy, I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Hey, that's heavy duty, man.

When you charge a person before God and before the Lord Jesus Christ. Laying a charge now on Timothy, the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead. Now, the quick is an old English word.

It means alive. Someone said in LA traffic, there are two kinds, the quick and the dead, but the word means alive. The Lord is going to judge those that are alive and those that are dead at his appearing and his kingdom.

Now there will be two judgments. The one at his coming is appearing will be the judgment of those who have lived through the great tribulation period. The first thing that Jesus does when he comes again, according to Matthew's gospel is he gathers together the nations for judgment and he will separate them as a shepherd separates his sheep from his goats.

And he will put those on his left hand. And he said, you know, depart from me you workers of iniquity. I was hungry and you didn't feed me.

I was thirsty. You didn't give me anything to drink. I was naked.

You didn't close me. I was, you know, sick and you didn't visit me in prison. You didn't visit.

Lord, when did we see you this way? Well, in as much as you did not do it to the least of these, you didn't do it to me. To those on his right hand, come you blessed of the father, inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you from the foundations of the world. For when I was hungry, you fed me.

Lord, when did we see you like that? Well, in as much as you did it on the least of these, you did it to me. But the judgment, which will determine those who will be allowed to go in to the kingdom age, when Jesus is going to reign upon the earth for a thousand years. After the thousand years reign, then he will judge the dead.

And all of the dead, small and great, will stand before the great white throne of God. And they will be judged out of the things that are written in the books. So I charge you before God and before the Lord Jesus Christ, who is going to judge the alive and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.

The two judgments. What does he charge him? Preach the word. Why? Because it is the word of God that can change man.

It is the word of God that can inspire really the, well, bring the changes, can cleanse a man. So preach the word. Oh, isn't it a shame that there is so little preaching of the word of God today in the pulpits across the

country? All kinds of preaching of psychology and all other kinds of things, but so little preaching of the word.

I charge you before God and before Jesus Christ. Timothy, preach the word. Paul said we preach not ourselves, but Christ crucified and ourselves, his ministers for your sakes, his servants.

Preach the word. Then he said be instant, in season and out of season. In other words, be ready to go.

Sometimes you feel like it, sometimes you don't. Ready to go. Reprove.

The word of God is profitable for reproof. Rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. Now Paul is emphasizing here, preach the word and get the people indoctrinated in the basic foundational truths of God.

Preach the word. For, the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lust shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables. You know, it is an interesting thing how that the word of God seems to create an appetite for the word of God.

And it seems to spoil you for anything else. The word of God is so exciting. There is so much there.

It is so powerful, so dynamic, that when you really are being taught the word, and you really get into the meat, you begin to grow and be strengthened. You just can't be satisfied with these little, you know, beautiful days and butterflies and sparrow sermons, you know. Everything is pleasant and the world is great.

So, the time will come, though, if a person doesn't have a diet of the word of God. They get itching ears. Oh, he tells the greatest jokes, you know.

Man, that guy is a great storyteller. And the people have itching ears. They want to be entertained.

And churches have become really entertainment centers. I mean, they put on shows that would make Hollywood jealous sometimes. They want to be entertained.

Itching ears, desiring entertainment, turning their ears away from the truth. And it opens them up to be gullible, to listen to fables. But watch thou in all things, and endure afflictions, and do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of thy ministry.

Now, Paul was an apostle by the will of God, but he was also a pastor and a teacher. Timothy had the calling of an evangelist. Paul is encouraging him to preach and to do the work of an evangelist.

Now, it is important to know what area of ministry God has gifted you and called you to fulfill, and that you be what God has called you to be, and not attempt to be something that God hasn't made you. Because the most difficult and frustrating thing in the world is to try to be an evangelist if God has made you a pastor-teacher, or to try and be a pastor-teacher if God has made you an evangelist. You know, we've got to make our calling and election sure.

We've got to know what God has called us to be. The first 16 years or so of my ministry was totally frustrating, as I sought to be Chuck an evangelist by the will of God. God never called me to be an evangelist.

And my endeavors to do so were just totally frustrating and unfruitful. It was not until I really acknowledged and came to the realization that God had called me as a pastor-teacher that the ministry began to be blessed. Because now it's natural.

Now it's not forced. Now I can be what God has called me to be, comfortable with it, loving it. So to Timothy, do the work of an evangelist and make full proof of your ministry.

So important that we make full proof of that ministry. For Paul said, I am now ready to be offered. The time of my departure is at hand.

Things were going bad for Paul in Rome. The trial is not looking good. He's appeared for his preliminary hearings and he's heard the charges and he has seen the attitude of the Roman government at this point.

And Paul realizes his days are numbered. This is the last letter that Paul wrote. His second epistle to Timothy.

And he realizes that the handwriting is on the wall. The time of my departure is at hand. You see, with Paul, he looked at death as only a departure on his journey.

I'm going to move in a short while from this tent into a mansion. The building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Time of my departure is at hand.

And then Paul said, I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith.

Oh, what an important thing to say when the time of departure gets close. And I look back at my life and I can say, well, I fought a good fight. I gave it in all I had.

And I have finished the course. Earlier, Paul had written to the Philippians. And he said, I have not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended of Jesus Christ.

Neither do I count myself perfect, but this is what I'm doing, forgetting those things which are behind. I'm pressing towards those things which are before as I press towards the mark for the price of the high calling of God, which is in Christ Jesus. He saw the Christian life as a race.

He said, don't you realize that they which run in a race run all, but only one receives the prize. So run that you might obtain. I've fought a good fight.

I've been in there. I have finished now my course. And I have kept the faith.

So henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, our righteous judge, shall give me at that day. And not to me only, but unto all of them also that love his appearing. We are told to wait for his appearing to look for his appearing.

And now Paul speaks about loving his appearing the crown of righteousness. Jesus said to the church of Smyrna, be thou faithful unto death. I will give thee a crown of life, the various crowns of heaven, that crown of righteousness.

The Lord, our righteous judge, shall give not to me only, but all those that love his appearing. So do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. Hey, get here quick.

I'm about to leave. Time of my departure is over. Hurry, get here as quick as you can.

For Demas has forsaken me. Now, Demas was joined with Paul in other of the salutations of his previous epistles. But Paul had said earlier that all of those of Asia had forsaken him.

Actually, it probably would have meant their own death had they associated with Paul at this point of the trial. For he was a prisoner condemned to die and their association with him at now would endanger their own lives. So Demas has forsaken me.

Tragic. Because of the reason having loved the present world and has departed to Thessalonica. In other words, for his own skin, you know, he wants to live on.

So he's departed to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia. Titus to Dalmatia.

Only Luke is with me. So take Mark. Now, this is the Mark that was a nephew to Barnabas, who created a fight between Paul and Barnabas earlier.

When Paul and Barnabas left on their first missionary journey, Mark went with them. But when they had passed through Cyprus and were heading over to some rough country, Mark got scared and went home. And Paul and Barnabas went on alone.

Now, as Paul and Barnabas were getting ready to take their second missionary journey to go back into the same areas to strengthen the brethren that had been converted in their first journey, Barnabas said, well, I want to take Mark with me again. And Paul said, oh, no, you know, a kid defected the last time. I don't want to take him again.

I don't want the problems. And so a big argument arose between Paul and Barnabas. The contention was so great that Barnabas took Mark and headed on out for Cyprus.

And Paul took Silas and headed on back into Asia Minor again. It is interesting now, though, you know, within the Christian body, we can have differences and we can have disagreements, but the Lord always brings us back. And now Paul writes of this same Mark that he had problems with earlier, wouldn't go along with Barnabas, who wanted to take him.

And he says to Timothy, take Mark and bring him with you, for he's profitable to me for the ministry. I like that young man. Of course, Mark had matured a lot by now, no doubt.

Several years had gone by, but Paul speaks about him in loving terms as being profitable unto him and all. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. The cloak, and Paul's dealing with just some, you know, very personal kind of thing.

The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when you come, bring it with you. And also my books, but especially bring the parchments. Paul, it is said, was an avid reader.

In fact, history, Gamaliel, Paul said he sat under the feet of Gamaliel. And we have an account of Gamaliel talking about Paul as a student. And as he spoke of Paul as a student, he said, the biggest trouble I have with him as a student was supplying him with enough books.

An avid reader. That is why when Paul was making his defense before King Agrippa, Festus cried out, your much learning has made you mad. Paul had been there reading for two solid years in prison in Caesarea.

And every time he saw him, oh, Paul was buried in the books. And he said, hey, you've studied too much. You've flipped, you know, gone over the edge.

Your much learning has made you mad. So bring me the books, bring me the part, especially those parchments, you know. You know, I think that that's something about a teacher is that you have a thirst to know and you never stop learning.

Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil. The Lord reward him according to his works. That's interesting, isn't it? Pray for those, the Lord said, who despitefully use you.

But I don't know that he intended you to pray that way. Of whom be thou wary also. Watch out for that Alexander the coppersmith.

For he has greatly withstood our words. Now at my first hearing, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. I pray that God will not lay that to their charge.

Interesting. Paul was totally forsaken by all of his friends at this first hearing before Nero. They all left him.

When Paul's one of his first exposures to Christianity was the stoning of Stephen that is recorded in the Bible. The first time we find Paul, he is standing there holding the coats of the men who are stoning Stephen to death. He had just heard Stephen's tremendous witness before the Sanhedrin, of which he was a member.

They voted, stoned him. Paul voted, yeah, stoned him. You know, he voted, consented to his death.

He voted with them to stone him. And then he participated by holding the coats of the men who did the actual stoning of Stephen. While Stephen was being stoned, you remember that he looked up and he said, Father, lay not this sin to their charge.

You know, don't charge him with this one, Lord. That evidently made a pretty heavy impression upon Paul. Because later when the Lord got hold of Paul on the road to Damascus, he said, hey, it's been hard to kick against the bricks, hasn't it? You know, I'm sure that that whole thing of Stephen was still, you know, going over in his mind and in his heart.

Seeing this guy die in such a way as saying, Lord, into your hands I commend my spirit. Don't charge him with this sin, Lord. Rather than cursing and screaming and all at those who were, you know, stoning him, this beautiful attitude of love and forgiveness.

Now, Paul is more or less emulating that as he talks about these fellows who forsook him. Lord, I hope that the Lord doesn't charge him with that one. Notwithstanding, and this I love, all of the men forsook me, but nevertheless, the Lord stood with me.

And that's all I need. The Lord stood with me and strengthened me. That by me, the preaching might be fully known and that all the Gentiles might hear.

And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion or Nero, he calls him the lion. Or perhaps he could be referring to, you know, being put in the arena with the lions. But I just thought that he's referring, it's cryptic for Nero.

Now, notice this. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me. That by me, the preaching might be fully known and that all the Gentiles might hear.

You see, what happened is that when Paul stood before Nero, he just took opportunity to preach the gospel to Nero. I mean, what a great opportunity. I've got to make my defense for this guy.

And so, but that was Paul's tactic all the way along. Whenever Paul was arrested and had to appear before the judges or later before King Agrippa, he always used that opportunity to witness and tried to win them to Jesus Christ. Now, Jesus said to his disciples, you're going to be persecuted and they're going to arrest you and they're going to take you before the magistrates and you're going to stand before kings.

But don't take any forethought what you're going to say, for in that hour, the spirit will give you the words that you should say and it will turn to you as an opportunity to testify. In other words, you're going to be, you know, arrested, brought to court and all, hey, don't worry about it. It's going to be an opportunity for you to testify, to share your faith.

And so, Paul took every appearance before the judges and all as the opportunity to testify until he was laying such a heavy witness on Agrippa, King Agrippa. He said, Agrippa, do you believe the scriptures? I know you believe the scriptures. And Agrippa said, wait a minute, hold on here.

You mean you're trying to convert me? And Paul said, oh, I wish I could. But he really was, he was trying to convert him. Now, Paul doesn't, nor does Luke give us an account of what Paul said to Nero, but you can be sure he laid on Nero one of the, he no doubt figured, boy, if I could win this guy to Christ, think of what it would do for Christianity, if Nero could be one to Christ.

And I'm sure he laid on this guy a testimony like you can't believe. And he said, they all forsook me, but the Lord stood with me. The Holy Spirit will give you the words in that hour.

And he strengthened me that by me the preaching might be fully known. I mean, he laid the full witness on him and that all the Gentiles might hear. The whole court of Nero heard the gospel and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion and the Lord shall deliver me.

Oh yes, he sure did. His head was whacked off and he escaped from Nero. Because Jesus said, don't fear them that have the power to kill the body, but after that have no more power, but rather fear him who after the body is killed is able to cast your spirit into hell.

Yeah, I tell you fear ye him. So I'm going to be delivered, Paul says. I know God's going to deliver me.

And Paul knew exactly how, because he said, the time of my departure is at hand. I'm going. The Lord's going to deliver me.

I think that is wrong when we think that deliverance only comes through healing. God has many ways of delivering us. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.

They might take my life here, but man, I'm going to be preserved in the heavenly kingdom to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Salute Prisca and Aquila.

Now here they are again, still in Ephesus and Paul is so bound to Priscilla and Aquila. Met them first in Corinth and then they went with him or they went before him to Ephesus and they were with him in his

ministry there. And a couple of people that I am anxious to meet Priscilla and Aquila.

Salute them, greet them. And also the household of one Sepsorus. Now it is thought that maybe he was killed also in Rome.

He looked Paul up, sought for him diligently, found him in a dungeon. But it is thought that maybe because of his relationship to Paul, he was slain because he doesn't greet him, but only his household. And there are some accounts that he was actually killed because of his relationship to Paul.

Erastus stayed at Corinth, but Trophimus have I left at Militum or Militum, which is Malta. And he was sick. Now do your diligence to come before winter.

And Eubulus greets you and Prudens and Linus and Claudia. Now with Prudens and Claudia, a couple of interesting names. And all the brethren.

Oh, I don't have time for this story, but there are some interesting stories behind Claudia who is thought to have been a princess from the British Isles. And there are some interesting stories in the early church concerning this Claudia. And it's that she is the same.

Claudia, of course, is not known. But in the early church in Rome, there was a Claudia that had become converted. She was a princess from Britain and had been sent to marry one of the Roman leaders as a part of a treaty and all.

And was converted to Christ there in Rome and became a very powerful figure in the church. The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you.

Amen. So Paul's last letter to Timothy and the last letter that he wrote. May the Lord richly bless you as the Word of God is now assimilated into your life and you begin to apply it in your daily experiences.

That the Word of God might have a purifying effect upon your life this week. Even as Jesus said, now you are clean through the Word that I have spoken unto you. May you find the Word of God guiding you in the way of righteousness, being profitable to you in leading you in that path of righteousness that God would have you to walk.

May the Lord be with you and strengthen you for the various tests and trials that you'll be facing this week and cause you to be victorious more than a conqueror through Jesus Christ.

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