

Retaining the Standard of the Gospel

by Santosh Poonen

Santosh Poonen emphasizes the importance of retaining the gospel standard and preparing for the challenges of faith amidst worldly distractions and potential persecution.

Duration: 48:19

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:13

Topics: "Falling Away", "Faithfulness", "Discernment"

Description

Santosh Poonen emphasizes the urgency of retaining the standard of the Gospel amidst the distractions and challenges of the world. He warns that as persecution increases, it will become harder to hear God's voice, urging believers to cultivate discernment and faithfulness in their walk with Christ. Poonen reflects on the historical context of the early church, highlighting the importance of using current times of peace to strengthen the body of Christ and prepare for future trials. He encourages the congregation to guard the treasure of the Gospel and to live with a sense of urgency, ensuring that their faith does not wane in the face of adversity. Ultimately, he calls for a commitment to the teachings of Christ, reminding believers that their actions and choices today will impact their eternal standing with God.

Transcript

And sit at your feet, longing to hear from you. We fill our minds, Lord, and allow our, the world is bombarding us with news and reports and good reports and bad reports and trivia about this and that, and the world is pursuing all these things. I pray you'll give us years to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

We need it more desperately in the days to come, Lord. It's going to become more and more difficult as the devil steps up, the loudness of the noises around us, Lord, to hear that still small voice. But thank you that if we will listen, if we will stop and pay attention, like you say over and over again in the book of Proverbs, pay attention, pay attention.

He who has years to hear, let him hear. Give us those years, Lord, to hear, to hear your voice. Give us a spirit of discernment as individuals in our lives, in our homes, and in this church, a spirit of discernment that we can know clearly your voice, distinguished from all the other voices that the devil would try to confuse us with and bring unbelief and doubt and fear.

Worldly counselors, worldly wisdom, worldly pursuits of knowledge, worldly interpretations of your word. Lord, so many thoughts of man exist around us, Lord, and I pray that you will give us the grace to shut all of that out, even this morning, as we come back to your word. Give me the grace to shut out all of my human thoughts, that I can hear what your Spirit is saying to me and speak what your Spirit is speaking to me.

And for all of us, let us hear that voice alone, in Jesus' name, Amen. Okay, 2 Timothy chapter 1, we'll look at verses 13 through 18, at least some of those verses. You know, I believe the time is coming when going to church is not going to be as cozy or comfortable as it is for us today.

I don't know if you believe that, I hope you do, but that time is coming, the Bible speaks of it, we're not going to be taken up before the tribulation, I'm not ashamed to say that, even though there are Christians that believe otherwise, but we are going to go through that, and I'll tell you why I know that, because there are Christians today who are going through it. If you read magazines like Voice of the Martyrs, read the biographies of people, through the history of mankind, the church has been persecuted, and the devil has done a wonderful work of convincing western Christendom that somehow God loves his church too much to allow them to go through the same kind of suffering that he himself, the captain of our salvation had to go through. So the time is coming when, you know, today we live in a culture, especially here in the US, I think, where coming to church is just a matter of, well, what am I going to wear today, which Sunday best outfit am I going to wear, or I don't like this church, I'll just pick the one that's a little bit closer, that's a long drive, I'll find one that's a little closer, or I don't really like those people, I'll find one that fits my taste a little bit, or whatever, we're so, it's so easy for us, and this is not a message of condemnation, I'm speaking to my own heart here as I share my heart with you, that it's easy therefore for us, because, you know, it's not that we welcome persecution, I'm not looking to go and move somewhere where I'm going to be persecuted, that'd be foolish.

We're thankful that God has given us time of peace, and I believe that we should use these times of peace wisely, because that's what Jesus, I believe, meant when He said, the fields are ripe for harvest, which means that you have a limited amount of time in which to harvest, we have a limited amount of time in which to do the work of God's kingdom, building the body of Christ, and the time is going to come, I believe, when it's going to be very difficult for us to meet as a church, for us to gather and have times of fellowship, and I'll tell you this, that the greatest tragedy would be if we get to that time and realize, I wish I hadn't wasted those times when it was good, when it was easier, may we never be like that, you know, that's a regret that many people reach the end of their

lives and realize, man, I wasted my life, when you're on your deathbed, or people are on their deathbed, look back and think, man, I wasted my whole life in sin, thank God for the blood of Jesus Christ that ransoms us, redeems us, and makes restitution for all of that, for things we can't make restitution for, but I don't want to be one who gets to the end of my life and says, Lord, I may waste my whole life, will you let me come into your kingdom, we may hear the words that Jesus told the thief on the cross, today you will be with me in paradise, but that's not the life I'm shooting for, that's not the life I'm planning for, on living my whole life, pleasing myself, living in sin, doing whatever I want, wasting my money on this and on that, my time on this and on that, raising my

children just however I want, and then get to the end of my life and realize, I'm going to face God now, and think, wow, I better get right with Him, unfortunately there are many Christians that are planning on that, deathbed conversions, that's better than nothing, but the Bible also talks about a man's work being burned

up, even though he is saved, or he or she is saved, but the work being burned up, that's not our goal, right, our goal is to do the work of God while we can, and so the time is coming when going to church is not going to be as comfortable, and like I said, the history of the church is full of these stories, Paul lived in such a time, let me show you that, 2 Timothy chapter 1, in Paul's time already he was being persecuted, this book that we're reading, 2 Timothy chapter,

the book of 2 Timothy, the letter that Paul wrote to Timothy, the second letter, he wrote in prison, in fact, most of what we consider inspired scripture, God's word, in the New Testament, most of it, at least the Pauline epistles, the epistles written by the Apostle Paul, were written while he was in danger of death at any moment, imagine him writing to Timothy, and he says, you know, verse 13, retain the standard of sound words, and he was prepared, Paul was prepared that mid-sentence, the jailer could just decide, you know, I heard from Nero, your time is up, take him out there and kill him, behead him, eventually he did get beheaded, just like that, I don't know if he was in the middle of writing another letter perhaps, or talking to somebody, mid-sentence, Roman soldier shows up,

Nero said your time is up, off with your head, he's dead, and Paul lived in that awareness that at any moment he could face his maker, and it's in that circumstance, it's in that environment, that God gave us his inspired word, the word of God, do you see the value of it now, that Paul was suffering for what he stood for, when he said, I am not ashamed of the gospel, or verse 12, this reason I also suffer, but I'm not ashamed, it wasn't just words, his not being ashamed took him to the worst place he could possibly go in his time, that was a Roman prison, and eventually to death, he died a martyr's death, actually this was the last letter, historians say the last letter that Paul wrote, was this letter to Timothy, 2nd Timothy, within a few months of this, his life was over, but that's

what he says, you know at the end of 2nd Timothy chapter 4, he says, I fought the good fight, I finished the course, he could look back on his life and say, those times of plenty, when I wasn't sitting in jail, and my circumstances weren't uncomfortable, when it was easy for me to meet with the church at Ephesus, and the church in Corinth, and the church in Rome, I made full use of those opportunities, he wasn't sitting there in jail thinking, man, I wish I had done more to build churches, I wish I had done more to let the Lord use my life, while I was out there, and the time may come when we find that our opportunities are no longer available to us, may we not be those who say, look back and say, wow, I wish I had taken those opportunities for fellowship, to build the body of Christ on

this earth, I'll tell you honestly, my dear friends, my dear brothers and sisters, that is the passion of my life, I am not interested in anything else, I have interests, I like to play basketball, I like to watch an occasional game here and there, I love spending time with you guys, I love doing some work, I love the work that I do for a living, God has allowed me to do that, I enjoy those things, but those pleasures pale in comparison, those are like night lights, little stars, and then the sun comes up, and the Lord shows me afresh His revelation of the body of Christ, and allows me to pray for you all, and think about you all, and interact with you all, and the sun is up, and those lights are not even visible anymore, that's my honest testimony, I mean it, because I want to stand at

the judgment seat of Christ at the end of my life and say, Lord, this is the work you gave me to do on this earth, and this is what I made it my priority to do, will He ask me, well, how many games of basketball did you win, or how many promotions did you have in your work, He's not going to ask me those things, He gives me those things, and when I play, I'm going to try to win, right, you guys know that, sometimes too much, but that's not what the Lord is going to ask me at the end of my life, did you do the work for which I

called you to do, can you say like Paul, while you're alive, I fought the good fight, I'm looking back on my life, I fought the good fight, I finished the course, now there's prepared a crown for me, not just for me, but for all who have loved His appearing, I like

that Reece pointed that out, that when Jesus, we know that He's coming, we're not like, I'm thinking about all those things I need to set right, somebody else I spoke evil about, and somebody else I haven't asked forgiveness from, no, that's not ought to be our response, when you know that Jesus is coming in three minutes from now, what will you do, would you be like, yes, I'm ready to go, all who have loved His appearing, you love His appearing that way, so, sorry, I got off track, little excited, 2nd Timothy 1 verse 13, let's read these verses together, but I want you to understand that Paul was in this time, when he was suffering for it, and it's in this context that he says, 2nd Timothy 1 verse 13, retain the standard of sound words, which you have heard from me, he's writing to

Timothy, in the faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you, you are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia, turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes, the Lord grant mercy, and I just want to pause there for a moment, sad words, verse 15, all who are in Asia, that's why I said that this was the time when Paul was living in, where the church itself started to be drawn away into other things, here was the Apostle Paul, perhaps the godliest man alive in his generation, certainly, I'm not here to judge that, but from what we know of his life and what he writes in the revelation that God gave him, this was perhaps the godliest man, and the churches he was planting, I can imagine

were some of the godliest churches in his time, and yet here were Phygelus and Hermogenes, perhaps his co-workers, that's the sense we get from this verse, working with Paul, they were there, they were traveling with him to this church and that church, and at some point, they turned away from him, perhaps they realized that if I hang around with Paul, he has a habit of getting caught by the cops and thrown into jail, I don't want that life, Phygelus and Hermogenes thought, you know what, I'd like a more cozy Christianity that doesn't involve my occasionally getting caught and thrown in jail and getting a few beatings, and that cattle nine tails, you know the 49 whips they used to do that, maybe they had to go through it once and thought, man, I've had enough of this kind of Christianity,

I like that church that preaches a Christianity that doesn't involve the persecution, let's go there, Paul, I'm working with you, this Christianity seems more like it, I don't get this whole suffering business and I'm not ashamed of this gospel, and I don't mind suffering, Paul, somebody told me this once, he's like, you know, when you talk about the cross of Christ and crucifixion, it's just so morbid, can't you talk about something more interesting than that, I'll tell you this, there's nothing more interesting to me than the cross of Jesus Christ and my dying, taking up my own cross, because what comes at the end of it, resurrection, if I don't die, I'm never gonna be resurrected, and that's why it's good news for me, am I willing to go through the suffering of this earth, whatever it

might be, a circumstance on this earth, absolutely, do I like it, no, but I'm looking at the joy that's behind it and thinking, I want that, and so you present a cross to me with all those sufferings, and what I mean by cross is the circumstance that you're going through, that painful, hurtful circumstance, and God allows you to look at that as a cross and says, okay, Santosh, I'm gonna put you up on this cross, and they're gonna crucify you, and they're gonna put nails in your hands, and they're gonna beat you up and all that, for my sake, for the gospel, because you're gonna be like a lamb led to the slaughter with your mouth shut, and you're gonna suffer and suffer and suffer, but at the end of it will come a resurrection power, or just live a

normal, cozy life and pick which, whether

you want to wear the blue shirt or the green shirt on Sunday morning, if that church doesn't suit your needs, find another place, and live the end of your life, how will you meet your maker one day, how will you meet the son of God, the captain of our salvation who said, when I stood there and was forsaken by my own father, I gave it all, I didn't hold back anything at all, I don't want to be ashamed when I meet my maker, meet my savior, and say, Lord, I know you gave all, but I gave a couple years when I was about to die, I gave those years when I was past my youth and the prime and the energy and the passion that you wanted me to give to you when I was young, and this is a message for our children too, I want more than anything else for our children to grow up as young, growing up into

their teenagers and into their 20-somethings, sold out for the Lord, they don't have to make mistakes that we made, don't they, they don't, they don't have to wander in the world and test out all these other things, you know, like we sing in that song, I taste all the things the world has to offer, I hope that they don't have to sing that song 20 years from now, that by God's grace, because we're faithful parents, we can tell them, you can take that verse out of that song, I didn't taste the things that this world had to offer because I didn't want it, I saw examples in my father and mother and in the other brothers and sisters in the church of a way of glorious salvation, and I'll tell you this, if they see us as glum, gloomy, depressed all the time, they'll look at us and say, I don't

want that, that's not the Christianity that appeals to me, this guy, he's always depressed, always talking about how miserable his life is, they don't want that, how is that appealing to any of our children, and I'm not saying that we pretend that our circumstances are easy, if they're not, no, that's not it, but we see a reality, we see the cross, we present our children and we show them, daddy's going through the hardest time he's ever gone through in his life, but there is a resurrection coming, and it's that day that I'm waiting for, I am longing for his appearing, if we show our children that, and then they see, here's my dad who walks through the pain of his journey, day by day by day, I'll tell you this, I believe with all of my heart, that our children will be saved, they will be

disciples, because we'll have shown them good examples, they will have seen daddy, in the midst of all his trial and circumstance, pursue after godliness, pursue after the fruit of the spirit, which is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, all of those things that are listed there in Galatians 5, no matter what the circumstance we're going through, so I believe that there's going to be a great falling away, and this was Paul's own testimony, you'll see this here in 2nd Timothy chapter 1, 2nd Timothy 1, we'll read those verses again, retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus, guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you, you are aware of the fact that all, he's talking

about his co-workers here, all of them who are in Asia, turned away from me among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes, but on the other side, the Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, you see the contrast, Phygelus and Hermogenes, they saw Paul's chains and ran, and deserted him, and on the other side, Onesiphorus, he was not ashamed of the chains, he said, Paul, I'm with you, whether this is the life that God has called me to or not, I'm with you 100%, he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he was in Rome, he not only wanted to be, he searched him out, when Paul was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me, are you eagerly searching for godliness that might lead you into chains, that's Onesiphorus, he knew that

if he hung out with Paul, he might get caught, because Paul's co-workers also had a habit of getting caught with Paul, you know, Paul and Silas, they got caught, Silas ended up stuck with Paul's suffering, and Onesiphorus probably knew that, but he heard Paul's in Rome, and they might catch him, but I'm going to go find him, he searched him out, where's Paul, where can I be a part of God's work, whether it includes suffering or not, and the Lord grant him, Onesiphorus, to find mercy from the Lord on that day, and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus, is that me or, no, okay, I'll try to be careful, and so you see here in verse 12, you know, Paul says, this reason I also suffer these things, but I'm not ashamed, we know that Paul was writing these words while he was

suffering, and so this time when Paul lived in, was characterized by those two things I have up there, he was persecuted by the world, and those verses that I think Silver was reading, and Joshua you too, you still on, okay, in John chapter 15, those verses really struck home to me, because I was looking at them too, and how when we receive the love of the Father, and the love of Christ is within us, the world will hate us, in the same way that it hated Jesus, and when we find that we are truly in Christ, there's a hatred that people who love their sin, and want to continue to live in sin, will have towards us, we may not necessarily, it's not based on, we may not even necessarily say anything, you'll find that there's a hatred, you might based on what God wants you to speak into their

lives, but whether you're silent or not, there will be a power of the gospel that's manifest in your life, that will convict an anger, and bring a hatred in the lives of those who love their sin, because it says the light came into the darkness, and men loved the darkness, and hated the light, that's the way of the world, but not only was he persecuted by the world, it's worse than that, if that wasn't bad enough, he was deserted by his own Christian friends, his own Christian co-workers, you know that there's going to come a time, I believe in our, going to come a time in this world, when Christians will start to betray each other, people who committed themselves to a local church perhaps, or attended the same church, they'll turn around and betray the person that sat in the pew next to

them, that's what he's talking about here, let me show you that actually, Matthew 24, see Paul goes on to say later on, he talks about Demas, how Demas deserted him, and then 2nd Timothy 4 verse 16, at my first events, no one supported me, this is the testimony that Jesus had as well, when it came time for the suffering, the 12 disciples who were there, like Lord we'll give everything for you, Peter who said Lord I'll go to the cross for you, I'll do whatever, he ran away, in the face of a little servant girl, that was the testimony that Jesus had, Paul's testimony was the same, everything was fine and dandy, when he was going around planting churches and doing miracles and raising the dead back to life, it was great, but the moment it came time for suffering, everybody ran away, they

deserted him, his fellow believers, Matthew 24, begin reading in verse 9, then they, they, we'll see who this they is, will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you and you will be hated by all nations on account of me, and at that time many will fall away, you know what it means to fall away, it means you were there at one place, one point in time and you fell away from it, these are people who claimed to be believers in Jesus Christ I believe, but they fell away, many will fall away, and what will they do, not only will they fall away, because the persecution is increasing, and it's becoming a hard thing to go to church now, it's not just a matter of, I get in my car and drive and show up there and there I am at church, now there's a policeman standing at the door who's checking to

see if you really are willing to confess Jesus, now it's a little bit more difficult to go to church, and so they'll fall away, and not only will they do that, they will deliver up one another and hate one another, really, you

mean I attended you, church with you my dear brother, for so many years, and you fell away, and you betray me, that's the reality that, now I'm not saying any of us will do that to each other, but that's the reality that I think is going to face churches, churches are going to experience that, where people who fall away will start to betray one another, and hate one another, and many false prophets verse 11 will arise and will mislead many, and because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold, because lawlessness is increased, most people's love

will grow cold, but the one who endures to the end shall be saved, you see, let me point, emphasize a few words here, verse 9, you will be hated by all nations, many, verse 10, many will fall away, verse 11, many false prophets, verse 12, most people's love will grow cold, I don't know how that speaks to you, but when I hear that I think man, he's talking about a majority there, a majority of people who believe in God, and claim to be Christians, most of them, and I say Lord, I want to be in that remnant, I want to be in that small number that's going to be faithful, whose love is not going to grow cold, I get a reverential fear of God when I read that verse, Lord if it's true, what your word says, that most people's love will grow cold, I do the math and figure Lord, I don't want to be

in that majority, there's a good likelihood that I will be in that majority, but I don't want to be, fill me with your Holy Spirit, give me grace, help me to take my walk with you seriously, you know what Paul said, it was in first Corinthians, he says, I run as if to win, as if, if there was one person in this room that could attain Godliness, it better be me, not in a selfish way, but in a way that allows me to suffer more than anybody else, and go to the cross more than any else, and be mistreated more than any of you, is that the desire of your heart, if you run as if to win, then you have that reverential fear of God, then you can't afford to take life easily and dabble with sin, and just take it easy that you have lustful thoughts and angry thoughts, and one of these days I'll learn

to speak respectfully to my wife, one of these days I'll stop shouting at her, one of these days I'll learn to submit, one of these days I'll learn to not speak evil of others, one of these days, one of these days, such people will be among the most whose love will grow cold, I believe with all my heart, and it's not, it's not a message to speak fear in the hearts, other than the godly fear and the reverence for Him, but a message that says, Lord help me to take my walk with you so seriously, that if there's one person in this room that needs it, that needs to be, to suffer the most and be persecuted the most, let it be me, let me run as if to win, many will become, many will deliver up one another and hate one another, what causes this, I don't know if you've pondered the story of Judas

Iscairiot, what made him the betrayer, you know that, I don't believe Judas Iscairiot was a deceiver all along, it says in Luke 6, I think that he, when Jesus, you know, when you study the name of the disciples, you see that in Luke 6, Simon, Peter, Andrew, etc., Luke 6, 14, 15, and it says, and Judas Iscairiot, who became a traitor, he wasn't a traitor when Jesus picked him, he became a traitor, so let me, let me put this into modern day language, if you will, here was Jesus Christ, he was the elder of the, of the church that he was building, the disciples, and here was Judas Iscairiot, one of the leaders of the church, one of the committed, wholehearted disciples, a part of that church, there's Judas Iscairiot, and something happened that he became the betrayer of the son of God, the son of

perdition, there's only one man about whom it's called the son of perdition, Judas Iscairiot, you know which church he attended, the best church that's ever been built, the one that Jesus himself built, the twelve disciples, how is it possible that you can attend a church where Jesus himself is the one preaching every single Sunday, if I told you, come to our church, I guarantee that Jesus Christ himself will show up and

preach every single message, every single Sunday, he'll do the Bible study too, and he'll lead the music while we're at it, does that mean that by simply attending that church, my salvation is guaranteed, it wasn't for Judas Iscariot, he became a betrayer while hanging around the good teaching and the good fellowship and the, and the discipleship messages and the miracles

and the five thousand being fed and the, and the boat being tossed up and down and the calms, the seas being calmed and the demons being cast out, in the midst of all these great works which were genuine miracles, here was one man becoming a betrayer more and more and more and more, it's a sad, sad reality and I believe that if it could happen to Judas Iscariot, it could happen to me, if I don't fear God and live in fear before him, if I don't love him, it says most people's love will grow cold, they'll be content to just say, well, I'm a part of this church, it's a good church, I hear good teaching, I love the messages, I love the fellowship, but inwardly I have not taken my, my inner life seriously, it's a dangerous place to be in, I think there's more hope for a truly repentant sinner

sitting in some other church than for a Pharisee who sits here, if I was to stand here as a Pharisee in hypocrisy, where my, my relationship with my wife is not right, my relationship with my children is not right, I have secret thoughts of gossip and slander and bitterness towards any of you and I stand up here and preach or sit here in the pew, it would be more hope for somebody else, Jesus told the Pharisees, there'd be more hope for the prostitutes and the tax gatherers, the people who are out there prostituting themselves and getting drunk on Friday night instead of showing up on Sunday morning, than to stand here and to be here and to be a hypocrite, that brings fear to my heart, because most people's love will grow cold, you know what happened to Judas in Matthew 26, let me show

you this, this is one incident, I've been meditating on Judas' life, what was it that made, I don't think the scripture is very clear on it and you kind of have to delve into it and even then, it's hard to figure out how, I mean it's baffling to me and I'll tell you why, not so I can point fingers at Judas, but to stand in fear, lest that happen to me, the scriptures are very clear, you know when he talks about the bad example of the Israelites in 1st Corinthians 10, he says, therefore let him who thinks he stands, I could never be a Judas, Jesus, if I was one of your 12, I would never be the Judas, no way, maybe I wouldn't be Peter or James, I'd be at least Thaddeus, okay, not Judas, I'm not that bad, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall, that's the verse that keeps coming

back to me, Lord may it never be that in your church, in the church that you are building in 2012, I am the Judas that becomes a betrayer, that becomes a traitor, what happened to Judas, Matthew 26, you know the story, Jesus was in a room and this was Simon the leper and a woman came and opened up a bottle of costly ointment and Judas had already had a bunch of stuff festering, he had some irritation with Peter and probably with James son of Alphaeus and some irritation with Jesus, all kinds of resentments been festering in Judas's heart for a long time, very dangerous thing, happened to Cain, what did God tell him, sin is crouching at the door, he sees this festering going on, he sees these thoughts of resentment you have towards that other brother, these thoughts of bitterness towards

that other sister, I see it and the word of God is clear, be careful, sin is crouching at the door and its desire is for you, God told Cain, Cain didn't heed it, became a murderer, killed his own brother, the first sin committed towards another person was the result of a man refusing to take the warning of God, God I think spoke through heaven in a way that Cain could understand, says Cain be careful, sin is crouching at your door and I see what's in your heart, that's what happened to Judas and I think Jesus must have spoken many times to Judas in a way that Judas knew that Jesus was talking about him, Judas, I wonder

if Jesus every now and then called him and said Judas I know what's in your heart man, take it seriously, don't allow that bitterness to have any root in you, it will

destroy you, its desire is for you, you think that it's okay to have a little bit of bitterness in your heart, it will destroy you, and so what happens, this woman pours a bottle of ointment and that's the straw that broke the camel's back, it's not like in a moment Judas became the betrayer, this Judas had stuff festering and festering and festering and eventually he became a betrayer, this was the straw that broke the camel's back and he says, Judas you know being the, it doesn't hear that it was specifically Judas but we know in another passage that that's what it was him, verse 8, he was ignorant saying why waste this and of course you garb it with spiritual language, you cover it with spiritual language, he says well you know what why did you waste this perfume on Jesus, you should

have gone and sold that money, you probably spent a thousand dollars on that bottle of perfume, you could have, think about how many poor people you could have helped with those thousand dollars, instead here you are pouring, wasting it on Christ's body, I mean on his feet really of all places, you spend a thousand dollars just to pour a little bit of ointment and he thought Jesus being, since Jesus loves the poor, yes he does, he thought Jesus would take his side perhaps and Jesus said don't bother her, she has done a good deed to me, she has served my body, a picture of serving the body of Christ in the face of all the other good things we could do with our time and with our money, doing the work that God has called us to do, it might involve helping the poor sometimes and feeding the

hungry and doing those good things but we are doing what God has called us to do and if it means serving his body that's what we do and then 14, so it wasn't even really, he just kind of told Judas hey let her be, she has done a good work, didn't speak to him rebukingly, didn't call him Satan which he did to Peter another time and Judas got offended, verse 14, one of the twelve named Judas Iscariot went to the chief priest and he says, hey what will you give me to betray him, thirty pieces of silver, after three and a half years of walking with the son of God, holding his hand, watching him love mankind with such a love, you will betray him for thirty pieces of silver, let him who thinks he stands, take he lest he fall, could I ever betray the son of God for thirty pieces of silver after

spending three and a half years day in, day out with him, absolutely, I have the same flesh that Judas Iscariot had, absolutely it could but is it going to happen to me by God's grace, I say no absolutely not because I'm going to live in fear all of my days, reverence God's word, live in all of his name and live in his presence all the time so that that could never happen to me, can I say with assurance that that will never happen to me, yes if I live in fear and soberly and circumspectly on this earth, it need not happen to any of us, not even one, not our children, will any of our children grow up to be rebellious, I want to say in faith, absolutely not, but we ought to take it seriously parents, we ought to set an example before them in our homes that they will not want anything else

but godliness and to serve God in the same way that we have, and so he goes on to say, verse sixteen, from then on he began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus, imagine that, you get the sense that he continued with Jesus for a few more, we don't know maybe, we don't know when this happened but it was close to the end of Jesus' life so maybe a few more weeks, a few more months, but now look what's happening, Judas is still with the twelve, he's still attending church every Sunday and for them it was every day, he's walking around with the disciples, clean face, everything is good, how are you doing brother, oh man my week is going good, inwardly he was looking for an opportunity to betray the son of God, and the time is coming my dear brothers and sisters when in churches, men and

women who were once good, who were once count to the cost and were disciples fell away and start to look for opportunities to betray their fellow brothers and their fellow sisters to betray the son of God himself by their lives and by their actions, it's a sad reality but may we be among the few, the way to life is narrow and few there be that find it, we hear that over and over again that Jesus says it's a minority, it's a very very small percentage of people, take the cross section of the community, take the cross section of churches, people who call themselves Christians, all of that, it's a very small minority of people that will make it and my greatest desire is to be in that minority because I know that's my salvation and this is a message, it's ought to be a message of hope that

says Lord I know this with all of my heart, I am not ashamed because you know we're looking in 2nd Timothy 1 where Paul says I am certain of this that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him, but see Paul had entrusted it to him, he didn't try to take control of his life and dictate how he lived his life, he had entrusted everything to him and if Jesus said I am calling you to suffer, he says Lord well ok, I have entrusted my whole life to you, if the life that you have called me involves suffering, well it doesn't matter, I know you whom I have entrusted my whole life to, you'll take care of me, if I am rotting there in a jail in Rome it doesn't matter, I have entrusted it to you, you take care of it Lord, I encourage you my dear brother and sister to do that with the

circumstance you're facing right now, however big it is or however it's small, entrust it to him, will he take care of it?

Absolutely, absolutely he will take care of it, do you know him and are you assured of this, verse 12, that he is able to keep what you have entrusted to him, 2nd Timothy 1 verse 12, hold on to that Lord, I am entrusting this circumstance to you, I have no idea how that bill is going to get paid, but I am entrusting it to you, I have no idea how my children are going to grow up in the fear of God, but I am entrusting that to you, we've talked about that, let me say that again, Lord I don't know how you're going to give me grace as a father to raise my children in the fear of God, I don't know, I'm so foolish, I'm so full of myself and my wretched ideas, but will you make it happen, if I entrust it to you?

He will, read it this way, for this reason I also suffer, verse 12, and I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is able to guard my children whom I have entrusted to him until that day, that's a promise from me, and whatever it is you're facing in your life, the areas that God has called you to have responsibility, I know I can say that about my children, because he's given me those children and he tells me in God's word that I am responsible for them, that as a father I am responsible for raising them in the fear of God and disciplining them and loving them and nurturing them, as parents that's our calling, knowing that I know that I can claim that promise, Lord I'm entrusting my children to you, I'm entrusting you and you will keep them until that

day, if you live with this mentality that Paul had, where you are completely sold out to him and you're willing to suffer hardship, retain, the standard of sound words, I don't do this as well as Phil does with his analogies, but I'm going to try, retain, when I think of retain I think of a cup that's holding water, retain, so he says retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus, and he shows us here that, and he goes on to say in verse 14, guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us the treasure which has been entrusted to you, guard it, I think of our lives like this, that he says retain the sermons that you heard and the reading of God's word that you do and you spend every morning half an hour or an hour or whatever

or five minutes studying God's word and you think Lord how am I going to remember all that, I listened to a message for 45 minutes and I was a little bit distracted but I kind of got the meat of it, how is this going to become a reality in my life, that's what he says in verse 13, retain the standard of sound words, he says Timothy I've taught you a lot of things, I've spent years with you Timothy and I know you're not going to remember everything, you're not even going to remember stuff I told you yesterday perhaps Timothy, you're not even going to remember this sermon by the time you get home tonight, but listen to the word of God, he says retain, retain is different from remember, I want you to understand that too, if I asked you to remember everything that I said today or remember

everything that God has taught you, that would be an impossible command, no human being on earth can remember everything, maybe some can come close but that puts us in different levels then, if you have a good memory you're going to remember everything you heard and if you have a good memory you can read God's word and there it is, but he's not talking about remembering, he's talking about retaining, it's down here and I tell you that, it doesn't matter what your education level is, it doesn't matter how smart you are, how dumb you are, retaining is available to all of us equally if we're all humble and willing to receive grace from God, it doesn't matter if you only got an 8th grade education or you got a college degree, masters, PhD or you are a CEO or a slave, the foot of the cross,

the ground is even, why?

Because the opportunity is available to all of us, are you a housewife at home and you think well Lord how am I going to grow in godliness and how am I going to retain all these things, all I can do is think about my children and how I can meet their needs, how am I going to retain this?

He says retain it in the faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, I think of faith and love as this cup that's holding the doctrines that we've heard, all the good teachings, without faith and love, without this cup I could pour, I'm not actually going to do that, but I could pour and think why is it that it seems like all the sermons I heard just fall to the ground, nothing comes out of it, faith and love, retain, retain, if I put it in faith and love it's there, I could set it there and I come back tomorrow and it's still there, because there's faith and love holding that teaching in place and I'll tell you where I have gone astray for so many years in my life and so many Christians I observe are going astray in their life even though they're sitting under some of the best teaching

imaginable without faith and love, I could, this could be kangen water, I could just be wasting it and pouring it on the ground, pour it into a cup and it's actually useful, retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus, he says guard the gospel like a treasure, you know when I think of faith, I think of what Jesus told Peter, you know, you remember that story, it's in Luke 22, it's not really a story, but at one point Jesus was talking, he says Peter, near the end of his life, Peter, he looked, I picture that look, I'm going to try to recreate it, I don't know if it's accurate or not, but imagine just looking gently at Peter, look him in the eye, Simon, Simon, Satan, I know that Satan's demanded permission to sift you like

meat, you hear the voice of God saying that to you today, I do, Santosh, Santosh, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like meat, you're going to go through a hard week coming up, I don't know if it's true, but I'm just imagining a circumstance, we face those hard weeks, you got a hard week coming up, but he tells Peter, I prayed for you, I haven't prayed for you that you won't be sifted, I haven't prayed for you that, for anything else other than this, that your faith may not fail, that you won't give this up, because if you give

up faith, at some point if you stop trusting your maker, you stop trusting your God, no matter what you're going through, he says, I'm praying for you Peter, I'm not praying for you that you won't go through that, or that things won't get worse, it might

get worse, but I'm praying for you that your faith may not fail, that you won't throw the cup away just because it seems like you're going through a hard time, Simon, Simon, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you, your faith may not fail, and you know what he goes on to say, and when you have turned, you're going to fall Peter, you're going to betray me, you're going to swear and cuss and deny that you know me, but when you have turned, when you come full circle, and you get a hold of that faith, because your faith has not failed, strengthen my brothers, now pour water into their life, so that they can have it, drink it as well, that's why Peter could stand on the day of Pentecost, in front of so many thousands of people standing there, full of the

Holy Spirit, and preached one of the most powerful sermons that's ever been preached, and three thousand people got born again there, right there, the same Peter, but if his faith had failed, like it did for Judas, I think that's what happened to Judas, his faith failed, he heard Jesus say some hard words to him, he got offended about something in the church, his faith failed him, he says, I had enough, throw away the cup, and that's the message of hope I get, Peter fell into worse things than Judas did initially, Judas betrayed him, but before that, Peter was, you know, I see that the opportunity for both of them was there, Judas could have repented, if he had heard Jesus' words there, that we read in Matthew 26, and said, you're right Lord, the most important thing is serving you, not

all these other fancy ideas I have, but the most important thing is serving you, if he had wrapped himself around that, I think the story would have been different, the betrayer would have had to be somebody else, because Judas Iscariot took God's word to heart seriously, and that's the message of hope for me today, that if I'm headed down that path of becoming a betrayer, one who denies Jesus, one who in the face of persecution will shrink back and say, oh no, not me, then there's hope, that if I listen to God's word, if I listen to his voice calling me, that I can, I'll be among those few, he also talks about love, you know, we, most of you know John 3 verse 16, we teach our children that, that's only half of the love of God, I believe, the other half of it, it's very easy to remember,

is in 1st John 3 verse 16, I don't know if you've seen 1st John 3 verse 16, it's a good verse to memorize, we actually sang it earlier today, John 3 verse 16, we all know that, right children, God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son, so that none should perish, but that all should, I misquoted it, John 3 verse 16, for God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life, you know 1st John 3 verse 16, by this we know love, that he laid down his life for us and you, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, that's the second half of the love of God, John 3 verse 16, God so loved the world that he sent his son, so that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal

life, well what's my part in that, the second half of that, the other side of the coin, 1st John 3 verse 16, we know this, that he sent his son and he gave himself for us, but we also ought to love the brethren in the same way, and without that, I'm without a cup in which to retain the sound words that we have heard, and you could listen to sermon after sermon after sermon, without that faith, without that love, that 1st John 3 verse 16 love, where I'm willing to lay down my life for my brethren, no wonder I'm unable to retain, no wonder the messages I hear don't seem to translate into a reality of life in my life, I'm going to use another analogy here, I think the reason so many of us have a hard time retaining is because we have little holes

here, I'm going to poke a little hole in

here, do you understand the, just a little hole, I'm going to put a little bit of unbelief, just a little unbelief, you probably can't even see it from there, it's a really small hole in the bottom of it, a little bit of unbelief, a little bit of, I don't know if God's really going to come through in this, He's put me through too much already, I don't really know, a little bit of love of the world, a little bit of, I love money a little bit, I like these things, I like a little bit of pleasure, a little bit of worry, how about that, a little bit of, I'm worried, every now and then, once a week I have about an hour of anxiety, it's just a small little hole, you know what would happen if I was to pour the water into this cup, right, it's obvious, here's that cup, like I said, I come back a

day or so from now, it's a small little hole, and you may not even notice it, but I put more water in that cup than the other one, if I come back in a few days, you see the water already, you probably can't see it from there, it's already starting to drain out, retain, retain the standard of sound words, which you have heard from me in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus, and what are these things, my dear brothers and sisters, that are poking holes in our faith and our love, have you thought about it, Jesus used the example of thorns, do you remember what the three things Jesus said were thorns, what are these nails, I use the nail, but what are the thorns that are poking holes in your faith and in your love that prevent you, prevent I, prevent us as individuals, as families and

as a church from retaining the standard of the sound words that we have heard, what is it, you remember, the pleasures and the deceitfulness of riches, yes, the worries of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the pleasures of this life, think about it, let me show you that, Luke chapter 8, when Jesus explained the parable, they didn't understand it, he says, Lord, what does this parable mean, you planted good seed, the seed was good and it started to come up, but somehow no fruit came out of that, why, verse 14, and the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard and as they go on their way, they are choked with thorns, the worries and riches and pleasures of this life, the worry of this age, Matthew 13 calls it, the deceitfulness of riches and the pleasures

of this life, the worry of this age, the deceitfulness of riches and the pleasures of this life, I could pour more water into that and wonder, Lord, why is it draining, why is it that I find a lack of power in my life, you filled me up on Sunday, I was at that conference and I got filled up with the Holy Spirit, but within a week, it's all drained out, the worry of this life, it's a little drip, it's a little drip, most Christians go through this and I went through this in my life for many years and I didn't, smaller than that, I didn't even notice that the power of God was being sapped away from me by the worries of this age, how seriously will you take a little bit of worry, a little bit of fear, a little bit of unbelief, a little bit of pleasure of myself, a little bit of the love of

money, a little bit of the deceitfulness of riches, that's all it takes, and I find myself falling away and betraying the Son of God Himself, it's really quite different from what I intended to say, I didn't even get to my slides, that's okay, the Lord had something else in mind.

My dear brothers and sisters, this is a word of encouragement, it's not a word of condemnation, I hope you know that, that everything that we preach from here and do in our Bible studies is a word of encouragement, it's to stir us up, to challenge us, to exhort one another, to encourage one another daily while it is still called today, you know the Bible talks about that, while it is still called today, it's still called today, because the time is going to come when it won't be today anymore, we will look back on our life as yesterday, the past, and there will be no more today in which to pursue godliness, in which to give God every part of our lives, while it is still called today, today if you hear His voice, harden not your heart as

they did in the wilderness, Lord, strengthen us for your good works, thank you that you have created good works for us to walk in.

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