

The Chapel Ministry



CLEARCREEK
CHAPEL

Tested Truths from 2nd Timothy

Russ Kennedy

*S*avoring the *S*upremacy of *G*od
*S*tudying the *W*ord of *G*od
*S*haping the *P*eople of *G*od
*S*preaching the *G*ospel of *G*od

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Introduction

Last words are sad and solemn. The last words of a beloved mother to her dear children will be precious jewels to adorn their memories. The last words of a faithful father to sons and daughters who stand around him as living tributes to a life lived well. The last words of a great leader and much admired mentor will be oft echoed in the lives and teaching of students. There is often great glory in the grace given to being gathered in saints. What an amazing thing it is to sense the brightness leaking through the open door they are passing through.

This is what we have in this letter. These are the last words of a great leader whose final counsel and inspired instruction ring as a mighty call to endure hardship, embrace suffering, expound the Word and exalt Christ in life or death. They are also the tender words lightly salted with tears that will constantly feed and nourish the soul of a loving son and soldier in the faith, sustaining and strengthening him for ministry.

These words do not come from the warmth of a bed where a man may die with a certain amount of comfort. They come from the dripping dankness and stone hardness and scarce provision of a Roman prison. Paul, in this second imprisonment around 66AD, is experiencing little of the privileges of his first where he was largely under house arrest. That he could receive guests and write letters is remarkable on its own. So the call here to endure hardship and embrace suffering does not come from the luxury of a well-appointed office, but from the misery of an unkempt prison.

These words do not come from a man surrounded by the loving care of many friends and much (even spiritual) family. He has been deserted by those who owe their very spiritual life and ministry well being to him. He has been betrayed by those seduced by the trinkets and fools-gold treasures of the world. He has been horribly opposed and much harmed by wealthy and politically powerful and connected public figures. And the church that had received three years of personal ministry investment has begun a slow decline in doctrinal error and carnal behavior that will eventually snuff out the candle of their ministry.

But these words are written to a greatly loved son who alone had his spiritual father and mentor's heart (Philippians 2:29-30). They are written...

to infuse courage in the midst of spiritual warfare,
to ignite passion in the midst of spiritual decay,
to inspire hope in the midst of spiritual decline,
to ingrain steadfastness in the midst of spiritual failure
and to inoculate souls in the midst of spiritual disease.

And though we are no Timothy, we can still listen with a grace relying profit and a God glorifying purpose and suffering embracing perspective. These words can infuse courage, ignite passion, inspire hope, ingrain steadfastness and inoculate our souls today knowing that we as well will be brought safely into God's heavenly kingdom to whom be the glory forever and ever, Amen." (2 Timothy 4:18)

Be Not Ashamed

2 Timothy 1:1-18

Introduction

The Encouragement

The letter opens with great words meant to encourage Timothy.

- **Authority** (v.1) – The authority of God behind these words causes us to bow to them so that we might draw strength from them.
- **Intimacy** (v.2-4) – The importance of joyfully intimate relationships in the Kingdom of God is displayed as the root from which faithful prayer springs.
- **Authenticity** (v.5-7) – The necessity for authentic faith and gift-ness is highlighted for us. We must know that we are in the Kingdom and what place we have in the Kingdom.

The Emphasis

This pericope has a repeated emphasis that helps shape the structure of the text.

- **Pointed Command** (v.8) – "You, do not be ashamed."
- **Personal Commitment** (v.12) – "I am not ashamed."
- **Practical Case** (v.16) – "He was not ashamed"

So it is evident: Christians must not be ashamed. There must be in Christians a deep confidence that exudes courage under pressure.

The Conditions Required

(v.3-7)

Follow how Paul develops his thinking through this portion of the text. *TO SERVE WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE* means...

- Remembering** to pray regularly;
- Recalling** a genuine faith;
- Reminding** to stir up gifts;
- Resulting** from Spiritual power.

What is highlighted are the conditions or prerequisites for not being ashamed.

The Confidence of a Clear Conscience (v.3)

How many of us can say that we have served and are serving God with a clear conscience? What mighty weights of guilt and hidden sin fetter our feet from running and serving well! There will be nothing to erode your confidence and courage as the niggling voice of a defiled conscience.

The Purpose of a Joyful Aim (v.4)

Paul is pursuing his joy in his relationship with others. He remembers Timothy in prayer, with a longing to see even a face tracked with tears. His tender love and care and fellowship with Timothy bring him enormous joy. He does not see that joy as merely a side benefit; rather he seeks and pursues that joy. My beloved, I want you to be holy. And I want you to be joyful. And I want your relationships to be joyous for the sake of God's glory.

The Conviction of a Genuine Faith (v.5)

How can we have confidence and courage when we do not have the conviction that our faith is authentic and genuine? Part of this is what we call "having an assurance of faith." Would it not be helpful for our assurance if we know our faith's genuineness? The realness of Timothy's faith was brought to Paul's attention (mindful). He establishes it as necessary to not be ashamed.

The Ministry of a Stimulated Gift (v.6)

Timothy had a Spirit given, apostolically recognized and elder affirmed enablement for ministry. The Spirit gave it, but Timothy was responsible to fuel it, fan it and use it. Spiritual gifts atrophy if not put to use. Even a gift like Timothy's must be stimulated and stirred up. So much in Timothy's life were impediments to the use of his gifts. He was young (1 Timothy 4:12), handicapped by physical ailments (1 Timothy 5:23), naturally timid (1 Corinthians 16:10), facing determined opposition in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3-7) and was ministering to people who were suffering persecution. (William Hendriksen, *NTC – 2 Timothy*, pp. 228-229). So in spite of personal struggles, relational and doctrinal battles and opposition from the world, we must stir up and exercise the ministry gifts God has given us.

The Power of the Holy Spirit (v.7)

Being timid does not come from the Holy Spirit nor is it to be the prevailing attitude of a believer. God's grace infuses us with power, love and a discipline of mind (a sound mind). William Hendriksen has written, "Avail yourself of that limitless, never-failing *power* and you will proclaim God's *truth*; of that intelligent, purposeful *love* and you will comfort God's *children*; of that ever-necessary self-discipline and

you will wage *battle* against cowardice, taking yourself in hand." (Hendriksen, pp.229-230; italics his)

So much of your shame and embarrassment as Christians over your faith comes from defiled consciences, suppressed joy, doubt, unused gifts and timidity not overcome by the power, love and discipline the Holy Spirit imparts.

Therefore beloved, do not be ashamed.

The Command Explained

(v.8-14)

This is not a simple command:

- Expected in great difficulty – Whether a person with natural courage or natural timidity, not being ashamed is called for. There are no "personality" excuses. Because we have the Holy Spirit and the power, love and discipline of mind He gives, therefore, we must not be ashamed.
- Expressed in grand complexity – Being ashamed is explained as a type of unbelief. It is unbelief in the gospel and the mighty sovereign providence of God who moved to save us and now moves in our situations.
- Experienced in genuine adversity – Being ashamed is exposed in the environment of pressure, persecution and ridicule. I wonder how we will speak out when life and property are in danger when we will not speak out when only our pride and desire to be accepted and appreciated is threatened.

At the center of our not being ashamed is the Gospel. It is what we must not be ashamed of. It is what will be called into question that will stir up the fear of man. It is what must be understood, believed, maintained and defended.

I want to articulate this at both the level of eldership in which it is written to Timothy and at the level of every believer in which we all hear it. This is what not being ashamed of the gospel looks like.

Suffer for the Sake of the Gospel

(v.8)

We know what it means to be ashamed by what we are to embrace instead. Do not be ashamed but [instead] join in suffering for the gospel. Our shame is being embarrassed at being identified with Jesus or with those who are suffering for the gospel. Now we do not face open opposition, but is that because our culture is so benign or because our witness is so weak?

I further want to challenge you to think of embracing the suffering standing for the gospel may bring. Peter Tson has challenged us to think that possibly the reason that the gospel has largely been ineffec-

tive in Muslim countries is because we have attempted to penetrate it by stealth. Maybe we need to remember that the seed of the church is in the blood of her martyrs. Maybe this is why the gospel has progressed with amazing power in China while faltering in Muslim countries. Maybe we just need men and women and young adults who will go in and preach boldly, courageously and powerfully even if it means death.

Maybe what is needed is an attitude among us that would be able to say while in a Roman prison that he is prisoner of Christ (v.8).

Understand the Truth of the Gospel (v.9-11)

But to do that, we had better understand the gospel clearly. Though the whole content of the gospel is not exhausted here, it is certainly represented here.

The Structure of the Text

God [who] has saved us and called us with a holy calling.

Not according to *our works*

But according to His *own purpose and grace*

Which [**then**] was granted [to] us

in Christ

from all eternity

But **now** has been *revealed* [to us]

by the *appearing* of our Savior Jesus Christ

Jesus [who]

Abolished death

Brought to light

life

immortality

By the gospel.

The gospel [For which]

[Paul] was appointed [to be]

a preacher

an apostle

a teacher

The Content of the Gospel

So the gospel is what God has done not what we can do. It is about what He has actually done: saved and called. This finished work arises from His purpose and grace in eternity past that is now seen by Jesus' appearing. The gospel is about the doing and dying and living of Jesus. It is about the work of God and the work of Christ, not out work. We are saved by the sheer grace of God who purposed salvation for His people. That salvation was effected by abolishing death and illuminating life and a never-ending one at that.

The Minister in the Gospel

Notice to what Paul has been appointed:

- **Function** – a preacher, proclaimer. This is what he does.
- **Office** – an apostle, a sent one. This is the office he holds
- **Method** – a teacher. This is his method and how he does it.

This is important because it bookends the gospel. Timothy was appointed in ordination by the elders to the office of elder where he was to preach and teach and shepherd. Paul was appointed by God to the office of apostle where he was to teach. For both of them in their respective ministries, the gospel is at the center.

This must be so with us. We must have at the heart of all our ministry the Sovereign God who saves and calls because He has purpose of giving grace. The gospel that God did it all including its application to us must be intricately woven with our function, office and method.

Believe the Christ of the Gospel

(v.12)

I have chosen this heading carefully. Paul is not ashamed and does embrace suffering for the gospel because of *WHOM HE HAS BELIEVED*. It is like Titus 3:8 where it is those *WHO HAVE BELIEVED GOD* who must be engaged in good works. Because God is who He is and what He is like, Paul is convinced that God is able. Though we believe in Christ, the confidence that God will guard what we commit to Him, the eternal safety of our souls, comes from believing God Himself. My confidence in His ability rests on His authority.

Maintain the Integrity of the Gospel

(v.13)

We cannot express the gospel in just any words we choose. There is a responsibility to maintain the integrity of the gospel itself by holding to a standard of right words. In a day where we use sub-Christian talk all the time, this is going to sound strange. The life, death and resurrection of Christ must be spoken of in words that accurately represent the truths the original Greek and Hebrews conveyed.

Further, our preaching of the gospel must call people to do what the Bible tells them to do. For example, in a presentation of the gospel, it is popular today to tell people they "need to ask Jesus into their heart." The problem with this is ❶ it places the initiative in man, ❷ it makes a demand the Bible never does. The Bible often talks about Jesus (by the Holy Spirit) indwelling believers. But it never says that we are to ask Him in. The Bible's gospel commands are to believe, repent, bow, submit, follow and love. These are the verbs of evangelical salvation.

Defend the Purity of the Gospel**(v.14)**

First, let's note that the word treasure in this verse is that of a valued deposit. It is the responsibility of the church to guard the apostolic deposit of truth in the Scripture. We are to do so through the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is an effort in the spirit, not a work of the flesh. But we must guard the gospel and defend it from corruption and change. We must stand for it against its enemies. We must defend it and speak up when false Christians misstate it or misrepresent it.

So here are the ways in which we can embrace the suffering of the gospel in the midst of danger and difficulty. Choose to suffer for the sake of the gospel you understand and believe, while speaking of it in the right words and defending it from attack and corruption. Do so publicly, with the love, power and disciplined mind the Holy Spirit gives.

The Commendation Given**(v.15-18)**

Paul wants to highlight someone like this for us.

The Experience of a Great Desertion**(v.15)**

The brightness of this person's courage is shown against the darkness of all those in Asia who deserted Paul because they were embarrassed and ashamed of Christ and His servant. Their desertion may have been led by Phygelus and Hermogenes. Whatever the reason, these two are singled out in their desertion.

The Example of a Gracious Determination**(v.16-18)**

Why do I say that those who deserted Paul were ashamed? Because Onesiphorus is commended for not being ashamed of Paul's imprisonment but rather seeking him out diligently. This determination to fulfill his mission of love and mercy was completely in character and consistent with his ministry at Ephesus. He was not timid He was not ashamed of Christ or of Paul, even in his imprisonment. He was a man in whom the power, love and disciplined mind given by the Spirit worked itself out in an eager search that ended with finding Paul in prison.

Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, do not be ashamed of the Lord and the gospel. Rather, from a clear conscience and a genuine faith and a stirred up gift by the power of the Spirit, suffer for the gospel you have learned and trusted; the gospel that you can articulate clearly and defend powerfully. May the Lord grant you mercy before Him on that great day of His appearing and glory.

Be Strong

2 Timothy 2:1-26

Introduction

This text is written to an elder and apostolic representative to stir up in him strength for the difficult tasks. So in many ways, this is a message aimed at our elders. But the underlying principles ought to shape all of us for whatever ministry God places us in. So let us see this first to our pastors and then to all and each of you.

We are to be strong in the grace of Christ to what end? What will this enabling grace strengthen us for? This text weaves together the inward receiving of grace and its outward results...

In the Pattern of Understanding God's Ways (v.2-7)

The enabling grace of God strengthens us for the ways in which God grows and furthers His kingdom. Some of what God does is deep and profound. Some of what God does is clear and easily understood, particularly when illustrated from the common every day life.

Transferring Truth (v.2)

Truth is transferred. It must be first learned and then taught. Every one of us is in this ever-expanding network of learning from others and then teaching what we learn to others. This is how the church's knowledge is deepened, broadened and spread down through time.

But there is careful qualification. The entrusting of truth to be taught to others is to *faithful* men. So what is in view here is the identifying, qualifying and ordaining of godly men to shepherd (pastor) the church as elders who teach. Much harm is done when unfaithful men are allowed to spread error. This is the essence of what happened in Ephesus that made Timothy's residence and ministry there necessary.

Suffering Hardships (v.3)

Good soldiers suffer and endure hardships. It is the defining characteristic of a good soldier. Yet we as Christians think that we have been called to and what we are engaged in is a playground, not a battlefield. But Paul calls Timothy to endure hardships like good soldiers do.

Ben Patterson, Dean of Chapel at Hope College, in discussing this talked about not taking attacks and opposition and hardships person-

ally. After all, soldiers don't peek up over the top of the foxhole and say, "Was it something I said?" Charles Simeon, a pastor in the 1800's was assigned a church to pastor that did not want him. The congregation who owned their pews (a common practice of the day) locked the pews. For 8 years, Simeon preached to a congregation forced to stand in the aisle.

"Suffer hardship" from a man who was beaten, stoned, vilified and imprisoned. It is as poignant as sitting to hear Josef Tson describe what he suffered for the sake of the gospel. I tell you, those three days at the Conference have caused me to think more deeply about this whole issue of suffering hardship. It seems to me that we can do the hard and risky task of ministry in our evangelism, which frankly, we simply don't do much of.

Pleasing God

(v.4)

The great inner drive that causes good soldiers to endure suffering is that we are utterly committed to pleasing God, our supreme commander. That enduring hardship, pleasing God hunger causes us to disentangle ourselves from daily distractions. Certainly this is true more for those who have given themselves to ministry, it seems to me that many of you see church as something you add to your life; it is not your life. Do we make our great aim to please God in everything in everyway?

Obeying Rules

(v.5)

Further, Paul points to athletics as reminding us that competently serving God means understanding the guidelines and following them. We are not talking here about moral issues necessarily. What Paul is indicating here are those self-regulating parameters that we commit ourselves to as matters of wise ministry. It is the determination and discipline that focuses our energy and effort on finishing well. And there are disciplines (rules) that we must follow that may not be specific commands, but are evident. No one can minister well as God's athlete who does not read the Word, pray, participate in body life in worship, ministry and evangelism. Many try only to ultimately fail under pressure.

Working Hard

(v.6)

That brings us then to an encouraging pattern in God's ways. This is an allusion to the responsibility of a congregation to support hard-working elders. There is the sense of *oughtness* here. One who labors in the Lord's field ought to reap a harvest from that field. It also points to the fact that our hard labor in life and ministry for the sake of God and the gospel will not go unrecognized. Take hope, beloved, your hard work in serving God and His people will be rewarded.

Thinking Deeply

(v.7)

There is a sense in which this sentence is the other bookend of verses 1-2. Be strong in grace and pass on the truths you have learned to faithful men. Think deeply on what you have learned and God will give you insight. Timothy (and we) are to think carefully about these analogies in verses 3-6 and God will give us understanding as it relates our place in His providence. Reflect on the Word in the midst of our world. Once again we encounter that wonderful meeting of our exercise and God's enabling.

You do the thinking and God will give the understanding.

In the Privilege of Suffering for the Sake of Others (v.8-13)

Being strong by enabling grace means that we will embrace the privilege of suffering for the sake of God's people and the gospel.

Foundations in the Gospel

(v.8)

At the center of the gospel is the divinity and humanity of Christ. The resurrection attested to His being God and to God's accepting of His finished work as complete. The lineage to David attested that He was truly human and established His credentials as the Messiah, the promised King. So we must constantly keep in mind the wonderful mystery of the incarnation as an essential part of the gospel. When we preach Christ crucified, we do so as those who believe that He is both fully God and fully man, yet without mixing or mingling the humanity and deity.

I also want to underscore two important ideas here: ❶ that the resurrection is the highlight of the gospel ❷ that Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed King. Peter in his preaching early in Acts makes these two things inseparably connected. Jesus' resurrection and ascension places Him on the throne of David.

Let us remind one another regularly: Jesus is risen and He is our Sovereign.

Realities of Imprisonment

(v.9)

Since that is so, it gives meaning and significance to the suffering and hardships that come with courage. Though Paul maybe imprisoned, the gospel is not chained. The power and propagation of the gospel does not depend on any single person, even a Paul.

John Calvin wrote to several young ministers who were imprisoned for the gospel these words, "God will use your blood to sign His truth." I hope that will be true of us. Would it not be great to have the testimony here at the Chapel that these members signed God's truth with their blood?

Motivations for Evangelism (v.10)

How does Paul view the hardships he endures? What does God's strengthening grace fill His heart and mind with? It fills it with a commitment to enduring because God is calling out His elect. Paul says, "I have chose and I challenge you to choose to endure suffering for the sake of gospel because that gospel will be use to bring God's chosen to the eternal salvation planned for them." We can scarce think such a thing. In Acts 10, the fact that God has many people yet in Corinth is used to stir up courage to stand for the gospel in spite of threats against life.

Statements of Consequence (v.11-13)

Here is Paul probably quoting a hymn or a widely circulated creedal statement. These are written as a series of commonly understood Christian truths, commonly held "If... then..."

For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him;
If we endure, we shall also reign with Him;
If we deny Him, He also will deny us;
If we are faithless, He remains faithful;
for He cannot deny Himself.

Here is the point. Our faithfulness in dying and enduring brings unimaginable reward. Our denying Him invokes His denial of us. But we can bank on the faithfulness of God even in the our own faithlessness because HE cannot deny Himself.

After almost unimaginable trials as a pioneer missionary in the New Hebrides, John G. Patton wrote, "Our struggles are strangely mingled with success."

In the Problem of Wrangling over Words (v.14-19)

So courage and conviction even to death are called for. But what must not emerge from this grace-enabled strength is self-important brashness that masquerades for Christian boldness.

Futility of Word Strife (v.14)

Holding to the standard of sound words (Ch.1) must not degenerate into all kinds futile arguing over words. The Greek literally reads striving with words. What is warned about is the going to war with words in a way that is futile and destructive of believers. Yes, we must stand for truth. But we must not use words as weapons to rip and ruin others.

There is also a sense in which we must guard against the kind of theological wrangling that makes words stand alone apart from context. There is a way of approaching the Bible using word studies that can

be useless, destructive and lead to error. Every significant doctrinal word in the Bible has to be understood in the ever widening circles of sentence, paragraph, book, redemptive historical and canon context. Believing this hugely affects the way I approach the Bible for preaching and polemics.

Responsibility for Diligent Study (v.15)

Over against the kind of poor use of the Word represented by verse 14 is the God approved diligent study that accurately handles the Word. We do not come to the Word in study to be signed and sealed by man. We are doing our study diligently, carefully and accurately because it is before the face of God.

Danger of Contagious Error (v.16-18)

Why is diligent study required? Because error is virulently contagious. While truth must be carefully and diligently studied, taught and propagated, error spreads like gangrene or AIDS. And unguarded, foolish talk is the primary agent for error's spread.

Notice in identifying what is happening in the church at Ephesus, Paul identifies how the error is being spread (v.16-17a), the people who are spreading the error (v.17b), the content of the error (v.18a) and the effects of the error (v.18b).

Assurance by Heavenly Holiness (v.19)

The point of verse 8 is to counter the content of the error and verse 19 the effects of the error. Though error may upset the faith of some, it can never ultimately destroy the faith of those whom God knows, has chosen, called, saved and sealed and are evident now as those who abstain from sin. So our assurance stands on the firm foundation of God's work which produces holiness in us.

In the Pursuit of Growing in Holiness (v.20-22)

All through the Bible, those who believe and especially those who teach error live impure and ungodly lives. They may have an external show of works righteousness, but not the inward reality that is its root. Further, the Bible shows us that living impure lives makes us even more vulnerable to believing untrue ideas.

Understanding the Analogy (v.20)

We must make a distinction between the category of vessels and the condition of the vessels. One has to do with how the God has constituted us; the other with how we have corrupted ourselves. So there are some in God's house (or Kingdom Community) who are wood, clay or gold pots. Each of us have been made to serve God differently. But

some have become through error and sin corrupted vessels of dishonor.

Dealing with our Sin (v.21)

So our response is to prepare ourselves for every good work by cleansing ourselves from those corrupting, dishonorable things and become an honorable and useful vessel for God. The key is that we will be sanctified. And sanctified vessels are useful to the Master. Do you want to be a vessel of honor, sanctified, useful and ready for God's work? Cleanse yourself from all that pollutes, corrupts and dishonors. Cleanse your minds from evil thoughts, your affections from evil desires and your wills from evil choices. Have grace to be transformed.

Pressing Forward Together (v.22)

Diligent effort will be called for. That emerges from the two verbs in this sentence: flee and pursue. Once again we recognize that holiness involves a negative and its opposite replacement. It is put off and put on. It is stop this and do this instead. It is flee the lusts of youth (even if you aren't young) and pursue the characteristics of holiness.

And we flee lust and pursue holiness *together*. If I am to grow in grace and be changed in life to become an honorable, sanctified, useful ready vessel, I must be fleeing and pursuing with others who are going hard after God with pure hearts. So ask yourself: if I am running with a pack, what are we running from and where are we headed? Surround yourself in your pursuit of God and godliness with pure hearted lovers of God.

The Power of Ministering in Gentleness (v.23-26)

Time will probably prevent me from unpacking this as I would like. But here it is. Being strong in Jesus' grace manifests itself in a gracious, patient gentleness that is willing to wait for God to do His part in people's lives.

Dangers from His Adversaries (v.23)

Make no mistake; this is in an adversarial environment. Timothy faces false teachers who will wage war with words, overwhelm with vain and empty chatter, distract with foolish and ignorant speculations and engender quarrels. They will wrong Timothy and will be in open opposition to him. So we are talking about loud, abusive, overbearing, public opposition aimed at overwhelming a young, timid elder.

The danger from these adversaries comes when we allow error to cause us to respond in a wrong way. We must reject foolish and ignorant "what-ifs" because we know that it stirs up squabbling and bickering.

In this abusive and abrasive atmosphere, look at what his attitude and actions are to be. And by the way, this is good counsel *regardless whether this atmosphere surrounds your leadership at church, at home or at work.*

Humbleness in His Attitude

(v.24a)

Any one in service to the King must have this very important attitude. It is utterly essential to those who serve as elders/pastors. We must see ourselves as God's bond-servants, His slaves. This is not to deny our sonship. It is a *both-and* not an *either-or*.

Maybe the fact that our modern translations no longer use the word *slave* to translate this word is actually a loss to us. When I am facing overwhelming opposition that may pose suffering and call for courage, I must simply view myself as God's slave.

Characteristics of His Approach

(v.24b-25a)

Now look at what grace enabled strength looks like in God's men and women.

- Not quarrelsome – is not given to being easily stirred up to fight. He is not always looking for a fight. This is important. Courage is not brashness. Standing for truth must not be rooted in pride. Frankly, we all know people like this: they love a good debate and will engage you at the least provocation.
- Kind to all – how easy it is in the midst of suffering and opposition to become unkind. How easy it is when people we are responsible for disobey and rebel. Though this is aimed at elders, I also want to paint a target on parents and employers. Harsh, cutting and satirical slicing up others is loathsome. The only unkind words by Jesus recorded in Scripture are those spoken to hypocrites. Be kind to all.
- Able to teach – Careful, able instruction is what is called for in the midst of Satan snared, willful opposition. We must teach our flocks, our opponents, our spouses and our children.
- Patient when wronged – I have a simple question: are you? Elders when are you patient when someone misunderstands and opposes you? What about ministry leaders? Parents? What about you teens and kids? Does God's grace that enables you to see yourself as God's slave cause you to be patient?
- Gentle correction – the word here refers to child training and chastening. With gentleness, we correct and chasten.

Once again, do not relegate this merely to doctrinal controversy or moral confrontation by elders. This text ought to shape all our interaction with others. Frankly, some of you sitting under the sound of my

voice this morning need to hear and heed this with your spouses and children.

Expectations in His Actions

(v.25b-26)

How can we do this? Isn't it true that when we stand for truth and confront error and chasten wrong that what we are after often is self-vindication and we want others to change NOW! Sinfully, we demand from others what we ourselves often will not do.

Paul exhorts Timothy and through him, us, that we can be kind, able teachers, patient and gentle in our correction when we realize that it is God who must give them the power to change, repentance. Beloved, to all our counselors, you must have this truth screwed deeply in your heart. After all that you do with the Word, accurately handled and ably communicated, at the end of the day, true and lasting repentance leading to change *is what God and God alone does*.

And that repentance does two very important, distinct, yet connected things:

- It causes them to acknowledge the truth. Any change that is not truth oriented is not God empowered change. This is true whether we are dealing implicitly with error and heresy or with sinful conduct.
- It causes them to have an "awakening" in the soul (come to their senses) that frees from the devil's bondage. I think most of us have had this sort of thing happen in our own lives. We come to see – that is to believe by faith in the soul, some truth that illumines the trap our soul's enemy has laid for us.

What kind of people is Timothy confronting? What kind of opposition is he facing? He is facing the opposition of men and women who were ensnared by the devil and were doing the bidding of his will. This is where the power of the Word arising from purity in life and gentleness in method ministers so helpfully to others.

Conclusion

Be strong in grace:

To think deeply on the Word and understand God's ways;

To choose and endure suffering for the sake of the gospel;

To diligent, God approved, study of the Word that avoids error and warring with words.

To pursuing holiness alongside other pure hearted Christians;

To ministering in the midst of opposition with kindness, able teaching, patience and gentle correction.

Be Faithful

2 Timothy 3:1-17

Introduction

I want to remind us once again why this book was written. Its purpose is so clearly shown in the text before us. It is written...

to infuse courage in the midst of spiritual warfare,
to ignite passion in the midst of spiritual decay,
to inspire hope in the midst of spiritual decline,
to ingrain steadfastness in the midst of spiritual failure
and to inoculate souls in the midst of spiritual disease.

I pray that we will hear with a grace relying profit and a God glorifying purpose and suffering embracing perspective. These words can infuse courage, ignite passion, inspire hope, ingrain steadfastness and inoculate our souls today knowing that we as well will be brought safely into God's heavenly kingdom to whom be the glory forever and ever, Amen." (2 Timothy 4:18)

In one sense this text is plain and not hard to understand. In another sense, this text is startling and unsettling. It is my aim today to point the spotlight of this text at our comfortable, easy Christianity and illuminate its danger, corruption and failure. I aim to do this, not merely for the satisfaction of seeing what is wrong, but to feed your faith in God and to call forth from you faithfulness in your creed, character and conduct.

The Warning of Danger to the Church

(v.1-9)

The man of God ministering the Word with gentleness and able teaching and patient waiting on God to bring repentance does this in very difficult and dangerous circumstances.

Realities: The Conditions that Bring It

(v.1-5a)



Slide - Work through the overview before going into the details, which have their own slides.

Its Difficulties - Peril due to the time and the trouble

The New Testament sees the Last Days as beginning at the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. So what he is expecting to come in ever increasing ages or times has already begun to manifest itself in their own day.

Its Description

What is pictured here is the *overflow of sin from a self-loving heart*.



Slide - Set up with heart, tree then items.

LOVERS OF SELF – most commentators agree, beginning with Calvin, that this is the root and source of what follows. It is significant how the list begins with love of self and ends with love of pleasure replacing love of God. In this day, it is appalling how self-esteem and self-love are now commended and required. What ought to have been clearly denounced in the church, now is baptized in Scriptural texts and theological argument. Self love and self esteem not only displace love for God and others, but also become manure fertilized soil in which many evils grow. So the root of self-love produces the fruit and overflow of many evils.

LOVERS OF MONEY – The word covetous could be used here. It refers to materialism and an ever-increasing craving for things. It is the love for self gaining satisfaction from material things and measuring life and blessing by what I have now while hungering for more.

BOASTFUL – This is self-love talking about the object of its love. Boasting is pride taking credit for my achievements, real or imagined. It is love for self-seeking acknowledgement from others. Let me point out that self-love may express itself in self-pity as well. Boasting is what love for self does to be acknowledged by others. Self-pity is love for self nursing its hurt at not receiving the acknowledgement it thinks it deserves.

ARROGANT – This is self-love seeing its superiority to others. Self-love disdains the significance or the humility of others. It sees its own opinions and ideas as ultimate and rejects the wisdom and counsel of others. Arrogance and boasting are often found issuing from the same heart stream of self-loving pride.

REVILERS – This word could be translated blasphemers or slanderers. This is the tongue being guided by self-love. This is the mouth of self-love speaking against God (blasphemy) and against others (slander).

DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS – This is self-love rejecting the role and authority structures God has ordained. Disobedience to parents is self-love asserting its independence and freedom. It disregards God's authority as mediated by the family. This expression of self-love will eventually mature into disobedience and independence from all God-ordained authorities and the embracing God rejecting authorities.

UNGRATEFUL – This is self-love seeing itself as deserving of all good it receives. It is love for self becoming a sink hole for the good blessings God gives, even through others. Since gratitude is surface

wave caused by the inward power of grace in the soul, being ungrateful is evidence of an ungraced life.

UNHOLY – This is self-love expressing itself in indecency. The word *anosias* indicates the kind of indecency of incest or failure to bury the dead. So love for self can not only behave sinfully, but erupts in unrestrained excesses of self-satisfaction in gross and vile sins. This is self-love wallowing in its own dung (excrement).

UNLOVING - The word here is *astorgos* which refers to natural affection for parents, family and was also used to refer to a patriotic love for country. This is self-love refusing even to acknowledge the natural affection that God has placed in the world by common grace. This is self-love that sees a nursing child as a bother and an intrusion on its freedom and time.

IRRECONCILABLE – This is self-love asserting its perfection. It cannot see a need for change. It refuses to enter into the give-and-take necessary to make relationships work. Love for self will always call for the other person to make the changes and advances necessary for reconciliation.

MALICIOUS GOSSIPS – This is self-love delighting in and passing on what it hears in order to destroy another. This is the diabolical form of self-love that aims words at lives and uses them like high-powered rifles to assassinate the character of others. Gossip is the weapon in the holster of self-love.

WITHOUT SELF-CONTROL – This is self-love becoming incontinent, unable to control itself even for its own good. It careens out of control, eventually being enslaved to its own passions and lusts. This is self-love eating and eating until it is grossly fat but sees a Snow-white in the mirror.

BRUTAL – This is self-love defense mechanism. It is the savage self-protection that disregards the needs and sensitivities of others.

HATERS OF GOOD – This is self-love leaving only hatred for all that is good. Self-love's primary object is sinful and wicked. Therefore, it must point its hatred at the opposite, that which is good and lovely. Thus self-love will embrace the discordant and evil and turn away with loathing from the good, beautiful and lovely.

TREACHEROUS – This is self-love being disloyal. It has no standard that prevents it from turning brutally with malicious gossip and irreconcilable hatred even on the closest of relationships. Expect treachery and disloyalty from a self-loving heart.

RECKLESS – This word could have been translated rash or careless. This is self-love losing its perspective on the very real dangers to itself. Love for self mistakes rash and careless actions for courage and

daring. It will presume on the providence of God. Self-love sees bungee jumping as fun.

CONCEITED – This is the smoke and mirrors of self-love's imagined self-importance. It is love for self requiring all else and everyone else to be in its orbit. It is the way self-love's self-centeredness looks in the way it carries itself. It is the self-love that expects everyone to notice its entrance in a room.

LOVERS OF PLEASURE RATHER THAN LOVERS OF GOD – You could almost place this as the name of the tree itself. If self-love is the root and all these evils are the fruit, then pleasure-lovers rather than God-lovers is the tree and the trunk. It is love for self seeking satisfaction in pleasure instead of in God. As a result, it cannot love God and cannot love others. It is not that pleasure is loved more than God, but that pleasure is loved instead of God. It is not that we please ourselves, but rather we are too easily pleased. We are too easily satisfied with lesser things when just beyond our ken is the all-satisfying greatness and goodness of our God.

Its Diagnosis

All the people described in verses 2-4 will have *an outward form of godliness without its inward reality*. The idea here may mean they have the contours of their theology correct, but they have rejected its spiritual power. So they have correct orthodoxy without genuine Biblical truth inwardly. In the context, it seems more correct that these people will have the outward shape of religion and Christianity, but have denied the power that makes genuine godliness possible. Having done so, they can have the inward root of self-love and its fruit.



Slide – Outward good man, heart and wolf in sheep.

Response: The Command that Averts It

(v.5b)

So, how are we to respond to this?

VERB – Avoid. We must turn ourselves away from *OBJECT* – people like this. Identify them so as to not be influenced by them. The word is in the middle voice and is an imperative. This indicates that we ourselves have to take the necessary steps to distance ourselves from people who appear religious but are manifesting the fruits of self-love.

Recognition: The Characteristics that Identify It

(v.6-8)

THEY PREY ON THE SPIRITUALLY VULNERABLE. Among these religious people are those who take advantage of women, particularly those whose sin makes them susceptible to error. The language here

conveys men creeping in to capture these women, was the actual situation in Ephesus.

THEY LEARN BUT ARE NOT ABLE KNOW THE TRUTH. These people are involved in studying and gaining more Bible data. But their learning has not brought them to know the truth. Great learning does not guarantee a true knowledge. This is the great danger of seminaries: ever learning, but not coming to know the truth.

THEY OPPOSE TRUTH BY OPPOSING GOD'S MEN. The reference here is to the two magicians who opposed Moses at Pharaoh's court. John Gill traces the writers of antiquity that Paul could have learned these men's names from. The point here is not to major on who they were, but on what they did. The false teachers and self-loving religious people of Ephesus were opposing the men of God and the truth of God just like the magicians who opposed Moses. Exodus 7 and 8 relate how Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses. They duplicated the authenticating miracles of Moses. So at Ephesus (and in Christianity today) there are people who are opposing truth by opposing God's men by undercutting the authority of the Word of God. Many are even now counterfeiting the sign miracles in order to attest to their own position.

THEY HAVE DEPRAVED MINDS. God has given them over so that their thinking is irreversibly dominated by evil (Romans 1:28-32). Thus their self-loving hearts can sin with little restraint except that imposed by the need to appear religious.

THEY ARE REJECTED AS COUNTERFEIT. Their faith is tested for genuineness and they have failed. They are exposed as counterfeit Christians.

Results: The Consequences that Follow It

(v.9)

God intervenes in *THE RESTRAINT OF THEIR FORWARD MOVEMENT*. He prevents their strategies from succeeding over the long term. Their progress may appear to be present victories. But in the end, the eschatological realities will display the futility of opposing God.

God also intervenes in *THE EXPOSURE OF THEIR FOLLY*. Jannes and Jambres were unable to bring lice out of dust. They could not create life. So their failure became obvious. So to these false Christians. Even in their display of power and signs, there is no ability to bring life out of death, eternal life out of spiritual darkness.

So this is the situation Timothy found himself in at Ephesus. And it is often the situation Christians find themselves in now. It is in this environment that Paul encourages and exhorts us to faithfulness.

The Call for Faithfulness in the Church

(v.10-15)

If this is our situation, how then ought we to respond?

Example: Pattern to Follow

(v.10-11)

In Paul and all around us in history and life, God has given us men and women whose lives have modeled for us courage, strength and faithfulness in hardship and suffering in the midst of counterfeit Christians.

We are to follow the model *IN ITS SHAPING* – Paul lived a life and ministry by design and purpose. He left a superb example of a life very different from the self-loving counterfeits spoken of earlier. In all these areas he was fully authentic. His teaching was true, backed up by a life of passionate godliness and purity. He had a purpose statement that aimed his life at the glory of God. His faith in the midst of amazing difficulty brought him grace for patient endurance.

We are to follow the model *IN ITS SUFFERING* – Paul had a long history of persecution and pain. Some of it Timothy had shared in. Some of the kind of persecution and pain he suffered in these cities he lists may be what awaits Timothy at Ephesus. And these same sufferings may await us if we surrender to the pattern of courage and faithfulness Paul left us.

We are to follow the model *IN ITS STEADFASTNESS* – Here is the outcome of faith's perseverance. Here is an example of enduring while being delivered. Out of all them God delivered. Out of the last of them God delivered through death.

Expectation: Persecutions to Share

(v.12)

The persecution we expect is *ROOTED IN DESIRING GODLINESS*. A Christ centered hunger for holiness will cause our lives to be different. Sometimes that may bring acceptance and even admiration. But often it calls forth opposition. So that hungering for holiness *RESULTS IN SUFFERING PERSECUTION*. We are all assured of sharing in opposition. It is our common lot.

Experience: Process to Observe

(v.13)

Notice *ITS DOWNWARD SPIRAL*. As the times and ages roll along, even the church comes under an increasing domination by sin, by evil men and imposters. Yes, God in His mercy has given us seasons of grace. But I am convinced that most of us are seeing a kind of apostasy today unparalleled since the cross. Look further at *ITS DECEPTIVE CYCLE*. The downward spiral of evil men becoming worse is a self-feeding cycle of deception. They are being deceived

and then in turn deceive others, only in their turn to be deceived further.

Exhortation: Precept to Obey

(v.14-15)

The call for faithfulness is a call to continue what he has already done.

It is the *REQUIREMENT IN THE PRESENT SITUATION* - Continue in what you have learned and been convinced of. Sometimes what is needed are new efforts the begin faithfulness. But mostly what is need is a return and a continuing that is it self faithfulness to the truth.

It argues with *REASONS FROM THE PERSONAL HISTORY* - Confidence in your teachers. Timothy has a confidence in what he has learned because he knows the character and qualities of those who taught him.

It is *ROOTED IN THE SCRIPTURE'S POWER* - Commitment to the Word's ability to impart wisdom, even saving wisdom. How important it is that we believe and stand strong and true to the Word.

RESULTING IN A CHRIST-CENTERED SALVATION - Received through faith in Jesus Christ. The salvation you receive comes through faith. Not just faith as faith in faith, a amorphous religious feeling. Rather a genuine, authentic trust in Jesus that rests in Him alone for all your good and for all His glory.

The Resource Sufficient for the Church

(v.16-17)

We as a church stand for the sufficiency of the Scripture. But enough of you are new here and I want to drive this truth powerfully home to your hearts. In dangerous and difficult days when we are surrounded by counterfeit Christians, false teachers and desperately need to stand, our sufficient resource is the Scripture. It is all we need for life and godliness.

Principle: The Source of God's Word

The Scriptures are sufficient by virtue of the important *Doctrine of Inspiration*. That doctrine rests in two words. First, *ALL SCRIPTURE*. This is including the Old and New Testaments. What we have here is all the Word of God and all that God intends us to have. Second, it is *GOD BREATHED*. It is given by the will of God as the very word of God. So it is without error, cannot fail and absolutely authoritative. In the Word and Spirit together is God's voice.

Profit: The Suitability of God's Word

The Word of God is useful for...

TEACHING - The Scriptures are useful and profitable for doctrine and teaching. It tells us what we must know and believe.

REPROOF - The Scriptures are useful and profitable for reproof and confrontation. It shows us when we are wrong. It is the primary tool of our admonition and counsel.

CORRECTION - The Scriptures are useful and profitable for correcting what is wrong. It tells us how to recover from our sin and failures. It shows us how to rebuild and renew our lives.

INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS - The Scriptures are useful and profitable for “child training in righteous living”. It is our pedagogue. It stands both at the end of the cycle and at the head of moving forward. As is often heard in NANC circles, the Scriptures are useful *to tell us what is right; show us when we are not right; tell us how to get right and finally what we must do to stay right.* (R. Patton)

Purpose: The Sufficiency of God's Word

To Complete the Man of God - To make him adequate, finished.

To Equip the Man of God - To make him able. We understand what it means to be equipped. It means to have all the tools, resources and skills necessary for what we are being set to do. So the Word of God finishes and fully equips the man of God *for every good work.*

Conclusion

Give heed to the danger all around us

- Arising from the root of self-love
- Arising from the false teachers

Have grace to be faithful in our world

- Look to godly patterns in the Bible and in history
- Endure the hardship and expect the suffering that comes with faithfulness
- Be committed to what you have learned knowing from whom you have learned it

Trust the all-sufficient Scriptures

- Use them in every facet of life and ministry
- Expect to be thoroughly equipped by them

Be On Guard

2 Timothy 4:1-22

Introduction

Here we have them. Here are those last words of a great leader whose final counsel and inspired instruction ring as a mighty call to endure hardship, embrace suffering, expound the Word and exalt Christ in life or death. They are also the tender words lightly salted with tears that will constantly feed and nourish the soul of a loving son and soldier in the faith, sustaining and strengthening him for ministry.

This text rings with a powerful, clarion charge to preach the word. This text sighs with the sad, lonely appeal to come soon. And it bristles with help and hope. In all the change of ministry, my son, be on guard.

Its Glorious Exhortation

(v.1-5)

Here are words to make saints and elders tremble. Before the face of God, herald the Word God's way even when they won't listen from a life that authenticates your message.

Its Solemn Charge

(v.1-2)

In God's presence and by His parousia...preach!

The motivating power rests in the awesome depths of the solemn majesty of the God we are serving. Our lives and ministry are open before His face and in His presence. It is not just that He sees and knows, but that an accounting will be given to this one who judges all. And what we do now is anticipating His appearing and kingdom that will be made full and complete. In the presence and in the sight and for the present pleasure and future glory of this great King: *preach the Word*.

When are we to do this? At all seasons. We must be ready when it is a seasonable time for the Word to be heard and when it is not. There will be seasons of mercy when people will listen. Then there will be seasons of hardness when people will not. And there will be seasons in our own lives when we are full with God's power and times when we are not.

How are we to do this? Our preaching of the Word is to be characterized by all these words.

Reprove - Our preaching is to expose and convict, with authority (Titus 2:15), even severely (Titus :13) if necessary as an expression of God's love and discipline (Revelation 3:19).

Rebuke – Our preaching is to mete out an appropriate and just correction. It must be designed to gain the attention of the sinning ones and cause them to halt from their sin.

Exhort – Our preaching is to motivate and to provide steps of action so that people will want to move forward and will know how.

All of this is to be tempered with *great patience* and saturated with *instruction*. If we are hurried and impatient in the strong words of our preaching, it will simply become merely negative and critical and corrosive. Great patience and able instruction make even the bad tasting medicine of correction tolerable. We must powerfully communicate the Word with patient application arising from clear instruction.

Its Dangerous Cause

(v.3-4)

Here is the sad decline that will be the context of ministry... As the times and epochs roll, more and more will people not endure sound doctrine. They will not have it.

The *result* is that doctrine is rejected and de-emphasized. People cannot stand to hear doctrine. Why?

The *root* of the matter is in what they want. They want the kind of preaching and teaching that is pleasing and palatable. It must tickle the ears. It must never thunder. It must never challenge. It must be like and expensive Scotch that goes down smooth.

The fruit manifests itself in three ways:

- ❶ They accumulate teachers who will follow their desires. They will turn away from the hard meat of doctrine to the sweet chocolates offered them.
- ❷ They turn away from truth. When one rejects doctrine, one is in the process of turning away from truth. It is inevitable. It is a terrible thing when people think they can reject doctrine and still have truth.
- ❸ They turn to myths. When one turns from truth in rejecting doctrine, you have to turn to something instead. Paul calls these myths. They are the deceptions that people live by. They are how people explain life. If they are not truth, then they are myths. And there are many myths to which even religious people turn. In the face of the myths of evolution, self-esteem, pragmatism, individualism what we must do is *PREACH THE WORD*.

Its Needed Contrast

(v.5)

But you be different... What great words these are and so much needed today, not just by modern day Timothy's, but by all of God's serving saints.

Keep your head – realize that we need a serious and reflective approach to life and ministry. More and more we are besieged by frivolity and levity. What we need are joyfully serious saints. And we need a level headedness for the days ahead.

Endure hardship – again we must hear this call to us. Our lives and our ministries are so easy. Where is the enduring hardship that will come to pray with us at 8:20 – 8:40? Where is the enduring hardship that will come every week to evening worship and to SALT? Where is the enduring hardship that will overcome self to give the gospel, serve widows and help others at all hours? Endure hardship? Get up from your TV's and your stereos and your leisures and sacrifice. What does taking up a cross mean to this generation?

Do the work of an evangelist – Timothy cannot be an evangelist for that is not his gift or calling. But in all of ministry he can do the work an evangelist does, that is, he can preach the gospel in his preaching. And so can we and so will I and so will each elder here. We will at the Chapel do the work of an evangelist.

Finish the job – do everything that your ministry requires. This means Sunday School teachers, study your lessons. This means ministry directors, plan pray, prepare and perform your ministries. This means deacons, serve with good and glad hearts. This means every one (and I mean all of you) finish the work of your ministry. This means do it every week until Jesus comes, whether He comes in your death or at His Parousia.



The essence of Paul's exhortation could be summed up in this short phrase: *DO WELL*. Do well because Paul intends to *DIE WELL*.

Its Inspiring Example

(v.6-8)

How many failing and faltering hearts have gained hope and received grace to finish from these words. What a great aim this is.

In his Facing Death

(v.6)

Facing death was simply the departure of a fully sacrificed life... His life was already being poured out. At some point, this great sacrifice will end in a departure. Interestingly, not as soon as he thought.

In his Finished Course**(v.7)**

What a mighty confidence to have at the end of one's life...

It is a life of the good fight well fought, the heavenward race well run,
the standard of faith well kept.

In his Future Reward**(v.8)**

There is a crown of righteousness to all whose future hope shapes
their present living...

Do we love His appearing? We will if we are devoted to the one who
is coming and have done the duty He requires of us.

Illustration: Pastor friend who lived on a farm growing up. He was
given his chores to do. Whether he loved his father's appearing at the
end of the day depended on and was driven by whether he had done
well.

Its Difficult Experience**(v.9-22)**

These are some of the saddest words Paul wrote. Alone, abandoned
and needy... sometimes this is what ministry is like.

The Focus of His Concerns**(v.9-15)**

I am alone... Some have left because of the **work**. Others have left
because of the **world**. Will we for the love of God go for the work?
Or will we for the love of this world, leave the work? So Timothy,
you come quickly and bring John Mark. What a great heart this man
has. Someday I want to preach a message on John Mark.

I have needs... Bring my cloak, it is cold in this prison. Bring my
books – all is bearable if I have my parchments. And lovers of books
take heart at these words.

You are in danger... Timothy is to be on guard against a public,
professional and powerful opponent in the city. He harmed much the
work that Paul did. He will vigorously oppose the work of the gospel.
But God will settle the account in the end.

The Shape of His Confidence**(v.16-18)**

How terrible his situation and God's heat... The Roman court had two
hearings – the first to establish the charges, the second to try the
charges. When he appeared at the court, no one was there! Think.
How would you feel? And would you have grace to ask God not to
hold it to people's account?

He responds with forgiveness and purpose, experiencing the Presence
and provision of God... No one stood with me, except God. And God
stood with me so that I might finish the job of proclaiming the gospel.

In other words, it was not his personal safety that worried him, but his opportunity for ministry. So he was rescued...

His heart hopes in God and God's delivering care... Do you sense that Paul is leaning into the tape at the finish of his race? Do you sense that he is standing on tiptoe in ministry seeing the brightness just over the horizon? Don't you sense that he hears the herald trumpets of God's coming Kingdom? This is the hope that holds him to the task to finish well.

The Greetings to His Comrades

(v.19-22)

Note the intimacy and hopefulness of his greetings...

Conclusion

What are the dangers to our piety when facing death? Note how they emerge from verses 9-22.

- In Loneliness (v.9-12) – I will value relationships...
- In Discontent (v.13) – I will be satisfied with the essentials...
- In Bitterness (v.14-15) – I will warn others for their good...
- In Isolation (v.16-18) – I will sense the presence of God...
- In Self-centeredness (v.19-22) – I will stay focused on people...

Beloved, preach the Word. Finish the race. Do well. Die well. Love people. For God has rescued us from our sins and will rescue us from every evil deed and will bring us safely to His heavenly kingdom, to Him be the glory forever and ever, Amen.

