

2 Timothy 2:19-26

"Be Prepared"

Don't deviate from the truth. That's been the basic emphasis behind Paul's 2ND letter to Timothy; that we are a living link between generations taking what *we've been* taught & teaching it to others. Being diligent to present ourselves approved to God, a workmen who does not need to be ashamed, because we rightly divide the word of truth...

You & me, we are to put forth every effort to lead lives that are befitting of a child of a holy God. Everything we do in life is all & only for an audience of One. We are to be holy, for the Lord our God is holy; & if God be in you by the power of His Holy Spirit than that will yield certain results. The nature of God, nuances of godliness will surface in your life. You see, what fellowship has righteousness w/lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And how can there be harmony between Christ & that which is evil? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? Yet the bible declares that you are the temple of the living God. *"As God has said: 'I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters,' Says the Lord Almighty."*¹ Paul goes on to say, *"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*²

Or as we find it in Vs 15 of 2nd Timothy Ch 2, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God..." It's not man's approval you seek, it's God's approval. Don't deviate from His word, rightly divide it, stay focused *on* it, administer it in truth.

As we pointed out last week by the very fact that Paul exhorts us to "rightly" divide it, that implies that there is a way to "wrongly" divide it... 2 of such men he mentions by name; "Hymenaeus & Philetus". *The message they're declaring is a message of death & division, saying the resurrection had already past & they were overthrowing the faith of some. Confusing them, discouraging them, disillusioning them concerning their hope (that confident expectation they had) in Christ... Look at Vs 19.*

Vs 19

The idea here is for Timothy (for you & me) to be *encouraged*, rather than *discouraged*. Don't be discouraged by those who reject the truth.

¹ The New King James Version. (1982). [2 Co 6:16-18]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² The New King James Version. (1982). [2 Co 7:1]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Don't be discouraged by those who go after (the words were [Vs 16]) "vain & profane babblings". God has a plan, He has a purpose, He has a strategy (if you will) & regardless of how many people fall away, it will not fail.

"Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands," people may place the message of the gospel under attack, but word of God makes it clear in no uncertain terms that the kingdom of God cannot be shaken. Regardless of how strong the attack may seem, the kingdom of God will stand; the foundation is solid, J.C. Himself being the Chief Cornerstone.

Paul says here that the foundation is safe, it's secure, having this seal (the seal being the mark of ownership & security); this seal has an inscription on it that speaks of security & integrity/purity; there is a Godward aspect to this seal & a "man-ward" aspect to this seal...

Perhaps you recall the story, it's found in the 16th Ch of the book of Numbers; division, distraction, & disillusionment arose in the camp of Israel because Korah, along w/Dathan & Abiram rose up against Moses & brought 250 leaders w/them saying, "You take too much upon yourself, the whole camp is holy... why then do you & Aaron exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" Translation? "Hey big shot, who do you think you are calling the shots, what makes you any better than us, why are we doing what you wanna do as opposed to what we want to do?" They were saying, "We're people of God just like you, therefore we're qualified to lead *just like you*." They were seeking to lure the people away from those whom God had called to lead them, espousing falsehood/deceit.

Moses said, "Tomorrow morning the Lord will show you who is His." Or as Paul puts it here, "The Lord knows those who are His." We can't always tell from the outside looking in, but God searches the heart, He knows those whom He's called & those whom He has not, He knows who is truly following Him & those who are going through the motions. He knows who has a heart of humility & who is simply seeking to in some way place themselves in a position of prominence...

The next morning Korah & his crew show up & God spoke to Moses & said, "Tell these people to get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, & Abiram." Moses spoke to the congregation & said, "Get away from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs lest you be consumed in all their sins."

Long story short, the people scattered & the earth opened up & took those men alive down into the pit & fire went forth from the Lord & consumed the 250 men who teamed up w/Korah & his crew.

Listen to me, get away from the tents, from the talks of those who cause division, discord, or disillusionment in the things of God, it doesn't go well for them & you don't want to be consumed in their sins... That's what Paul is pointing out here as it pertaining to Hymenaeus & Philetus, they're stirring the pot, pulling people away, creating division & distraction, destroying people's faith; but God is in control.

The solid foundation of God stands having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His" people can claim whatever they want. At the end of the day they might deceive me, but they're not fooling God. He knows... God knows those whom He has called. That's the security, that's the Godward side, that's what God sees.

As for the side that we see? As for the integrity/purity that's man's responsibility? "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." "Depart now, from the tents of the wicked." "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean..." In the book of Colossians we read it like this, *"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."*³ And again, *"But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds..."*⁴ In the 4th Vs of the 1st Ch of the book of Eph we're told that we've been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be *holy & w/out blame* before Him in love.

It goes back to being diligent to present yourself approved to God, being holy for He is holy. Let everyone who names the name of Christ, who calls themselves "Christian", depart from iniquity.

You see, God sees your heart, I don't. How than am I to know if you're genuine, if you really love God, if you really belong to God? I can't see your heart, but I can see your life... Jesus said that all would know that we're His disciples, if we have love for one another... Here the word of God declares that all who name the name of Christ are to depart from iniquity (from sin). So if I'm to narrow it down & place it in a nutshell (though there may be other things) there are 2 primary things I'm looking for in the person who calls themselves a believer to aid me in discerning their genuine disposition. #1 Love for God's people, #2 Obedience to God's Word.

³ The New King James Version. (1982). (Col 3:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ The New King James Version. (1982). (Col 3:8-9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

You see, the 2 elements of this inscription go hand in hand. God knows those who are His & that will become evident by the way they lead their lives...

Vs 20-21

So the foundation is solid, no worries there. As for the house itself (aka, the church); well there are all kinds of vessels in it; some of gold & silver, others wood or clay, some for honor, some for dishonor. You're preparing this week for Thanksgiving; you'll get out your nice glasses, your best dishes, they're vessels of honor aiding in satisfying the hunger & thirst of the human condition. But then you'll also have a garbage can, maybe a disposal in your kitchen sink, dust pans, they full of trash & waste, there's nothing good that goes *into* them or that comes out *of* them.

That's the way that Paul says the church is. It's like a great house. (It certainly is, it's the house of our Great God, it was purchased & built at a great price, the price of the shed blood of the sinless Son of God, J.C.)

Yet in this house (the church at large) there are all kinds of vessels; some for honor, some for dishonor. "Wait a minute, are you saying that there will be containers of 'garbage' in the church?" That's exactly what I'm saying, because that's what Paul is saying & that's what Jesus said! In more than one parable Jesus described the kingdom of heaven as a place (that on the earth) would encounter problems; in the parable of the sower He said that a sower went out to sow. As he sowed some seed fell by the wayside & the birds of the air came & devoured them. When He explained the parable He told us that the birds represented the wicked one who comes and snatches away the word of God that's being sown in the human heart.

Listen, your enemy never sleeps, he's working overtime to destroy your life. He has his emissaries alive & well & at work in the church. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven was like leaven, which a woman took & hid in 3 measures of meal till it was all leavened. In scripture leaven is always used as a type of sin, because it spreads through putrefying & it just takes a little to infect the whole lump.

In the "church" there will be those who are genuine, those who are counterfeit, the wheat & the tares, the sheep & the wolves in sheep's clothing. Vessels for honor & vessels for dishonor, Pauls & Timothys; & Hymenaeus' & Philetus'; those who will be refined through the fire, & others destroyed by the fire; who won't stand under God's judgment.

Vs 21

Notice again the emphasis upon human responsibility. You've got to "cleanse yourself" from the latter. Steering clear of those things that will corrupt & contaminate you, false doctrines, divisive people & so on.

This is not salvation, that's a positional cleansing that only God can accomplish. This is separation/sanctification, practical cleansing that God will not enforce upon us but will work through the desire in us to honor Him & be found pleasing to Him. This aspect involves your will, you have to take the responsibility, God won't force you to quit sinning... However if you name the name of the Lord, you will be obedient His word, it will be in your heart to depart from iniquity.

In so doing what happens? You become a vessel of honor, sanctified & useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. There is a very real degree in which you determine how useable your life will be to God.

It's not that anyone is more spiritual than anyone else, or in some way better than another; yet it's only appropriate to acknowledge that some people are in a place whereby they can be used of God more than others simply because they have "cleansed themselves". They've made themselves usable. Think of it like this, do you want to feed your guests from an old dirty plate that's full of contaminants or a clean plate? Do you want to drink from a cup filled w/mold & residue of unknown origins or a clean cup? Than let's not fault God for wanting to use clean vessels as well.

If you're leading a life that entertains compromise, your conduct is unclean, than you're limiting the degree to which God can use your life. We want to be "prepared" for every good work. That's what it's all about, being used by God to make an eternal difference in people's lives, be it in the church, at school, in the workplace, at home... we want to be vessels of honor prepared for every good work.

So beyond keeping away from false teachers we aim to lead a life free from compromise; so that should God desire to use our lives we're ready & willing at any time.

Vs 22-23

I don't know if you've picked up on this or not but over & over & over again Paul tells us to avoid disputing & debating. Simply stay focused on the Word of God. "Flee also youthful lusts", now when we hear the word "lusts" our minds generally lean toward sensual kinds of sin (& certainly that's included).

However the word "lusts" is much broader than that. It's really any sin of the flesh.

It could point to the love of money, the desire for fame or for power, making a name for himself in this world. Paul says, “Flee from these things.” We don’t seek to reason w/sin. That would be like trying to reason w/a tornado, it’s not something we want to see how close we can get to it, it’s something we want to get as far away as we can from it!

What would you think of the guy who tried to see how deep he could stab himself w/out inflicting a mortal wound? Or the guy who sought to see how much poison he could ingest w/out dying? Yet how many people seek to see how much sin they can get away w/& still be saved? It’s a fools game. Flee! Don’t try to endure it, don’t entertain it, flee from it.

This is all part of “cleansing oneself”, not only are we to *flee* youthful lusts, we’re to pursue *after* righteousness (right living), faith (trust in the Lord), love (toward God & toward man) & peace. We’re not to be dividing one another, but uniting one another; the blessing isn’t found in being a *peace-breaker*, but in being a *peacemaker*.

& Notice that Paul makes a difference between separation & isolation. Separation is good, we’re to be set apart to God. Isolation is bad, we’re to be in fellowship w/those who call upon the Lord w/a pure heart. The way to keep a coal burning bright is to keep it in the mix w/other coals that are on fire, you isolate that coal & it begins to dim down & burn out. Stay in fellowship w/those who love God like you do, those who will challenge you to do more & rise higher in your commitment to Christ... But don’t debate people, don’t dispute w/people, that’s not what God has called us to do, notice.

Vs 24-26

Here’s the deal. We don’t wrestle flesh & blood, people are not our problem, we have a spiritual enemy who is at the root of it all. False teaching, errant positions will always be divisive, but we’re not going to fight w/people about it... Rather we’re to be gentle *toward* them, an example of Christ *to* them, patient *with* them, speaking the truth in love & in humility.

You see the hope isn’t to win arguments, it’s to win souls. We want to see God grant them repentance that they might know (that is, have a full knowledge of) the truth... We want to see them “come to their senses”. The idea there is coming to sobriety out of a drunken stupor, it’s like the enemy has intoxicated them, they’re not thinking clearly, correctly.

I’ve never watched “Duck Dynasty” but I know a lot of people are big fans. But I saw on the internet where they made a documentary or something called “I am 2nd”.

Phil Robertson was speaking & he said, "It's only when you meet Jesus -- & you look back at where you were, that you end up saying things like, 'what - was I thinking'". Here Paul says, "That's exactly the problem, you weren't thinking, you weren't thinking soberly, or clearly, & it's *the gospel* that will sober a man/woman up to reality, to eternity, to sin, salvation & God's love for me," Satan makes people drunk on his lies, it's our desire to sober them up through the Word of God, to rescue them from his snare.

Repentance takes place when people come into the knowledge of the truth. Jesus said, "*And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"⁵ He said, "*Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*"⁶ People are set free from captivity through J.C.

"To do his will". Now there's debate here are they doing the devil's will or are they set free to do God's will? Yes. If you're not for Jesus you're against Him... You're doing the devil's will whether you like it or not (if you're not in Christ). Having said that, Jesus wants to set you free to do God's will & that seems to be the context here. "If perhaps God will grant them repentance, so that they may come to the knowledge of the truth, & that they may come to their senses & escape the snare of the devil (having been taken captive by him) to do His (that is God's) will."

The desire here is that God would grant them repentance so that they might do *His will* rather than being bound by the enemy.

God wants to use you in an instrumental way to set people free, cleanse yourself from dishonorable, corruptible... lets just say it "sinful" things, & you will be a vessel for honor, sanctified & useful for the Master, prepared for every good work...

Prayer Points:

God help us to lead lives set apart to You. Holy & w/out fault by Your Spirit, through Your grace. We don't want to be disqualified, dishonorable, we want to be prepared so that You might use our lives at any given time, for the glory of Your name. God we also realize that it's not only about fleeing the bad, its also about following after the good. Help our hearts to hunger for righteousness, may we purse faith, love & peace w/those who call upon You w/a pure heart...

The bible declares that whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. But we have to understand that to turn *toward* God, there is a turning away *from* our sin. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Perhaps today you're being convicted that it's time to quit fighting against God & surrender whole heartedly *to* God. If you're to name the name of the Lord, you must depart from iniquity. Christ shed His blood & died upon the cross for all your sin, you can be set free right here & right now, God has a plan for your life & I want to encourage you to lay hold of that for which God wants to lay hold of you. He will forgive you of all your sin, come to Jesus.

⁵ The New King James Version. (1982). [Jn 8:32]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ The New King James Version. (1982). [Jn 8:36]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.