

“A Solemn Warning”
2 Timothy 4:10
(Preached at Trinity, December 11, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we've seen, Paul knows fully well that his life is coming to a close. He is in a Roman prison and he doesn't expect to be released. He has written this letter to encourage and strengthen Timothy who he has mentored since Timothy came to faith in Christ. While Paul's life was coming to a close, Timothy still had much to do and much to endure. Paul encouraged and admonished him.
1 Timothy 4:16 NAU - "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."
1 Timothy 6:12 NAU - "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."
2 Timothy 2:1 NAU - "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."
2 Timothy 2:3 NAU - "Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."
2. As Paul looked back over his own life he had no regrets, no remorse. He states with confidence:
 - A. That he had fought the good fight – he had been faithful in the Christian warfare.
 - B. That he had faithfully completed the course of life into which God had placed him. He saw his life as a divine calling and he did all that he could to fulfill that call.
 - C. That he had been careful to keep the principles of the faith – not only in doctrine but also in practice.
 - D. He also stated with confidence that there awaited for him a crown of righteousness. But not for him alone. There will be a crown for all who are faithfully laboring, watching for the return of the Master.
3. In these closing verses Paul speaks openly with his trusted friend. He expresses his immediate needs – “Bring me my coat and the books, especially the parchments.” He shares some comments regarding individuals who had impacted his Roman ministry. He expresses praise to God for His continued rich provision. For 30 years God had sustained Paul through every situation. He was a living testimony to his statement:
Philippians 4:11-13 NAU - "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

4. He makes mention by name of several individuals. We'll look at some of them next week. Paul's situation had been difficult. Not all of his companions had been faithful in their support of Paul.
Verse 16 – "At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me"
 There were few who stood with Paul in his hour of need.
5. This is particularly sad in light of Paul's words in **Verse 8** – that there was a crown promised for the faithful.
 In **Verse 10** Paul mentions one who will not share in this reward. His love for this world overshadowed his love for the appearing of our Lord.
 His name stands forever as an example of unfaithfulness, and the reason Paul gives is particularly convicting.
Verse 10 – "For Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me"
6. Demas had served beside Paul for several years. He was mentioned some five years earlier in the book of Colossians as one of Paul's close associates.
Colossians 4:12-14 NAU - "Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³ For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas."
7. He was mentioned about the same time in the book of Philemon as one of Paul's fellow laborers:
Philemon 1:23-24 NAU - "Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, ²⁴ as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers."
8. Apparently Demas had been a faithful laborer in the ministry. For five years he had faithfully endured many of the hardships Paul had endured. We do not know all of the circumstances, but we know he did not finish the course. He was drawn aside by his love for this world.
9. In all indication, those who served beside him assumed he was a Christian, although I'm sure Paul probably had some concerns.
 Demas didn't fall away all at once. It would have been a gradual departure.
- A. Perhaps he became bored with the things of God as the world continued to draw his heart.
- B. Or perhaps he had never counted the cost. He was fine when he was traveling with Paul. There is a sense of excitement for a young man to strike out on a new adventure. But in time it began to cost him more and more. In Rome there was even the treat of imprisonment and death. This was more than he had bargained for. William Barclay described it well: "It may be that Demas was swept into the Church in a moment of emotion without ever thinking things out; and then when the unpopularity, persecution, the necessity of sacrifice, loneliness, imprisonment came, Demas quit because Demas had never bargained for anything like that. When a man undertakes to follow Christ, the first essential is that he should know what he is doing."¹

¹ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960) Page 245.

10. And most troubling, Demas most likely thought he was on his way to heaven. John Bunyan in his well-beloved, “*Pilgrim’s Progress*” wrote of one whom he called *Ignorance*. Ignorance was convinced he was a Christian and that heaven was his. He maintained his vain presumption all the way to the end. “I turned my head to look back, and saw *Ignorance* coming up to the Riverside; but he soon got over, and without half the difficulty the other two men met with (referring to Christian and Hopeful). For it happened that there was in that place one *Vain-Hope*, a ferry-man, that with his boat helped him over When he was come up to the Gate, he looked up to the writing that was above, and then began to knock, supposing that Entrance should have been quickly administered to him: but he was asked by the men that looked over to top of the Gate, Whence come you? And what would you have? He answered, I have eat and drank in the presence of the King, and he has taught in our streets. Then they asked him for his Certificate, that they might go in and shew it to the King; so he fumbled in his bosom for one, and found none. They said they, Have you none? But the man answered never a word. So they told the King, but He would not come down to see him, but commanded the shining ones that conducted *Christian and Hopeful* to the city to go out and take Ignorance and bind him hand and foot, and have him away. Then they took him up, and carried him through the air to the door that I saw in the side of the Hill, and put him in there. Then I saw that there was a way to Hell, even from the Gates of Heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction.”²
11. Demas was like Ignorance, who boldly marched up to heaven’s gates expecting admission only to find himself excluded.
12. This is one of the most troublesome verses in the entire letter. One of the most troubling aspects is Demas is called out by name. The Holy Spirit wants us to pay attention to Demas. To heed the warning. There are several things we need to glean from this brief passage. May the Holy Spirit press these things upon our hearts this morning.
- I. Although he appeared to be a true believer and fellow laborer for five years, he never knew Christ.
- A. Many today would cry out immediately – wait a minute! Didn’t he make a decision for Christ! He was baptized! He faithfully ministered with Paul for 5 years!
1. During those five years Demas may have appeared to be a faithful Christian. Paul, however, gives some very damaging evidence to the contrary.
 2. He describes Demas in a very troublesome way:

“having loved this present world”

 - a. This is troublesome for some because Paul didn’t say, “Demas has deserted Christ.” He said, “Demas has deserted me.” Calvin presumed by this that Demas had not abandoned Christ but had left his commitment to Paul. On the other hand, there seems to be a clear implication here. By abandoning his commitment to Paul and to the Gospel work, he was demonstrating that he had abandoned his commitment to Christ.

² Bunyan, John, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), pages 188-189.

- b. It's the reason that is so revealing and disturbing – He abandoned Paul because he fell in love. It was because of his love of the world that he turned his back on Paul. He was a world lover.
James 4:4 NAU - "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."
1 John 2:15 NAU - "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."
- c. And the word Paul uses is $\alpha\iota\omega\nu$ – It refers to this age and all that pertains to it.
Romans 12:2 NAU - "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."
- B. Jesus warned that it isn't enough just to labor for a season – the man that begins to labor in the Kingdom but doesn't finish the work demonstrates that he never knew the Master.
Matthew 24:12-13 NAU - "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. ¹³ "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved."
Mark 13:13 NAU - "You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved."
Luke 9:62 NAU - "But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."
1. "The word for "looking back" literally reads, "looking to what lies behind." Same word as Phil. 3:13
Philippians 3:13-14 NAU - "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."
 2. Jesus warned: in **Luke 17:32** - "Remember Lot's wife."
 What did He mean by that? Of course our eyes are turned back to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
Genesis 19:24-26 NAU - "Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven, ²⁵ and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ²⁶ But his wife, from behind him, looked *back*, and she became a pillar of salt."
 The idea is she longed for what she was leaving behind. She lamented the treasures that had seized her heart. While the brimstone was raining down upon Sodom in judgment her eyes were upon her true love.
 3. It isn't enough to profess Christ for a season. It is the one continues to the end who will be saved.
 Demas followed for a season. He even served as a missionary for a season. But then he turned back.

II. How do we know if we have turned back or in the danger of turning back?

- A. It is possible in our religious society for a person to become a Demas without even knowing it.
1. You can still be in church – faithful in attendance – still present within the household of God but outside the body of Christ.
(Demas might have returned to his home church at Thessalonica and pretended that all was well)
 2. In our godless generation there are multitudes of church members who have no understanding of Biblical Christianity. There is no zeal, no passion for Kingdom work, no thirst for holiness – it’s just religion.
 3. Many began with great zeal but did not have the power to continue. Something will always come along that is more important than our Lord’s Kingdom.
We’ve all sadly witnessed individuals who fit this description.
 4. They did not lose their salvation – they never possessed it.
1 John 2:19 NAU - "They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us."
 6. The question I place before you this morning is this.
Are you among those who have turned back?
Are you in danger of turning back?

I want to give you several warning signs seen in someone who is departing from the way of life.

- B. You are in danger if Jesus is not your passion
1. This was our Lord’s warning to the church of Ephesus
See Rev. 2:1-5
They had not yet left the object of their love but the degree of it. To this Jesus gives a solemn warning.
 2. Paul pronounced curses upon any who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ
1 Corinthians 16:22 NAU - " If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha."
 3. The reason many professing Christians are unfaithful is because Jesus is not their chief love.
Paul described them in **Chapter 3:1-5** – they are lovers of self, lovers of money, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”
 - a. They will not be inconvenienced for Jesus. They will not make any real sacrifice for Christ
The plain truth is this - We will find the time to pursue the things we love.
 - b. Their primary problem with lost men is they are passionately in love with themselves
2 Timothy 3:2 – “For men shall be lovers of self”
 - c. The great danger with self-love is that it is so satisfying to the flesh that it seems proper

4. Our love for Jesus is the wellspring of all service, obedience, faithfulness
It keeps our eyes upon our true source of hope and contentment
 5. It is not without meaning that God describes our relationship with Christ as a husband-wife relationship.
- C. You are in danger if you have become bored with the things of God
1. You no longer eagerly anticipate His return.
2 Timothy 4:8 NAU - "in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."
 2. Worship has become a common thing. The hymns are no longer sung as instruments of praise. The preaching moment is a time for daydreaming about the many interests in your life.
 3. Bible reading is a dry unsatisfying experience.
Compare this with David's view in Psalm 119
Psalm 119:97 – "O how love I thy law! it *is* my meditation all the day."
Psalm 119:103 – "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth!"
 4. Prayer has become cold and empty
 5. Would you be content if you suddenly learned that you could never hear another sermon? Would you be content if you never read the Bible again? How much did you read it last week?
- D. You are in danger if worldly affairs occupy your chief interests.
1. Your occupation is more important than your church. Would you be absent from work for the same reasons you are absent from worship?
 2. Your family takes precedence over God.
Family is important and must never be neglected but it must never prohibit us from our lifelong labor in the Kingdom.
 3. Do you take more pleasure in worldly amusements than in Kingdom pursuits? How do you spend the Lord's Day?
Most of our Lord's Day activities are a matter of Christian liberty but how we spend it can speak a lot about our heart.
- E. Holiness is not your chief pursuit
1. A true believer should have holiness as his chief desire
Matthew 5:6 NAU - "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."
a. Hungering & thirsting implies an intense longing of our whole being.
b. It cannot be artificially created
The nauseated man cannot be made to eat.
The satisfied man cannot be made thirsty.
 2. The Christian has this intense longing for righteousness
a. He knows that sin hinders his fellowship with his Savior whom he loves and so he is continually diligent that he does not sin.
b. He has an intense desire to be like Christ. To please Him?
 3. Has your pursuit for holiness grown cold? Have you become careless? Are you allowing more and more things into your life that you used to prohibit?

III. A word to those who are pressing on

- A. Praise God for His continuing preserving grace.
1. We press on because of His grace alone
 2. We are all just one step from turning back.
 “O to grace how great a debtor, Daily I’m constrained to be!
 Let thy grace, Lord, like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee:
 Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love
 Here’s my heart, Lord, take and seal it, Seal it for Thy courts above.”
- B. Do not become careless or presumptuous.
1. The Christian life is one of diligence, discipline, sobriety. God is working in us but commands us to flee from evil.
1 Corinthians 10:12-14 NAU - "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. ¹⁴ Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry."
 2. In the Book of Hebrews we find a group of professing believers who were on the edge. They were weak and faltering. The word given to them is the word given to us – Hold Fast Your Profession!
Hebrews 3:6 NAU - " but Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house-- whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end."
Hebrews 4:14 NAU - "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession."
Hebrews 10:23 NAU - "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;"