

## Message #5

## II Timothy 1:13-18

Every now and then you run across someone who says we don't have any right to judge and usually they will cite Matthew 7:1 that says, "Judge not, that you be not judged." I actually heard this statement made in a conversation in which one believer was pointing out that there was a TV preacher who was taking in millions of dollars preaching heretical doctrines. One believer was saying this was evil and another was saying we have no right to judge. Well Paul did not see it that way. He believed we have an obligation to spot evil doctrine and name those who are false.

II Timothy is the last letter Paul writes. It is the culmination of over 30 years of ministry. **In his final letter, Paul stresses the importance of Biblical study and doctrinal precision.** By inspiration of the Spirit of God, Paul names at least six men who were heretics or defectors and frankly, I would not want to be any of them: 1) Phygelus (1:15); 2) Hermogenes (1:15); 3) Hymenaeus (2:17); 4) Philetus (2:17); 5) Demas (4:10); 6) Alexander (4:14-15).

By name Paul points these men out as spiritual losers and he wanted Timothy to see them the same way. Part of being a good soldier is to spot enemies. Part of being faithful is to spot those who are not faithful. Timothy was Paul's beloved son in the faith (1:2) and Paul would soon be gone. He wanted Timothy on the front lines. He wanted him sharp. He wanted him to be an award winner. Paul wanted Timothy to stay focused on his doctrine and those who opposed it. So as we come to this part of the letter, what Paul says to Timothy is this:

**AN AWARD WINNING BELIEVER WILL HOLD TIGHT TO TRUE PAULINE INSTRUCTION AND RECOGNIZE THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL TO IT AND THOSE WHO ARE NOT.**

Paul had no problem pointing out doctrinal heretics who were opposed to his grace message and he was not afraid to expose them. He wanted Timothy ministering with the same mindset. Paul was appointed by God to be a preacher and teacher and apostle (1:11). Other people were not. His grace message was not open to debate; it was directly from Jesus Christ. If we are going to be an award winning believer, we need to grasp grace instruction and we need to be able to point out those who are faithful to it and those who are not faithful.

Now in this section of Scripture there are four award winning mandates given to Timothy:

**AWARD WINNING MANDATE #1 – Hold fast and retain Pauline instruction. 1:13**

Apparently Timothy was being tempted to modify Paul's grace message and grace doctrines. Most of the religious world was given to O.T. law or some form of works system and Timothy was being drawn away from those doctrines. Paul says you need to "retain" them.

The verb "retain" is an imperative command. Paul is not suggesting this to Timothy, he is demanding it.

The Greek is strong here and Paul is specifically challenging Timothy to hold tight specifically to instruction that “you have heard from me.” That prepositional phrase “from me” is emphatic in Greek. **Paul wanted Timothy to hold tight to and retain specific Pauline teaching.**

Now he says that his teaching consisted of “sound words.” The adjective “sound” refers to teaching that is healthy as opposed to teaching that is diseased. Paul is saying that his grace teaching is able to make one healthy in their relationship with God. Religion will make you sick.

Notice Paul says, “Retain the standard.” That word “standard,” as I understand the Greek, refers to an actual outline system of teaching that Paul gave to Timothy (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 463). There is an entire system of instruction that is consistent with an outline of grace theology.

**Paul’s point is that award winners will hold on tight to Pauline grace theology and teaching.** Pauline doctrine will make you healthy in the sight of God. These words will develop your faith and love and you will come to understand what you have in Christ Jesus.

Now here is what we must conclude. If we are to be an award winning believer and if we are to be an award winning church, we must be very concerned about grasping the instruction of Paul. Paul did not tell Timothy stay focused on the O.T. law or stay focused on the traditions of men; he said you stay focused on the teaching you got from me.

John Calvin was saved at age 20. He developed into the supreme theologian and Bible teacher in the 1500’s in Geneva Switzerland. He influenced many men of God such as Richard Baxter, John Bunyan, George Whitefield, Jonathon Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, and William Carey. In fact, we here today have gleaned much because of this man. Lewis Sperry Chafer relied on many doctrinal points observed by Mr. Calvin. Calvin said back in the 1500’s that if you examine most books on doctrine, you will discover a lot in those books that are “non- Pauline.” In fact, Calvin said many ministers have made riddles of pure Pauline doctrine.

This is what makes men like C. I. Scofield and Lewis Sperry Chafer and John Miles so significant to the church. They understood Pauline instruction and they understood grace.

**AWARD WINNING MANDATE #2** – Carefully guard your ministerial entrustment. **1:14**

Timothy had been entrusted with a treasure which was the wonderful Pauline doctrine of the grace of God. What is particularly interesting about the word “entrust” is that in classical Greek it was used to refer to one who went on a long journey and would entrust something valuable with someone until he returned.

Paul is saying to Timothy that you have been entrusted temporarily with a great treasure. That treasure includes my teaching (2:2); that treasure includes your gift and ministry (I Tim. 1:18-19) and it also includes the continual presence of the Holy Spirit in your life.

In fact, you are able to guard these things through the power of the Holy Spirit, who is always in you. It is the Holy Spirit that enables us to know truth (John 16:13); it is the Holy Spirit that gives gifts for unraveling truth and it is the Holy Spirit that enables one to guard the truth. The Holy Spirit will always prompt you to guard grace truth. The Holy Spirit will never lead one to move back under O.T. law or into some religion that stresses works.

Don't ever forget this point—when a minister is not given to careful teaching of grace truth that minister is not seeking to magnify God's truth and that minister is not led by the Spirit.

**AWARD WINNING MANDATE #3 – Be aware of those who are unfaithful. 1:15**

The word “aware” is one that means one is to have a clear perception. Paul wanted Timothy to have a clear perception of two people, Phygelus and Hermogenes, and also many people of Asia. Now the thing that these people did was to “turn away” from Paul and his teaching.

That verb “turn away” means they turned away from Paul and his grace teaching and went back to their former state of thinking in doctrine and place of residency, which obviously was in Asia.

Now Timothy was in Asia, which is modern day Turkey. In fact, he was in the capital of Asia, which was Ephesus. Asia was a country/state which contained several churches. In fact, in Revelation seven churches of Asia are mentioned—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea (Rev. 1:11). Also Colosse was located there.

Now there is an article “the” used before the word “all,” which would suggest that he had specific people in mind who had defected from him. **It would appear to me that what he is saying is that he wanted Timothy to know that all the specific Asian people who had been in Rome turned away from Paul and his teaching and went back to Asia.**

Paul wanted Timothy aware of the fact that these people defected in their allegiance to Paul. He did not want them sliding back into Ephesus or any other Asian city as heroes. He wanted Timothy to know that they had abandoned him and his teaching. **It is very God-honoring to be aware of the people who have sat under grace teaching and then defected. These people are not heroes; they will be eternal losers.**

Two specific people that he names were Phygelus and Hermogenes. They must have been somewhat of the ring leaders of the defection. They turned against Paul and his teaching and got others to do the same.

Now what we may glean from this is that faithfulness and faithlessness are definitely connected in the mind of God in how we relate to one who has been proven faithful and gifted in communicating the truth of God.

When a church is focused on grace and focused on communicating truth, at times things will get hot. Those people who run away and don't stick with it or to it will one day be seen and known for what they were; spiritual defectors.

These two guys right here go down forever as Pauline defectors. They turned away from him and his teaching and left him to rot. They did him harm and it was not forgotten by Paul and will not be forgotten by God.

**AWARD WINNING MANDATE #4** – Acknowledge those who are faithful. **1:16-18**

There was one man from Asia who was not like the others. When he was in Rome, he did everything he could to minister to Paul. His name was Onesiphorus, and Paul opens up this section by praying that God would give mercy to him and to his house in the day of judgment (**1:18**), which for the Church Age would be the Bema Seat judgment, which Paul himself developed for the Grace Age believer.

People who abandon faithful instruction and abandon faithful people may think that is the end of it. We walk away from grace instruction and we just go back to our old system of religion and begin a new chapter of life. Well that thinking is not quite true. God doesn't forget and neither does Paul. Paul did not forget those unfaithful and he did not forget those faithful.

You could chain Paul's body, but you could not chain his prayers and you could not chain his brain. You could not stop his teaching. One of the things Paul did in this serious condition was pray for Onesiphorus. He specifically spent some of his final hours of life praying for God to bless Onesiphorus and his family.

He specifically prayed that God would be merciful to Onesiphorus and his entire house. He did not pray this for Phygelus and Hermogenes. He did not pray this for Alexander (4:14); but he did personally pray this for Onesiphorus. In fact, Thomas Constable said God will eventually express His displeasure at all those who turned away from Paul; but Onesiphorus would "escape that shame" (*Notes on II Timothy*, pp. 12-13).

Think about this; you have the great Apostle Paul praying for you and your family before he dies. He is the most important apostle for the Grace Age and he is specifically praying for you.

There are four reasons why Paul prayed that God would be merciful to Onesiphorus:

**Reason #1** - Because he refreshed Paul. **1:16b**

In ministry there are many drainers and downers. There are many who depress you. Someone just told me about some Christian in another city who they said was known to be a negative downer. They do not refresh you, they zap your energy.

Well Onesiphorus was a breath of fresh air to Paul. He refreshed Paul. That word “refresh” is rare and it carries with it the idea that there were times in Paul’s life when he was low and he needed some reviving and apparently in many of those moments Onesiphorus was used by God to help Paul (G. Abbott Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 35). Notice the text says he “often” refreshed him. This was not some one time deal. In fact, that adverb “often” means he did this a great number of times (*Ibid.*, p. 371).

Onesiphorus was always doing things to help and support Paul. He did these things at his own expense. As one writer said he refreshed Paul by his presence and presents. He apparently was a man of means and he used his means to help Paul time and time again. Paul could not ever repay Onesiphorus for his time and energy and money, but he could pray for him and testify before God of his faithfulness and ministry. Onesiphorus is long gone but his reputation as a faithful and generous man in regard to Paul stands forever.

**Reason #2** - Because he was not ashamed of Paul. **1:16c**

Paul was not only in prison, but apparently he was also in chains. He may have had chains on his hands and feet and it was possible that he was either chained to a soldier or to a wall. In either case that did not stop Onesiphorus.

I have to say that I admire those who have a prison ministry. I get the creeps when I go into a jail. It is almost like I get claustrophobic. You have to check in and then go through a series of steel doors that are filled with bars. It is intimidating to go into a jail or prison. Now in my ministry I have gone into jails and detention centers many, many times to visit those who hopefully want to get things right with God. I admire those men and women who minister in prison ministries day after day. Must admit most of the time I am somewhat embarrassed to go there.

In my first ministry, a man from Chicago came to faith in Jesus Christ. The reason why he ended up in prison is because after he came to faith in Christ, he actually confessed something he had done because he was under conviction. Well I went to see him in a prison on the west side of Chicago. I was not ashamed of him at all. In fact, in a good sense I was proud of him. He had sinned. He had admitted it and he was facing it and was willing to take the penalty. I encouraged him that after he got out that he needed to go on for the glory of God.

He was not ashamed or embarrassed to go see Paul and minister to Paul. He did not consider Paul to be a disgrace; but he esteemed him as a very faithful man of God. Onesiphorus was a real support and real help and a real encouragement.

When you stand for pure grace, you can take serious heat for that. People demean you and lash out against you so that you are the one who looks shameful and disgraceful. Onesiphorus never saw it that way. He was always on the side of truth and always on the side of Paul.

**Reason #3** - Because he sought out Paul. **1:17**

The adverb “eagerly” means that Onesiphorus tracked down Paul with an eager zeal and intensity to see him. His attitude was not I don’t want to do this, but I have to. He was eager to find Paul. The text is clear to point out that not only did he search for Paul, but he found him. There are at least three historical facts that would have made finding Paul not so easy:

- 1) Rome was a big city.
- 2) Onesiphorus was not from Rome, he was from Ephesus (**1:18**).
- 3) Nero’s fire had destroyed much of the city. Things were in turmoil.

Handley Moule made an interesting historical observation when he said that in many of these dungeons, the only way you could get in to see a prisoner was to pay some heavy bribe money to the guards. It is quite possible that he had to do this very thing.

So Onesiphorus was a man who sought out Paul at his own expense and found Paul just because he so esteemed him and his ministry and he wanted to refresh him.

**Reason #4** - Because he ministered to Paul. **1:18**

The word “service” is the word from which we get our word deacon. Timothy knew of many things that he had done for Paul in Ephesus. Onesiphorus took it upon himself to be Paul’s deacon. Paul never asked him to do this, but he did it. He did all he could to care for Paul and meet his needs. So Paul said I am praying that at the Bema seat judgment God to be merciful to Onesiphorus.

Paul does not pray these things for the defectors, but he does for Onesiphorus and his family.

**PRACTICAL LESSONS:**

- 1) We need to be rock solid in our grasp of Pauline grace and our defense of it.  
We need to retain it.**
- 2) We need to spot those who defect from grace and go back to some former system of doctrine because this is more than just a difference of opinion; there are eternal consequences at stake.**
- 3) When we do things to refresh those who are on the front lines in standing for grace and truth, God takes notice of that and He will reward it.**