

Thursday, May 25, 2023 • Read 2Timothy 2:14–16

Questions from the Scripture text: What is Timothy to do with the faithful men (cf. v1) whom he trains and raises up for the next generation (v14)? In addition to reminding them of the ABCs of the faith, what is he to charge them not to do? Before Whom? Because it will do what? What are they to be (v15)? At what presentation does this diligence aim? What are they to consider themselves? What are they trying to avoid as the outcome of their presentation? If they are to be unashamed, what must they do (v15)? In order to guide rightly/straightly through the Word of truth, what must they shun (v16)? What do these empty noises lead to?

Why must ministers of the Word work so hard? 2Timothy 2:14–16 looks forward to the second reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these three verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **ministers of the Word must be diligent workers, so that they can guide hearers straightly through life-giving truth, rather than ruining them with empty noise.**

Remind them. By quoting from a catechism that they had used in Ephesus (vv11–13), Paul equips Timothy with a powerful tool as he trains up the “faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (cf. v2). The truth that they are to preach and teach is truth by which God Himself gives that union with Christ that the catechism describes. The ABCs of Christianity remind us of what is at stake. What a crucial ministry, that would make the difference reigning with Jesus in the last day and being renounced by Jesus in the last day!

Faithful men can grow weary. Faithful men can grow discouraged. Especially in days of widespread unfaithfulness in the church. They need reminders (v14a). They need the glory of Christ set before them, so that love for Him will refresh and strengthen them. They need the glory of union with Christ set before them, so that love for the souls under their care will drive them to aim at this glory for those souls.

Charge them not to word-battle. The apostle uses a compound word here: word-battle. Timothy is to charge them not to wordbattle (v14b). There is a temptation to let word-battling divert us from the preaching and teaching of the truth from the Bible. People who are twisted by their own ignorance or enjoyment of word-battling will wish to commandeer the teaching ministry of the church. They must not be permitted to do so, for it will bring catastrophe to the hearers (v14c).

Be diligent workers. The antidote to giving in to the desire to be approved by men is to remember the desire to be approved by God (v15). With his eye bent toward that priceless joy in the last day, when God approves of his work, the elder must be diligent. He eagerly applies himself to the work. And he is a worker, one who labors and toils, who persists in the work until the work is done.

Be straight guides. As the elder leads the congregation through the word of God, what will he see when he looks back? Spiritual catastrophes and a tangled mess of a path? Or will it be straight guidance through the word of truth? If he has worked hard to handle the truth rightly, straightly, his work will meet with the approval of God. But if he has gotten sucked into word-battling (v14b) or babblings and empty-noise (v16a), he will be ashamed.

Whatever else men want to teach about in church, this passage should give them pause. Everything, other than straightly guiding through the Word of truth, the Spirit calls “word-battling, babbling, and empty noise.” People often enjoy that sort of teaching. Many even enjoy participating in it. But that is not the teaching in which Timothy and the faithful men are to engage. Such teaching advances not holiness but ungodliness.

A faithful preaching and teaching ministry is a blessed thing. It brings before our eyes the glories of Christ. It brings before our eyes the glory of union with Christ. It takes Christ’s own Word as a straight and sure guide to glory. Let us seek it from the Lord unto His eternal praise and our eternal good!

What should you hear in the preaching and teaching ministry of the church? What should this set before you? What sort of effort do you expect your teachers to put forth? What sort of effort do you think this means that you should put into hearing? Where is this designed to take you, ultimately?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for the instruction that You gave to Timothy. Thank You for giving us Your Word to teach us about Christ’s glory, and to guide us straightly into union with Him as our path to glory. Forgive us for being content with word-battling, or the babbling and empty-noise of the ideas of men. Forgive us for laziness in teaching and laziness in hearing. Spare us from the catastrophe that we would otherwise bring upon ourselves, we ask in Jesus’s Name, AMEN!

ARP1 “How Blessed the Man” or TPH406 “Jesus, with Thy Church Abide”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Second Timothy 2 verses 14 through 16. There’s our God’s words. Remind them of these things, charging them before the lord, not to strive about words to no prophet. To the ruin of the hearers. The diligent to present yourself approved to god. A worker who does not need to be ashamed.

Rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun. Profane and idle babblings. For they will increase to more ungodliness. So far the reading of god’s inspired in the narrant word.

The apostle is. Giving Timothy instruction here. Uh, yes for himself. That he would be willing to endure all things. That’s kind of where we have just recently, come come out of He reminds him that the lord jesus faced death and was raised from the dead. He reminds him that he paul was willing to endure much for the sake of jesus christ and in these quoted to him.

From their catechism. From which we have several samples and these faithful sayings passages in first and second Timothy talking about union with christ and how enduring in union with christ on earth as just the predecessor to reigning in union with christ forever. But he hasn’t lost sight of the fact that he’s not just talking to Timothy for Timothy sake.

You remember, at the beginning of chapter 2, he said the things that you have heard commit to faithful, men who will be able to teach others. Also, In other words, He’s giving Timothy advice as a seminary professor or seminary president. As he gives him instruction both for himself as a minister to endure hardship.

And then he says reminding them of these things. That those who are trained to be ministers, teachers, preachers. Of God's people among the eldership of god's people. That they too. Must endure hardship that they too. Must be diligent. That they too. Must be dependent upon the means of grace.

They are these. Uh, soldiers. And athletes. And farmers to use the illustrations that he is used earlier in the chapter. Now, somebody who is Uh, committed to a mission. Of ministering god's word has different pitfalls. Into what you may fall different. Distractions, and Ways of Of failing in oh, in his task and his assignment.

Of which he is in danger. And so he says remind them of these things. In other words, remind them that the main thing here is union with christ. Then the main thing in the preaching and teaching ministry is that those who hear would hear jesus, And by by the spirit giving them life.

They would not only hear jesus in that life but they would believe into jesus and receive continually from him life by his word and relationship with him. That's what we are doing. That's why we come to the bible all the time in family worship while you should in your private worship.

And Why we do so in the public workshop that we're having fellowship with christ himself by means of his word and he gives his life to be in us by his spirit blessing, his word to us. Well, this is a very high view of preaching and teaching But those who know the truth and those who are defending the truth from error are tempted, not to think of the use of the truth.

In terms of facilitating this, glorious life in union with christ that we've just been hearing about in verses 11 through 13. And so he says remind them of these things. Charging them before the lord. It's a pretty uh, pretty serious instruction here. We've just been upgraded from remind them of wonderful truths from their catechism to.

Now charge them before the face of god to apply those truths. And here's the first part of applying those truths. Not to strive about words. And this is one of the famous, pauline Mashups, it's one word that takes a word for warring and battling. A verb for warring and battling and attaches it to it.

The root for words, he says Tell them not to word battle. The truth is something to be taught is something to be defended, but always an application to life always pointing to christ always preaching and teaching union with christ. It is not something to sit around and word joust.

That's not a way to. Have fun or Or even worse than having fun to, to make it a kind of personal contest. And Go at each other and see who can win the most points in in a battle. Know the the truth is to be preached and taught and defended but it is to be done aiming at union with christ to be used by christ for the good of others.

And if you As the preacher and teacher get into the habit of using the truth for word battling, then you will find Uh, you will find that those who hear you. Uh, either do the same. And ruining themselves or are ruined just by your own word that one. And so, he says not charging them before the lord, not to word battle to no, prophet to the ruin.

Of the hearers. There's a way to ruin others. It is a way to ruin ourselves. It's not very concerned. Uh, because of the way that In our congregation, i know many of you have just Uh, taking the option of withdrawing or Maybe meekly spending time with older people, which is wonderful.

And and good for you. But this is one of the reasons why i'm so concerned about the way that Um, The social times. Hardly call it fellowship because greatest fellowship is worship. The social times in our congregation gets stratified, Because there's something about young people that when they get hold of theology.

Unless they are gripped by the lord jesus and who he is. And What he has done, what he is doing, they end up in the word battling. And in the two other. Um, The things that we were warned about in verse 16, which is what happens when there's word battling without knowledge.

But in verse 14, he's Uh, he's Warning about word battling with knowledge. He says be diligent. So, the first is don't misuse it. Don't take something that is designed. For affecting and advancing affecting union with christ. An advancing experience of an application of union with Christ. Don't take something that the spirit uses to be those things and just word battle.

And now he says, be diligent So here's what you do instead. If, if preachers and teachers, Who are supposed to defend the truth. One of the main things in first and second Timothy is defending the truth from error. If they're not to be worried battling, what are they to do?

It says, be diligent to present yourself approved to god.

He says be diligent to present yourself approved to God and so this is the first thing that will help you stay out of word battling. Is forgetting. To some measure. The fact that you're before the face of other people, And remembering, first of all, That year before the face of god and so how you engage those other people needs to serve the lord properly.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to god a worker. Okay, so rather, you know, when you're in the conversation, Rather than Considering yourself. Uh, to be engaged in a battle with somebody else, you are now on assignment from god. You, you have a job to serve the lord. And what is the service that preachers and teachers in particular?

Um, Have assigned to them. To present yourself a proof to god a worker. Who does not need to be ashamed. Rightly dividing or guiding straightly. Is a little bit more literal and i think a little bit more helpful guiding straightly through. The word of truth. That the word of truth is literally a guide.

To take you from the city of destruction to the celestial city. If we can Borrow bunions. Um, origin and destination. Uh, language there. And so the word of truth is something for guiding people, straightly to god himself. And and taking into account, this section of their catechism and versus 11 13 on unit union with Christ to guide people straightly through union with christ.

Not to. Uh, not to teach the word in a crooked way, which is to misunderstand. It Not to misuse it for some other purpose. Than to direct them unto God in union with christ. But to guide, straightly to use the word properly to understand it properly and to use it for its proper purpose.

Which is hard work. Because many people misunderstand it and they need to be taught. There's this duty to with all patients and instruction that he's that he's going to be commanding Timothy about Not too far from now, in this letter. Uh, they misunderstand it and they want to misuse it.

And they're going to resist repenting of their sin. And if they're infatuated with some, Uh, area of theology. Uh, to their harm. Not considering it in proportion. And it's biblical. Uh, proportion and connection to the rest of Bible truth. They will level want. Uh, to emphasize that area and often those who Uh, have something that's out of proportion that they that they focus on.

To the detriment of other areas of bible truth. Not surprise you to know that they're often in error. In whatever area, they're focusing on. Because it's been taken out of its connection to christ and to the rest of the bible truth, which allows Small mistaken ideas to metastatize. With testicides like cancer.

And the area of their unique interest becomes an area of unique error. And so this need to use to understand rightly and to, to connect Bible truth to all the rest of the Bible trees. Um, which will bring it into line and it's right and use. Guiding the lord's people through faith in christ and union with christ all the way home.

To god who has redeemed us in his son. And so, The minister, the elder and the congregation, and then Um, With perhaps less. Uh, less training required and and not as great knowledge required or skill. Perhaps Uh, but still with great responsibility the house, The husband or father in the home, Must be a diligent worker guiding straightly through.

The truth. Which means you don't have time. To misuse the truth for word battling. And to cheapen the truth on his lips. By word battling. And he said, son two other things that increase unto ungodliness Verse 16. What, what is the word that's translated profane here is literally the word for babbling's.

And the word that's translated idle babblings here. Is a mashup of the root for empty and the root for sounds. So babblings and empty sounds. And it is a little bit shocking, but is intentional. So that you may know, As far as what? What you're really doing before god.

And what you're really doing to other souls, when you do the word battling, When you don't use. Uh, scripture properly understood in the right way for its right purposes. Than as far as god is concerned. It is babblings and empty, sounds. It's theological sounding gibberish. And as far as, The people who with whom you are speaking.

It's It's unhelpful, it doesn't lead them. To faith in christ. It doesn't lead them to love and obey christ. And walk with him and grow in their union within And so, it leads to ungodliness because instead of using The truth of the word of god in the right way independence, upon god, the spirit you're using it for our own purposes.

And it doesn't do them anymore. Good. Than if you had just been doing. Baby talk and making weird noises. It sounds like theological words, all strung together. It may even sound like cogent arguments. Um, But it is ruining the viewers. Because it is not. The word of god being greatly understood and used for the right purposes.

And so, may God be Merciful to us, merciful to me. Help me as. A minister. Preacher and a teacher and as your dad, It's your husband. To handle the truth. Well, In the congregation, and in the home. But you also, Uh, must have a value. Must value the right way of using the bible.

And, And seek that for yourself and for others. You won't get into the word jesting. And you won't. Do the babbling and empty talk. But always. Guiding straightly through the word of truth. Which aims at reconciliation with god and the lord jesus christ in union. With him unto the glory of god's grace.

And the glory of the lord jesus. Then, let's pray. Her father in heaven. We pray that you would help us to. Put in the hard work, that it takes. To grow in our knowledge of and understanding of Your word. We pray that your spirit would use your word. To stir up our faith in christ.

That we might know and experience. Union with him. We pray that you would make us useful in the lives of others. And whatever role you have appointed to us. Help me especially o lord. And this season of my life, for Your church and for This households of those who belong to you.

Pray, especially for the boys that you would. Help them to understand the bible and to grow. And then understanding, but especially to understand. How to be a worker who? Is diligent and is unashamed. And who guides? Um, rightly whomever you entrust to them. We thank you, lord. That in all of this, we are not merely entrusted to men.

But entrusted to you, and to the word of Of your grace. And we pray that you would bless that to us that word to us, by your spirit, in jesus name. Amen.