

“Perilous Times – Part 3”
2 Timothy 3:1-5
(Preached at Trinity, August 14, 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. In this passage Paul has been describing some of the difficulties that the church would have to confront as it conducts its mission upon the earth. Paul places a unique parameter upon these difficult times. They would take place in the last days.
"But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come."
As I’ve pointed out, these last days mark the entire age of the church. They mark that period of time between our Lord's two comings – the entire age of the church. These include the days in which we live.
2. We’ve also seen that Paul is not talking about conditions with the world in general, although the fallen world is certainly a dangerous place. Paul is talking about conditions within the church.
One of the greatest dangers to the church has been corruption from within rather than persecutions from without.
3. These dangers involve people within the church who will bring great harm to the church. They weaken the ministry of the church. They lower the church's standard of holiness. Paul uses a single word to describe this – “unholy.” These people cause the church to forfeit the powerful presence of Christ.
4. It is important that we understand these dangers so that we can protect the church.
 - A. We need to heed the warning: "in the last days difficult times will come."
It is so relevant for today – We can see it before our eyes.
 - B. Many churches choose to deal with the problem by lowering the standard – They have declared carnality normal Christianity – THE BIBLE DOES NOT!!!
WE MUST NOT!!!
 - C. Paul includes with his warning instruction for dealing with the problem:
“Avoid such men as these.”
5. This is counterfeit Christianity. We’ve been looking at these perilous conditions. The first examples deal primarily with the lusts of the heart – They are selfish, prideful lovers of self and lovers of money. They are characterized by prideful arrogance that use their tongue to inflict pain upon others. They are boastful blasphemers. The NASB calls them revilers.
William Barclay – "He might even seem to be humble; he might even seem to be quiet and inoffensive; but in his secret heart there is contempt for everyone else."
6. This morning I want to address the other dimension of the problem. Paul describes the collapse of human relationships.

I. Disobedient to Parents

- A. This too flows from self-love and a carnal hatred of authority. This is the heart of the 5th Commandment.
1. Children are born with a natural bent to self-will and disobedience.
 - a. Parents have the responsibility of training them – of arresting their sinful resistance to authority.
Proverbs 13:24 NAU - "He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently."
 - b. Most parents are oblivious to how counter-productive and self-defeating their overindulgence is.
 - c. As families disintegrate children will increase in their rebellious behavior. It is a mark of God's judgment upon a society.
Isaiah 3:11-12 NAU - "Woe to the wicked! *It will go badly with him*, For what he deserves will be done to him. ¹² O My people! Their oppressors are children, And women rule over them."
 - d. Most parents today pander to their children, they want to be pals, best friends.
 Parents need to be parents – they need to govern their children
 The failure of parents to properly train their children causes them to lose the respect of their children.
 Paul is saying that this is one of the characteristics of the unregenerate members in the church.
- B. This isn't just a condition that affects small children. It also addresses adult children. It speaks to the issue of duty – Those motivated by a self-love are inclined to abandon their parents.
1 Timothy 5:4 NAU - "but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God."
1 Timothy 5:8 NAU - "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."
1. The ancient world set duty to parents very high.
 2. God placed this as a part of His moral law.
 3. It is the sign of a wicked civilization when children fail to recognize this duty.
- C. Paul gives the source of their disrespect for their parents.
 They are "unloving."
1. This word refers to family love.
 2. The KJV translated it "without natural affection."
 3. God has instilled us with a natural love for family. But sin turns our heart to stone. We abandon those natural graces that God has given human beings. In **Romans 1** Paul describes what happens when God abandons human beings to their corruption.
Romans 1:26-27 NAU - "God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error."

4. This is why they abandon their parents.
Romans 1:28-30 NAU - "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,"

II. They have a heart of entitlement – They feel they are deserving of everything they have. This results in a heart of ingratitude. Paul says they are “ungrateful.”

A. Ingratitude is one of the great sins of fallen humanity but it should not characterize God’s people

Romans 1:21 NAU - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

1. They fail to comprehend the blessing of life.
2. Listen to the heart of David

Psalms 139:14 NAU - "I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well."

KJV - "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well."

"Praise" - הַלְלָהּ – can also be translated "to give thanks"

B. God commands us to be thankful

1. Thanksgiving is the recognition of God as the giver of all things and an expression of praise for His goodness.
2. Thanksgiving is the placing of value upon God and upon His actions
Psalms 107:15 – "Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!"
3. God expects all men to exalt Him alone
Second Commandment: "I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God"
Exodus 34:14 – "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God:"
4. A failure to give thanks is to deny God.

Paul is saying that such wickedness would find its way into the church.

C. Why is this so dangerous to the church

1. Because the ungrateful person will never understand grace.
2. It leads people to approach the Lord’s table unworthily.
3. Because God’s wrath is kindled against them

Romans 1:18 NAU - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,"

21 "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

- III. They sow discord – they are “irreconcilable” – it literally means “no truce”
- A. There are social graces that keep civil discourse polite.
1. We learn how to speak at the right time and when it is best to remain silent
 2. We learn how to choose our battles.
 3. We learn how to be tolerant of the opinions of others.
- B. Irreconcilable refers to the lack of grace
1. We take offence at even small differences. This is the cause of our “cancel culture.” We want nothing to do with anyone with whom we disagree.
 2. This can have terrible consequences within the church.
Paul wrote in 1 Cor 13
1 Corinthians 13:4 NAU - "Love is patient, love is kind"
1 Corinthians 13:5 NAU - ". . . is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,"
1 Corinthians 13:7 NAU - "bears all things . . . endures all things."
- C. Paul adds that they are “brutal, treacherous, reckless”
1. Such behavior has no place in the body of Christ.
 2. Many church business meetings have turned into shouting matches.
Many a church has been destroyed because of unbending attitudes on non-essential issues
 3. Instead of new churches being intentionally planted by mission minded churches, too often they are the result of church splits – to factions who can no longer labor together. Their attention is drawn inward rather than outward—to make disciples of the nations.
 4. The NIV translates the word “unforgiving” which also captures this unbending spirit. Many a church has been grievously harmed by these mean-spirited unbending people.
- D. Their hearts become void of love and replaced by unbridled hatred.
1. Notice how Paul weaves together this perversion of their love
Verse 2 – “lovers of self . . . lovers of money.”
Verse 3 – “unloving” “haters of good”
Verse 4 – “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”

Conclusion:

1. These people are problematic in the church. Paul says they hate all that's good.
 - A. They hate God's good people.
 1. They are not concerned for the well-being of the brethren.
 2. They are most concerned for themselves.
 - B. They hate God's good preaching.
 1. The preaching of the Word bores them.
 2. They demand sweet things to tickle their ears.
 3. They demand short, empty sermons.
 - C. They hate God's good worship.
 1. They demand worship that satisfies the carnal flesh and is entertaining.
 2. They want worship to meet their needs rather than worship focused upon God.
 3. They don't feel compelled to meet when God's people gather.
 - D. They hate God's good Word.
 1. The Word of God is too demanding.
 2. They try to dismiss it or twist it to suit their carnal inclinations.
 - E. They hate God's good church.

They seldom give of themselves for the good of the church.
 - F. They hate the good life of the child of God
 1. They are uninterested in prayer.
 2. They are uninterested in meditation.
 3. They are uninterested in growing in holiness.
 4. They are uninterested in the disciplined life that holiness demands.
2. But they love those things that are pleasing to the flesh. They love money. They love pleasure. They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.
3. A church with such people is in grave danger. We must be cautious about receiving such. Paul says they must be avoided.
And we must guard our hearts lest we discover Paul is describing us.