

Subject: *In Times Like These*

Scripture: *1 Timothy 4:1-5*

As I studied this passage I thought about an old song in our hymnbook titled, *In Times Like These*. One of the verses goes like this: "In times like these you need the Bible, in times like these, O be not idle. Be very sure, be very sure, your anchor holds and grips the solid rock." Paul wrote Timothy about the latter times (vs. 1). According to the Bible, we have been living in the latter times or the last days since the first coming of Jesus, **Hebrews 1:1-2** ¹ *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,* ² *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.* The latter times are the period between the first coming of Christ until His return. We know that these will be dangerous times in which to live. **2 Timothy 3:1** *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.* These are going to be dark days, difficult days, and dangerous days.

These are times of departing from the faith

The Holy Spirit spoke expressly (explicitly, clearly) about it and God recorded it in His Word as a warning for all people. Paul describes apostasy or a deliberate turning away from the Christian faith. There is a body of truth we know as the Christian faith and many will forsake it and turn away. Apostates are people who defect from the faith. True Christians are people who are devoted to the faith. Church leaders must be fully committed to the faith (1 Tim. 3:9). The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (3:15).

These are times of demonic doctrine

Paul speaks here of spiritual seduction or people who are drawn away by false teaching. The most devastating and deadly form of seduction is not sexual seduction, but spiritual seduction (see 2 Tim. 3:13). Doctrines of devils (demons) are not teachings about demons, but teachings from demons. The devil and his demons promote false teaching and false religion.

John 8:44 *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.* All lying is bad, but the worst lies are lies about God, lies about Jesus, and lies about salvation. These lies have the greatest consequences. These lies have eternal consequences. Satan would rather have you believe something wrong that do something wrong.

These are times of deceptive teachers

Verse 1 reveals the satanic source of false teaching and verse 2 reveals the human instruments that spread it. Jesus warned that false teachers and their teachings would be widespread in the last days, **Matthew 24:11** *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.* These false teachers speak lies in hypocrisy. They are literally hypocritical lie-speakers. Their conscience is deadened, desensitized, non-responsive. Paul uses a medical term that refers to tissue that is cauterized or burned. They are emboldened to teach lies because their conscience doesn't bother them. It no longer works. Paul has already stressed the importance of a good conscience (1:5, 15; 3:9).

Paul refers to some examples of their false teaching in verse 3. They taught celibacy or being single and holding to a restricted diet (meats) as a means to salvation. This false teaching

may have been influenced by certain Jews called Essenes and Greek dualism that taught physical matter was evil and only the spirit world was good. Neither celibacy or any form of special diet saves or sanctifies. It is false teaching, but it sounds spiritual and it appeals to the flesh to think we can do something to earn God's favor.

These are times for discerning believers

We must know the truth that God created marriage and food and pronounced them good. Therefore people who believe and know the truth receive both marriage and food with thanksgiving. Verse 4 is a great verse to claim. Everything is good and is set apart or dedicated for holy use by God's Word and prayer. This means that as we understand that God has set aside the dietary restrictions given under Moses in the Old Testament, we can be thankful for what God gives us to eat and enjoy it. The key is to know the Word well enough to have a discerning mind and then to enjoy all things God gives with a thankful heart.