
Sermon Notes

September 19, 2021

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

A Worker Approved By God 2 Timothy 2:14-19

A Job Worth Doing

- ❖ “If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well!”
 - shoddy workmanship
 - from frustrating to fatal
- ❖ Of far more serious consequence: mishandling the Word of God

Word Wars

- ❖ False teachers are destructive, their methods are deceptive
 - their teaching and the results of their teaching are capable of quickly corrupting and destroying the church
 - one weapon in their arsenal is arguing about words
 - words and disputable doctrines cause strife and division
- ❖ The arguments of false teachers not only produce nothing of value, they actually do harm
 - ruin the faith of those who have not yet started building on the firm foundation of the gospel
 - the church needs to be constantly reminded of this

Rightly Handling the Word

- ❖ *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved*
 - *a worker who has no need to be ashamed*
 - *rightly handling the word of truth*
- ❖ The single word that is translated for us with two words (rightly handling) has the prefix, *ortho* (eg. *orthopedic*)
 - “get it straight and give it straight”
 - sadly, in many places, human thinking has replaced God’s wisdom as the standard
 - do not fall into this kind of trap!
- ❖ How can we train ourselves to rightly handle the word of truth?
 - read Scripture in the context in which it is given
 - what comes before it? what comes after it?
 - how does a verse fit within the paragraph in which it appears?
 - how does the paragraph fit within the chapter?
 - how does the chapter fit within the book?
 - how does the book fit within the Bible?
 - “A text without a context is a pretext.”
 - grids, filters and lenses
 - it is very easy to view everything through our favorite “lens” (psychological, therapeutic, political, chauvinistic, social issues or domestic issues)

A Final Word of Warning

- ❖ Just in case we've missed the point, Paul offers a final, graphic illustration
 - false teaching tears people down, leads to ungodliness and spreads like gangrene
 - "the only way to stop the spread of gangrene is amputation"
- ❖ Equip yourself to be one who *rightly handles the word of truth*

Personal Application

1. After considering Paul's words and listening to this message, how do you evaluate your ability to rightly handle the word of truth?
2. In what ways do you need to sharpen your skill or exert more diligence in studying God's Word and properly applying it to your life situation and circumstances?
3. Are there any places where you are exposing yourself to the "irreverent babble" of false teachers? How seriously do you take Paul's warning about their talk spreading like gangrene? If you are concerned that you not be led into more and more ungodliness, stop listening to and supporting these false teachers!

- guard yourself against imposing the issues that mean most to you on Scripture texts
- forcing 21st century sensibilities onto the text of Scripture will not help us come to terms with its proper meaning or application
- come to Scripture humbly, prayerfully, asking
 - what message did the Holy Spirit intend to convey through this human author to the people who first heard or read these words?
 - based on that, what are the timeless truths this text conveys?
 - how does this timeless truth apply in my situation/circumstances/culture today?
- spiritualizing/moralizing
 - assigning symbolic meaning to elements of Scripture or looking for hidden and/or allegorical meaning
 - when you read Scripture, take its plain meaning, the most basic, obvious understanding
 - spiritualizing is a common practice of many of today's most popular TV or media preachers
 - the truths of God are passed over and neglected to craft human centered, emotionally appealing messages
- ❖ Doing all this is hard work, BUT, "if a job is worth doing..."