

INTRODUCTION

Last time we delighted ourselves in the apostle's use of the phrase "these things" to refer to those truths set down for us in the Bible, which truths are good for us, to which truths the church's pastors are to devote themselves, and in which truths the congregation is to receive instruction from the pastors, with the result that the disciples of Jesus Christ may live a blameless life of good works.

We read where the Bible says that such a pastor, who instructs the congregation in these things, will be a good servant of Jesus Christ. That is, he will be a servant whose service is beneficial to his fellow servants.

But such a good servant is not made in a day. A disciple of Jesus Christ can serve well as a church pastor only when he has been engaged in a program of preparation, and only as he continues in that program. But the truth applies not to pastors only, but more broadly to all the disciples of Jesus Christ. Becoming and continuing to be a good servant of Jesus Christ requires a training program.

In the next few verses of 1 Timothy 4, we find loving instruction from our Lord Jesus about this subject in terms of a program of spiritual diet and exercise for everyone who would be a good servant of Jesus Christ. I had thought to preach on that whole subject today, but eventually I realized that would be too much for one session. So, our study today is about a diet to nourish those who would be good servants of Jesus Christ.

TEXT

1 Timothy 4:6-9

BODY

- I. A Good Servant of Jesus Christ Is Nourished
 - A. "Good" here meaning one who is of benefit, on behalf of Jesus Christ, to those he is serving
 - B. A Christian is not, upon first repenting of sin and believing in Jesus, ready to be a good servant of Jesus Christ
 - C. Instead, he must be nourished; he must be fed
 1. we know children's bodies must be fed in order for them to grow up;
 2. so we are speaking here about a servant of Jesus Christ being nourished in the figure of his receiving food; but we are talking about a Christian being trained to be a good servant, by use of the figure of feeding a child
 3. the Bible speaks elsewhere of our being like sheep, who must be fed by the shepherd
 4. the Bible speaks also about Christians starting out as "babes in Christ" in need of milk, then progressing to be mature, and in need of meat

II. A Good Servant of Jesus Christ Is Nourished In Words

- A. From the beginning of the Bible, which describes the beginning of the world, God tells us of doing things by His word, by speaking: God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light
- B. We learn in John 1 that God’s Word is not mere words, but a person, the Word of God or Son of God, who has come down here with us as a man, Jesus Christ
- C. By His Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, the Word of God, has communicated to us everything He would have us know about Himself as the Savior of sinners only in words; the Bible is entirely and exclusively made up of words
- D. I do not mean to minimize the value of our Lord’s ordinances---baptism and the Lord’s supper
 - 1. these are things we participate in
 - 2. by His Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus nourishes us as we participate in these things
- E. I do not mean to minimize the value of following the example of other Christians who are more mature in the faith than we are
- F. But the primary kind of nourishment we need, by which we are nourished up, or brought up, in the faith, is words, verbal instruction

III. A Good Servant of Jesus Christ Is Nourshed In the Words of Faith and Good Doctrine

- A. These two terms are not entirely separate; they overlap; to some extent they are referring to the same thing
- B. If there is a distinction in what they mean, it is something like this:
 - 1. words of faith, or words of the faith, are those truths we are to believe, especially about Jesus Christ personally: who He is; what He has done for us; what He has promised to do yet in the future; words of the faith would mean the same thing as “the gospel”
 - 2. words of good doctrine is a broader term that encompasses all of that, plus everything else that the Bible says, as rightly taught by the Lord’s apostles
- C. Three examples (see chart)

IV. A Good Servant of Jesus Christ Is Nourished In the Words of Faith and Good Doctrine Which He Has Followed

- A. Of course no one is physically nourished by food that is served to him, but which he does not eat and digest; similarly, a Christian does not become a good servant of Jesus Christ simply by hearing words of faith and of good doctrine
- B. Instead, to become a good servant of Jesus Christ, a person follows carefully those words of faith and of good doctrine; he works to know them, understand them, master them, live by them; he attains unto them
- C. Not that he, during this life, ever completely, perfectly attains to all of it, but he strives to do so, and accomplishes much

CONCLUSION

A good servant of Jesus Christ is nourished in the words of faith and good doctrine which he has followed

If you would be a good servant of Jesus Christ, nourish yourself in the words of the faith and of good doctrine; follow them closely.

If you would have the children after you become good servants of Jesus Christ, nourish them in the words of the faith and of good doctrine, and exhort them to follow them closely.

-and pray for them in this

-and set them a good example of this

Be encouraged; trust in the program that the Lord Jesus has set for us, His servants.

-Timothy was, indeed, nourished by the words of faith and good doctrine, and did become a good servant of Jesus Christ

-If you, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, eagerly receive that same nourishment, you also will be a good servant of Jesus Christ

Allison - Prelude

Allison - Trinity 87 "Holy, Holy, Holy"

Rita - Trinity 774 "When Morning Lights the Eastern Sky"

Rita - Trinity 672 "He Lifted Me"

Dillon - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Colossians 2:13-15

Stephen - Scripture Reading - Psalm 143

Chris - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - Revelation 22:1-3

Oh, that sounds so meaningful!

I need to make sure my family and I do not eat this food.

OR

I need to make sure my family and I DO eat this food.

OR

I need to make sure my family takes these vitamins or anoints with these oils

-If that holds any profit for you and your family, it is only a little.

MacArthur:

“Don’t you fool around with what is radically opposed to that which is holy, and don’t you fool around to something that is opposite the truth.”

“For bodily exercise profits a little.” What does he mean by that? It profits a little in two ways: extent and duration. It profits a little. In extent, it’s only good for the physical body. In duration, it’s only good for the time. In fact, it’s a short time.

profane G952 *bebelos*

JRY: not holy

In OT usage, *bebelos* is not the opposite of righteous, but of common

e.g. holy bread and common bread

The reason that “cussing” is called “profanity” is that it takes the name of the Lord our God in vain; it treats the terms “Lord,” and “God,” and “Jesus Christ” as if they were just common words, not holy words set apart to refer to the one true God. That’s why it’s also called “vulgar,” because “vulgar” means “common.”

Leviticus 10:10 to distinguish between sacred and profane, and between clean and unclean,

1 Samuel 21:4-5 And the priest answered David, and said, There are no common loaves under my hand, for I have none but holy loaves: if the young men have been kept at least from women, then they shall eat them. 5 And David answered the priest, and said to him, Yea, we have been kept from

women for three days: when I came forth for the journey all the young men were purified; but this expedition is unclean, wherefore it shall be sanctified this day because of my weapons.

Ezekiel 21:25 And thou profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day, even and end, is come in a sea of iniquity, thus saith the Lord;

Ezekiel 22:26 Her priests also have set at nought my law, and profaned my holy things: they have not distinguished between the holy and profane, nor have they distinguished between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I was profaned in the midst of them.

Ezekiel 44:23 And they shall teach my people to distinguish between holy and profane, and they shall make known to them the difference between unclean and clean.

godliness G2150 *eusebeia*

It has been nearly two years since this word came up in 1 Timothy 2:2

2 Peter 3:10-11 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and **godliness [G2150 *eusebeia*]**

we studied this word 1 Timothy 2:2, about a year and a half ago

two words, this is the second, rendered “godliness”

matters pertaining to the worship of God, to piety, to devotion; the whole matter of God dealing with man, and man dealing with God

the issue of man’s duty to love God, and what God provides in His grace by which men can be righteous before Him

1. examples of the words of faith and sound doctrine

a) Jesus Christ gave His life a ransom for many

(1) Matthew 20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and **to give [G1325 *didomi*]** His life a **ransom [G3083 *lutron*]** for many."

(a) before going any further with this, sinners, take that as the best possible news to hear

(2) 1 Timothy 2:5b-6 ...the man Christ Jesus, who **gave [G1325 *didomi*]** Himself a **ransom [G487 *antilutron*]** for all...

(3) 1 Timothy 2:1-5 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, (2) for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. (3) For this is good and acceptable in the sight

of God our Savior, (4) who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (5) For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

b) sinners cannot save themselves by their works of righteousness; but God shows mercy, and justifies sinners by His grace

(1) Luke 18:9-14 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were **righteous**, and despised others: (10) "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. (11) The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. (12) I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' (13) And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, **be merciful** to me a **sinner!**' (14) I tell you, this man went down to his house **justified** rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

(2) Titus 3:3-8 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. (4) But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, (5) **not by works of righteousness** which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, (6) whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, (7) that having been **justified by His grace** we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (8) This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

(3) Man cannot save himself by good works

(a) Titus 3:5 not by works of **righteousness [G1343 *dikaiousune*]** which we have done

(b) Luke 18:9,12 who trusted in themselves that they were **righteous [G1342 *dikaios*]**...I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess

(4) God is merciful to sinners

(a) Titus 3:5 but according to His **mercy [G1656 *eleos*]** (see verse 3 for us as sinners)

(b) Luke 18:13 God, be **merciful [G2433 *hilaskomai*]** to me, a sinner!

(5) Justification is by God's grace

(a) Titus 3:7 having been **justified [G1344 *dikaioo*]** by His grace

(b) Luke 18:14 this man went down to his house **justified [G1344 *dikaioo*]**

- c) 1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.
- d) 1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.
- e) 2 Timothy 1:9-10 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, (10) but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,
- f) 2 Timothy 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,
- g) 2 Timothy 4:1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:
- h) 2 Timothy 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.
- i) 2 Timothy 4:18 And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!
- j) Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, (12) teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, (13) looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, (14) who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.
- k) Titus 3:4-7 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, (5) not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, (6) whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, (7) that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

V. Diet

VI. What we do not eat or feed to others

A. the profane

- 1. doctrines that present things as holy, which our Lord Jesus has not told us are holy

B. old wives' fables

1. doctrines that present things as true, which our Lord Jesus has not told us are true
- VII. What we do eat and feed to others: the words of faith; or the words of the faith and of the good doctrine
- A. words of faith
 - B. words of good doctrine
 - C. examples
- VIII. What profits us little: bodily exercise
- IX. What profits us in all things: exercise unto godliness