

Text: 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Title: Surviving the Last Days

Truth: Bible truth will sustain the Christian through Dangerous Times

Date/Location: Sunday September 11, 2016 at FBC

Introduction

The first 9 verses of chapter 3 concern non-Christians who are part of the axis of evil that will increasingly dominate world culture in the last days. This is a threat to the church. Last time we outlined their character and conduct. They are people who resist the truth, have corrupt minds, and fall far short when evaluated by God concerning the Christian faith. In the end, they will face severe judgment, and their foolishness will become obvious. In the meanwhile, their self-centered character works evil in the world as they pursue their idolatry to the full.

The remaining verses in the chapter (and the next) instruct Timothy about what he must do in response to the growing threat.

I. Ponder Paul's Example, 10-12

A. Timothy was a student of Paul's in that he learned Christian truth from him; but Timothy was also a student of Paul's life. He knew what Paul was all about. Even more than that, Timothy followed Paul in that he was a close associate of Paul and experienced some of these things along with him.

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| 1. Doctrine | 7. Perseverance |
| 2. Manner of life | 8. Persecutions |
| 3. Purpose | 9. Afflictions. Examples: Antioch, Iconium, Lystra (Acts 13–14), which were the first persecutions Paul experienced in his traveling missionary work. |
| 4. Faith | |
| 5. Longsuffering | 10. God rescued Paul from all these things. This is a powerful testimony of the goodness of God. |
| 6. Love | |

B. All godly likewise will suffer persecution. Timothy had to know that Paul was not the only one who would suffer persecution. He was to arm himself with the mindset that would be ready to do the same.

1. Many, many of our brothers and sisters in the world in recent decades, my friends, have suffered similar and terrible persecution *simply because they believe in Jesus*. Why? What sense does it make? The explanation is a special kind of hatred in the heart of the oppressors against God and His people.
2. Notice Paul's implicit call to live godly in Christ Jesus. Nay, not just to live that way, but to *want* to live that way. The living comes out of the desiring, the wanting, the longing to be righteous. We can only do so "in Christ Jesus," a phrase so rich with theological meaning we could spend an entire hour and more just on that idea alone.

3. In a similar way, you will suffer if you decide to follow Jesus. It may not be martyrdom. It may be other things like ostracism from family; loss of opportunities in the world; jail; etc.

II. Reiteration of the Threat, v. 13

- A. In distinction from the godly who will suffer persecution, the ungodly will grow worse and worse.
- B. The ungodly are described by two phrases: evil men and impostors. The evil men are simply those who are evil. They are bad people and have no concern to hide it. Then there are those who are wolves who hide in the clothing of sheep to look like harmless people (Acts 20:29-30). These are the impostors. They are probably even more dangerous because of their stealth nature.
- C. We said before that human depravity is not static. That is, it does not remain the same. And it does not get better either. It gets worse. It is "progressive." By the way, that is generally what modern political progressivism is (liberalism, socialism, and ultimately communism, which is anti-God among other objectionable characteristics).
- D. A major mark of the progressive worsening of mankind will be deception. They will attempt to **deceive others**, and will often succeed. The ironic thing is that they will also **be deceived** themselves, perhaps by each other, by the Devil, and even by God's continuing to allow them to have the veil of ignorance over their hearts (2 Cor. 3:14; 2 Thess. 2:11).

III. Continue in the Things of God, v. 14-17

- The flow of divine information has come to Timothy through a well-defined and understood sequence starting with God making certain things known that could not be known otherwise.
- A. Verse 14: It starts with people that Timothy knew well, like Paul, and his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5).
 - B. They lived a life that was a credible Christian testimony. Paul's example above is example number one.
 - C. These people taught Timothy things. They started early in his life (v. 15).
 - D. Timothy learned the things they taught. He internalized them. He not only heard. He listened and thought.
 - E. Timothy became assured of those things. He embraced them as his own. This is where things really go awry. Young adults, high school and college students: are you assured of the things you have learned? If not, work hard toward that because your whole life really depends on it.
1. Let's be honest. Many of us come to a place of doubt about our spiritual life. But how shall we process those doubts in a righteous manner? We don't run

off and assume that God doesn't exist and we can figure this all out on our own. That's a selfish way to do things.

2. Instead, we must ask God for help. We ask others for help. We resolve not to automatically throw out our faith. We work through things. We study the Bible. We talk to our pastor. We want to honor God, not forget God, in the process.

F. Timothy learned from childhood the things of God (v. 15). Recognize your heritage, and don't bash it. Of course, if your heritage is wrong—like secular atheism, or other false religions—then go ahead and knock it. But when you start out with Christianity, you know God and that He exists, you know Christ died for sinners, you know you are a sinner, you know you need to repent. These are all rock solid truths.

1. Stress the importance of teaching children the Bible. It is this which teaches them the need of salvation and the way of salvation.
2. If you have not had this heritage of godly Christian instruction, you can catch up. We can provide it for you in this church. You can gain the wisdom that is needed for salvation—to be rescued from the awful consequences of sin, death, and separation from God.

3. The bottom line is that you must turn in faith to Jesus Christ to be saved.

G. From where do we ultimately learn these principles? The Holy Scriptures. In other words, the people that taught Timothy were not first in the chain of events. Divine revelation from God started the chain. That revelation is deposited in the Bible. In Timothy's years coming up as a child, all that was available was the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament as we call it. These were their holy writings (Scriptures = writings).

8. These writings were and still are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. They provide the foundation and basis for knowing God.

IV. The Surpassing Nature of the Scriptures

A. Scripture – that which is written. 2 Peter 3:15-16 helps us to know that the New Testament of the Bible is part of the "Scripture" as well.

B. All of it is God-breathed. It is a product of the mind of God. It comes from God. This "inspiration," as it is called, does not focus on the men used to pen the Bible. It does not focus on what happened in them or how the words and message were conveyed through them (see 2 Peter 1:21 for that). This focuses on the origin of Scripture, and that is God.

C. The results, by implication, are that Scripture has to be:

1. Without error, because God cannot err (Prov. 30:5; Psalm 12:6, 119:140).
2. Infallible, because God cannot fail (Matt. 5:18; John 10:35; 1 Peter 1:24-25).

3. Truthful, because God cannot lie (John 17:17; Titus 1:2).

C. The word “profitable” means useful or beneficial. It is profitable for:

1. Doctrine = teaching, either the act or the content. The pastor has a divine sourcebook from which to speak. The Bible is a teaching book that teaches you how to rightly believe, think, and act.
2. Reproof = strong disapproval, rebuke. The Bible is beneficial because it tells you where you are going wrong.
3. Correction = improvement. The Bible is profitable because it helps you to improve where you have been reproved!
4. Instruction in righteousness = provides guidance in how to live a God-pleasing life. How can a person be right with God? By paying heed to the Bible.

D. The Scriptures are then described in terms of what they accomplish. The above characteristics outfit the man of God (Timothy) so that he will be complete and fully equipped to do all the good works that God has ordained for him (Ephesians 2:10).

1. This verse gives us the doctrine of the **sufficiency of Scripture**. Let us take for granted for the moment that Scripture is necessary. Every Christian must embrace that truth, even in the face of modern pastors like Andy Stanley who want to untie the church’s ministry from Scripture and tie it to something else (the resurrection in his case).
2. But is the Bible really sufficient? What does the pastor need other than the Scriptures to be thoroughly equipped? What does the Christian need more than the Bible to be fully prepared to do every good work?
3. Do we need an institution like a denomination or hierarchical church? Do we need additional revelation like new books to add to the Bible, or direct revelation from God as via impressions or audible voices? Do we need tongues to give us revelation from God? Do we need other charismatic or Pentecostal gifts? The answer to these questions is that we do **not** need anything more.

Conclusion

You may be at a loss when faced with terrible news like we read in 2 Timothy 3:1-9, or the terrible remembrance of September 11, 2001. The following verses tell us what to do: keep godly examples in the front of your eyes; continue in what you have learned about Christianity; and be a man or woman or boy or girl of the Book, the Bible. Whether you “feel it” or not, the Bible will outfit you completely to live life for God in this sinful world. Period. Get into it!

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