

Bible Lessons



Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 40, No. 2
April, May, June
2008

Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, OK
73044

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People
(USPS054-680)

Volume 40

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Table of Contents

DATE	LESSON TITLE	PAGE
April 6	Lawful Use of the Mosaic Law in the Gospel	1
13	Leading A Life in All Godliness and Honesty	6
20	Submission and Leadership	11
27	False Doctrines Versus True Godliness	16
May 4	Giving Attendance to the Doctrine of Christ	21
11	Following Christ to Escape the Final Judgment	27
18	The Love of Money Versus Desire for True Riches	32
25	Saved and Called with an Holy Calling	36
June 1	Enduring Hardness as a Good Soldier	42
8	Being a Sanctified Vessel for the Master's Use	47
15	Holding Fast to Faith in Perilous Times	51
22	Being Faithful in the Gospel of Christ	55
29	Facing the End of Life with Victory	59

**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of
Jesus Christ and His Church**
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**Subscription Price-\$1.50 a copy for quarter of year, or
\$5.00 per year, issued quarterly.**
Periodical postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.

Published Quarterly By:
FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE
4318 S. Division
Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044
Postmaster: Please send address corrections
to above address.

THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER

We feel inspired to bring a series of lessons from the two epistles of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, his well-beloved son in the Gospel. His writings in these letters have been a great inspiration to our hearts through the years. Paul's teachings and counsel in these two wonderful sets of Holy Scriptures cover a number of vital subjects and themes. While rejoicing and being thankful for Christ's wonderful invitation given to him, and for his call to preach the Gospel, Paul imparts the beautiful principles of a godly life and character that is enjoined upon all who would follow the meek and lowly Savior. He touches upon women and what God is calling them to be in their conduct and manner of life and dress. He also dwells upon the qualification of bishops and deacons as good examples to the flock of God. He gives much warning of false doctrines that depart from the principles of godliness. The warning against covetousness and the love of earthly wealth is strongly dealt with in his teachings. We have other important items of study in this series of lessons. We pray the Lord's blessings to accompany this study through this wonderful part of the New Testament Scriptures. —Bro. Leslie Busbee



APRIL 6, 2008

LAWFUL USE OF THE MOSAIC LAW IN THE GOSPEL

1 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is our hope;*

2 Unto Timothy, *my own son* in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do.*

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of a good conscience*, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain to jangling;

7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: of whom I am chief.

MEMORY VERSE: Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. I Timothy 1:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God gave His holy law, through Moses, not to justify man, but to cause man to be aware of his sin and transgression before God. Jesus came to fulfill the law and enable us to love God and our fellowman with a pure heart and live a life of true faith in God, without condemnation or guilt.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Timothy 1:4, "*fables*": Fictitious tales or myths. "*endless genealogies*": Surveying of generations without any real conclusion. "*which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith*": The Greek text reads: "which cause or furnish doubts rather than a stewardship of God in faith."

Verse 5, "*the end of the commandment*": This means the goal, purpose, conclusion and final result that God wants His law to have in the heart and life of man. "*unfeigned*": Sincere and without pretense.

Verse 6, "*swerved*": Missed the mark and deviated from the truth. "*vain jangling*": Idle and empty talk.

Verse 7, "*affirm*": Trying to confirm thoroughly by words.

Verse 8, "*use it (the law) lawfully*": Handle, apply or furnish it for the profit of man.

Verse 9, "*the law is made*": This means that the law was appointed; set up; laid down. "*profane*": Heathenish or wicked.

Verse 10, "*whoremongers*": Fornicators; those who carry on unlawful sexual relations. "*them that defile themselves with mankind*": Homosexuals. "*menstealers*": Slave-traders. "*perjured persons*": People who swear by a false oath.

Verse 13, "*blasphemer*": One who uses indecent, abusive, or vulgar language. "*persecutor*": One who seeks to afflict or harass constantly so as to injure or distress, especially for reasons of religion, politics or race. "*injurious*": Abusive, violent and harmful.

Verse 15, "*worthy of all acceptance*": Worth receiving completely. "*sinnners; of whom I am chief*": Foremost and the worst of transgressors against God. This was Paul's estimation of himself before he found Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Timothy was a young Christian disciple whom Paul found at Lystra, whose mother was a believing Jewess, but whose father was a Greek. He was well reported of by the brethren in that area, so Paul desired that he go forth with him in the work of the Gospel. (Acts 16:1-3.) We have these two epistles, or letters, that Paul wrote to young Timothy, the first from Laodicea, and the second from Rome not long before Paul finished his course and was martyred. Both of these writings are full of wonderful spiritual counsel, and the instructions are very beneficial for us today.

In our lesson today we have Paul's wise counsel and warning against the misuse and application of the law of God given to Moses. He makes it very clear that the law was not given to bring righteousness, but it was given to reprove and

make known what was sin in God's sight. Yet there were those who made use of the law and desired to teach the law, not knowing just what God's purpose was in giving the law. Paul brought this out more clearly in Romans 7. And, in making man aware of his sin, the law pointed to the holy and righteous manner that the love of God in Christ could help us to live and follow. Then Paul expressed his gratitude to God for saving him, who was chief among sinners, and calling him to proclaim the glorious Gospel of Christ Jesus Who came into the world to save sinners. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God have in mind in laying down His holy law?
2. What condition was man in that made him needy of the law?
3. When the law is applied lawfully what effect does it have in man?
4. What was Paul's estimation of himself prior to Christ saving him?
5. What can the abundant grace of Jesus accomplish in man today?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is very plain in the teachings of the Apostle Paul that the law was not given to bring righteousness. It was given by God to help man to see his sin and need of mercy and grace for forgiveness and deliverance. Not by being obedient to the law was man able to win the favor of God. Sin was stronger than man's ability to deliver himself from its bondage. It was simply the means of man becoming conscious of his guilt and condemnation before God. But satan had a way of deceiving men to think that their good deeds and righteousness of their own endeavoring to keep the law was the means of their salvation. So while they were patting themselves on the back for their seeming good accomplishment, in the sight of God they were condemned even more than ever. Thus it was only through the righteousness of Christ's obedience to God, in submitting to the death of the cross as an atonement for sin, that man could attain to the deliverance and victory over sin that he needed so desperately to attain to. But, for this mercy and grace to be received in the heart, man had to be made aware of his wretched and sinful condition.

This is the light and understanding that Paul received through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. And this was the thing that set him at naught with the self-righteous Jews. They saw not Christ as the answer to their need, for they felt no need. Christ was a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to them, just like He is today. Many deluded souls are not aware of their need of Christ because they are not aware of their lost, guilty, defiled and erring condition of heart and life. But when man becomes aware of his awful condition, and humbles himself to acknowledge and confess his need, the door opens wide to faith and trust and overcoming strength to conquer sin, and to have holiness, righteousness and truth enthroned in the heart, causing charity, a good conscience and unfeigned faith to abound. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There are many examples that could be taken from Christ's teachings that would illustrate how the Law was misused by the men of Jesus' day and failed to bring about the change of heart that God desired them to have. Several times Jesus prefaced His teachings with the statement, "ye have heard—But I say unto you," calling attention to the wrongful application of the Law by carnal men. Notice Matthew 5:43-44, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies..." You can probably think of other examples. Much of Jesus' teachings in this chapter focus on the changes that need to occur in the heart for one to truly please God.

The question presented to Jesus by the rich young ruler gave voice to the longing that remained in his heart even though he had kept the commandments from his youth up. Matthew 19:16 says, "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" This man had been doing good things, yet good things of themselves are not sufficient to give eternal life. Perfect obedience to the will of God is the answer, but when Jesus put His finger on the things the young ruler's heart was centered on, he went away sorrowful, for he had great earthly riches.

When an issue of holiness is presented to mankind, there is a tendency of the flesh to swerve around it, just as the priest

and the Levite went around the man who needed help, in the illustration of the Good Samaritan. Those who take this detour fail to find the true satisfaction and blessing that comes from obeying Christ with a pure heart. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey



APRIL 13, 2008

LEADING A LIFE IN ALL GODLINESS AND HONESTY

I Timothy 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies that went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

I Timothy 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

MEMORY VERSE: Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. II Peter 3:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Professing Jesus Christ must be accompanied by a conscientious life of godliness and honesty by both men and women in the way they behave themselves before men and in the sight of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Timothy 1:16, "*Howbeit for this cause*": Nevertheless for this reason. "*first*": At the beginning of the Christian era. "*show forth all long-suffering*": Give evidence of Christ's great mercy and forbearance. "*pattern*": An example to typify as a sketch for everyone to see.

Verse 18, "*prophecies which went before on thee*": Or, to thee. The prophetic writings inspired of old by the Holy Spirit were all given for the benefit of everyone who would seek to please God and follow Christ. "*war a good warfare*": Wage a victorious fight of faith and obedience to God.

Verse 20, "*delivered unto Satan*": Turned them loose to suffer the consequences of their error with prayer to God that they would get wise and repent.

I Timothy 2:1, "*supplications*": Petitions and requests unto God. "*for all men*": On the behalf and for the welfare of all humanity.

Verse 2, "*that we may lead*": That our days may be spent. "*honesty*": Honor and reverence for God.

Verse 4, "*will have all men to be saved*": Desires all men to be delivered. "*knowledge*": Complete discernment and recognition.

Verse 6, "*a ransom for all*": A redemption price on everyone's behalf.

Verse 7, "*ordained*": Divinely appointed by God. "*I speak the truth*": In speaking of his being ordained to be a preacher and an apostle, Paul did not want to sound boastful or lifted

up, but wanted to declare that it was the truth that he was called of Christ.

Verse 8, "*lifting up holy hands*": Manifesting and showing a holy life. "*without wrath or doubting*": With loving forgiveness and full assurance of faith.

Verse 9, "*modest apparel*": Orderly and decent clothing consistent with holiness and what pleases God. "*shamefacedness*": With downcast eyes; not wanting to show or display their body to be attractive to men. "*sobriety*": Soundness of mind and self-discipline. "*broided hair*": Having the hair interwoven and braided with ornaments and fancy colors. "*gold or pearls*": Any kind of jewelry or ornaments attached or worn. "*costly array*": Expensive garments.

Verse 10, "*which becometh women professing godliness*": That which is suitable and proper for the women who testify to be followers of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our first scripture in today's lesson from I Timothy, Paul expresses his conviction of why he obtained such great mercy, after stating in verse 15 that he had been chief of sinners. He felt that he was chosen then at the start of the Christian dispensation of grace to be an example of the longsuffering of God to the ages and generations which were to follow. This should be a great witness of the love and goodness of the Lord to bring encouragement and comfort to all who seek His saving and keeping grace. And, as he said in verse 17, all honor and glory goes to the only all wise, immortal, and invisible God.

Then we have more of Paul's charge to Timothy which we can be instructed from even today. There are things to be very watchful and careful about to avoid shipwreck and failure. The responsibilities of living a successful Christian life are solemn and many, but let us remember that they do afford the greatest reward and benefit that we could ever receive.

Let us take notice of the counsels in the last three verses. Both men and women are called to a holy life of godliness and obedience to God. Let us especially be attentive to the instruction for women. It is concerning these things that women are so prone to depart from the faith. The outward beauty is a big item in girls and women. We can look around us and see this is so true. But Paul plainly names out this matter and gives

appropriate counsel. He coincides with Peter who in I Peter 3:3-4 said, concerning women, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." These are vital instructions; to disregard and reject them is a transgression and sin in the sight of our holy and righteous Creator. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTION:

1. What did Paul feel that his conversion to Christ would portray?
2. What did some put away concerning faith, causing shipwreck?
3. Why is it wise and good to pray and intercede for all men?
4. How can men truly lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting?
5. What adorning should godly women seek to wear?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The great work of the Lord Jesus Christ in the life of the Apostle Paul is truly a great example of the longsuffering, forbearance and mercy of the Almighty God. As he stated in our previous lesson, before being saved and called to the ministry of the Gospel, he was a blasphemer, a persecutor and an injurious person. He felt that he should do everything in his power to destroy the teachings of Christ and those who followed Him. And he was going about with all the zeal and efforts he could muster to accomplish it. Oh, what a change took place when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus and became aware that the One he was fighting against was truly the Christ, the Son of the living God! It was a wonderful witness of the love and mercy of the Almighty. It has inspired and helped many people down through time.

In an evangelistic meeting in Chicago years ago, there was a policeman who was withstanding the efforts put forth and causing quite a problem to the Christian workers. But they were praying, and one day one of the workers came out with a song, the first part of it saying, "What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought since Jesus came into my heart!" It

is said that when that policeman heard that song, it struck him with such forceful conviction that he melted and surrendered to the Lord. Another man who was a professed infidel decided to try to write a book against Jesus in an effort to help what he called "those deluded people" who believed in Him. As he worked diligently to gather information and material for his book, he was brought face to face with the reality that everything pointed to it being the truth. This man also surrendered and was saved. The result was a book he wrote about the truth of Christ. These witnesses, along with many more in history help to assure our hearts about the Lord Jesus and the truth that He brought to the world. Thank God that He has made it possible for Paul's testimony to be preserved down through the ages so that we also can be assured of its truth.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A prophet, according to the Scripture, had three important responsibilities. (1) To predict future events, such as God's punishments upon a nation. He was then to (2) petition God to avert or withhold these judgments. He was also to (3) preach to sinners and counsel them to turn from their wicked ways.

As God's prophets and priests today, we are to follow this example. We see impending judgments. But do we earnestly entreat God to change the hearts of men and bring repentance? This is the meaning of the word *prayers* in our lesson today. To *supplicate* means to beg or petition. This particularly means "prayers for averting evil of all kinds." (Clarke.) The word *intercessions* gives us the idea of an interview, or conference with God, where we entreat Him and deal with Him, as Abraham did concerning the coming judgment upon Sodom. It implies taking a chance, as did the king of Nineveh, when he said, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent. . .?" Jonah 3:9.

Our lesson also mentions "giving of thanks." This can be a challenge. May God help us to express grateful language instead of gripes about our government.

After we pray, we also have a responsibility to speak to others. We can write or visit our elected representatives, governor or president. As someone has said, "Get down on

your knees and talk to God about men. Then, and only then, go out and talk to men about God."

We sometimes take a fatalistic approach to national and world events: "The evil in our world will just get worse and worse until it takes over." But, according to the admonition in Paul's letter, the Saints of God have a special power concerning world events and governments, and that is the power of prayer. Do we employ this power as we should?

—Sis. Angela Callenbeck



APRIL 20, 2008

SUBMISSION AND LEADERSHIP

1 Timothy 2:11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

1 Timothy 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a good conscience.

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: ...Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. I Peter 5:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Those who are leaders in the Church of God must be good examples of holiness and righteousness before those in the Church and before the world.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Timothy 2:12, "*suffer not*": Do not allow. "*usurp authority over the man*": Exercise authority of a man. "*silence*": Quiet reverence and respect.

Verse 15, "*saved in childbearing*": Blessed and carried safely through the childbearing stage of life. (This same expression is used in two other places: I Corinthians 3:15, "*saved; yet so as by fire*": Brought safely through the fire, and I Peter 3:20, "*saved by water*": Carried safely through water.) "*charity*": The love of God. "*sobriety*": Soundness of mind and self-discipline.

I Timothy 3:1, "*desire*": Aspire to or reach out after. "*office*": Responsible position. "*bishop*": Overseer; pastor or spiritual leader. "*blameless*": Without reproach. "*vigilant*": Circumspect; being watchful in every direction. "*sober*": Same as sobriety: sound in mind with self control. "*of good behaviour*": Of orderly and suitable conduct. "*given to hospitality*": Fond and loving to guests. "*apt to teach*": Able to teach others.

Verse 3, "*not given to wine*": Not a drinker or one who keeps wine near at hand. "*not a striker*": One who does not quarrel or smite with words. "*not greedy of filthy lucre*": Not given to or guilty of desire for ill-gotten or dishonest gain.

"patient": Mild and gentle. *"not a brawler"*: One who does not argue or quarrel. *"not covetous"*: Not greedy for money or wealth.

Verse 4, *"gravity"*: Being venerable and worthy of respect and honor.

Verse 6, *"novice"*: One newly converted to the faith.

Verse 8, *"deacons"*: Those who minister and serve in temporal things as well as spiritual things. *"not doubletongued"*: One whose words are reputed to be dependable and true.

Verse 9, *"holding the mystery of the faith"*: Knowing the spiritual things of God with a clear and conscientious attitude.

Verse 10, *"first be proved"*: Be found faithful in trials and tests of life previous to assuming the responsibilities of a leader.

Verse 13, *"used the office"*: Ministered and labored faithfully in the work of the office he or she holds.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today has Paul's counsel concerning three different kinds of people: the woman, the bishop and the deacon.

In our previous lesson, Paul had just given counsel about how a woman should dress and adorn herself. The vain outward adorning was to be refused, and the inward beauty to be desired and made manifest. Then he brought out how a woman should be silent and submissive to man. And he gave the reason for his convictions on this by referring to the fall of man and how it was the woman who was deceived by the tempter and that Adam was made first. This submission and silence cannot be applied to forbidding the woman to preach, as many suppose. For Paul himself said in Galatians 3:28 that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. And the prophet Joel prophesied concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit that "...your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...." Joel 2:28. Peter quoted this on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit had come in Acts 2:17. One of the deacons, Philip, who became a minister of the Gospel, had four daughters who prophesied. (Acts 21:9.) Paul spoke of the women who labored with him in the Gospel in Philipians 4:3 and of Phebe, "our sister, which is a servant of the church in Cenchrea" and what a blessing she had been to many, and

even to him. (Romans 16:1-2.) But, this is also to be accompanied by a submissive attitude, especially to her husband.

The counsels given concerning qualifications for a bishop are very good, and it is wise and pleasing to God for everyone to respect and conform to them. It is a serious thing to take the sacred stand and give out the Word of God. The deacons have freedom to exercise their office as the Holy Spirit leads and anoints, and as Stephen and Philip, of the seven deacons appointed in the morning church, they may well be used of the Lord in the ministry of the word of the Gospel.

But, as our lesson shows, there are standards of life and character that must accompany the ministers of the New Testament Gospel of Christ for it to be effectual and blessed of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it proper for a woman to be in subjection to the man?
2. What is required to be carried safely through childbirth?
3. Why is it so important for a bishop to live such a blameless life?
4. Why should a bishop not be one newly come to the faith?
5. Why should a bishop or deacon have but one wife?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The desire to be a bishop or minister of the Gospel should be preceded by a total and perfect consecration in the heart to do the will of God, and a complete death to the world, self and pride. There should be no appetite for pre-eminence or the lifting up of one's self in the eyes of the people. It is not for position or financial gain that one should desire the ministry of the Lord Jesus. There should be a sincere burden and concern for souls and the work of the Lord, backed by the anointing and direction of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Humility and meekness should be a ruling factor in the life of a Gospel worker. All the things mentioned in our lesson concerning the ministers of the Lord Jesus are vital and very expedient. One's life and actions bear more weight on a person's ministry than the things that he or she says from the pulpit. Oh, how careful

and prayerful one should be if they are to carry the banner of the Gospel! How many people down through the years have failed to come up to the standard of holiness and righteousness in their lives, thus disqualifying them from being an efficient and successful worker for the Lord! Much prayer and careful living must be employed. There have been some who have been lifted up with pride. And there are those whose house and family standards have fallen below the level of decency and wise management, thus disqualifying them from the work of the Gospel. Let us all be diligent and watchful that we may be accounted worthy of the high and holy vocation God has called us to!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The word *minister* in the verb form means: "to give service, care or aid; attend, as to wants, necessities; to contribute, as to comfort, happiness; synonym: servant." Ministry is simply serving the people: whether it is bringing the good news of Jesus Christ, fortifying God's people or giving aid to a lost world, it all sums up to the same—being a servant to souls. When a minister steps outside of these boundaries, he/she is no longer a true minister of God.

Just as there are different ministers, there are many types of ministry. "And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." Jude 22-23. Some ministers are soft spoken, while others speak with thunderous tones. Some preach hell-fire and damnation messages, while others deal with the home life and relationships. Each type of ministry works together to promote the Kingdom of God in individual lives. The Holy Spirit is the key in placing the burden of the message on the vessel of God's choosing. It is all a part of God's perfect plan.

A minister that chooses to use this office for pride, personal financial gain or pre-eminence is in grave danger of the wrath of God. In Mark 12:38-40 it says, "...Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: which devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

APRIL 27, 2008

FALSE DOCTRINES VERSUS TRUE GODLINESS

I Timothy 3:14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

I Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

11 These things command and teach.

MEMORY VERSE: Bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. I Timothy 4:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Since God has so wonderfully revealed Himself and the way of true godliness by Jesus coming into the world, we must be on our guard against the workings of satan—all of his deceptions and false religions—that he is surely going to come against us with.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Timothy 3:15 "*behave*": Live and labor faithfully. "*pillar*": What holds up straight and level. "*ground*": Foundation, basis, and support.

Verse 16, "*without controversy*": Confessedly; with a true and undeniable witness. "*great*": Far reaching, high, strong and admirable. "*mystery of godliness*": The fear, love and respect for God that is hidden from the worldly and proud. "*justified in the Spirit*": Proven to be just and accepted by the Spirit of God. Christ was shown to be accepted and approved of God by the manifestation of His meek, lowly and holy life and the miracles and healings that He wrought and by being raised from the dead by the power of God.

I Timothy 4:1, "*speaketh expressly*": Speaks in words clearly and distinctly. "*seducing spirits*": Deceptive spirits of the devil that pull down the souls of men to standards unacceptable to the holiness of God.

Verse 2, "*hypocrisy*": Feigning to be something but not real or true. "*conscience seared*": The heart and mind of man that is rendered insensitive and having no awareness nor perception.

Verse 5, "*sanctified*": Made holy, clean and lawful to partake of.

Verse 7, "*profane and old wives fables*": Heathen and foreign like a silly old woman. "*exercise thyself*": Practice in one's own heart and life. "*godliness*": piety; deep fervent respect and honour to God.

Verse 8, "*bodily exercise*": Physical strength and endeavor. "*profitable*": Helpful, edifying, of good service and of great advantage.

Verse 9, "*worthy of all acceptance*": Suitable for complete acceptance and good heed.

Verse 10, "*specially*": Particularly; most in the greatest degree.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today there are found some wonderful and vitally important truths. First is the thought of the house of God, which is declared to be the church, or congregation, of the living God. This church is found in the hearts and lives of people who are saved, sanctified and being led by the Spirit of God. Paul wrote this epistle with a desire to help everyone to know how to conduct themselves in this spiritual house. It is serious business and demands sincere and wholehearted response and commitment. Paul follows this statement with a solid declaration of the undeniable truth that surrounded and established the Christian faith. It is a wonderful exhibition of God's visit to mankind. He was clearly exposed to human sight, plainly in one accord with the Spirit of holiness, beheld and upheld by angels, commissioned to be preached to the nations, believed on and received in the hearts of men and women and received back up into the realms of eternity.

Then we have the warning about the workings of satan and the deceptive tactics and devices he employs to deceive the hearts of men, as an opposition to the work of Christ. Paul mentions two elements in this satanic move, the one forbidding to marry, and the other to abstain from meats. This is an Old Testament precept, that had a spiritual meaning, and is no longer binding upon the New Testament believers, no more than the literal Sabbath and offering up of literal sacrifices are binding. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it is received with thanksgiving." That is definite. "For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." This gives us great freedom and access to God's help and blessings upon what food is supplied for us. It is a serious matter, and asking a blessing upon a meal is not to be taken lightly. Without the blessings of God, our food will not be the blessing that we need.

Then the statement about how profitable it is to exercise one's self unto godliness is a worthy thing for everyone to consider. Physical and natural things of earth will perish, but being reverent and respectful to our Creator and His precious Word is profitable for our eternal welfare and happiness.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of behavior is required to be in the house of God?
2. How was God manifest in the flesh and justified in the Spirit?
3. What are some of the false doctrines that the devil promotes?
4. Why is bodily exercise of little profit?
5. What does it mean to be godly and why is it so profitable?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is a wonderful thing to be in the New Testament House of God. To be in this spiritual house one must be born from above, changed from a fleshly, material mind and heart, to the reality of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is what created the world and gave life and being to us. If we are confined to material things of flesh and earth that are seen, we will miss the most important part of us. God is a Spirit and man is also a spirit. But this spirit of man is housed in a fleshly dwelling. The flesh must be subdued and under strict control of the Spirit if there is to be a reality of spiritual things. God worked a wonderful operation in His visit to this earthly realm. He left enough witness and testimony to satisfy and enlighten the soul of man to His wonderful richness and reality. People can deny it, ignore it and refuse to conform to His wonderful way. But those who are willing to acknowledge their sin and conform to the image of His Son will find a satisfaction that nothing else can equal.

Satan has always withstood the work of God. And the accomplishment of Christ will not be otherwise. Satan will work against the holiness and spiritual values of the Lord, and we have to be on our guard and let the Spirit of Christ guide our hearts and minds against his devices. It is Satan's work to get people to profess religion but have ideas and thoughts contrary to the truth of the Gospel of God. But the Holy Spirit will reveal the truth to every sincere and honest heart who will be willing to walk in His light. Everyone should follow righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness.

They should pursue these things and apply them to their hearts and lives. By doing this we can escape the snares of the devil and be wise to his devices to seduce and deceive. "Godliness with contentment is great gain". I Timothy 6:6. We must seek after godliness and apply it faithfully to our walk of life. Only through it will we really possess the life that now is and that which is to come.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The apostle Paul was very concerned about the doctrines being taught in the churches of God. We find the word *doctrine* (Gr: teaching, instruction) mentioned many times in the two epistles to Timothy. Paul had first hand experience of the damage that was being caused by satan through false teaching. He encouraged Timothy to abide at Ephesus "that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." Paul's desire was for them to continue in "the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;" which when coupled with the Spirit brought forth good fruit.

Paul warned Timothy, "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;" and "evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." What would the Apostle Paul think of all the various teachings and ideas that are in the world today. These scriptures are being fulfilled. Following both warnings, Paul wrote "Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" and again, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." It is vitally important for us today, to take serious time to "study to show ourselves approved unto God".

Isaiah 40:8, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever." The Scriptures were given by inspiration of God and far surpass what the human mind is able to come up with on its own. "Back to the blessed old Bible."

—Bro. Bob Wilson

MAY 4, 2008

GIVING ATTENDANCE TO THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

I Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given to thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

I Timothy 5:1 Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;

2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

MEMORY VERSE: Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. I Timothy 4:16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We who believe in Jesus Christ and the eternal power and authority God has given to Him need to seriously take to heart all that He taught, and strive to follow and obey Him all the days of our life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Timothy 4:12, "*Let no man despise thy youth*": Give no man any cause or reason to doubt or lightly esteem your youthful ministry. "*example of the believers*": A model for all of those who believe in Christ to follow. "*conversation*": Behavior or conduct. "*in spirit*": Possessing and manifesting the same Spirit that Jesus had.

Verse 13, "*give attendance*": Hold your mind toward. "*to reading*": Pay attention to what is being read from the Scriptures, even if you have already heard it. Being attentive will give the Holy Spirit opportunity to open up deeper depths of truth. "*exhortation*": Words of comfort and consolation. "*doctrine*": Instruction, learning, and teaching.

Verse 14, "*gift*": The divine bestowment of special grace and the indwelling Holy Spirit inspiration. "*given to thee by prophecy*": Inspired and conveyed through the preaching of the Gospel under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. "*the presbytery*": The elders or older members of the ministry.

Verse 15, "*meditate*": Turn over and weigh thoughtfully in one's mind. "*give thyself wholly*": Be alive, receptive and wholly aware. "*profiting*": Spiritual advancement and progress.

Verse 16, "*Take heed*": Hold on to and retain "*unto thyself*": For your own spiritual welfare. "*unto the doctrine*": Closely conform to the standard of Christ's teaching. "*continue*": Remain unmoved; turn not to anything else.

I Timothy 5:1, "*entreat*": To call near and offer love and fellowship.

Verse 2, "*with all purity*": Complete cleanliness of mind and affection.

Verse 3, "*widows indeed*": Being really widows.

Verse 4, "*shew piety*": Manifest godly respect and caring support. "*requite their parents*": Give back what is due to their parents for what their parents have given for them.

Verse 5, "*desolate*": Bereaved and left alone by the death of her husband.

Verse 6, "*dead while she liveth*": Dead in soul while alive in body.

Verse 7, "*give in charge*": Order, urge, or command with authority.

Verse 8, "*worse than an infidel*": To profess faith in Christ and live contrary to godliness is worse than not believing at all.

Verse 9, "*taken into the number*": Enrolled or accepted to receive aid.

Verse 10: "*lodged strangers*": Is hospitable and willing to accommodate people in need.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have a continuation of Paul's counsel for Timothy in which is found beneficial things for us. Timothy was a young man sold out for God and the work of the Gospel. This is a wise decision to be made by young people, but there are various things to bear in mind if one would really succeed. Young people have much to learn and God will allow difficult trials and temptations to come that will school us in the knowledge of the work of the Lord. We should give diligent heed to the Word of God and to our own hearts and attitudes, which have a vital bearing upon our hope of success and victory. Diligently watching our conversation and ways and disciplining ourselves in conformity to the image of Christ is an indispensable thing we must fulfill. We are not to be beaten back by feelings of inadequacy because of our youth. Let us remember that how we conduct ourselves speaks louder than our words. We must live the Gospel as well as preach it. Setting a godly pattern by our actions and ways is surely a vital function of the Christian minister.

Young people in the Gospel work must also learn to relate to others in a godly manner. Toward those older in the work of the Lord we must show much humility, honor and respect. Perhaps we might see things that we do not approve of in our older brothers and sisters in the Lord, but we must be careful and slow about saying anything about it to them. We must discipline ourselves to have the right attitude toward our fellow young men and women in the congregation. This is a vital area of watching and carefulness. It should be held in strict conformity to purity and righteous behavior.

The counsels given concerning help and support for widows are wise and profitable. In the time before Social Security and Old Age Assistance were available, it was a great

work of the saints of God to see about the care and support of those who were destitute and needy. As Paul said, all members should be faithful in caring for those of their own family, and the church can and must see about helping those who have no one to help them.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is being a proper example so important?
2. What does it mean to meditate and give wholly of one's self?
3. What will we accomplish if we take heed to the doctrine of God?
4. What should be a young person's attitude toward those older?
5. How can a widow qualify for aid and support from the church?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Many years ago when I was a young minister, I was in a tent meeting with an older minister couple. Living in close quarters with them, I began to see things that bothered me, and ways they had that did not seem right. I was tempted to pack my suitcase and leave for home. But I took it earnestly to God in prayer. I really sought the Lord with all my heart for His help for me that I might have the right attitude and do the right thing. I remember when the Lord filled my soul with such victory and love for them, that I overcame my hurt feelings, and all I had left was love and tenderness and a desire to help them. It was a vital lesson for me to learn in the work of the Lord. I remember the morning when we had to part. The Lord showed me to speak to them of the things that I saw that had been a grief to my heart, but He helped me to do it with such love and tenderness. Heaven overshadowed our visit and prayer together, and we left one another still in fellowship and unity of love.

Another time there was an older minister that seemed to be critical of me. Every time he spoke I had the feeling that he was throwing it at me personally. I prayed the Lord to help me. One day this minister was up talking and everything seemed to be all right. And then, all of a sudden, the whole thing twisted in my mind and the devil said, "See, he's throwing that at you!" I saw it was all of the devil, and I began rebuking him

with all of my might in the Spirit of the Lord. God gave me victory that day and the devil was defeated. We must be very diligent to seek the Lord for victory in our own hearts that we will have the right attitude toward others. God can help us in our relations with other people if we will seek His guidance.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Give attendance," "take heed," and "be blameless." If one will diligently incorporate these first two admonitions into their life, they will be able to stand before the judgment seat of Christ without blame. The Lord has been faithful to provide the counsel we need to make Heaven our home.

There are many voices crying for our attention, but do not neglect the voice, and words, of our Savior. Our busy society would fill our time with things of this life, but we must take time to do the will of the Lord if we would be blameless. The energies we exert to overcome the forces and influences that oppose us will be an eternal blessing to our souls.

Honor and respect are due those who have been faithful to the Lord through the years, and the Scripture says, "Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;" Ephesians 6:2. Acts of disrespect for parents or other Saints, even after they have been forgiven, can leave scars that prick the heart for years afterward.

There is a story of Daisy and Dan, twins, who had gone to the store to buy candy. On their way to the store they met up with some other children who had not received proper training at home. Together they crossed a vacant lot that contained a pile of crushed rock. As they came near the pile of rock they met an elderly lady carrying a satchel. She spoke kindly to the children, but one of the boys answered her rudely and stuck his tongue out at her. She said, "My boy, you need someone to teach you how to be a gentlemen." The boy responded roughly, "Oh, do I!" and picking up a rock threw it at her. Another boy did the same, and still another. Now the twins had been taught to be polite, but in bad company it is easy to override the small voice of conscience. Soon, they began to throw rocks also.

No matter how hard Daisy tried, she could not throw a stone straight. But Dan had a better aim and threw a rock, which hit the old lady's hand. Finally the children continued

on to the store. After they made their purchases they gave some of their candy to the rude children.

When Daisy and Dan reached home, they were surprised to find a visitor. It was the old lady whom they had treated so rudely. Mother was crying as she bathed the hand that had been hurt by Dan's rock. "Children, this is your dear grandmother who has come to see you. She arrived on an earlier train than she expected and walked out from the station alone. Some rude children treated her very unkindly on the way."

Their Grandmother said, "Well, Well, is this Daisy and Dan? I should never have taken them to be my grandchildren." The twins expected her to add, "So you are the naughty children who threw stones at me." But she didn't say it. Daisy and Dan hurried from the room as quickly as they could.

After that, whenever they were in the presence of their Grandmother they were very uncomfortable. A few days later Mother commented about how strangely the twins were acting. Daisy happened to be near an open window and heard what her mother said. With her heart pounding she waited for her Grandmother's reply, but she went on with her mending without saying a word. Daisy felt so badly; Grandmother wouldn't tell on them, so she decided to confess. She rushed into the room with tears streaming down her face and laid her head in her mother's lap. She was crying so hard that for a few moments she could not speak. Then Daisy told the whole story. When she finished she threw her arms around her Grandmother and said, "I'm so sorry, dear Grandma!"

Just then Dan came softly into the room and Grandmother held her hands out to him. Dan burst into tears and said, "It was my fault lots more than Daisy's. I threw a stone before she did, and besides, it was my stone that hit your hand." Grandmother talked to the twins a long time in her own quiet way and told them that children who were in bad company were almost sure to do wrong themselves. She finished by saying, "I know such a thing will never happen again." After kissing them both she said, "So now it is all forgiven and forgotten." But the twins could not forget. Grandma went home, and she still wrote letters and sent presents just as if nothing had ever happened. But many years later—long after Daisy and Dan were grown—whenever they thought of

their grandmother, they felt the sting of their rudeness and cruelty to her.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

(Story condensed from *A Hive of Busy Bees*.)



MAY 11, 2008

FOLLOWING CHRIST TO ESCAPE THE FINAL JUDGMENT

1 Timothy 5:11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

25 Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

MEMORY VERSE: Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. I Timothy 5:24.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Every man and woman must be faithful in their life and labors to please the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to meet Him in the great judgment day; escape eternal destruction, and receive a crown of life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Timothy 5:11. "*when they have begun to wax wanton*": The Greek says, "When they grow full of fleshly desires". "*they will marry*": They desire to marry.

Verse 12, "*having damnation*": Deserving judgment. "*cast off their first faith*": Gave up the most important confidence and trust one can have.

Verse 13, "*withal*": At the same time. "*idle*": Lazy, useless. "*wandering about*": Going around. "*tattlers and busybodies*": Meddlesome gossipers. "*things which they ought not*": Things not proper.

Verse 15, "*after Satan*": Following behind satan.

Verse 16, "*let not the church be charged*": Do not burden the church.

Verse 17, "*elders*": Those in leadership who are being efficiently used of God. "*counted worthy of double honour*": Esteemed to be entitled to double support. "*labour*": Work diligently. "*word*": "...The word of God which by the Gospel is preached." I Peter 1:25

Verse 18, "*not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn*": This is speaking of the oxen who were used to tread on bundles of grain to thresh out the grains from the chaff, which was by great fans blown aside. These oxen were to have freedom to take some of the grain for food and not hindered from this by coverings placed around the mouth. This is applied here to the ministers of the Gospel who were to be able to live of the Gospel.

Verse 21, "*elect angels*": This could refer to special angelic beings who may have been especially commissioned to minister to God's people, or the called and chosen and faithful apostles and ministers of the Gospel of Christ. "*without preferring one before another*": Without prejudice. Adam Clarke has these comments: "Promote no man's cause; make

not up thy mind on any case, till thou hast weighed both sides, and heard both parties, with their respective witnesses. Do not treat any man, in religious matters, according to the rank he holds in life, or according to any personal attachment thou mayest have for him."

Verse 22, "*suddenly*": Quickly or without careful thought and full knowledge. "...Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." James 1:19- 20.

Verse 24, "*open beforehand*": Obvious, exposed, confessed and forsaken. "*going before to judgment*": Coming under the judgment of the Gospel of Christ and gotten out of the way. "*follow after*": Accompany them to their destruction.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson, Paul addressed the subject of the church's care for widows and how they were to conduct themselves in order to qualify for the benefits of such. Our lesson today begins with his treatment of the subject of younger widows and the difficulty met with them, as they are more likely to be tempted and influenced by fleshly desires, rather than godly fear. And he gave the reminder that believers in Christ should be faithful to care for widows in their family, that the church would not be overburdened and would be better able to help the widows that really needed the church's support.

Then Paul spoke of the faithful and efficient elders, who are leading the congregations in the worship of God, being counted worthy of support, quoting from two Old Testament scriptures that he applies to the elders and their need for support and consideration. The one about not muzzling the ox that treads out the corn is from Deuteronomy 25:4, and the other one about the labourer being worthy of his reward is from Leviticus 19:13 and Deuteronomy 24:14. He then gives the admonition of being careful of not receiving accusations against an elder except there be two or three witnesses. These admonitions and counsels he gives Timothy, charging him to observe them without any prejudice or partiality.

His final statement concerning the coming judgment is surely worthy of our consideration. Opening up our sins before the judgments of the Word of God and the Gospel of

Christ is the only way we can escape that awful day which is to come. We must confess our sins, believe from the heart that God forgives through the sacrifice of Christ, and then faithfully follow His teachings. This will prepare us to meet the great judgment day and escape the destruction of the wicked. He also speaks of the good works of some being manifest beforehand, that is, now and in this present life. But there are others whose good works are otherwise, that is, not manifest or seen of men. These, he said, cannot be hid, which means that they will be manifest on that day when all shall receive for the things done in the body, whether it be good or bad. (II Corinthians 5:10.) —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why are younger widows not likely to qualify for support?
2. Why are the faithful elders worthy of double honor?
3. What illustration from the Scripture does he give on this?
4. Why is it so important for us to keep ourselves pure?
5. How can we have our sins open and going before to judgment?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The word "responsibility" is clearly descriptive of the various aspects of our lesson. We are responsible creatures before God and before one another. We are going to have to give an account of the life we have lived in this world and how faithful we have been to obey God and to live the life He requires of us before Him and our fellow men. As Romans 14:7 says, "...None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." It is to God and our fellow creatures that we live and are going to be accountable for. Young and old, rich and poor, wise and ignorant, weak and strong—all are responsible creatures before God. There is going to be a day of retribution. Each individual will give an account of himself before God. It is a sobering and solemn thought that we must consider seriously. The young widows mentioned in our lesson who become lustful and go against Christ are going to be held responsible for their course in life. The young people, both men and women, are going to have to answer for the way they have lived as married couples and the way they have raised

their families and what kind of examples they have set before them. The elders and those who have the rule and jurisdiction over the congregation will give an account to God. (Hebrews 13:17.) How we have lived, the decisions we have made, the attitude we have taken, the words we have spoken: we will give an account for it all. Let us be humble and honest before God, willing to confess our faults and needs before Him and partake of His goodness and grace without fail. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In our lesson today, a young woman is admonished to “marry, bear children, guide the house.” A good woman, like the good man in Psalms 112:5, will guide her affairs—in her case, the household—with discretion. Paul also wrote to Titus that the young women must be taught by the older women “...to be “. . . discreet, chaste, keepers at home. . .” Titus 2:5.

In the Old Testament, the word *discreet* was the same word for *understand*, which meant “to separate mentally, to distinguish.” *Discretion* meant “pronouncing a judicial verdict, litigating, or governing.” It also meant to “have a plan,” and in some Scriptures, it meant taste, intelligence, perception, being circumspect, and having sense.

In the New Testament, the word *understand* means “a mental putting together.” *Discreet* means “safe or sound in mind.” It comes from two words, one meaning safe, preserved, whole; and the other referring to reining in or curbing the “midriff” or the feelings, sensitive nature, mind and cognitive faculties. It also takes in self-control, moderation as to opinion or passion, and the quality of being sober.

Now, to apply this to guiding a household! Wouldn't the successful, godly mother have a plan, instead of wading in with never a care for the outcome, dangers or consequences? Don't her responsibilities include the *planning* of meals, budgets and housework, *governing* children, *intelligently distinguishing* between right and wrong (media, amusements, apparel, language?) Doesn't homemaking require *perception*, *good sense*, and *good taste*? And certainly, to really conquer, and not merely cope with life, a woman must have her sensitive feelings, passions and opinions *reined in* or *controlled* by the Holy Spirit. He will guide her in both “separating and distinguishing” and then “putting together” the problems of life.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

MAY 18, 2008

THE LOVE OF MONEY VERSUS DESIRE FOR TRUE RICHES

I Timothy 6:6 Godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

15 Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

MEMORY VERSE: ...The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. I Timothy 6:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We should beware of the spirit of covetousness and greed and learn to be content with what the Lord has promised to provide, striving and reaching for the true riches of spiritual life and hope of resurrection in that happy world above.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Timothy 6:6, "*contentment*": Being happily satisfied. "*great gain*": Better and eternal riches in Heaven.

Verse 8, "*raiment*": Clothing to cover the natural body.

Verse 9, "*will be rich*": Purpose and resolve to have earthly wealth. "*temptation*": Enticement and attraction to evil. "*snare*": A trap that is easy to get caught in but hard to escape out of. "*foolish*": Unintelligent; ignorant. "*hurtful*": Damaging and injurious. "*destruction and perdition*": Ruin and eternal loss.

Verse 10, "*erred*": Seduced and led astray.

Verse 11, "*follow after*": Strive for, seek to have, pursue, exercise in, apply diligently to the heart. "*patience*": Cheerful endurance.

Verse 12, "*fight*": Struggle, compete, contend and endeavor. "*lay hold*": Seize with determination. "*called*": Invited, given a special chance or opportunity. "*profession*": Acknowledgement or testimony. It is from the same Greek word and means the same as "*confession*" in verse 13.

Verse 13, "*charge*": Urge or impose with authority. "*confession*": Acknowledgement or testimony, the same as "*profession*" in verse 12.

Verse 15, "*in his times*": At the proper set time or season. He can make known now, to those who seek to love and follow Him, of His Kingdom and power, and at the end of this world He will show Himself in His judgment to the entire realm of humanity.

Verse 16, "*Potentate*": The supreme Ruler and Officer of authority and power.

Verse 17, "*highminded*": Lofty and lifted up in estimation of one's self. "*uncertain*": Not real or lasting. "*giveth*": Brings near and makes available. "*richly*": Copiously, abundantly.

Verse 18, "*distribute*": Impart to others. "*willing to communicate*": Generous.

Verse 19, "*a good foundation*": A true assurance and perfect preparation. "*against the time to come*": For the coming age.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is from the last chapter of I Timothy. We have omitted the first five verses and the last two verses. Our lesson covers some very serious and vital warnings and declarations that we all need to diligently consider and take heed to. In the verses previous to our lesson, Paul spoke of those who consent not to the wholesome words of the Lord Jesus and the doctrine, which is according to godliness. He stated that such were proud, knowing nothing, and how they were "supposing that gain is godliness," and counseled Timothy to withdraw himself from such. For any person to get the idea that financial prosperity is a sign or proof of being accepted and favored of God shows that they are full of pride and ignorant of what the true riches are. And Paul dealt with this issue for the most part of the rest of the epistle.

We have the real truth of what real true gain is. And, in full agreement with what our Savior taught, we need to seek after godliness and learn to be content with the necessities of life as the Heavenly Father has promised to supply. After declaring the spiritual harm and danger of seeking earthly wealth, we have the wise counsel that people need to take heed to today: "Flee these things!" Then he mentioned the list of things we need to pursue after. Oh, how good and profitable is this wise counsel! How we have proven it to be true! Think and study about each one of these six things that our dear brother Paul told us to follow after. Get them in your mind and memory and hold them before your eyes in every decision you must make in life.

Then he spoke of Jesus and the testimony He gave before Pontius Pilate, and how He is King of kings and Lord of lords and has been exalted to power and immortality in the realm of the unseen eternal world. We need to keep Him in mind and let the vision of Him to us through the Word and the Spirit guide and sustain us on this fleeting journey of life. The last three verses hold the key to being able to obtain and lay hold of life eternal. May God help each one to follow these worthy instructions!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does our lesson declare is really great gain?
2. What is the danger and risk of seeking earthly riches?

3. Instead of financial gain, what should we follow after?
4. What is there about Christ that makes this truth so important?
5. What is the recipe for being able to lay hold on eternal life?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In verse 7 of I Timothy 6 of our lesson is a fact that we all should face up to. "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." This is also stated in the Old Testament. Job 1:21 records the words of Job, uttered at the news of the loss of his earthly wealth and the death of his sons and daughters, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." Psalm 49:17 says concerning the death of a rich man, "When he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him." And again in Ecclesiastes 5:15 it says, "As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand." This puts the extent and the limit of our earthly possessions right where it is. Death will disrobe every one of us from everything except one thing, and that is what we obtain through the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, in this present short and fleeting earthly life, is our only chance to secure this real treasure for our own. How foolish is the person who gives all their life and strength to amass a fortune of earthly worth! But how wise is the person who learns the vital lesson of faith in God's promise to supply our earthly needs and who seeks to live and labor to lay up in store a good foundation for the world to come, that he may lay hold on eternal life! How sad that our society is stained with earthly love and infatuation of the fleshly lusts of immorality and covetousness! It is because people are not aware nor have any persuasion of the life that is to come. What is now and visible to the eye has the pre-eminence. All will perish except those unseen things of Jesus Christ. He lived solely for eternal values and set the example for us to follow. He loved not His life but died for the joy set before Him in obedience to God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand." Ecclesiastes 5:15 We bring nothing into this world and we carry nothing out of this world. Ask any coroner, mortician or funeral director. When John D. Rockefeller died, someone asked his accountant, "How much did John D. leave?" The accountant replied, "All of it."

While we live here on earth, we are blessed with so many things; a comfortable home, more than one vehicle, clothing, food, family. These things brighten our lives and make our lives more comfortable, and for that we are thankful. But in death, we will take none of it with us—not even our family. All we will be taking is our eternal soul. This is where the priority really is. Why bother with so much accumulation of this world's goods and neglect the eternal treasures!

While Jesus was here on earth, we notice that he was never impressed or intimidated by riches and wealth. He and his disciples ate out of a cornfield, fed thousands with two fish and five loaves of bread, paid taxes with money found in a fish's mouth. Why? Because money is obviously not important in building the Kingdom of GOD. His example was to love and care for all souls. His great commission was not to "Go ye unto all of the world and invest and accumulate great wealth so that we may build a great kingdom on the earth." No, his commission was to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matthew 28:19.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



MAY 25, 2008

SAVED AND CALLED WITH AN HOLY CALLING

II Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. II Timothy 1:7.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God has given us a heavenly invitation to share eternal glory with Jesus Christ, Who for us abolished death and offers to us life and immortality, through the good news of eternal salvation.

WORD DEFINITIONS

II Timothy 1:5 *"unfeigned"*: Real, genuine, and without pretense.

Verse 6, "*stir up*": Rekindle, fan the flame.

Verse 7, "*spirit of fear*": Disposition and attitude of cowardice and timidity. "*power*": Force; miraculous strength and might. "*sound mind*": Soberness; discipline and self-control.

Verse 8, "*his prisoner*": One who is held captive because of his stand for Jesus. "*be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel*": Be willing to suffer hardship for the sake of the Gospel.

Verse 9, "*called us with an holy calling*": Invited us with a heavenly invitation.

Verse 10, "*abolished death*": Made death of no effect, having robbed it of its dominion and destructive power.

Verse 12, "*keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*": Guard that which I have deposited in trust to Him to be mine at that day of righteous judgment and recompense of reward.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today there are some beautiful and inspiring expressions from a man who was, at the time of his writing, a prisoner of the Roman Empire. He had been arrested and taken into captivity at Jerusalem by the Roman authorities, after rescuing him from being murdered by the Jews. Then, after discovering a plot by the Jews to kill Paul, he had been sent under heavy guard to Caesarea to be given a hearing by governor Felix. But, after Felix had heard his defense, he kept him in prison. The next governor, Festus, heard Paul's case, and asked him if he would go to Jerusalem and be judged. But Paul requested to be judged at Caesar's court of justice, and Festus gave the jurisdiction for him to be judged at Rome. In the mean time, king Agrippa and his wife, Bernice, came to visit Festus, and, after Festus told him about Paul and his case, Agrippa said that he would like to hear Paul himself. After hearing Paul, Agrippa and Festus both agreed that Paul had done nothing worthy of being a prisoner, but since he had appealed to Rome, he would have to go to Rome and stand trial.

Paul was sent to Rome and given liberty to dwell by himself with a soldier who guarded him. Paul arranged to have a special meeting with the leaders of the Jews who were in Rome

and reasoned with them all day from the Scriptures, about Jesus and why he believed that Jesus was the Christ. After that, he was allowed to stay in his own hired house and to receive visitors and any one who would come to him. This continued for two years.

The Bible goes no farther than this concerning Paul at Rome. But history informs us that, at first, Paul was acquitted and set free by the Roman tribunal. But the Emperor at that time, named Nero, decided to call Paul back to court. Nero was a tyrant and an evil man. It is said that he set a fire burning in Rome and blamed it on the Christians. He called Paul back to court and judged him guilty and sentenced him to be beheaded. It is said that this epistle of II Timothy was written not long before Paul sealed his testimony with his own blood.

Our lesson is full of tenderness and love for Timothy and spiritual truths about Christ. Paul also expressed his confidence in the Saviour's ability to keep those things he had committed unto Him until that great Day of eternal redemption. He speaks of the unwavering faith of Timothy and how it had been first in his grandmother and mother. He exhorted Timothy to keep stirred up in the Lord and His work, and not be ashamed of the faith of Christ and His testimony. His testimony was, as verse 12 declares, that he was not ashamed and that he knew that Christ would bring to pass the promise of the Gospel and the hope that was being placed in Him. This epistle of Paul is a treasure preserved for our edification.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was there about Timothy that made him so dear to Paul?
2. Instead of a timid spirit, what kind of spirit does God give to us?
3. Why should we not shrink from suffering for the cause of God?
4. What does God call us to be a partaker of?
5. Why was Paul not ashamed to suffer for his Savior?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

A godly influence wielded and projecting out from a person's heart and life is surely a wonderful vocation for one to have and work at. The character of a true child of God is

to have and work at. The character of a true child of God is beautiful and inspiring to others. Abounding with the fruits of the Spirit, we can be a bright witness for the truth of the Bible. We need to work at our experience through prayer and diligent study of the Holy Scriptures and faithfully applying them to our heart, soul and mind. The spirit God gives is one of strength, comfort and cheer radiating out from the inner man and bearing a good testimony of the love and blessings of our heavenly Father. The God of all grace has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. Jesus made the way for us to escape the corruption of this fleeting world and to lay hold on eternal values and a life beyond the grave. But we must work at it through prayer and seeking to draw close to God every day. We need to cultivate a sound mind that takes in the truths of the Bible and lives them out in a plain simple manner. The Holy Spirit can and will reveal to our hearts the real truth of the Holy Scriptures. It is so wonderful that the apostle Paul was drawn to give all to Christ after ignorantly working against Him as he did. What a change was wrought and what a difference his conversion to Christ made in the world! He was faithful and a valiant soldier through all the adversity and sufferings that fell upon him. For he knew Who had called him, and what he had been called to live out and follow after. He was not ashamed for he knew Whom he had believed in and never doubted it in the least. His testimony was bright and clear and has been a great blessing down through the centuries. We would do well in taking heed to what Paul wrote to his beloved son, Timothy; what a day that will be when we can meet them face to face! That is what we are striving for in living a Christian life of love, humility, faith, holiness, temperance and godliness. We want to be a partaker of that resurrection that Christ has made available and meet with that mighty blood-washed throng in that last great day! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The apostle Paul's testimony is another remarkable reminder of the power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious:" Paul who was earlier called Saul, was present at the death of Brother Stephen, (Acts 7:58) and consenting to his death,

into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." Acts 8:3. Part of his testimony to Agrippa was—"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."

On the way to Damascus, to persecute the saints, he came face to face with the glorified risen Savior. This visitation overwhelmed his entire belief system, and he fell down prostrate in his own sinful corruption. He had been so wrong, so totally wrong. He thought he had been doing God a favor, but he had been persecuting Jesus. What a change took place that day. His eyes and heart had been opened, he had humbled his heart and the Lord forgave him. He went on and was just as zealous in building and helping the church as he was in injuring it.

"But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." If the Lord could save someone like Saul, that was so thoroughly blinded and filled with anger and hatred; isn't there hope for sinners today? —Bro. Bob Wilson

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JUNE 1, 2008

ENDURING HARDNESS AS A GOOD SOLDIER

II Timothy 1:14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

17 But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

II Timothy 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

5 And if a man also strive for the masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

7 Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

MEMORY VERSE: Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. II Timothy 2:3.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Christian life is a spiritual warfare, requiring strong endeavor to overcome this wicked world and live a life of love, faith, hope and faithful service to the souls of men.

WORD DEFINITIONS

II Timothy 1:14, "*that good thing which was committed unto thee*": The Greek says simply, "the good deposit." The revelation of the Word of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a sacred trust to the ministers of God. It involves great responsibility and recompense of reward. "*keep*": Guard; protect it from harmful additives of human reasoning, fleshly ideas, imaginations, wrong thoughts and false teachings. "*by the Holy Ghost*": Through the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Jesus said the Spirit of truth would abide with us forever. (John 14:16.) We are warned in Ephesians 4:30 to not grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. If we will keep the pure, humble, loving attitude of Christ and be obedient to the Holy Spirit's directions and counsel, He will stay within us and help to keep us level with the real truth.

Verse 15, "*all they which are in Asia be turned away from me*": Paul said in II Tim. 4:16 that at his first answer (or testimonial defense at Rome) no man stood with him, but all forsook him. It was his desire to God that it would not be laid to their charge. It was evident that what Paul suffered at his trial caused some to withdraw their support, not being able to understand what to do or how to relate. This has probably been the case with various suffering Christians through the years.

Verse 16, "*mercy*": Compassion; special rewards and consideration. "*refreshed*": Relieved; ministered comforts and support. "*chain*": The fetters Paul bore as a prisoner of Rome.

Verse 17, "*very diligently*": More earnestly and promptly than others.

Verse 18, "*in that day*": In that great resurrection and day of judgment.

II Tim. 2:2, "*able*": Competent; adequate; fully prepared.

Verse 3, "*endure hardness*": Undergo hardship and adversity.

Verse 4, "*entangleth*": Becomes all involved and influenced by.

Verse 5, "*strive for masteries*": Compete as in games. "*crowned*": Adorned with honorable reward. "*lawfully*": Legitimately, being specifically agreeable to the rules.

Verse 6, "*be first partaker of the fruits*": Personally obey and measure to the Gospel standards regardless of what others might do.

Verse 7, "*consider*": Give due thought and exercise of the mind; observe, comprehend and take heed.

Verse 8, "*Remember*": Exercise in memory and do not forget. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. This is the main core of the Gospel. Everything hinges and revolves around this glorious truth.

Verse 9, "*the word of God is not bound*": Though Paul, because of his stand for the Gospel, suffered imprisonment, yet he knew that the word of God was freely flowing swiftly and with no hindrance from his life.

Verse 10, "*for the elect's sake*": On account of and for the benefit of those who are truly accepted and chosen of God. "*the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory*": The full extent and complete fulfillment of God's salvation unto the eternal resurrection of life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is a continuation of Paul's writings to Timothy from his state of imprisonment in Rome. We see how that, despite being forsaken by some, yet he was befriended and refreshed by others. This Onesiphorus, mentioned again in chapter 4 and verse 19, ministered to Paul, seeking for him and finding him in Rome, and sharing as much of the comforts that he could with him. Paul knew that God would not forget this man's work and labor of love, (Hebrews 6:10) and that God would grant him mercy unto eternal life in that great day of rewards that is coming to all.

He turns to Timothy with several items of counsel and encouragement. All of this is good for us today, also. God wants all of us, who have taken up our cross to follow the Lord Jesus, to be strong and of good courage, and endure whatever comes against us as a brave and true soldier in the Christian fight. How sad that the world is so taken up with carnal warfare that they are ignorant of the true warfare that needs to be fought! Let us give due consideration to Paul's words here

with earnest prayer that God will open up our understanding to their vital meaning.

Let us remember, as Paul said here, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and that this is the basis of the hope of the Gospel. If Christ had not been raised from the dead, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins, and all hope of life everlasting is perished. (I Corinthians 15:17-18.) While in Jerusalem before the council, Paul declared that it was of the hope of the resurrection of the dead that he was called in question. (Acts 23:6.) This is the root of the whole matter. Did Christ arise from the dead, or did he not? This is something we should each one settle forever in our hearts. By the help and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we can be sure—without a doubt, just what the real truth is. And thank God for assurance that Christ did arise from the dead! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What mercy did Paul pray for Onesiphorus to have and why?
2. What kind of men should God's truth be committed to?
3. Why should a man of God not be entangled with this world?
4. Why should a Christian worker be first partaker of the fruits?
5. Why is Christ's resurrection from the dead such an important truth?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our lesson today is from the writings of a man who was soon to seal his testimony of Christ with his own blood. There were those who did not take their stand in his behalf because they could not comprehend what was really going on. They were looking at the outward bearing of things and the reproaches and humiliations involved. But there were those who looked beyond the shame and saw Christ being tried and condemned afresh in one of His servants. I heard a minister say one time, "The Lord will have someone who will stand with us if we will stand with Him and not faint!" So we have the encouraging words: "Be strong and endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ!" Yes, we must keep unentangled from

the affairs of this present age of vanity and be sure and strive in accordance with the will of God. We must seek to know Him, the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, and be willing to suffer death as He did if we hope to attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (Philippians 3:10-11.) Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, counting lightly the shame, and was highly exalted to set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2.) He was resurrected from the dead, triumphant over sin, death, and all the power of the enemy.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” Matthew 13:45-46. As the first verse in our lesson instructs, we should keep that good thing which has been committed to us. I believe the merchant man had it in his mind to hang on to that one special pearl he bought. He valued it above everything he possessed. Our salvation and hope of eternal life should likewise be precious to us and we should carefully guard it from the enemy.

When one has a proper understanding of spiritual values, the trials and afflictions we suffer here will be considered light. We do not want to fall, after the manner of Esau, and turn loose of our birthright for a mess of pottage. Therefore, we must be strong.

I remember the words of Sis. Nellie Poulus as she was being cared for in her final days of this earthly life. Even though it was a difficult time for her physically, her resolve to make it through to glory was firm and her hope was bright. In her determination to go on she said, “I can! I will! I must!” By God’s help, I believe she made it. I also believe God will honor our commitment when we purpose with our whole heart to be faithful to the end. “I shall never tire or give the battle o’er, For a crowning day is coming by and by.” —Bro. Willie E. Murphey

JUNE 8, 2008

BEING A SANCTIFIED VESSEL FOR THE MASTER'S USE

II Timothy 2:11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

MEMORY VERSE: Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. II Timothy 2:15.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The erring and straying of man from the ways and thoughts of God do not change or affect the solid foundation of His truth and faithfulness.

WORD DEFINITIONS

II Timothy 2:13, The Greek renders this: "If we are unfaithful, that One faithful remains: to deny Himself He is not able."

Verse 14, "*charging*": Solemnly testifying. "*before the Lord*": In the face or the presence of the Lord. "*subverting*": Overturning; throwing down.

Verse 15, "*Study*": Make prompt and earnest effort to show, to present and recommend. "*approved*": Properly and rightfully acceptable. "*needeth not to be ashamed*": The Greek says simply, "unashamed". "*rightly dividing*": To make a straight cut; to expound correctly the Word.

Verse 16, "*vain babblings*": Empty, fruitless discussions.

Verse 17, "*canker*": Cancerous and gangrenous sore.

Verse 20, "*some to honour, some to dishonour*": In any household of function and operation are found various kinds of pots, pans, baskets, tubs, bins, etc. Some are used for beneficial purposes of holding and storing food and items of health, such as pans, bowls and pots. They must be kept clean and available for instant use. These are vessels to honour. Then there are trash cans, garbage containers, and other vessels that receive refuse and things to be disposed of. It is that way in humanity. What kind of commodity do we allow ourselves to be filled with?

Verse 21, "*purge himself*": If we want to be used for an honorable purpose, we must "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." II Corinthians 7:1 "*from these*": From the false doctrines, the spirit of lust and pride in the world, from humanism and fleshly ideas, and any other influence contrary to sound doctrine and godliness. We must not allow ourselves to be affected by these false doctrines and erring beliefs. "*meet for the master's use*": Useful for the Master.

Verse 25, "*those that oppose themselves*": Those who oppose and resist counsel. "*if God peradventure*": Perhaps; giving God a chance to deal with them and open their understanding.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today some good and profitable counsels that are so vital to know and understand. Because they are spiritual and have spiritual direction and import for the spiritual part of us, they will escape the earthly and carnal minded. There are so many things that people hash and discuss that are of no real profit. But these things that Paul brings out in the Scripture text of today's lesson are of great value in what really matters.

He begins with the faithful saying that to live with Christ, we must first be dead with Him, and to reign with Him we must be willing to first suffer with Him. In this way we can show ourselves approved unto God and will not be ashamed. The warning is given to avoid vain and useless teachings of error and human logic, which have overthrown many in their faith. Let us take notice of the double seal upon the foundation of God. One seal is on the Lord and the other seal is on us. The Lord makes no mistake and is in full knowledge of those who are truly His own. And we must make the decision and take the action to depart and cleanse ourselves from all iniquity. The Lord has control of His part, and we must be diligent to take care of our part. It will mean much for us to do this so that we can be the pure and clean vessels unto honor, useful for His service.

Paul gave us good counsel about how to relate to people. It does not pay to argue and strive with words and a lot of talk. Gentleness and few words go much farther on the wings of prayer than a lot of forceful conversation. It takes God to bring a man to an awareness of his need. We may sometimes think we need to talk our way through, but, as says the old saying, "Pray more and talk less."

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to be "dead with Christ"?
2. What must we do to show ourselves approved unto God?
3. What seal does the foundation of God have?
4. What must a man do to be a vessel unto honour?
5. Why is it wise for the servant of the Lord to not strive?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

*God gave to us the pow'r of speech and to communicate:
But how we need for Him to teach us of His wisdom's rate.
So much of empty chatter vain proceeds from mortal tongue,
While many by their talk would gain the ranks of fame among.
'Tis best to take heed to our ways, and let our words be few,
And forfeit strife and human praise along this dark earth through.
'Tis not how much that you can say, nor books that you can write;
But how you live from day to day in God Almighty's sight.
Hold now thy peace, thy tongue restrain; thy sorrow let be stirred.
Within thy heart let Jesus reign to guide each thought and word.
Behold the measure of your days, what is your coming end:
Rise up above this earthly maze; and prayers to Heavens send.
—Bro. Leslie Busbee*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If we are to be vessels unto honor, there are three things that must take place. I see these things as I study the Old Testament tabernacle, which is a spiritual pattern for us today.

First, a vessel must be clean. Every utensil, every priest, every sacrifice had to be perfectly clean in order to be used in worship. We also must be cleansed from all unrighteousness by the blood of Jesus, and be washed in the laver of obedience to God's Word.

Secondly, we must present ourselves to God and set ourselves apart for His service. This is one meaning of the word *sanctify*. A vessel must be *dedicated only to sacred use*. We no longer speak our own words, or do our own pleasure. We live only unto Him. "Holiness unto the Lord" is now written upon us.

Thirdly, the vessel must be filled with God's Spirit. We cannot act on our own. We must do as He bids, speak as He speaks, go where He sends. He must live through us. In His infilling, we find even more cleansing taking place, refining us and purging us for future use.

Only then can the vessel be used. It is now *fit* for the Master's use. It can be filled up and poured out time and time again. The blood of Jesus, the laver of God's Word, and the

Holy Spirit continually maintain "Holiness Unto the Lord" in every willing vessel that is set apart for Him.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



JUNE 15, 2008

HOLDING FAST TO FAITH IN PERILOUS TIMES

II Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was.

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

MEMORY VERSE: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Matthew 7:21.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Salvation for the soul and obtaining eternal life is an individual matter. Regardless of what others may do, every person has access to the grace of God and can be successful in winning the celestial crown of life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

II Timothy 3:1, "*perilous*": Difficult, grievous and dangerous.

Verse 3, "*without natural affection*": Hardhearted towards kindred. "*trucebreakers*": Those with whom peace cannot be made. "*incontinent*": without self-control. "*fierce*": Savage, cruel, heartless.

Verse 4, "*traitors*": Betrayers; those who are not true, but given over to the enemy and Satan. "*heady*": Reckless. "*highminded*": Puffed up with pride.

Verse 6, "*laden*": Heaped up. "*divers*": Various.

Verse 7, The Greek says, "always learning and never able to come to a full knowledge of truth".

Verse 8, "*Jannes and Jambres*": Adam Clarke says that these were the magicians of Pharaoh's court who practiced magic, contesting the signs that Moses did. They were evil, but the devil enabled them to do signs and wonders. But the power of the God of Moses and Aaron prevailed and the magicians' works were frustrated. "*reprobate*": Unapproved, worthless, rejected.

Verse 9, "*proceed no further*": Advance no more. "*manifest unto all men, as their's also was*": Make clear and open to everyone, even as the magicians' defeat was made manifest before Moses.

Verse 10, "*manner of life*": Conduct and behavior. "*purpose*": A setting forth as the shewbread was put forth in the Mosaic tabernacle, as Paul's proposal and intentions were before God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today, the apostle Paul describes the perilous and grievous conditions upon human kind that were being made manifest even in his time. He makes reference to the magicians who rose up against Moses and Aaron as they came to speak to the king of Egypt, concerning letting the children of Israel depart out of his land. The Lord instructed Moses to have Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh called his

wise men, sorcerers, the magicians of Egypt and they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. (Exodus 7:11-12.) Then Moses smote the waters of the river and they became blood. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments. Then, at God's command, Moses told Aaron to stretch his rod over the streams and rivers, and frogs came up upon the land. Then the magicians did so likewise. But when Aaron smote the dust of the earth with his rod and it became lice in man and beast, the magicians could not do so. And they acknowledged to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God..." Exodus 8:19. Thus their folly was made manifest and thus shall all liars and evil workers be shown to be what they really are—corrupt and disowned of the God of truth.

Think of the awful things that infest the sons of men! The first two mentioned are probably the main element of the whole thing: "Lovers of their own selves and covetous." There is also mentioned the condition of being incontinent, which means without temperance or self-control. Paul said, in I Corinthians 9:27, that he kept under his body and brought it into subjection. How vital it is for us to keep under control our appetites, feelings, passions, desires, words and all manner of conversation! Then there is that of being "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." All of these things prevail in the lives of unholy and carnal minded men and women.

But Paul reminded Timothy of what he, as the apostle of Christ, had manifested in his life. Oh, what a difference there is between the holy and the unholy, the godly and the ungodly! It surely is a sad picture of the course humanity has taken through the ages! God is calling us to flee the spirit of lust and evil and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness. While the world keeps on in their pursuit of physical pleasure and financial treasure, we can endure the trials and persecutions heaped against us and live for that blessed world of eternal life. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the evils prevailing in these last days?
2. What did Paul show in his life as a better life to follow?
3. What will happen to all who follow after ungodly lusts?
4. What can those who live godly in Christ Jesus expect in this life?
5. Can we expect things to get better, and why?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Paul spoke about people "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." What is meant by the term "the power thereof," or the power of godliness? Any thing that is of any value to the souls of men must have capabilities to accomplish what is needed in the hearts and lives of people. Let us consider some of the things that the power of being godly and reverent before God will provide for us. Godliness opens one's eyes to the true riches. It shows the vanity and futility of earthly wealth and how deceitful and disappointing it is. We have already had in our lessons the truth that "Godliness with contentment is great gain." 1 Timothy 6:6. If a man's profession of believing in God does not open his eyes to the vanity of earthly wealth, and he or she is possessed with the love of money and financial gain, then it is evident that the power of godliness is not in operation. Godliness is deep reverent respect and regard for God and His holiness. This causes a vehement hatred for sin and things that are displeasing before God. This hatred and abhorrence for sin will cause one to repent of all sin and banish it from one's ways and thoughts. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts..." Isaiah 55:7. Here is some more of the power of godliness. It will enable a man to renounce and quit the sin business. "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." Proverbs 8:13. The same attitude that hates evil will cause one to love and seek after righteousness and true holiness. Instead of worldly desires and interests, love and devotion to God and what pleases Him will fill the heart and mind. It will cause a man to love to pray and study the Word of God. He will love the service of God and you will find him there at every opportunity. This is more of the power of godliness. It will enable one to conquer and overcome all forces contrary to the holiness and righteousness of God. Hatred, bitterness, wrath, strife, adultery, lust and all other attributes of wickedness are overcome through the power of reverence and godly fear. And this will, in turn, promote the love of holiness, purity, humility, meekness, kindness, forgiveness, mercy and all other attributes that reflect the image of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jannes and Jambres were learned men and chief magicians in the court of Pharoah. Each time the Lord worked a miracle through Moses and Aaron, the magicians were ready with magical imitations of their own through sleight of hand, incantations or smoky illusions.

This deceptive spirit is still roaming the world today. False teachers do not wear a sign stating, "I am a false teacher." Nonetheless the spirits of deception are rampant in our present world making it a very dangerous day and time to live in. It is easy to become mesmerized by intellectual debate, glittering testimonies and large audiences. Great speakers, repetitive singing or theatrical performances cannot save the soul. They offer at best only a smoky illusion to the true salvation that Jesus has to offer.

"But there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matthew 24:24. Shall deceive the very elect? To deceive the very elect must mean then that deceptive spirits are all around and in close contact with the Saints of God. Our only hope of safety is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can ascertain truth from deceit for us. "My soul be on thy guard, ten thousand foes arise, and hosts of sin are pressing hard to draw thee from the sky."

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



JUNE 22, 2008

BEING FAITHFUL IN THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

II Timothy 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

II Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

MEMORY VERSE: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. II Timothy 3:16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Knowing that his days on earth were short, Paul encourages young Timothy to continue in the ministry of the Gospel and be faithful to the Lord and the real truth, regardless of how others reject it and turn to other ways.

WORD DEFINITIONS

II Timothy 3:5, "*able to make thee wise unto salvation*": Can instruct one in the knowledge of the real salvation of the soul from sin, self, the world, death and eternal damnation. "*through faith which is in Christ Jesus*": By means of and through the avenue of believing in Jesus, the Anointed Son of God. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." I Peter 1:8.

Verse 17, "*thoroughly furnished*": Fully equipped.

II Timothy 4:1, "*charge*": Solemnly witness and declare. "*shall judge*": Is presently about to judge. Paul and the early

ministers of the Gospel were impressed that time was uncertain and that Christ's coming could come soon. So should we today reckon that the Lord could come at any time. "*the quick and the dead*": This could refer to those who are yet physically alive and those who have passed on. And it can also be applied to those who are alive spiritually and those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

Verse 2, "*preach*": Proclaim, publish, declare, announce and speak forth. "*be instant*": Be present, on the job, ready to industriously and urgently preach the Word of God. "*in season*": As opportunity presents itself. "*out of season*": Be ready even if there is no present or convenient opportunity. "*reprove*": Convince of wrong. "*rebuke*": Warn, censure and admonish. "*exhort*": Encourage, comfort and console.

Verse 3, "*itching ears*": Desiring to hear what is exciting and entertaining instead of what will instruct and discipline the soul.

Verse 4, "*fables*": Tales, stories, fiction and myths.

Verse 5, "*evangelist*": One who preaches and proclaims the Gospel of Christ. "*make full proof*": Fulfill and carry out completely; entirely accomplish.

Verse 6, "*now ready to be offered*": I am already being poured out as a sacrifice of my own blood. "*departure*": Passing from this life.

Verse 7, "*a good fight*": The good, profitable and beautiful fight of faith.

LESSON BACKGROUND

After a fervent warning against false doctrines and seducing spirits, Paul urges us to continue in the truth we have been assured of, and the wonderful value of the Holy Scriptures and what they have for us. Those who are called to minister the Word of the Lord should be diligent and ready to preach and send forth this glorious Message of the Gospel. It will not always be welcomed and received, but we must hold fast to its standards of truth and holiness, regardless.

At the time of this writing, the apostle Paul was facing martyrdom. History tells us that at the first part of Paul's coming to Rome he was released from the charges, but was soon recalled to be tried and was sentenced to be executed. He was beheaded in the colosseum at Rome. His language concerning his soon departure from this life has inspired

soon recalled to be tried and was sentenced to be executed. He was beheaded in the colosseum at Rome. His language concerning his soon departure from this life has inspired Christians all down through the ages. The man who fought against Christianity so fervently was conquered and subdued to obedience and faith in the Lord Jesus and lived a faithful life of service to his beloved Master. But we see no dread nor draw back from what he was facing. There was only joy, gladness and thanksgiving to God in his heart for how the Lord helped him to fight the good fight, finish his course and keep the faith. What a bright future was before him! Laid up for him in the heavenly places was the great reward that Christ has promised to all who are faithful to Him. "...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Revelations 2:10.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why can we be so assured that Paul's teachings are the truth?
2. What profit is there in knowing the Holy Scriptures?
3. What was Paul's fervent charge to Timothy?
4. What was Paul soon to meet up with?
5. What was Paul looking forward to, beyond it all?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a wonderful treasure we have in the Holy Scriptures! The Old Testament writings are full of inspiration and spiritual edification. Even though we are in the New Testament age, the histories, prophecies, psalms and utterances of the men of old who were moved by the Holy Spirit are still filled with edifying and soul-feeding manna from above! "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4. The Old Testament Scriptures were the textbook of the New Testament Church in its beginning. It can still be a great spiritual blessing to us today!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We live in an environment of evil men and seducers waxing worse, and people are turning their ears from the truth

and are turning unto fables or that which is false. The influence of this encompassing atmosphere puts pressure on the child of God, who is endeavoring to walk in the straight and narrow way, causing him, at times, to question his or her standards or convictions. We need to be aware of this pressure and guard against it by watching, praying, holding fast to the form of sound words taught in the Scriptures.

Principles of truth that were held by past generations that had more of the fear of God are now being cast aside in our nation. Jeremiah saw the same things in his time and said, "stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." It is vital that we recognize that we live in a backsliding generation, lest we backslide with it.

I can remember a number of the older ministers warning us from time to time concerning compromise; which we would do well to consider today. I appreciate the many faithful ministers that I have known who had a good influence on my life. The older I get, the more I recognize the pressures that they felt and the courage it took for them to preach the truth of the Gospel. The Lord helped them and will help us; so let us continue in the things we have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom we have learned them.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



JUNE 29, 2008

FACING THE END OF LIFE WITH VICTORY

II Timothy 4:9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

13 The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly

17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE: And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. II Timothy 4:18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Paul closed out his epistle with expressions of sorrow for the straying, appreciation for the faithful, warnings about the evil doer, testimony of his Lord's faithful help, and steadfast confidence in victory and success through Christ, giving eternal glory and praise unto Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

II Timothy 4:9, "*Do thy diligence*": Make haste. "*shortly*": Speedily.

Verse 11, "*Only Luke*": Luke alone. Everyone else had departed from him, some to other fields of labor for the Master, and one, Demas, had departed from Paul in spirit as well as in bodily presence. "*having loved this present world*": Demas allowed physical and earthly values to supercede his spiritual vision and had deserted Paul in the face of the persecutions that had taken shape. Faithful Luke, the author of the wonderful Gospel account of the birth, life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, proved to be a faithful

companion to Paul as long as he could. *"Take Mark"*: Paul wanted Timothy to make contact with Mark and bring him along when he came. This is the John Mark who was nephew to Paul's companion, Barnabas, who Barnabas wanted to take with them when he and Paul were going to go again and visit the brethren where they had previously preached the Gospel. This Mark had not stayed with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but had departed from them at Perga and gone back to Jerusalem. (Acts 13:13.) Paul thought it not good to take him with them, so Barnabas had departed from Paul, taking John Mark with him. (Acts 15:39.) But, now Paul states that Mark is useful to him and desires to have him there. It is good that John Mark did not go down in discouragement over the issue, but had been faithful and progressed in the work of the Lord and won Paul's confidence and respect.

Verse 13, *"cloak"*: This was like a mantle, or overcoat, worn over the other garments. *"books"*: Scrolls. *"parchments"*: Writing material made from sheepskins.

Verse 16, *"my first answer"*: My first defense. *"all forsook me"*: No one stood up to openly agree with or defend Paul. *"that it may not be laid to their charge"*: May it not be reckoned unto them. Paul no doubt realized the difficulty the others had with the whole thing, and did not condemn them for not standing with him like he wanted them to.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today brings out the final part of Paul's two epistles to his beloved brother and son in the Gospel, Timothy. The footnote in the King James Version at the end of this second epistle says, "The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time." History says that Nero was a tyrant, and that he murdered most of his own family and many other people whom he feared. While he was emperor, a large part of Rome was burned, and many believed that Nero started the fire just to see the city burn. But Nero blamed the Christians and had some of them put to death for the crime. That was the kind of

man that Paul faced at his second trial in which he was sentenced to death.

As far as can be known, this was the last writing of Paul. How soon we know not, but not long afterward he sealed his testimony with his own blood, being beheaded. The various things mentioned in this final part of his epistle are quite touching. He wanted Timothy to come to him very soon. Luke was with him. He was confident that the Lord Jesus had not forsaken him and his hope and confidence in His beloved Savior was steadfast and unshaken by all he had suffered and what he was about to suffer. What a confidence so strong he possessed to rise above all the adversities and sufferings of this present life!

Let us remember what the apostle Paul taught and stood for. He knew that Jesus Christ was the risen Son of the most High God. He knew that a crown was laid up for him, an everlasting reward of being in the resurrection with Christ and all of His Bride. He was not afraid, for he knew that his suffering days would soon be over. Let us follow after this same triumphant faith and love for the Savior. It will be worth it all to be accounted worthy to be in that great throng, clothed in white raiment that was washed in the blood of the Lamb!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Paul desire from Timothy?
2. Why had Demas forsaken Paul?
3. Why was the presence of Luke with him such a blessing?
4. How did Paul feel about Mark?
5. What was Paul's outlook on what was before him?

COMMENTS APPLICATION

*Being justified by trusting in the One he once despised,
Paul in hope was all rejoicing, by the Word of God advised.
From the sacred Scriptures drawing truths he never saw before,
Paul put Christ as Lord and Master, as the One he did adore.*

*Oh, how earnestly He followed in the Savior's holy way,
 Working for the sacred Gospel and its purpose day by day.
 Gracious letters to the churches did he write with fervent mind,
 Seeking to encourage, comfort, with a spirit pure and kind;
 Warning, counseling, with doctrine lining up with godliness,
 Always grateful for the mercy shown for his unworthiness.
 For it was a faithful saying, worthy to be thus received,
 That Christ came to save poor sinners, who, like him had been deceived.
 He, who sought to fight against Him, had become a soldier brave
 And determined to be faithful, true, and steadfast to the grave.
 He was sent to Rome for trial, and at first was freedom giv'n;
 But was soon called back and sentenced unto death and sent to Heav'n.
 But we have his final message unto Timothy, his son:
 He was ready to be offered and his work on earth was done.
 He had fought a good fight, keeping to the faith of Christ His King,
 And was looking for the crown that God would surely to him bring.
 We are thankful God has blessed us all his writings to enjoy,
 Giving light and knowledge ever that the devil can't destroy.
 Let us cherish all his mem'ry and his faithful life so true,
 And some happy day we'll meet him in that heav'n and earth anew.*
 —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." II Peter 1:10-11.

There may be occasion near the close of our mortal journey that it seems we are forsaken and deserted, but we should not be discouraged. For if we have obeyed the voice of our Master, we can be certain He will be with us. Therefore, we need not fear evil.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

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