

## 2 Timothy 2:7-19 “The worker in the Word”

### I. Introduction

### II. Vs. 11-13 Five encouragements

### III. Vs. 14-19 A battle of words

#### I. Introduction

Paul had just finished with the three metaphors of how to “*Hold fast the pattern of sound words*” when the world is falling apart all around you. If the believer is to leave a lasting impact upon the people around them they will need:

- *The dedication of a soldier*
- *The discipline of an athlete*
- *The diligence of a farmer*

Having said that Paul addresses yet another tactic of the devil and that has not so much to do with “*keeping the WORD*” but with the “*conduct of the WORKER*”. Without giving our enemy too much praise he is a master at strategy to defeat Christians and he employs several different tactics to defeat us. With Paul in prison only a few weeks away from being beheaded he offers Timothy encouragement to keep going the right direction as well as things to avoid so as to not get side tracked.

#### II. Vs. 11-13 Five encouragements

Vs. 7-13 Remember that Paul is written a personal letter to Timothy as we can see the five very personal encouragements that he offers Timothy:

1. Vs. 7 **Look Again**: Paul wants Timothy to chew on those three examples. Dear ones it’s not only important to know the truth, it’s important to know where the truth fits in

your life. The word of God offers more than answers, it offers answers rightly fitted to your life just when you need it! We have heard that it is “*The early bird that gets the worm but don’t forget also that it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> mouse that gets the cheese!*” This is why Paul says, “*Consider what I say*” and “*may the Lord give you understanding in all things.*”

2. Vs. 8 **Look Up**: Paul sets this encouragement up by reminding Timothy that Jesus was the “*seed of David*”. There are two truths with regards to this statement:
  - a. First, Jesus was the fulfillment of promise to David, that he would have this heir always sit upon the throne. But this promise didn’t look like it was going to be fulfilled as Jesus the promise died before ever making it to the throne. Yet it was this defeat that it His reign forever more possible. Saint’s sense Jesus conquered death to fulfill forever the promise how much more can we be of great courage that whatever we are facing now will be conquered as well.
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> this reminds us that Jesus was fully man and as such knows exactly what we are going through on every level. When all the doubt and despair comes in like a flood we need only look to our Savior who has gone before us.

**Light works best in a dark room! And Jesus resurrected power is most visible in a cemetery!** Nothing I know of can sustain me in seasons of doubt and despair as much as remembering the resurrection of Jesus.

3. Vs. 9 **Look Out**: We can all suffer from spiritual myopathy as we focus exclusively at our circumstances or situations. **We must not ascribe the limitations of our situations and circumstances to the truth and work of Christ.** To do so is to adopt a defeatist attitude to the work of Christ because we often see the work of God limited by what

limits us. Paul couldn't move outside the dungeon he was in the Word of God was not hindered by the same cell. Saints the word of God by the Spirit of God is not bound, it is turned loose upon the world we live in and it will not return void.

4. Vs. 10 **Look Upon**: Paul tells Timothy that his circumstances were so that others would be blessed. Paul was a syringe in the hand of the Master. The things we go through are part of how the truth must be distributed. For some the truth must become harassed and agitated, shaken and broken for it to have its full effect. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "*Grace is free to all of us, anybody can take it, but somebody has to be involved in the suffering that made it possible.*"
5. Vs. 11-13 **Look on Him**: The fifth encouragement comes in the form of an early Christian hymn which is a statement that the earthly difficulties are no match to the heavenly victory won us by trusting in Jesus. Some folks use Jesus as a "good luck charm" only to become disillusioned with Him when He didn't meet their expectations. *We are being refined to see if what we see we believe is truly what we believe.* Ah but don't become discouraged because being a faithless at times is different than being a fake. When we are faithless, dear ones Jesus remains faithful. Life is a great test track to see if we are willing to let go of ourselves and this world and trust in only Him. These times will require us to have: *The dedication of a soldier, the discipline of an athlete and the diligence of a farmer.*

### III. Vs. 14-19 A battle of words

Vs. 14-19 There is a great division in this letter to Timothy right here as Timothy focuses more upon the worker and how our enemy tries to keep us off balance. Reading these verses gives me two general observations:

1. These tactics are aimed at those who are “*in the game*”. Satan isn’t concerned with those who are apathetic. I can only surmise that he isn’t interested in them because they purpose no threat to his self-absorbed kingdom.
2. These tactics **have to do with communication**: (vs 14 *not to strive about **words***, vs. 16 *shun **profane** and **idle babblings***, vs 17 *their **message** will spread like a cancer*.) Paul even calls this tactic “*word battles*” as that is the literal translation of “*not to strive about words*”. Our enemy is into getting the church to squabble about words, after all he is the prince of the power of the air and the author of confusion and the father of lies. So it shouldn’t surprise us that he seeks to cause miscommunication.

Paul gives Timothy **four things to do about word battles**:

- a. Vs. 14a ***Avoid disputing words***: Paul makes no reference about whether these words are false or true. Satan wants people to dispute and argue different aspects of what they believe because when people do it keeps them from speaking about Jesus. We get all caught up in when He will return and forget to talk about Him. We don’t have to change our position nor do we have to convince our opponent all we have to do is “stop”. The story is told of Brittan’s Admiral Nelson as he came across two of his officers arguing to the point of about to come to blows when Nelson stepped in between them and said, “*Stop!*” Then he pointed to the French fleet and said, “*There is the enemy!*” Paul says that if you don’t avoid this you can count on **two casualties**:

1. **No Profit**: Truth will be the first casualty! There will be no advancement of truth no gain for the Kingdom. This doesn’t produce unity it only produces division.

2. **Ruins the listener**: The listener will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> casualty as all the disputes and arguments just closes people's hearts to want to hear truth all together.
- b. Vs. 15 ***Seek God's approval not mans***: The problem with word battles with people is that we are putting all our energy in trying to convince people instead of working hard to have the Word of God transform us. The "*Worker in the Word*" is employed to win arguments but to be transformed by the word personally. The phrase "*rightly dividing*" is a Greek word that means to "*cut straight*" and as a leather worker Paul knew well the importance of "*cutting straight*" fabric or leather. I'm not a seamstress but I've been told that the key to making a garment fit properly is in the cutting; if you cut to short below the line it won't fit right and pull, but if you cut to large it will droop and sag. Ah but cut it right and it will fit together and look right. When handling the word of God "*cut it right*" don't cut it short so that you have to pull it or stretch to fit over the things in your life. And don't cut it to long so it bags over you and no longer resembles the word of God. We need to cut straight the word of God so
- c. Vs. 16-18a ***Don't get involved in empty words***: Paul uses the word "*shun*" in the Greek means to "*walk around*" and implies not to get involved idle chatter that leads to arguments. Idle babblings refers to folks who just shot their mouths off, using lots of emotionalism to cover up their ignorance. This kind of thing will spread like a cancer among the church. Paul offers Timothy an example of a cancer that spread in the actions and words of Hymenaeus and Philetus. Hymenaeus we already read about back in Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> letter to Timothy where Paul said that he delivered him to satan in order that he may learn not to blaspheme. It

appears that the cancer of false teaching had not been completely cut away as it had spread to Philetus who was now spreading the same lies.

- d. Vs. 19 ***Take a stand on the solid foundation of God's word:*** There will always be people and the enemy that will try to get you off tract but there is the solid foundation of God that will keep us in tract. The truth of the word of God will never be altered but Jesus. Paul quotes Numbers 16:19 about the rebellion of Korah during Israel's wilderness wanderings. Korah, Dathan and Abiram wanted the power and popularity of the people and challenged the authority of Moses. So Moses took the problem before the Lord and suggested they and their families come before the Lord and the people to be examined and when they did the ground opened up and down they went, as God in essence told the people "***Any questions!***" John said in 1 John 2:19, "*They went out from us that it might be evident that they were not of us, for if they had been of us they would have continued with us.*"