

2 Timothy 3:10-13
“A pound of the eternal in a paper sack”

I. Introduction

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I. Introduction

I start this message with a disclaimer: Preparing a weekly message through a book of the Bible where you approach each study as you are the most important person who needs to hear this message often doesn't allow me to go further in the text as He has given me all I can apply. I also run the danger of being so specific that the text meant for me may not apply to those I have the privilege of sharing what the Spirit has given. So I apologize upfront, I have left in the personal nature of this conviction as I have no other way to communicate it if I made it less specific.

The 3rd chapter started out with Paul telling Timothy the signs of the times referring to them as the “last days”. Paul then described what the enemy will do as he will have his counterfeits sown among the real thing. In this part of the letter to Timothy, whom he left in Ephesus, Paul offers encouragement concerning pastoring and living in a world that has abandoned faith in Christ for religion. The most difficult of which has less to do with the temptation to become religious and more to do with a “*hard hearted cynicism, bitterness and resentment*” against those who are pursuing religion. That's the subject that Paul will cover for us today, a he will share two things Timothy can do:

- Vs. 10-13 Follow his example
- Vs. 14-17 Follow the Word of God

II. Vs. 10-11a Follow his example

Vs. 10-11 The word “*followed*” in the Greek is a word that describes walking in another’s footsteps and it seems odd to me that Paul would remind Timothy first to follow his example before he mentions to him to follow the Word of God. But Paul’s example was of a man who first followed the Word of God and Timothy had a first row seat to that as he had been with Paul observing how to live by the Word of God when living in a world that had no connection to it. In the Greek the phrase “*you have carefully followed..*” “*You came right along with me*”. Paul says, “*You accompanied me through all that life through at me, you saw how to live life, so don’t forget that now!*” We often forget the context in which most of the New Testament was written, we tend to think that Paul and others didn’t have to endure hardship. The letters of the N.T. weren’t written in a theoretical classroom or think tank; they were writing for the most part in prison cells. **Paul reminds Timothy of five facts that he learned during watching Paul concerning truth that works:**

1. **Observable** Vs. 10a “*You have carefully followed..*: Timothy had heard many messages of Paul’s about living the Christ centered life in a godless world, but more than just hearing the message Timothy saw that message lived out daily as there was no “*do as I say, not as I do*” in the life of Paul no matter what the adversity. Paul not only pointed out the fallacies of religion he lived out the riches of Christ and the superiority of a relationship with Jesus. I believe that every Christian ought to be able to teach the truths of the Word of God without ever opening their mouths by simply being a living demonstration.

2. **Verifiable** Vs. 10b “My doctrine..”: Paul told Timothy that he could always check out his teaching next to the Word of God. *Far too often teaching is graded on delivery not content and teaching must never be received as truth on how well it’s packaged.* Saints our life is not lived out in a vacuum, life happens in real time and what we say we believe what our purpose in life will be witnessed not when things are going according to plan but rather when our lives are coming apart.
3. **Visible:** Vs. 10c “*Manner of life..*”: Paul gave more than he received, served more than he was served, stood up for truth even if it cost him friends. Paul’s life was that of a servant of Christ not a celebrity. Timothy had witnessed how Paul had controlled his temper, continued to love those who hated him and continued to do so over time. Man reading this makes me very convicted, what a great truth we see in Paul’s example as we recall as admonition in 1 Corinthian’s 11:1 “*Imitate me as I imitate Christ.*”
4. **Purposeful:** Vs. 10d “*purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance..*”: There was never a question as to the purpose in Paul’s life and ministry. His desire was to finish the work Christ had given him to do, he trusted the Lord to enable his to do this, and he was patient and loving towards people who continually attacked for the work.
5. **Demonstrable: Vs. 11a persecutions, afflictions:** Paul ministry was not done in a library or laboratory but rather in the operating room and battlefield of life. His ministry was not a thesis or a theory it was first and battle tested and came through the fire proving the truth.

The word of God put into our lives and lived casts out fear as John wrote in 1 John 4:18. There is a web site called the Phobia list that says that there are 530 Phobia's or fears everything from "A" to "Z" as in Zemmiphobia "*the fear of the Great Moll Rat of Eastern Africa.*" And in case you didn't see your particular "fear" you can always claim that you have "*phobophobia*", the fear of phobias. But it doesn't matter what fear you when Jesus' love casts out the fears. Paul lived with an overriding truth: **That whatever he did and said in this life would either bring glory to Jesus, of grief the Spirit of God.**

III. Vs. 11b-13 Follow the Word

Vs. 11b-13 Paul reminds Timothy, "*You were with me during many of those times of persecution. Remember how at Antioch I had to leave town lest my life be taken, how at Iconium I was driven out by a lynch mob, and how at Lystra I was stoned and left for dead outside the city walls.*" Then Paul adds, "*And out of them all the Lord delivered me.*" **Timothy wasn't in the class room with Paul, he was in the crucible with Paul.** Paul's life was an accident, he wasn't a victim or an innocent bystander. Paul's life verse were the words delivered by God to Ananias in Acts chapter 9 verses 15-16 "*...he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.*" Our focus in that calling is the conditions of his service which we understand in part are "he must suffer." but it's unfortunate that we leave out two phrases, "I will show him....for My name's sake". Embedded in the Lord's calling of Paul is two promises:

1. "I'll show him": That's a wonderful promise that where ever he is at, and whatever the journey, "*The Lord will be with Him, as it is He that will show him.*" As long as we are going on the journey through out our life that Jesus has sent us

on, every turn and twist, he will be revealing to us personally, hand in hand.

There will never be a word from our Jesus saying, “*I’ll catch up to you around the bend.*”

2. “For My names sake”: The second promise is that the purpose is always “*for HIS name’s sake*”. Our struggle comes when we can’t understand the purpose and I suggest to you we are trying to find the purpose in the wrong place. The purpose is not to be found as it relates to ourselves, no the purpose is to be found in His name sake, not ours. I can realize that though I can’t understand the purpose of the twist and turn one day we I see Him face to face that twist and turn will make perfect sense and fit for His glory.

That’s the secret that we need to lay next to verses 12-13:

- Yes, “*All those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*” But Jesus is with you and will never leave you or forsake you and your suffering is accomplishing His purpose, it’s not just random suffering with no purpose.
- Yes, “*Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*” But, Jesus is right next to me through this and even their wickedness has no consequences on His purpose and plan.

Paul is revealing to Timothy as well as us that Christianity is always going to be a “counter-culture movement”, it’s always going to be going against the popular trends and grain of society. The Church was never designed to be popular in this world, it was never to be the center of what’s happening where folks gather at Church to have a Big Mac and a cup of Starbucks. Dear ones, The Church that stands for nothing, never stands for

anything! Paul's words to Timothy are reflected in a sarcastic and convicting poem of Ray Stedman:

I would like to buy \$3.00 worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul, or disturb my sleep, just enough to equal a cup of warm milk so I can take a snooze in the sunshine. I don't want enough of Jesus to make me love my enemies, or to serve the afflicted. No I want ecstasy, not transformation. I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy just \$3.00 worth, no more.

This brand of Church, though increasingly popular, is nonetheless worthless! It does nothing to stem the tide of corruption. These are our “*last days*” and it is up to each of us to decide what kind of Christian and church we want to be. Do we want to make our life count or are we looking for a pound of the eternal in a paper sack? If you want to heed your calling then do what Paul did: **Practice what you preach and teach the truth!** You will be unpopular at times but don't let that dissuade you, walk in the Lord, love Him with all your heart, live in His presence moment by moment.