

~2 Timothy~

Lesson 11 – Sanctified and Useful for the Master

We are continuing our study of the book of 2nd Timothy and last week we saw Paul's exhortation to Timothy to avoid the false teaching of the Gnostics that was corrupting the Word of God and straying many away from the Truth.

In this section, Paul solemnly urges Timothy to make a maximum effort to stand alongside God, approved as genuine, to be a faithful worker who is not ashamed of the Testimony of our Lord, rightly dividing or rightly guiding the Word of Truth along a straight path. Not allowing Truth to veer or be compromised. Let's read these verses as a reminder, **2 Timothy 2:14-19**

In these six verses, Paul tells us how we as believers should be standing alongside God, standing in avoidance of idle babblings and standing away from unrighteousness.

- This is the motivation of Paul in our next section, 2:20-26. Paul is continuing his exhortation to separate from these false heresies infiltrating the church.
 - This begins the process of being “Sanctified and Useful for the Master”

Let's read our text today- **2 Timothy 2:20-21**

All of us want to be “useful”. In fact, it is a very depressing and a terrible thing when we are found “useless”. In life, we have an innate desire to be useful, to be profitable, to win in life. And this is a God-given desire, one that God put in all of us so that we might serve Him. Because it is when we are serving Him and are useful to Him, that our life is full of purpose and joy.

This is why Paul said to be diligent, or make a maximum effort to stand alongside God, a faithful worker in the plan of redemption. That is why we are still on this planet, to serve Him and be useful to the Master in His plan of redemption.

However, many people try and fill this desire with ungodly things, such as money, and wealth, a successful job, maybe even being involved with social duties claiming to make the world a better place. But in most instances, these desires go unfulfilled because they are not fulfilling their True desire of serving and being useful to the Master. And when these people dedicate their life to such things that do not give glory to God, they are found useless and unprofitable and they themselves are unfulfilled because they are not performing the work they were called by God to do.

God has chosen us to be part of His redemption plan. He has given us the privilege and the amazing opportunity to serve Him. He set up the plan of redemption to include our working with Him. He did this because He loves us and wants to spend His time with us.

2 Timothy 2:20 †But in a great house †there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

† *But in a great house...*

- Some commentators say this “great house” is the house of God, the Church. But I don't believe this is the True Church because there are obviously unbelievers in this great house that Paul mentions.
 - This great house that Paul speaks of contains a mixture of people; all the different levels of faithfulness down to those who are being swayed from the Truth, and finally those deceivers and servants of Satan himself.
 - I think this lends itself to Jesus' parables of the Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew. Jesus makes a point to tell us that the enemy is all around us and even growing up with us,

- One example is the parable of the mustard seed with the birds nesting in the branches, **Matthew 13:31-32**.
 - These parables in Matthew 13 are types to show us that the enemy is all around us.
 - The Word is faithful, the Lord knows those who are His and He is faithful to separate the righteous from the unrighteous, 2 Timothy 2:19.

† *there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.*

- “vessels”- skeuos, σκεῦος, a better translation might be utensils or instruments for a household, not just jars.
 - This word has a very broad meaning. Any goods or objects that a great house might contain.
 - And among these objects of the house there are different levels of honor or worthiness.
 - Gold and silver are the most “noble” but even then, gold is more precious than silver.
 - The same with wood and clay.
 - So Paul is giving us an example of a variety of people within this house. Some are Christians and some are not, just like the parables.
- But the next verse is so precious. Many people associate these vessels of honor or dishonor to Romans 9 and say “I guess that’s just how God made me. I can’t do anything to change it”
 - But look at verse 21- we have a choice of what kind of vessel we want to be

2 Timothy 2:21 †Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, †sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

Verse 21 tells us we do have a choice. We can make a decision to serve God, reject sin and through the power of the Holy Spirit be cleansed and become a useful vessel of honor for the Master.

† *Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor...*

- “cleanses”- ekkathairo, ἐκκαθαίρω, to cleanse thoroughly, to purge out, to eliminate
- Paul is specifically speaking to those in the church. Those who claim to be one of the brethren
 - This word “cleanses” is an intense compound made up of 3 words
 - This is the most extreme way to say “to cleanse out something” and you really miss this in the English
- “if anyone cleanses... **himself**”- heauton, ἑαυτὸν, this is putting the emphasis on the one who wants to be cleansed. The one who desires above all else to be a useful vessel of honor to the Master.
 - Nobody else is doing this for you. You, yourself need to be doing this by the power of God.
- “if anyone cleanses himself... **from the latter**”- the Greek statement is ἀπὸ τούτων. Do you notice a special word from what we learned last week?
 - ἀπὸ - away from, 2 Tim 2:19- stand away from, away from unrighteousness.
 - ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ ἀδικίας
 - ἀποστήτω- ἀπὸ + ἴστημι, = to take a stance away from unrighteousness, v.19
- “Therefore, if anyone intensely purifies and cleanses himself out **away from** the dishonorable vessels...” ἐὰν οὖν τις ἐκκαθάρῃ ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τούτων... then he will be a vessel of honor.
 - This has been a common thread through both epistles, to take a stance away from unrighteousness, **1 Tim 1:4, 4:7, 6:3-5, 20; 2 Tim 2:16, 19, 22-23**
- “Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter ... **he will be a vessel for honor**” ἔσται σκεῦος εἰς τιμὴν.
 - He will be, (future indicative, this is guaranteed to happen), if you cleanse yourself away from dishonor, you will be vessels unto and **for the purpose** of honor.
 - The purpose of the cleansed vessel is to honor God.
 - That is the desire of my heart, to be a useful vessel for the Master, to give Him all the honor, glory and praise.

† *sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.*

- “sanctified”- *hagiazo, ἁγιάζω*, to be set apart away from the world, made holy, purified, cleansed.
 - Sanctification is the process of “being saved”
 - It is the decrease of sin and the increase of righteousness; a separation from sin that manifests itself in increased holiness in your life.
 - Our Salvation is complete in Christ, and we are **being saved** unto sanctification as we walk and live in Christ, **Heb 2:11, 1 Cor 1:18**.
 - Christ is in you, He is in all believers, this is justification, the first step in salvation. But there is another step, the process of Sanctification.
 - There are three parts to our salvation. Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification.
 - We **were** saved, we **are being saved**, and we **will be saved**.
 - Sanctification is the process of separating ourselves from the world and being made holy and useful for the Master, **1 Cor 1:30; Jn 17:17-19; 14:6**
 - **The WAY**- Justification
 - **The TRUTH**- Sanctification
 - **The LIFE**- Glorification
 - Sanctification is the lifelong process of the manifestation of Christ being fully formed in you- becoming more Christ-like.
 - The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth, using the Word of God, that is the Word of Truth, shapes the believer into Christ likeness. This is sanctification.
 - In this process our soul starts to take on the characteristics of Christ. How we think, how we act, the words we speak are all in the form of Christ.
 - This is Christ being formed in you, Gal 4:19. This is being clothed in Christ, putting on Christ, **Romans 13:11-14; 6:11-14**.
 - This is a lifelong work of resisting the flesh, removing sin and replacing it with thoughts and actions and words of holiness.
 - This is a lifelong process that is only completed at the final Bema Seat Judgement when we enter Glorification.
 - The more sanctified we are in this life means there is less that will burn off at the Bema Seat as we enter eternal life with Him, and greater rewards will be given, namely the great outstanding reward of becoming His Bride.
 - That we might be presented to Christ as holy and without blemish, **Eph 5:25-27**;
 - **2 Cor 11:2-3**- Paul was deeply concerned for the Corinthian church that they were being led astray from the simplicity and purity of the devotion to Christ.
 - Paul always had an earnest desire and pursuance toward Christ, to obtain the ultimate reward of being the Bride of Christ, **Phil 3:12-14; 1 Cor 9:24-27**.
 - We must be separating ourselves from the world, but many of the churches today are doing the exact opposite. They are trying to be more like the world to draw the world to itself.
 - Over the years, the modern church has been tolerating sin and even preaching the message of self and self-centeredness, an inner-directed experience of religion, which as we spoke last week, was a result of the uprising of this Gnostic, self righteous thinking that arose in the 19th century.
 - Instead of rebuking the tendencies of the flesh and its corrupt desires, the modern church has been sending a message that this is the place where all your desires can be fulfilled, 1 Tim 6:5
 - Instead of standing up for the Truth, the modern church has been compromising the Truth. Focusing its message on a temporal means of fulfillment of what the “flesh” wants to hear

rather than a call to holiness and the message of eternal life and spiritual matters.

- The message of Sanctification is not a popular message, but it is probably one of the most important topics in Christianity, and in fact it is what the majority of the NT is all about.
 - Sanctification is the passive, purifying work of Christ through the Spirit. We cannot sanctify ourselves, however, before God can sanctify us and make us holy, we first have to make the decision to resist sin and pursue Jesus.
 - Jesus said, *“if anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **daily and follow Me**”*, Luke 9:23
 - This is a daily act of walking unto sanctification. This is the process of rejecting sin and allowing Jesus to sanctify the soul.
 - As your soul is sanctified, it is easier to guard yourself against sin. This is the process of sanctification, the daily battle against the sin nature, Rom 7:13-25
 - This is separating yourself from the affairs of this life and not being entangled with the world, 2 Tim 2:4.
 - It is choosing first to live holy and make a maximum effort, spoudazo, σπουδάζω, to be a useful vessel to the Master, then the Master, Himself, cleanses and prunes and sanctifies us passively, preparing us for every good work, Jn 15:1-3
 - But notice our part in verse 2 Tim 2:21- *If anyone cleanses **himself** thoroughly and purges the dishonorable vessels out from their life*, then God can passively come in and sanctify our soul from the corruption of sin.
 - As we have been learning in our study of Timothy, the church of Ephesus was struggling with this.
 - Because of false teaching in the church, this process of sanctification was slowed down significantly and, in many cases, even hindered completely, swaying believers to move in the other direction away from Christ.
 - This is why Paul now is solemnly charging Timothy to hold fast the pure words of Jesus Christ
 - To reject false teaching and allow Christ to be formed in you through His Word.
 - It is then that we can become vessels of honor and useful to the Master
 - “sanctified and ... **useful for the Master**”
 - This should be our whole reason for living. Striving to be useful to our God. A vessel of honor, sanctified and approved as genuine, v.15, to show forth His glory and give Him honor
 - This word “useful” is another compound that is only used 3 times in the NT and only by Paul, 2 Tim 2:21; 4:11; Philemon 11.
 - “**useful**”, euchrestos, εὐχρηστος, means “to be highly useful and very profitable”
 - **for the Master**- to despote, τῷ δεσπότη, we get the word despot- a ruler with absolute power and authority
 - Highly useful and very profitable for the Master
 - Usefulness is being faithful and fully committing yourself and your desires to Him so that God can use you to fulfill His will
 - But He can’t use you if you are tied up with the world, especially if you are being swayed to false doctrine.
 - Once you make the decision to remove yourself from the distraction of the world, and you choose to resist sin, then He can start working in you Sanctification and you will start bearing the fruit of Sanctification and that is to have Christ fully formed in you, Gal 4:19, 5:16.
 - And know this, that God is with you every step of the way.
 - This is what we learned in Hebrews 12. His paideia, παιδεία, His loving training, correction and instruction cleanses us so we can begin bearing fruit.

- It is His loving correction as a Father that helps us resist sin and leads us unto Sanctification
- Then having been sanctified we become useful to Him in His plan of redemption, and He can send us out and put us to work.
- “sanctified and useful for the Master... prepared for every good work”
 - These good works were prepared before the foundation of the world and placed in Christ Jesus that we might walk in them, Eph 2:10.
 - These good works are the result and fruit of being a Christian, not the means to salvation.
 - These good works are the result and the fruit of Sanctification, Rom 6:22;
 - We do good works, not to become a Christian, but we do good works because we are Christian.
 - This is the purpose of Sanctification: to become useful for the Master and walk in the good works He has prepared for us. That we might be useful to Him in His plan of redemption.

To summarize verses 20-21 from what we have learned:

But in a great house, there are many different varieties, there are not only golden and silver vessels, instruments and utensils of the house, but also wood and clay; some unto honor and others unto dishonor.

Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself thoroughly, completely away from these vessels of dishonor, he will be a vessel for the purpose of honor, having been sanctified, becoming more Christ-like, set apart and highly useful and very profitable for the Master, having been prepared to walk unto every good work that was placed in Christ before the foundation of the world.

This should be our deepest desire, that we might be sanctified and useful for the Master, and this is done thru absolute submission and humility toward His Word and Truth.

This is one who is standing alongside Him not ashamed, approved as genuine. This is the one who resists sin, stands away from unrighteousness, rejects false teaching and keeps the Words of Truth pure, holy and undefiled.

Who keeps the Word of Truth on the straight path, not allowing it to veer without compromise.

This is the one who is sanctified, set apart from sin, and useful for the Master. This is the one who is prepared to carry out the good works of Jesus Christ, that we might one day be presented to Christ as a chaste virgin, holy and undefiled as His Bride.