

## ~2 Timothy~

## Lesson 12 – The Response to Ungodly Opposition (part 1)

We are in our study of 2 Timothy and in this 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter we are continuing to see Paul's exhortations to stand away from unrighteousness and stand alongside God, sanctified, useful for the Master and prepared for every good work.

Paul is warning and exhorting Timothy about false teachings and ungodliness in the church, but this isn't the first time Ephesus has seen false teachers. It began all the way back in Acts 20, about 7 years before this letter, 58AD, Paul warned the Ephesian elders of false teachers infiltrating the church, [Acts 20:29-32](#).

Notice a key word Paul uses in v.32, sanctified, *hagiazō*, ἁγιάζω. Last week we learned what it meant to be sanctified. To be an honorable vessel to the Lord, set apart from sin and increased in holiness. To be more Christ-like by having Christ formed in you, putting on Christ and being clothed in Christ and in His likeness. Because it then that we are useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

- This was the stance Paul was telling Timothy to make against false teaching in the church because many in Asia had turned away from the Truth, 2 Tim 1:15,
  - And Paul had entrusted Timothy with the authority and charge to strengthen the church of Ephesus and rebuild it with the Truth of God's Word.
  - This process begins with choosing to stand alongside God, turning away from sin, and allowing the Truth to strengthen you and set you free.
  - There was an immense amount of pressure on Timothy as the Bishop of Ephesus and his charge to get the church back on its feet. There was intense hostility from the unbelieving Jews, hostility from the pagan, hostility from Rome in an all-out assault to kill and expel Christians from the Roman Empire, as well as this incessant attack of Gnostic false teachers against the Truth to tear down the pillars of the Gospel and sway people away from the Truth of God's Word.
  - It was the attack on the Truth that crippled the Ephesus church allowing it to stumble and uprooted when persecution arose.
    - Throughout 1 and 2 Timothy we have seen Paul's admonition against false heresies in the church and the response he tells Timothy to have toward them.

As a way of review lets read some select verses from Paul's letters to Timothy concerning the false teachers and the response to this ungodly opposition:

1 Timothy 1:4- *do not give heed to fables and endless genealogies*; 1:18- *wage the good warfare by the pure words of Jesus Christ that I have entrusted to you*; 3:1-13- *train up faithful men that are able to teach*; 4:12-16- *give yourself entirely to the Word of God*; 5:17- *raise up elders who are committed to labor in the Word and doctrine*; 6:2- *teach and exhort the Truth*; 6:3-5- *withdraw yourself from those who are destitute of the Truth*; 6:11- *flee ungodliness and pursue holiness*; 6:12- *fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life*; 6:20-21- *avoid the Gnostic heresies and their idle babble*; 2 Timothy 1:6- *stir up the gift inside you*; 1:7- *don't be timid, and remember your resources of power, love, and a disciplined mind*; 1:8- *do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, but share in the sufferings for the gospel*; 1:13-14- *hold fast and keep the pure words of Jesus Christ that were entrusted to you*; 2:1- *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*; 2:3- *endure suffering evil afflictions and do not be entangled with this world*; 2:8-13- *remember Jesus Christ and His faithfulness*; 2:15- *make a maximum effort to stand alongside God, approved as genuine, not ashamed, guiding the Truth on a straight path not allowing it to veer or be compromised*; 2:16- *stand in avoidance of idle babble against the Truth*; 2:19- *stand away from unrighteousness*; 2:20-21- *cleanse yourself away from the dishonorable vessels of unrighteousness and be sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work*.

Now, as we continue into verse 22, Paul warns of the dangers of false teaching, but he also teaches us how to respond to their heresies as well.

- So that is what I have titled this next section, “[The Response to Ungodly Opposition](#)”
  - This section continues from 2:22 and on into 3:9

Let’s read this entire section- [2 Timothy 2:22 – 3:9](#)

You can see, this section is about responding to the opposition of false teachers and ungodliness.

2 Timothy 2:22 †Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace †with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Paul now continues explaining how we can be highly useful and profitable to the Master and he gives us two imperative commands in response to false teachings: commands to flee and pursue.

We must **flee** away from immature and youthful lusts and **pursue** the call to holiness.

† *Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace...*

- In addition to removing ourselves away from dishonorable vessels, we must also flee “[youthful lusts](#)”
- “**Flee**”- fueugo, φεύγω, to escape, run in terror. Imperative command
  - The word for youthful is used only once in the entire Bible so its hard to get a full understanding what Paul means by youthful, but Paul says almost the exact same thing in, [1 Tim 6:11](#).
    - Since these verses are so similar, I would conjecture that whatever Paul is telling Timothy to flee from in 1 Timothy are the same things as “youthful lusts” in 2 Timothy. Lets read [1 Tim 6:9-12](#).
  - According to this, “youthful lusts” could be the desire of the temporal pleasures of this life; money, wealth, fame, power, greed...
    - These are immature lusts, whereas mature desires are that of eternal life- so lay hold of eternal life, 6:12.
    - Flee temporal pleasures and lay hold of eternal pleasure. Lay hold on eternal life!
- “flee youthful lusts; and instead... **pursue**”- dioko, διώκω, Phil 3:12-14. Pursue and earnestly acquire.
  - This word is used many times in reference to persecution. To be pursued and chased down for the sake of persecution, 2 Tim 3:12- *all those who desire to live Godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*.
  - This is a heavy pursuance of something. So Paul says to have an intense desire to eagerly and earnestly pursue and chase down Jesus in haste.
  - This desire, this pursuance is the key to sanctification; to yearn to be a fellow-worker with God. A useful vessel to the Master.
- Paul tells us to pursue 4 things: Righteousness, Faith, Love, and Peace
- “Pursue...**Righteousness**”- Pursuing righteousness is the idea of being clothed in His Righteousness,
  - Ps 132:9; Isaiah 61:10; Zech 3:1-4; Rev 19:7-8.
  - This isn’t pursuing self-righteousness. This isn’t making ourselves righteous by good works, but rather this is the justified, those who have been declared righteous by God, acting out His righteousness in us. It is committing our life to righteousness, 1 John 2:28-29.
- “Pursue...**faith** and **love**”- Paul is giving us the way to pursue Jesus, to be a useful vessel to the Master
  - Faith is the avenue to apprehend God’s grace that He made available through His love
  - Faith and love is the commandment of the NT, 1 John 3:23.
  - Paul helps define this in his first epistle, 1 Tim 1:5- He says “*Love out of a pure heart is the purpose or the completion of the commandment*”
    - Faith and love fulfill the commandment of God

- “Pursue...**peace**”- not tolerance, not peace as the world sees peace, but true peace with God; reconciliation with the Father through the blood of Jesus, Jn 14:27; Rom 5:1-2.

† pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace... *with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

- Pursue Jesus WITH those who are calling upon the Lord, or as in v.19, those who are naming the name of Christ and standing away from unrighteousness.
  - Those who are pursuing Jesus and calling upon the Lord “**out from a pure heart**” are those who have made themselves clean by purging and cleansing themselves from the dishonorable vessels, v.21.
  - A cleansed heart means your soul has been purified, sanctified, and cleansed and we do this by committing our life to Truth, righteousness and our hope in Jesus unto everlasting life, 1 John 3:3.
- Notice, Paul says to do this WITH each other. Stand in avoidance and away from those who are dishonorable, and stand alongside God and WITH those who are calling upon the Lord.
  - This is why it is so important for us to meet together. To be WITH each other praising and honoring God.

2 Timothy 2:23 †But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, †knowing that they generate strife.

† *But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes...*

- “**avoid**”- paraitou, παραιτού, to reject or refuse - 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular imperative command
  - Paul is still speaking and exhorting Timothy directly, telling him to “*reject or refuse foolish and ignorant disputes.*”
    - This same exact word is used in 1 Tim 4:7- “*reject profane and old wives fables*”
  - Here is another instance of Paul telling Timothy to reject, stand away from and avoid false heresies
- “**foolish and ignorant**”- moras kai apaiduetous, μωράς και άπαιδευτους,
  - Foolish- moras, μωράς, moron - 1 Cor 3:19- “*for the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God...*”
  - Ignorant- apaideutos, άπαιδευτος, only used this once in the NT. This word has the negative α prefix is the opposite of paideia, παιδεία, the Father’s loving training, correction and instruction that cleanses us so we can begin bearing fruit.
    - apaideutos, άπαιδευτος – is the opposite of training and correcting- untrained, undisciplined, uninstructed. Ignorant is an okay translation, but these people are not only ignorant, but **willingly ignorant of the Truth**. They don’t want to know the Truth.
    - These people are suppressing and resisting the Truth willingly, 2 Tim 3:8, Rom 1:18
- “**reject foolish and ignorant...disputes**”- zetesis, ζήτησις- debate or controversy.
  - Used in 1 Tim 1:4- *do not give heed to fables and endless genealogies which cause **disputes***, zetesis, ζήτησις; 1 Tim 6:4- *men of corrupt minds who are destitute of the Truth knowing nothing but are obsessed with **disputes***, zetesis, ζήτησις, *and a war of words.*
    - These people love disputes and fights...

† so avoid and reject them... *knowing that they generate strife.*

- Debating with people who are willingly ignorant of the Truth is of no profit. These are not people who want to learn, but only want to cause a fight. That’s what this word “strife” is, a fight, a war.
- “**strife**”- mache, μάχη, fight or war- as in 1 Tim 6:4-*those obsessed with **disputes** and a **war of words***, logomachia, λογομαχία, *out from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions...*
- 2 Tim 2:14- *do not **strive about words***, logomacheo, λογομαχέω, *to no profit* (the enemy does this) *for the purpose of catastrophe and ruin to the hearer.*

2 Timothy 2:24-26 <sup>24</sup> And a servant of the Lord †must not quarrel †but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, <sup>25</sup> in humility correcting those who are in opposition, †if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may †know the truth, <sup>26</sup> and that they may come to their senses and †escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

We have to remember that these people in opposition to the Word are professing themselves as Christians in the church. All of which have been caught in the trap of the Devil. But these people are not the enemy, they are just playing out the will of the enemy.

To fight this, we need to remember, we are not fighting flesh and blood. But rather the root enemy who is the Devil and his deceiving spirits and the doctrine of demons, 1 Tim 4:1; Eph 6:12.

This is now when we set all emotions and feelings aside and walk in love toward our brethren, that perhaps they might find repentance, know the Truth and come to their senses.

† *a servant of the Lord must not quarrel...*

- “quarrel”- machomai, μάχομαι, verb form of mache, μάχη, to fight or war, 1 Tim 6:4; 2 Tim 2:14, 2:23
  - The statement, “must not quarrel” is, οὐ δεῖ μάχεσθαι, it is not necessary to fight. This is the turning point. When a conversation turns into a fight, it has to end.
- Look how we are to act instead:

† *but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, <sup>25</sup> in humility correcting those who are in opposition...*

- “gentle”- epios, ἤπιος, nurturing and gentle in loving. Used also in 1 Thess 2:7-8- gentle, as a nursing mother cherishes her children.
- “able to teach”- didaktikos, διδακτικός, skillful in teaching, namely the Word of Truth, 1 Tim 3:2- bishop
- “patient”- anexikakos, ἀνεξίκακος, endure evil patiently
  - compound of anechomai, ἀνέχομαι (endure patiently) + kakos, κακος (evil)
  - ready to endure mistreatment, without retaliating
- “in humility”- prautes, πραΰτης, meek, humble (but not weak)- power under control- tamed horse
- “correcting”- paideuo, παιδεύω, loving Fatherly correction- Heb 12- correction and instruction
- “those who are in opposition”- antidiatithemi, ἀντιδιατίθημι, thoroughly out of place in accordance with the Word.

To the world, this seems like a weak reaction to opposition.

- If this is how we are to treat our enemies, wont this result in reviling and persecution?
  - Absolutely! This is why Paul has been telling Timothy to kakopatheo, κακοπαθῶ, suffer evil afflictions, 2 Tim 1:8, 2:3, 4:5, Look to Jesus as our example, 1 Peter 2:20-23- Jesus did not retaliate in violence, He did not revile in return, but instead He entrusted Himself to God who judges righteously.
  - Responding emotionally doesn’t profit anyone. It doesn’t edify the hearer and it might lead the one admonishing to destruction by getting entangled in useless debates.
- Remember, Paul is speaking about those who need correction in the church. This isn’t the world. This is within the church.
  - It’s our responsibility to uphold the Truth without compromise. To be loving, gentle, in all humility and control correcting those who say they are Christians, but oppose the Word of God. And we must be ready to endure evil mistreatment for the purpose that, “perhaps God might grant them repentance, and they would know the Truth and come to their senses.”

† *if God perhaps will grant them repentance...*

- “will grant”- this is in the subjunctive mood meaning there is a condition to be met for this to happen. The condition in this case is: “will they have a change of heart and hear the Truth?” Will they have ears to hear

and accept the Truth.

- “**Repentance**”- metanoia, μετάνοια, meta, μετά (change) + noeō, νοέω (thinking)- literally a change of thinking
  - God will always grant repentance to anyone who has a repentant heart, a desire to change their thinking
    - Luke 15:1-32- Parable of the lost sheep and the prodigal son are parables of granting repentance to those who desire it.
    - Acts 5:31-32- God offers repentance to those who obey Him
    - Romans 11:23- God will grant repentance to Israel and allow them to be grafted back in **IF they believe.**
    - Luke 23:42-43- the thief on the cross was granted repentance “today you will be with me in paradise”
    - Acts 11:18- God has granted to the Gentiles repentance to life
    - Romans 2:4- The goodness of God leads you to repentance
    - 2 Peter 3:9- God is delaying His judgement because it is God’s will that all would come to repentance and not perish.
    - Hebrews 12:17- Esau didn’t find repentance because he wasn’t seeking God
    - Anyone who has a heart for repentance will be granted repentance.
  - Heb 6:4-6- tells us that it is impossible to be granted repentance while you are in the state of a reprobate mind.
    - But the Word of Truth is powerful, and it is able to pull those strongholds down, 2 Cor 10:4, so that if the one hears the Word of Truth and if they will allow the Truth into their soul, the Word can break through their stony heart and soften their heart for repentance, then God is able to grant repentance.
- When any type of immorality is found within the church, this is a threat to the purity of the Lord’s body, who is the church, Eph 1:22-23, 4:11-16; 1 Cor 12:12-27
  - We must be exposing the deeds of darkness and walking as children of the Light, Eph 5:8-11
  - Sometimes our admonition against our sinful brethren comes with the stance of avoidance so that they might come to repentance, **2 Thess 3:6, 14-15; Gal 6:1; 2 Cor 7:9-10;**
  - The goodness of God leads us to repentance, Romans 2:4. Godly shame and godly sorrow awakens our soul to the Truth of God’s goodness. And His good news is His goodness; that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, 1 Jn 1:9.
    - This then leads them to repentance.
- But not all those who are corrected will come to repentance. If they don’t come to repentance, then they need to be expelled from the church, given over to their own lusts and desires.
  - The Bible gives us this method of discipline and correction.
  - This is not done in self-righteousness, but in love so that the church can remain pure, “*for whom the Lord loves He corrects*”, Heb 12:6;
    - **Matt 18:15-17; Titus 1:10-11, 15-16, 3:9-11;** 1 Tim 1:18-20; 1 Cor 5:1-5.

† if God perhaps will grant them repentance...*so that they may know the Truth<sup>26</sup> and come to their senses...*

- Once they have made the decision to have ears to hear, and they come with a repentant heart before God to know and hear the Truth, then God will grant them repentance.
- “**come to their senses**” ananepho, ἀνανήφω, to elevate your thinking, refresh anew again, think soberly
- This is why we are commanded to preach the Truth to them that they might think soberly, come to their senses and be set free by the Truth, Jn 8:32.
  - It may be hard to hear it. Sometimes the conviction of the Spirit cuts deep, Acts 2:37, but this is the

paideuo, παιδεύω, the loving correction that Paul tells us to have toward these people, 2 Tim 2:25.

- Sometimes it can even be painful, but this correction and instruction is working in them a purification and sanctification *so that they might be partakers of His holiness and bear the peaceable fruit of righteousness*, Heb 12:10-11.

† ... *so that they may know the Truth* <sup>26</sup> *and come to their senses... and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.*

- “escape” isn’t in the Greek, it’s really saying, “refresh anew and rise up your thinking out from the snare of the devil. καὶ ἀνανήψωσιν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ διαβόλου παγίδος
  - It is the Truth that rises you up out from the trap of deception from the devil
- “*having been taken captive by him to do his will*” ἐζωγρημένοι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ἐκεῖνου θέλημα.
  - Literally - “having been captured alive under him for the purpose of that one’s will”
  - These are victims of Satan and demonic forces who were deceived and caught in the lie. Satan is a liar and the father of lies, Jn 8:44, and he sets the trap of deception and many get caught in it.

Unrighteousness cannot be tolerated in the church. The response to false teaching and ungodliness in the church is to be like Christ by showing them God’s goodness and Truth.

- This is being Christ-like by showing forgiveness and mercy, but also the shepherd must protect his flock against the ravaging wolves. And if they do not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord, then they are destitute of the Truth, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth, these are men of corrupt minds who resist the Truth and from such people you must withdraw yourself and turn away from them, **1 Tim 6:3-5**; **2 Tim 3:5-8**; 1 Timothy 1:4, 4:7, 20, 2 Tim 2:16, 19, 22-23; Rom 16:17-18; 1 Cor 5:4-5, 9-13
- If they will not come to repentance, the only thing we can do to protect the flock of Christ is to expel them from the church and let them go to their depraved mind.
  - They cannot stay in the church among other believers.

There must be a call to holiness in the church. And when we have a commitment to sanctification and a commitment to keeping the Word of Truth pure and unwavering in His church, then the Light is shining and the darkness is exposed and the darkness cannot overcome the Light.

This is what we need to be praying and standing on. Tearing down the strongholds within the church and doing this with the Word of Truth, waging warfare with the enemy of darkness, fighting the good fight of faith and laying hold on eternal life. Light always exposes darkness, revealing their evil deeds. And we do this lovingly, with a gentle, humble heart so that there might be some who are saved.

But whether they accept the Truth or reject it, we have the mandate to Preach the Word and we stand in faith knowing that, “*the enemy will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all*”