

~2 Timothy~

Lesson 13 – The Response to Ungodly Opposition (part 2)

Last week we learned of our response to ungodly opposition within the church. Our duty to uphold holiness and Truth in the church against the false heresies infiltrating the body of Christ. We do this by not fighting, but with gentleness, teaching, enduring evil patiently, correcting and instructing with controlled power in humility those that oppose the Truth, so that they might know the Truth and come to their senses and rise out from the snare of the devil.

But as we learned, not everyone will do this, in fact it is a small few that will repent and come to the Truth. It is then that we must maintain purity in the body of Christ and not tolerate those committed to sin in the church. This is why Paul has been so adamant about separating away from unrighteousness because it leads to destruction.

False doctrine breeds ungodliness; they go together, and they are the greatest enemy of the church.

Jesus said beware of wolves in sheep's clothing, Matt 7:15; John warned of many antichrists, 1 Jn 1:18; Peter prophesied of false prophets, 2 Pet 2:1-3; Jude spoke of ungodly men creeping in unawares, Jude 4; and Paul battled this in almost every church he established, Corinth, Galatia, Thessalonica, and of course Ephesus. False teachers appear in many ways, but they always have the form of godliness, but they are destitute of the Truth.

These 9 verses in chapter 3 not only include the false teachers, but also the consequence of false teaching which is manifest in ungodly living. And this is why it is so important that we keep a watch for distorted Truth and profane and idle babble within the church because as Paul said, “they will increase to more ungodliness and their message will spread like gangrene”, 2 Tim 2:16-17.

Lets read our text today starting with **2 Timothy 2:22 through 3:9**

We have to remember that this is a list of ungodliness within the church, not the world. It seems like these are worldly sins, and that's because it is the fruit of unrighteousness that has crept into the church. It is the result of having the world come to the church without a call to holiness and sanctification.

Don't get me wrong, it is God's desire that the world would turn to Him and this should be our desire as well. John 3:16, “*for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...*”, John 1:29, “*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” This is a universal gospel to everyone in the world. God is calling all to Himself, and the call is a call to repentance. A call of submission to His Son as Savior and Lord.

Jesus said, “*I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*”, Luke 5:32. Calling sinners to repentance is the key and there must be a change that comes with that. There is a spiritual change, as in a new, reborn spirit, and there must also be a change of mind, a metanoia, a change of thinking, a heart of repentance to allow the Truth to sanctify and cleanse your soul.

When Jesus spoke to the adulterous woman in John 8, He was the only one who had the right to condemn her, but instead He showed her the goodness and mercy of God to lead her to repentance. And remember what He said, “*Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.*” She was confronted with her sin, but in God's mercy she was forgiven, but with a call to holiness. “go and sin no more”, Jn 8:11.

And as we spoke last week, this is the call to holiness. This is the walk of sanctification, but the call to holiness is not being implemented in the church. The world is beginning to feel comfortable in the church and that shouldn't be happening. In fact, it should be the opposite, the world should feel uncomfortable in the church and the holiness of the brethren and their behavior should be creating a sense of conviction in them to want to change. This isn't done out of condemnation, but of love and correction.

The walk of sanctification doesn't mean you will never sin, that's why we have the blood of Jesus. *"if we sin we have an advocate with the Father, that if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness"*, 1 Jn 1:8-2:2. The issue isn't sin, but what is your heart committed to? Are you committed to sin or committed to righteousness? Are you being sanctified by the Truth or is sin reigning in your mortal body?

In verses 1-8, Paul is describing apostasy within the church. Paul tells us in 2 Thessalonians that before the Day of the Lord comes, there will be a falling away, apostasia, ἀποστασία, 2 Thess 2:3. I don't know when the end will come, nobody knows, but I can see the makings of what would be a huge falling away from the Truth. This is what happened in the church of Ephesus. They were not rooted in the Truth, and when persecution and affliction arose for the Word's sake, they stumbled. They were swayed away from the Truth and many fell away, 2 Tim 1:15.

The ungodliness that is listed in our text today is certainly true of the world outside the church, but what makes this such an insidious issue is that they have become issues within the church, and they pose a severe danger to the church's health, safety, and power.

As we said last week, the admonition to the servant of the Lord seems weak, not fighting, to be gentle, teaching, enduring evil patiently, correcting, but there is a sense of resoluteness, a stance of immovability, unwavering, uncompromising from the Truth. It is a controlled power inside that keeps us steadfast, persevering, able to endure to the end. This is hupomene, ὑπομονή, and hupomene, ὑπομονή, is what brings us to glory even if that way is death. It is the strength to never compromise the gospel even under intense hostility and suffering evil afflictions.

- ... Lets begin studying from verse 1.

2 Timothy 3:1 †But know this, †that in the last days perilous times will come:

† *But know this...*

- This is another second person singular imperative command, telling us Paul is still talking directly to Timothy and commanding him to *"know this"*.
 - This thing that Paul wants Timothy to know is relative to him and his circumstances.

† *that in the last days perilous times will come...*

- *"in the last days"*- ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις,
 - Some commentators say these "last days" is the time period right before the 2nd coming.
 - This term, "last days" in the NT is specific to the last age of time before Jesus comes back.
 - The last days is the age of grace that we now live in.
 - Heb 1:1 says, *"in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son"*
 - Jesus is speaking to us now
 - Acts 2:15, Peter quotes the prophet Joel and says, *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh..."*
 - and the Holy Spirit has come and is being poured out on all who believe
 - 1 John 1:18, *"this is the last hour...and many anti-christs have come, by which you know this is the last hour."*
 - In the NT, the last days is this long dispensation of the Church. The age that Jesus is building His Church.
 - These last days extend from the cross to the Second Coming of Jesus.
- *"perilous times will come"*-
 - *"perilous"*- chalepos, χαλεπός, violent, dangerous, fierce, as in being attacked.
 - This word is used in Matt 8:28 when the two demon possessed men came out of the tombs exceedingly "fierce"
 - This gives us the sense that there is and will be demonic participation in these last days.

- “will come”- enhistemi, ἐνίστημι, compound of ἐν + ἵστημι, to stand in or take a stance within
 - My conjecture, based on the context, is that the enemy is taking a stance within the church.
 - False teachers and ungodliness standing within the church trying to tear down the Truth

“In this last age before Jesus comes back, fierce and dangerous seasons driven by demonic activity and ungodliness will take a stance within (the church)”

- Remember, Paul tells us to take a stance alongside God and stand away from unrighteousness, 2 Tim 2:15-19
- When you take this stance, there will be persecution and suffering evil affliction for the Word’s sake.
 - The NT tells us to expect this, Matt 5:11-12; Jn 15:20; 16:33; Rom 8:17-18; **1 Pet 4:12-14**; 5:10
- This is the process of dokimion, δοκίμιον, and it goes hand in hand with sanctification.
 - Persecution and trials refine us as gold is refined in fire. It strengthens the faithful and puts to work our perseverance.
 - **1 Peter 1:6-7**- the proving of your faith... **James 1:2-4**- count it all joy...; **Rom 5:3-4**- glory in tribulations
 - This brings joy and fulfillment, being useful for the Master and pleasing to Him
 - And those who aren’t proven genuine and do not have perseverance, they will fall away and apostasize and reject God and fall into the trap of the enemy.
 - This I believe will be the great falling away leading into the Tribulation.
- As things grow worse, the end draws closer. Glory is almost come and the hope of eternal life is at hand
 - That is why we fight, and we stay True to holiness and purity.

In our text today, 2 Timothy 3:1-9, we see the enemy distorting Truth and in verses 2-8, there are 25 statements used to describe the dangers of the enemy lurking within the church. It defines the method of the enemy to destroy the Truth.

- All 25 words and phrases are anti-god and anti-truth and there are some that are specifically a direct antithesis of the Truth. Meaning the root word is good and the prefix changed its meaning to evil
 - **un**-thankful; **un**-pious; **un**-loving...the Greeks use the negative **α** prefix to show this change
 - Many of these words are wholesome words at the root, but then morphed into an abomination.
 - That’s what the enemy does, it literally twists and corrupts good into evil. Satan and his demons are anti-Christ, they are anti-Truth and they pervert and twist every good thing that God has made.
- This list in 2 Tim 3:2-8 is an attack on the Truth, an attack on the purity of the Word, and it is an attack on Jesus who is the Truth.
- As we study verses 2-8, we need to look at these verses as a whole, so instead of dissecting each word, I want to read and study this text as one thought so we can understand the method of the enemy.
 - As we go through these verses, notice the overall selfish, self-righteous attitude that is portrayed by this list.

2 Timothy 3:2-8 ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power.

And from such people turn away!

⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;

2 *For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money...*

- Selfishness is the root of all ungodliness. Self-love, lovers of self, people in love with themselves rather than lovers of God and the brethren.
 - Every wicked thing is born out of self-love and selfishness. This is who Satan is and he has developed his kingdom on this earth to thrive in selfishness.
 - The flesh loves when you feed it. But it is never satisfied and that's why evil grows worse and worse.
 - Selfishness breeds and feeds this entire list and it's not surprising that money is the next on the list because Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:10, "*the love of money is the root of all evil ...*"
- This self-lover mentality began in the 19th century in the age of innovation when people started thinking of themselves as god because of discovery and technology and it really gained a foothold in the 1960's with the sexual revolution.
- The root of this was self-love. How can I please myself? How can I feed my flesh to the fullest with every desire. This is why sexual immorality is always the fruit of selfishness. Just look at Romans 1 and then compare it with this list in 2 Timothy.
 - Now the really disturbing thing is this isn't a list of the world, that is expected, but this is a list of so-called professing Christians in the church.
 - This is why there has to be a call to holiness in the church or else this will progress to ungodliness and complete depravity in the church, that will lead many in the body of Christ to ruin and destruction.

2 *These men are ... boasters, proud* (hyper-shine as in shining the glory of themselves rather than God), *blasphemers, disobedient to parents* (un-persuaded by parents), *unthankful* (un-gracious), *unholy* (un-pious),

3 *unloving* (un-affectionate), *unforgiving* (un-able to reconcile, namely unable to reconcile with God), *slanderers* (διάβολος, same word as the devil- literally someone who thoroughly and completely throws you down), *without self-control* (without power and might, incontinence, no self-control), *brutal* (un-gentle, fierce), *despisers of good* (un-loving toward good),

4 *traitors* (first-giving, as in a betrayer giving up someone or something. As in giving up the Truth. This is someone who has no problem compromising the Truth), *headstrong* (to fall head first, to act rashly), *haughty* (puffed up, conceited, full of himself, but Paul says 1 Tim 6:4, they know nothing), *lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God* (lovers of temporal sensual pleasures rather than lovers of God and His eternal pleasure of being with Him),

5 *having a form of godliness but denying its power*. (Paul is specifically talking about false religion. Whether it is Gnosticism, Legalism, Catholicism, or any other "ism", they have a form, an outside appearance of godliness, but they deny its power by their actions, Titus 1:16- *they profess to know God but in works deny Him*. The Catholic church became obsessed with power and money, selfishness and greed and for 1,000 years they hid the Bible from the people and made it illegal to own or even read the Bible.

Today we also have ecumenism on the rise. This is the attempt to join all Christian groups to one faith and unity. That sounds good and has a "form of godliness" but it's wrong. Yes, we should be of one faith, one body, one Spirit, but this can only be accomplished by unity in the Truth. It is impossible to bring organizations into unity, only people's hearts can be formed into Truth. Ecumenism attempts to bring unity between Evangelicals and Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses and Roman Catholics and even Muslims, and there is no way to do this unless you compromise the Word of God. Tolerance and compromise is not unity. This is Satan's way of tearing down the Truth)

"And from such people turn away!" apotrepo, ἀποτρέπω, turn away from, change away from

6 *For of this sort* (for out from these false teachers and false religion) *are those who creep into households* (How do they creep into houses? Through the media, the news, social media, even schools. They do this through their seemingly pious speeches and their deceptive, conniving lies. **Jude 3-4, 12, 19**)

and make captives of gullible women (this is 2 Tim 2:26- they have been taken captive in the snare of the deception) *loaded down with sins*, (having their sins heaped upon them- guilt-ridden), *led away by various lusts* (these include sexual lusts as well as the youthful, immature lusts of power, greed and selfishness, 2 Tim 2:22 and 1 Tim 6:9-11)

7 *always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* (this was the Gnostic way, to teach knowledge, but this heresy will never lead you or allow you to come to the Truth. The same is for our generation today. The internet has given us the wealth of knowledge, but are we smarter, has it allowed us to come to the Truth? NO, far from it. Technology hasn't made our lives easier, or made us smarter, it has only fed our flesh and created selfishness. The idea of instant results has given this generation a quick fix gospel, instead of having a life of perseverance and sanctification)

8 *Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses* (this is the only place in Scripture where these men are mentioned, but Jewish tradition tells us they were the magicians of Pharaoh who rebutted the miracles of Moses, Ex 7:11. Tradition also says these magicians went with Moses out from Egypt at the Exodus, pretending to be Jewish converts, and they supposedly were the ones deceiving the children of Israel to make the golden calf.), *so do these also resist the truth:* (so do these false teachers come against the Truth in complete opposition. These men resist the Truth, they are destitute of the Truth and they are willingly ignorant of the Truth)

Paul goes on to say, they are: *men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith*; (this word disapproved is *adokimos*, ἀδόκιμος, the opposite of being approved genuine. Those who are anti-Christ are also *adokimos*, ἀδόκιμος, without genuineness.)

Any one of these people can be saved IF they open up their souls to the Truth and stop resisting the Truth. Otherwise, after we have proclaimed the Truth to them and admonished them to repent, if they do not, we must turn away from them by not allowing them into Christian fellowship.

9 (Paul closes with an encouraging statement of faith), *but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.* (As was the folly of Janus and Jambres was manifested, so will the folly of the false teachers be revealed to everyone)

Those who know the Truth will not be swayed by false teaching.

Jn 3:21 says “*those who are committed to the Truth are coming to the Light*” and we are shining the light on the enemy's evil deeds and exposing their folly so that they will progress no further,

The Light is exposing the darkness and the Light will always flush out the darkness.

God wins in the end and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
Phil 2:10-11

While we are on this earth, we are in a battle. A battle to stand for Truth. To stand for holiness and purity in ourselves and in the body of Christ, knowing that these light afflictions are working for us an eternal weight of glory, so that one day we can stand before the Master, having been useful to Him in this life, standing un-ashamed and having confidence that we will be proven genuine and adorned in His righteousness as His perfect Bride to live with Him for all eternity.