

~2 Timothy~

Lesson 9 – Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth (part 1)

In the beginning was the Word and Word with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was light and the light shined in the darkness and the darkness did not receive it.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and Truth.

Jesus is the Truth and He is the Word of God. And when the Father sent Jesus to this world, He sent His Truth through His Word so that all who believe in Him would not perish but have eternal life in Him.

Jesus said I AM the Way the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father except thru me. And Jesus also said, speaking to the Father, your Word is Truth, sanctify them by your Truth.

God cannot lie, it is impossible for Him to lie because He is Truth.

However, Satan is a liar and he is the father of lies since the creation of the world he has sought to destroy the Truth of God. So that brings us to our discussion today and I have titled this message Rightly Dividing the Truth, the battle against false teaching.

We are continuing our study of the book of 2nd Timothy and in this week's lesson will be looking at 2 Timothy 2:14-19. This is a two part lesson on Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.

- Timothy was a young man in his mid-thirties by now. He had traveled with Paul for over a decade and in 63AD was given the biggest responsibility that Paul could give someone. He entrusted Timothy with the Word of Truth, 1 Tim 1:18. The pure words of Jesus Christ that were given to Paul, 1 Tim 1:11, were now being entrusted to Timothy.
- At this time Timothy was ordained as the Bishop of Ephesus for the reason of combating the false teachings that were coming against the church.
 - Prior to Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, Paul spent 3 years with the believers in Ephesus founding that church.
 - Ephesus and Asia as a whole would be a central hub for the Gospel, central to the known world, and I think Paul had this in mind as he was building the church, but shortly after his 3 year stay in Ephesus, after returning to Jerusalem, Paul is put in prison for 4 years, 59-63AD.
 - And it was just before this imprisonment, on his way to Jerusalem that Paul warns the Ephesian elders of false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing come to infiltrate and destroy the doctrine of Truth, Acts 20:29-31
 - During the four years Paul is in prison, false teachers tear down the foundation of Truth in the church of Ephesus, so after Paul's release, Paul travels back to Ephesus with Timothy and gives Timothy the charge and authority to get the church back on its feet by teaching and upholding sound doctrine.
 - Shortly after Paul leaves Timothy in Ephesus, Paul writes the 1st letter to Timothy. He tells Timothy to reject all false teachings and put in place faithful men who will bring the integrity of the Truth back into the church through teaching and preaching the gospel.
 - He sets up a structure for the church to help keep these things in line, with the main purpose to expel the false teachers who were destroying the pillar of the church, the Truth of the Word, 1 Tim 1:3-4, 18-20; 4:1-2; 6-7;

- Now in 2nd Timothy, Paul is in prison again, this time until his death and he writes Timothy exhorting him and reminding him with the same charge he had when he was first ordained as Bishop in Ephesus: to expel the false teachings and hold fast the Word of Truth.
 - However this time we see Timothy shaken, scared, and uncertain, so Paul begins his 2nd letter by encouraging him in the faith, **2 Tim 1:6-8, 13-14; 2:1, 3-4, 8, 12**
 - And then starting with 2:14, Paul now begins to warn Timothy of the dangers of false teachings.
 - Let's read our text **2 Timothy 2:14-19**, and then we will study verses 14-15.

In this section Paul begins addressing the false teachers and the major problems they cause in the church

- Every word in this section has huge impacts, so we're going to study this out carefully

2 Timothy 2:14 †Remind them of these things, †charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, †to the ruin of the hearers.

† *Remind ~~them~~ of these things...*

- “**them**” is not in the original Greek. The statement, tauta hupomimneske, Ταῦτα ὑπομύνησκε is a 2nd person singular saying, “you Timothy” is the main intent from Paul,
- He says “You Timothy, call to mind these things” - Remember these things I am telling you
 - hupomimneske, ὑπομύνησκε, is a present active imperative, meaning it is a command that must continually be taking place.
 - It means “call to mind” but it has the hupo, ὑπο, prefix in front which gives it the sense of “bearing up”. Being under, bear in mind, call to mind as foundational elements.
 - “continue to bear in mind as foundational all this that I have told you so far”

† *charging ~~them~~ before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit...*

- Again “**them**” is not in the original language- Paul says, “charging you Timothy, before the Lord...”
- “**charging**” is an intense word, diamarturomai, διαμαρτύρομαι, . To solemnly urge, strongly exhort or testify. Used in a sense of life or death matters, Lk 16:28; Acts 2:40; 8:25; 10:42; 18:5; 28:23; 1 Tim 5:21; 2 Tim 4:1-2
- “I solemnly urge you not to...**strive about words** to no profit”, logomacheo, λογομαχέω, literally a war of words, a wrangling of words against the Truth, **1 Tim 6:3-5**.
 - Look closely at this word. It is a combination of logos, λόγος, + mache, μάχη, to fight
 - This is not only a war of just any word this is a war against THE WORD, logos, λόγος

† *to the ruin of the hearers.*

- “**to the ruin**”, epi katastrophe, ἐπὶ καταστροφῇ.
 - Compound word of kata, κατα, + strepho, στρέφω, to turn, to twist, change one's course
 - But when the kata is placed in front of this word, it intensifies it to catastrophe, utter ruin and destruction.
 - This word is only used one other time in the NT, 2 Pet 2:6, utter destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - It is the hearers, those who engage in these useless debates that are being led down the path of destruction. That is what the enemy wants. *Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy*, Jn 10:10
 - This word epi, ἐπὶ, when used with the dative case can mean “for the purpose”. The enemy gets into these useless debates for the purpose of destroying the believer.
 - They are obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, because these lead to strife, envy, reviling, and evil suspicions, 1 Tim 6:4.

Who were these false teachers and what were they teaching that was so bad?

The Gnostics and their Heresy

- These false teachers were known as the Gnostics, those that try to attain to righteousness and salvation through intellect and knowledge, gnosis, γνῶσις, **1 Tim 6:20-21**.
 - These Gnostics, although they confess they believe that Jesus was on the earth they have completely twisted the Scriptures and made it fit their agenda.
 - They have made a war of words, logomacheo, λογομαχέω, with the Scriptures
 - This has been Satan's #1 tactic since the beginning: to get us to doubt the Word of God. It started all the way back in the Garden when he created doubt saying, "has God really said?"
- The Gnostics formed this elaborate means of attaining salvation through obtaining a higher knowledge, gnosis, γνῶσις, of what they call the Aeons.
 - They did this through deception and trickery claiming they were Christians and using Scripture to support their false agenda.
 - They didn't deny Jesus as Savior, but they twisted thinking didn't make Him Savior as we know it.
 - They claimed that there were 30 Aeons or gods in the Pleroma that each had special attributes.
 - Some of their names were Aletheia, Zoe, Sophia, Logos, Christos, all names of our Savior, Jesus Christ. But they say that all of these Aeons endowed themselves into Jesus and He was the culmination of all the Aeons and it was through Jesus that He brought the spark of knowledge.
 - And if you attained to this knowledge, you would know God and have eternal salvation.
 - You can see small bits of truth in their doctrine, but in reality, it is so selfish and off base, it is blasphemy.
 - The Gnostics were taking Paul's doctrine of Christianity and twisting it into lies and heresy.
 - Irenaeus, 120 – 202AD, Bishop of Lyons and a pupil of Polycarp wrote his book – "Against Heresies" in defense of Christianity against the heretical teachings of the Gnostics.
 - Here are a few readings from his 5 volume book- "Against Heresies"
 - **Irenaeus, Against Heresies Book 1- preface:1; 4:6; 6:1; 8:1**
- The effects of these heresies are still pervasive today even in the Christian community.
 - The Gnostics were famous for allegorizing or spiritualizing the Bible. Saying that the events in the Bible didn't really happen. But they are only stories for us to allegorize them into our life today.
 - Allegorizing Scripture can be very dangerous because it starts to interpret the Bible from feelings and beliefs rather than facts. With this thinking, the basis of the Word no longer controls the meaning.
 - This Gnostic thinking goes along with New Age mysticism, Scientology, Mormonism, and amillennialism ideas
 - Again, you can see Satan's tactics to discredit the Bible and reduce the Word of God to nothing
- Another heresy that stemmed from the Gnostics is their view of the flesh and the spirit.
 - They believe a person can fulfill any lust of the flesh without eternal consequences because the spirit is completely separate from the flesh
 - They believe that the inward man is perfect and is held in bondage by the flesh until it can come to an understanding of knowledge.
 - This is in direct violation of Romans 5-6. We as Christians know and believe that our inward man has been corrupted by sin and the only way to perfection is to be baptized into Jesus' death and be reborn in life as a new creation in Christ, Rom 6:3-4; 2 Cor 5:17

- But this Gnostic thinking leads to unrestrained lust
- Today this same doctrine of demons is still at work. The world is filled with lasciviousness, unconstrained lust and sexual immorality.
- Gnosticism focuses on self, the “sovereign self”. They have no obligation to rules or conduct because they don’t recognize God as God.
 - They view themselves as god and they feel “oppressed” if anyone tells them differently
 - This same group of people see themselves as “self righteous” to the point that they think even the evil things they are doing, like killing babies, are in some way a righteous act to themselves.
 - These are the same people who will be persecuting and killing Christians, thinking they are doing it for good.
 - These people are trying to reshape the way we think and believe. The enemy does this little by little until it can get a foothold then the world views these heresies as “normal”
- These modern-day Gnostics are telling the world there is no right or wrong way to live, as long as it feels good to you.
 - They say sexual orientation and gender is your choice because the flesh isn’t really who you are, it’s what is inside that really matters.
 - This is the same lie from the 1st century
- The Green Movement or the Green Religion is another guise to gain control. It is disguised as saving our planet, but it is really worshipping the Creation rather than the Creator
 - All this is Romans chapter 1 played out
- Gnosticism, the doctrine of demons, is always seeking to discredit the Bible or get people to doubt the Word of God- for example, the “lost books of the Bible.”
 - The Gnostic gospels of Thomas, Mary, Philip, Judas, and others are doctrines of demons disguised as truth
 - Recently New York Times published an article re-introducing a known forgery of the book of Deuteronomy discovered in 1883, but now people are questioning if this really is a fake.
 - Of course it is. It’s different than all the other manuscripts of the Truth.
 - All this just to create doubt.
- The same thing happened in 1881 when Westcott and Hort rewrote the New Testament using the corrupted texts known as the Alexandrian Codices. There are four main codices of the Alexandrian text type. All of which are corrupted by the Gnostics.
 - During the first few centuries, the Gnostics had corrupted the text of the Greek New Testament by omitting 48 key verses, and making thousands of other changes that altered the original Word of God.
 - They literally rewrote the Word of God to fit their heretical agenda
- Two men named Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, being led by the spirit of demons, used these corrupted manuscripts to present the world with what they called a “better and revised” Greek New Testament.
 - Most scholars today believe the lie that the oldest and best Greek manuscripts of the NT are these corrupted Alexandrian Codices written by the Gnostics in Alexandria, Egypt.
 - Just because they are the oldest doesn’t mean they are the best
 - But they don’t realize the heresy of these texts and their corruption.
- These lies have plagued and distorted the Bible and now have infiltrated its way into almost every modern translation except the KJV and NKJV
 - Mark 16:9-20; Acts 8:37; 1 John 5:7-8 are just a few examples of this missing content

- Up until this point, the Greek New Testament and all Protestant translations were based off Erasmus' Greek New Testament that he had printed in 1516 from the True Byzantine manuscripts known as the Majority Text.
 - This later became known as the Textus Receptus or the Received Text of the New Testament.
 - For over 300 years the pure words of the Greek NT were printed and distributed throughout the world until Westcott and Hort came along and changed history and corrupted the Word of God with their revised Greek New Testament in 1881.
- Gnosticism, disguised as modern-day self righteousness, is Satan's tactic to destroy God's Word and tear down the foundation of Truth
 - It is their fight against the Truth, their logomacheo, λογομαχέω, the war against THE WORD
 - Everything they believe destroys sound doctrine, the foundation of family, the foundation of church, the foundation of the Truth.
- Paul tells Timothy the effects of this heresy will spread like gangrene, 2 Tim 2:17, and it will bring ruin and destruction to the hearer, 2 Tim 2:14

So how does Paul tell us to respond to these heresies and the lies of the enemy?

Continue to bear in mind these foundational Truths I have told you. I solemnly urge you not to make a war of words against the Truth to no profit. For these false teachers are destitute of the Truth and are obsessed with disputes and arguments over words that only lead to envy and destruction.

Be diligent and make a maximum effort to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. But avoid profane and idle babblings with these who are destitute of Truth and withdraw yourself because engaging with them will only increase to more ungodliness.

Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. Preach the Word; be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, and fulfill your ministry.