

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 TIMOTHY 2 (PART 2)

2 TIMOTHY 2:14-19 - HANDLING THE WORD

REMIND THE FAITHFUL MEN ABOUT THESE THINGS AND SOLEMNLY CHARGE THEM IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD:

1 - DON'T WRANGLE ABOUT WORDS...IT LEADS TO RUIN

WRANGLE - TO FIGHT, QUARREL, BICKER. "A DISPUTE OR ARGUMENT, TYPICALLY ONE THAT IS LONG AND COMPLICATED (OXFORD DICTIONARY)"

USELESS AND LEADS TO THE RUIN OF THE HEARERS - THE WORD RUIN IS THE GREEK WORD καταστροφή (KATASTROPHE), WHICH I'LL LET YOU CONSIDER WHAT THAT MEANS.

2 - BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED TO GOD

DILIGENT - TO BE ATTENTIVE, WORK HARD, DOING ONE'S BEST

3 - ACCURATELY HANDLE THE WORD OF TRUTH (GOSPEL)

KJV: "RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH..." "ACCURATELY HANDLE" IS THE GREEK WORD ὀρθοτομέω (ORTHOTOMEΩ) WHICH MEANS TO CUT STRAIGHT. IMAGINE A FARMER PLOWING STRAIGHT ROWS TO PLANT EFFICIENTLY, A CREW CUTTING A ROAD THAT IS STRAIGHT SO AS TO ARRIVE IN THE RIGHT PLACE, A CARPENTER CUTTING A BOARD STRAIGHT SO THAT THEIR BUILDING STANDS.

NOTICE THE ROOT WORD "ORTHO", MEANING STRAIGHT OR RIGHT. AN ORTHO-PEDIC DOCTOR IS CONCERNED WITH CORRECTING DEFORMITIES IN MUSCLES AND BONES. AN ORTHO-DONTISTS SPECIALIZES IN REALIGNING OUT OF PLACE TEETH. ORTHO-DOXY MEANS THE CORRECT OR STRAIGHT WAY.

4 - AVOID WORLDLY AND EMPTY CHATTER

"WORLDLY CHATTER" - (GREEK: βέβηλος BEBELLOS) THE WORD MEANS SOMETHING THAT IS PERMITTED TO BE STEPPED ON, SOMETHING THAT IS PROFANE OR UNHOLY. IT COMES FROM THE WORD WHICH MEANS "THRESHOLD" AND IT COMMUNICATES SOMETHING THAT IS NOT WELCOME OR ALLOWED. SOMETHING OR SOMEONE THAT IS NOT ALLOWED OR GIVEN ACCESS.

"EMPTY CHATTER" - (GREEK: κενοφωνία, KENOPHONIA) THIS WORD IS USED 2X IN THE NT, BOTH BY PAUL (ALSO 1 TIM. 6:20). ITS A COMPOUND WORD FROM THE WORD MEANING EMPTY/FOOLISH/IN VAIN AND THE WORD TO MAKE NOISE OR CALL OUT. THIS IS THE IDEA THAT SOMEONE IS JUST MAKING SOUNDS THAT HAVE NO POINT.

WE ARE TOLD TO AVOID THIS KIND OF TALK. IT LEADS TO FURTHER UNGODLINESS AND IT WILL "SPREAD LIKE GANGRENE. (2:17)"

Q - IN LIGHT OF THIS COMMAND, WHAT ARE THE THINGS YOU NEED TO AVOID?

Q - HOW HAVE YOU SEEN WORLDLY AND EMPTY TALKING LEAD TO "FURTHER UNGODLINESS"

GANGRENE - LOCALIZED DEATH AND DECOMPOSITION OF BODY TISSUE, RESULTING FROM EITHER OBSTRUCTED CIRCULATION OR BACTERIAL INFECTION (OXFORD DICTIONARY).

IN MODERN TIMES, WE KNOW THAT GANGRENE IS CAUSED BY LACK OF BLOOD FLOW TO CERTAIN PARTS OF THE BODY. NOT-AVOIDING WORLDLY AND EMPTY CHATTER CAN LEAD TO BLOCKAGE OR ISOLATION OF MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST AND EVENTUALLY THE OBSTRUCTION OR EVEN SEVERING OF THOSE MEMBERS THE SOURCE OF LIFE (JESUS IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY), ALLOWING FOR THE BLOOD NOT TO FLOW PROPERLY.

ACCORDING TO THE MAYO CLINIC: "(ONE TYPE OF GANGRENE CALLED) GAS GANGRENE PROGRESSES VERY FAST. IT'S FATAL WITHIN 48 HOURS IF YOU DON'T RECEIVE TREATMENT. AMONG PEOPLE WHO DO RECEIVE TIMELY TREATMENT, ABOUT 75% SURVIVE."

EXAMPLES: **HYMENAEOUS AND PHILETUS (2:17)**

THROUGHOUT PAUL'S LETTERS WE HAVE GOTTEN LITTLE DETAIL TO THE CONTENT OF THE FALSE TEACHERS MESSAGES - INSTEAD WE HAVE BEEN TOLD TO OBSERVE THE CHARACTER AND RESULT OF THEIR TEACHING. HERE PAUL MENTIONS WHAT HYMENAEOUS AND PHILETUS HAVE BEEN TEACHING: "THE RESURRECTION HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE..."

IT SEEMS A LITTLE ABSURD TO US TO THINK THAT SUCH A MESSAGE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN ANY TRACTION. BUT IN 64-67AD, ONLY DECADES AFTER THE MINISTRY OF JESUS HIMSELF, PEOPLE WERE TEACHING AND BELIEVING THAT THE RESURRECTION HAD ALREADY HAPPENED. REMEMBER, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS THOUGHT THAT JESUS WAS GOING TO COME BACK IN THEIR LIFETIME, ESPECIALLY WITH ALL THE CHAOS THAT WAS BREAKING OUT IN THE ROMAN WORLD. HOW DID THEY MAKE SENSE OF HIS DELAY? PERHAPS SOME DEVELOPED A NEW TAKE ON THE RESURRECTION AND THE PROMISED COMING OF CHRIST...

REDEFINING TERMS - PERHAPS WHAT THESE FALSE TEACHERS DID WAS REDEFINE WHAT "RESURRECTION" MEANS. BIBLICALLY SPEAKING "RESURRECTION" MEANT THE *BODILY* RAISING TO LIFE AGAIN OF GOD'S PEOPLE ON THE LAST DAY. THE OLD TESTAMENT DESCRIBES THE FAITHFUL COMING UP FROM THEIR GRAVES TO LIFE AGAIN IN A RESTORED CREATION. FALSE TEACHERS COULD HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT RESURRECTION ACTUALLY MEANS A SPIRITUAL-ONLY RESURRECTION LIKE THE DEAD ARE STILL ALIVE IN A SPIRITUAL OR HEAVENLY REALM.

REFRAMING THE STORY - MAYBE THE FALSE TEACHERS WERE SAYING THAT THE RESURRECTION HAPPENED ALREADY SECRETLY AND NOW WE'RE IN A NEW MYSTERIOUS PART OF THE STORY WE HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT YET. MAYBE WHEN JESUS SPOKE ABOUT RESURRECTION IT WAS A METAPHOR TO MEAN THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST? MAYBE JESUS' SECOND COMING WASN'T LITERAL BUT SPIRITUAL? AFTER MULTIPLE MISCALCULATIONS OF PROPHETIC NUMBERS, THE WATCHTOWER SOCIETY TEACHES THAT JESUS DID IN FACT RETURN IN THE YEAR 1914 BUT BEGAN RULING IN HEAVEN INVISIBLY AS KING. SEEMS FAR FETCHED - BUT AS OF 2022 THERE WERE 8.5 MILLION JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WHO BELIEVE THAT, TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF JESUS' DELAY.

REJECTED AND ABANDONED - A THIRD OPTION COULD BE THAT THESE FALSE TEACHERS WERE TELLING PEOPLE THAT THE RESURRECTION HAD OCCURRED ALREADY AND THAT THEY HAD MISSED IT! AS THE SAINTS WONDER HOW MUCH LONGER IT WILL BE, SOMEONE SUGGESTS THAT MAYBE IT HAPPENED ALREADY AND THE TROUBLE THEY ARE EXPERIENCING IS BECAUSE THEY'VE BEEN ABANDONED AND "LEFT BEHIND." THINK ABOUT HOW DISCOURAGING THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR NAIVE CHRISTIANS HEARING THAT? PAUL TELLS TIMOTHY THAT THESE FALSE TEACHERS HAD "UPSET THE FAITH OF SOME...(2:18)."

THE CALL FROM PAUL THEN AND NOW IS THAT WE TRUST GOD'S PLAN AND PROVIDENCE AND WAIT FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST. MUCH OF THE LATER NEW TESTAMENT LETTERS WILL DEAL WITH THE SUPPOSED DELAY OF CHRIST'S RETURN. FOR EXAMPLE, PETER WILL WRITE THAT JESUS' DELAY ISN'T A DELAY, IT'S **MERCY AND GRACE**, ALLOWING MORE PEOPLE TO REPENT AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL (2 PETER 3). AND REVELATION, THE FINAL NEW TESTAMENT LETTER IS FILLED WITH HOPE AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE CHURCH TO WAIT AND TRUST FOR THEY ARE NOT ABANDONED AND HAVE THE VICTORY.

2 TIMOTHY 2:20-26 - USEFUL FOR THE MASTER

PAUL NOW CONTACTS THE FALSE TEACHERS AND THE UNHEALTHY TALK WITH HOLINESS AND HEALTHY CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR. HE TOLD TIMOTHY WHO AND WHAT TO AVOID (V. 16) AND NOW WILL GUIDE HIM WHAT (AND WHO) TO RUN TOWARDS (V. 22). HE SPEAKS OF WHAT THE FALSE TEACHERS ARE DOING TO THE FAITH OF SOME OF THE BELIEVERS, AND NOW PAUL WILL SHOW TIMOTHY HOW TO BE A HELP TO THE BELIEVERS.

V. 20-21 - USING IMAGERY OF A HOUSEWARES PAUL ENCOURAGES TIMOTHY TO BE A "VESSEL" USEFUL FOR THE MASTER'S USE RATHER THAN NOT HELPFUL. THIS ISN'T A METAPHOR ABOUT SALVATION, BUT AN ILLUSTRATION ABOUT HOW TO BE USEFUL TO THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE. THE KEY TO BEING USEFUL TO THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE IS HOLINESS. HOLINESS WILL BE DENIED HERE BY RUNNING AWAY FROM UNGODLY THINGS AND ZEALOUSLY PURSUING GODLY THINGS.

FLEE AND REFUSE: YOUTHFUL LUSTS (V. 22), FOOLISH AND IGNORANT SPECULATIONS, WHICH PRODUCE QUARRELS (V. 23)

PURSUE: RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE, PEACE (V. 22). DO THIS WITH OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLING ON THE LORD WITH A PURE HEART (V. 22)

HERE'S SOME QUESTIONS FOR GOD'S PEOPLE TO ASK:

*IS THIS GOING TO **HELP** ME BE USEFUL TO GOD?*

*IS THIS GOING TO **HARM** MY ABILITY TO BE USEFUL TO GOD?*

*IS THIS **NEUTRAL** IN MY USEFULNESS TO GOD?*

EXAMPLES:

DRIVING A CAR - HELPFUL, HARMFUL, OR NEUTRAL

EATING A MEAL - HELPFUL, HARMFUL, OR NEUTRAL

ENTERTAINMENT CHOICES (TV, MOVIES, BOOKS, MUSIC) - HELPFUL, HARMFUL, OR NEUTRAL

TECHNOLOGY (PHONE, SOCIAL MEDIA, ETC) - HELPFUL, HARMFUL, OR NEUTRAL

RELATIONSHIP - HELPFUL, HARMFUL OR NEUTRAL

V. 24-26 - THE CALL OF THE LORD'S BONDSERVANT

IF JESUS IS MASTER OF THE HOUSE, THEN TIMOTHY IS ONE OF THE SERVANTS OF THE HOUSE. HOW THEN SHOULD HE (& BY EXTENSION, WE) BE?

NOT QUARRELSOME

KIND TO ALL

ABLE TO TEACH

PATIENT WHEN WRONGED

WITH GENTLENESS CORRECTING THOSE WHO ARE IN OPPOSITION

IF A SERVANT OF THE LORD MODELS THESE QUALITIES, IT MIGHT JUST LEAD TO SOMEONE WHO IS IN OPPOSITION TO COME TO A KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH - LEADING ULTIMATELY TO THEIR RESCUE FROM THE DEVIL'S TRAP AND THEIR OWN SALVATION! THAT IS WHAT IS AT STAKE!

CONSIDER THE ALTERNATIVE: THOSE OF US THAT KNOW THE TRUTH AND HAVE THE GOSPEL, THAT ETERNAL LIFE GIVING CURE TO SIN AND DEATH - BUT WE ARE QUARRELSOME AND NOT KIND, OR ONLY KIND TO SOME. WE KNOW THE GOSPEL BUT WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN IT WELL. WE QUIT ON PEOPLE WHEN THEY DO US WRONG OR DISAGREE, WE GIVE OURSELVES EXCUSES TO BE IMPATIENT. AND IF AND WHEN WE INTERACT WITH THOSE THAT ARE WRONG AND NEED CORRECTION, WE DO IT WITH HARSHNESS AND CONDESCENSION.

GOD FORBID THAT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, THE HOUSEHOLD OF OUR LORD WOULD BE A STUMBLING BLOCK TO THOSE WHO ARE BLIND! WE MUST FIGHT THE FLESHLY TEMPTATION TO TAKE THINGS PERSONAL, TO FIGHT AND ARGUE AND GIVE UP WHEN THINGS GET HARD.

IF WE LOSE PATIENCE, ACT UNLOVING OR UNKIND OR UNNECESSARILY OFFEND THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING, THEY WILL PERISH. WE MUST REMEMBER THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE WE ARE IN. PAUL SAYS THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED OF REPENTANCE AND WHO ARE OPPOSING US ARE BEING "HELD CAPTIVE BY THE DEVIL, TO DO HIS WILL!" (V. 26). OUR BATTLE IS NOT WITH SINNERS OR ATHEISTS OR LIBERALS OR CONSERVATIVES OR POLITICAL PARTIES OR MEDIA MEMBERS - OUR BATTLE IS AGAINST SPIRITUAL FORCES OF WICKEDNESS! AND SO OUR BATTLE PLAN COMES FROM KING JESUS AND REQUIRES SPIRITUAL ARMOR AND WEAPONS.

WE DON'T FIGHT BATTLES LIKE THOSE OF THE WORLD - WE FIGHT WITH PRAYER AND LOVE AND TRUTH AND HUMILITY AND SERVICE AND PRAYER AND PRAYER AND PRAYER. WE FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST AND LINE UP WITH HIS WORD AND AUTHORITY. WE ARE HIS BONDSERVANTS.

TAKE SERIOUSLY THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE USEFUL FOR THE MASTER - DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME ON FOOLISH, EMPTY, WORLDLY AND LESSER THINGS. INSTEAD, LET US GIVE HEART AND SOUL AND MIND AND STRENGTH TO SERVE THE KING OF KINGS.