

Continue in the gospel

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Date: 10 November 2019

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[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

I'm not too into paintings, but I can appreciate some good artwork, and I have seen some famous paintings in my life. I recently had the opportunity to view Rembrandt, some of you who know him, Rembrandt.

Two famous paintings in Poland. They are the girl in the picture frame and the scholar at the lectern. I was told these paintings are actually priceless. You just can't put a value on them. Now, there's this painting on the screen.

It's also a world-famous painting. Can I have the painting on the screen? Yes. I've censored it a little bit. By a French artist called Jean-Leon Jerome.

[1 : 43] I know I'm not pronouncing that right because there are some letters with stuff on them. But yes, Jean-Leon Jerome. But the point is, okay, this picture is called The Truth Coming Out of the Well.

It was painted in 1896, and there is, in fact, a story behind this painting. Now, according to 19th century legend, the truth and the lie meet one day.

And the lie says to the truth, it's a marvelous day today, much like today. And the truth looks up to the skies with suspicion and sighs, for the day was really beautiful.

And the truth and the lie, they spend a lot of time together, and ultimately they arrive beside a well. And the lie tells the truth, the water is very nice.

Let's take a bath together. And the truth, once again, suspicious, tests the water and discovers that it is indeed very nice. So the truth and the lie, they undress, and they start bathing in the waters of the well.

[2 : 50] And suddenly the lie comes out of the water, puts on the clothes of the truth, and runs away. The furious truth comes out of the well and runs everywhere to find the lie and to get her clothes back.

And the world, seeing the naked truth, turns its gaze away with contempt and rage. The poor truth returns to the well and disappears forever, hiding therein its shame.

And since then, the lie has traveled the world, dressed as the truth, satisfying the needs of society, because the world, in any case, harbors no wish at all to meet the naked truth.

That's the story behind the painting. And I know this is, of course, just a story. But I think there are some things that we can take note of as we are in the midst of this 2 Timothy series.

And that is lies being dressed up as truth. Evil under the guise of good, a veneer of godliness that if it is peeled away, reveals ungodliness.

[4 : 02] And this is the tone that was in last week's passage, in chapter 3, verse 1 to 9. The sermon last week was brought by Craig Dyer.

And in the interest of a quick recap for those of you who may not have the benefit of following us every week, we know that Paul is writing specifically to Timothy while he was in prison.

And we know that there are false teachings being taught in the church in Ephesus. So we find that somewhere in chapter 1. And we know that there are Paul's co-workers, Phygelus and Homogenes, who had deserted Paul in the ministry.

So it's not going so well. But Paul encourages Timothy not to be ashamed of the gospel, but instead to guard the good deposit of the gospel that has been entrusted to him. And Paul reminds Timothy to remain steadfast and focused on the gospel, to be a worker approved by God.

And last week, coming back to chapter 3, we hear that Paul tells Timothy difficult times are coming. So Craig last week said that the word difficult is kind of translated to mean the fierce violence, right?

[5 : 29] The same word used in another story about a demon-possessed man. And Paul, in chapter 3, verse 1, instead of verse 2, in fact, until 5, lists 19 negative characteristics of these difficulties.

And the cause of these difficulties, we were told last week, lie with misdirected love. A love that is directed away from good, away from God.

Now, church, it is against this backdrop of deception of godliness and moral decline at the beginning of chapter 3 that Paul says what he says at the beginning in verse 10.

So if you want to join with me in verse 10, chapter 3. In verse 10, we start, and Paul says, You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, love, endurance.

Now, from this expression of the two words at the start of the sentence, you, however, we can tell that Paul is trying to contrast between two things.

[6 : 53] Right? And in other translations, such as the NKJV, the New King James Version, the translation for the two words at the start of verse 10 is But you.

But you. And John Stott puts the Greek translation at the beginning of verse 10 as but as for you, which is in fact the same two Greek words used similarly in verse 14 as well as we come to verse 14.

But transitional differences aside, thanks, Justin, the point here, church, is clear. Paul is telling Timothy, you are to be different.

Different from the ungodly bunch who are described in verses 2 to 5 by staying faithful and loyal to the gospel.

Now, in encouraging Timothy to the end, Paul, in verse 10 and slightly into verse 11, if you have your Bibles with you, says, You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings.

[8 : 09] And Paul points to himself as the precedent for Timothy's standard of living. In the NIV Bible, Paul says, You, Timothy, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecution, and suffering.

And in the ESV, the word know is in fact translated as follow. And this word, the Greek word, here actually carries a very deep, a deeper meaning than just know or follow, but rather it's one of diligently tracing or to follow closely step by step.

And Timothy had the opportunity to follow closely step by step the many facets of Paul's life to a point which I believe of deep commitment to make it his own.

So, Paul is saying here essentially to Timothy, Look at me. Look at me. This is why you are to be different.

So, let's just take a quick look at the individual parts of verse 10 and 11. So, we see there, you know my teaching, so that's the doctrine of Christ, the same which was preached by the rest of the apostles and which are based on Scripture and according to godliness.

[9 : 47] Paul's way of life. Timothy knew Paul's conduct, his behavior. And we see in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 17, Paul says, My ways which be in Christ.

His purpose, Paul's purpose, the end of, or the purpose of his ministry to give the glory to God and the salvation of man and not to honor himself or any self-interest or to gain any advantage of his own.

His faith in the discharge of his duty, his patience towards Paul's adversaries, to the false teachers, to those who wish to bring him harm.

His love to all men, saints and sinners, friend or for alike. His endurance, his patience in all the adversity that Paul has been going through.

The persecution and suffering. And Paul specifically mentions three examples or three specific places where he had endured persecution and suffering which Timothy was a witness, most likely a witness of.

[11 : 08] And Paul being convinced of what he believed in prepared to suffer for it. And in fact what had happened in Iconium and Lystra was that Paul was in fact subject to the threat of stoning and he was in fact actually stoned.

Paul was in fact actually stoned. You can find this in Acts chapter 15. He was actually stoned and they thought he was dead and they dragged him out of the city but of course he wasn't dead by the grace of God. So, Timothy had already followed Paul closely therefore Paul reminds Timothy to maintain the same pattern of his doctrine conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love and endurance

even in suffering.

Now, you might be wondering wow, Paul a bit haolian lah go ahead and say look at me right? but, I think as Timothy's mentor, as Timothy's teacher, as the one who commissioned Timothy, right, this serves two purposes.

Firstly, it shows a clear pattern of what godly living looks like as opposed to the ungodly living in the beginning of chapter 3 and therefore showing Timothy what it's like to be godly when one stays faithful to the gospel.

And secondly, it was preparing Timothy and encouraging and strengthening him for the future. And we'll get to that future in a bit.

[13 : 00] So, by following Paul's example, Timothy was by extension following Christ's example.

And Paul putting himself forward as the yardstick of godly living shouldn't be a surprise as Paul in speaking to the Corinthian church also says, follow my example as I follow the example of Christ. So, we see at the end of verse 11 that even in all the suffering and persecution the Lord had remained faithful to his servant by rescuing Paul from dire circumstances.

And in the face of opposition in Ephesus being reminded by Paul that the Lord remains faithful even in the worst circumstances would have been great encouragement and comfort to Timothy.

And so the future we are talking about just now, this is crucial because in verse 12 that's where Paul states clearly what he is to expect. Godliness and persecution come hand in hand.

[14 : 23] Verse 12 says, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Not if, but will be persecuted.

And right after Paul states his own experiences of suffering and persecution, Paul is laying it straight to Timothy. No sugar coating. Suffering and persecution is not exclusive just to me, but to everyone, including you, if you live a godly life.

In other words, Paul is also saying you are not alone. Timothy, you are not alone. Everyone who seeks to follow Christ will suffer and we suffer for the sake of Christ.

Just as you know, I am doing now, Paul says. So if you have been drifting off, I hope Paul's words in verse 12 are getting your attention back.

Persecution, godliness and persecution come hand in hand. And every person, church, in this congregation right now, if you are intending to live a godly life, following Christ, if you have committed to believe and act in accordance to the example of Jesus Christ, well then, news for you, suffering and persecution will come.

[16 : 07] Right? And this should come again as no surprise to all of us here because Jesus himself said to his disciples, John 15 verse 18, if the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.

A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. So that's not all.

church. So verse 12 seems pretty depressing. But Paul doesn't stop there. In fact, in verse 13, he continues on.

And he says, the evil will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. Not only does Timothy have to contend with suffering and persecution on one hand, but the people responsible for his hardship will get worse.

The lies that have been dressed up as the truth will continue to deceive others and themselves being deceived. So now, church, we know that in the context of this letter, the evildoers and impostors here, we refer to the false teachers.

[17 : 35] And there may be an impression that when Paul says that the evildoers will go from bad to worse, as I mentioned just now, earlier, it may sound like their false teaching starts to get more widespread.

Now, it is encouraging to note that that's not what Paul is saying here because as we've heard last week, in verse 9, Paul makes it clear that they will not get very far.

These false teachers will not get very far. But rather, what Paul is trying to highlight to Timothy here is that there is a moral and intellectual decay of these false teachers that will get worse.

So the depravity of their minds becomes even more corrupt. The twisting of even more lies in opposition to the truth.

And they use more and more evil methods to deceive others. So that's what Paul is getting at. A moral intellectual decline and decay. And in the end, Paul says that through their own deception, they deceive themselves.

[18 : 59] Sometimes when lies are just spun round and round and round and then people who spun these lies, they end up deceiving themselves. themselves.

So this is what Paul is saying that's happening. But even though Paul has set this sort of tone in verse 12 and 13 of what the opposition looks like church, nevertheless, Paul gives the charge to Timothy.

And in verse 14 and verse 15, we see what that charge looks like. And it says, but as for you, again we see, but as for you, continue in what you have learned and have been convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it.

And from infancy you have known the holy scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Now I'm not sure if most of you have watched The Lion King 2, but there is a scene, so The Lion King 2, I'm quite sure most parents here will have watched The Lion King 2.

[20 : 23] Okay, so there is a scene where when Simba in The Lion King 2 tries to take back Pride Rock from another group of lions, and the hyenas surround Timon and Pumbaa and they say, when the going gets tough, the tough gets going.

Right? So after reading verse 12 and 13, this is one of those moments where the tough in faith get going.

Where the tough in faith get going. We see the call from Paul to Timothy as we saw earlier in verse 10, but as for you, but as for you, that he is to be different by being faithful to the gospel.

And Timothy is to be different by continuing in what he has learned and has been convinced of. So we see that Paul appeals firstly to the what.

Right? We read that just now. What you have been, what you have learned. And Timothy, the what that Timothy has learned continue to be firmly rooted in Timothy's life, for Timothy to be loyal to what has been passed on to him from Paul.

[21 : 53] And we know this what is in fact the gospel that has been taught by Paul. And we know that Timothy is convinced of the gospel as Paul says in verse 14, but also at the beginning of 2 Timothy in which Paul tells Timothy to guard the good deposit.

Right? So these are just reminders appealing to Timothy, don't forget, stay firm. And it's also, here again, where Paul appeals not just to what he has learned and been convinced of, but also to whom he has learned it from.

You can see that. And Paul offers two reasons why Timothy ought to continue and persevere in what he has learned and been convinced of.

And at the end of verse 14, Paul alludes to the whom, which is the second one. And we know from the passage that we've read this morning and in the beginning of verse 10, it is clear that first and foremost, Paul is referring to himself as a person whom Timothy has learned the gospel from. Paul, who is an apostle of Christ, Jesus, we see that in chapter 1, verse 1, who laid hands on Timothy, who taught Timothy with sound teaching.

[23 : 32] And as we have seen earlier in verse 10 and 11, someone whose life and conduct shows what it's like to be godly when one stays faithful to the gospel.

And in reading this, Timothy's confidence in Paul is, as a reference point, is very well placed. Timothy can be confident that the gospel that has been taught is the truth, is genuine, from Paul's authority as an apostle of Christ and from the consistent life that Paul has sought to live for the sake of the gospel, in suffering, in persecution.

And the whom, church also, may also refer to Timothy's mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lewis. They were specifically mentioned in chapter 1.

And Paul mentions of the sincere faith, if you remember back in chapter 1, that was passed down from Lewis to Eunice and now is in Timothy.

Right? Paul sees that sincere faith in Timothy. And I think, church, that Eunice and Lewis were crucial as Paul mentions, the other reason for continuing in the gospel in verse 15, is that Timothy from infancy, from infancy knew the holy scriptures.

[25 : 10] Wow. This is important why we do Sunday school, isn't it? from infancy, from young. We expose our children to the holy scriptures, just as Timothy was exposed by his parents.

So we can safely presume that because of Timothy's grandmother and mother, his upbringing was well exposed to the holy scriptures.

And in Timothy's time, that would have been the Old Testament. Yeah? So this means that the gospel that Paul was preaching could be tested and verified by Timothy himself. Someone who had acquainted himself closely with the scriptures would be able to test and verify if what the doctrine that Paul was teaching is genuine.

And Timothy knew that Paul was preaching nothing new but what was already in the holy scriptures. In other words, Paul was teaching doctrine that was consistent and this gives great confidence, I believe, that his loyalty to Paul and ultimately loyalty and faithfulness to the gospel is the right thing to do, is the godly thing to do.

[27 : 02] Now, after this, Timothy knows what he ought to remain steadfast and loyal to. Right? Timothy knows the what is being authenticated by the whom.

We now come to the second half of verse 15, which is to be read with the remaining two verses. Paul writes that the holy scriptures known to Timothy since infancy and second half of verse 15, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. Wow. By relying on scripture, Paul reveals that wisdom for salvation through faith will follow by sticking to what the scripture teaches.

And wisdom for salvation was especially crucial for Timothy in the circumstances in which false and distorted teachings were happening.

[28 : 30] And Paul had already warned of the deception from godless people that worm their way into homes and take advantage of gullible women. But the provision of scripture church, the provision of God's word as the source of wisdom in being steadfast in the faith, what a great reminder and encouragement for Timothy in these troubled times.

In Paul's final appeal to Timothy at the end of this passage this morning to stay faithful and true to the gospel, Paul asserts and puts forward two truths about scripture in verse 16.

It is firstly the word of God is God breathed and secondly it is useful. And verse 16 is in fact a verse which is I think very should be very familiar to many of us and it's in fact one of my favorite verses in the Bible it's the basis of why we do expository preaching like what we're doing now with the book of 2 Timothy the provision of God's word to Timothy and the church then is equally important to the church today.

So the first truth let's get to that all scripture is God breathed and there are a vast amount of commentaries on this verse relating on what all scripture and what God breathed is so I'm not going to get into the Greek grammar or the canonicity of the Bible now there are books in the church library for that I believe or you can see Pastor Brian to direct you but church the bottom line that we need to know this morning from verse 16 is that the holy scriptures or the Old Testament then and even the Bible as we know it today right both all and you is God's word it originated it through through faithful servants of

God by the Holy Spirit right faithful through faithful servants of God by the Holy Spirit and so therefore church if scripture is directly from God as persons who profess to follow Christ must not we must then not corrupt or stray away from what has been spoken by God Timothy was reminded that the scriptures he knew from infancy were of divine origin and authority divine origin and authority and not to be straight from or tweet Timothy could have every assurance as well as us today that what he learned and what he knew was the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth and

[32 : 20] Paul continues on with the second truth that the holy scriptures are useful now if you follow me church Paul dictates the usefulness of scripture in a number of areas and he lists down four areas in which scripture can be used we see that in verse 16 the scriptures is useful for teaching for righteousness and Paul reveals that the holy scriptures what Paul is trying to say here is that the holy scriptures is sufficient for the purposes of a wholesome Christian life the sufficiency of scripture for whatever circumstance still applies today and through scripture

Timothy is able to teach the doctrine necessary for salvation in Christ Timothy is able to rebuke and convict the sin in one's life so that the believer who strays will turn back to Christ Timothy is able to correct and train in righteousness to set right how the church or believers of Christ should behave and should conduct themselves Timothy is able to align their morality with God's standards to instruct in what is right and what is wrong and what is required of a follower of Christ to lead a godly life these are the usefulness of scripture that Paul is saying this is sufficient and by sticking to the

gospel the error church the error and deception of the world will be plain to the faithful servant it will be plain and the combination of scriptures usefulness we now come to the end verse in verse 17 is culminated in verse 17 where all that teaching that rebuking correcting and training in righteousness the servant of

God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work and the word thoroughly here going back to some linguistics here in the original Greek has the expression of to make complete or the expression of perfection and you could in fact read the verse as the servant of God may be completely or perfectly equipped for every good work sufficiency of the gospel of scripture now by no means is Paul saying that we will ever attain perfection in this imperfect body and imperfect world I think perfection is left to God but instead what Paul here is trying to convey is that the scriptures have laid down the way which leads to perfection and as one commentary puts it that whatever good work the man of

God desires to perform or however perfect he aims to be he will find no deficiency in the scriptures but will find there the most ample instructions that he needs the scripture is sufficient for those who wish to follow Christ so because of these things Paul appeals to Timothy to stay loyal steadfast and faithful to the gospel the same appeal even today so now church how then can we apply this passage today that we've just gone through now Paul was writing specifically to Timothy who was a church leader teacher someone who preached the gospel so this is in fact quite a specific audience but

I think there are some general applications and some specific applications from the passage that we can consider this morning so I think first off we'll start with those who are in Timothy's position our pastors our preachers or lay preachers those who teach the gospel whether up here or in Christianity Explored or whatever seminars that we are doing these people if you identify yourself as one of these people you ought to stay loyal and faithful to the truth of the gospel and not distort it in any way the need to constantly be on guard for the temptation to tweak a little bit here a little bit there because perhaps a certain teaching is more successful in drawing bigger congregations or perhaps it draws more money into the church lovers of money saw that in verses 2 and 5 or perhaps it caters to a current dominant or trendy worldview and morality wow the temptation now especially today is so great for our teachers and our preachers to tweak the gospel in a way that is easy to swallow and sweet to the ears that temptation is so very real and therefore brothers and sisters who teach and preach remember that this is

[39 : 19] God's word breathe out by God of divine authority and origin stand firm in what scripture says stand firm in what scripture says for the congregation we can remain faithful to the gospel by constantly desiring to be taught the gospel and to learn the gospel that's why we come Sunday after Sunday to sit under and to hear God's word being preached from the pulpit we should appreciate that God's word is being taught to us book by book verse by verse and in doing so we build up our faith to be able to be wise against potential deceivers and imposters we can strive to become better listeners and give utmost attention to those who are teaching who are here every

Sunday to bring you God's word and as a congregation we can pray and encourage your pastor our pastor so that he may continue to remain firm and steadfast to the gospel as I mentioned earlier temptation to go wayward is always lurking nearby and perhaps one other application for our congregation is that we open ourselves to accept correction humbly in areas where we fall to strive to live up to God's standards and encourage one another to do so as a church as a congregation and finally church the final application which I want to leave to you today and perhaps I can call the musicians to come up on stage as well as I conclude the final application this morning whether you are part of the congregation or whether you are a pastor a teacher a preacher we all who profess ourselves as

Christians will need to be ready for persecution and suffering it is not a matter of if but when some of us may think that by accepting Jesus that by believing in him all our troubles go away but God is love and God is good it's blessing upon blessing upon blessing it's all smooth sailing and calm seas that may be the perception of some but the problem is church that Jesus doesn't in fact promise that God is indeed love and God is indeed good but God is also holy and the standards which God has called us to live by will go against the grain of this world we are called to live the right side up in this upside down world we are to live right side up in this upside down world and when we do live up to that calling church the storms and of persecution the storms of persecution and suffering will come but don't be discouraged as we sang earlier

God is our cornerstone and our God is faithful and the Lord in his sovereignty will also rescue you Jesus did not promise you a stormless life but church be encouraged that with the help of the Holy Spirit and his scripture he has made you storm proof he has made you storm proof and I want to leave you with the words in chapter 2 verses 11 to 12 which says if we die with him we also live with him if we endure we will also reign with him church we are called to be different so stand firm stay faithful to the gospel let's pray father lord we just want to thank you for your word that has been spoken to us this morning so clearly that we are called as

Christians to be different to behave differently to conduct ourselves differently from what is out there in the world and lord we know that the future is not so bright but lord notwithstanding and despite whatever opposition that echoes against us lord we want to remain faithful to you want to remain faithful to you because we know the truth and we believe and are convinced that what is in scripture and what comes from you lord is good and is right and lord this morning we just want to pray for each and every one of us here congregation or teachers and pastors we want to ask lord that you help us lord to remain faithful to remain steadfast and not to be deceived by things that are sweet to our ears and just easy to swallow father but that we will test and verify everything based on what the scripture says and lord help us through your holy spirit to stand firm we pray all this in jesus name amen