

The Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy
Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 1:12-20
Approved By God

Sermon #6
February 12, 2017
2 Timothy 2:14-19

Affirm The Truth Of God's Word

There are certain beliefs that have to be agreed upon for us as a community to move ahead in affirming our faith. Paul instructed Timothy and the readers of this letter, which includes you and me, that we are to be “acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:15–17 ESV) The breath of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments clearly affirms that God is truth and that He speaks only truth and cannot lie. History, science, archeology and many other events in human history confirm God's truth of the Bible. Jesus the incarnate God said to God the Father, “Sanctify them (meaning believers in Christ) in the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17) God's truth is found in the Bible. Jesus said of Himself, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” (John 14:6–7) We must accept God as one God with one plan of redemption revealed through His three personalities. This plan, revealed in the scriptures, defines the way for mankind to know the Father and thus, know the Son.

Now that we agree and affirm the Word of God is infallible and inerrant, and therefore eternally true, then we must also accept and believe what the Bible says about Satan. Jesus said, Satan is “a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (John 8:44) Satan works hard to

deceive with the purpose of keeping people from knowing and worshipping the one true God. God's people have not escaped Satan's lies and falsehoods. Our fallen nature gravitates toward the things of the fallen world. If we do not surrender to the Holy Spirit and cling to Christ we will fall into sin. Satan works to keep the fallen world in the dark and he works to confuse and discourage God's people. Satan's deceit persuaded Adam and Eve to distrust and disobey God, bringing sin and death into the world. It was at this point that mankind became separated from God. Through the centuries Satan has fed mankind falsehoods and lies meant to create a deeper and wider rift between man and God. Satan undergirds his lies with just enough of God's truth to make them believable.

How do we protect ourselves from Satan's lies? Simply by knowing the truth it becomes easy to identify a lie. We submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit to understand the wisdom of the Bible. Eternal truth is found in the Bible and we are to test everything by the words of God. The Apostle Peter warned, "[false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you ... \(False teachers and prophets, working for the interests of Satan, will plague the church until Christ returns.\) ... just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.](#)" (2 Peter 2:1–3) False teachers may plague the church but their destruction is set, even if it is not finalized until they die and are condemned to hell eternal as Paul clarified in Galatians chapter 1.

Paul wrote in his first letter the Thessalonians, "[test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.](#)" (1 Thessalonians 5:21–22) This is exactly what Paul is telling Timothy, he is encouraging, motivating and warning him

to hold fast to the truth and to pass on the truth of the gospel until it has come to us this every day.

Paul begins in verse 14 of 2 Timothy, chapter 2 with, “Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.” Paul is saying remember or “Remind them of these things” referring to what Paul has already instructed. Look at 2 Timothy chapter 2, in verse 1 believers are called to be strong, verse 2 Timothy is to entrust the true gospel to other men so they will teach others. Paul follows up these instructions saying we are to “charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.” Quarreling does not good but rather we are called to remember who we are “before God” and this should give us a sense of awe for who He is as the Creator. To be with God or before God is salvation and to be away from God is eternal destruction.

How many of you have argued or quarreled with someone and that argument led the other person to Christ? When those who quarrel are from completely opposite sides little good will come. Unbelievers do not believe in God or trust that the Bible is the Word of God and believers do not trust the words and philosophies of men. Where, then, can common ground be found? Here is a problem many have not considered. If one, as a believer attempts to argue or quarrel with an unbeliever they bring the Word of God down to the level of pitting the Bible against men words and human wisdom thus lowering the authority of God’s Word.

C. S. Lewis wrote his fictional but insightful *The Screwtape Letters*, where an older demon mentors a younger demon named Wormwood. The older demon gives advice to Wormwood about how to keep the human he has been assigned to from focusing on God. The old demon says, “Your man has been accustomed, ever since he was a boy, to have a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together

inside his head. He doesn't think of doctrines as primarily 'true' or 'false,' but as 'academic' or 'practical' ... Jargon, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the church.” You need to understand that Satan knows well and it is time tested over the centuries, that most people, including those who are considered highly intelligent, are persuaded by popular jargon and verbiage of our day more than by biblical agreement founded in God's truth and this is despite the fact that they claim to be truth seekers. One cannot believe what they read in the newspapers any more as true facts. Almost every article is opinion, yet people buy in. We make fun and tease saying, “If it is in the internet it has to be true.” But people read the most outlandish things on the internet and believe them. I sometimes read things people post and ask the person who posted it what their source is and where they came up with these so-called facts. People and society declare the Bible is not entirely true, even though they have not read it. They declare this without fact or logic, but people accept and believe to Satan's delight.

Let me be blunt, human intelligence has never been able to match the schemes of Satan. Christians are on guard against many obvious sins, but what about those sins that appeal to Christians? There are many, but here is just one, the teaching in many churches that promote high self-esteem as a Christian virtue. One's pride of being virtuous and therefore better than others is in truth sin. One can be in the right framework of heart and mind to focus on God to become holy only through study and meditation of the truth of God's words. Man does not define who Christians are, but it is God through His Bible.

Paul says to involve ourselves in these arguments and quarrels over the words of man and the words of God will lead to the ruin of the hearers. This Greek word translated as “ruin” is only found one other place in the Bible - in Peter's second letter, chapter 2 verse 6. God condemns the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction or extinction. Peter uses the same word that in translated as ruin or

destruction or extinction. These cities are ruined to ash heaps as an example to anyone leading ungodly lives. Peter says false teaching and doctrine brings the destruction or ruin of many who think they are believers. Paul is saying that arguing with the world's intelligence is futile and leads to confusion and the watering down of God's Word resulting in the utter ruin or destruction of those involved just as God poured out his wrath and ruin on Sodom and Gomorrah.

Present Yourself As Approved

Therefore, Paul continues that as believers, we are to **“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”** (2 Timothy 2:15) The purpose of presenting one to God as an approved worker is not to please others and not even for your own pleasure but to **“present yourself to God as one approved.”** In the Greek to present yourself means to stand along side of and to be in step with God. Beloved, heed these words, **“just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.”** (1 Thessalonians 2:4) As one works diligently to know the gospel, which leads to one knowing God, one grows in spiritual wisdom that leads to a life focused on Christ and serving others. The outcome of focusing ones life on Christ and the Word of God will be you will hear Christ say, **“Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.”** (Matthew 25:21) Is this not what we all desire to hear when we meet Christ face-to-face? Hearing these words from Christ will mean one will have led a life, as verse 15 says of **“a worker who has no need to be ashamed.”**

Not only does studying the Bible and spending time in prayer help one to be a **“good and faithful servant,”** but being in community gives support to each other. Paul says, **“to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to**

think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” (Romans 12:3–5) It is my responsibility to speak into your life and help you stay living in God’s Word to allow the Holy Spirit to direct you in your walk with the Lord and your service to others. Is it not your responsibility to do the same for others and for me? How do you know if what I preach on Sundays is true and consistent with God’s Word if you do not know His Word? Am I and are you speaking and living and sharing God’s true Word with others in love, grace and mercy?

Speak Truth

False teaching leads to the deception that ungodly living is correct. Satan has worked hard to corrupt the church, leading unholy people to think that they are holy. It is kind of like the frog in the pot of water. The frog is happy and will not jump out of the pot. If you slowly heat the water the frog will not realize you a boiling him until it is to late. The warm water that gradually becomes hot drew the strength out of the frog and when he realizes he is being cooked he has no strength left to jump and escape his demise. This is often how it can be with false teachings.

Overseas working in the Muslim world the spiritual attack and attempts to damage the Word of God was blatant and in many ways easier to deal with than the deceptive heresies in the church here in America. Those serving the evil one, those who are false prophets “**come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.**” (Matthew 7:15) It has been a couple of years past, but I spent a year debating with a group of about 12 pastors convinced that the God described in the Bible could not be accurate. How could a loving God allow evil and people to suffer? Their answer was, “If God does not know the future, and well then, He

would not be responsible for evil and suffering.” It is more complicated than this, but bringing it down to its core this is what is known as “Open Theism.” I read the books they requested so that I would be enlightened and understand. I read and discovered these books took scripture out of context and attempting to make it say something it does not. I held to the biblical God who is all-present and all-knowing and whose plan of redemptive history is assured. These pastors and their congregations, were examples of what verses 16 and 17 say, their “**irreverent babble ... lead people into more and more ungodliness,** ¹⁷ **and their talk will spread like gangrene.**” My efforts to get them to go back to the Word of God and not the writings of men failed and I had to break fellowship with these heretics in order that I not become infected. Just as Paul said in verse 17, “**Among them are Hymenaeus (hoo·men·ah·yos) and Philetus (fil·ay·tos),** ¹⁸ **who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened.**” I took the advice of Paul and treated these pastors teaching Open Theism as he treated Hymenaeus. Does anyone remember what Paul said concerning **Hymenaeus (hoo·men·ah·yos)** in 1 Timothy? Paul wrote, “**Some have made shipwreck of their faith,** ²⁰ **among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.** (1 Timothy 1:19–20) There comes a point when we must remain faithful to God and realize these other people are not interested in the eternal truth of God. It is at this point we must separate and leave them to the world and the prince of this world.

My beloved, you cannot convince people of the truth of God when they are hell-bent on believing the world and the lies of Satan. Jesus warned His apostles when He sent them out into the world to share His gospel of salvation. Jesus said, “**If anyone will not receive you or listen to your words** (*that is the Word of God given by Christ to His disciples and given to us only in the Bible*), **shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.** ¹⁵ **Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on**

the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town *or church or person.*” (Matthew 10:14–15) We are to go into the world and share the gospel. We are not called to go arguing, quarreling and fighting with those who will not listen. Jesus said of Judas at the Last Supper, “*woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.*” (Matthew 26:24) Judas was aware of his treachery against Jesus who is the Christ. Do not be fooled, there are those within the church universal who are knowingly working against God and for Satan. They are wolves in sheep’s clothing.

Be Holy

This is a serious warning and calling to faithfulness. How do we know who are the wolves in sheep’s clothing or the Judas’ who are among us? Paul closes out his teaching in verse 19 writing, “*But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are his,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.’*” Those who belong to God through Christ are of “*God’s firm foundation.*” Those belonging to God bear His seal. A seal is sign of ownership. As God’s children He owns us and if God owns us we will name the “*name of the Lord and depart iniquity!*” We will run to God and run away from sin.

God’s ownership of both believers and the church is seen in two ways. First, every member of the body of Christ, which is the Church of Christ, has God’s assurance of election. Once truly saved always saved. Verse 19 makes clear “*The Lord knows those who are his.*” There was deception and sin during the wilderness travel of the Exodus and a tribal clan leader named Korah sinned and brought shame on Israel. God told Moses what He would do. After God instructed Moses, he went before Israel and spoke, “*In the morning the LORD will show who is his, and who is holy, and will bring him near to him. The one whom he chooses he will bring near to him.*” (Numbers 16:5) God made it clear that Korah had brought dishonor upon

God, Israel and his family and the punishment was the destruction of Korah's entire clan. They suffered because of his disobedience to God.

Moses was leading the Hebrews through the wilderness. The people did not have the Bible, for Moses had not even completed the first 5 books of the Old Testament. God inspired Moses and Moses led the people. God acted directly at times as with Korah. Today we possess the most precious gifts from God. God's gift is salvation through Jesus Christ the incarnate Son of God. God's gift is the indwelling of every believer with Himself, God the Holy Spirit. God's gift is His revealed perfect written word - the Bible. For the Hebrews of the wilderness the Messiah had not yet come, the Bible was not yet complete and few had the gift of the Holy Spirit. That is why God directed Moses to lead the people and God acted at times directly with the people. We have so much more than they. Through Christ and the Holy Spirit and the Bible we know God's truth and when we hold it up to the teachings of men it becomes clear who is of God and who is not.

It is by holding every teaching up to the light of God, the Bible, that it is proven true or false. That includes what is being taught this morning. God does not say you will like all of His truth, in fact there is much in the Bible that is hard and goes against our human desire – but that does not change its truth. God does say His Word is eternal and unchangeable and we are to accept His Word and be obedient to live it.

The second way in which God has placed His seal on His Church is through our personal sanctification, our efforts to live holy and our giving up who we were and our becoming who He has called us to be. As God prepared to pour His wrath out upon Korah, Moses instructed the tribes of Israel to **“Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men (*Korah's clan*), and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with all their sins.”** (Numbers 16:26) Those people who did not separate

themselves from the wicked men of Korah who sinned against the holy God were destroyed along with the wicked. You can read the story of Korah in Numbers 16.

So, Paul's call is for us to live holy, set apart, for our sanctification is both an encouragement and confirmation. Paul's encouragement is echoed from 1 Corinthians, "do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19–20) Paul is confirming and in agreement with Peter's caution to us, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,¹⁶ since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.' " (1 Peter 1:14–16)

Paul instruction is straight forward and simple, yet profound and not easily accomplished. We are to know God's Word which will protect us from the wiles of the world ruled by Satan. Knowing God's Word will make it easy to identify false teachers and false doctrines. When we see those who are knowingly or unknowingly working to destroy God's church we are to use God's Word to correct them. If they do not accept correction we are to separate ourselves from them and let God administer their punishment. God calls us to live holy and spiritually separate in our holiness from the world while we live and journey through this fallen world. We cannot allow the infection of false teaching to enter the church and spread like gangrene. We are to cut out the disease to keep the rest of the body healthy. My beloved it is each of our sacred duty to keep the Word of God, the Bible, pure as God has entrusted it to us. This is our task, our duty and our delight. Let us together grow in God's Word and helping each other to be faithful for our God is forever faithful! Let us pass the pure Word of God to our children and to our children's children until the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Amen!