



WEEK SIX – REMAINING FAITHFUL TO THE END

Read 2 Timothy 3

Remember in our first study, we learned how few people who start to walk the Appalachian Trail manage to complete it. I wonder how they feel on returning home. What excuses do they give for not sticking it out? In Chapter one of second Timothy, Paul spoke about all those in Asia who had turned away, naming Phygellus and Hermogones. However, he was able to encourage Timothy with the example of Onesiphorus who looked after Paul and *“... wasn’t embarrassed a bit that I was in jail. The first thing he did when he got to Rome was look me up. May God on the Last Day treat him as well as he treated me. And then there was all the help he provided in Ephesus – but you know that better than I.”* (NLT) Timothy had looked after the church in Ephesus for a time in AD64 whilst Paul continued his journey elsewhere. Let’s look at some of the words Paul used to encourage Timothy to keep going in the Lord’s work.

- *What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 1:13*
- *“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor’s crown except by competing according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.” 2 Timothy 2:1-7*

Read again 2 Timothy 3:1-9

Although Paul encouraged Timothy in his faith, he did not try to paint an unrealistic picture of what might lie ahead of him.

In the NKJV, verse 1 of this chapter says: *“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.”*

The word perilous here has a much wider meaning than our single word, it means: *harsh, savage, difficult, dangerous, painful, fierce, grievous, hard to deal with. The word describes a society that is barren of virtue but abounding with vices.*

The NLT says in verse 1: *“don’t be naïve”.*

1 Peter 5:8 says: *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”*

- Whilst the first century was certainly different from the 21st, the same human traits remain the same. God’s word is as much for us today as it was then. Is our society today barren of virtue but abounding with vices?
- Of what things do you think we should be aware?
- You may well read verses 2-9 of *1 Timothy 3* and think they don’t apply to you, and I sincerely hope they don’t, but are you aware that such things happen.
- Paul uses the illustration in verse 8 of Jannes and Jambres, the so-called wise men or magicians of Egypt who thought they could do all the things our God is able to carry out. Is there a lesson we can learn from this?

Read again 2 Timothy 3:10-17

In verse 14-15 Paul continues to urge Timothy to: *“continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,…”*

Don’t accept teaching or ideas that don’t line up with God’s word. 1 Thessalonians 5 tells us to test what we hear.

We all know of politicians of whom we wouldn’t believe a word they say. There is plenty of ‘stuff’ that goes out online with no verification.

- What yardsticks do we use to measure truth?

Verses 16-17 say: *“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.”*

I believe this message to Timothy is very relevant to us.

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-8

- What do you think verse 2 means?
- In verse 5, Paul tells Timothy to discharge all the duties of your ministry.
- What do think your ministry is?

Paul knew that his life was soon to end, and that this second letter to Timothy, would be the final epistle he was to pen before His death. As he sat in his dark dungeon,

waiting for his execution, Paul wanted to impress on Timothy, the important responsibility that now lay on his shoulder – and those other faithful servants of God.

There was an urgency in Paul's heart to make sure that Timothy and other ministers of the gospel were fully furnished for their Christian service, properly prepared as a minister of the Lord, and entirely equipped as elders in the Church of Christ. And so, we find many important instructions and reminders to Timothy – and we would do well to take seriously the directives he gives, and the wisdom he shares.

Source: <https://dailyverse.knowing-jesus.com/2-timothy-4-6>

Paul writes some very personal remarks to Timothy in verses 9 onwards. He knows he is at the end of his life but still has such a huge concern for those he is leaving behind. Timothy could be under no illusions as to what the future might hold for him after reading this letter, but Paul is still confident that the God who stood by his side and gave him support will do likewise for his son in the Lord.

It's quite touching when you read that he wants his cloak and tells Timothy to do his best to get there before winter when clearly, it would be very cold.

- Let us pray that we will be able to say with Paul:

***I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the
righteous judge, will award to me on that day***



Prayer:

Father God, help us at all times to put you first in our lives, to acknowledge that it is only your strength, your grace, your help, that enables us to complete the task you have for us.