

## **An Urgent Call for Biblical Exegesis**

Call to Worship: Psalm 107:1-3  
1st Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:1-13  
2nd Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:14-19

Hymn Insert- *10,000 Reasons*  
Hymn Insert- *Speak O Lord*  
Hymn #80- *How Firm a Foundation*

### **Introduction**

We continue to see the urgency of Paul's Second Letter to Timothy, as he fervently charges Timothy to persevere. Timothy must, himself, cling to the true gospel, at any expense, willing to suffer great hardship, if necessary, for the sake of the Gospel. For, it is only those who persevere to the end, who can be certain that they will live and reign forever with Christ. Those, like Hermogenes and Phygellus (and many from Asia), who have walked away from the faith unto to the temporal preservation of their own comfort in this world, could expect to be rejected by Christ, even as they have denied him by their apostasy. And so, the warning to Timothy was urgent and strong. And at the very heart and core of the doctrine, to which Timothy must cling, lie this confession: "Jesus Christ, of the Seed of David, was raised from the dead."

This morning, Paul, while still directing his exhortations to Timothy, will now shift the focus of his exhortations toward Timothy's specific responsibility, as a preacher of the Word of God, who must rightly present the truth, to those under his charge. And so, here we will consider the sobering and urgent call for the proper, Biblical exegesis of God's Word, something that desperately needs to be upheld and proclaimed today.

### **I. An Urgent Call for Biblical Exegesis**

Paul begins here, by saying, "Remind them of these things..." (vs. 14a). Now, it is worth noting right here, for a moment, that when Paul orders Timothy to "Remind them of these things," an essential assumption comes to the foreground. The "these things" that Paul is here speaking about, obviously refer to all that Paul has just written before this, and that being the case, we can and ought to presume that these instructions are not only for Timothy, but for the whole church. Now, why do I highlight this fact? Well, because some might presume that when Paul commands Timothy to suffer hardship with him as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, and not to

get entangled in the affairs of every day life, that those instructions are limited to those who are in the gospel ministry, and are, therefore, not meant for the general flock. This statement, “Remind them of these things,” looks back to all of the previous instructions, and by doing so, it presumes that all true Christians, while not necessarily being called into the pastoral ministry, are called unto the same mission, and into the same battle, as those who are in the leadership. In other words, we are all to be engaged in this battle, with our hearts focused heavenward, standing firmly upon the profession of Jesus Christ, the Seed of David, who was raised from the dead. And so, I simply note this as a further affirmation of how we have applied these texts in previous weeks. That said, let us continue on, then.

“Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers” (vs. 14). Here again, we find Paul addressing a problem that had existed when he wrote 1 Timothy, and which was still not resolved. [Read 1 Timothy 1:3-4; 4:1-8; 6:3-5, 20-21]

And so, we are reminded of some of the false teachings that Paul had addressed back in 1 Timothy, dealing with abuses and the misuse of the law, genealogical disputes and attempts at obtaining holiness by commanding the brethren to refrain from enjoying particular foods and the ordinance of marriage. All in all, these teachings were actually eclipsing and thwarting true growth in Christ, by putting forth an alleged form of holiness that served no real benefit to contend with the true *sinful* desires of the flesh. And to that end, it promoted another gospel; a dead, powerless, Christ-less gospel, which put unnecessary burdens on the people of God, and distracted them from taking aim at those sins which really defile both body and soul.

Well, here again, more false, useless teachings were being taught and promoted in the church, which again, rather than leading the brethren to improve in true holiness, were actually serving to produce ungodliness. As we have seen in the past, a pursuit of holiness and godliness, that is not in accordance with God’s true law, no matter how sincere and no matter how much bodily sacrifice or restraint is involved, will actually serve to corrupt the people of God. It both distracts us from what God is truly after in us, while inevitably making us more vulnerable to the very lusts that God *would* seek to purge from us. Ultimately, if left unchecked, it leads to total

ruin. To this end then, Paul here exhorts Timothy to charge the brethren “before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.”

Now, Paul will continue on with this charge in a moment, even providing an example, but first, he inserts the remedy; the very antithesis and destroyer of these false, profane, corrupt teachings. “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (vs. 15).

Within this context then (of teaching the brethren not to strive about words to no profit, which actually leads to the ruin of those listening), Paul adds, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God...” And so, Paul is presuming here, that Timothy, himself, has a great responsibility in the midst of all kinds of false channels of corrupt communication that are flying about within and without the church. He cannot simply sit back and allow all manner of words and thoughts and ideas to fly about, unchecked, into the ears of listeners, which would serve to ruin the brethren, if they believed what they were hearing. He had a critical responsibility to contend with extra-Biblical ideas and concepts. And Paul highlights the urgency of that responsibility by saying, “Timothy, be diligent (be awake and conscious, focused and actively, painstakingly involved in being a faithful watchmen over the people of God)...be diligent to present yourself approved *to God*.” “Let the fear of God, and pleasing God, drive you in your duty here! Let not God find you sleeping at the helm! Always, be ready to present yourself, at all times, approved to God! Let Him be true and every man a liar, if necessary! Let Him be the Master of your conscience in every regard!”

“Be a ‘worker who does not need to be ashamed...’” Ashamed, in what sense? “By allowing trials and persecutions to compel you to compromise, such that a fear of man and not of God; the approval of men and not God, is what directs the course of your life and actions.” And so, Paul here charges Timothy to rightly deal with the false, corruptible teachings, being motivated and driven by the desire to be approved by God, having no need to be ashamed, because although his boss is not visibly present, he continues to faithfully do what his boss calls him to do. Indeed, he does so “diligently” (with fervor, zeal and focused determination).

Now, how specifically is Timothy to do this? In what specific, active direction, is Timothy to exercise great diligence in contending with false teachings and vain, defiling doctrines? Six simple, and yet, profound, English words: “rightly dividing the Word of truth!” How is Timothy to utterly defeat the destructive heresies that were making their way into the churches? By properly, exegetically, opening up and expositing the Word of God. Oh Brethren, that the preachers of our day would take this sobering charge to heart! That the fear of God would be in all preachers, and the whole hearted desire to proclaim the truth in such a way as to gain God’s approval, and not the approval of the world, the present culture and man, in any sense! And what does Paul mean by “rightly dividing the Word of truth?” How is one to properly expound the Scriptures, God’s Holy Word?

By being determined to practice utilizing Biblical exegesis and not eisegesis. By presenting the Scriptures in accordance with the actual intentions of the biblical writers (who were, themselves, writing implements of the Holy Spirit) and not in accordance with our own natural desires or preconceived notions. It’s proclaiming the Word, as it stands, and getting out of the way, so that we do not interfere with God’s method of saving the unregenerate and sanctifying redeemed sinners. The word “exegesis” containing the Greek prefix “ek” (which means “out of”) means bringing out of the texts of Scripture what is actually there, as intended by the author, the author’s purpose and the author’s context (both biblically and historically). Contrary to this, is the word “eisegesis,” containing the Greek prefix “eis” (which means “into” as opposed to “out of”), implying the idea of reading into the text our own preconceived notions and what we want the text to say. And sadly, there is a lot of “eisegesis” going on in many of the pulpits of our day.

You see, Brethren, in a nut shell, rightly dividing the Word of truth, means taking what is in the Word of God and explaining its intended meaning plainly; teaching it and applying it, as it relevantly addresses God’s people. For His own glorious reasons, God has chosen to use men of dust; indeed, imperfect, fallible men of dust, to convey His message (His Word) to other men and women of dust. And by His Spirit, when the “means” strives to function in such a way that would carefully and accurately handle that Word, letting the content simply say what it says (and

indeed, letting the content direct *how* we say what it says), governed by a fear of God, God then blesses that Word and uses it to change people from the inside out.

And so, having inserted this critical, remedial duty, which Timothy was to embrace, as a means of dealing with the false teachings, Paul continues on with his original exhortation and charge, providing an example as well. “But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some” (vs. 16-18).

You see, in one vein, Timothy is to positively proclaim the truth, and in another vein, he must reject and shun idle babblings. Ideas and notions that are contrary to Scripture are not to be entertained in the slightest sense. They are to be immediately rejected, shunned, and thrust outside the church. And this is necessary, because if they are entertained or allowed any kind of free course, they will increase; they will grow worse and worse and they will produce more and more ungodliness. They will “spread like cancer,” as Paul here states. Cancer, generally doesn’t stay isolated for too long, which is why you want to catch it and kill it early. If left alone; if left unchecked, it will spread to other parts of the body, and it will gradually infect, deteriorate and destroy everything. This is the illustration that Paul uses to show how false teachings eventually spread and destroy the church. Like a little leaven (just a little yeast), permeates and infiltrates the whole loaf of bread, such is the danger of leaving evil communications unchecked. [III. Paul, also in 1 Cor. 15- “Do not be deceived. Evil communications corrupt good morals...etc”]

And we get an example, a glimpse of one of the idle babblings; the false, defiling teachings, brought forth by Paul here, as well, which had caused problems in the church. “Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.” Here, we have an example of one of those useless, fruitless, idle teachings that have served only to overthrow the faith of some. These two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, were disseminating the heretical teaching which claimed that the final resurrection had already taken place, and as it was embraced by some, it produced ungodly, licentious living, ultimately overthrowing their faith. And so, once again, this real life illustration does well to provide Paul’s fervent exhortation with an accompanying “case

in point” example, adding a sure sense of urgency to his charge. And therefore, Timothy would do well, to take it seriously.

Finally, Paul adds, “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (vs. 19). Here, Paul brings forth a glorious encouragement to bring balance to his strong exhortation. He has pressed Timothy, particularly concerning his responsibility and the responsibility of the brethren, and he has brought forth a sobering example of apostasy in Hymenaeus and Philetus, but here, he also reminds Timothy that God is yet sovereign, and He will keep His true people to the end. They will persevere. And so, the warnings are real and they serve a motivational purpose for Timothy, but lest Timothy should move from diligence to terror and sobriety to anxiety, he also reminds Timothy of the sovereignty of God, whose plan will not fail. Christ’s true, elect sheep will prevail. The solid foundation of God; the foundation of God, which has, as its Cornerstone, the Lord Jesus Christ, and upon which His church will be built is solid, it is certain (for the Father has preordained it, Christ has secured it, and the Holy Spirit regenerates unto it), and therefore, it must stand. Indeed, it stands, having this seal (having this divinely embedded seal of authority and guarantee), “The Lord knows those who are His!” And because He knows them, they will endure, they will persevere, they will prevail...they will not depart from the truth! This doesn’t remove Timothy’s responsibility from striving unto their perseveration; indeed it motivates him all the more, both, as a means that God will use to carry out His will and as an encouragement to know that the power of God will follow and anoint Timothy’s faithful proclamation of the Word. God will use that means to speak to, to preserve and to direct His people. The power is not in Timothy (a burden which no human being could bear), but rather, it is in the pure Word of God, to which God has attached His divine power.

And so, Timothy is motivated to strive unto faithfully ministering the Word of God, so as to fear God and not men (seeking God’s approval and not the approval of men), but at the same time, he can rest in the fact that Christ will speak through Timothy, and His sheep will hear His voice. He knows those who are His. And those who would profess to be His, must and ought to, exhibit that clear sign of being among His marked children, how? By departing from iniquity.

By rejecting false teachings (the voices of false shepherds) and giving heed to (and obeying) the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Name they name.

## **II. Closing Thoughts and Applications**

1) Brethren, see here again, the role of pastors, urged upon them by Scripture, to fervently contend with all false teachings that would infiltrate the church. Some would think of pastors as being nosy or busybodies because they seek to pry into the spiritual affairs of the body. Falling into the crevice of a culture that says, “Stay out of my business, unless you are invited” and which takes pride in not receiving correction, in many cases, pastors can be despised or seen as mere pulpit parrots. Keep them at a distance and all will be fine. However, here we see that Timothy was to strive to be approved by God by getting into and dealing with the philosophies and teachings that were passed on from the culture to the church. Pastors have the responsibility, before God, of overseeing His local church, and to some degree, that involves being a bit nosy, not about secular matters, but concerning the type of communication, counsel and philosophies that are passed around, and which are potentially being absorbed by some in the body. And in a multi-media, internet, FB, Twitter, cellphone, texting world, that gets real complicated.

And so, not that this has been a major problem here in this church, but let this text, at the very least, drive us to appreciate the responsibility that pastors have in overseeing the flock. And be cautious, very cautious, about the type of information and teaching that you allow into your lives and your home and in the hearts of your children. Don’t be deceived. Don’t play with fire. Evil communications corrupt good morals!

2) Notice again, that the best remedy against the harmful infiltration and influence of false teachings is the proper exposition of the Word of God. Brethren, we need to be a people who have an exceptionally, all submissive, high view of God’s Word. If we don’t stand firmly committed to the doctrine of Sola Scripture, embracing the Bible as God’s infallible, inerrant, all authoritative, all sufficient, Word, we will get swept away by error. We have to be committed exegetes, seeking to read and understand and apply the Scriptures, in accordance with the intended meaning and purposes of the divinely inspired writers, and not our own presuppositions. We need to be a people who value the true meaning of Scripture, each text

within its context, seeking to understand what God's will is for us, in the volume of the Book! And let us pray, that for every future generation until the return of Christ, this pulpit is filled by faithful, capable, uncompromising, God-fearing, Christ exalting, exegetes and expositors of God's Holy Word! ...Men who live by this Book, who unashamedly proclaim the full counsel of God found within it, and who are led to proclaim it in accordance with the methods and tones that are derived from each text.

3) If you are not a true Christian here this morning, know that there are competing world views which scurry about all over the face of this earth. And by nature, you yourself have embraced a worldview. But hear and know this for sure. God's will must and will prevail. God's Word alone is a sure and reliable foundation, and unless you are on that foundation, eventually you will find yourself sinking through the large cracks that permeate your own foundation. Your foundation will collapse, and if it is on the other side of the grave, there will be hell and eternal regret to follow. You cannot contend with your Almighty Creator! [The Gospel!!!]

Amen!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25