

**Title:** God Knows His People  
**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 2:14-19  
**Series:** The Pastoral Epistles

1. Introduction:

- a. The subject matter found in 2 Timothy 2:1-13 is further expounded in our passage today, the difference being that what was said positively in the previous paragraph is stated negatively now
  - i. In a positive sense, Timothy is told to remind the faithful men (ministers) to remain steadfast in the performance of their God-given tasks of teaching, and preaching God's word.
    1. The minister of God must always look to Jesus Christ, the risen and reigning Savior, who imparts strength to the faithful and rewards them.
    2. In the negative sense, Timothy is to warn the faithful to shun both the false teachers and their message.
      - a. It is here that our passage begins.

2. Verse 14A: Warned against the false teachers: Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words...

- a. Timothy has a **charge** for these leaders, just as Paul had charged him. In both cases, it was a **charge (stern warn) before God (whom every believer and minister must fear)**. Timothy must warn the church leaders in Ephesus not to wage thoroughly useless word-battles with the false prophets. Such deceivers

use human wisdom and reason to undermine God's Word, and believers are not to engage them in debate.

i. Paul had warned Timothy in this regard before.

We read about such evil men in **1 Timothy 6:4**

he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions,

1. Notice that quarreling with these individuals only endangers the sheep of God.

b. Paul's purpose was to motivate and encourage Timothy to keep a firm grasp on the truth and to pass that truth to others who would do likewise.

c. Timothy is urged to **remind** the faithful men of their primary duty to teach and preach God's Word.

i. To **remind** carries the meaning of persistence.

Timothy must persistently **remind** the faithful not to get side-tracked by the false teachers.

ii. It is good to hear the same admonitions over and over again because it protects the people of God from error.

1. This is the thought behind **2 Peter 1:13** I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder,

3. Verse 14B: Danger 1: False Teaching Ruins the Hearers: which does no good but only ruins the hearers.

a. False teaching is a stumbling block in the path of both the unbelievers and believers. For the unbelievers,

false teaching turns them away from the true way of salvation.

- b. It also harms the believer by causing confusion, doubt, discouragement, and disobedience.
  - c. The word **ruin** in *Greek* is *kata/stro/phē*. It is the root of our English word catastrophe. It means to overthrow or cause destruction.
  - d. False teaching has a catastrophic effect.
4. Verse 15: Danger 2: False teaching brings eternal shame on the teachers: 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.
- a. Paul's second warning about false teaching is given to us by contrast. Contrary to the false teachers that ruined lives, Timothy was a minister who accurately represented the gospel.
  - b. Timothy's example must serve as a powerful weapon against error. Paul commands Timothy to **do his best to present himself to God as one approved**.
    - i. **Best** (*Greek spoudazō*) it is a call for maximum effort. Timothy was to exercise every effort to conduct himself in godliness to stand as **approved** not before men but before God.
      - 1. **2 Corinthians 10:18** For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.
        - a. Beloved, we want His approval.
      - 2. **1 Thessalonians 2:4** but 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.

- a. Our purpose in preaching is to be pleasing to God.
- c. The implication of this verse is quite clear. The false teacher has much for which to be ashamed. However, those that have the most reason to be ashamed indeed are the most shameless.
  - i. **Philippians 3:19** Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.
    1. They wrangle over words using human philosophy
    2. They cause division and destruction
    3. They cannot be corrected
    4. They persist in error and encourage others to do so.
- d. The mark of a faithful teacher or preacher is **rightly handling the word of truth.**
  - i. How do we know that a man is **rightly handling God's word**? The following two truths are evident in his life:
    1. First, the man who handles the word of truth correctly does not change, pervert, mutilate, or distort it; neither does he use it with a wrong purpose in mind. On the contrary, he prayerfully interprets Scripture in the light of Scripture. He courageously, yet lovingly, applies its glorious meaning to concrete conditions and circumstances, doing this for the glory of God, the conversion of sinners,

and the edification of believers.

*(Orthodoxy)*

2. Second, the man who rightly handles the word of truth lives in obedience to it. He understands God's calling on his life and endeavors, by the Grace of God, to walk in complete submission to it. He does not rationalize or excuse sin within.

*(Orthopraxy)*

3. Both of these truths flow from *Orthopathy*.

5. Verse 16: Danger 3: False Teaching leads to ungodliness:  
But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness,

- a. All false teaching is **irreverent babble that must be avoided**. It pretends to bring great blessing but what it truly brings is nothing of spiritual significance.

- i. **Jude 1:12-13** These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; (13) wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

- b. Not only are these false teachers empty of any true blessings for the hearer, but their teaching also leads the hearer to **more and more ungodliness**.

- i. The natural outcome of false doctrine is false living (ungodliness).

1. False teaching cannot restrain the flesh

2. False teaching cannot help in the fight against the devil.
3. False teaching cannot protect from the world.
4. False teaching cannot guard our hearts against sin.

6. Verse 17A: Danger 4: False Teaching spreads rapidly: and their talk will spread like gangrene...

a. The foolish disputes of the false teacher will resemble **gangrene** or malignant, cancerous tumors. It spreads in its deadliness until it consumes the false teachers and those that follow them.

- i. **Galatians 5:7-9** You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? (8) This persuasion is not from him who calls you. (9) A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

7. Verses 17B and 18: Danger 5: False Teaching upsets the faith of some: Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some.

a. Paul identifies two of these false teachers by name.

- i. **Hymenaeus** appears to be the ringleader and has now been mentioned in both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy as a false teacher.
- ii. **Philetus** is mentioned for the first time, having replaced Alexander.
- iii. By calling these men out by name, Paul was protecting the sheep of God.

1. Paul mentions these men as those that have **swerved (to deviate from, miss (the mark) from the faith)**. False teachers will wander away from the doctrine of salvation in Christ. They profess to be Christians, but their teaching and lives prove otherwise. This is why they had been excommunicated.
  - a. **1 Timothy 1:20** among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.
  - b. The error of these specific men was that they denied the future literal **resurrection** of the saints. They taught that the believer only experienced a spiritual resurrection when they came to Jesus.
    - i. By holding this position, they denied the immortality of the believer. They were destroying the Christian foundation of faith—denying both the reality and implications of Christ’s resurrection for the believer.
    - ii. To deny the truth of the resurrection is to deny the heart of the gospel and to promote licentious sin.
      1. **1 Corinthians 15:13-14** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. (14) And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain...
      2. **1 Corinthians 15:17-19** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. (18) Then those also

who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. (19) If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

8. Verse 19: God Knows His True Ministers: 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."
- a. False prophets shall lead many astray. If it were possible, they would lead astray even the elect (Matthew 24:24). But the Good Shepherd knows his sheep and gives everlasting life to them, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of his hands. This is the teaching of Scripture.
  - b. Though Paul has just pointed out that specific individuals have wandered away from the truth and have upset the faith of some, we must remember what Scripture says; not all Israel is Israel, and not all who confess Christ are Christians.
  - c. Therefore, Paul now writes that the **foundation of God stands firm**
    - i. God's true church consists of those who are His. By calling the church **God's firm foundation**, Paul stresses the church's permanency and immobility. Some, indeed, have wandered away, but the true church is immovable!
      1. Beloved, praise God for this truth. God knows His people and will conduct them safely home.



- d. We note that God's church **bears His Seal**. A seal speaks of three things in Scripture
- i. Protection: God the Father protects the Christians so that none are lost. He has known them as His own from all eternity.
  - ii. Ownership: God the Son bought/redeemed the Christians with his precious blood.
  - iii. Certifies: God, the Holy Spirit, certifies that the Christians are, indeed, the sons of God
- e. But how do believers experience the comfort of the seal? The answer is: by taking to heart what is written on the seal! The seal bears two closely related inscriptions. God's decree of election and man's responsibility in sanctification receive equal recognition: **"The Lord knows those who are his,"** and **"Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."** Let us compare and contrast these two great truths.
- i. The first is dated in eternity; the second, in time.
  - ii. The first is a declaration that we must believe; the second is an exhortation that we must obey.
  - iii. The first exalts God's predestinating mercy; the second emphasizes man's solemn duty.
  - iv. The first refers to the security; the second to the purity of the church.
- f. The close relationship between the two inscriptions is evident also from the fact that the words of both are a reference to the same Old Testament incident, namely, the rebellion by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in Numbers 16 (v. 5 and 26).

- i. **Election:** **Numbers 16:5** and he said to Korah and all his company, “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.
  - ii. **Sanctification:** **Numbers 16:26** And he spoke to the congregation, saying, “Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with all their sins.”
- g. **Hymenaeus and Philetus**, in their rebellion against the true doctrine and holy living, resembled these wicked men of the Old Testament. In both instances of rebellion against authority, there was disbelief of what God had revealed.
  - i. In both cases, the leaders involved others in their crimes.
  - ii. The implication is that just as the rebellion under Korah ended in dire punishment for those who rebelled and for their followers, so also will the present rebellion of **Hymenaeus and Philetus** end in disaster for them and their disciples unless they repent.
- h. Beloved, our first truth of election has no meaning at all apart from the second truth of sanctification, nor the second apart from the first.
  - i. The two inscriptions always go together. Security and purity are linked forever.
    - 1. **2 Thessalonians 2:13** But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you

as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

2. **1 Peter 1:1-2** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (2) according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

- i. The second inscription follows hard upon the first; on the seal, the two stand next to each other.
  - i. Reliance on God must reveal itself in a life that is consecrated to God's glory. A person's confession must exemplify itself in a holy walk and conduct. Christians must be consistent.
    1. That same consistency is what **Hymenaeus and Philetus** lacked. They named the name of the Lord and yet promoted unrighteousness both in their teaching and their practice.

## 9. Benediction:

- a. **Deuteronomy 13:4** You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him.

## Public Reading of Scripture

## **Deuteronomy 13:1-10**