

“Perilous Times – Part 2”  
2 Timothy 3:1-5  
(Preached at Trinity, August 7, 2022)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **chapter 3** Paul described some serious and dangerous times that would have a major impact upon the church.  
"But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come."  
Paul uses the word γινώσκω which is a verb that means “to know.” It’s in the imperative: “**Know this**” Know of a certainty, there are difficulty days ahead.
2. Last week I stressed that these “last days” were not speaking of some indeterminate season at the end of the age just prior to the return of Christ. Rather, the last days describe the period of time that would mark the entire age of the church. They have been going on for 2000 years. They include the days in which we live.
3. We must be clear. Paul is not talking about conditions with the world in general, although a fallen world is certainly a dangerous place. Paul is talking about conditions within the church. Reading it in the context of this passage, Paul is describing the impact unregenerated church members would have upon the health and ministry of the local church. These are the vessels of dishonor Paul described in the previous chapter.
4. **Verses 1-5** describe church members whose lives are ungodly – counterfeit Christians. Paul calls the existence of these people a great danger to the church. These people bring great harm to the church. They weaken the testimony and ministry of the church. They lower the church's standard of holiness. They cause her to forfeit the presence of Christ.
5. It is important that we understand these dangers so that we can protect ourselves.
  - A. We need to heed the warning: "in the last days difficult times will come."  
It is so relevant for today – We can see it before our eyes.
  - B. Many churches choose to deal with the problem by lowering the standard – They have declared carnality normal Christianity – THE BIBLE DOES NOT!!!  
WE MUST NOT!!!
  - C. Paul gives us our only proper response: “Avoid such men as these.”
6. This morning I want us to begin to look at these dangerous conditions.  
We might be tempted to race by these characteristics as generic problems, but Paul is being specific. It is important that we have a clear grasp of each one because they are so dangerous to the church. **Verses 1-5** have a focus upon two groups. Although the division isn’t absolute the first group seems to follow fleshly lusts while the latter deals more with the impact upon relationships.
7. The list begins and ends with false loves—lovers of self, lovers of money, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.

- I. The first thing Paul says about them is they are intoxicated with themselves. Paul calls them “lovers of self.”
- A. This is the chief of sins – the sin from which all others flow.
1. Self is elevated above all else.
    - a. His chief love is that which looks back at him in the mirror.
    - b. We were created to love God. Man’s chief end is to glorify God. But the lost man only loves himself. His priority is himself.
    - c. He really can’t focus love upon any other object. When he tells someone, “I love you,” what he really means is “I love me, and you satisfy me.”
  2. The Bible commands love for God above all else. True obedience is based upon loving God supremely.  
**1 John 5:3 NAU** - "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."
  3. Moral corruption always flows from misdirected love:  
Love of self, love of money, love of pleasure.
- B. This marks those who come into the church for purely selfish reasons.
1. They see the church in terms of what it can do for them.
    - a. Paul described the problem in Epistle to the Philippians:  
**Philippians 2:21 NAU** - "For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus."
    - b. They easily become dissatisfied. Discontent can become infectious. Pastors sometimes consume great energy trying to put out the flames of discontent—just trying to keep people happy.
    - c. These members are not usually very faithful – they don’t like being inconvenienced. They avoid sacrifice. They seldom consider whether their actions glorify Christ, whether it will edify others or strengthen the church.
    - d. Paul says in Verse 5 that for them, Christianity is only an external thing, only a “form of godliness.” Jesus isn’t rejected. He is simply displaced.
  2. We need to continually ask ourselves, "Am I motivated chiefly by what pleases me or what honors God and strengthens His church?"
  3. Self-love is the greatest hindrance to fellowship within the church  
When everyone is serving themselves above all else.
- C. Self-love is so dangerous because few see it as something that describes them – because they think so highly of themselves.  
The Bible gives the solution – we must have the mind of Christ  
**Philippians 2:3-5 NAU** - "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; <sup>4</sup> do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,"

- II. They are greedy, lovers of money. From a compound Greek word literally meaning a lover of silver or a lover of shiny things – it is a term that represents materialism – covetousness is an excellent word to describe it.
- A. These people are never content with what they have
1. This too is a great danger to the church.  
**1 Timothy 6:9-10 NAU** - "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."
  2. Because of their love of material things they set up their lives so that they have no time for the ministry of the church – this is dangerous for the church.
  3. Because of their love of money most never tithe of their income. Across the evangelical spectrum 10% give 90% of church funds.
  4. It is easy for us to excuse ourselves because we think too concretely. You say you don't love money. But do you love things and want more – always something new? Are you miserly, wanting more and more for yourself? These are hard questions to address in our wealthy environment.
  5. Paul says that because of their love for material things many have even wandered away from the faith  
In Chapter 4 Paul writes that love for this world caused Demas to abandon the work of the Kingdom.  
**2 Timothy 4:10 NAU** - "for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me."
  6. The love of money will enslave us.  
Gary Demarest writes: "Only when we regard money as a means of serving God and others—particularly the poor and needy—can we be liberated from its destructive power. What would happen if we worked to make money in order to give it away?"<sup>1</sup>
- B. The Bible gives us the solution for this love of money
1. We must find contentment in Christ. Are you continually seeking to add to your stuff? If everything you had was taken away would you still be content? This is Christianity. Contentment in Christ.
  2. Have you learned the blessing of being frugal? If you suddenly came into millions of dollars would it change your priorities, your lifestyle? I read an article once about Warren Buffet driving a 20 year old Volvo.
  3. We must be Kingdom seekers.  
**Matthew 6:33 NAU** - "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

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<sup>1</sup> Gary W. Demarest and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *1, 2 Thessalonians / 1, 2 Timothy / Titus*, vol. 32, The Preacher's Commentary Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1984), 281.

- III. They have little control over their tongue. They bring great trouble upon the church with the things they speak. This problem is a significant element in this passage.
- A. “Boastful and arrogant” –
1. Pride is the outward evidence of self-love.  
They have a high view of themselves – "Hey look at me"
  2. Pride renders preaching ineffective –The proud man seldom applies preaching to himself.
  3. Pride is dangerous to a church because of God's attitude concerning pride.  
God hates pride  
**Proverbs 6:16-17 NAU** - "There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: <sup>17</sup> Haughty eyes . . ."  
**1 Peter 5:5 NAU** - "and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
- B. “Revilers” – Also sin of the tongue. From the Greek word βλάσφημος – They are blasphemers.
1. This also flows forth from the proud, boastful view the person has of himself. He thinks nothing of expressing his irreverence.
  2. It can be directed towards God or man.
  3. The proud man looks with contempt towards others and uses his tongue to slander, criticize and condemn.  
William Barclay – "He might even seem to be humble; he might even seem to be quiet and inoffensive; but in his secret heart there is contempt for everyone else."<sup>2</sup>
  4. Blasphemy is a sin of the tongue – speaking against others or of God.  
But we must also remember that the tongue is a window to the heart.  
**Matthew 15:18-19 NAU** - "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. <sup>19</sup> "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders." - βλασφημία
  5. The tongue can be used for great good or great evil, it can build up or tear down.
- C. Paul adds regarding further abuses of the tongue they are “malicious gossips.” This is from the word διάβολος
1. This involves using the tongue to spread slander towards others.
  2. It may not be false information but it is information we have no right to share—with those who do not have the right to know.
  3. There is a certain power that comes from knowing some information someone else may not know.  
The wagging of the tongue is great evil. The word for gossip is a word that refers to the devil – diabolos.  
**Matthew 4:1 NAU** - "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."

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<sup>2</sup> Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956) page 214.

Conclusion:

1. These are heart issues. And they are issues that plague the church.
2. Paul isn't talking about those who are outside the church, those who have no interest in religion. Paul is talking about those inside the church. Those having a form of godliness, always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.
3. The church must always be on the alert. Paul says, "Avoid such men as these."  
Do we have the discernment to recognize these things in ourselves?