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# Sermon Notes

September 26, 2021

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## Keep Your Nose Clean 2 Timothy 2:20-26

### “That’s Personal”

- ❖ If one is competent in performing their job, does their character matter?
  - many argue that one’s personal life is irrelevant as long as they are skillful and effective at what they do
  - *Chicago Sun Times* “We are normally willing to sacrifice character for conduct, and integrity for achievement.”
- ❖ For those who follow Christ, nothing could be further from the truth
  - character is everything when it comes to Christ and His church
  - R. Kent Hughes, “A noble life must have for its core a noble heart.”

### Character Counts

- ❖ “Keep your nose clean” ... avoid doing anything “shady”

- ❖ Paul’s words to Timothy about being an honorable vessel for honorable use parallel the expression, “keep your nose clean”
  - vessels for dishonorable use: cleaning, disposal of garbage and human waste
  - vessels for honorable use: noble functions, dining, entertaining (“fine china”)
- ❖ Honorable vessels depict believers who are faithful and useful to the Lord like the good soldiers, competitive athletes and hard-working farmers Paul mentions earlier
- ❖ Dishonorable vessels represent cowardly soldiers, lazy athletes and slothful farmers
  - example of the “one talent” man in Matthew 25:24-30
  - but, unlike Jesus’ parable, in Paul’s illustration, there still is hope, time to change, time to cleanse oneself from what is dishonorable, time to grow

### Being a Vessel of Honor

- ❖ Vv. 22-26 are addressed to *the Lord’s servant* as indicated in v. 24
- ❖ Paul stresses our need for holiness and details what needs to be done in order to cleanse ourselves from what is dishonorable
  - a conscious, willful cleansing (v. 21, *if anyone cleanses himself*)
    - filters
    - what you allow to enter your mind affects your thinking, beliefs, values, motives and priorities

- faithful service for the Lord requires separation from everything that can contaminate you
  - we need God’s grace to cleanse ourselves
  - we are responsible to “work out” what God “works in” (Philippians 2:12-13)
- ❖ What marks the life of a faithful, godly believer who is a vessel of honor?
  - ***flee youthful passions***... a wide range of immature thoughts, attitudes, and actions which may still have a foothold in our lives
  - ***pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace*** (ethical forms of behavior)
    - righteousness = right conduct that glorifies God
    - faith = belief + trust in God
    - love = love for others that is based on choice rather than feeling
    - peace = tranquility and harmony with your fellow believer (*cf.* Romans 12:18)
- ❖ A practical example (vv. 23-25)
  - in the face of false teaching, patiently promote and proclaim Biblical truth
    - don’t engage gospel critics on their own terms
    - announce God’s truth in the most straightforward, direct way possible
  - a holy, set-apart vessel for honorable use must
    - be *kind to everyone*

- present truth with meekness, gentleness, and humility
- don’t be harsh, abusive, overbearing, unkind, thoughtless, or combative
- speak the truth in love even to those who most forcefully oppose, dismiss, belittle, and reject Biblical truth
- be able to teach by knowing what the gospel is and how to offer it simply and clearly to others
- ***patiently enduring evil... patient when wronged... not resentful***
  - though we oppose evil and stand against it, we do so with gentleness and without becoming resentful (*cf.* 1 Peter 2:23)

- ❖ The long-range hope of seeing others come to faith in Christ

<b>Personal Application</b>
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1. What are you doing to cleanse yourself from that which is dishonorable?
2. How have you worked to flee youthful passions over the course of your life in Christ? What youthful passions still have a foothold in you, and how are you battling them?
3. In what ways are you pursuing ethical conduct that is characterized by righteousness, faith, love, and peace?
4. How do you evaluate yourself when it comes to the issue of being kind to everyone? What can/will you do to grow in your ability to do this?