

Pastoral Epistles VIII

Purpose of the Church & Ministry #1

(2-Timothy)
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This is the purpose of the Church, the ministry and why God has called us and how that fits in with how the Church congregations and fellowships should be organized. The Pastoral Epistles are:

- 1st-2nd Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon

Plus what we find out of Acts and 1st-2nd Corinthians. The things on how the Church has been structured according to the way God inspired the Apostle Paul to do it is the only model we have in the New Testament.

In it we see that there is a right balance between the local congregations with independents, plus connected with what Paul was doing and the other ministers who were with Paul. And he, when their were difficulties and problems could intervene directly into any of the local congregations by letter, by visit or by sending someone to help them understand their problems.

When you come to the Church at Corinth, just to show you some of the authority that the Apostle Paul had and used, and never at any time was it used in a way of a dictator ruling over people. The first part of the covenant that Jesus gave in Matt. 20 was that you shall not be like the princes of the Gentiles, which lorded over them, or the great ones who exercised authority upon them. He says, 'It shall not be so among you.' So, we find that the Apostle Paul did not do that either.

You can read 1st-2nd Corinthians and just see how the Apostle Paul went through explaining and inspiring, and then correcting, admonishing and ridiculing to bring them back to Christ. Since they were all enamored with all this false apostle that were coming along saying that they were Hebrews and they had seen Christ and were Israelites, indeed, Paul had to say, 'Hey, I am, too, but I don't want to be a fool and boast.'

Paul had explained his circumstances, how he had an infirmity or a weakness in the flesh, an angel of Satan came to buffet him so that he wouldn't be exalted above measure, because of the revelations that had been given to him. And the answer was, after he had besought the Lord three times to take it away, 'My grace is sufficient for you.' God is glorified in weakness. When we are

weak, then we are strong. That doesn't mean necessarily feeble physically. That means that we understand that the flesh has no spiritual strength whatsoever. Then we are

- strong in the Grace of God
- strong in the Spirit of God
- strong in the Truth of God

That's what the Apostle Paul was saying. Then he said:

2-Corinthians 12:11: "I have become a fool *in this* boasting. You have forced [compelled] me *to do so...* [because of all your strife, vanity and sins] ...when I ought to have been commended by you.... [rather than running after all these false apostles] ...For *in no way* was I inferior to those highly exalted ***so-called apostles***—even if I am nothing."

These are hotshots, not talking about Peter or any of the other apostles of God. These are the false apostles referred to in 2-Cor. 11. They were coming along and saying, 'We have a better revelation than Paul.'

Read the book: *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight. That will tell you who they were and what they were doing.

Verse 12: "Indeed, the signs of an apostle were demonstrated *by me* in all patience, in signs and wonders and miracles among you. For in what *way* was it that you were inferior to the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong" (vs 12-13). *All right, I'm going to trap you!*

They knew that God commanded tithes and offerings, but who were they giving to? *All these false apostles coming in!* Sound familiar? So, Paul said, 'All right, I'm going to be paid by other churches.' He called it *robbing them for wages*. 'I'm going to preach the true Gospel to you without cost in hopes that when you are converted you will understand what you need to do.' That's why he said, "...I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong."

Verse 14: "Behold, a third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not burden you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for the children are not obligated to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. Now, I will most happily spend, and am willing to be totally spent, for your

souls; although the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved” (vs 14-15). That’s what happens to carnal people. They misunderstand it.

Verse 16: “Yet, even so, I did not burden you; but being crafty, I caught you with guile.” You fell right into the carnal trap—didn’t you?

Verse 17: “Did I make a gain of you by any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus *to go to you* and sent with *him our* brother. Did Titus make a gain of you?... [Did he come in and demand tithes and offerings?] ...Did we not walk in the same spirit *and* in the same steps? Again, do you think that we are making an excuse to you? We speak before God in Christ; and everything *we do*, beloved, *is* for your edification” (vs 17-19). I’m reading this to show you the authority that he had in the local churches. He did have authority. For what? *To teach, to help, to correct!*

Verse 20: “But I fear that when I come, perhaps I may find you *in a state* such as I do not wish, and I may be found by you such as you do not wish...” He’s laying it on the line: ‘I’m coming, folks, what are you going to do? Are you going to be adults; responsible Christians and solve your problems? What is it that you’re going to do?’

“...that *there may be* strifes, jealousies, indignations, contentions, evil speakings, whisperings, puffings up, commotions” (v 20)—which we’ve all experienced—have we not?

Verse 21: “*And* that when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall grieve over many of those who have already sinned, and have not repented of the uncleanness and sexual immorality and licentiousness that they have practiced.” He laid down the warning! ‘You’ve got a chance, I’m coming,’

2-Corinthians 13:1: “This *is the* third time *that* I am coming to you. In *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every matter shall be established.” Did he follow Matt. 13? *Yes, he did!*

Verse 2: “I have previously told *you*, and I am telling you in advance the second time, as though I were present; but since I am absent now, I am writing to those who have continued to sin until now—and to all the rest—that if I come again, I will not spare.”

- How do you want me to come, folks?
- In meekness and love?

Clear up your problems! If not, “...I will not spare.”

Verse 3: “Since you seek a proof of Christ speaking through me (Who is not weak toward you, but is powerful in you.” *Look, this guy can’t even*

speak, all mighty in letters.

Verse 4: “For although He was crucified in weakness, yet, He lives by God’s power... [referring to Christ] ...and we are indeed weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by God’s power toward you), **examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves....**” (vs 4-5). *Don’t let me have to come and do it to you!*

What Paul is doing is showing that the exercise of authority has been in using the authority to admonish the brethren to correct their own problems. As we covered earlier, a person convinced against their will is of the same opinion still. You can’t force people. You’ve heard it: *You’ve got a bad attitude!* You wouldn’t dare say, ‘Yeah, and you caused it, Mr. Minister.’ You’d be rebellious!

Paul was just the opposite. This shows that they had choice. This show they had room and latitude to make a mistake. This also shows that they were responsible as individuals to correct their own mistakes. But if necessary if they wouldn’t do it, Paul would come and referee, but he would say, ‘Prove yourselves now! Look at yourselves before Christ.’

“...Don’t you *of* your own selves know that Jesus Christ is in you? Otherwise, you are reprobates” (v 5). Notice the correction and the pleading; notice the cynicism and admonishment so that they see the foolishness of their error. Not to criticize them and put them down, but to make them become mature and responsible for their actions.

You can always command things to be done, but you can never command responsibility. So, Paul is saying, ‘Look, you solve your own problems. I’ll help you in it, and I am coming.’

Verse 6: “But I hope that you will recognize that we are not reprobates. Now, I am praying to God *that* you do no evil; not that we may appear *to be* approved... [exalted] ...but that you may do what *is* right, even if we are *regarded* as reprobates” (vs 6-7). *Look, we’ll take the position of reprobates if you just correct yourselves!* Isn’t that amazing?

Verse 8: “For we do not have any power against the Truth, but *only* for the Truth.” Even if you sin, you’re verifying the Truth.

- that the Law is Truth
- that the Law is good
- that the Law is right

You can’t do anything against it. You may sin, but the Truth still stands.

But for the Truth, v 9: “And we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong... [come on, be

strong] ...for we are also praying for this... [we wish, we desire] ...—*even your perfection.*”

Doesn't that put us right back where we started. The purpose of the Church is *the perfecting of the saints!*

Verse 10: “For this cause, I am writing these things to you while I am absent, in order that when I am present I may not treat *you* with severity, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction. In conclusion, brethren, rejoice! Be perfected; be encouraged; be of the same mind; be at peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (vs 10-11).

That's how Paul exerted his authority and shows his longsuffering, and shows that they were to be responsible as brethren for what they should do. Let's see how Paul also used his authority in teaching, as we saw in 1-Tim.:

- he commanded
- he charged
- he made Timothy responsible

Brethren, we're all responsible, and we're all accountable. If we all understand, won't things be a whole lot better. No one can live your life for you. With Christ *in you*, you can live the life that God wants you to. That's what God wants.

2-Timothy 1:1: “Paul, *an* apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, according to *the* promise of life which *is* in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, *my* beloved son: Grace, mercy *and* peace from God *the* Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I am grateful to God—Whom I have been serving from *the days of my* forefathers with a pure conscience—because I never fail to remember you in my supplications night and day” (vs 1-3).

Remember, he probably was in prison at this point. He was in prison several times, but I think this is his second prison term that he was doing.

Verse 4: “*As* I recall your tears, *I am* longing to see you, so that I may be filled with joy; when I remember the unfeigned faith *that is* in you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice—and I am convinced that *it dwells* in you also. For this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God that is in you by the laying on of my hands” (vs 4-6).

{Note 1-Tim. 4:14, that there was the laying on of hands of the eldership and Paul was leading in the laying on of hands with it. This is the gift of God for being an elder, and serving, preaching and teaching.}

Verse 7: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness.” That's what God has given to us, all of us!

Verse 8: “Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord...” Never be ashamed of the Truth or for what Christ has done for you. You're to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world. *All of us!*

“...nor *of* me His prisoner; but jointly suffer with *me for the sake of* the Gospel, according to *the* power of God... [he's writing to Timothy as an apostle to an elder] ...Who has saved us and called *us* with a Holy calling...” (vs 8-9). Being an elder is a Holy calling, and it is a covenant that is based on the love of God, based on the foundation of Christ.

“...—not according to our works...” (v 9). What we've done, what we are, who we are. God could care less about personality. God could care less about education or whatever. If you love God and you are faithful, God can teach you, educate you and empower you with His Spirit. You have *His* love and *His* Truth, which all comes from Him! That is a key for any serving elder, or anyone who is preaching, that you rely totally on Christ “...**not according to our works...**” God didn't have to call us, but He did because He loves us.

“...but according to His own purpose and grace, which *was* given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time; but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who has annulled death...” (vs 9-10). Do you understand that, brethren? It doesn't matter if you die, because you're going to live again. He's annulled it.

“...and has brought to light *eternal* life and incorruptibility through the Gospel” (v 11).

I know that I'm reading this, but I want you to *catch the power of the words* that God has inspired from the Greek. I want you to understand, for any of you who are speaking and teaching, ask God to help you teach the Scriptures. When you do, to read them like you speak. Then you will catch the sense of God's inspiration of the Scriptures even more.

Verse 11: “Unto which I was ordained a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of *the* Gentiles... [he's all three] ...for which cause I am also suffering these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed.... [he's in prison] ...For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He has the power to keep what I have committed to *Him* for that day. Hold as the standard for doctrine the sound words that you heard from me” (vs 11-13).

We've seen all the way through that these doctrines are important, and they are the Word of God. Doctrine is important! It is true, *doctrine does divide, and Christ intended it to divide!* To divide you from the error, to divide you into His Truth. So, if any man comes preaching a gospel of politics, the doctrine divides, so doctrine is not important. *NO!* That is a false teaching!

"...in *the* faith and love that *are* in Christ Jesus. **Guard the good thing that was committed to you by the Holy Spirit** that is dwelling in us" (vs 13-14). We have a responsibility—individually and as elders:

- *to guard* the Word of God
- *to guard* the Truth of God
- *to fight* the false doctrines that come up and meeting them head-on and do not be afraid of them
 - ✓ Christ did unto death!
 - ✓ The Apostles did unto death!

Remember what I wrote in the book *Lord, What Should I Do?* For all those who were worried about their friends in whatever church they may be, 'You need to consider this: You're better off standing alone with the Truth than standing in the congregation of sinners and compromising.' That's what Paul did!

Verse 15: "You know this, that all those who *are* in Asia have rejected me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus because he frequently refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains" (vs 15-16).

He didn't say, 'Oh, look at that, that Paul, I knew he was up to something. Look, he's in prison and in chains. I won't even go to visit him; I am so ashamed of him that I disown him.'

Verse 17: "For when he was in Rome, he searched for me very diligently and found *me*. May the Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from *the* Lord in that day and how much he served *me* in Ephesus, you know very well" (vs 17-18).

Remember, he's writing this knowing that he's going to die. These are the last words of the Apostle Paul, and to Timothy; profound words! Instruction inspired of God in a very desperate situation was at hand.

2-Timothy 2:1: "Therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that *is* in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, these *things* commit to faithful men, such as will be competent to teach others also" (vs 1-2).

That's what we're trying to do here in the Christian Biblical Church of God.

What Wayne Stenhouse does in how he handles the monthly schedule of sermons, tapes (CDs) and videos: he takes one Sabbath a month he takes one sermon I have done in the past and listens to it and then he brings his own sermon covering the same thing. I said to him, 'You know, I never thought of it, but that's doing exactly what this is doing here. We don't have a college, and I can't be there in person, so if you listen to the sermons and use them from that point of view, I am teaching you, and you can teach the brethren. If you're faithful and confident, and able to teach—which you are—then you can grow in grace and knowledge and be able to teach with conviction, truth, strength and power, too.

It's God's Spirit that does it. And that we all grow into the ability to inspire the brethren. When days get going and are tough and rough and people are down and discouraged, you don't inspire them by 'beating them over the head' and 'knocking them down' with every sin that there is. *You inspire them! Uplift them!* Pray about that and ask God to help you with it. *He will!* We're all nothing but just dust of the earth. If God could use a jackass, surely He can use us.

Verse 3: "You, therefore, endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one who is serving as a soldier becomes involved in civilian pursuits, so that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. Also, if anyone strives *to win* in the athletic games, he is not crowned unless he has competed lawfully. *Moreover*, it is necessary for the husbandman to labor before partaking of the fruits" (vs 3-6).

You've got to plow the ground. You've got to hoe it and dung it. You've got to water and nurture it, and it's got to grow. Then it has to have the fruit. You don't eat the tomato the day that you put the seed in the ground, you've got to labor first.

We've been laboring. Let me tell you what God is going to grant us to have, and that is when we become more known publicly we are going to be armed to the teeth with:

- booklets
- doctrine
- books
- teachings
- series
- Bible translation

There are going to be people who are going to wonder how on earth was this done, and who are these people to do it. We are consider to be:

- the rebellious
- the weak
- the off casts

In that sense we join the Apostle Paul—don't we? So, if God can use us, He will. But when He does, let's not get exalted.

Verse 7: "Give careful consideration to the things *that* I am telling you..." Couple that with all the charges, commands] ...and may the Lord give you understanding in all things." He's saying to Timothy, 'Look, *you* have got to do it.'

Verse 8: "Remember *that* Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, *was* raised from among the dead according to my Gospel; for which I am suffering hardship, *even* to the point of being imprisoned like a criminal..." (vs 8-9).

Trust me, today when you are arrested you are guilty, because they've changed the law enough through court cases that you now have to prove your innocence in too many cases. Know that there are a lot of corrupt police out there who do entrap innocent people, and send them to prison to cover their own sins. So, Paul was sent off like a criminal.

"...but the Word of God has not been chained. Because of this, I endure all things for the sake of the elect in order that they may obtain the salvation that *is* in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (vs 9-10). So, he kept his mind on the whole purpose of why he was serving the brethren, and why God had called them.

Verse 11: "This is a faithful saying: If we have died together with *Him*, we shall also live together with *Him*; if we endure, we shall also reign together with *Him*; if we deny *Him*, He will also deny us; if we are unfaithful, He remains faithful—He cannot deny Himself. See that *they* remain mindful of these things, **earnestly charging them...**" (vs 11-14). There's some more of the authority that God grants to an elder. ***Authority is for edification, not destruction.*** You only use the authority that is necessary, that is warranted by the circumstances.

Example: You don't get rid of a fly by killing it with a 105 Howitzer and destroying the house. You don't use the authority necessary for hard problems, for small problems. You don't have to go in and correct every problem. Give it some time; let the people work it out. Pray for them that God would work on their mind. God will take care of it.

But when it comes time, when it has to do with doctrine and effects other people "...**earnestly charging them in the sight of the Lord** not to argue

over words..." (v 14). That's why you have to *prove all things* by the Scriptures.

"...that are not profitable in any way, *but which lead to the* subverting of those who hear" (v 14). Did that happen concerning 'ben ha arbayim' and counting Pentecost, the calendar things. Did it subvert people? *Yes, it did!* That's why we're under obligation to show the Truth.

Verse 15: "Diligently *study* to show yourself approved unto God..." An elder has to study all the time; all the time apply yourself to the Word of God. You know how you prepare sermons? *All the time!*

- you study the Word of God
- you think on the Word of God
- you see it in action where you live, where you work with people
- you see it on television

Let God's Spirit exercise you in that.

"...a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of the Truth" (v 15). There is a wrong way to divide the Word of Truth. You can deceitfully use the Scriptures. You can corrupt the Word of God. You can prove anything out of the Bible if you *wrongly* divide the Word of God. But if you *rightly divide the Word of God*, you'll understand the Truth. That's an amazing thing that God has done in inspiring the Bible. ***The same book that confuses those who are rebellious, and enlightens those who love God!*** Isn't that amazing?

Verse 16: "But avoid profane and vain babblings because they will *only* give rise to more ungodliness." Haven't you seen that happen, too? A little change in the doctrine here, a little change of a doctrine there, add in a little leaven, stir it up and let it grow, and you have more ungodliness!

Verse 17: "And their words will eat away at the body like gangrene; of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus, who have gone astray from the Truth, claiming that the resurrection has already taken place..." (vs 17-18). They are not even 40 years removed from the resurrection of Christ, and they're already saying that it's over and done.

"...and are destroying the faith of some. Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands firm..." (vs 18-19).

Verse 21: "Therefore, if anyone has purged himself from these... [the vessels of dishonor (v 20)] ...he will be a vessel for honor, having been sanctified and *made* serviceable to the Master, *and* having been prepared for every good work." What you do today in studying prepares you for tomorrow.

What you do for tomorrow prepares you for the next day. And accumulative over a period of months and years then you are ready.

How long did God work with Moses before He used him? *He said to tend sheep for 40 years!* Though he was a great general and heir apparent to Pharaoh. Then he was ready. What did the Apostle Paul have to go through? What have we had to go through? *If we're preparing we'll be ready!* If we're not prepared we'll be like the five foolish virgins. Oop! The last minute, no oil!

Verse 22: "But flee youthful lusts..." Oh that some evangelists would do that even their old age would be helpful.

"...and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace with those who are calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and ignorant speculations reject..." (vs 22-23). I get them every week. I get things sent to me all the time. Some of them I answer, some of them I don't. Some of them I have Jim Hyles answer, some of them go into the waste can. Some I remember and bring a sermon on it at a later date. But Paul says:

"...reject knowing that they engender arguments. Now, it is obligatory *that* a servant of the Lord not be argumentative..." (vs 23-24)—for the sake of being argumentative. They always pick things apart!

"...but gentle toward all, competent to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting those who set themselves in opposition..." (vs 24-25). Help them to understand in meekness. Sometimes that difficult to do.

"...if perhaps God may grant them repentance unto acknowledging of *the* Truth, and *that* they may wake up *and escape* from the devil's snare, who have been taken captive by him to *do* his will" (vs 25-26).

I tell you what, brethren, these words of God are powerful. Paul wrote better than I can speak. But if, with the Spirit of God, we can grasp spiritually what he is saying, and understand what lies ahead of us, then we will accomplish what God wants us to, and understand the Word of God even more.

2-Timothy 3:10: "But you have closely followed my doctrine, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance... [because he was with them much of the time] ...persecutions *and* sufferings—such as happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, *and* in Lystra...." (vs 10-11). You read what the Apostle Paul went through. He could glory in tribulations and persecutions better than we can.

I've often thought: I have a hard time glorying in tribulation. I have a hard time being happy in a trial. The reason being is because God gave him that gift to do so was compensation for those he killed and injured before he was called; when Paul took them up to the high priest into Jerusalem. He knew what he did to them; he knew how vicious that he was to them. He knew that he was described as a boar hog with its tusks rooting up the ground, which was then likened unto the Church.

So, when he was stoned, he got up and went on. He said, 'Thank You, God, that I am counted worthy to suffer the persecution of Christ.' Timothy was there and saw it.

"...*You know* what sort of persecutions I endured..." (v 11). I tell you what, we get upset if we're served cold toast.

"...and the Lord delivered me out of them all" (v 11). God will help you! God will deliver you! ***All things work together for good for them who love God and are called according to His purpose!*** That is absolutely a true statement. When you are down to the lowest and you feel no hope, cling to that Scripture! God will deliver you!

(go to the next track)

We've all had our troubles, but nothing like they had. The Proverb says, 'When you faint in the day of adversity you have little strength.' Always turn to Ps. 34, it's what's important; remember this, and this only happens when:

Psalm 34:4: "I sought the LORD..." you seek Him in these times of troubles of difficulties, whatever the circumstances of your life may be you seek God. You're all going to have a trial or difficulty that you will come to the point that you will say, 'God, I don't know! *You know!*' ***That's where God wants you to be!***

Not that He joys in the trial and suffering that you're going through, but He joys in the fact that you turned to Him and admit that you don't know which way is up or down. 'God, please show me!' *He will!*

"...and He answered me..." (v 4). God is there to hear. Remember what David did when he thought that God wouldn't hear, he said, 'O God, hear me!' *God did!*

"...and delivered me from all my fears" (v 4). You don't have to worry or be fearful, God will deliver you. Remember, where there is fear there is torment, but *perfect love casts out fear!*

Verse 5: "They looked to Him and were radiant; and their faces were not ashamed. This poor

man cried, and the LORD heard, and saved him out of all his troubles” (vs 5-6). God will deliver you out of all your troubles.

Verse 7: “The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him and delivers them. O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him” (vs 7-8). That’s why we have these things come upon us.

We read the book of Revelation and all those horrible events that are going to come—and they are going to come—and when we preach about it, please understand that this is not to instill in you *fear*, but this is to give you hope and strength that you know that

- God is going to fulfill His Word
- God is going to help you
- God is going to strengthen you

Whether you go to a place of safety or not; that’s not the question. If you are right with God and you die in the faith, or you’re martyred in the faith—which one day that will come... There are some true Christians and many professing Christians who are being killed by Muslims and imprisoned in China. The only reason that God has given us faith, time and peace here is so that we may *work*. ***That work is Christ in you!*** That you grow in:

- strength
- character
- faith
- love
- ability

—and be made a vessel to serve God, because He’s going to give you eternal life to live forever and ever in glory. That’s what God has called us to. He’ll deliver us out of all.

Just imagine that some of those who have been martyred, that when they’re resurrected, what they’re going to think. Just imagine the joy that they’re going to have when the angel say, ‘Come here, let’s go on up to the Sea of Glass, my friend.’ *Oh, I’m going to see the Lord?* ‘Yes, you’re going to see the Lord.’ *The last thing I remember is that they lopped off my head, I saw the guillotine blade coming down right on me! I’m alive!* ‘Yes, you are, are you ready to meet the Lord?’

Verse 14: “Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.... [God is there!] ...The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth” (vs 14-16).

Remember, the day for the evil person is

coming, though they are prospering before your very eyes right now.

Verse 17: “The righteous cry, and **the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.**” God delivers us! He has and will continue.

Verse 18: “The LORD is near to the broken-hearted and saves those who are of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, **but the LORD delivers him out of them all**” (vs 18-19).

- all your fears
- all your troubles
- all your afflictions

God will deliver you!

- be it whether you are healed in the flesh
- be it whether you are saved from catastrophe
- be it whether you are delivered from those who are persecuting you

or

- be it whether you die in the faith

God is going to save you out of it all! He delivered Paul out of them all, and he said that while he was in chains, in prison; he says, ‘I’m ready to be offered.’

- that’s why God is perfecting the saints
- that’s why God is shaking the Church

All of those who have been baptized 40 years, 30 years, 25 years, 20 years, that they can wake up and seek God. God has something great for them, a perfection for them. He wants them to be perfected and ready for the resurrection. That’s what God wants for every one of us.

- we don’t have time to wait
- we don’t have time to lollygag around
- we don’t have time to play socials on the Sabbath and play pitsy-patsy and politics with rank and authority with church members

He’s got everything set before us.

2-Timothy 3:12: “And indeed, everyone who desires to live Godly in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted.... [Don’t worry, it’s going to happen!] ...But wicked men and imposters shall become worse and worse, deceiving *others* and being deceived *themselves*” (vs 12-13). And you can see it on cable news 24 hours a day in any election.

Verse 14: “But *as for* you, continue in the things that you did learn and were assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*; and that from a child you have known the Holy Writings...” (vs 14-15).

We’re all to know the Scriptures. I believe

that in times of peace and prosperity we know it's not going to last forever. Just like the Stock Market, every time it goes up, they always get euphoria and think that it's going to go on and on, and they predict the Dow and then one day, BOOM!

Same thing with the Word of God! In the days of peace and prosperity we have the Word of God, and you better take that time to know the Bible, study the Bible, to realize the Word of God. To exercise ourselves there unto; to let God's Spirit inspire us to do it. We have the greatest gift from God: *His Word! His Spirit! And time and peace to do it!*

Know the Holy Scriptures "...which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which *is* in Christ Jesus. All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (vs 15-16).

God wants you to have all of that. If there's any one thing that God wants us to have it is *the conviction of what we believe to the very depths of our being!* No one can gainsay that. They may try, but *God is Judge!*

Some people call me hardheaded. I'll accept that. I'm willing to listen when things need to be changed and worked on. But when I'm confronted with people that want to change the Word God, that want to alter the doctrines and truths that we have and carry brethren back into this world, into the ecumenical swill of the harlot dressed in purple and scarlet, with the golden cup of her abominations that she's feeding to all nations, and have the brethren drink out of that, *I get upset! I will be as hardheaded...* I pray that God would give me a forehead of flint and give you a forehead of flint; just like He did to Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Christ said that when the Son of man comes, 'will He find the faith on the earth?' Brethren, if it can't be with us, and the people of God, **where will it be found?** *It won't be!*

Verse 16: "All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work" (vs 16-17).

That is for the elders, and that is how you are to treat the Word of God in preaching and teaching and being able to help, convict and uplift the brethren! There are some powerful words here:

2-Timothy 4:1: "**I charge you**... [Paul said in one place, 'I solemnly charge you'] ... therefore, in the sight of God..." I take this personally. If God

inspired Paul to write this to Timothy, then God inspired it to be preserved for every elder that God places in the service of His Church.

"...even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the* living and *the* dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **Preach the Word!**...." (vs 1-2). Very simple:

- you're to know it
- you're to live by it
- you're to teach it
- you're to explain it
- you're to preach it

"...Be urgent in season and out of season..." Does eternal life ever get old? *No!* If we do it that way, every Sabbath is going to be tremendous! God will be there fellowshiping with us, inspiring all of us, not just the one who doing the teaching or preaching, but the ones who are doing the hearing—the ones who are learning—that you may be inspired. God delights in that.

I know that God is doing that right now in this very room! We can know and understand. Have you ever gone to the Feast and never hear the Feast spoken of? What happens? *They lose the knowledge of it!*

Then they say, 'Brethren, we have liberty in Christ. You all come to the Feast of Unleavened Bread and we're going to have a nice spread here for the potluck. For those of you who don't believe that you have to eat unleavened bread, we'll have some leavened bread. For those of you who believe that have to have unleavened bread, you can have that, too. We'll just all be cozy and warm together in our sin and ecumenism.'

That's not being "...urgent in season and out of season..." When the Holy Days come, we are ***commanded*** to preach the Holy Days. God will inspire you so that you will say—preach and teach—what's necessary, because He's commanded you to.

"...convict..." (v 2). That's what I hope that God's Spirit will do with you: *convict you* with determination and the will and power of the Spirit of God ***that you be strengthened:***

- in might
- in your mind
- in the love of God

That you can look at all the things that you have gone through, and will go through, *as nothing*, except those things necessary for you to receive eternal life and the reward that God has waiting for you:

- that He is making

- that He is building
- that He is preparing
- that He's going to give you

with a new name that you can live in New Jerusalem forever.

“...rebuke, encourage, with all patience and doctrine. For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine... [we've seen that, too] ...but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves *a great number of teachers, having ears itching to hear what satisfies their cravings*” (vs 2-3). I added that last phrase, but that is implied in the meaning of the Greek. Why heap to yourselves a lot teachers who are going to teach you a lot of things to titillate your lusts.

Verse 4: “They shall turn away their own ears from the Truth...” Haven't you seen all the brethren whom you knew, who were keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days with you, that now that they have swallowed the lie of Sunday-keeping and ***turned their ears away from the Truth, and will not hear?***

Some brethren have said that when they see those who have done that, meet them on the street, and they look them in the eye, that something has changed. That's sad, but that's what happens just as sure as there is the law of life, just as sure as there is the law of gravity, and ***just as sure as you turn your ear away from hearing the Truth so will you lose it!***

“...and they shall be turned aside unto myths. But *as for* you, be vigilant in all things, endure hardships, do *the* work of an evangelist; fully carry out your ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand” (vs 4-6).

It's almost like in writing this, you could hear the footsteps of the guards coming down the corridor to come to his cell to lead him out chained to be killed. He still had some things he needed to do; it didn't happen right then, but you get the feeling of it there.

Verse 7: “I have fought a good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. From this time forward, a crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day—and not to me only, but also to all who love His appearing.... [there was some work he had to finish] ...Be diligent to come to me quickly... [before I die] ...for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens, to Galatia; Titus, to Dalmatia” (vs 7-10). That doesn't mean that they left the faith, but they

went to these other areas.

Verse 11: “Only Luke is with me. Get Mark *and* bring him with you, because he is profitable to me for *the* ministry of the Word.” Mark was the one who helped finalize Paul's part of the New Testament. Whereas, before, Paul had rejected Mark saying, ‘This man doesn't want to work.’ Paul and Barnabas had a big fight over it, and Barnabas took Mark and went off in a huff. So, Paul had taken Timothy, but now he says to bring Mark.

Verse 12: “But I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the chest...” (vs 12-13)—a box covered with a garment; in that box is where they kept the pages of the writings that became the New Testament for which Paul had his part in doing.

Paul knew that his mission was to finish writing and completing the Word of God. That was went on from Paul, by Mark, to Peter. Peter then added what he had, and later that was sent on to John and to the elder of which Timothy was one there in Ephesus and whoever remained of the apostles still living, where they finished and canonized the New Testament for us. *They preserved it, brethren!*

It wasn't the figment of the imagination of believers 400 years later under the auspices and guidance of pagan priests who professed Christ, which became the Catholic Church. God never entrusted that to them! They would never have been faithful in handling the Word of God. That's what this is all about here.

“...When you come, bring the chest that I left in Troas with Carpus, and the books—especially the parchments.... [he had more to write] ...Alexander the coppersmith did many evil things against me. May the Lord reward him according to his works. You also be on guard against him because he vehemently opposed our words. During my first defense, no one stood with me; instead, everyone deserted me. (*I pray* that God will not lay it to their charge.) But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully made, and all the Gentiles might hear *the Gospel*; and I was delivered out of *the* lion's mouth. And the Lord will deliver me from every wicked deed and will preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom; to Whom *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 13-18).

Some powerful instructions for Timothy, which is preserved for all elders for all time! So that we're all on the same foundation of Christ! So that we can serve the brethren and the brethren can

serve others. Paul always included the brethren with him. He said ‘we’ and ‘the brethren with me.’

What God wants us to do is do the things the way that He has instructed in His Word. Every other way has failed. He does not want us to bring the means, structure and devices of the world into the Church of God. The Church of God is a *spiritual organism*. God is perfecting the character of the saints, and that character involves:

- responsibility
- accountability
- diligence to apply yourself

All of us together. What we do in *walking in faith* is:

- we don’t know what God wants
- we don’t how long we have to the end
- we have a great deal more time
- we may have very little time

But whatever the time is, we need to be busy doing what God wants us to do.

- He will help us!
- He will bless us!
- He will inspire us!

If we are prepared for every good work that He wants us to do—whatever it is—He’ll open the door and make it known. When He does, we’ll walk through it. God has closed the door of radio and television, because you can’t really preach the Truth on that any longer; it’s all censored. You either preach a watered-down gospel or you don’t buy time.

We do have the Internet, with websites; that gives us an opportunity. How far that will go, I don’t know, it depends on what we do. But we want to keep the website vibrant, alive, teaching and preaching the Word of God. We have links to certain things, but we don’t want to get it bogged down in things pertaining to other people or churches which have yet to led to the understanding that God has led us. That’s not trying to say that we’re exclusivists, because we’re not.

That is saying that we need to really preach the Word of God the way that the Word of God has led us to do, and not be encumbered with the burdened of other people who do not understand it the way God has given us the understanding.

There will be people out there—and pray about it because it’s a big wide world—that God will inspire the ones that He wants to come and visit the website. We don’t know who visits the websites—we don’t know if they’re friend or foe—but we are getting responses.

Matthew 22:1: “And again Jesus answered and spoke to them in parables, saying, ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man *who was* a king, who made a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast; but they refused to come.... [the Jews] ...Afterwards he sent out other servants, saying ‘Say to those who have been invited, ‘Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and the fatted beasts are killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding feast.’” But they paid no attention and went away, one to his farm, and another to his business. And the rest, after seizing his servants, insulted and killed *them*. Now, when the king heard *it*, he became angry; and he sent his armies *and* destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city” (vs 1-7). That happened to Jerusalem.

Verse 8: “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast indeed is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy; therefore, go into the well-traveled highways, and invite all that you find to the wedding feast’” (vs 8-9). Go out and do it.

God will have to open the door and make it possible; if that’s what God wants us to do, He’ll open the door.

Verse 10: “And after going out into the highways, those servants brought together everyone that they found, both good and evil; and the wedding feast was filled with guests.” For the sake of the parable, obviously, this cannot be complete in the resurrection. Someone who does not have on the wedding garments, or have the garments of the guests, is not going to be resurrected to be in the first resurrection.

This parable is designed to give the understanding that there will be some who will not complete it. So therefore, the rest of this parable cannot be applied directly, but the literal sense of its meaning, for not being properly clothed, is true.

Verse 11: “And when the king came in to see the guests, *he* noticed a man there who was not dressed in proper attire for the wedding feast...” The righteousness of the saints. What did God say of the Laodiceans? *You’re naked! You don’t have any clothes on!*

Verse 12: “And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you enter here without a garment *fit* for the wedding feast?’ But he had no answer. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind his hands and feet, *and* take him away, and cast *him* into the outer darkness.’....” (vs 12-13). This part of the parable is applied at the second resurrection of the incorrigible wicked. You are incorrigible and wicked if you turn down the call of God and do not prepare yourself.

“...There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few *are* chosen” (vs 13-14).

You see, I think the day is coming that God is going to say, ‘You go into the highways and byways and the hedgerows, and you preach the Gospel and tell them that God is calling you to eternal life. God is calling you to repent of your sins and to turn to Him and get out of your misery and wretchedness that you’re in, in this world.’

- It’s not going to be to the rich!
- It’s not going to be to the elite!
- ***It’s going to be to the lowest that are in society, because they are miserable and brokenhearted!***

*God will save them, but we have to prepared for whenever that day comes! **May God fill you with His Spirit, with His love, and with His dedication and purpose!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Corinthians 12:11-21
- 2) 1 Corinthians 13:1-11
- 3) 2 Timothy 1:1-18
- 4) 2 Timothy 2:1-19, 21-26
- 5) 2 Timothy 3:10-11
- 6) Psalm 34:4-8, 14-19
- 7) 2 Timothy 3:12-17
- 8) 2 Timothy 4:1-18
- 9) Matthew 22:1-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 20
- 2 Corinthians 11
- Matthew 13
- 1-Timothy 4:14
- 2 Timothy 2:20

Also referenced: Books:

- *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight
- *Lord, What Should I Do?* by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo
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