

# PREACHING THROUGH I AND II THESSALONIANS, I AND II TIMOTHY, TITUS AND PHILEMON

## THESSALONIANS

Paul established the church at Thessalonica, in Macedonia, while on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9). When he was at Corinth, later on the same journey (Acts 18:1-17), he learned that some of the Thessalonian Christians had already laid down their lives for the faith, and their friends were much concerned over them. He wrote these letters to establish them in the faith and to comfort them concerning their departed faithful friends. The letters were among the earliest New Testament books to be written—about A.D. 52.

## TIMOTHY

For the character and work of Timothy, see Acts 16:1-4; I Thessalonians 3:1-8; Philippians 2:19-22; Acts 18:5; 19:22; Hebrews 13:23; II Corinthians 1:19. Paul had completed his major missionary labors when he wrote these epistles to Timothy at Ephesus, giving instruction and exhortation concerning the conduct of the work. Some time elapsed between the writing of the two letters. The second is Paul's last preserved writing, from prison in Rome about A.D. 66.

## TITUS

For the character and work of Titus, see Galatians 2:1-3; II Corinthians 2:13; 7:6-14; 8:6-23; II Timothy 4:10. He was given charge of the work of the church in the Island of Crete, as Timothy was in Ephesus, but his problems were different. The chief trouble at Ephesus arose from false teachers; in Crete it came from the immorality of the heathen world.

## PHILEMON

Philemon was a wealthy Christian in Colosse, a city near Ephesus. His slave Onesimus escaped to Rome, and was there converted by Paul, who sent him back to Philemon with this beautiful letter, written about A.D. 64.

## PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE

You are cordially invited to share in this fellowship of reading God's Word, and to share in the worship as these messages are presented.

### Sermon Outlines Provided:

- "Your Election of God" (I Thess. 1:2-10)
- "On Wholesome Diet" (I Tim. 1:1-7)
- "Add Godliness" (I Tim. 6:3-16)
- "Workers Together for God" (II Tim. 1:1-8, 13, 14)
- "He Abideth Faithful" (II Tim. 2:13)
- "Where Have All the Craftsmen Gone?" (II Tim. 2:7)
- "The Book We Need" (II Tim. 3:10-17)
- "Ready to Every Good Work" (Titus 3:1-9)

### Other Sermon Topics Suggested:

- "The Word of God" (I Thess. 2:13-16)
- "On Playing Fair With the Family" (I Thess. 4:1-8)
- "Concerning Them That Sleep" (I Thess. 4:13-5:11)
- "His Own Bread" (II Thess. 3:6-12)
- "Of Shepherds and Servants" (I Tim. 3:3-13)
- "Train the Young Women" (Tit. 2:1-8)
- "Our Brother" (Philemon)

## QUESTIONS OVER I AND II THESSALONIANS, I AND II TIMOTHY, TITUS AND PHILEMON

1. Paul says he is constantly remembering what three things about the Thessalonians? (I Thess. 1:3)
2. After the return of Christ vengeance will be given to what two groups? (II Thess. 1:8)
3. What does Paul say is the goal of his instruction or charge? (I Timothy 1:5)
4. What did the false teachers Paul warns against in I Timothy 4 say about marriage? (4:1-3)
5. Name Timothy's mother and grandmother. (II Tim. 1:5)
6. Though Paul was imprisoned he said what was not imprisoned or bound? (2:9)
7. What does Paul call Titus? (Tit. 1:4)
8. Who was the runaway slave Paul asks Philemon to receive back? (Philemon 10-12)

PREACHING THROUGH I THESSALONIANS

YOUR ELECTION OF GOD

(I Thessalonians 1:2-10)

INTRODUCTION — In addressing this subject one has to be comforted by the exhortation to “tackle the great texts, even if they throw you.” What is election, and how can one know it?

I. WHAT IS ELECTION?

*Ekloge*, choice, selection. (Of Paul, Acts 9:15.)

- A. This in accord with eternal purpose of God. What?
  1. See Ephesians 1:9-12. Introduces fore-ordination (predestination). See Romans 8:28-30.
  2. “The Lord is . . . longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:9).
  3. “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:3, 4).
- B. Thus He has ordained—set in order—before hand.
  1. It is not a matter of force, but of plan.
  2. As the ordination of church officers, it is a plan, sometimes broken by the free choice and action of the one ordained.
- C. The selection—the act of choosing—is the act of God. As with Jesus’ choice of the twelve:

“Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit . . .” (John 15:16, ASV).

“Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:14).
- D. The will to accede or not to accede to the choice is still with man. Compare the rich young ruler—the man also who would go and bury his father. “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden” (Matt. 11:28).
- E. The old definition of election is still good: (You announce yourself a candidate; God votes for you, Satan votes against you; you vote, and the way you vote you are elected.) Many are not elected because they decline the nomination!

II. HOW CAN ONE KNOW THAT HE, OR ANY OTHER, IS ELECTED?

—By their fruits ye shall know them.

- A. Our gospel came unto you not in word only, but in power . . .

“When ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe” (I Thess. 2:13, ASV).

- B. You became imitators of us, and of the Lord—so that you became examples to all that believe.

Be ye imitators (not followers) of me, even as I also am of Christ (I Cor. 11:1).

The fruit of the Spirit is manifest (Gal. 5:22, 23).

- C. You turned from idols, to serve a living and true God.

“The dearest idol I have known, whate’er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from thy throne,  
and worship only Thee.”

- D. From you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord—Macedonia and Achaia and beyond.

CONCLUSION —

“Give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (II Pet. 1:10).

PREACHING THROUGH I TIMOTHY  
ON WHOLESOME DIET  
(I Timothy 1:1-7)

INTRODUCTION —

- A. The unpopular position of doctrinal preaching.
  - 1. The worst slur one could make on a preacher, that he preached nothing but doctrine.
  - 2. I am announcing the subject boldly.  
Like taking castor oil without orange juice.
- B. Doctrine is teaching, and soundness is wholesomeness.
  - 1. Some have denied the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals because they and no others of his letters refer to “sound doctrine.”
    - a. But Paul was at this time in prison, attended by Luke, his physician.
    - b. The medical term under the circumstances is natural—wholesome spiritual diet (Heb. 6:1; I Pet. 2:1, 2).

I. ON GETTING ENOUGH.

- A. It is unfortunate that our spiritual appetite dies with starvation and does not demand food as our stomachs do when they are denied.
- B. But this is not the center of our thought.

II. WARNING AGAINST POISONED FOODS.

- A. Parallel.
  - 1. We have pure food laws to protect us against getting poisoned or inferior foods for our bodies.
  - 2. The labels must tell the exact truth about what is inside.
  - 3. Perhaps some would not know the difference if teachings were so labeled.
- B. Genealogies—socially significant, but spiritually unprofitable.
  - 1. To Paul they were the carry-overs from Judaism.
    - a. Introducing to religion the things that were of no importance.
    - b. Disturbing the mind of the people with guesses.

2. So occupied are they who base much teaching on the uncertain prophecies.
    - a. If it is even true, for instance, that Revelation refers largely to the last things, still it is subject to many and varied interpretations, none of which can be authoritative.
    - b. Such things are those on which division is based. Beware the young preachers of Ezekiel and Revelation.
    - c. Beware the Russellites with their queer mixture of dogged literalism and wild allegorizing, all according to their own fancy. Entertain them if you must, but expect only fruitless questionings to arise from them.
- C. Myths—Fascinating, but misleading.
1. These came in the pagan element of the church at Ephesus.
    - a. The knowledge falsely so called.
    - b. The vagaries and dogmatics of the pagan mind.
  2. Of such is the "science" that makes the present day superstitions.
    - a. "A true scientist keeps his mouth shut until he knows what he is talking about."
      - i. Yet one hears the dogmatic assertion that the Peking man is our ancestor of a million years ago.
      - ii. The basis of all science is hypothesis.
    - b. Science, dogmatic as it is, is ever changing, yet would claim in its more brazen state, allegiance away from the stable Gospel. Illustration—The young sailor, who, off the course, wanted another star to follow: "We have passed this one up."
    - c. Beware of the scientific teachers, who want to be teachers of the law, yet do not know what they are talking about.
      - i. If they knew science, they would know and admit its limits, as do really eminent scientists such as Jeans, Millikan, etc.
      - ii. They know only enough to cast doubts.

III. THE REAL FOOD.

A. "If any man teacheth otherwise, and consenteth not to wholesome words, *even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words" (I Tim. 6:3, 4).

B. Milk—I Peter 2:2.

1. Faith in Christ, repentance toward Christ, confession of Christ, baptism into Christ, and living in Christ.
2. Milk is foundation food—it is completely essential doctrine.
3. When one lingers too long on this it becomes (Heb. 6:1) not doctrine but dogmatics and systematics.

C. Meat—II Pet. 1:5-7.

Virtue — manliness, beauty, worth.

Knowledge — there is no limit to the knowledge which is in God.

Temperance (self-control) in all things — it may mean abstinence.

Patience — that which is learned through enduring and staying kind.

"Let patience have her perfect work" (James 1:4).

Godliness — God-likeness, and to that there is no limit.

Brotherly kindness — It is without limits inside the world.

Love — "for God is love" (I John 4:8).

When we have achieved that in perfection, we have achieved God.

CONCLUSION — Where do you find wholesome diet?

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

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ADD GODLINESS

(I Timothy 6:3-16)

INTRODUCTION — The ugly phrase, “pious hypocrite,” has put piety or godliness under a shadow, even among its friends.

A. There are two bases for it:

1. One without knowledge becomes a pious fanatic.
2. One without temperance becomes a pious fraud.

B. In II Peter 1:6 this attribute is put late in the list, for a purpose, but it is given great significance.

I. PIETY ESTABLISHED ON SOUND DOCTRINE.

A. Sound doctrine is “the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness.”

B. “One cannot have the Holy Spirit without knowing and following the word of God.”

C. If it is not founded in Christ it becomes a display of oneself—“puffed up, knowing nothing.”

D. If it is based on fragmentary knowledge it becomes “a striving about words to no profit.”

II. PIETY ESTABLISHED ON SOUND PRACTICE.

A. Basic is a proper attitude toward the Creator and the created.

Godliness is fundamentally an attitude toward God, impossible to the materialist. *Read again verses 6-11.*

(Illustration—Two families following a flood; one “lost everything”; the other “saved everything”; though their experience identical, in destruction of property, survival of people.)

B. True piety impossible with any willful sin.

III. EMPHASIS ON PRACTICAL MORALITY HAS GONE TOO FAR.

A. The fashion of John Hay, the poet (which see).

B. In discussion of “week-day religious education,” Dr. P. feared that the teaching would “degenerate to doctrine”—that it be kept strictly ethical.



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C. In Church:

(Original hymn)

Lines 2 & 3 as edited:

From all that dwell below  
the skies,

Let the Creator's praise arise; Let faith and hope and love

Let the Redeemer's name be arise

sung

Let beauty, truth, and good

Through every land, by every sung  
tongue.

D. Thus to be ashamed of the deep piety that is at the base of all true good is like a child ashamed of his parents.

IV. NOTE THE ENTHUSIASTIC PIETY OF THE APOSTLE.

A. On God's honor roll are those soldiers of the Cross who have dared to march with His banner flung out for all to see, not caring about the ugly taunt of "hypocrite."

B. It is God-consciousness in practice—awareness of God; frank and honest humility before Him; willingness to praise Him before men.

C. Deep and daring piety characterizes great men.

1. Lincoln frankly admits his dependence on God.

2. The Campbells' conversation and letters steeped in expressed faith.

D. Surprising evidences of piety.

1. "God bless you," says our physician, genuinely.

2. Editor Jack Blanton, Monroe Co., Mo., in *Appeal*—headlines "Rain, Rain, Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow!" "Lord, We Confess Our Sin, We Ask Forgiveness, We Pray for Rain."

CONCLUSION —

Let our lives be rooted and grounded in faith; let them grow the strong trunk of manly virtue; let their branches be bolstered with knowledge; let them grow through winter storm and summer sun with steadfast patience; but let them never forget to lift high their boughs in prayerful honest piety, drinking the warmth of God's love and the sweet rain of His mercy.

## WORKERS TOGETHER FOR GOD (Teamwork)

(II Timothy 1:1-8, 13, 14)

INTRODUCTION — Our restoration of New Testament Christianity needs to recognize its rural beginnings.

- A. The elements of God's kingdom are not identical pieces stamped out in a factory; they are living growths, springing from good seed and producing good fruit.
- B. Recognition, then, is not like identifying the make of an auto off an assembly line; it is like finding a walnut tree in a winter woods, by walnuts on ground.
- C. Consider our stereotyped reference to "Timothies" (with the impersonal *ies* plural), as products of a Timothy factory, home church and ministry. The New Testament Timothy was not sent into ministry, but *brought*, apprenticed, companioned with, interned, trained, loved, and directed by Paul. Thus, if I am a "Timothy," it is not so much of the Salem church, where I grew up, as it is of P.H. Welshimer at First Church, Canton, where I served as assistant, and learned *teamwork*. — Christian friends and partners, working together. Let's restore teamwork, a la Paul and Timothy (more Biblical *Timothys*) as seen here, and in Acts.

### I. THIS TEAMWORK WAS FIRST A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONS.

- A. They knew each other from long and close association.
  - 1. Some twelve years of "father-son" service between first joining and the writing of the letter (Phil. 2:19-22).
  - 2. Acquaintance with the family for two generations back.
  - 3. (By comparison, P.H. Welshimer wanted dinner-table acquaintance with me and Mrs. Hayden.)
- B. They maintained affectionate regard for each other.
  - 1. Timothy was Paul's "beloved son."
  - 2. Paul was subject of Timothy's tears (perhaps at stoning—Acts 14:19, 20).

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3. Each was the object of the other's fervent prayers.
4. This relationship cannot be forced; it can be deserved and encouraged.

(One member of the team does not entertain fault-finding against the other.)

- C. Their personal relationship was centered in Christ, in whom they were brothers before they were partners.

### II. THIS TEAMWORK WAS THE OPERATION OF PERSONS, NOT MACHINES, IN MINISTRY.

- A. It centered in tasks and functions, rather than positions.  
There was work to be done, and each did the part for which he was then fitted and able.

- B. It defies any mechanical and absolute job descriptions.
  1. The fitting of pegs and holes, square and round, has limited value.
  2. The Christian ministry is a vast area, growing and changing.
  3. The Christian minister is his own person, not like any other.
  4. Teamwork is the operation of two or more individual, growing persons, in a field that is itself growing and changing.

- C. It demands the recognition of "good faults" — qualities good in one situation, but less desirable in another.
  1. Paul perhaps like P. H. Welshimer, a "steam engine in breeches" — watch the safety valve!  
— Comes out in relation to Barnabas. Paul took over; conflicted over Mark.
  2. Timothy's self-forgetful tenderness (perhaps delicate health — I Tim. 5:23) became a lack of needed energetic aggressiveness when he was in charge.
  3. So the perfectionist worker may be a very poor trainer of others.

### III. THIS TEAMWORK WAS GEARED TO ONE ESSENTIAL TASK TOGETHER.

- A. Doctrinal — "Retain the standard of sound words" (v. 13).

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“Guard the treasure entrusted” (v. 14).

“Endure hardship as a soldier of Christ.”

- B. Moral — as seen in the admonitions related to Ephesus’ needs.
- C. Mutual — each supplying the other’s need.
  1. Paul (and the presbyters) had supplied some special gift for Timothy’s use in the ministry.
    - Consider what you have from teachers, mentors, parents.
  2. Timothy supplied an element of encouragement without which Paul was less than wholly effective (Acts 18:5).
    - “Every man is my superior at some point.”

CONCLUSION — Teamwork is still found.

“He is not only a good worker himself. His influence (presence) makes everyone around him a better worker because he is there.”

The coaches’ score sheet includes not only goals, but *assissts*.

PREACHING THROUGH II TIMOTHY  
HE ABIDETH FAITHFUL  
(II Timothy 2:13, ASV)

INTRODUCTION — From present situation.

- A. Some lose faith in time of difficulty.
  - 1. Rebellious at personal affliction.
  - 2. Swamped in national calamity.
  - 3. Blame everything and everybody but themselves.
- B. Contrast Paul:
  - 1. Charitably forgetful of others' failures.
  - 2. Everlastingly sure of God.
  - 3. Concerned lest he himself prove faithless.

Probably no one ever suffered more from faithlessness of others than Paul.

I. HIS OWN PEOPLE THE JEWS, PERSECUTED HIM.

- A. Hounded from city to city.
  - 1. Stoned at Lystra.
  - 2. Jailed and beaten at Philippi.
  - 3. Driven from Thessalonica.
  - 4. Opposed at Corinth.
  - 5. His work destroyed in Galatia.
- B. Betrayed in the Temple while doing the Jews a favor.
- C. Still he prayed for them—(Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1).

II. THE CHURCHES FAILED HIM.

- A. Corinth quarreled and divided.
- B. Galatians proved untrue.
- C. Caesarea sent no visitor in two years of imprisonment there.
- D. "Some even preach Christ of envy and strife" (Phil. 1:15).

III. CIVIL GOVERNMENTS FAILED HIM.

- A. Beaten contrary to law in Philippi.
- B. Held without charges for two years in Caesarea.
- C. Felix waits for a bribe.
- D. Falsely condemned by Caesar in Rome.

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### IV. FRIENDS TURNED THEIR BACKS ON HIM.

- A. "All that are in Asia are turned away" (II Tim. 1:15).
- B. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (II Tim. 4:10).
- C. "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me" (II Tim. 4:16).

### V. HE FELT HE COULD TRUST TIMOTHY.

- 1. "I have no other one likeminded, who cares for your souls, for you know the proof of him, how that as a son with a father he has labored with me in the gospel" (Phil. 2:20-22).
- 2. "Yet, Timothy, though you yourself and I myself prove faithless . . ."

### VI. GOD ABIDETH FAITHFUL.

"Faith, beaten back to its last stand, rallies there and turns the tide, then ventures forth upon those who bear the image of God."

- A. "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent; hath he said, and shall He not do it: or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).
  - 1. Promises to Israel had all been fulfilled, even after much time.
  - 2. We see but for a day and are impatient with delay.
- B. Paul's faith had been tested.
  - 1. "I besought the Lord three times . . . My grace is sufficient for thee" (II Cor. 12:8, 9).
  - 2. "I know whom I have believed" (II Tim. 1:12).
  - 3. "The Lord stood by me" (II Tim. 4:17).

### CONCLUSION —

- A. "If we die with him, we shall also live with him,  
[remembering Stephen]  
If we endure, we shall also reign with him:  
["Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give unto thee the crown of life" Rev. 2:10.]  
If we shall deny Him, He also will deny us.
- B. He is faithful that promised.

## WHERE HAVE ALL THE CRAFTSMEN GONE?

(II Timothy 2:15—chapter as basis)

INTRODUCTION — Is workmanship a lost quality?

- A. Is it true as often reported that job-holders in our time are: — Lazy, incompetent, unconcerned, unskilled, and unwilling to learn?
- B. Consider Paul's exhortation to Timothy.
  - 1. Philippians 2:19-22 describes Timothy as selflessly dedicated and experienced in Christian service.
  - 2. Yet Paul's second epistle to Timothy is full of vigorous admonitions to more aggressive and fruitful workmanship (II Tim. 1:6-8 and chapter 2).
- C. No harsh criticism need be found, then, in our application of Paul's words: "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (2:15, ASV).

### I. DILIGENT WORKMEN NEEDED.

- A. This seems to be the key to Timothy's problem.
  - 1. His gentle disposition and perhaps delicate health (I Tim. 5:23) rendered him less persistent and aggressive than Paul wished.
  - 2. The same quality that rendered him easy to work with, seems to have rendered him also easily discouraged and dissuaded.
  - 3. The epistle urged stirring up and using his talents to the full.
- B. This is the key to the workman-examples in 2:3-6; all speak of single-minded application to the task at hand:
  - 1. The soldier endures the rigors of service and avoids competing involvements.
  - 2. The contestant submits to the discipline of the rules. (Remember the racer who came in first but was disqualified for infraction?)
  - 3. The fruit grower invests enormous labor in bringing his crop to harvest.

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- C. Beware the temptation to consider that hard work is not to be expected in the field of religion!  
—It is the laborer, not simply the position occupier, who is worthy of his hire.

### II. GOD-CONSCIOUS WORKMEN NEEDED.

- A. If one would succeed in any enterprise, he must keep his purposes clear.
- B. The Christian's purpose is like that of his Lord: "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30).
- C. If God approves, we can bear the disapproval of all else; if God disapproves, other approvals mean nothing.
- D. "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him" (II Cor. 5:9).
- E. Our aim must be to adjust our ways so as to please God; we cannot expect Him to adjust His judgment so as to be pleased with what we have chosen to do.

### III. WORK-PROUD WORKMEN NEEDED.

- A. One should find gratification in worthy accomplishment.
  - 1. Do you like to be around when the inspector looks your job over?
  - 2. Then take pride in what is designed to please God, for He is the final judge.
- B. Did Timothy have a problem with timidity?  
"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner" (II Tim. 1:8).
- C. Confidence before God may rightly grow into a "holy boldness" before men.

### IV. SKILLED WORKMEN NEEDED.

- A. "Handling aright" or "rightly dividing" (AV) was literally "cutting straight," and by usage "dealing correctly" with the matter at hand.
  - 1. It suggests the plowman or the user of a saw cutting straight and square.
  - 2. It agrees with Proverbs 4:27: "Turn not to the right hand nor to the left."



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- B. The straight course in Scripture teaching is urged: Don't wander off.
  - 1. "Strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers" (v. 14).
  - 2. "Shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness" (v. 16).
- C. ("Happy is he born and taught Who serveth not another's will; Whose armor is his honest thought, And simple truth his utmost skill.")
- D. The basic task is to convey accurately to others the Word that has been received (v. 2).

### V. TRUTH-TAUGHT WORKMEN NEEDED.

- A. One cannot be God's workman without a commitment to God's Word.
- B. That is the Bible, to be known, loved, lived, and taught. . . "Handling aright" demands awareness of the way in which any book or passage relates to the whole.
- D. It is not enough to assert, "The Bible says." Each passage must be weighed by:
  - 1. Who said it?
  - 2. To whom was it said?
  - 3. When and under what circumstances was it said?
- E. The Word of truth demands that Bible words be used with Bible meanings. Examples:
  - 1. Scripturally the *heart* is the center of thinking, rather than of emotion.
  - 2. *Conversation* (AV) is the manner of life; not just talk.

CONCLUSION — Where have the craftsmen gone? Ask rather, "Who is a craftsman?" and "Who is to judge my workmanship?"

(The Boy Scouts built bird houses and brought them to the troop meeting place. Tommy's wren box, solid and brown, looked dull and awkward among the brightly painted models around it. Some boys were embarrassed to have it in the display. But Tommy took it home and mounted it firmly on a tall pole, where it sheltered families of happily approving wrens for many years. Tommy's work was approved by the ultimate authority!)

By whom is your workmanship approved?

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THE BOOK WE NEED

(II Timothy 3:14-17, ASV)

INTRODUCTION — What can we do about the mess we're in?

- A. The third chapter of II Timothy reads somewhat like today's paper or TV news.
  - 1. Increasing wickedness in the "last days."
  - 2. Sufferings endured by the faithful.
  - 3. Warnings of persecutions to come.
- B. What shall Timothy do under the circumstances?
  - 1. He shall not waste time wailing and hand-wringing.
  - 2. "Abide thou in the things which thou hast learned."
  - 3. The Bible is what you need; make use of it!

I. SCRIPTURE IS TO BE KNOWN (v. 15)

- A. Timothy knew the Old Testament Scriptures.
  - 1. It involved rote learning of much material.
  - 2. His learning began very early, with Grandmother Lois and Mother Eunice (II Tim. 1:5).
    - a. The Psalms were probably their lullaby songs.
    - b. Scripture was taught and discussed at mealtimes, etc. (Deut. 6:4-9).
- B. We have many advantages toward knowing Scripture.
  - 1. The New Testament material is briefer and more interesting.
  - 2. Copies are readily available and convenient.
- C. Reverence for the Book is of little worth if the Book itself is not known.
  - 1. Some are like the housekeeper who will not allow anything to be placed on top of a Bible, but admits that she knows very little of its content.
  - 2. The content, not the container, is valuable.
- D. We could bewail the modern lack of knowledge of Scripture; but what shall we do about it?
  - 1. If you have not known the Bible from childhood, you can start learning it now!
  - 2. You can act so that another generation will not be so cheated. Teach now!

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### II. SCRIPTURE IS TO LEAD TO SALVATION IN CHRIST (v. 15).

- A. It is able to make wise.
  - 1. It provides *information* about God and His will; it also directs to the *useful employment* of that information.
  - 2. It separates between the wise and the fool (Prov. 1:7).
- B. This wisdom directs toward Christ and salvation.
  - 1. Old Testament Scriptures foreshadowed the Messiah.
  - 2. Jesus and the apostles used the Old Testament in setting forth the Gospel.
  - 3. Hearers examined the Old Testament to check on their preaching (Acts 17:11).
- C. Salvation was not through the law, but through faith in its Messiah.
  - 1. The way of salvation is much easier for us to trace in the New Testament.
  - 2. John 20:30, 31 identifies this salvation as the purpose of the writing.

### III. SCRIPTURE IS TO DISCIPLINE ONE FOR GROWTH IN CHRIST (v. 16).

- A. The "profitable" writings are those inspired of God.
  - 1. Some writing is inspired of the devil and is most destructive.
  - 2. Unbridled "freedom of the press" can work harm.
- B. The useful discipline appears in four elements.
  - 1. Teaching or doctrine, the subject matter for study.
    - In the Old Testament it was the Law; for us it is basically the Gospel.
  - 2. Reproof, showing the error of one's way.
    - a. Through the law is the knowledge of sin.
    - b. Seeing perfection in Christ, Simon Peter said, "I am a sinful man."
  - 3. Correction, showing the right way to the erring.
    - a. Timothy saw the right way according to the prophets: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).

## PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE

- b. To us, Christ provides correction by His teaching and example, in New Testament.
- 4. Instruction in righteousness—the drill that makes the right way a habit.
  - a. Parents were to give daily instruction (Deut. 6:4-9).
  - b. The New Testament reiterates the Gospel facts and commands (to love, etc.) “To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe” (Phil. 3:1).

### IV. SCRIPTURE IS TO EQUIP ONE FOR GOOD WORKS (v. 17).

- A. The man of God is to grow to maturity in Christ (Eph. 4:13-16).

(“The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts.” —George Müller)
- B. For that maturity, Scripture offers the needed and balanced diet.

(A noted educator once said that a knowledge of the Bible, without college training, was a better education for life than college training without a knowledge of the Bible.)
- C. The purpose of Christian maturity is active service to God and man—“good works.”
  - 1. Matthew 25:31-46 relates Jesus’ demand for acts of love to the needy.
  - 2. Romans 12 spells out Paul’s exhortation to good works built on sound doctrine.
  - 3. Book of James warns against a dead, inactive, faith.

**CONCLUSION** — The Bible is designed for these things: (1) to be known, (2) to lead to salvation in Christ, (3) to provide discipline for growth, and (4) to equip one for good works.

The Bible is God’s provided instrument for our blessing. It accomplishes His purpose only if we use it!

PREACHING THROUGH TITUS  
READY TO EVERY GOOD WORK  
(Titus 3:1-9)

INTRODUCTION — “Good works” to Titus.

1. We are impressed by repeated emphasis on “good works.” Read Titus 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14.
2. Strange from the same pen that wrote, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8, 9).
3. Sound living and sound teaching are all part of the same pattern, here given.
4. Special need to write of good works to Crete: see Titus 1:12.

We shall see that the advice given for Crete in Nero’s time is good for us.

I. “THE THINGS WHICH BECOME SOUND DOCTRINE.”

- A. The pattern for aged men. Of one such it was said “His presence a benediction.”
- B. Aged women—Not china figures for a picture, but “teachers of good things.”
- C. The younger women taught by the older.  
—Centering at home, and loving it.
- D. Younger men—the insistence on soberness is significant for every age. —Where that is necessary there is danger.
- E. Servants—a special need.  
Perhaps we need also here: “Ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Eph. 6:9).
- F. Citizens.  
Obedience to authority.  
Peaceableness, without groveling.

This quality of life doesn’t come by wishing for it, nor talking about it; then or now.

II. *WE OURSELVES ARE A CHANGED PEOPLE.*

(Here a before-and-after picture).

A. Reasons for wickedness.

1. Foolish—"Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee" (Luke 12:20).

Absorption with things seen; no appreciation of eternal values.

2. Disobedient— Either not knowing, or deliberately rejecting, God's will.

3. Deceived—"Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).

B. Nature of wickedness.

1. Serving divers lusts and pleasures.

Note "serving"; pleasure seekers become slaves.

2. Living in envy, hateful, and hating one another.

The self-seeker, confronting other self-seekers, is in position of the terrier that ruled the block till an airedale came.

III. "BUT *AFTER* THE KINDNESS OF GOD'S LOVE APPEARED." (What worked the change?)

A. God's love in Christ.

1. Reaches the heart that won't bend to the bludgeon.
2. If He can love us, we can love one another.

B. According to His mercy He saved us.

Not that we are saved unwilling, any more than a drowning man is saved against his will.

C. By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

"Except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5).

CONCLUSION — A great vessel at the shipyard has been years in the building. Now it is ready— fitted, commissioned, manned. Let it sail! That's what it was built for! Christian, what were you made ready for? Good works!