

2 Timothy

Book Study

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The unconventional punctuation styles you will see are related to the way these studies were originally intended for the e-mail audience, using plain text to keep file sizes smaller for bulk mailing; creatively 'formatting' with punctuation, for various kinds of emphases, in the absence of formatting the actual type. You may find occasional misspellings, and the more rare cases of a Scripture reference going to a wrong passage; those will be 'typos', not intentional. With this type of POD (Print On Demand) publishing, it seems simplest, and the most prudent use of time, to not completely go through and revamp everything, but to just leave things as they are. Please accept this book, warts and all; but rather, please pay attention to, and receive God's Truth presented herein.

2 Timothy

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Introduction

2Timothy is one of the NT's two unique 'personal' epistles; the other being Philemon. True, 1Timothy is addressed -to- "Timothy", but is also a 'general' epistle regarding how things are done in the church congregation. Yes, 1Timothy speaks of his youthfulness (4:12), and his personal medical needs exhorting the use of a little wine for his digestive concerns (5:23); as Paul also on occasion in many of his epistles gives personal examples about himself to give support and credence to what he is teaching. And while he does occasionally name the names of those who need a *swift* kick or shunning (Php4:2, 1Ti1:20, 2Ti2:17,4:14, etc); for the most part, Paul's epistles are written to the 'group'; and these personal things just mentioned could be understood and appropriated generically by anybody with similar issues. e.g. the individuals in Corinth with sexual misconduct are not named, but the exhortations are for -any- similar situations. (1Co5:9-13)

This epistle also does not necessarily 'follow' the 1st epistle like some others do. Paul writes to Corinth a second time because they have not fully faced and corrected their problems of carnality, saying things like "if I come again I will not spare" (2Co13:2) On the other hand, he follows-up to the Thessalonians commending them on how their faith has been growing. (2Th1:3) Peter, an apostle to the Jews (Ga2:9) but who also first opened the door of the Gospel to Gentiles (Ac10-11), in writing two epistles writes to those different audiences: first to the "sojourners of the dispersion" (Jews) (1Pet1:1), and next "to those who have obtained like precious faith with us" (Gentiles) (2Pet2:1)

But this epistle is unique for two reasons: 1) Timothy seems to have become despondent and seems to have pulled back from the ministry, and needs some loving encouragement to buck-up, chin-up and get-going again, and 2) This is likely the 'last' epistle Paul writes prior to his martyrdom, and contains some 'final' words, both to Timothy, his spiritual 'son', and about his own spiritual state in readiness to meet the Lord...of all the people Paul could be writing those things to, he writes them to Timothy. Timothy must have been 'special'.

Timothy first joins in ministry during Paul's 2nd missionary journey (Ac16:1) and accompanies Paul to many places in Asia Minor. That begins somewhere in the mid 50s AD. Most sources seem to think that 1 & 2 Timothy are separated by only a couple of years in the mid-60s. However, the fact that we don't know exact dates becomes quite clear when the same dictionary (Easton's) lists Paul's death at 66AD, but also speculates that 1Timothy was written around 66-67AD. And if 2Timothy came two years later...well, I really don't think Paul was writing to Timothy 'after' his own death. Scofield places the two at 64 & 67, respectively. For our purposes, we can understand they were somewhere in the 60s, and Paul was martyred before Israel's destruction in 70AD. Otherwise, we'll leave

the speculations of those exactitudes to others who have nothing better to do with their time and intellect.

During some of Paul's journeys he has Timothy stay at Ephesus to exhort the Believers away from false doctrines. (1Tim1:3-4) Ephesus also seems to have become a kind of 'hub' of church activity, as that is from where Paul summons all the elders to visit with them during his last return trip to Jerusalem, before his imprisonment. (Ac20:17) According to Easton's dictionary, 'tradition' says that Timothy settled at Ephesus after Paul's martyrdom.

What do we know about Ephesus? Paganistically it was also the -hub- for the worship of Artemis. (Ac19) It is the very first church mentioned in Revelation: which was praised for holding to sound doctrine and its emphasis to (what is today called) discernment. (Rev2) These good things for which Ephesus is praised, are they not the very things which Paul exhorts Timothy in both epistles: "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1Ti1:3); "give attention to..doctrine" (4:13); "hold fast the form of sound words" (2Ti1:13) Could it be that Ephesus' faithfulness to doctrine can be attributed, in large part, to Timothy; to his laying the foundation and basis for strong faith; as he was exhorted in these epistles by Paul?

Wherein did Ephesus lose its "first love"? (Rev2:4) Well, John was writing those things 30 years after these epistles. A lot can happen in that time. Was Timothy still around by then? Paul does exhort Timothy regarding the youthful flesh. But we will also see a 'hurting' young man. Perhaps a person of tender heart, and easily wounded? He does experience imprisonment, as the writer of Hebrews speaks of "our brother Timothy has been set free" (Heb13:23)

Many details we don't know. But what we need to know we can pick up on as we begin, into this epistle. And I suspect there is much that is written 'personally' to Timothy that many of us can receive for our own lives 'personally' (especially those who are in ministry), as well.

Stir up the Gift - (2Tim1:1-7)

"Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (vs6-7)

Paul begins this epistle as he does most of them, with greetings of "grace, mercy and peace". (vs2) He gives a little mini-capsule of the Gospel: "the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus" (vs1) He speaks of his own "pure conscience" in service to God (vs3a); something for which he was slapped across the face when he said it before the illegally-convened council of the sanhedrin. (Ac23:1-2) He speaks of how he prays regularly for Timothy. (vs3b)

And then gets 'personal': "...greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears..." (vs4) This is the context of the exhortation to "stir up the gift!"

What was the source of Timothy's tears? We are not told directly. But if we take the first couple of chapters as a whole, as we will plan to look at each point, one after the other, we see the exhortations: Hold fast (1:13), Be strong (2:1), Endure hardship (2:3), Remember (2:8), Be diligent (2:15), Shun..babblings (2:16), Flee youthful lusts (2:22), Avoid..strife (2:23). Are these not the kinds of things that are said to one who is wimping out, abandoning the fight, taking an easier road, getting caught away in philosophical arguments, lusting after the world and an easier life?

When a runner is growing weary and faint in the race, what do the coaches and fans yell to them: hey, go over and sit down for awhile and rest, let's go grab a burger, catch a movie and have some R-n-R? No! Not hardly! They are in a race. The yelling is of the nature of: C'mon, goooo! You can do it! Keep going! You have just a little bit more to go! You can make it! They fall down, and the yelling is: C'mon, get up! Get up! Get up! That's it! You can do it! And perhaps a supporter hands them a paper cup full of water, and gives them a swat on the bee-hind, with an energetic, "Go! Go! Goooo!!!"

However, when somebody is suffering spiritual or emotional setbacks, what is today's typical approach to such things? "Awe, there there! You poor thing. You -do- really have things rough, don't you. I can empathize with your plight. Yes, boo-hoo, those people -are- really mean and nasty! And they are torturing you, sooo. Come'ere...let me give you a big hug. Pat, pat. There, there."

At the mention of Timothy's "tears", what is Paul's immediate take-off comment? "...being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy..." (vs4)

Huh? What's the matter with you, Paul?! You really are some piece of work! (this was actually said to me recently) Don't you know any better? Don't you know how to -EMPATHIZE-??? Tim needs 'sympathy'... not this attitude of UN-CARING!!! He's crying, and you're joyful??? Sigh! (shaking the head in disbelief and disgust)

Well, yeah....if we stop at the man-made verse number designator, and don't see the sentence through... What is the 'rest' of what Paul is saying?

"...that I may be filled with joy, -WHEN- I call to remembrance the GENUINE FAITH that is in you..." (vs5)

Let's not forget how Timothy got immersed into the ministry. Since he came from a mixed marriage, so that the Jews will have nothing to criticize, Paul circumcises him. (Ac16:3) If you continue through that chapter, that's where Paul and Silas get beaten and thrown into prison, and from there Paul experiences other persecutions and stonings. That is the world of ministry to which Timothy is introduced. And somewhere along the line he, himself, ends up in prison and is "set free". (Heb13:23) On which side of his own imprisonment is this epistle?

The early missionaries were of a different sort than most people are today. Today, if merely a snide remark is made, those claiming to be "christian" wilt under the scrutiny and accusations of "hate speech" and being "judgmental", and they 'compromise' and cave in to the world's demands for "tolerance". Yes, I know...I did it for 20 years...to my shame! While I read this epistle many times during those years, I never really saw it applying to me. After all: I wasn't in "tears". I wasn't feeling downtrodden. Rather, I was doing pretty much OK....those called "christians" luuuuuved and praised my music ministry. And then, when the Lord did finally get my attention over 14 years ago, those who counseled me showed me how what I was suffering at the time was somebody -else's- fault.

However, in spite of their "there-there" approach, the Lord was getting my attention by other means, through His Word.

And this is what Paul does with Timothy, whatever the cause of his tears may have been; whether it was his own backsliding, or pressures from the enemy; or a bit of both. Yes, things are rough right now; but I'm so full of joy that you KNOW THE LORD. Back to basics: in spite of where you've been recently, remember where you came from; your grandmother was a Believer, as was your mother; and I know -YOU- ARE, TOO! When he addresses the "perilous times" of the "last days", he will have the same approach: Remember that, in spite of all the perversities of the apostasy, from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures. (3:1,15)

When things get all crazy, go back to basics! Go to the Root! When things get all confused with darts and arrows flying all directions, look to the "Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph6:17)

When dancers (and this is not a discussion of whether dance is right or wrong; also understanding that there's different 'kinds' of dance) perform and do spins I notice they do an 'orientation' move with their heads...the head moves and their eyes 'aim' at something or other stationary, and then their body spins around to join the head. If you are holding a bird (like a chicken), and move its body around, you will notice that it keeps its head fixed, for orientation; you can even turn its body clear around upside down, and it will attempt to maintain its head orientation. When a pilot gets disoriented in the fog, or some other conditions, they look at the instruments. When you lean a motorcycle around a fast curve, experienced riders keep their heads level with the ground/horizon, not the lean of the bike.

Yes...things have gotten out-of-hand, and there are tears. But the focus is not those tears. You are a True Believer! Hallelujah! Praise God! In that knowledge is JOY!

Therefore...I also want you to wipe away those tears and BE JOYFUL!!

Is that what vs6 says? That's what many in christendom teach. They say that no Christian should be sad or downtrodden. That to be anything less than ear-to-ear smile is sinful.

No!

THEREFORE... Because you are a True Believer... Therefore STIR UP THE GIFT of GOD which is in you. You've been given a gift. You've been given a charge. You've been given a duty. Don't be shirking.

Here's where that "reaching within" comes into play. This is not an exhortation unto Salvation. Salvation does not come -from- within, but is a "gift of God". (Eph2:8) But this reaching within is to "stir up" that which is already there. Like Paul says elsewhere about "discipline my body and bring it into subjection". (1Co9:27) It's like the boxer coming out of his corner, beating on his own face with his mitts, to 'toughen' himself for the bout. Tears are a property of this flesh and blood of corruption, and the enemy knows how to manipulate our circumstances to try to way-lay us. But we don't have the luxury of the pampering of "me time".

The gift has already been given: what are you doing with it?

A boxer cannot go into the ring "timid". It is the "cowardly" who have their place reserved in the "lake which burns with fire and brimstone" (Rev21:8) Timidity is not what God gives us.

But we have been given POWER, LOVE and a SOUND MIND. (vs7)

The Power comes from God's Word through the Holy Spirit. When the disciples prayed to God after being mistreated, they prayed for "boldness" to proclaim God's Word, and it says the place where they were was "shaken" and they were all "filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness" (Ac4:31)

And also, is not a Sound Mind the opposite of blubbering emotions.

This is how Paul begins to exhort Timothy to Get Back into the Fight. If the elder and shepherd is failing and stumbling, how can the sheep survive? Like God says to Jeremiah, "If you have run with footmen, and they wore you out, then how can you compete with horses? And if you feel secure in the land of peace, then how will you do in the swelling of the Jordan?" (Jer12:5)

The entire epistle is of this sort; and we'll hope to cover each item as we progress through the book, until the Lord comes, and see exactly, point-by-point, 'how' we stir up the gift.

Not ashamed, but partake - (2Tim1:8-12)

"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but partake in the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (vs8)

What does it mean to be "ashamed of" something or someone? The part of the dictionary definition that applies in this context is: "reluctance through fear of humiliation" In addition, when it comes to things of the Lord, this "humiliation" can also take on forms of fear of ridicule, harassment, intimidation...persecution.

When a young man has fallen in love, and has found his life mate; but he is yet in that emotional 'transitional' stage between being a youth and a man; he is still hanging out with his old college buddies and the group happens next to where the man's "love" is; how does he behave? Does he fully acknowledge his lady, or does he feel 'uncomfortable' to be with her, because of his buddies? If he shows her the intimacy of their new relationship, which by definition means that he is no longer fully a "buddy" with the guys, he is 'fearful' of the "razzing" they will give him; the old peer pressure. So he 'slights' his lady, in favor of maintaining his "buddy" status with the guys. Many of you who passed from youth to adulthood remember this. And your lady later got upset because you weren't showing her the attention she rightfully deserved as your new girlfriend/fiance/wife.

Similar things happen when such a "buddy" becomes a Christian, and becomes at odds with his old drinking carousing buddies. Not to mention that which comes from those calling themselves "christian", but are not. The old drinking buddies might come directly snarling their fangs. But the so-called "christians" will be more cat-like, cutely walking around meowing and rubbing up next to the feet, purring; or like snakes, slithering around, hissing their tongues. It's you (alone) against that 'group' of buddies. It's you (alone) against the "rich history" of the "church fathers", papal encyclicals, catholic councils, prestige of the seminary degrees and...mass-consensus.

The Christian loves the Lord, but all these different forces, ideologies and people come along, challenging the Believer's holiness (separation) from the "broad way" (Mt7:13); and they manipulate the Scriptures into saying that the Believer is unloving (Jn13:34-35) and lacking "unity" (Jn17) with them.

With whom is our friendship? If we feel the need to maintain "friendship with the world" do we forget that by such allegiance, we are at "enmity with God"? (Ja4:4) When all the various "buddies" find their own wives, and each couple goes their own direction, quite typically that old fraternity becomes forgotten, and is no more. If those buddies continue having their

"boys' nights out", or the wives continually are getting together with their old girlfriends; those are often the marriages that have problems.

For those who believe in marriage 'ceremonies', not yet convinced of their pagan origins, the vows speak of "for richer or poorer, for better or worse". In our marriage to Christ are there not aspects that are "worse"? Persecution and afflictions.

What did Jesus endure? "He is despised and rejected by men; a Man of pain, and knowing infirmity; a hiding of faces; being despised, we have esteemed Him not." (Is53:3) They taunted: "He saved others; He has no power to save Himself. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him." (Mt27:42)

Jesus said: "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn14:15) So, when we keep His commandments, and are ridiculed and condemned for doing so; we cower away in shame? Jesus also said: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and that of His Father, and of the holy angels." (Lk9:26)

When the apostles stood up to the sanhedrin and proclaimed, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Ac5:29) this boldness procured for them the notice that "they were with Jesus". (Ac4:13b)

Peter had been ashamed of Jesus and cowered away: I don't know the man...I don't know what you're talking about. (Mt26:69-74) This episode began with a little servant girl...you know, the aforementioned "kitten" coming and "purring". But later Peter learned to PARTAKE in the afflictions; and tradition says that when it came time for him to be crucified, he proclaimed his unworthiness to be crucified -as- Jesus had been, but that they should crucify him upside down.

Scripture says that Jesus "GAVE" His back to the smiters. (Is50:6) When one reads in Foxes "Book of Martyrs" one reads accounts of those who, when faced with the flames, willingly 'jumped' into the fire. Paul "rejoices" in his own persecutions, and speaks of "fill[ing] up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, on behalf of His body, which is the church," (Col1:24)

As such, Timothy is exhorted to "PARTAKE" in the afflictions. What does it mean to "partake"?

When one partakes in a meal, the various dishes are passed around and the person 'reaches' out to take hold of what they wish to eat, putting it on their own plate. They then put the fork, spoon or chopstix to the food, 'reaching' for the food, and putting it into their own mouth. Partaking is NOT "forcefeeding". One is not strapped down, squirming and struggling,

with several people there to pry the mouth open, and pour the substance in.

A very poor example, because it is so perverse; but it is like the show "Fear Factor", where the contestants are faced with the most grotesque and foul-smelling things, and they of their own free will put the stuff in their mouths and eat it. For them it is the hope of winning the prize.

For us, it is the "hope of Eternal Life". (Tit1:2)

In the case of afflictions, if a person is a True Believer, there is no choice in the matter. Afflictions -are- part of the territory. Jesus said, "In the world you have affliction" (Jn16:33) No ifs, ands or buts. That's just the way it is.

But are we on our own? No! We partake "according to the power of God" (vs8b) Are we saved? How were we saved? God "saved us and called us with a holy calling" (vs9) There is no such thing as an unholy salvation. Salvation, by definition, is holy; "holy" meaning to be separate and distinct. If we belong to Christ, by definition, we are no longer of the world; we do not belong to the world. Our citizenship is in Heaven. (Php3:20)

This partaking in salvation with its accompanying afflictions is not something we accomplished with our works, but God has a "purpose" for us. (vs9, Rom8:28, 2Pe3:9) God gave it to us, and it was planned "before the beginning of time".

Many are fearful of persecution. What is the ultimate persecution? Death. But you see, when we partake of afflictions, when we were saved we - already- partook along with Christ's death. (Rom6:3) To be 'ashamed' of Jesus is to project 'doubt' in Jesus' victory over death. But Jesus "deprived death of its power and brought life" (vs10) He was the "firstfruits" of the resurrection. (1Co15:20,23) Jesus exhorted: "do not fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear Him who has power to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Mt10:28)

What it boils down to is the level of our faith and trust. When Jesus was explaining all this to Martha, He asks her "Do you believe this?" What was her reply? "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who comes into the world." (Jn11:26-27) Eternal Life and the resurrection are synonymous, by definition, with Jesus Christ. Jesus is the very essence of Eternal Life and the resurrection. Jesus proclaimed, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (Jn14:6) A person who will not partake in afflictions, by that act of shameful denial, is actually proclaiming lack of trust in Jesus Christ.

Thus, we come to Paul's (famous) proclamation: "For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep safe what I have committed to Him until that Day." (vs12)

Most people quote only the latter part of that verse, beginning with, "...for I know whom I have believed..." But it is inextricably linked with Paul's reason for "suffering" persecution.

I can partake of afflictions, even unto death, and not be ashamed of Jesus; because "I KNOW Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death," (Php3:10) Even if persecution takes me through death, I know that the "Lord is -MY-Shepherd, I shall not want" (Ps23:1) I shall not 'want'...or be 'lacking'. My salvation has been sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. (Eph1:13) It is all safe and secure: -true- "eternal security". Thus, I can partake, knowing that that is not the end. God has waiting for me, for this "light affliction which is but for a moment", a far "surpassing and eternal weight of glory" (2Co4:17)

The level of our willingness to 'partake' in afflictions is directly related to our faith in Christ, and is indirectly proportioned to our shame of Him. If we are ashamed of Christ, He will be ashamed to acknowledge us before the Father and the angels. But if we truly love Him, we will not be ashamed, and will partake of His sufferings.

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the Word that I said to you, A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My Word, they will keep yours also." (Jn15:18-20)

"Blessed are you when they shall revile and persecute you, and shall say every evil word against you falsely because of Me. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven, for in this manner they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Mt5:11-12)

See Also Addendum: Partake of the Afflictions

Hold fast & Guard - (2Tim1:13-14)

"Hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (vs13)

What is the most important thing to God's minister? Paul delineates three things, "Faith, hope and love", and declares "love" to be the "greatest" (1Co13:13) But what does he exhort to "hold fast" to? If a person is doing as he says elsewhere, "and having done all, to stand" (Eph6:13), what is he standing for? Love? ..since love is the greatest? There are many who teach this...

"..the form of sound words" What does that mean?

A new subscriber recently emailed, expressing appreciation for what is presented through this ministry, and commented: "I also like the fact that you really chew on the words in order to better grasp their meaning."

So, let's "chew" on these words a minute, shall we.

The word "form"; what does that mean? When cement is poured to make a foundation, or build a structure, the workers build "forms". Form is, literally, a "shape". It is the appearance. The form -defines- the character. If there is an error in the form, everything else will be off. They speak of the 'foundation' as being at the root of the support. But even before the foundation exists, the form -defines- what that foundation will be. If the forms are put too close together, the resulting foundation will be too small, and no amount of buttressing later will ever be -quite- 'right'. If the forms are laid down crooked, once the cement cures, it can never be made straight again; short of ripping it all out, and starting with new forms.

When it comes to 'words', what is 'form'? Back when I was in school, English grammar had what was called sentence "diagrams". The words of sentences would be charted as to the subject, verb, object, modifiers, phrases, clauses, etc. Different lines would be drawn to pigeon-hole the various parts. When I took Latin we learned about declensions and conjugations; sort of a different way of understanding the same things that diagraming illustrates. Depending on how a word is configured, and where it goes in the sentence, it means different things, because of its 'form' in that particular useage. Form includes spelling. There, their, they're: all have different meanings, even though sounding the same. If "the apple is there" or "the apple is theirs"; the understanding might merely indicate an apple 'sitting' someplace, or that it 'belongs' to somebody.

When it comes to Godliness and words, what might we be talking about? "In the beginning was the Word...the Word was God" (Jn1:1) "Your Words were found , and I ate them" (Jer15:16) "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps119:105) God's Word, the SCRIPTURES. When

the Scriptures were "breathed by God" (3:16), He breathed -words-; as the disciples said to Jesus, the "Words of Eternal Life" (Jn6:68)

Now, Timothy is exhorted to hold fast to -sound- words. In a context such as this, what does "sound" mean? It means something a little different than sound that we 'hear'. According to the dictionary: Free from defect, decay or damage; in good condition. Having a firm basis. Thorough, complete. Trustworthy.

When we apply these words to Scripture, this means adherence to KJ-onlyism. Right? Many KJ-onlyists would tell us so; and in their militance to "hold fast", they often reject instances of God's TRUE Word, when the KJV differs from it.

What this means is to stick to God's Word, not the perversions. Not long ago I had correspondence with a former teacher I had known as a child on the mission field; and in the midst of various things I discovered their love for "The Message"; so I wrote back, expressing my 'sadness' at this. Their response was something on the order of: I like reading how other people 'view' what the Bible says. This, from a retired missionary.

Many who endorse the various perversions and paraphrases try to suggest that the perversion is merely a "different way" to "say the same thing". When Jesus proclaims, ".you will find rest for your souls.." (Mt11:29); is it the 'same' to proclaim "..learn the unforced rythms of grace.." ?? When Scripture says, "-in- Him was life" (Jn1:4) is it the same to say "What -came-into-existence- was life"? They are not the same. They are not 'sound' words, because they have no basis in the texts copied down through the centuries originating from those "holy men of God" (2Pe1:21) who penned them originally. Thus, the words need to be 'sound', coming from the right sources.

But they need to be of the right 'form', also. That means that translations need to say -what- the Heb/Grk say. When the Hebrew says "yowm yowm" (Ex5:19) is it close enough to say "daily" (KJV, Darby, MKJV, NASB, NKJV), or is the 'form' of that expression closer by saying "day by day" (VW); or "day in its day" (LITV)? We may 'tend' to think of "daily" in the correct way...but the Hebrew text has two words indicating "day", next to each other, the word being repeated. eg. "day day" There is a different 'sense' to speaking of "daily" quotas (of bricks), vs the requirement for the quota of bricks "day after day". Israel's slavery in Egypt was not merely a 'production' quota, but it was ongoing gruelling slavery... day in, day out. Or how about this one: "then I will shew it thee" (1Sa20:12-13 KJV) Darby says: "apprise thee" NASB: "make it known to you" NKJV: "tell you" But more literally it is "disclose it in your ear". The context is Jonathan feeling out the situation with his father regarding David, and promising to let David know, and the two of them are meeting in secret. Is such communication not more like "Pss pss psst" IN THE EAR, rather than -open-communication, "blah blah blah"? Especially when they never knew but

what one of Saul's spies could have been lurking around to hear them. When the correct 'form' of words is faithfully translated, the reader can get a better sense even from the words themselves, can almost 'see' this secret meeting taking place.

It's like giving a greeting. One might greet a superior with, "Hello, sir." On the other hand a precocious teen might jabber, "Hi ya, dude!" If this greeting were being recounted in a narrative, to translate the equivalent of "hi" would not be the same as "hello"...even though, as the perversion-promoters whine, "it's different ways of saying the same thing". Well, the perversions have "hi ya, dude" all over the place where God's Word says, "Hello, sir".

Oh but...! you might object. Why must you keep nagging at this "translations issue" topic all the time? 'You've just got a big head and are promoting "your own" translation, saying the rest are all bad.' Well...I am merely doing as Paul says to Timothy: HOLDING FAST to God's Word.

What does it mean to "hold fast"? It means to get a good grip, and don't let go. It reminds me of when I was a child in Japan, and would ride on the back of my father's motorbike. Back in those days the roads in rural Japan were worse than most American logging roads, full of ruts and holes. Furthermore, the bike did not have springs in the back. (the front had springs, and the rider's seat was sprung, but all I had to sit on was a padded cushion attached directly to the frame) And so, as the back end of that bike would go bouncing (flying) over those rough roads, (and my father was never known for going slow!) the only way I would not be thrown off was to HANG ON FOR DEAR LIFE! Sometimes, when we would reach the destination, I would have to 'peel' my fingers off the grip, I had been squeezing so tight. -THAT- is what "hold fast" means.

Furthermore, Timothy is exhorted: "That good thing which was committed to you, guard it by the Holy Spirit who dwells in you" (vs14)

What was committed to Timothy? His appointment to the ministry, and the sound words. Guard your ministry. Guard the fidelity to God's Word. Don't let anyone lead you astray from what God has called you to. Do not stray from the pure Words of Scripture. In a few more verses Paul will liken Timothy's work to being a soldier. Traditionally, when a soldier was placed on guard duty, it was "your life for his". If the guard allowed a prisoner to escape, it was the guard's neck on the chopping block. If a guard allowed the enemy to infiltrate, and didn't get killed in the effort, he was executed for not "having done all, to stand". (Eph6:13) -THAT- is the kind of terminology Paul uses in exhorting God's minister. To Ezekiel He speaks of the "watchman" and the blood of those being guarded on the watchman's hand. (Ezk3:20,33:6,8)

Is it "hate" that motivates those of us who are sticklers for God's Word? Is it that we are just soooo "judgmental" that we reject the perversions, and

exhort people to throw them in the trash? No. It is out of "faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (vs13b)

It is out of love for God and the Words of Jesus Christ, that we wish to convey -exactly- WHAT GOD SAID (as much as is possible, considering the copy process, and challenges in translation).

It is out of love for those to whom the Word is being ministered, so that they (you) do not end up in the Lake of Fire, but come to know Him, and share in the hope of the resurrection. If God's Word says to "go right", and a perversion says, "go left"....HOW LOVING IS IT to NOT WARN you of the falseness of that perversion? If you "go left" you will not arrive in God's presence as you claim to be hoping for.

Thus, "hold fast"... HANG ON to God's Word. GUARD IT. Guard the teaching. Hold to sound doctrine and teaching. This, again, is in the context and upon the foundation of "stirring up the gift" and "partaking" in Christ's afflictions.

Don't forget: "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." (1Co4:2)

It's a tough job. But -DO- it!

Be Strong - (2Tim2:1-2)

"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (vs1)

Throughout history there have been various great leaders who surmounted overwhelming odds, and as they are analyzed by others, the consensus is often that they were people of great "inner strength". Indeed, a few lessons ago we observed the exhortation to "stir up the gift", and we spoke of "reaching within"; stirring up the 'gift' that was 'already' there, having been given by God.

Are these concepts the same? The world speaks of finding that inner strength, the inner beauty that (they say) comes from a healthy sense of self-esteem; and today more and more it is also a self-empowerment. Ignoring everything outside of you, but meditate (easternly) and 'harness' the strength of that god-within.

But when Paul exhorts Timothy, where does strength come from? When a confident person exhibits "grace under fire", is that modern "christian" psychology's 'graaaaaeessss'?

The [C]hristian finds strength in Christ Jesus. When we struggle with the flesh, where is victory? "I thank God; through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom7:25) When we are called upon to "give a defense" regarding our Faith (1Pe3:15), it is the Holy Spirit doing the speaking. (Mk13:11) Our protection (authority) against the enemy comes from Jesus. (Lk10:19)

How many in the ministry today work under God's power? How many, instead, function under their own authority! How many look to their denominational leaders for authority, their board of elders for chain-of-command, members who are also 'professionals' from various careers in the world for strategies? It's been awhile, now, but for a time I was getting queries, asking who my authority was; to whom am I answerable? They would often fudge around with their words, saying things like: 'other than God (of course), who is my -earthly- authority? What group of -men- (or people) am I held accountable to?'

"OTHER THAN GOD" ???

Who is it that -sends- God's minister?

"Son of man, I am sending you...and you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord Jehovah" (Ezk2:3-4)

If it is -God- who commissions, -God- who sends, and it is -God's- Word; what group of men is it who feel it is their duty to 'monitor' or perhaps 'filter' the man-of-God? You know what happens, don't you, when you get a 'committee' involved in making decisions. Everybody's fears and frailties

get mixed into the mess. When God's messenger boldly proclaims through the Holy Spirit that the "soul that sins shall die" (Ezk18:4,20), the committee, if the messenger were to allow the message to be 'filtered' first, would soften that message to be LESS HARSH, and not nearly so JUDGMENTAL.

Remember, in the previous lesson we considered the exhortation to "hold fast" to God's Word...UNADULTERATED. When the world, the church, the apostasy, the board-of-elders, the denominational leaders, scholars, the (emotional) wife... all start tugging, nagging, whining, coercing, condemning, plotting, gossiping... it is HARD for many to remain TRUE to the message God has given; because, to remain strong also often makes one 'unpopular'. It takes GREAT STRENGTH. But if the minister remembers -WHO- it is who commissioned him...even though they may write him a paycheck, he is not the 'employee' of the local congregation...he "know[s] whom [he] has believed". (1:12)

Also... There are many who believe that to be 'strong' means to be an 'autocrat'. To be a strong pastor means that he is ON TOP, and the rest of the congregation is 'subservient' to him. That his word is 'final'. That he sits on the pastoral 'throne' as the only teacher.

First of all, Jesus quashes that notion. The disciples were arguing amongst themselves as to "who was greater"; and Jesus says, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." (Mk9:34-35) On another occasion when a couple of them were requesting special places of honor next to Him on His Heavenly throne, He says: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mt20:25-28)

A Christian minister is NOT to be like the pope of Babylon, nor like the priests of Babylon's global religion; whether they be catholic, lutheran or what-have-you.

But notice that Paul exhorts: "...the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will also be able to teach others." (2:2)

STRENGTH is not achieved in clinging to autocracy like a despot, but in being 'fruitful'. In the very beginning, God created all living things to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen1); and after the flood He furthers the command to: "...fill the earth". (Gen9:1)

The early church spread when persecution started, and Believers went wherever they fled and scattered, "preaching the Word" (Ac8:4) Part of the

complaint was that the church had "turned the world upside down". (Ac17:6) The apostles went around, preaching the Word, establishing the new converts into congregations all over. Obviously, if the apostle had then moved on to a new location, they were not the immediate "boss" of that congregation. That congregation needed leaders. And that's what they did. They "appointed elders in every church" (Ac14:23) "...in every city" (Tit1:5)

It does no good to take upon one's self sole authority. What if the person becomes incapacitated? And furthermore, there is only so far a single person can reach, before 'burn-out' happens. (Could that have been Timothy's problem? Burn-out, and thus, retreat?) That's what started happening with Moses, and God instructed him to appoint the 70. God says to Moses, "And I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will lay upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you not bear it yourself alone." (Num11:17)

Furthermore, in a society lacking technology as we have it, where we can make nearly unlimited quantities of copies of God's Word, back then a lot was stored in memory and relayed by word-of-mouth. Congregations tended to not always have a complete 'set' of the parchments, but as Paul writes to Colosse: "Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." (Col4:16)

If you want to design something to NOT FAIL, it is designed with multiple 'redundancies'. A simple example of that might be with our cars: if the brakes fail when the pedal is depressed, a person can grab the 'emergency' (parking) brake. And supposing the parking brake is also broken, a person can leave the car in gear, turn the engine off, and let it coast to a stop with the engine's compression. (If it ever happens to you, be careful not to lock the steering column in the process) In other applications there are "backup" generators, so that if the public power grid goes down, the generator can be started up.

One argument the proponents of the perverted texts of Scripture give for some of their documents is (alleged) "preservation". They find some obscure parchment that was locked away someplace, never used, and assume it is a 'pure' copy. But if it was not being used, how do we know 'why' it wasn't being used? Was it not used for the purpose to preserve it, or was it because it was 'abandoned' (rejected) as not being faithful? On the other hand, as the regular parchments in use were copied over and over, those copies spread out to more people, were read, and further-copied. There became thousands of these copies all over the place, and as Believers communicated with each other, there was 'verification' that their own individual copies were 'pure' because they agreed with what was in all the others. Redundancy. Or to use computer terminology...'sampling rate' The higher the sampling rate, the more faithful (pure) the data is presumed to be.

If there is only -one- teacher, trained in God's Word, and something happens to him, where does that wisdom and knowledge go? But when that teacher trains -others- to also be teachers, not only is the wisdom preserved in "multiple copies", but it makes possible the fruitful "multiplying" for the goal of "filling the earth".

You see...the entire concept of a "mega-church" is wrong. Supposing such a church had 20,000 members, and there was only -one- pastor ministering to each, and supposing he was attempting to minister 'personally' to each one throughout the course of the week, and he was ministering to them in "assembly-line" fashion, one after the other; he would have only 30 seconds with each member during that week. And that would not allow any time for him for bathroom breaks, meals, sleeping or preparing next Sunday's sermon. See how 'impossible' that is? Many boast about "how many members" they have. But how are they ministering to 'individual' needs? They aren't. But all those people certainly add to the offering plate, and with his rich salary he 'looks' rather grand on that platform in his expensive suit and flashy jewelry flashing from his mic-gripping fingers.

This is why the NT church was "scattered" and they met "from house to house" (Ac20:20) and Paul addresses the church "that is in their (Aquila & Priscilla) house" (Ro16:5)

And if the main overseer (Ac20:28, 1Ti3:1) is training "ministers" (Php1:1) to be teaching elders and shepherds/pastors, it 'spreads' the Gospel over a wide area. Paul speaks of the message of false prophets "spreading like cancer" (2:17) How is cancer stopped? By inundating the cancer cells.

A single sparrow may feel helpless against a crow. But how many times have you seen a crow being put to flight by -several- smaller (tiny) birds working together. You've heard the expression, "strength in numbers".

Exactly!

Our strength is the grace of Christ Jesus. And even if we find ourselves alone (which is the case with many of you in these days where you find no faithful congregation, but remember that God still has His "7000 who have not bowed to Baal" 1Ki19:18), Joseph found strength in Egypt, 'alone', trusting God, and became ruler during the famine, and saved the world from starvation.

But when the overseer trains others to share in the burden... well, the NT church turned the world "upside down" with the Gospel.

"...be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." (Eph6:10)

Endure Hardship - (2Tim2:3-7)

"You therefore endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2:3)

When they come home we welcome them with signs, banners, press conferences, parades. (Although, those returning from another war, after the treasons of people like Hanoi Jane and John Kerry, were spit upon) Almost a century ago it was with songs, "When Johnny comes marching home again, Hurrah! Hurrah!" When a frightened young girl, who really shouldn't have been there in the first place (e.g. Jessica Lynch) comes home after being captured and wounded, we give such a person a standing ovation. Why?

Periodically public TV has programs with old WW2 footage, and whatnot. Not having served, myself, I find it educational to see what real combat looks like. The horrors when a flame thrower sets foliage ablaze, and out come the enemy, their bodies on fire...and then they are mowed down with machine gun fire. The horrors of war...how could anybody not return home "shell-shocked", or as they call it now, "post traumatic stress"!

There are some who return and behave treasonously. Others come home and spend the rest of their lives whining and complaining about how rough they had it.

And then there are some others, like the fellow I knew at a job years ago, who due to his shorter stature, had been a "tunnel rat" in Vietnam. Yes, he described some of his PTS: for instance, on one occasion waking up in the middle of the night, to find himself straddling his own wife in bed, just on the verge of dealing her a death-blow with one of the methods they would use in hand-to-hand combat...waking up -just- as he was about to 'kill' her...in his sleep. But in dealing with these things, was he a whiner and complainer? He said that that sort of thing was for "those others". He was of the sort to suck-it-up, and 'deal' with it.

In Iraq they show footage of our US troops. Often they don't have a bed to sleep on, but find a place on, around or under a tank, HumVee, or some other war vehicle. Typically, when on a mission, they get scarcely a couple hours of sleep a night. Their food is "rations" (they call it something else these days...but still, it is NOT a home-cooked-meal! or even the mess-chow!)

Besides the security they are said to provide for the homeland, we honor their personal sacrifices in accomplishing that goal. We honor those who gave, as Lincoln said, the "last full measure of devotion". We honor the living who sacrifice their lives AS THOUGH the next bullet or explosive device would be taking their lives.

These that we honor in this way is -like- what each one of us is to be in our own service to God. GIVING ourselves as "a living sacrifice". Remember how Paul says that we "partake" of the afflictions. (1:8) Our 'soldiering' for the Kingdom of God is the same way: "that you -PRESENT- your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom12:1) In the O.T. the sacrifice was 'presented' for only one purpose: Death.

That means "hardship". Forget the la-dee-dah flowers, dancing and sunshine that many claim is the realm of the Christian life! Jesus promised hardship. Jesus promised to the ones wanting places of honor in His kingdom, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be immersed with the immersion that I am immersed with;" (Mt20:23) What was Jesus' "cup" and "immersion"? The cross. And He says, "And whoever does not BEAR HIS CROSS and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Lk14:27)

It is those who "endure". It is not those who have "no root" who endure only a short time, and then stumble away. (Mk4:17) But it is for those who "endure to the end" that are "kept safe". (Mt24:13)

Hardship is not: being "stuck" with a 12ft boat, when you are lusting for that 20 footer. Hardship is not driving a Vega or Chevette, when you are lusting for a Hummer. Hardship is: "They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, oppressed; of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb11:37-38) For you who know Spokane, recently when I drive by I've notice a new MEGA-complex being erected over next to Government Way with a name on the sign that looks 'charismatic'; judging by the size and format of the place there doesn't appear to be any visible clues that there is any hardship going on there!

Hardship is like a missionary, leaving family and friends, to go to an entirely strange culture, and then the support checks don't come regularly or on time so they are scrimping by, the wife is taken ill and maybe dies, there are cultural struggles with the language, and there is intense spiritual warfare as this man-of-God is all 'alone', stuggling along, not seeing what looks like any sort of fruit, year after year after year; and then to hear from the home church or mission board that perhaps he is not doing God's will...because he does not have any 'numbers' to boast about.

It is like Paul; Paul could say this to Timothy, because he led by example: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I excel them: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in hardship and toil, in

sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness; besides the other things, that come upon me daily: the care of each of the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?" (2Co11:23-29)

"No one serving military duty entangles himself with the affairs of this life..." (vs4a)

For a couple of years I drove school bus on a US Air Force Base (Grand Forks, ND) and saw the children, how they behaved and how they were dressed. I would see the parents come out to the bus to get their kids (it was a "special ed" bus) and see how they were dressed. You see the base housing. You see the kinds of vehicles they drive. Surely, we've all seen the young hot-shots with the fancy motorcycles and hot cars, like in the movies. But when military personnel are settled as 'family' units, they do not have the same 'flair' æ those who work in the corporate world or as politicians. They are a more "humble" sort.

When a soldier is in combat, or riding patrol, he is not doing so whilst also sitting there polishing his motorcycle. He does not take his girlfriend/wife along on patrol, with a picnic lunch. While on duty, they do not stop in at the local tavern and belly-up. The scenes they keep showing us is of soldiers, carrying their weapons, -always- at-the-ready. Even when talking with civilians, or directing groups of people, etc, their finger is never far from the trigger, and the weapon is held in an attitude that, in a split-second they could aim it and shoot, if the need arose. While on duty, thoughts of the 'easy' life are pushed to the back burner, and attention is focused on the job at hand.

Those who distinguish themselves with faithful service garner for themselves commendations and medals. He has "pleased" those higher in the command structure. (vs4b)

Yes, we certainly see the scandals like the ones in Iraq, where prisoners have been treated in ways that are not 'decent' or 'moral'. Can they not elicit the same results for interrogation purposes without resorting to acts of 'depravity'??? And those who were thus joyously perverse, are now facing due justice. Such a person does not return home to parades and praise. We must "compete lawfully" (vs5)

We give these examples from the present. Paul also speaks of the hard-working farmer. (vs6) But Paul assumes there is a bit of "two-plus-two" going on in our minds. He doesn't spell out any specifics in Timothy's own life. And in this section we don't either. Our duty is not to Paul. Your duty, as the reader, is not to me. But these examples are given, and Paul says, "..the Lord will give you understanding in all things" (vs7)

People sometimes ask: Is it OK for me to ...? or, Should I -NOT- DO such-n-such? Beyond certain specific things as given directly in Scripture, for

which there are no "gray areas", Paul exhorts, "Let each be fully assured in his own mind" (Rom14:5)

While there is a certain accountability to each other, we are -each- one of us, answerable before the Lord. "So then each of us shall give account concerning himself to God." (Rom14:12)

Yes, the Lord will often pour out blessing upon the Believer, and allow for a life of ease. Paul said that he knew both how to "abound"; but he also knew how to be "abased" and "hungry" (Php4:12) The exhortation is to "endure hardship" in the same way a soldier, on duty, does. Be faithful. Be focused to the task. Put out of the mind those distractions of the world.

How does all this apply to me...SPECIFICALLY?

"Consider" these things, and then look to God for the "understanding", for application.

Remember & Remind - (2Tim2:8-14)

"Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel." (vs8)

What was the "gospel" that Paul preached? "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised the third day according to the Scriptures," (1Co15:3-4)

Paul calls this 'his' gospel. But how did it become 'his'? Was it something he concocted in his own mind? No. He "received" it. When? He doesn't say. It doesn't seem that he received it from the other apostles, because he says that he did "not confer with flesh and blood", nor went to study at Jerusalem, but went into Arabia. (Ga1:16-19) The matters of the Lord's Supper he says, "I received from the Lord..." (1Co11:23)

Hmmm...an interesting side-note observation here: Many scholarly types don't much care for Paul nor his epistles. These same types typically also don't much care for the likes of us who don't much pay any attention to the writings of the "great men" nor the "rich heritage" of Rome, etc. Perhaps it is because both Paul and we look directly to God and His Word, rather than the wisdom of man? (1Co1:21,2:7) Seeing as how God used Paul to write most of the N.T., wouldn't you say we're in good company, eh!

While we take the bread and cup "in remembrance" of Jesus' death (1Co11:25-26), what does Paul tell Timothy to "remember"? The RESURRECTION. "But now Christ has been raised from the dead.." (1Co15:20)

Paul exhorts Timothy to "partake" in afflictions (1:8), to "be strong" (2:1) and to "endure hardship" like a soldier. (2:3) Over -WHAT- is this struggle? What is the prime message of the Gospel? How was "death swallowed up in victory"? (Is25:8, 1Co15:54) The RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ.

What was the reason for the Jerusalem apostles being brought before the sanhedrin and being flogged? They were "...greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead." (Ac4:2) Why was Paul in bonds? As he cries out in the council: "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!" (Ac23:6)

And yet, most who call themselves "christian" grasp hold of their icons of Jesus' death: the cross and/or crucifix. In fact, the one the pope carries around as his walking stick has a most demonically grotesque depiction of Jesus' death on the top. And if anybody, like me, should suggest that those crosses are idolatrous "likenesses" in disobedience to the 2nd Commandment, "You shall not make for yourself any graven image, or any

likeness..." (Ex20:4), and that they should be destroyed, just like Hezekiah did the bronze cross/serpent from the wilderness (2Ki18:4), many respond with vitriolic hatred.

But what are we to remember? Jesus' RESURRECTION. We are not to be spending a complete hour watching a re-enactment of Jesus' back being whipped to shreds, but we are to be remembering that, "He is not here, for He is risen" (Mt28:6)

So, why is it that so many "seek the living among the dead?" (Lk24:5) with pagan symbols?

This is what the pastor is to "remember". And then, as he remembers, he in turn "reminds them". (2:14)

Let's back up a little to the "endurance" theme...

What is the ultimate affliction of which we might partake? Death. This entire epistle is founded on the understanding of enduring affliction. Other than the discomforts of pain, what is there to fear in death? There is no fear. Why? Because we know that Resurrection follows death. This is why Paul endured all his affliction. Remember, he "knew" whom he had believed and that his life was in "safe keeping" for "that Day" (1:12) Thus, what was the yearning of Paul's soul? The salvation of "the elect". (2:10) Israel. Paul was of the "tribe of Benjamin" and says, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ on behalf of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh... Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is for them to be saved." (Rom11:1,9:3,10:1)

This is a faithful saying... (2:11) In other words: Pay attention. Here is a little nutshell of doctrine in its pure form of simplicity.

If we die with Christ, we also shall live with Him. (2:11) Is this not what immersion is all about: We died with Him, and are "raised to newness of life" (Rom6), symbolized by going 'under' the water, and then coming back out; and why a person really should not 'baptize' themselves, but be immersed by another Believer...thus, the symbolism of that other person "raising" them back out of the water.

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. (2:12a) ".he that endures to the end will be kept safe" (Mt10:22) If you look up that verse, you will see the context is being "delivered up" due to the 'hatred' of unbelievers, including family and friends.

If we deny Him, He also will deny us. (2:12b) The act of denying is not "losing" something 'accidentally' (oops! where did it go?), but a -deliberate-act. The ground where the seed fell, endures (is saved) for awhile and due to persecution stumbles (turns away). (Mt13:20-21) Puts his hands to the plow (gets saved), plowing towards Jesus and the Kingdom, but then looks back; and thus is not "fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk9:62) Something that

is "not fit" is something that does not gain entrance. Sorry, you who believe in OSAS; that is a false doctrine coming out of the reformation. Is not 'denying' an -act- of the mouth. Jesus said: "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Mt12:37) If we deny Jesus, He will also proclaim: "I never knew you" (Mt7:23) "I do not know you, where you are from" (Lk13:27)

If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself (2:13) There may be several different thoughts about this verse, but let me put forth this one to you-all: Remember how Jesus asked the man if he had "faith" for his son to be healed, and the man cries out, "Lord, I believe! Help my unbelief!" (Mk9:23-24) Hebrews ch11 is also the great "Faith" chapter, a recounting of many of the saints of faith throughout history. And yet, if we look at some of those people in the O.T., we see some faiths - wavering- from time to time. Abraham sired Ishmael, and other such things.

The Believer has Faith. That is a very part of the definition of Salvation. We are saved by grace thru -faith-. (Eph2:8) "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ..." (Ac16:31) And the whole set of doctrines regarding the Church is called "-the- Faith" (Ac6:7,13:8) And there are some who are "weak in the faith" (Rom14:1)

But the faith that saves us, and assures the promise is the "faith -OF- Jesus Christ" (Rom3:26, Ga2:16, etc) We are yet "flesh and blood"; and our flesh-ness and blood-ness does not allow us into Heaven in this present state. (1Co15:50) That's why we will be "changed" (vs51) But until "my change comes" (Job14:14), our faith might not always be as strong as it should be, and our feet get dirty, needing washing (Jn13:10) and confessing (1Jn1:8-9)

Thus, you see, Jesus is ever-faithful. Our safe-keeping is not reliant upon our own abilities. We could not save ourselves. And we cannot 'keep' ourselves saved. Jesus does, in -His- faithfulness. Thus, Paul gives that wonderful passage on "eternal security".

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loves us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom8:35-39)

"Remind them of these things" and don't be arguing with "empty words to no good, to the destruction of the hearers" (2:14)

Be Diligent - (2Tim2:15)

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2:15)

I suppose we could address the objections of the KJ-only cult that their word "study" is changed to "diligent". I suspect the use of "study" was a temporary culturalism of the English language from the time of Tyndale through the Geneva and KJV. The Wycliffe, which preceded the Tyndale does not use "study", and most modern translations pretty much all agree with "diligent"...which, in fact, is what the Greek means there in our current understanding and use of words. It has nothing to do with going to Bible school, or how a student conducts themselves in their academic pursuits. Many from the KJ-only cult teach these kinds of things, while missing the point of the verse; and in so-doing do not "rightly divide" the Scriptures.

What does it mean to "be diligent" (about anything)? According to the dictionary: Marked by persevering, painstaking effort. Keeping busy.

In other words, it is an expression of 'working real hard at' something. Of devoting close scrutiny to minute details. When starting something, to see it through to completion.

What is the goal of this diligence? To be "approved" to God. In other words, when the Master returns and is sorting out what the servants have been doing during his absence, to have one's work scrutinized to be able to hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Mt25:21,23, Lk19:17) After all, that is the minister's calling; not to conform to some earthly standards or the praise of men; but, to "be found faithful". (1Co4:2) Faithful to whom? to "...Him who enlisted him..." (2:4)

God's minister is not called to be at the beck-and-call of the church board; he does not seek to please the financially prosperous church members; he does not adjust his message to be acceptable to the unsaved; he is not seeking the approval of the elite at the denominational headquarters or mission board. He seeks the approval of God.

All these man-made organizations and hierarchies may taunt him, and he might be made to feel 'shame' for not measuring up to -their- 'vast' clout. But the shame that matters is what he may feel when standing before the "judgment seat of Christ" (Rom14:10, 2Co5:10)

Just remember: All those others will also be standing before Christ's judgment, to account for 'their' works. Some of them will have to answer to Christ for how they tried to entice you away to other goals and agendas. God's minister should not worry himself about man's agenda, but God's.

And so... In that context... What is his duty?

"...rightly dividing the Word of Truth"

When Timothy was exhorted to "hold fast the form of sound words" (1:13) we observed the need to stick to the correct translation/s of the Scriptures. Rightly dividing has no meaning, if one is not -first- holding to the correct texts. To use prior examples: If a person needs to take the "right" fork in the road; if they have chosen a map that directs them to take the "left" fork, they can 'rightly divide' -that- map's directions, and -go- 'left', and will end up in the wrong place. They "rightly divided", but ended up in the wrong place, because they were looking at the wrong map. That's why 1:13 comes before 2:15.

But when the correct text is being held to, one also must "rightly divide" it. If the navigator held the 'correct' map upside down, that 'right' arrow is now pointing 'left'. One must hold the map at the correct orientation, and then one sees clearly that one needs to go "right".

If a pastor is a "people person" and spends all his time visiting the members, is continually busy with building programs, spends his time appearing on TV/Radio 'debate' programs, and all sorts of other 'wonderful' programs, but never spends any time in his office, in the Word, reading, studying and preparing....and when it's meeting time, closes his eyes, opens his Bible, winds his finger down to the pages, and wherever his finger lands....'that' is his sermon, and stands behind the pulpit without any preparation....how can he possibly "rightly divide" the Word? He cannot.

The word "divide" means to take something big, and prepare it in smaller pieces. Much as a parent might take a child's plate and cut the various vegetables and meat into bite-sized pieces, so the child, who doesn't yet have the ability to wield the knife, nor has the strength to cut with the fork, nor has the sense to bite off a size that can be chewed, without choking, can successfully pick up the pieces to 'fit' into their mouth and chew and swallow.

And then, is not the word "rightly" pretty much self-explanatory; self-descriptive? This dividing is done "right"....not wrong. In other words, through the Holy Spirit's guidance, the right parts of Scripture are subdivided into appropriate sections, and other appropriate Scriptures are joined with the study passage, to the end that the hearer comes away properly understanding the Scriptures; to do as Jesus did, "And He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures" (Lk24:45)

In God's eyes building programs, soul-winner campaigns, and whatever else the carnal mind might concoct are not the pastor's prime goal. His prime goal is to be pleasing to the Lord. (Col1:10) And the way he does that is to faithfully, correctly, rightly... (as Jesus said to Peter)

Feed My lambs... Tend My sheep... Feed My sheep. (Jn21:15-17)

But Shun - (2Tim2:16-21)

"But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will proceed to more ungodliness" (2:16)

Let's connect this to its context, shall we: "...rightly dividing the Word of Truth. But shun profane and idle babblings..."

The word "but" is a word of division; a word of contrast; a word often indicating opposites. The man of God is to be faithfully dividing the Word to feed the sheep, and -NOT- engaging in idle (dare we say it?) 'dialogue'.

In the first epistle Paul speaks much of teaching and doctrine. (1Tim1:10, 4:6,13,16, 5:17, 6:1,3) In the latter half of this epistle it will be mentioned again, in contrast to the apostasy which does "not endure sound doctrine". (4:3) Right now Paul is "stirring up" Timothy; and, isn't talk of "rightly dividing" the Word the very essence of the definition of "sound doctrine".

The apostasy today is busy "tearing down the walls" of doctrine. Teaching of Biblical doctrine is holy. By definition, creating a 'distinction' between the Believer and the world. It's a term the apostasy doesn't like, and they poo-poo those few staunch "independent" groups that hold to Biblical "SEPARATION". Separation, by definition, is holiness. God is holy (Le11:44) and commands us to be holy. (1Pe1:16) The teaching of Biblical doctrine, by definition, promotes that "wall" of separation between the Believer and the sinful world. That wall is SUPPOSED TO be there. It is Biblical. The unholy was not "in any way" to be allowed to enter the temple. (2Ch23:19) There was a wall built around the tabernacle to divide between the holy temple area, and the outside where people had not purified themselves. But unbelievers are trying to gain access to God's presence without being cleansed; they are trying to come "just as they are", sin-and-all; they are trying to enter "some other way" (Jn10:1) And so, they are busy "tearing down the walls"; and to that end, they are tossing doctrine aside.

Hand in hand with that, to replace Biblical doctrine, they are trying to find "common ground" by engaging in "dialogue". They talk; they babble; they discuss in circular reasoning; they "stray concerning the truth" (2:18) What truth? A topic related to that which continually pops up today, only from a different angle: Today they deny the Rapture. In Paul's day they were saying that it had already happened; thus, the persecution the Church was experiencing was said to be the Day of the Lord. This error was being foisted upon the Thessalonians, too, and "disturbing" and "alarming" them. (2Th2:2) Today they say either that there is no rapture, or that the rapture comes later...thus, the Church is going through the Day. In either case, both errors try to persuade the Believer that Jesus lied when He promised to "receive" us to Himself. (Jn14:3) and "they overthrow the faith of some" (2:18b)

Yes, that last little phrase certainly would seem to lend strong credence to the notion that a person's position on the Rapture, when they've confronted it and become convinced in their heart, can also indicate whether the person is truly a Believer, or not. Do you see what vs18 is saying? These false teachers proclaim errors about the resurrection (which we know happens concurrently with the rapture 1Th4:17), and some get carried away with their error, and their faith is overthrown. Faith: another term for the state of being Saved. As we've observed many other times, and will again later in this series, that the "crown of righteousness" (indication of being saved) is for those "loving His appearing" (4:8)... His "appearing" being distinct from His "kingdom" (4:1) How many people of the apostasy 'used' to claim to believe in the "pre-trib" rapture, but now allegedly have "wised up"; proving that... "they went out that they might be made manifest, that not all of them are of us." (1Jn2:19b)

And so, when these false prophets come around, who have "strayed from the truth" (2:18) what are we to do? Engage them? Dialogue with them? After all...are they not calling themselves our "brothers"? Are they not naming the name of Christ? Are they not confessing that Jesus is Lord (1Co12:3), and that Jesus has "come in the flesh"? (1Jn4:3)

Paul tells Timothy to -SHUN- them! What does shun mean? "To avoid deliberately. Keep away from. Escape." You see them coming? Turn and go the other way. They send e-mails? Don't engage them by answering. If they keep sending e-mails? Put a 'filter' on their address and bounce their messages back to them, with an automated message, explaining that you are not reading their messages, because they are false prophets.

These idle babblings also take the form of those wishing to object to God's Word with the arguments of the "great men" and "famous" teachers and authors. You know...all those various works of commentaries and best-seller books. All these things "proceed to more ungodliness". They are in CONTRAST TO the pure Word of Truth that is rightly divided. God's Word is "pure". (Ps12:6, 119:140, Pr30:5) If the minister has God's -pure- Word, why would he wish to muddle it up with all the other garbage? All those other things are the -ideas- of man. They are ungodly. They lead to false doctrine. Those who rely upon them can get their faith overthrown. You hear me say this all the time, and some object to one man claiming to know God's Word...but now, here it is, directly from the pen of Paul, writing to Timothy. What do all those commentaries know, that God's Holy Spirit cannot impart to God's faithful servant? There are many who feel that, to not rely on commentaries is tantamount to being swept away in error...that those commentaries are somehow anchors to truth. Many would trust what they read in a commentary before they trust what they read -directly- in God's Word. They read the Scriptures through "lenses" (are not lenses designed to 'change' what is viewed?). They divide the Scriptures, making the Bible -agree- with various preconceived viewpoints. But such attitudes OVERTHROW the faith. They lead to ungodliness. And it spreads like

cancer: today Jerry Falwell, Chuck Swindol, Warren Wiersbe, Jack Van Impe, Billy Graham, James Dobson, and all their ilk "are of this sort". (2:17)

Shun them! Shun dialogues with the apostate. They are not candidates for salvation. They are spreading cancer. What do you do when cancer is spreading? Nurture it? No! You try to kill it with whatever means possible. You first try to "separate" from it, by cutting it out. Well, in the same way, if you have associations with such people, you need to "cut" them out of your life! Disassociate from them. Separate from them. Shun them.

And STICK TO GOD'S WORD!

Now, supposing there are legitimate questions as to who-is-who; remember Jesus also spoke of the wheat and tares growing up together, being reserved for the harvest, at which point the tares are separated out and burned (Mt13:30); be assured that "the Lord knows those who are His" (2:19) We may not be sure, always; but the Lord knows.

But as for us, our responsibility is to "depart from iniquity" (2:19) Don't stick around, wallowing in their muck. But make a clean break, and "shun" the evil. Be holy. Again...if you didn't understand it earlier: Holy means to be separate, distinct, set apart. And is that not the opposite of getting together to 'dialogue'. The enemy knows that if he can get you to dialogue, he is quite skilled at spinning words (babbling), and has persuaded many to leave the "simplicity that is in Christ" just like he did with Eve (2Co11:3) in favor of his idle babblings.

We mentioned in a previous lesson, that some who try to entice you will, themselves, be standing before Christ to answer for their actions.

When you separate from someone, it may well be that you are separating from a True Believer. But never mind that. If they are acting apostate, you must be faithful. "in a great house"; it's all one house, thus all its contents are of the same landlord or master or kingdom; are vessels both to honor and dishonor. (2:20) Remember, the Believer's works are tested by fire. (1Co3:13) Works of gold and precious stones withstand the fire. The wood hay and straw get burned up. Some receive rewards. Others -truly- do make it, "yet so as through fire". (vs15) As they are "snatched out of the fire" (Ju23) they are surely going to be singed, and smell of smoke...but they made it. They are the vessels "for dishonor"...even though they are "in" the "great house".

2:20 ends with the word "dishonor", and 2:21 says, "Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from these"...in other words, he is cleansing himself from those dishonorable vessels in the house; as Paul exhorts Corinth to separate out the one "named a brother" who is in sin, unrepentant, who is delivered to satan "for the destruction of the flesh" (1co5:11,5); in separating from that which is deviant from "rightly dividing the Word of

Truth", the separation will most often be away from false prophets; but in some cases the separation -could- also be from some who truly do know the Lord...only, at present they are dishonorable vessels. The exhortation to "shun" (2:16) covers both scenarios.

Many Believers concern themselves, and rightly so, with the notion that they might be separating from a true Brother or Sister. True. But if they are behaving in an apostate manner, the exhortation is clear: Shun them. We can "bear one another's burdens" only so far; there is also the aspect where we are to each "bear his own load" as "each one proves his own work" (Ga6:1-5) If the person overtaken in trespass has been confronted, and refuses to repent, there is also the exhortation to treat them as a "foreigner and tax collector" (Mt18:17)

Again: God knows those who are His; and we do not judge another's servant. (Rom14:4) He deals with them.

But if we separate ourselves, we can see to our own lives to be sure -we- are vessels to "honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work" (2:21b)

And how do we do this? By "rightly dividing" the Scriptures, and shunning the jibber jabber of the dialog of false doctrine.

Flee youthful lusts - (2Tim2:22)

"But flee youthful lusts; and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2:22)

In the first epistle Paul exhorts that counseling of younger women should be as with one's sister "with all purity" (1Tim5:2) When it comes to things that some young men enjoy, working out and body-building, Paul says, "For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things.." (1Tim4:8)

Let us never forget the two primary things that bring down pastors: 1) sex and 2) money. And both of these are based on "lust". What is it that young western men lust after? Hot cars/motorcycles and sexy women...both of which require -lots- of money. There might not be anything intrinsically wrong with a hot car; but playing around in the world of sex pierces the soul.

"For the lips of a strange woman drip honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil, but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a cleaver; her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on Sheol; lest you should ponder the path of life, her paths are unstable; you cannot know them. Therefore hear me now, O children, and do not depart from the words of my mouth. Remove your ways far from her, and do not come near the door of her house, lest you give your honor to others, and your years to the cruel; that strangers not be filled with your strength, nor your labors be in the house of a foreigner, and you moan in the end, when your flesh and body are spent;" (Pr5:3-11)

If we understand that an overseer is to be "blameless" and the "husband of one wife" (1Ti3:2); if such a man lusts and acts on that lust, it essentially removes him from that position.

As this is being prepared, this very day, a mailing came from another ministry, a Q/A answering the question: Can an adulterer be a pastor? The one answering the question said, essentially, "no". Such a person can perhaps serve in other things, but not as 'pastor'.

For the most part I would agree with that. However where, also, is God's grace? David was not only Israel's king, but he was also their 'pastor'. He set up much of the post-tabernacle temple worship which was carried forward into Solomon's reign. When he sinned with Bathsheba, God did not removed him from the 'pastorate', although he experienced various incidents of discipline, along with the death of the baby. His inability to build the temple was not his affair, but his lifetime of bloodshed in battle.

Thus, because David did not receive the death penalty the law required, but God's grace left him in that position, does that give us license? No! That is one of the characteristics of today, people having "crept in unnoticed" who preach a gospel of God's -acceptance- "just as you are" (sin-and-all) who "who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness" (Ju1:4)

There are true men-of-God, who have slipped in a moment of weakness, and then have truly confessed and repented as David did (Ps51), and where necessary have put away their "foreign women" (Ezra10) Notice that this involved the "chief priest and levites", after which, they purified themselves for service. (vs5) And also, did not Paul consider himself to be the "chief" of sinners? (1Ti1:15) He did not view himself as being "fit" to be an apostle, because he had persecuted the church of Christ; but says, "But by the GRACE of God I am what I am" (1Co15:9-10)

This is a little note to you men: Understand very clearly that there are many women out there whose sole goal it is to snag sincere men-of-God, and bring them down. They come purring like kittens. They slither around like serpents. They come proclaiming their desires to serve the Lord, saying, "Regarding my peace offerings, today I have completed my vows" (Pr7:14) They are like "desperate housewives". They are the ones in the next chapter: "gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts" (3:6b) What does Paul exhort to do about them? Try to straighten them out?

!! -FLEE- !!

Like Joseph did. He "fled and went outside" (Ge39:12) Don't have anything to do with such; but rather...

Pursue righteousness...with those who are following God with pure hearts. Don't worry yourself over their souls. They will either repent, or not. As in the previous lesson, God knows their heart. But if they are stalking you, treat them like the world, and shun them. Let them face the Judge on their own. Don't be deceived by their appearances of tender 'delicateness' and 'helplessness'. If they are crouching to pounce, they are evil. They will face the judgment of Jezebel. (Rev2:22) Stay clear of them. And if you are pursuing righteousness -with- others of pure heart, they won't have anything they can do.

Also, if your own heart is occupied with things of God, you won't be inclined, nor have the time, to be on the prowl, either.

I suppose we could go into depth on the "money" topic, too. However, in these days the way the world is, if the man-of-God can keep himself pure of sexual perversities, "If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well" (Ac15:29)

Avoid Strife - (2Tim2:23-26)

"But avoid foolish and unlearned questionings, knowing that they generate strife" (2:23)

This exhortation may sound an awful lot like "shun profane and idle babblings" (2:16) But if we look at the included context, there appears to be a subtle difference in shading. At vs16 it is about false prophets bringing along false doctrines; and Paul names a couple of names. Whereas, vs23 seems to begin a discussion of the more 'generalized' ways in which people sit around, asking, speculating, giving their opinions; perhaps this is like the Bible 'studies' like they began in the 70s, where everybody would speculate as to what something "means to me". Perhaps this addresses things like Alpha Course, where not much of anything is taught, but people freely share in the group, whether the doctrines are true or false; and if false, nobody corrects them.

This is seminary students sitting around during idle time, speculating as to "how many angels can sit on the head of a pin", like they are alleged to have done during the 40s and 50s. This is discussions about things Scripture doesn't even address, and concluding that there -will- be "pets in Heaven". This is the discussions where people will come whining with, "Well, don't you thiiink....???"

There are some who will take these topics, about which Scripture makes no mention, and will elevate them into 'legitimate' doctrines, and set up arguments and debates. And as debates often go, if somebody disagrees, the person will become angry. These are not discussions about salvation, sin, atonement, Eternal Life, holy living, etc. These are stupid speculations. And some will create "straw-men" for the purpose of refuting whatever item of sound doctrine the pastor/teacher is attempting to teach at the moment, changing the subject from the Scriptural topic to this other of their own devising; and things get stirred up. And satan has successfully just gotten people's attention away from the pure Word. Whether he does it with false prophets coming in, or from within with silly arguments, he doesn't care. His goal has been achieved....people are now NOT "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2:15) This is one reason why Paul exhorts that teaching be done "orderly" (1Co14:29-30,40); and why he orders the women to "keep silent in the churches" (vs34) From experience I have noted that it is often the "gullible women" (3:6) who start these disagreements.

Notice the exhortation is to "avoid" the questions, and to "not quarrel" (vs24); but he also does not exhort to avoid the confrontation. Confront the error with truth. But don't get into a wrangling match over it. Don't add fuel to the speculations, but if necessary the teacher needs to say something along the lines of: We are not going to discuss that. If something is far-outlandish, there may not be any answer that is possible. On the other

hand, a quick Scriptural answer can be given to "correct those who are in opposition" (vs25) If the idle speculations are allowed to continue, and tempers flair up, the multitude of words results in sin and foolishness. Job34:37, Ec5:3, 10:12-14, Pr10:19,15:2

Correcting someone's error is not for the purpose of "offending" or "embarrassing" them. Alpha refuses to correct errors for these excuses. But is it 'loving' to allow the person in error, to 'continue' in their error? If a person continues in their error, they are on the broad way to destruction. (Mt7:13) The loving thing is to correct their error, to the goal that they will "repent", and then be given "full true knowledge of the truth". (vs25) Considering how many of the speculations are stupid, Paul also suggests, "and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil" because presently they are "captives" of him, and are doing "his will". (vs26)

Did you catch that?

Not everybody who asks questions is truly a 'seeker' of the kingdom of Heaven. (Mt7:7-8) They are satan's 'captives' doing his will. I find this quite often with e-mails. Somebody will come along pretending to 'ask' a question, as though they were truly 'seeking' an answer; and then, when I spend the time to answer their question, their reply then contains their 'preaching' at me, making 'proclamation' of whatever it is their false doctrine consists of. They were not 'asking' at all...they were merely seeking to get their (proverbial) foot in the door, to gain entrance, to proclaim their own agenda. Those types, I typically answer firmly in an effort to "correct" their "opposition", and if they continue in the same path, I close off communication.

So...as we come to the end of the first half of the epistle let's review briefly:

Paul exhorts Timothy to "stir up" the gift. Get off his duff, and get to work. Don't be ashamed, but "partake" in afflictions. Hold fast to the correct texts of Scripture. Be strong. Endure hardship like a soldier. Remember the primary doctrine, the Resurrection. Be diligent about rightly dividing the Word of Truth. Shun false prophets. Flee lusts. And avoid foolish questions, but correct satan's slaves.

All this, thus far, has been the 'what' and 'how'. Beginning with ch3 we will understand the 'why'.

The first half has been forthright and strong. Straight forward and in your face. It probably seems like a lot of things have been repeated and hammered and drummed. But it is for good reason. The nature of the "perilous times" (3:1) demands it. A person who trains to be a boxer does not spend his time learning how to knit and stitch; he spends time training how to 'hit' and -be- hit. When a soldier is training in "live fire" exercises, I can't imagine the instructor standing at the sidelines, calmly smiling, if

some of the trainees are not staying hunkered down...he's gonna be - yelling- at them to "GET DOWN!!! STAY DOWN" (or whatever it is they yell) If they don't follow their training, but raise their posterior into the air, they're gonna get shot. And if they don't follow training in the heat of battle, they can get killed, where, if they had been attentive, they might have survived.

Well, it's the same thing here; only... the consequences for inattentiveness are eternally devastating. It is the -eternal- consequences at play. This is more critical than any military live-fire training. Thus, the entire first half of the epistle has been devoted to in-your-face, LET'S GET SERIOUS. God's minister needs to be devout, holding to Scripture, proclaiming Scripture, avoiding false doctrine, shunning satan's messengers, keeping pure and holy.

If we are thus prepared, then we are ready for what comes next. People in the military are trained, first, to be "soldiers". Once they have been proven, -then- they are given the mission. God's ministers have a mission; but they need, first, to be secure, solid, faithful, strong in God's Word. Now that we have that squared away...now it's time to understand 'why' we needed all this "stirring up" of the gift.

That's next....

Last days: perilous times - (2Tim3:1-9,13)

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come..." (3:1)

Please take a moment to read vs2-4. It is a laundry list that describes - today- to-a-tee. And from things we see in other Scriptures were we to look them up now, we know that we are living in the "last days", right now. This is one of the slogans at the website: "An oasis of Biblical truth...for the LAST DAYS". This is why VW has existed for the past 11 years. And we are now in the 11th hour.

If we consider the expression "perilous times", we might think of 9/11, the war in Iraq, the conflict between Israel and the PA, N.Korea with their sabre rattling nuclear program. Iran with its Gog-Magog (Russian) supplied nuclear program. If we keep track of local news, we hear of shootings, stabbings, kidnappings, rapes, etc. And certainly, this laundry list includes these things.

But notice how the list ends: "...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (3:4) Why are these perilous times? Because mankind has turned its back, totally, on God. And lest you be inclined to suggest: Well, that's the 'world'...but that doesn't apply to me; I'm a christian... notice it says, "having a form of godliness but denying its power" (3:5a)

What/who is the "power" of Godliness? The power of godliness -is- the "power of God". (2Ti1:8, 2Co4:7,6:7, etc) God is the power of godliness. (Rev15:8,19:1, etc) Power is through the Holy Spirit (Ac1:8, Rom15:13), without whom a person is not a Christian (Rom8:9), by definition.

In other words, what exists today:

- professed godliness -without- God.
- professed christianity -without- Christ.
- spirituality -without- God's Holy Spirit.

And what is Paul's exhortation to the minister, in light of this understanding? Dialogue with them? ...after all, we want to 'win' them for the Lord. Many think it is their mission to -stay- in these groups to testify to them, so they keep attending and going through the motions of 'ministering'.

But, what does Paul say? "From such people turn away" (3:5b)

Is it beginning to sink in? Paul's message to God's minister...? Where there is error and apostasy, what are we to do? Shun them. Turn away from them. Avoid them. Flee them.

He goes on to describe more: "For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning, but never able to come to the full true knowledg of the truth" (3:6-7)

Does it seem like Paul is picking on women? Some accuse him of 'hating' women. There certainly are those who accuse me of that. Those who accuse me thusly, don't know me. But this goes along with what is prophesied: "As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them." (Is3:12) One of the popular TV shows lately is "Nanny 911" where they show little children -completely- out-of-control, because their parents have not raised them up with discipline. And what is the other primary agenda today? Women's rights and female empowerment. Hillary Clinton has been at the forefront of this through various UN agencies and conferences. Pretty much everything on TV shows women supposedly being in charge, and the man is the stupid little buffoon.

But notice the -truth- of the matter. It is not that women are so superior, but they are "gullible". Being 'emotions' based, they run on feelings. If it feels right. (Like I noticed one of the Star Wars episodes was rerun on TV, and young Luke Skywalker is exhorted before the race, "Don't think... feel") They don't research spiritual matters, they just "know" them. And so this Godless, Christless, Holy Spiritless "christianity" comes to them with false doctrines, gets them to 'feel' the experiences they call being "spirit-filled", and their sin-laden female self-empowered lusts take off, and they behave like "desperate housewives" fulfilling their various lusts, of whatever their nature.

I've known some of these who were continually buying all the books at the (so-called) "Bible" bookstores, reading this author and that famous conference speaker, going to this seminar and that conference of the famous people. Always seeking...and in their seeking, claiming to have superior understanding; but "never able" to come to the full knowledge of Truth. They cannot grasp Truth, because their hearts lust after a leadership power superceding the God-ordained role of the man over them. (1Co11:3) Many of them, through this false knowledge they accumulate, take it upon themselves to usurp authority over the man, and become teachers and self-appointed pastors. But they are devoid of the "full true knowledge of the truth".

That is the "peril". The peril is not so much bombs going off, and terrorist attacks...but false teachers leading the gullible and lust-filled sinners further into a non-returnable pitched headlong fall over the cliff to destruction.

"Professing to be wise, they become foolish" (Rom1:22) Their minds are "corrupt" and their faith is "reprobate". (3:8)

What does it mean to be corrupt? Perverse, depraved, tainted, putrid, ruined, contaminated, rotten, etc. That's what they are.

What is reprobate? Morally unprincipled, predestined to damnation, shameless, rejected by God, without hope of salvation.

You see, that is the "peril" of these days. All these people that are in rebellion against God...are WITHOUT HOPE of salvation. But many 'stay' in the groups, thinking they want to save them. But the truth is, they are past saving. You are not going to save them! Thus...

"From such people turn away."

Are you getting it? I know this is the total opposite of what Christendom teaches today: that we are to love and have 'unity' of all denominations. But we are told to TURN AWAY from it.

"And I heard another voice from Heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, so that you not share in her sins, and so that you not receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to Heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her." (Rev18:4-6)

Do you understand, yet? Unless you want to receive apostasy's judgments, "From such people TURN AWAY"

Suffering persecution - (2Tim3:10-12)

"But you have carefully followed...." (3:10a)

This epistle has two main themes. The first is the recipient, in tears. (1:4) The other is the "stirring up" to action. (1:6) Not a lot of time is spent feeling sorry over the tears, but most of the epistle is, really in many ways, one of the most hard-hitting letters in all of Scripture, regarding 'how' the servant of God is to forge ahead and endure for Christ. There are many books dealing with backsliders, God's impending wrath upon the rebels, and God pleading with the sinner to repent. We don't find any of that in this epistle, because it is written to a primarily 'faithful' minister; just...he needs a little kick in the pants, a slug on the arm, a cuff up-the-side of the head, a firm word of strength. It's a combination of pep-talk, strategy session, warning, and just a lot of earnest 'straight' talk. It's not written to average Joe-Bloe, lazy, sluffing off sleeping dopy "christian"; nor is it a message to the false prophets and other wolves in sheep's clothing. It is written to God's minister, who -already- has received God's call to ministry, and just requires a little boost. (Please, don't anybody get offended at this next; because these are also necessary in the scheme of things...) It is not written to week-end warriors that serve scarcely one week-end a month, doing exercises and polishing up equipment; it is written to Marines and Special-Ops dedicated tough guys; the ones who do what the others could never dream of being able to do. And yes, God's minister has the same slogan, "Semper Fi" ... "Always Faithful" (1Co4:2)

When a person talks so forcefully in exhortation, how effective would such talk be if he had never personally experienced what he is exhorting? There is no such earnestness as that which comes from the mouth of one who's been there, and done that. Periodically, when we speak of some of the strong issues we address, particularly in the realms of interaction with pretend-christians, church leadership, and the need to "come out of her, My people" (Rev18:4); I have shared with you-all that there is nothing I write about, especially the things that I exhort to you-all with great earnestness, that I haven't been there, myself. I came through those hippy years, I sat in those Bible 'studies', I've heard all the excuses about gray-areas, I've been called "judgmental", for some years I actually caved in and became 'tolerant', I spent 20 years reading one of the perversions and remember clearly how it never really -quite- felt 'right' to my spirit, I've been married to an unequal yoke, I've been through the Bible word-for-word in translation considerations for both the LITV, and then the VW-edition, I know what's in the Bible...and when I exhort, repeating Rev18:4 over and over, I've been there...I CAME OUT. In past years I know what it is to have been called before church boards because of my stand on God's Word, when they were not, and they were calling me on the carpet for not submitting to the 'authority' of their apostasy. You can be sure, when you read something from here, it is not written out of hypocrisy.

I say this, not to boast; but for us to understand what Paul says here. This epistle is written with strength. It expects the minister to buck-up, suck-it-up, and go strongly forward; remaining firm in sound doctrine, shunning error, and enduring affliction. Paul has the 'right' to expect this of others, because he himself WENT THROUGH IT. There is nothing Paul writes, that he expects out of Timothy, that he hasn't endured, himself. Thus, he reminds Timothy of that which Timothy has already seen and known about Paul. Please read these verses; we're not going to address each item or incident.

But, once we leave the "doctrine", which is what Paul's epistles are all about; there is a heavy dose of "persecutions and afflictions" that characterized his service. If we want laundry lists, besides the historical accounts through the latter sections of Acts, he also enumerates in 2Co10-12 to the carnal church, seeking validation of the authenticity of his authority.

Yes, when Paul doesn't spend a lot of time dealing with Timothy's tears, he knows what tears are. He was in places where they "despaired even of life" (2Co1:8); but as he says here, "And out of them all the Lord delivered me" (3:11b), he learned that for himself, "Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us, in whom we hope that He will still deliver us," (2Co1:9-10) How could he confidently affirm "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep safe what I have committed to Him until that Day" (1:12)? Because he had been at death's door on numerous occasions, and the Lord "delivered" him.

There is nothing like trauma, to confirm a person's solidarity. I've shared this years ago, but it fits here; from the animal world. Years ago I had a cat. As a young thing it tended to feel pretty cocky. It even seemed to manage to win the scraps it would get into with other neighborhood cats. But on one occasion, according to the emergency vet who treated the wound/infection, it apparently got into a tussle with a cat that bested him. His hind paw got terribly infected from being bit; and in the process of nursing him back to health, it required regular soakings; and for a period of time the trip up and down the stairs was by me carrying him, because he was too weak to negotiate things to food and other of life's necessities. Prior to this incident, he had been rather head-strong, and if he didn't feel quite like coming in at night, he just didn't come. But after this injury, and the time it took to nurture back to health, he developed a bond with me, from my care of him. The latter part of his life he was never again nearly so cocky. When it was time to come in for the evening, when I called, he would come 'eagerly' running. Having been to a very low place, he came to understand my 'care' for him. He had 'experienced' it and 'knew' it.

Paul experienced many persecutions. But there were also times the Lord said to him to not be afraid, that nobody would hurt him for that period of

time, because the Lord had work for him to do, and souls to save. "Then the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you; for I have many people in this city." (Ac18:9-10) Paul knew persecutions; but he also knew when God was providing a covering of protection for him

But, conversely, even though he knew God's protection; he also knew that persecution comes with the territory. A lot of "christians" may have a life of ease. But notice that, if you purpose in your heart to go past the sitting-on-the-couch stage, and decide to 'serve' the Lord and be faithful, notice Paul says: "...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (3:12)

You can go back to your worldly friends and proclaim, "I became a Christian". But if you continue carousing with them, they won't take much notice. But if you decide to "live godly", that's when they start to see a changed life. You are no longer laughing at their dirty jokes, you are no longer leering after that sensuous flesh, your mouth cleans up...and then, "What's the deal? So you think you're better than us!?"

You're around those claiming to be Christian, whose lives are like the world. You don't join in many things. Perhaps you even suggest (matter-of-factly, figuring the concept is an 'assumed' amongst 'fellow-believers') that a family dinner (being hosted by the family patriarch who claims to be a Christian, and is on the church board of elders) be held at a restaurant, instead of a tavern. Well, enough of this sort of thing happens regularly enough, and you have suddenly become so judgmental; and those claiming to be "Christian" label the True Believer with expressions similar to "holier than thou" and such things.

Are you merely talking the talk? Or are you walking the walk?

And...don't expect things to get any better. When a person crosses one hurdle, the expectation is that things will begin to become 'smoother' on the other side. But in these "last days" (3:1) that is not the case. When one obstacle has been cleared, the Believer who is "living Godly" might just as well be preparing themselves for the next because, come...it will. Because...

"...evil men and pretenders will grow worse and worse, leading astray and being led astray" (3:13)

See that word we use quite regularly? "pretenders" It's going to continue being called "the church"; and those involved in it will continue calling themselves "christians"; but that's all they are. Pretenders. They are not the real thing.

Yes, over the years, there have also been many retorts, blasting me for saying that so many who call themselves "brothers", are NOT. How -

DARE- I judge them??? Notice that the expression did not originate with me. This is what Paul calls them. It's what Scripture calls them. "...for not all those of Israel are Israel" (Rom9:6b)

Not all [c]hristians are [C]hristian. Not all [b]rothers are [B]rothers.

Continue in the Scriptures - (2Tim3:13-17)

"But you continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them..." (3:14)

Since things are getting continually worse, let's just give up. Right? After all...sigh! Whine! What can we do about any of it...?

Wrong! That's not what "Semper Fi" is!

Just because the world is headed to hell in a hand basket, doesn't mean that we give up. Just because the world is getting worse and more perverse, doesn't mean we give in and slide along with them. Just because the world changes its standards, doesn't mean we change our center of gravity to 'adjust'. Remember, God says, "I, Jehovah, change not" (Mal3:6) Jesus Christ is the "same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb13:8)

Even though the world may be changing, God does not change; and we follow God; thus, we are not to change, either. There is a holy standard. It is found in the Scriptures. The apostasy is trying to change God's holy standards by changing their translations of Scripture. But remember, we "hold fast the form of sound words" (1:13); that which we learned. We've already been assured of them, thus, why should we change? We know - who- it is that saved us, thus, why should we desert?

I have an advantage over some, just as Timothy did. I cannot boast, like some, of having lived a life of sin, of drunkenness and immorality, to then 'boast' how -spectacularly- I was saved. Many clamor for such sensational tales. But like Timothy, I've known the Scriptures since childhood. By third grade I was reading well enough, I received my first complete Bible (which I still have over here on the shelf), which was a KJV (not a so-called "children's edition"), and read regularly, daily. In fact, by 4th grade I was reading the Bible through in a year. It's easy, you know: read 3 chapters a day, and 5 on Sundays, and you will get through the entire Bible in a year. I don't know how many times I've read through the Bible. But Paul encourages Timothy from his childhood faith. Remember, as Paul remembers Timothy's "tears" (1:4), he also reminds him of his "genuine faith", learned from his mother and grandmother. That faith was from the Holy Scriptures. (3:15)

Here we go again... From where does wisdom come? Paul harps on it; so I will, too. Seeing as how most people have abandoned the faith, it becomes obvious why it is needful to harp on it. What is the source of wisdom? The commentaries? The writings of the "great men", the "church fathers" of the reformation? The teachings of the famous conference speaker Dr. Rev. Mr. So-n-so? No! The HOLY SCRIPTURES.

If there is one thing, only -ONE- thing, that you -ever- get from any of these mailings and studies, it is this: The foundation and source of all that is "helpful"; that which expounds the "whole counsel of God" (Ac20:20,27) is God's Word, the Holy Scriptures, the Bible; in the English language having been translated 'faithfully' from the Masoretic and Textus Receptus texts. If all else was taken away from you, the one thing that would provide you with all you need is the Scriptures.

The Scriptures are the basis for salvation. "Faith is of hearing, and hearing through the Word of God" (Rom10:17)

Where did the Scriptures come from? They were "breathed by God" (3:16a) What was the agent of this "breathing". Was it man? "...knowing this first, that not any of the prophecies of Scripture came into being from personal exposition, for prophecy was not formerly brought forth by man's choice, but holy men of God spoke as they were propelled along by the Holy Spirit." (2Pe1:20-21)

How is the Bible useful? It is the textbook for doctrine. It is the lawbook for reproof. It is the decree for correction. And it is the instruction manual for righteousness. Anything a person wants to know regarding one's standing before God can be found in it.

It is the -only- guidebook necessary to make a person "complete". So many years after more knowledge, and they lust after new experiences. Some think they need a spouse to "complete" them; but in this I can attest, as I said previously that I don't write anything that I haven't been through, myself; I was married at one time, until my unequal yoke left. (you that have read the online testimony, know about this) I was so deeply "in love" with her....I thought. When I would read in Scripture how, to follow Christ, a person even needed to be willing to give up "wife" (Lk14:26), and that in Heaven "they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Mt22:30) I would secretly contemplate in my mind, wondering if I wanted to be in such a Heaven, if I couldn't be married to the one I loved. Thankfully, the Lord knew my heart, that the Faith was "in me also" (1:5); and when the unequal yoke left to pursue her other gods and 'self', during those following days and months of utter sorrow, the Lord made Himself known to me, in my heart, in ways I had never known before. It was during that time that I also learned the errors of the perversion I had been reading for 20 years, which started me in the path of "holding fast" (1:13) to the 'correct' texts of God's word, which then further opened the doors to be privileged to work on God's Word at the proofreading/translational level.

Also during those days and months, certain pretend christians were feeding me man's wisdom on all sorts of levels. But the Scriptures that I had known "from childhood" were still firmly implanted in my heart. And so, as these false christians were feeding me the world's wisdom (one of those worldly gurus, John Bradshaw, I happened to catch on TV one day, saying that: the worst form of child abuse is to have them read the Bible!

This was the man these "christians" were following, and counseling me from his teachings.), God's Word was also RIGHT THERE in my mind and heart, and I was continually comparing what 'they' were saying to me, vs what God's Word said. Thus, I can vouch to you the -CERTAINTY- that Scripture provides the "instruction in righteousness" to create a man of God that is "complete" and "thoroughly equipped" for every good work. I no longer need that unequal yoke to give me a sense of completeness, I have God and His Word. There are times, when being engrossed in the Scriptures, either to prepare these lessons, or particularly when I was working hours upon hours on the VW-edition, that when I would complete a certain segment, and would get my eyes out of the computer....I would look around and realize, sadly, that I was 'still' on this earth; having come out of God's presence. On one such occasion recently I found myself seriously contemplating, trying to figure out 'what' day it was; being totally bewildered at my earthly surroundings. And quite often, I do NOT LIKE the sense of getting my thoughts back into the humdrum of 'life', after having been so deeply engrossed in the Scriptures. No longer does another - person- 'complete' me. God does. The Scriptures do.

As I've said many other times, the things that come from here do not come from commentaries or other men. As many object to Biblical doctrine on certain topics, without reading thoroughly what is presented, they will rant, accusing me of following so-n-so's teaching on this, or following some other philosophy on that. Let me share with you that, although I went to Bible school years ago, I really don't remember all that much that I was taught there. What you receive here is from God's Word, from 50 years of being God's child and servant; these computer keys being typed on, with just me, with the Scriptures through the Holy Spirit. And when it comes time to preparing these lessons, I have never once felt the need to consult somebody else's ideas. The Scriptures have been "complete", and -all-that was needed.

You see, as Timothy was being "stirred up", the series begins with holding fast to the Scriptures. (1:13) And as the exhortations wind down, it ends with the Scriptures. (3:16,4:2) And in-between it's about "rightly dividing" the Scriptures. (2:15) Remember the "form" of sound words? If the form is laid out right, the cement cures right, providing the proper foundation and structure. Without the Scriptures, everything else falls flat. Without God's Word, God's servant is lost and in a daze. Without the Bible, the minister is without a mission. Without the Bread of Life, the sheep go hungry.

Do you see apostasy in this "last days"? Do you also see them tearing down the walls of doctrine? And do you understand how the Bible is the doctrinal text book? Do you understand 'why' the apostasy exists? Because they have thrown out God's Word, for the perversions. They don't want the Pure Word of Truth...they want something else.

But we are to "continue in the things we have learned" from out of the Scriptures.

"Your Words were found, and I ate them; and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O Jehovah the God of Hosts." (Jer15:16)

Charge: Preach & Be Watchful - (2Tim4:1-5)

"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom." (4:1)

What is a "charge"? Certainly, something the commander might yell to the cavalry as they rush into battle. But in this context what is it?

In the O.T. the tribe of Levi was commanded to "keep the charge" of Aaron and the congregation. One of the things that thoroughly disgusted me about the NKJV, while working on the VW-edition (speaking of "form of sound words"), was how they change it to "meet the needs of" the people. That they "attend to the furnishings" and "meet the needs of the people" (Nu3:7-8) The Levites were not janitors, hospitality hosts and butlers! They were given a "charge" of something that was only theirs. It was something that, if anybody else came along to try to do their service, they were to be executed. (Nu1:51) A "charge" is an "imposed duty, responsibility or obligation". What does it mean to "impose"? It is compulsory, prevailed upon, forced upon.

Again, Paul is not imposing something upon Timothy that he was not party to, himself. "...for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel." (1Co9:16) If a minister does not have this "charge" upon his life, then he should -leave- the ministry.... IMMEDIATELY! Lest he incur wrath upon himself. Isaiah begins many of his prophecies with, "the burden of..." (Is13:1,15:1 etc) Jeremiah speaks of God's burden: "But His Word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with holding it in, and I could not." (Jer20:9) Some leveled complaints against Moses for being the 'sole' leader of Israel; just as there are many of the apostasy who poo-poo the office of pastor: 'Why should there be just ONE MAN over the congregation?' And so, some of them form groups where they sit around, muttering things to each other, and NOBODY does any teaching! God told Israel: "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, Jehovah, reveal Myself to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream." (Nu12:6)

Yes, Paul and Barnabas were commissioned by a group of fellow-ministers to go on a missionary journey. (Ac13:2) But God had already called them to ministry, individually. If the man 'doubts' -whether- or not he should be a pastor? Then DON'T. If God has not called, but he is coming to the end of his Bible school term, and now it's time to "choose a career", and the role of "pastor" is one of the -many- options on the table? "Pastor" is one of the things -NOT- to do! When a person is called of God to ministry, there is NOTHING ELSE that moves the person. That is his -CHARGE-! Beyond that, there is nothing more I can say to describe it...when God calls a person -that- person knows, and there is NO QUESTION about it. It is -his- call...not his wife's. They are not a ministry

"team". Yes, certainly, it requires a special woman to be a pastor's wife; but the CHARGE is 'his'. Period.

In the N.T., part of the duty of apostles was to appoint people to ministry. Paul, the -apostle-, had laid hands on Timothy prior to this epistle. So now, as he is "stirring up" that which God had given, he is -charging- Timothy. This is his call, his duty, his responsibility. This charge is not between Paul and Timothy; but Paul is God's instrument in it, just as Moses was regarding the priests and Levites. This charge is "before God". And the severity of the charge, if it is not kept, is God's -judgement-.

What is that charge? Be a "people person"? Grow-a-church? Implement various multi-tiered programs? Start a fund-raising campaign and build a mega-complex? ...after all, how will people come if you don't have an impressive place for them to be comfortable...! Is this not what most pastors think they're supposed to be, and what churches advertise and look for when -they- are 'calling' a pastor? (Did you catch my little emphases in that last sentence...compared to the discussion just a couple paragraphs up?)

!!! NO !!! And again I emphasize: !!! NO !!! (pounding the pulpit)

PREACH THE WORD!

When we have a "charge", and then a description of that charge; such a description indicates the matter of **UTMOST URGENCY**. Of **PRIME IMPORTANCE**. **NOTHING ELSE MATTERS** comparatively. This first item of the charge stands alone, within its own sentence...Period.

Last lesson I repeated something I've emphasized on other occasions. If there is only one thing you get from these mailings, it is your attention to God's Word. Well, if there is **ONE THING** that a minister of the Gospel should understand, it is this point:

PREACH THE WORD!

If a pastor knows how to do nothing else, but faithfully preaches the Word of God, he will have been a "success", before the Judge; no matter the condition of the building, or the number of members. If he doesn't know how to preach, and the Holy Spirit is not gifting him for it, then **LEAVE THE MINISTRY**. -Seriously-

And then the other things: convince, rebuke (Oh! Gasp! sooo unloving!), exhort, with all longsuffering and (what?) **TEACHING**. Folks, that's **DOCTRINE**.

Why is all this so important? Again, our context is the "last days" of "perilous times" (3:1): "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own lusts, desiring to hear pleasant

things, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to myths" (4:3-4)

Well, now...isn't that EXACTLY what we see today! If anybody was wondering whether or not we are 'really' in the end times, those verses, along with 3:2-7, pretty much 'define' the situation today...as though Paul had already been here 'now', had seen it, and time-warped back to 67AD and written it. This is not 70% like Nostradamus and charismania prophesy, but this is 100%. -EVERYTHING- listed here is JUST like today.

They are singing "walls come down, walls come down" (of doctrine); they flock to stadiums where they can have "fun" dancing sensuously to the rock beats, and hear pleasant things about all-inclusive "acceptance"; they cling to their various perversions so they don't have to be faced with the Truth of God's Word; and they learn the various myths coming from the Reformation, the "rich heritage" of Babylon, and cling to eastern mysticism and call it "worship" and being "spirit-filled".

Thus, the charge to Timothy to "BE WATCHFUL". (4:5) Ezekiel was called a "watchman"; and the charge upon him was the "blood" of Israel. (Ezk3:17-18) Many people complain against the "negativity" of what has been coined, "discernment ministry". But this is the pastor's duty, to watch against intrusion. Yes, I know, people love to sing, "Bring them in, bring them in" But the pastor's duty is to KEEP THEM OUT, when they bring false doctrine. Remember all the exhortations to shun, flee and avoid? He also does that on behalf of the sheep.

There's a couple other things he lists. But we remember from the first epistle the various duties. And here we close. Everything that needs to be said -has- been said.

So, in closing: Be 'stirred up' and -DO- it. FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY. (4:5) Don't start, and then stop in mid-stream when things get a little tough. When the river runs wild and wants to pull you under, you keep forging to the other side as you "endure afflictions".

Remember, it's just like Ezekiel. The pastor has -blood- on his hands. The -souls- of the sheep entrusted to his care. And Christ judges the living and the dead. If they are dead, and they had been in your care, why are they dead? Was it -your- lack of fidelity? They will have died in their own sin, and you will be saved; but you will answer for your negligence. If you were faithful, your hands will be clean.

Where, in the course of events, do you want people to "feel good"? Where do you want to hear "thank you" with a firm hand-shake from them? Here, now? Or when standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ? (2Co5:10)

Paul's final testament - (2Tim4:6~)

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Hereafter, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all the ones loving His appearing." (4:6-8)

God's servant is stirred up, he is holding fast to God's Word, enduring hardship as a good soldier, preaching the Word, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, shunning profane babblings and false doctrines, watching and guarding the flock. And when one has "fulfilled their ministry" (4:5)... What comes next?

DEPARTURE.

The job is finished: no point sticking around any longer. Notice that Paul does not say things like: I'm about to be martyred. or: I'm about to die. But rather: "the time of my DEPARTURE is at hand" Departure to 'where'?

"We are confident, yes, preferring rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord." (2Co5:8) Peter spoke of, "...shortly I must put off my tent..." (2Pe1:14) as Paul says in another place: "For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life." (2Co5:4)

The world thinks of it as "dying". And, certainly, these bodies do -die-. "...as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this the judgment" (Heb9:27)

But for the Believer it is a "departure" from this sinful world, to ETERNAL LIFE in God's presence. Remember, our "citizenship is in Heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," (Php3:20) The Believer does not 'die', but he goes HOME!

As a Believer knows the 'time' is at hand, what weighs the conscience? Guilt at having done things one shouldn't have? Apprehension at not having done AS MUCH as one should have? When I get there will it be to praise, or shame and head-hanging? Will it be like a dog happily barking, bounding and wagging its tail because it is reunited with its master? Or will it be with tail between the legs, slinking around? Will we be able to sing:

I want to see my Savior first of all,
Before on any others I would call
And then for countless days
On His dear face I'll gaze
I want to see my Savior first of all

Or will we arrive with fire singes all over, barely by the skin-of-our-teeth? (1Co3:15) Will it be with singing or singes? (Don't you just love the play-on-words...!)

Well, Paul could confidently proclaim: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.

He has exhorted Timothy to "endure hardship as a good soldier" (2:3) Timothy was able to "carefully follow" (3:10) his example. Remember, we observed that Paul did not exhort anything that he, himself, had not persevered in. He has exhorted to "fulfill your ministry" (4:5) Paul did that. He has exhorted to "hold fast the form of sound words" (1:13); to remember/remind others of doctrinal truths (2:8,14); to shun/avoid false doctrines (2:16,23); to continue in the Scriptures (3:14); to preach the Word (4:2). That was Paul's primary focus, as we see most of the N.T. epistles written by him; and in pretty much all of them he has a recurring theme of faithfulness to sound doctrine. As he says good-bye to those of Asia Minor he proclaims, "how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, ...For I have not shrunk back from declaring to you the whole counsel of God" (Ac20:20,27)

Thus, what is Paul's reward? The CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

For whom is this crown? Just Paul?

There are several crowns mentioned in the N.T. There was the 1) crown of THORNS that Jesus wore (Mt27:29), the 2) crown of REJOICING (1Th2:19) when fellow-believers are in God's presence, the 3) crown of LIFE for those who love the Lord (Ja1:12), the 4) crown of GLORY that goes to God's shepherds for faithful service (1Pe5:4), and this one, the 5) crown of RIGHTEOUSNESS which is for those "loving His appearing" (4:8)

Paul is not claiming for himself the crown of "glory". He was not the sort to "boast beyond measure" (2Co10:13) But this crown he mentions is a universal one to those "LOVING HIS APPEARING".

What is Jesus' 'appearing'? Something we address regularly: there are yet two major events coming... Jesus' 1) appearing, and His 2) kingdom (4:1) When Jesus came on the scene in human form, the gospel preached was the "gospel of the kingdom" (Mt4:23, Mk1:14,etc) He had "come to His own (Israel), and His own did not receive Him". (Jn1:11) They crucified Him. He was "cut off" at the end of week 69. (Dan9:24-26, Is53:8) As Jesus was about to ascend back to Heaven, even after everything that had transpired and had been taught, the disciples' question is, "...will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Ac1:6) Notice that Jesus does not deny that there will be a future kingdom restoration for Israel, but he says it is not for them to know yet at that time. (vs7) We won't go into all that here, it is too big a topic and of a different context than to branch out here; but

the O.T. is -full- of God's promises to 'restore' Israel in their earthly kingdom.

The fact that -Israel- was to be a 'united' nation again in the land of promise is the whole point of "dem bones dem bones dem'a...dry bones" "...and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again." (Ezk37:22) Those who would try to make the church into this kingdom don't understand God's promises to give Israel a "new heart" (Ezk36:26) thru a "new covenant" (Jer31:31-34), as Paul also says, "...so all Israel will be saved" (Rom11:26) Thus, the (pretend) so-called "church" today erroneously looks for a "kingdom". But that is God's covenant with ISRAEL.

What the Church looks for is Christ's "APPEARING". We won't look them all up, hopefully you remember some of the passages; but our expectation of Eternal Life is called the "HOPE". And part of that is the "blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Tit2:13) The point at which we are "like Him" because we "see Him as He is" is when Jesus is "revealed" (1Jn3:2) "reveal" or "appear"...the same thing. When Jesus returns to Israel on the Mt of Olives He does so, "and all the saints with You" (Zec14:5)

But Jesus promises the Church, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (Jn14:3) You see: Jesus' coming to "receive" us is not the same event as when we come "with" Him to His kingdom where we "reign with Him a thousand years" (2:12, Rev20:6) Thus, Paul speaks of Jesus' 1)appearing and His 2)kingdom. (4:1)

So... 'who' receives the crown of RIGHTEOUSNESS? The ones waiting for His 'kingdom'?

No! The ones loving His APPEARING. This is the resurrection and rapture of the Church. (1Th4:16-17)

Certainly, for those who "love Jehovah with all their heart" (De6:5) Believers from Israel of ages other than the Church will receive the crown of LIFE. But the crown of righteousness is unique to the Church, because by definition, the Church -is- the "righteousness of God in Christ" (2Co5:21) We are the "glorious church without spot or wrinkle" (Eph5:27)

And it is the CHURCH, also, that is in expectation of Jesus' APPEARING. If a person's faith has been "overthrown" (2:18), and they have been persuaded of false doctrines regarding the resurrection/rapture, they are not "loving His appearing". Back in Paul's day they were deceived into believing it had already come and gone; today they deceive that either it isn't going to happen (at all), or that it coincides with Jesus' coming for His

kingdom. The crown of Righteousness is not for those who, having thoroughly studied and become 'convinced' of it, believe such errors.

Jesus commanded His followers to "watch therefore" (Mt24:42) And if people have been persuaded to NOT watch, it shows them to be "dead", and Jesus warns: "Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not at all know what hour I will come upon you." (Rev3:3) To "come UPON" is an expression of judgment.

But for those in expectation, "I will come and RECEIVE YOU TO MYSELF" (Jn14:3)

Amen.

P.S. Paul closes with some information of personal matters. If we read through those closing verses, we see how that, near the end Paul was abandoned by most. Demas had "deserted" him. (vs10) And anybody who might have been a witness on his behalf at his "first defense" (in court) "no one stood with" him. (vs16) Everyone in Asia had "turned away from" him. (1:15) Pretty much as it was for Jesus: "And they all forsook Him and fled" (Mk14:50) Apparently there was already apostasy begun; as John says, "even now many antichrists have risen" (1Jn2:18) And from history we can assume or imagine that Believers were afraid of the rise of Nero who burned many Christians at the stake.

But the One of whom he was "not ashamed" because he "knew" Him (1:12) stood with him to strengthen him. (4:17)

To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen. (4:18b)

Addendum Section:

Partake of the Afflictions

"..taking recollection of the unpretended faith in you...For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2Tm1:5-6 litv)

Timothy was a special young person. Spent a lot of time along-side Paul in the ministry. Several of Paul's epistles include him in the greetings. When Paul was in prison, he would send Timothy here and there to various ministries. He saw first-hand what Paul went through. And, as would be expected, he also experienced fear. When Paul writes to the church at Corinth, he speaks of Timothy's fear, exhorting them to help him out in that matter. (1Cor16:10-11) Not to "despise" him. It seems that his "youth" got in the way at times, as Paul exhorts him, "Let no one despise your youth" (1Tm4:12) but continue in the ministry in the Word, "reading, exhortation, teaching." (1Tm4:13) But that the ministry involves "labor and [suffering] reproach." (vs10)

But it would seem that it happened to him as happened to many prophets from time to time. When things got rough and people were mocking, Jeremiah said, "I will not mention Him, nor speak in His name any more..." (Jer20:9) In Jeremiah's case, God's Word "was in [his] heart like a burning fire shut up.." and so he "could not stop" from proclaiming.

In Timothy's case, Paul writes a letter. A little prodding. C'mon, son. Get up! Yes it's been a little rough; but that's the nature of this calling to which we've been called. Fear comes from us; it is not from God. The gift from God is "of power and of love and of a sound mind." (1:7)

So, what does Paul continue to say? "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner. But be partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." (vs8)

Does Paul encourage him by telling him it will be "better"? No. Get in there and jump into the afflictions. It somewhat reminds a person of martyrdom accounts during the middle-ages, where Believers had been gathered up, and a big bon-fire made to throw them into. In one such case there was a young 'frail' teen-aged girl. Bystanders feeling a bit "sorry" for her, being such a young 'pretty' girl; some, wondering how to 'save' her from the fiery death. Next thing they knew, she willingly ran and jumped into the flames. In another account, when a mass-martyrdom was occurring, a man rode up on his horse at a gallop, announced something to the effect that he heard there was a "martyrdom

of Christians" happened; that they couldn't carry on without him; at which point he jumped into the flames.

After all, what did Jesus do for us? It says, "...I did not turn away backwards. I gave My back to strikers, and My cheeks to pluckers; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting." (Is50:5-6) Notice: He -GAVE- His body to those who abused Him. For us, who have been redeemed by His blood, to think of reeling back from afflictions is like "[being] ashamed" (2Tm1:8a) of Christ, and of other martyrs/sufferers that have preceded us.

Notice a couple of things that afflictions produce in us. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept Your Word." (Ps119:67) Afflictions keep us humble, not too self-reliant. God disciplines us to follow Him more closely. Most of us haven't endured what Paul did with whippings, stonings or imprisonments. But God deals with each of us according to our need, and according to the job He has for us to do. (Heb12:4~) When we see our own inadequacy, it causes us to keep our eyes on Him. It drives us to His Word.

"It is good for me that I was afflicted, to learn Your statutes." (Ps119:71) You see, God's affliction is "for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." (Heb12:10b) Again, it drives us to His Word.

Timothy obviously follows Paul's exhortation. He gets back into the ministry. He also experiences further afflictions. Imprisonment. Because at some point it is said of him, "Know that our brother Timothy has been set at liberty..." (Heb13:23)

In whatever the case we are called: "...my beloved brothers, you be firm, immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord always, knowing that your labor is not without fruit in the Lord." (1Cor15:58)

"Beloved, do not be astonished at the fiery trial happening among you for your testing, as if a surprise were occurring to you; but according as you share the sufferings of Christ, rejoice; so that you may rejoice exultingly at the revelation of His glory. If you are reviled in the name of Christ, you are blessed, because "the Spirit of God and of glory rests on you." (2Pt4:12-14 litv)

Amen!