

Evidential Faith

We believe the Scriptures teach that God is one in both being and person. (Oneness Pentecostal Confession)

7.24.2007

Modern Wisdom from Paul's Second Letter to Timothy:

Reactions: [interesting \(0\)](#) [good \(0\)](#) [excellent \(0\)](#)

Labels: [2 Timothy](#), [Pauline Studies](#), [Sound Doctrine](#) Posted by JN Anderson at [Tuesday, July 24, 2007](#)



2 Timothy 3: 16-17 NIV, *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, (17) so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Almost from start to finish, in Paul's *Second Letter to Timothy*, we read of encouragement and instruction. A warning against false doctrine and persecution of sound doctrine is clearly made throughout this entire letter. It is typical in ancient Greek letters that the word *chairein* (English for "greetings") be used in introduction. Peter and Paul, some of the most powerful authors of Scripture, modified this tradition by replacing *chairein* with *charis* which is translated, "grace". To *charis* they added a Jewish custom of greeting by adding "peace" to the phrase. [1] For example, Paul begins *Second Timothy* with these words, "To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." (1:2 NIV[2])

Keep The Pattern of Sound Teaching:

Paul remembers the tears of Timothy and reminds him to keep his gift, given by God, alive! Timidity and fear is not from God (1:4-7)! God has granted us power, love and self-discipline. We should never be ashamed to testify of our Lord. The testimony or teachings that Timothy has gained from Paul is to be kept as "the pattern of sound teaching" (1:13). Paul clearly indicates that these teachings of truth are to be well guarded (1:14). Paul indicates to us that these teachings of truth are an entrusted deposit that should be guarded and passed on. It is obvious then that theological persecution and defectors of the faith were rampant in Ephesus. It appears Paul and Timothy has experienced or at least is aware of much persecution for the gospel.

About Me



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In spite of this persecution we are to be "strong in the grace" (2:1) from Christ Jesus. These teachings of Paul were to be entrusted to "reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." Paul here foresees persecution and seeks to maintain the persecuted teachings of truth. To Paul the Christian life is like a soldier (2:4) in an army, an athlete in a foot race (2:5), and a "hardworking farmer" (2:6) who should receive his reward for labor. All these metaphors indicate involvement in persecution, battles, running, and hard work. From these things we suffer because we do not tend to want to do them for great lengths. We are constantly to be reminded that we are in an active, engaged, battle against those who oppose truth. Paul tells Timothy though that even though he, himself, is chained "God's word is not chained" (2:9). Because of this Paul endures the things that he does.

A natural consequence of battle, running and hard work is that we train and become adept at each task. As we handle the scriptures there is little difference in application of effort. Paul tells Timothy that we are to be approved workmen, without shame, as he correctly handles the word of truth (2:15). It is a diligent and deliberate effort that even those in ministry can tend to avoid. To excel and cause the truth to triumph requires diligent effort on the part of believers. Godless chatter does nothing to help anything and it is wise to avoid foolish and stupid arguments, since they often lead to quarrels (2:16).

Terrible Times:

Paul begins chapter three with a warning that "terrible times" (3:1) will come in the last days. These terrible times are specifically mentioned as containing people stricken with pride, disobedience, unholy, brutal and etc. He encourages Timothy to "have nothing to do with them." These types of men "oppose the truth" and they have "depraved minds." (See 3:8) So far, Paul has mentioned three different sets of men in this letter. They are Phygellus and Hermogenes (1:15) who proved to be ashamed of the truth. Hymenaeus and Philetus (2:17, 18), as Paul states, erred concerning the truth. Jannes and Jambres (3:8), the OT figures who resisted Moses before Pharaoh, but were also resisting truth [3]. *It is prevalent in our post-modern society for individuals to shun the gospel because they are ashamed to defend its statements. Does this mean the gospel cannot be defended? Most definitely not.* In the times of Paul it meant grave persecution to be identified with Paul and those fellow believers. You would be a marked person by the establishment of their times. Therefore, true and unwavering commitment to one's faith was essential.

Authority and Inspiration of the Text:

Paul reminds Timothy that he knows of his controversial teachings and that, not only he, but "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." Nonetheless, Timothy is commanded to continue in what he has learned (See 3:10-12). Paul draws closer to the end of his letter by informing Timothy of the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures (3:16-17). Possibly, this was encouragement to Timothy in spite of the persecution he was facing about his Christian views which stem directly from his interpretation of OT texts, which in large part, was the message of the gospel of Christ.

C.S. Keener suggests, "The belief in the inspiration of prophecy and (usually in a somewhat different sense) poetry and music was widespread in Mediterranean antiquity. This belief was naturally applied to books of prophecy, and most of the Old Testament was attributed to prophets. Paul's claim for Scripture's inspiration matches Old Testament designations for the law and divine prophecies as "God's word." Like Paul, Judaism virtually universally accepted the Old Testament as God's word." [4]

It was imperative that Timothy *be not ashamed of a gospel that was contained in a New Covenant and that fulfilled the Old.* Primarily, in 3:16, Paul is referencing the complete OT, but also to the existent NT texts of that time. In

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Paul's first letter he quotes Luke 10:7 and references it as Scripture. Peter also spoke of Paul's letters as scriptures (2 Peter 3:16). Therefore, it is quite certain the early church had a high view of the letters of Paul; they were on par with OT scriptures themselves.

Paul warned Timothy of the Authority of Scripture. The NET Bible renders 3:16-17:

Every scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 3:17 that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work.

The Scriptures, inspired by God, are for our teaching, censuring or rebuking, correction and are able to train us in righteousness. The Scriptures, when a person is wholly committed to God, will equip them with every good work. Remember, Paul is writing this epistle to Timothy, likely the pastor of Ephesus. He is encouraging Timothy, and us today, to lean upon the Scriptures for these are [breathed of God and are living](#) and able to equip us.

Let us look again, afresh, at the Scriptures. It should be our desire for them cut away our presuppositions and let the Holy Spirit guide us, [illuminate](#) us, back to the Authority of Scripture. It can give faith in "terrible times". It can give peace to unrested souls.

Wisdom For Now:

Many of the same principles in this Pauline discourse carry over into our daily lives as Christians. *We are not to be ashamed of truth, we are soldiers in spiritual battle, we are to be diligent students of God's Word, we are to avoid foolish and stupid arguments, those who oppose truth still walk the streets of our world, persecution will come to all who live a godly life, and "all scripture" is useful for our guidance and correction in righteousness.*

We must guard our constitutions. We must solidify our core doctrines and uphold them. We should not allow tradition to impede the process of evangelism. In that same notion, we should never sacrifice holiness and the biblical demand for separation. To what ends we nuance our principles will forevermore reveal our diversity. The New Testament church has experienced flux in polity since its existence. We should draw the line however when technology and deductive interpretations (might Paul say, "What?") demand we divide and not a matter of soteriology.

*An idyllic notion that once a person becomes a believer that then they enter into a peaceful, passive utopia is actually foreign to the concepts provided in Scripture. As Paul has made clear in these texts above, believers are in a battle, engaged in a race, and should constantly be diligent with the handling of His Word. Christian Johnson once noted, "A Bible that's falling apart probably belongs to someone who isn't." It is imperative that, in these endtimes, we handle God's Word rightly and while being led by the Holy Spirit. We are stewards of the deposit of truth, it is imperative that we maintain it and proclaim it, unashamedly, to a **world** inculcated with falsity and gilded realities.*

NOTES:

1. This idea comes from *Grasping God's Word*-Second Edition, pg. 245 © 2001, 2005 by J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays

2. NIV is used here on unless indicated otherwise.

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3. The idea of this analogy was obtained by *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (2 Ti 3:8). MacDonald, W., & Farstad, A. (1997, c1995). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

4. Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (2 Ti 3:16). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.



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