

Dr. Robert Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 10, 2 Timothy 2:22-3:17

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This is Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough in his teaching on the Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Instruction for Pastoral Leaders and Their Followers. Session 10, 2 Timothy 2:22-3:17.

We continue our look at the pastoral epistles, Apostolic Instructions for Pastoral Leaders and Their Followers.

And we're beginning now in 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 20. And this is a section of 2 Timothy, which according to the NIV heading, Paul is dealing with false teachers. And in verse 20 and 21, he has a little metaphor, just like earlier in the chapter, he had the metaphor of the soldier and the athlete and the farmer.

Now he has a metaphor about, you could say, pots or wastebaskets or containers. He says, in a large house there are articles, not only of gold and silver, and we can think of these as receptacles, but also of wood and clay. Some are for special purposes and some for common use.

So, you could think of a vase or a vase for flowers. It might be silver. That's a special purpose.

But then there's the garbage can, that's for common use. That's the way things are in a big house. You've got various kinds of containers.

Those who cleanse themselves from the latter, from the common use, will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the master, and prepared to do any good work. And then he turns to Timothy and says, flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness. We've seen this pattern before.

Flee this, but pursue that. I call it the positive ethic. You mortify the flesh, not by just denying what's wrong, but by turning from it, repenting in a hurry, and pursuing what's good.

Pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. In other words, join the church in the fullest sense. Join those who have a pure heart.

Jesus, the blessed are the pure in heart. Join the people of God in the pursuit of God. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Boy, is that hard, but there it is. Opponents must be gently instructed.

Actually, I think there's maybe at least a hidden imperative there, but we'll take it as it is. Opponents must be gently instructed in the hope that God will grant them repentance, leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. Our observations, and I will split my screen here so that we can see the verse as well as the observation.

We're almost there. Okay, observation. When I read verses 20 and 21, I think of 1 Corinthians 12, where Paul talks about we're members of the body, and you've got the ear, and you've got the eye, and the ear doesn't say to the eye, I don't need you, and the eye doesn't say to the foot, I don't need you.

We all need each other. And then he goes further, and he says, there are those parts of the body we don't talk about, but they're pretty necessary, too. And so, he's saying that in the church, we need to realize that we need to affirm everybody who is a member of the body of Christ.

And on the screen, I used the phrase, it takes all kinds. Sometimes in American English, we'll see kind of a sketchy or marginal person, but we realize, well, they're part of this, too. And we'll say, well, it takes all kinds.

People, society is made up of all kinds of people. The church is made up of all kinds of people. But Paul is saying in verses 20 and 21, we should strive to be flower vases and not trash cans.

Verse 20, those who cleanse themselves from the common use will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the, and he uses the word despot here, because he's talking about the household master. He's making an analogy, useful to the master and prepared for every good work, or the NIV says, prepared to do any good work. So, that's just kind of hanging there.

It's a paragraph on its own. But I think what it is, it's a metaphor. It's an analogy that sort of prepares the ground for 22 and following.

He's going to say to Timothy, cleanse yourself for special purposes. Allow yourself to be reaffirmed in your dedication to God, and your holiness. So, flee and pursue.

And I've already said, we deny and defy the flesh by walking in the spirit and not merely by avoiding sin. Practically speaking, you have a child, you have a student, and you have somebody you're working with in church. A lot of times people struggle

with weaknesses and the means of grace that they will find is if you could find a way for them to take the energy that they're devoting in a negative direction.

How can you deploy that energy in a positive direction? Because sin is a God-given drive used in the wrong way. And often you can't deny the drive. It's there.

It's part of your makeup. All right, how can we turn that drive to holy purposes? And, the desire to flee controversy, Jesus said, blessed are the peacemakers. And sometimes we do need to just vacate ourselves.

In fact, Paul says don't have anything to do with certain things. So, there are times when we need to vacate a situation. We need to, in that sense, flee it.

It was good when Joseph fled Potiphar's wife. But the drive that causes us to do bad things can be turned in good directions. And then, that energy to flee for Timothy in some cases need to be redeployed to resist and to stand firm and to run interference to people who are being harmed by these false teachers.

So, there's a lot of wisdom and a lot of shrewdness in this council to flee the evil desires of youth and to turn those drives in God's direction out of a pure heart. Thirdly, handling conflict is tricky. And beginning in verse 23, we've got conflict.

We've got foolish and stupid arguments that produce quarrels. And handling conflict requires knowledge to teach. The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to everyone.

What does that look like? Able to teach. You know people who are headed in the wrong direction, let's just say that to some degree they mean well, how can they be redirected? Well, what did Jesus do? He taught them many things. He instructed.

So able to teach along with this, and then we have things that don't always combine with teaching. I mean, sometimes teachers are pretty heavy-handed. And sometimes teachers are pretty apathetic about their students.

They're mainly interested in their subject. Students need to catch what they can. Well, they need to teach along with restraint and kindness and the freedom from rancor and the gentleness and evangelistic compassion that may reap the harvest of conversion.

The goal is the redemption of people. People, if they're that misled that they could be lost, they're opposing the gospel. The goal is to create a space in the hope that God will grant them repentance.

That takes a lot of love. It takes God's grace to really desire the repentance of opponents of the gospel. It's easy to think, I've done my job if I prove they're wrong.

And I show everybody, if I show them up, that can be the temptation. But when you study even the Passion Week of Jesus when the opposition to Jesus was becoming pitched, he was still speaking redemptively to people. He was not denouncing people.

1 Peter makes a big deal of this, that when he was insulted, he did not insult in return. He maintained his status as the teacher and the shepherd. And he entrusted himself to God in doing what was right.

This is exactly what Paul is saying here, and he's putting it in a different idiom to a pastor named Timothy. But there is this very Christ-like picture of someone who is not quarrelsome, but kind and able to teach and not resentful. And I use that word restraint because I lack it so often.

As I read this, I'm ashamed of some exchanges I know I've been part of that I look back over my life. There have been things I've said, things I've written, reactions that I've had, and they're not right. And they're not productive.

They feel good at the moment maybe, but they're not productive. And so, these are things that are very important as Paul talks about dealing with false teachers. Now we go over into chapter 3, but we're still under this heading of false teachers.

The NIV says, but mark this, and this is one of the five or six uses of the word know, know this in Greek. There will be terrible times in the last days. And this kind of again echoes 1 Timothy, and the last days are now.

People will be, and we can say and are, lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, which kind of sums it all up. Lovers of themselves, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying its power. And there's that word godliness that we see in the pastorals.

And what Paul is saying here is that the gospel brings a kind of godliness. It brings a quality of devotion to God that results in behavior that looks very different than this. When people say they believe in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, then these kinds of characteristics should be relatively rare in their lives.

We all probably struggle with a number of them, but that shouldn't be the dominant characteristic of our life as we grow in the Christian faith. But, Paul says mark this. Mark this.

Mark this. There's going to come a time when people, and I think he's including people associated with the church, that's why he's warning the pastor. People are going to have all these negative indicators, and yet because they're in the church, it's like a form of godliness.

It's who I am and I go to church. And they're denying the power of the godliness that they profess. And he says have nothing to do with such people.

Avoid such people. And then he goes into a further description. They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires.

Always learning, but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. And these are the women who can never come to a knowledge of the truth, and also the teachers who are misleading them who never come to a knowledge of the truth. Just as Janice and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers opposed the truth.

And these are figures in Jewish literature when Moses was appearing before Pharaoh, and there were various plagues that were coming, and the magicians tried to produce the effects of the plagues from the curses that Moses, in the name of God, was pronouncing. Janice and Jambres were two figures that were said to be opposing Moses and opposing God before Pharaoh. And he's likening these people to Janice and Jambres in the time of Moses.

They are men of depraved minds who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But he says they will not get very far because as in the case of those men, that is Janice and Jambres, their folly will be clear to everyone. So, let's see if we can make some sense of this from some observations.

There's a lot in these verses. One challenge in ministry is identifying with sinners in the world. Jesus identified with sinners.

He was called a friend of sinners, and it wasn't a compliment. He received a baptism that was for the forgiveness of sins. He identified with sinful Israel.

No, he never sinned. He said to John, the baptizer, permit my baptism, and in the language of one translation, for thus it befits us to fulfill all righteousness. This has to happen.

I have to identify with sinful Israel in order for God's purpose in my life and ministry to be fulfilled. And so, we see Jesus rubbing shoulders with the Samaritan woman and the people who were hated even more than whatever she represented, tax collectors. He sat down and ate with tax collectors of all things.

He identified with sinners. But the danger is that we're conformed to that unholy world. That's the danger.

And I think of that for ministers. I know of a minister who ended up committing suicide because he was single. He got involved in HIV ministry some years ago.

He was compromised in his contact with people in this HIV community. And when it came to his senses, he shouldn't have taken his life, but that was his solution to his shame. And ministers, and even just anybody who wants to make disciples, who are you discipling? You're discipling sinners.

And you reach out to people and you befriend people. And if you're a Christian, you've probably grown in holiness in some areas, and you're not living like they are, and the danger would be that you would be moved in their direction. And so, Paul is underscoring the character of people who end up being in the church and certainly are prevalent outside the church, and they affect to have religion.

They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power. Whether they're in the church or whether they're outside the church, it doesn't really matter. Paul is saying, do not as a pastor make these your comrades in arms.

And I think of this today because we have the problem not only of very, what we used to call worldly people in the church, sometimes people with notable unholy lives, and yet we find them in the church, and they're not looking for help. They're looking for affirmation. But we also find movements outside the church that accuse the church of not doing its job, so they're going to do the church's job better than the church can do.

I think of a bumper sticker, which we don't see bumper stickers very much anymore, but there used to be a bumper sticker called, Deed Before Creed. And that was saying, I'm not going to stand around a church and say things that I believe. What matters is getting out and changing the world.

And I teach in a Presbyterian seminary, and if you are a scholar of denominations, you will know that Presbyterians are part of a heritage called the Reformed Heritage, and the Reformed Heritage is known for a view of the church in which the church seeks not to come out of the world, but to transform the world. We want to extend the kingdom of God, the sovereignty of God, the redemption of God to every corner, every square inch of the world. I think that's a noble philosophy.

But the problem is, there's this danger of so much identifying because you can't change what you don't have a connection with. To engage, you have to get up in contact with. Again, Jesus had to contact sinners, but he didn't let himself be misled by them, or convinced by all his opponents who argued and tried to trick him.

You never say, you know something, you've got a point. I'm going to kind of like change my script. He knew what needed to be upheld, and he did so.

We don't always, so we need this caution. Also, you can read this, this is called a vice list, and in ancient literature, there are lots of writers who wrote these lists of things. You can use them to sort of get outraged about how rotten people are, but the way you should read this is as diagnostic, and say, like the disciples at the Last Supper, Lord is it I? Because I can see myself here and there, at least.

And probably, God can see me at every one of these things. So, we need to use these as tools to ponder our ways and be honest, like slanderous. Have we said anything slanderous about anybody recently? Slander is one of the most common sins in ministry because in ministry you have to deal with people, and if you have a staff you have to talk about people, and it's very, very easy to slide over into character assassination, and speculation about motives, and saying kind of nasty things because, well, we don't like this person.

It's really hard to maintain holiness in your attitude and speech when you're dealing with the problems that people have, because, our self-righteousness makes us feel better, and we feel better in part when we run other people down. That's just one example. We could talk for five or ten minutes about every one of these things, and how susceptible we all are to them.

Secondly, by God's grace and faithful pastoral leadership, wise pastoral leadership, the conniving treachery, Jannes and Jambres are going to be conniving treacherous people. The conniving treachery of gospel naysayers and exploiters can be exposed and neutralized, and have nothing to do with such people. You can identify, Timothy, as fake godliness.

It may take some discernment, but especially with experience we learn. We learn, and that doesn't mean we become mean in return. He's already said, this is how you reach out to people who are opponents of the gospel, and there needs to be a separation, have nothing to do with such people.

But on the other hand, there's a positive ministry here of exposing and neutralizing their effect. And I don't think I say too much more about the rest of this, except I will say one thing about 3:6 through 9 because it implies, it's kind of euphemistic language, they were meant to turn their way into homes and gain control over

gullible women, and then we get evil desires here. It all but implies something like adultery or some kind of illicit activities.

And we wouldn't be honest about our cultural situation if we didn't cry out to God for the sake of world Christianity, because 60% of the world's Christianity on the books, by numbers, is Catholic, and Catholics around the world should be aware of how much sexual sin there has proven to be in the priesthood. I don't say that with delight, I'm just saying that there's something deeply, deeply reprehensible in the eyes of God, and we're not talking about a thousand or two, we're talking about tens of thousands of pastors, of priests, in recent generations around the world, in the world's most dominant confessing Christian religion. Now, I'm not a Catholic, and I fear for the teaching of Catholicism because I don't think it's true to the Bible, by and large.

I'm not saying there are no Catholic Christians, I'm just saying that there are many in the Catholic Church who don't hear the gospel, and it's been a public scandal in many parts of the world, acknowledged by the Vatican, that we have this problem of priests who are involved with boys or women in ways that they should not be. But it's a problem in Protestant churches as well. It's a problem in liberal churches, and it's a problem in conservative churches.

If you're in the ministry for very long, you will run into these situations. You'll be in a church, and you'll realize there's a history in this church. There was a church worker who slept with somebody they shouldn't have slept with.

Sometimes it's extreme, sometimes it's multiple women who've had affairs with the same or with various church staff members. So this sounds a little bit vague and foreign, and then we've got Moses, and we've got these kinds of mythological Jannes and Jambres, and there's a lot that's hazy here, but this is very, very graphic to us, and we live in a very sensual culture where even if you're even if people are faithful bodily, you have the whole problem of the internet, and the problem of porn addiction on the part of people who have a lot of time to be on the internet, and that would include a lot of church staff members, and they are rotting their hearts, and they are destroying their character by sexual sin in absentia. It's just virtual.

But God knows the heart, and probably at least in many sectors of the West, the powerlessness of preaching and the emptiness of preparation for preaching is most to be attributed to the thinness of soul and heart caused by the corruption of what people look at online. Just judging by what I read, and judging by what I know even about seminary students, this is a tremendous problem that weakens the character of people who profess godliness. They may be seminarians, or they may be pastors, or they may be seminary professors, but they can't get away from this addiction.

They're denying the power that raised Jesus from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead, but I can't kick pornography. Something's not right there.

So these are very, very powerful words to a church, and the virtual world is everywhere. I mean, you can go to places that don't have electricity, but even places that don't have electricity, a lot of them have solar collectors, and so they still have electricity even though they don't have transmission lines. And what I'm saying is the decadence that we associate with the West is actually the decadence of all humanity.

The abuse of boys in Afghanistan and in other Muslim countries is a reality, and it's not because of Islam per se, it's because of Adam and Eve and sin, and the form that corruption takes in men and women is the expression of desires in wrong directions. And when you talk about men and women, well, it's obvious where this is leading. So this was all about dealing with false teachers and false teachings.

We now move to the final charge to Timothy, and this begins in chapter 3, verse 10. And I think we have time to finish it and still have this lecture at a manageable length. You, however, and that's emphatic.

He doesn't often use the personal pronoun. He doesn't have to because in Greek, the verb contained the pronoun. But sometimes he actually says sigma, upsilon, su.

But you know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, my faith, patience, love, endurance, and persecutions. I'm so glad they didn't put and here. Suffering.

He's just kind of dumping out associations with his life because of the gospel. And what he's going to say here is, that the gospel made a night and day difference for me. As painful as it was, I loved what it caused.

The kinds of things that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Now this is especially notable because all these places he's mentioned, are all places where Timothy grew up. So, Timothy was a boy in Lystra, as far as we know.

And Antioch, that's Pisidian Antioch, that's not the Antioch over in Syria, the capital of the Roman province that had oversight over Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and the Decapolis and all that area. There were about a dozen Antiochs in antiquity. So, this is the Antioch in Pisidia, and the Antioch that was like an entrance into the Roman province of Galatia.

And Iconium and Lystra were in this Roman province of Galatia. And that's where Paul and Barnabas ministered on the first missionary journey. And you remember on that first missionary journey in Acts 13 and 14, Paul and Barnabas ministered for a couple of years.

But the more they ministered, they went to synagogues and they preached Jesus and they got a pretty good following. But the more they ministered, the more the Jewish opposition rallied against them. And finally, they stoned Paul and left him for dead.

They dragged him out of the town and they stoned him and they said, we've killed him. And they might have. We don't know from the language whether he was resurrected or whether he was not resurrected.

But he was as good as dead. And the Lord, he says, rescued me from all of them. So, in the previous section he's talked about all the bad things that happened in the world.

But now he's talking about the teaching. It's a teaching that changed him from a blasphemer, a violent person, and a murderer. He was just like those people that he just said, don't have anything to do with these people.

Now he's turning and saying, there is a message that changes people so that they can live lives that glorify God and I'm exhibiting A. And then he broadens it in verse 12. In fact, everyone, and the language of Greek is more, everyone who desires to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. And the NIV expands that a little bit.

Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. While, on the other hand, evildoers and imposters will go from bad to worse. People who do evil and people who pretend to be Christians or pretend to be godly but aren't, they're going to go from bad to worse deceiving and being deceived.

But as for you, so here's Timothy in between. He can see the form of godliness without its power. He can see the evildoers and imposters going from bad to worse.

He can see the deceivers and the deceived. And then he can see Paul. Then he can see Christ who upheld Paul.

And he has to make a continual decision, which side of the fence do I want to be on? And Paul says, as for you, which kind of takes you back to 3.10, you, however, but as for you, verse 14, continuing what you have learned and have become convinced of. Because you know those from whom you learned it. They were part of a venerable tradition going back to God calling Abraham and God making covenant promises to David.

You know from whom you've learned them and how from infancy you've known the holy scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. You know, that word of the Torah, that word of the prophets, that word of the Psalms as it was sung, as it was expounded, as it was prayed in the synagogue, as it

was prayed through the meal times and the rituals of Old Testament households, God did not leave himself without a witness and there was a remnant among the people of God even before Jesus came. They were awaiting the consolation of Israel.

They were awaiting the fulfillment of God's promises and he, Timothy, had the blessing of being in such a household. And so, from infancy, he was inculcated with these redemptive truths that could make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Now, they didn't have Christ Jesus until the first missionary journey.

But they had God's promise which was going to be fulfilled in Christ Jesus and that was just as good. Their souls were just as saved. And Timothy is in this wonderful transition generation along with his mother and his grandmother.

They were pious Jews awaiting God's promise. Christians could say they were saved. They were saved.

They had hearts that were, as the Psalms say, created me a clean heart, O God. They had the cleansing of the promise of God and I believe in the Spirit of God. But now Christ has come and so, you can look back on Christ's saving ministry and his ascension and Paul reflects on the power of Scripture, and aren't we glad this is in the Bible?

It would be true just by inference from what we see about the Bible. But this is a very explicit statement about the inspiration of Scripture. Inspiration comes from that word, God-breathed, which doesn't really mean inspired.

It means breathed out by God or breathed out from God. But especially in the Latin tradition, inspire is a Latin-based word. That word got into the English language and, you know, it's okay.

But it's not as graphic as this image of there being a God who speaks intelligibly to people and he speaks by breathing out his word. Couldn't be more organic, couldn't be more connected with the God who gives it. And it certainly isn't saying there were inspired people.

It's saying that the words on the page were breathed out by God. And that applies to all of Scripture some people want to interpret it. Every Scripture that is inspired by God is breathed out.

No. All the Scripture has this status of being God's inscripturated breathed-out word and it's useful for teaching, for reproof, for correcting. There's no and in Greek for training and righteousness.

Yit has a sort of a fourfold utility. I don't think it's comprehensive but it's certainly representative and rich. So that with the outcome that, with the result that, the servant of God, you girls translate that the man of God, may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

I tend to want to translate it man of God because I think he wants Timothy to apply to himself and he's already called him man of God at the end of 1 Timothy. But the NIV doesn't want it to sound so gender specific and certainly the word there can also mean person of God. So, they translate servant instead of human being or man.

So that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. We see first of all apostolic faithfulness by God's grace and rescue serve the temple for all future disciples especially leaders like Timothy. I want to say that in verses 10-11 Paul's not bragging.

Paul's reminding Timothy of what God brought him through because God is going to have to bring Timothy through some things and Paul's not going to be there to encourage him and to run interference for him. So it's important that as painful as that was, Timothy thinks back on it. And notice that Paul isn't saying you know Christ died on the cross and I went through all these things and I got some left for dead.

But now in the church Jesus delivers us from this. What he's saying is everybody who has that desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, you're going to have your day of woe. You're going to have your day of rejection.

You're going to have your day of arrest maybe. You may have your day, your season of who knows? Who knows? Ask pastors around the world who are in prison right now or not pastors. When I was in a country and the security cracked down they arrested my translator.

And she was just a godly church member. But for 40 days nobody knew where she was. And it was very, very grim.

All she was doing was just translating so that people could understand my lectures in that language. But God brought her through. We read 10 and 11 and there's something we need to remember here and in fact this is a factor throughout the apostolic testimony but we know something, we name it that they didn't have a name for and we call it PTSD.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Now I think God's grace worked so powerfully in Paul's life that I don't see a lot of signs that he was a disordered individual. But people who have gone through things like Paul went through have been affected emotionally and psychologically.

And it can twist them and deform them but it can also be a source of very deep wisdom and very profound authenticity. Paul was not some nut. And just as we shouldn't romanticize firing, we shouldn't romanticize the persecutions and the sufferings of anybody because they are traumatic.

And by the grace of God, we may well survive them and live to fight another day and we may be better people in some ways for them but we will bear those scars. And I've been around people who have been tortured and you know they're very godly people and very productive in God's kingdom but there is a darkness there that God's grace ministers to but it's extremely painful. And it exposes them to the danger of just like immobility paralysis.

If they let themselves get drawn into the state they were in when they were being tortured. I know of one case there was a situation I was ministering to and one man's eyes one went that way and one went another and you could tell there was something wrong and at times in our conferences, he would just stand up and start shrieking. At first, I was very frightened but people would just pull him down and put their arm around him and talk to him.

Finally, after a few days, I said you know what's wrong with that person? Well, they severely tortured him and he's never really been right again. When you read that third 2nd Corinthians or 3 Corinthians passage it gave 2 Corinthians 11 about verse 36 or so into chapter 12 you see Paul was beaten three times for example 39 lashes. He was stoned and left for dead.

He went through a lot of things and he was faithful through those things. God brought him through those things not without a price emotionally and psychologically. But I say this because it challenges us to take this seriously.

Number one because we are entering a zone where lots of Christians are being killed all the time and if you are listening to this you may be in a part of the world where Christians are being arrested and killed and we desperately need to regain the full effect of this testimony that God can bring us through and not romanticize it but acknowledge what a terrible thing this is to endure and acknowledge we need God's grace for courage. We need God's grace to be willing to continue to make the decisions that we fear are leading us to a confrontation with authorities. It's not going to be pleasant for us but we realize we don't have any choice.

Our Lord is leading us and we can see it coming. We don't want to get there but if it does God help us to be ready. We do not want to shame Jesus' name by denying him because of our fear of pain or fear of suffering.

So, I think he lays this out and I think it's graphic to Timothy especially if Timothy was a child in that area and he heard of and perhaps we don't know. He says you know all

about my teaching and my persecutions and the things that happen to me in your home area. Maybe his mother, his grandmother, maybe Timothy they may have seen him being stoned.

But I think this is graphic and I think it's a template for all future disciples especially when it comes to verse 12 because all Christians can expect some form and level of opposition worthy of being labeled persecution at some time in their Christian walk. And in some callings and in some settings this can be frequent, it can be chronic, and it can be severe. It can be lethal.

Meanwhile, evil doers may prosper. The people who turn Christians in, the people who rat out Christians in some countries where Christians meet secretly, and then informers are always looking for opportunities to find these people because if they report them they get rewarded. Doesn't seem fair but it's the way it is.

Finally, the scriptures what we know as both the Old and New Testaments have long steered the thoughts and the lives of God's faithful. It's kind of remarkable when you look at the modern world and the disdain that sometimes we find in the church even for scripture, the parts of the scripture that the church doesn't like, you never hear about. Or they change it.

I've got a book called, well it's called the Bible but it was translated by something like the Committee for Biblical Equality or something like that. And it's a group of Catholics who affirm gay and women's ordination and they've translated the whole Bible but like the word Lord doesn't occur there. It's a Bible where the words don't, they're all politically correct words.

So, we don't have Jesus being the son of God anymore and there are just a lot of things. He's not Lord anymore, he's something else. The Bible is devalued in the church in the modern world but for Paul, it's the lifeline for faithful service.

Timothy should continue in this heritage of a high view of God's written word. From childhood, you've known the scripture. It's able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

This is why best case scenario the scriptures are so valued and treasured in the church week after week after week. It's not a dead tradition. You know it's not a lack of creativity.

It's not why can't we think of something else to do? This isn't like a random activity that somehow the church got stuck on. It's like Peter saying to Jesus in John chapter 6 when Jesus says, are you going to leave me too? And Peter says, Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And there is no other source for the salvation of people.

Whether we talk about initially or whether we talk about week after week after week we all need fresh communion with God through his word. And we need Timothy's who are deeply instructed and deeply called and deeply gifted to be our servants because we're not all called and gifted to be ministers of the word. We are all called and gifted to be disciples.

But God has an *oikonomia*. He has a structure for that and in that structure, we need shepherds for our souls. And we need teachers for our minds and hearts and lives.

And those are our pastors. And their main tool is holy scripture. It's God-breathed and it's profitable.

It's useful. It's for teaching, for reproof. We're going to hear things we don't like.

That's more negative for correction. That's painful but it's positive. We're being corrected.

And then training. And that training is a child discipline word. Or we could say like training a German shepherd.

He becomes skilled in hearing and in doing. Training for righteousness that the man of God or the woman of God, the servant of God might be fully equipped for every good work. And you know in that, in those two verses we kind of have the holy grail we could say of Christian discipleship.

What's the goal of Christian discipleship? The goal of Christian discipleship is to be in communion with God such that through the word of God we are fully equipped. Not just equipped but fully equipped for not just a good deed now and then but for every good work that God sets before us. And sometimes the list can be very formidable.

But through scripture ministered to us, of course by the Holy Spirit but also by servants of God like Timothy, we can be adequate. We can be fully equipped for those good works. And that is a very high and strong note on which 2 Timothy chapter 3 ends.

This is Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough in his teaching on the Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Instruction for Pastoral Leaders and Their Followers. Session 10, 2 Timothy 2:22-3:17.