

II Timothy – Approved and Disapproved Workers II Tim. 2:14-26

Thesis: To help us understand what God wants from us so that we can be approved before Him.

Introduction:

I. Paul warns Timothy about some of the negative things that can come into the church (2:14, 16-18).

A. Directly, Paul warns Timothy about those who will cause a division among the brethren (2:14, 16-18).

1. Paul says that we should not “strive about words to no profit” (2:14).
 - a. To “strive about words to no profit” means that you argue about things that do not matter.
 - b. The reason we should be careful not to argue about useless matters is because it will lead “to the ruin of the hearers.”
 - 1) II Tim. 2:23 - But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.
 - 2) II Tim. 2:24a - And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel.
 - 3) When others, especially outsiders, hear members of the body of Christ arguing about useless things, they are turned away from the church.
 - 4) Also, when members of the body of Christ are constantly around those who like to argue, they are also turned away from the church.
 - 5) As Tom Holland says, “Arguments about insignificant matters tend to demoralize people” (Courageous Christians, pg. 43).
2. “Shun profane and idle babblings” (2:16).
 - a. Notice what Paul means by this saying.
 - 1) “Profane” teachings are that which is “heathenish, or wicked” (Strong’s).
 - 2) “Idle babblings” are that which is “empty sounding, i.e. fruitless discussion” (Strong’s).
 - 3) In other words, we should not be involved in teaching that which is wrong or useless.
 - b. The reason that we refrain from “profane and idle babblings” is that “they will increase to more ungodliness.”
 - 1) If someone teaches things that are wicked and useless to the kingdom of God, the hearers cannot grow closer to God.
 - 2) To help illustrate this point, Paul gives us the example of Hymenaeus and Philetus.

- a) Paul also tells Timothy that if he allows these things to continue, “their message will spread like cancer” (2:18).
- b) Most of us have known others who were infected with cancer, and know how quickly it can spread if left untreated.
- c) Hymenaeus and Philetus had lost their faith because they strayed from the truth.
 - i. They had said that the resurrection from the dead had already past.
 - ii. Because of them and their teaching, others had lost their faith.
 - iii. *Incidentally, this verse is proof positive that it is possible to have faith in God and then lose that faith.*

B. Today, we need to be careful about those who cause division among the brethren.

- 1. It can be easy for us to get caught up in talking about useless things or things that will destroy the faith of another.
- 2. However, we must heed the warning of Paul and not allow that to happen to us.
- 3. Rom. 16:17 - Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

III. If we want to be an approved worker for the Lord, we must put off that which is bad and pursue that which is good (2:19-21).

A. “The solid foundation of God stands” (2:19).

- 1. “The Lord knows those who are His.”
- 2. “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

B. Paul uses the example of a house in which there are vessels for honor and vessels for dishonor (2:20-21).

- 1. To be faithful to God, we must be willing to remove the vessels that are for dishonor, and put on the ones that are for honor.
- 2. If we do, we will be “sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work” (2:21).
- 3. I Cor. 3:11 - For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

II. There are some positive things that Paul encourages Timothy to tell his listeners (2:22, 24-26).

A. Notice the things that Paul says a true servant of the Lord should be.

1. There are certain things that we must actively pursue (2:22).
 - a. Righteousness
 - 1) We should want to live holy before God.
 - 2) It is only by living a righteous life that we can be justified before God.
 - b. Faith
 - 1) We should always strive to deepen our faith.
 - 2) II Pet. 3:18 - but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - 3) If we are going to grow in our faith, we must actively pursue it.
 - c. Love
 - 1) The Greek word that Paul uses is “agape” (Strong’s).
 - 2) It is the self sacrificial love that we should all have for one another.
 - d. Peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart
 - 1) Notice that this is not peace at all cost.
 - a) We cannot sacrifice the truth in order to be at peace with false teachers.
 - b) There are times in which peace is not possible.
 - 2) Paul is saying that we should have peace with those who are of a pure heart.
 - a) Rom. 12:18 - If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.
 - b) Heb. 12:14 - Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:
2. There are also certain things that we must be (2:24-26).
 - a. Gentle to all
 - 1) Christians cannot be harsh towards others.
 - 2) Even in the midst of adversity, we must be gentle to all.
 - b. Able to teach
 - 1) Christians must be able to tell others what they believe and why.
 - 2) It is not good enough to say “This is what I have always been taught” or “My preacher said...”
 - 3) I Pet. 3:15 - But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;
 - 4) All Christians, not just elders and preachers, should be able to teach one another.
 - c. Patient
 - 1) Christians cannot be quick tempered.

- 2) One of the characteristics of Christians is to be patient in difficult situations.
- d. “In humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, {26} and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”
 - 1) Because false teaching is prevalent, we all need to be able to correct those who are in error.
 - 2) However, when we are correcting someone, we should do so in humility.
 - 3) Our goal is not to embarrass someone, but rather to it is bring them back to Christ.

B. Today, if we are going to be faithful servants of God, we must be these kinds of people.

1. There is no doubt that it takes work in order to be this kind of person.
2. **II Tim. 2:15** - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
 - a. The Greek word that is translated as “be diligent” or “study” (KJV) is a word that means “to use speed, i.e. to make effort, be prompt or earnest” (Strong’s).
 - b. It is not something that happens overnight; it takes work to become.
3. If we are going to be faithful to God, we must be willing to work at it.

Conclusion: