

As For You

In our culture, what is suitable to the world is not always suitable for a Christian. Paul is dealing with this type of attitude in Eph 5:11. Ephesus is a wicked and vile city. ***(Eph 5:11) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*** What is suitable for the world is not always suitable for God's people. That pertains to the language that we use, the thoughts that we think, the places we go, the friends that we keep, etc. Christians are to live by a higher standard, we are to be distinctive. ***(Rom 12:2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*** The Living Bible says it this way, "Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold." It seems that if there is to be compromise between the world and the Christian, it is the Christians that do the compromising and not the world.

As Paul grows older and facing his death, because of his faith in Christ this matter seemed to be on his heart. 2 Timothy is the last inspired epistle of Paul that we have. In this letter Paul was doing all he could to maintain the purity of the gospel. Now he says ***the time of my departure is at hand.*** It's time to leave; it's about time for me to die. After his departure, Paul wanted to insure the purity of the gospel would prevail. He is preparing to pass the torch on to someone else, and he chose the young man Timothy. We learn from other writings that Paul and Timothy had a very special relationship. Paul and Timothy had a lot of respect for one another and in essence Paul is saying in 2 Tim. 4 that he was passing the responsibility of preaching the purity of the gospel onto Timothy. ***{2} Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.***

Now this could prove to be a challenge to Timothy for several reasons. **For one**, relative to Paul, Timothy was a **young man**. The Romans considered a man was still in his youth up until the age of 40. Timothy was considered a youth. So Paul would say to him ***(1 Tim 4:12) Let no man despise thy youth but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*** So there was his age.

Another possible challenge was his health. There are some indications that Timothy had some health issues. So on one occasion Paul says to Timothy, ***(1 Tim 5:23) Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.*** One translation says "frequent afflictions." It's not like he had a stomach ache every once in a while, but rather it was his frequent affliction. Apparently it was a frequent occurrence.

Then there was the personality of Timothy himself. Timothy doesn't seem to be as aggressive and bold as was Paul. Timothy was seemingly a bit more timid. So Paul tells him ***(2 Tim 1:7) For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*** Timothy, you don't be intimidated by this world, because you have the power of God on your side. So Timothy, I'm passing the torch on to you in spite of these things.

(2 Tim 4:5 NRSV) As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully. There is a little phrase in verse 5 that seems to sum up what Paul is trying to get across. That phrase is "but as for you." This phrase is painting a contrast toward the standard of the world. Timothy, it doesn't matter what the standard of the world may be, but AS FOR YOU, you are to be different. What is suitable for the world is not always suitable for God's people. That's the message to the church here in Blodgett in the 21st century, **as for you**, be different than the world around you.

Let me give you three reasons why this is important. (1) **presence of the God**, (2) **perversion of truth**, and (3) **passing of life**.

First it's important because of the **presence of the God-man**. *2 Tim 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; {2} Preach the word.* Note that before Paul gives any detail of the charge, he reminds Timothy that he is in the presence of God. Timothy, always remember that your life is lived in the presence of God. Every thing that you do and say is done under the watchful eye of God Almighty. While you may do something in secret to those around you, it's not in secret to God. *Yogi Berra, the hall of fame baseball catcher for the NY Yankees back in the 50/60's had several profound statements. One was "it ain't over till it's over." He said on another occasion, "One thing I notice is that wherever I go, there I am."* That's the way it is with God's presence. He is everywhere. *(Heb 4:13) Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* Let us be reminded as was Timothy that our lives were lived in the very presence of God.

Paul then adds *(2 Tim 4:1) ... who shall judge the quick (living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.* This God who sees and knows everything is ultimately the God who holds us accountable, and this judgment will be at "his appearing." This has reference to the 2nd coming of Christ and when he does, judgment is going to take place. **He will judge the quick and the dead.** This ought to be a motivator for us to live a holy, righteous, godly life. When it really gets down to it, the Lord Jesus Christ is really the only person we have to please. When all is said and done nobody else matters. You can please everybody else and it won't make a bit of difference eternally. Our lives are lived under the watchful eye of the Savior.

A second reason for this charge to Timothy is the perversion of the false man. *{3} For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; {4} And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.* Paul is telling Timothy that he needed to hold on and defend the gospel because the time was going to come when people will not appreciate the word of God. In fact, they will turn away from hearing the truth and turn aside unto fables. The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. The term "endure" is from a Greek word meaning they will not tolerate sound doctrine. Notice that Paul did not say that the time would come when they will not "enjoy" sound doctrine. There is a difference. You can endure something while not enjoying it. A trip to the dentist might illustrate this point. But Paul warns that there will be those who want "endure, want even tolerate" sound doctrine.

"Sound doctrine" literally means healthy, wholesome doctrine. This is the kind of doctrine that builds Christian character and that helps people to mature. The time is coming when people want endure that kind of teaching.

They want endure sound doctrine because sometimes sound doctrine doesn't taste too good to you. Have you ever noticed that you can tell health food just by the way that it taste? Health food does not taste nearly as good as "junk" food. Same is true with spiritual food. Some get a good taste of sound doctrine and they don't like it because it doesn't appeal to their appetite and desires. It's not that these people don't like preaching. In fact, the text says *they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.* They just pile up one teacher after another, but not just any ole teacher. They seek out teachers that tickle their ears. In so doing, they will turn away from the truth and turn aside unto fables. They want something that will not make them better but something that will make them feel better. They were seeking a "feel good" religion. Now there is a lot of that going on today as well, both outside and inside the church. I once heard a person who said, "I'm looking for a church that teaches what I believe." Understand that sound doctrine may not always taste good,

but it's always good for you. Timothy, whether it is fashionable or not, ***you preach the word; be in season or out of season.*** We need to hold to the soundness of truth because of the perversion of truth by the false man.

No. 3. We should hold true to the word of God because of the passing of Life. Vs 6 begins with “*for*” and that word is significant in that it introduces another reason. ***{6} For I am now ready*** (already being) ***to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand*** (has come). Paul is making reference to his death. The process of my death has already started; here I am in prison and I will never be set free. I am already being offered. The time of my departure has come. The word “*departure*” means to unloose something. At times it has reference to unhitching a yoke of oxen at the end of a long day of plowing. At other times it was used to refer to the taking of chains off the wrist of a prisoner. Sometimes it had reference to the soldier pulling up the stakes of his tent as he packed up his belongings to move out. Most of the time, it was a nautical term that referred to a ship in the harbor that was tied to the dock. The ropes were loosened and the sails were hoisted as the ship was getting ready for a departure to another destination. Paul said the time of my departure is near. I'm getting ready to go forth to a new destination.

Timothy, I'm not going to be here much longer and when I'm gone, the furtherance of the gospel is going to be passed on to you. This was probably a great motivation to young Timothy. Now when you think about it; that ought to be the motive for every generation. There have been some great preachers in generations past.

There is Marshall Keeble. I've been told that Bro Keeble was a master at illustrations and by such he presented the truth in a unique and clear understandable way. It is estimated that he baptized between some 40K – 50K people.

Then there is Gus Nichols. Bro. Nichols was an amazing man because of the scripture that he would quote. Some think that he had the entire Bible committed to memory. The amazing thing is that he had no formal training. He taught himself the word of God while working on the farm. While plowing, he would read a passage at the end of a row and then repeat that passage over and over until he reached the end of the row. Then he would memorize the next passage.

Bro. Guy N Woods was another great preacher. He was a great scholar. He had a doctorate degree in law, although he never practiced law. Instead, he preached the gospel.

Closer to home was the late Johnny Ramsey, a great mind for the gospel.

Right here at home we had Jerry Porter. I don't think anyone loved the truth more than Jerry. What a great inspiration he was/is to all of us that knew him.

There have been some great men of the past but that generation has passed on and they passed the torch of gospel preaching to my generation. Someone in our generation has to stand up and say, “*We'll preach the gospel. We'll be Bible class teachers, we'll be missionaries, we'll be song leaders, and we'll be elders and provide the needed leadership.*” Now the same thing is true in the generation to follow ours. Those of you who are younger need to step up and become the leaders of tomorrow. You that are younger need to start preparing yourself to be an elder in the church, a Bible class teacher, a song leader, a preacher of the gospel. ***The time of my departure is at hand. {7} I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*** Timothy, in spite of all that I have done, there is so much more to be done; so, preach the word. Let me stress to you the importance of developing and improving your abilities in the serving the Lord.

You can't help but to love the way Paul brings this great passage to an end. ***{7} I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*** Like an athlete, a prize fighter in the ring, I've fought a good fight. Like the runner in a marathon, I've run a good race, or like a trustworthy steward, I kept the faith. That would be a good inscription for a tombstone. Isn't that a good way to be remembered? Wouldn't you like for people to say about you, he fought a good fight, he finished the course, and he kept the faith.

Well, because of these attributes, Paul could say, {8} *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* The crown mentioned here is the crown of victory. That crown is given to the victorious life – to the person who had lived faithfully until the end. **DOES THAT DESCRIBE YOU?** Are you living faithfully? If not, then why not make things right

Invitation.