

New Morning Magical

God's got it covered

Let's finish up the second chapter the Apostle Paul's second letter to Timothy, and move on to Chapter 3.

We'll begin today in verse 19:

19 Howbeit, the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: The Lord knew those who are His, and, Let everyone who is naming the name of the Lord withdraw from injustice.

20 Now in a great house there are not only gold and silver utensils, but wooden and earthenware also, and some indeed for honor, yet some for dishonor.

Verse 20 is as close to a parable as we've seen in Paul's writings. It may be hard to swallow, but the utensils here are people, some of whom are INTENDED for honor and others for dishonor. It's not their choice, it's the Father's. He's not asking for volunteers; He's decided who will go which direction, and it all serves His purpose of the eons. Now, the human in me and probably you too, screams, "No fair!" This is where you and I are tested in our trust in the Father. Can the One Who created us and everything else help Himself to our lives, knowing that the consummation of the eons will reclaim everyone, including those chosen for dishonor? If that isn't persuasive enough, remember Isaiah 55:8-9:

8 For My designs are not your designs,
And your ways are not My ways, averring is Yahweh.
9 For as the heavens are loftier than the earth,
So are My ways loftier than your ways,
And My designs than your designs.

Back to 2 Timothy 2 now:

21 If, then, anyone should ever be purging himself from these, he will be a utensil for honor, hallowed, and useful to the Owner, made ready for every good act.

The "these" whom Paul alludes to here are the "*profane [prattlers]...who swerve as to the truth,*" whom we read about yesterday in 2 Timothy 2:16-18.

22 Now youthful desires flee: yet pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with all who are invoking the Lord out of a clean heart.

23 Now stupid and crude questionings refuse, being aware that they are generating fightings. **[More 'vain prattlings' going on here, but these result in literal battles]**

24 Now a slave of the Lord must not be fighting, but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, bearing with evil,

25 with meekness training those who are antagonizing, seeing whether God may be giving them repentance to come into a realization of the truth,

26 and they will be sobering up out of the trap of the Adversary, having been caught alive by him, for that one's will.

By now you understand that even when the Concordant Literal uses the term "adversary" as a proper noun, we're looking at the sa-tan in Hebrew, the oppositional, adversarial force to the word and will of God within human nature that rebels against its own mortality. We are NOT dealing with a being of any sort; we're dealing with what resides in our mortal, fleshly nature.

It's also worth pointing out that verse 26, where it reads, "*having been caught alive by him, for that one's will,*" the actual text means "*it,*" not "*him.*" In addition, the word, "*one*" in "*that one's will,*" is not in the actual text. It should read, "*having been caught alive by it, for that will.*"

Forgive me for laboring over such small points. To me, this is what "*correctly cutting the word of the truth*" looks like. Rather than letting errors like this stand that perpetuate the myths and misunderstanding from the past 2,000 years, we here are "*endeavoring to present ourselves to God qualified, unashamed workers.*" This isn't an exaggeration or misappropriation of Paul's instruction, but an entirely proper application.

Chapter 3

1 Now this know, that in the last days perilous periods will be present,

See if any of what follows looks or sounds familiar to you:

2 for men will be selfish, fond of money, ostentatious, proud, calumniators, stubborn to parents, ungrateful, malign,

3 without natural affection, implacable, adversaries, uncontrollable, fierce, averse to the good,

4 traitors, rash, conceited, fond of their own gratification rather than fond of God;

5 having a form of devoutness, yet denying its power.

Verse 5 is a terrible state to be in: *“having a form of devoutness, yet denying its power.”* I’m going to say something you may not like, but it probably won’t be the first time: Paul’s statement in verse 5 describes most of the religious world – not all, maybe, but most. The emphasis on buildings, ceremonies, garments, and even doctrine yields only the appearance of *“devoutness,”* while the real power of the evangel of Christ is barely recognized. Here’s what Paul says about these kinds of people:

6 These, also, shun. For of these are those who are slipping into homes and are leading into captivity little women, heaped with sins, being led by various lusts and gratifications,
7 always learning and yet not at any time able to come into a realization of the truth.

It’s the last statement that may be the most important, and you may know someone like this: *“Always learning and yet not at any time able to come into a realization of the truth.”* If there were ever a definition of being stuck, this is it.

Look at verse 13 now in this 3rd chapter:

13 Yet wicked men and swindlers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

No matter what the world looks like now, it’s going to get worse until the Lord Himself returns to straighten things out.

Paul concludes chapter 3 with this:

14 Now you be remaining in what you learned and verified, being aware from whom you learned it,

Once more we see Paul’s confidence and boldness in this instruction to Timothy. Notice too, that Timothy did not only learn, but verified what he learned. My prayer is that you do the same, because, truly, it doesn’t matter what I say, or what Barbara and I think, but what the Father reveals to you in His word and your own efforts to check things out for yourself.

15 and that from a babe you are acquainted with the sacred scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is inspired by God, and is beneficial for teaching, for exposure, for correction, for discipline in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be equipped, fitted out for every good act.

The Scriptures themselves, Paul says in verse 15 *“are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”* How wise do you want to be? Pour yourself into studying the Scriptures, put in the time and energy and watch what happens to your understanding of the Father and, more importantly, your relationship to Him and Yeshua.

We move now into the last chapter of 2nd Timothy, beginning in verse 2:

2 Herald the word. Stand by it, opportunely, inopportunely, expose, rebuke, entreat, with all patience and teaching.

Now, just a quick heads-up that verse 2 is addressed to one person, not all, so don't think that you are somehow charged to do what Paul tells young Timothy, unless the Father compels you. I say that, because I made that mistake early on in my walk with the Lord. I felt guilty many times, because I couldn't make myself go out and witness for Christ, like so many of my contemporaries. I can't explain my reluctance – my resistance – other than to recognize finally that I was never called to herald. I could speak to anyone who was curious, who asked questions, but to confront anyone who was otherwise not looking was supremely distasteful to me. It took me a long time to be at peace with being silent, no longer feeling like I was letting Yeshua down, and being content to study diligently and speak when asked, or when the Lord compelled me, which was rare, but which always produced good fruit.

3 For the era will be when they will not tolerate sound teaching, but, their hearing being tickled, they will heap up for themselves teachers in accord with their own desires,
4 and, indeed, they will be turning their hearing away from the truth, yet will be turned aside to myths.

We have encountered this kind of warning from Paul several times in our explorations of his writings, and it's uncanny how timely they are.

Verse 5 is the way that Paul recommends dealing with all the craziness around you:

5 Yet you be sober in all things; suffer evil as an ideal soldier of Christ Jesus; do the work of an evangelist; fully discharge your service.

And now Paul talks about his own end:

6 For I am already a libation, and the period of my dissolution is imminent.

7 I have contended the ideal contest. I have finished my career. I have kept the faith.

8 Furthermore, there is reserved for me the wreath of righteousness, which the Lord, the just Judge, will be paying to me in that day; yet not to me only, but also to all who love His advent.

I pray that you and I will be able to say the same thing that Paul could toward the end of his life. How good is it to know that you have fully discharged your spiritual accountability before the Father; that you've fulfilled your purpose and that you will receive your just award from the Lord when you stand before Him at the Dais of Christ?

Now for our last look at Paul's second letter to Timothy, Chapter 4:

16 At my first defense no one came along with me, but all forsook me.

17 May it not be reckoned against them! **Yet the Lord stood beside me**, and He invigorates me, that through me the heralding may be fully discharged, and all the nations should hear; and I am rescued out of the mouth of the lion.

18 The Lord will be rescuing me from every wicked work and will be saving me for His celestial kingdom: to Whom be glory for the eons of the eons. Amen!

The picture of the Lord standing beside Paul, invigorating him, is a powerful one, as is Paul's trust in Yeshua. Paul's vision was always pointed to "*His celestial kingdom*," which is significant, because you'll find most Christians more focused on His Earthly kingdom.

I shocked Barbara many years ago, after we had met with someone who kept talking about working for the kingdom. I said, "*That kingdom is not my focus and I have no interest in it.*" Paul in verse 18 indicates the same thing: He's entirely focused on the "*celestial kingdom*," because that is what you and I have been saved for too.

We've explored all of Paul's writings in 72 Morning Magicals. We saw him at the beginning when the Lord revealed Himself to Paul on the Road to Damascus; we learned of Paul's unique revelations and "secrets" as the Father's purpose of the eons was opened to him and then to us. We saw Paul today, as he wrote what he must have known would be his last epistle to Timothy.

The Apostle Paul, no one can deny, was a truly unique character who played an enormous role in heralding his evangel that will endure long after this day. Thanks be to the Father of us all for all that the Lord showed His hand-picked apostle who would bring the word of God to the nations and thereby to us today.

We pray that you'll enjoy the coming Morning Magicals, which may be very different, but we pray be of at least as much value to you as we all continue to live in the shadow of the Father's wings.

Until then,

May Yahweh bless you and keep you;
May Yahweh light up His face toward you
and be gracious to you;
May Yahweh lift His face to you
and appoint peace for you.

AMEN