

Living in the Last Days

2 Timothy 3:1-9

Introduction

- A. Do you think we are living in the last days? Why or why not? (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- B. Timothy is currently in the city of Ephesus
 - 1. Acts 20:29-30—Paul predicted that things would get bad in that city
 - 2. Now in 2 Timothy 3 Paul is saying to Timothy that what he said would happen is happening
- C. This week we will look at Paul's description of the last days, then next week we will consider how we should respond to them

I. Terrible times (2 Timothy 3:1-4)

- A. The phrase "times of difficulty" (ESV) is a general description of these days (3:1)
 - 1. Greek word translated "difficulty" could also be translated "outrageous, violent, dangerous, or menacing"
The word was used in classical Greek of both wild animals and a raging sea.
(Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, p. 83)
 - 2. Does that seem to represent the day in which we are living?
 - 3. Who is behind all this? (2 Corinthians 4:4)
 - 4. Surely Timothy already knows all this, so why is Paul taking the time to repeat it?
Because he wants Timothy to understand that this opposition to the Word of God is a permanent characteristic of this era in which he and we live. It is easy to think that the storm will pass and things will get better, but Paul gives no such hope. Sometimes things appear as though they will improve, but it never lasts.
- B. Now Paul begins to fill in the details of what these "times of difficulty" include (3:2-4)
This list is similar to Romans 1:18-32. It begins and ends with corrupt love.
 - 1. They love themselves
Does this sound like our culture today?

Three expressions of self-love
 - a. Lovers of money—necessary to pamper yourself
 - b. Boastful—bragging about what they have and have achieved
 - c. Proud—strutting their stuff
 - 2. They do not love God (3:4)
 - 3. Between these two corrupt loves are 5 expressions about family life
 - a. Abusive—Anger toward those that interfere with their pleasures
 - b. Disobedient to parents
 - c. Ungrateful
 - d. Unholy
 - e. Heartless ("without love"-NIV)
 - 4. Eight expressions of anti-social behavior
 - a. Unappeasable (irreconcilable, refuse to enter into a treaty)

- b. Slanderous (Greek word is *diabolos*, same word used for the devil)
- c. No self-control
- d. Brutal (savage, fierce)
- e. Failing to love what is good
- f. Treacherous
- g. Rash (reckless)
- h. Conceited

II. Deformed faith (2 Timothy 3:5-9)

- A. These people are religious!
- B. They divorce religion from morality
 - 1. Common accusation of the Old Testament prophets against Israel & Judah
Isaiah 1:11-14—“*What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.* ¹² “*When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts?* ¹³ *Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.* ¹⁴ *Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.*” (ESV)
 - 2. Jesus confronted the Pharisees on this point
Matthew 23:25—“*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.*” (ESV)
 - 3. What parallels to this do you see in our society today?
- C. They are evangelistic (3:6)
Terms “creep” and “capture” refer to acts and words of deception.

Conclusion/Application

- 1. We are living in the last days, so we must not be surprised that our faith is under attack. In this fallen world that is in rebellion against God we are going to feel the oppression of the devil and evil people.
- 2. Be encouraged and live faithfully for Jesus because Paul tells us in vs. 9 that these evil people will not ultimately win.
- 3. We must be on guard so as not to get caught in the deceptions of our culture by keeping faithfully to God’s Word.