

Staying True in the Last Days

2 Timothy 3:10-17

Introduction

- A. Last week we said that according to the New Testament (Acts 2:17; Hebrews 1:1-2) we are currently living in the “last days.” Paul describes these days in the first part of chapter 3 as outrageous times where people have a twisted love of themselves and a renunciation of love for God. Ironically they continue to be religious but fail to connect their religion with their lives. Paul implies that as we get closer to the return of Jesus (the “last, last days”) all of these issues will intensify.
- B. The big question for us is: how do I live as a Christian in these times? We know things are getting worse, but how do I handle it? Some handle it by saying the church has to adjust to our changing culture. Bishop John Shelby Sprong’s book *Why Christianity Must Change or Die* says that we can no longer believe in the supernatural and there is no such thing as “the Word of God.” Paul here tells Timothy the exact opposite!
- C. In 2 Timothy 3:10-17 there are two key verbs that help us understand how we are to live in these days

I. We (follow) those who follow Christ (3:10-13)

- A. “Followed” (3:10) literally means “to walk behind someone as he goes somewhere”
Walking in another’s footsteps
- B. Paul was never afraid to encourage people to pattern their lives after his
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 11:1—“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”
 - 2. 1 Thessalonians 1:6—“And you became imitators of us and of the Lord....”

Was Paul saying he was perfect by suggesting others follow his pattern? Should we pattern ourselves after an imperfect example?

- C. What are some of the things Paul lists here that he had to live through as a result of his commitment to Christ? (3:11)

What point is Paul trying to make here to Timothy? to us? (3:12)

John 15:18-20—“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.”

During this time what is the status of the evil people and false teachers? (3:13)

The false teachers “begin by being seducers and end in being dupes, and the dupes (very often) of their own deceptions, for deceit commonly leads to self-deceit.”

(Alfred Plummer, *The Expositor’s Bible*, Vol. 6, p. 479)

D. Application

- 1. Whom are you following? Choose carefully your heroes because they impact your life.
- 2. Who is following you? Remember, someone is watching you, whether you want them to

or not. If those people follow Jesus the same way you do, would you be happy with that?

II. We (continue) _____ in what we have learned (3:14-17)

A. What is the contrast between the behavior of the false teachers (3:13) and Timothy (3:14)?

B. Paul gives 2 reasons why Timothy (and us) should stick with what we are convinced of

1. He/We know whom we learned it from (3:14)

2. What he/we have been taught is in harmony with scripture (3:15)

We must never think somehow that the Bible is like elementary school and then we move on to higher things like science, philosophy or technology. “If you leave the Word, you will, in the end, just conform to the world—to the spirit of this age. This may feel freeing for a moment. But it will make you the slave of every passing fashion—and they are passing faster and faster” (John Piper)

Simone Weil—“To be always relevant, you have to say things which are eternal.”

Conclusion/Application

1. In our rapidly changing culture where values are constantly altering, we need to seek out those who are faithfully following Christ and imitate their example. We are never too old for this.
2. In order to remain faithful to Jesus, we must be constantly sinking our roots deep into the holy scripture. As we do this we must practice James 1:22 by not merely listening to that it says, but doing what it says.
3. If we practice the two previous principles, there is a great likelihood we will suffer for it (3:12). But in these last days, we must stand with God’s truth at all costs. C.S. Lewis wrote, “I didn’t go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don’t recommend Christianity.” I would add, that if you want a religion that will make you safe in this world, then I don’t recommend Christianity either. But a day will come when in the presence of Jesus in glory, we will be rewarded for faithfully following him.

Who is on the Lord’s Side (last verse)

Chosen to be soldiers, in an alien land;
Chosen, called, and faithful, for our Captain’s band
In the service royal let us not grow cold;
Let us be right loyal, noble, true and bold.
Master Thou wilt keep us, by Thy grace divine,
Always on the Lord’s side, Savior, we are Thine.