

Daily Bible Study

“Metaphors of The Christian Life ~ The Slave”

2 Timothy 2:23-26

July 6 – July 12, 2014

MONDAY – After looking at the *Metaphors* of the Steward, Soldier, Athlete, Farmer, Workman, and Vessels we now continue our study of **2 Timothy** with another specific *Metaphor of the Christian Life* and this time it is the Slave (Servant). In this text Timothy is told by the Apostle to give special attention to his role as a preacher and teacher of God’s Word. We see again the reminder to avoid *foolish disputes* which produce *strife* and instead be a patient, kind, *servant* of the Lord by teaching and instructing those in his care. He is told that he will have opposition (people actually opposing the truth) but he is to remain faithful as the Lord’s *Servant* and leave the results of the work to the Master of the House, The Lord God Himself. So this text wraps up the use of *Metaphors* by the Apostle has instructed Timothy and us who would read this Scripture what the Christian life looks like and how God desires His people to work and act. As good soldiers, rule keeping athletes and hardworking farmers, we must be utterly dedicated. The preacher as an unashamed workman we must be accurate and clear in Scriptural exposition. As *vessels* for honorable use we must be sanctified in our character and conduct. Each metaphor concentrates on a specific issue or characteristic which paints the whole picture of a useful and effective Christian and church. As Stott says in summary of this chapter, “Only if we give ourselves without reserve to our soldiering, running and farming can we expect results. Only if we cut the truth straight and do not swerve from it shall we be approved by God and have no need to be ashamed. Only if we purify ourselves from what is ignoble, from all sin and error, shall we be vessels for noble use, serviceable to the Master of the house. Only if we are gentle and not quarrelsome, as the Lord’s true servants, will God grant our adversaries repentance, knowledge of the truth and deliverance from the devil. Such is our heavy responsibility to labour and suffer for the gospel. No wonder the chapter began with an exhortation to *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. Read our text: **2 Timothy 2:23-26**: “²³*But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.* ²⁴*And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,* ²⁵*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.*”

Suggestion for Prayer: God, teach me from Sacred Scripture this week. As I finish these Metaphors that You used to teach me how I need to live, give me strength and a desire to do what You said.

TUESDAY – 2 Timothy 2:23: “²³*But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.*” We see yet again the importance of the pastor not wasting his valuable time in *foolish and ignorant disputes* or what we could define as useless controversy. He is not as Peter Williams says to; engage “with those who are awkward and of an unteachable spirit, for it only leads to dissension.” There are lots of people who like to debate and ask questions to provoke and argue and this is to be *avoided* by the Lord’s Servant. *Ignorant* or literally “uninstructed” *disputes* cause *strife*. The word in the Greek for disputes is the word *zetesis* which means “debate” and as one Greek lexicon defines it, “to express forceful differences of opinion without necessarily having a presumed goal of seeking a solution”. The word is used in Scripture six times and it is speaking either about some kind of philosophical investigation (speculation) or a controversy. Paul uses the word as he instructs another pastor; namely Titus in **Titus 3:9** where he tells him to also *avoid foolish disputes*. This does not mean that ministers today are never to be a part of controversy for when the truth of the gospel was at stake in the New Testament times we find Paul himself involved in heated controversy even with Peter as he *opposed him to his face* (**Galatians 2:11–14**). Also Timothy and Titus were urged to *guard* the sacred deposit of the Word of truth and fight the good fight of faith and contend for the gospel. What this does mean is that disputes that are *foolish and ignorant* often “uninstructed” because they go beyond what Sacred Scripture has said and are based in speculation are to be avoided. Subjective and feeling based “revelation” that has not the authority and verification of God’s Word is to be avoided as it is dangerous and injurious to the Church and cause of Christ.

Suggestion for Prayer: God, thank You that You have told me all I need to know in Sacred Scripture. Help me avoid ignorant disputes and questions that arise from my own sinful selfish pride.

WEDNESDAY – 2 Timothy 2:24: “²⁴*And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,*” Now as the text continues we get the *Metaphor* put before us as the Apostle speaks of the *servant of the Lord*. We saw the *vessels* of the *great house* in earlier verses and now we see the *servant* in the *great house*. He is called a *doulos* or as we know this familiar word in the Greek to mean, literally a “slave”. Notice that coming off of the instruction about *ignorant disputes* which cause *strife* he is again reminded not to *quarrel* **but** instead *be gentle to all*. Gentleness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit

(**Galatians 5:22-23**) and a fundamental characteristic necessary for those who would lead in God's church. The word used here is a different Greek word than that used in **Galatians 5** but the meanings are driving to the same point. The word used here speaks of a kind, gentle, mildness and is used and illustrated in **1 Thessalonians 2:7** with the picture of a nursing mother. This man Timothy is to be a *gentle* man and needs to be *able to teach* as well. As he is in a service or ministry of teaching God's people, he needs to be gifted to do it. Also, he is to be *patient*. The word used for *patient* speaks of being able to tolerate wrongdoing without getting resentful and enduring difficulty without getting angry or upset. This is Christian maturity beloved. This is especially necessary for leaders in the church and requires the working of The Holy Spirit in a man because in his work of teaching and instructing he will run in to those who oppose and want to quarrel and dispute and attempt to frustrate him with ignorant questions. Correcting error is often a delicate task and a kind and *gentle* approach with God given *patience* is necessary to do the job well.

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, give Your ministers strength to grow and act in the manner that You have outlined here and commanded in this text. Help me also to pursue these things which are marks of maturity and walking in the Holy Spirit.*

THURSDAY – 2 Timothy 2:25: ^{“25} *in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,”* We have one more word that carries over the thought of the previous verse and that word is *humility*. This word is a like a garnish on the plate of gentleness and patience if you will. This *humility* is displayed by a gentle attitude that has as its opposite a rude, brash, and prideful demeanor. This is a very difficult thing to exercise. Being like our master Jesus, the servant of the Lord must not in the vernacular be “touchy” about criticism as unjust as it may be. He is to have this humility as he is *correcting* people. The word correcting means “discipline” and this mark of humble, patient, gentleness will mark the way a Godly minister corrects those who are wrong. Like a surgeon who delicately cuts away the diseased and hurtful portion without causing unnecessary pain is how a minister must deal with *those who are in opposition*. His gentleness, patience and humility are toward the goal that *God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth*. Isaiah the prophet outlined these wonderful traits as he pointed toward the ultimate servant of the Lord, Jesus Himself. These following verses in Isaiah add a hearty AMEN to this text. **Isaiah 42:2-3, 50:4, 6, 50:6; 53:7** all give us this beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus and how we as ministers in His house and Name should be. “The Lord's Servant” portrayed here was “*given the tongue of the learned*” and he used it wisely as he “*spoke a word in season to him who was weary*”. He was so humble and meek that he would never “*cry out or raise his voice*” and gently dealt with people so as to not “*break the bruised reed*” or “*quench the smoking flax*” (put out the flickering wick). And when people rose up in opposition to him he did not resist or retaliate but instead “*gave his back to those who struck him*” and his face to the spitting and pulling out of his beard. This all ended up with him going “*like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is*

silent, he opened not his mouth”. This was the greatest minister and servant of the Lord, Jesus of Nazareth, who unbelievably described Himself as being, “*gentle, and lowly in heart*” (**Matthew 11:29**). And this same meekness and gentleness of Christ which was displayed by The Apostle Paul (**2 Corinthians 10:1**) *must* (**verse 24**) *dei* (it is necessary) be the character of all who claim to be the Lord's servants today.

Suggestion for Prayer: *Jesus, thank You for such a beautiful example of how I should live as Your child. Thank You that You perfectly fulfilled the law of God and took the punishment I deserve for disobeying. Help me and help Your ministers today to live this way that You alone can enable.*

FRIDAY – 2 Timothy 2:26: ^{“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.”* What is a wonderful hope is that the Lord will honor obedience and may even do so by performing a saving and sanctifying work in the lives of people who oppose the truth. We understand the primary opponent in view from these verse is actually unconverted and without a saving relationship with Jesus. This last sentence is in very complex Greek as some scholars have the *him to do his will* referring to God and not Satan. Regardless, and we will comment more this Lord's Day, what is clear is that we are looking for God to awaken *repentance* and the desire for the truth in people and bring them to truth and salvation. Obviously the unconverted and unrepentant man is in the snare of the devil and needs to be rescued and saved from sin and God makes this happen often by working through his servants who patiently bring the truth before the lost. The servant plays an important role but make no mistake it is *God who grants them repentance* and delivers them from Satan's power and kingdom (**Colossians 1:13**). But we also understand that not only does the unconverted man give the Lord's Servant opposition but sometimes sadly it is genuine Christians who need to be gentle corrected and brought into submission to the truth. We see in **1 Timothy 3:7** that even Elders must be careful *lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil*. It is in both contexts that the pastor will remind himself that he is not only dealing with people, but their sin, and the ultimate sinister enemy, Satan. This is a great challenge to a faithful ministry. Behind the scenes, Satan and his demonic hosts are at work manipulating, scheming, and seducing the hearts and minds of men and women. “*Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*” (NIV - **Ephesians 6:12**). This is serious business Beloved and we should strive to be more alert, sensitive, and desirous to do what God would have us do in this work of Christian ministry.

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, I pray for my ministers and all faithful ministers of Your Gospel wherever they may be, that they would by the Holy Spirit of God stand firm on the Word of truth and see victories for Your kingdom as You bring deliverance to those who are captive and opposing Your truth. Help me understand the most serious nature of the work of the Church of Jesus Christ.*