

Daily Bible Study

“Metaphors of The Christian Life ~ The Workman”

2 Timothy 2:14-19

June 22 – June 28, 2014

MONDAY – As we continue our study of **2 Timothy** we return to yet another specific *Metaphor of the Christian Life* as we look at the Workman. We have seen the Steward, Soldier, Athlete and Farmer and now in verses **14-19** we see the Apostle instruct Timothy of facts concerning the Workman for God. Several things will be made plain to us from the text including the fact the Workman has the job of teaching the Word to God’s people. He is to *rightly divide the word of truth*. We also learn that there are two kinds of Workman; the *approved* or unashamed and also the *disapproved* or ashamed. The difference can be seen between these two groups of Workman in the way in which they handle or treat the “deposit” of the gospel or *the word of truth* and whether they want the approval of God upon their work, or whether they want the approval of men. Timothy will have God’s approval and blessing on his preaching and teaching if he is *diligent to present himself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*. The *word of truth* for us today is the same as it was then, the revelation of God in Scripture. The minister of today as well as all of us saints are to handle Scripture correctly without deviating from its teaching or distorting its message in any way. As a preacher of God’s Word, a man is not in the pulpit to dispense his own or anyone else’s opinions about life, the state of the world, etc... but he is to preach the truth of the Word of God looking to see sinners converted and the faith of God’s people strengthened and see them grow in maturity. Read our text for the week from **2 Timothy 2:14-19**: ¹⁴ *Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.* ¹⁵ *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* ¹⁶ *But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.* ¹⁷ *And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,* ¹⁸ *who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.* ¹⁹ *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”*

Suggestion for Prayer: God, teach me from Sacred Scripture how I need to hear Your Word as it is preached and taught and to take and walk in obedience to the things You show me from it. Help me also be diligent to pray for Your ministers as they have this responsibility in handling Scripture.

TUESDAY – **2 Timothy 2:14**: ¹⁴ *Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.* As we move into the text we find subject matter (*of these things*) of the first 13 verses is continued with the difference that the point of what had been said positively in the earlier verses is now said negatively. He has spoken about reliable, faithful men in earlier verses that will teach other Christians and now we see a warning about futile and non-profitable words and teaching and the danger it has on people. Timothy is told to remind the “*faithful, reliable men*” of **verse 2** to remain constant in their duty of teaching and preaching. They were told that in their many afflictions they are to always look up to Jesus the risen, reigning Savior, who gives the grace and strength to His faithful and He keeps and rewards them. As Paul charged Timothy, Timothy is to charge the other faithful men, *before the Lord*. This was and is a serious charge. Timothy is to warn these other ministers *not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers*. Paul is speaking about all types of useless words including, quarrels, myths, old wives tales (**1 Timothy 1:3, 4, 4:7**). The point again is to stay faithful to and preach, The Word (**2 Timothy 4:2**).

Suggestion for Prayer: God, help me not be a part of striving over useless words. May I not give ear to such things. Help Your ministers to remain faithful and not deviate from Your Word of truth.

WEDNESDAY – **2 Timothy 2:15**: ¹⁵ *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* As Paul continues he will set two kinds of workman in contrast and will supply an example of each. Timothy is to be a good workman, approved and not ashamed while Paul will list *Hymenaeus and Philetus* as bad workmen for they have *strayed concerning the truth*. This point of straying, going crooked and swerving is what we will now deal with. The verb in this verse translated *rightly dividing* is *orthotomeō* which literally means “to guide along a straight path” and is also defined as “to cut straight, hold a straight course”. It is a very unusual word and occurs only here in the New Testament and twice in the Greek Septuagint of the book of Proverbs; **Proverbs 3:6** a very familiar passage says *...and He will direct your paths* (or *make your paths straight* in some translations). And in **Proverbs 11:5** we read that *“The righteousness of the blameless keeps his way straight”*. How is Timothy to *rightly divide* or as many versions render this word, “cut straight” *the word of truth*. Is he to carve it like a Turkey or a loaf of bread? The definition of cutting straight has led to a lot of different interpretations of what Paul is getting at here. Some see him saying to carve up the Word and serve it as one would serve a loaf of bread or turkey. Some dispensationalists see this speaking of the ribbon of truth if you will being cut into portions, time segments or allotments. But is that what is being said? It seems pretty clear from the context and warnings the Apostle is giving that he is telling Timothy to not deviate from this revealed truth of Scripture but cut a straight path through the crooked countryside with this straight path. As we saw earlier from the farming metaphor, the early church father John

Chrysostom renders it, “driving a straight furrow in your proclamation of the truth”. We get the main point beloved, *the word of truth*, the apostolic faith which Timothy has received from Paul and is to pass on to others is to be kept accurate and plain. He is to stay true to Scripture and not make the path to the Lord confusing as did Elymas the sorcerer in **Acts 13:10** where he was guilty of “*perverting (making crooked) the straight ways (paths) of the Lord*”.

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, I pray today for Your ministers who teach and preach Your Word. Help them to make it plain and clear and not deviate from it. Amen

THURSDAY – 2 Timothy 2:16-18: ¹⁶ *But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. ¹⁷ And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, ¹⁸ who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.*” We have seen that Paul has told Timothy to keep straight with the Word of God and its teaching and proclamation and now he will show Timothy two examples of men who did not do that and the damage that results. He again reiterates the point he made earlier concerning useless words as he tells him to *shun profane and idle babblings for they will increase to more ungodliness*. In **verse 14** he told Timothy that these dangerous words prove to be *the ruin of the hearers*. The word in Greek there used for *ruin* is ***katastrophe***. I think you can obviously see the English word we derive from this. Here we find Paul saying very much the same thing as profane and idle words to no profit are not merely ***catastrophic*** in their effect but they also increase into more and more ungodliness. Error dishonors God and damages men. The truth, on the other hand, always honors God, it promotes godliness (***Titus 1:16***), and always edifies its hearers. Instead of causing the ***katastrophe*** by ruining the hearers it builds them up in faith, love and holiness. Timothy is to *shun* (stand around, avoid, turn from) this empty talk and don’t give it credibility and advance by engaging it. The damage caused by such false teaching is not only godless but it is if you will gangrenous. The word for cancer in the original is ***gangraina*** which speaks of a type of canker sore, ulcer condition which inflames and eats away at the flesh and bone. In other words it causes a serious eroding of one’s soul’s spiritual condition. False *babbling* leads people away from God; pointing them in the wrong direction and infecting both their own soul and the community. Paul says *Hymenaeus and Philetus* are like this as they are teaching false things. Serious error rather than the pure straight gospel is what they were spreading. They were saying *that the resurrection is already past; denying any bodily resurrection to come (Acts 17:32, 1 Corinthians 15:12)*. They were perhaps early Gnostics who considered the body an evil encumbrance and the thought of any bodily resurrection was undesirable. So many of them spiritualized it as a release from the flesh through ***gnōsis*** (knowledge), or by saying the promise of resurrection had been entirely fulfilled when we were by faith raised with Christ. Today many continue the very same error as they demythologize the resurrection of Jesus, speaking only of faith rising in the heart and

they downplay or deny the physical resurrection of the dead. Scripture obviously says otherwise (**1 Corinthians 15, John 5:25-29, 14:19**). **Verse 18** tells us these men had strayed. The verb is ***astochēō***, which comes from ***stochos***, a “target”, and means to “miss the mark” and so to “deviate” from something. By swerving from truth these men wandered away into vain discussion (**1 Timothy 1:16**) and by professing falsely called knowledge have missed the mark as regards the faith (**1 Timothy 6:21**). They *strayed* from the truth or *shot wide of the truth (astochēō)*. We have seen Paul describe the word of truth as a target and as a road. The teacher shoots at this target and either hits or misses it and as he cuts a road through the forest, he will make it either straight or crooked and as result of what and how he teaches, others are affected, for better or for worse. If he cuts the road straight people will be able to follow and “stay the course” and if he misses the mark, the attention of the people will be distracted from the target and the direction of their lives will follow the arrow however widely off the mark and astray it goes.

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for the hope in the promise of the resurrection of the dead. Thank You that I will actually be raised in a new body incorruptible and likened unto Jesus’ body. Help me stay the course by holding on to the truth faithfully taught.

FRIDAY – 2 Timothy 2:19: ¹⁹ *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”* Although people may fall away and go astray from the faith the *foundation of God stands* and it remains secure. The church of Jesus Christ has a two-fold seal. The first is secret and invisible; namely *the Lord knows those who are His* and will therefore keep them safe for ever. The second is public and visible, namely *let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity* and he proves that he belongs to the Lord by holy living. Both of these quotations come from **Numbers 16:5, 26** where the Apostle is probably referencing the Old Testament story of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Paul is saying that only the Lord who knows His people and can tell the true from the phony as only He sees the heart. But though we cannot see the heart, we can see the life which provides reliable evidence of the heart’s condition. Both *seals*, the divine and the human, the unseen and the seen together bear witness to *the solid foundation of God*, His true church. Although error is taught in today’s church, and people’s faith is being seriously undermined, the true church of God will not ultimately be destroyed. Jesus promised. *“I will build my church, and the gates of Hades [hell] will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:18)*. The forces of Hell and Satan himself rush to destroy and beat down the witness of the true church. But they will fail because it is built on the solid foundation of God’s truth

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to love and live the truth. Thank You that You are omniscient and that You also work in me by Your Spirit so that I may bear fruit and give evidence of a life changed by Your power. Help me depart from iniquity and glorify You.