

# Sebring Bible Study 2023



**“Torchbearers”**

2 Timothy 3-4

## “Torchbearers”

### 2 Timothy 3:1

The reality of this letter --- what our focus always needs to be --- REVIVAL  
Direction, tone, focus of entire letter imperative for chapters 3-4

1. Discipleship and relationship (1:2-5, 13-14; 2:1-2, 7)
  - Not theological letter or issues, but relationship!
  - Final words, baton --- what we should always be about
2. Truth of Jesus through the Word! (1:10-13; 2:2, 8, 14-15, 18, 25)
  - Basis, foundation of all relationships --- seek Him together
  - What we are to hand off --- all that matters forever
3. War! (1:7, 14; 2:1-4, 25-26)
  - Truth is what the enemy will oppose --- truth battle
  - The battle of our times, until He comes

**CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER** – an escalation now in 3:1!!

Repetition, details, “What matters” --- what we do when we care

- “But know this” (Pres. Act. Imperative) “realize” (NASB) “mark this” (NIV) --- father to son, hands on shoulder, “Look at me”
- “In the last days, perilous times will come” --- sounds serious, wake up!
  - *xalepos* = “hard to bear, painful, sore, grievous, difficult, dangerous”
  - What we can expect --- 2 Tim. 3:12; John 16:33

**Not a distant reality, but an impending, clear and present danger to Timothy NOW!!**

- A. “Last days” --- future? Acts 2:16; Hebrews 1:2
  - From completion of His redemptive work until His return (New American Commentary)
  - We are living in the last days! Live like that! (this letter)
- B. *enistami* (Fut. Mid. Ind.) = “stand in (the way)” “threaten”
  - Sense of *very* present – Rom. 8:38; Gal. 1:4
  - J.B. Phillips: “The times will be full of danger”
- C. Wait, but future tense? Yes, but spoken as an impending reality  
2:17ff; 3:5-8

Thus, urgency to speak with repetition, detail, earnest, hand on shoulder,  
“Look at me” Ever felt that way? Life depends on it?

Paul’s tone and words to Timothy ---- felt strongly and clearly, *with grace!*

- False teaching, deception
- Paul’s own last days

What we need now! Awakening, revival! A clear and present danger to us and generations to follow (2:26) --- but grace and truth in and through Jesus

## **TORCHBEARERS**

What to do about this danger? What is the admonition and invitation?

(can become MY own crusade to fix!)

Remember the spiritual battle --- Eph. 6 and 2 Cor. 10 --- why Paul so focused in chapters 3-4 --- only ONE solution = Jesus through the *truth of His Word!!!*

- Note references to truth AGAIN --- 3:7 and 3:14-4:4
- Not much detail about last days (distraction of enemy?)

**It's all about the truth of Jesus through His Word** – father to son. Therefore:

### **Let your life be immersed and focused in Jesus and the truth of His Word**

- This is what matters!! Repetition, details --- father hands on son's shoulder
- What we need always and never more than now!
- Opposition this, spiritual war --- we *will* face opposition (1:7-8, 13-14)
- A decision for me --- will I choose this? Respond to Him and His call?
  - Intentional, purposeful, seeking
  - Revival! Paul's point that our survival depends upon this

### **Let Him be what I hand off**

- Picture of Olympic torchbearer – run to spot, hand off
- What am I diligent, earnest, passionate to do that with? With whom?
- Paul could have handed off a lot of things to his son, Timothy

*But hear his focus in this letter, from father to son --- WHAT MATTERS! Jesus and the truth of His Word in you and others*

Am I willing to be that in this lifetime? What the world needs. Picture of torchbearer giving all he has --- his very life, last strength --- to get that torch to the next person (4:7). Dramatic? But this is the tone, message of the letter

Don't know how? Feel alone? Don't have the strength?

**It is Him working in and through us.** 1:14; 2:1 **His ability, not mine**

- He is the Truth
- He carries us

Submit my life to Him for this? Torchbearer!! Nothing else matters

*“Jesus, please work in me; produce YOUR focus, YOUR life, YOUR purpose, and nothing else.”*

Not a condemnation, but a call!

## **“To the Core”**

### 2 Timothy 3:2-5

#### **THE CORE**

As Paul begins to elaborate on the warning (v. 1) . . . more details!

Gives Timothy elaborate detailed list of warning signs (vv. 2-5). Dive into each one in detail?

Overwhelming, and not Paul’s purpose --- not a list to be fixated upon, but a list of warning signs that point to an underlying problem!

Like dashboard lights on a car --- don’t get so fixated on symptoms --- what the world does and can be tempted to do in church (dashboard watchers?)

Dashboard lights are not the real issue --- just an indicator of a core, root, deeper problem

First item in v. 2 as the summary of the core problem? *“Lovers of themselves”* = **self-centeredness** ---- THE core problem of humanity and root of all human issues

What to do about it? 2 approaches . . .

#### **CRAFTING GODLINESS**

The approach of those Paul is warning about summarized in the final item: *“having a form of godliness”*

*morphe* (form or shape) >>>> *morphoo* (to form or give shape) >>>> *morphosis* (a forming or shaping, the process of making a form, shape, appearance)

Process of making or forming something = “craft” or “crafting”

The “craft” of godliness? The activity, focus, attempt, pursuit of making or forming godliness? Godliness as something we can make or produce --- OUR method, OUR pursuit

What is especially dangerous about it is the last part of v. 5 *“but denying its power”*

“POWER” = what can only come from God (1:7-8)

“DENYING” = “to refuse or decline”

*“No, thank you, Lord!”*

Instead of His power and the real thing, a choice for what we can make on our own  
Even this pursuit indicates an awareness that there is a problem --- but a different solution: What WE can create!

Often the downfall of humanity --- what WE can create apart from God  
(Gen. 11:3-4; Ex. 32:1-4)

The world knows there is a problem, but tries to make something instead of going to the real source

- Going after dashboard lights instead of core problem --- only perpetuates
- Appearance driven! “Nice dashboard!”
- Churches making something? Appearance driven?

My life? Something I am creating? An appearance? Form of godliness? Or only what He can do?

## **HIS POWER**

The other approach to the core problem --- what Paul is calling Timothy to. Entire letter based on three fundamentals:

### **Internal (1:5-6, 14)**

- A pure (1:3), genuine (1:5), sanctified (2:21) life
- Genuine, true from the inside-out --- from the very CORE
- A holiness message!

### **The truth**

- So much emphasis on truth the remainder of the letter
- We are sanctified by the truth of the Word (John 17:17, 19)
- The truth of the Word also exposes us to the core! (Hebrews 4:12)

### **His power (1:7-8, 14; 2:1)**

Instead of a “*No, thank you, Lord*” this is a “***Yes, please, Lord, I need You!!!***  
Desperate and humble --- always the attitude of revival

*“Lord Jesus, please go to the core of me and graciously expose my core and any root issues in me. Please produce a genuine and sanctified life that can only be explained because of You.”*

Much easier to just fix the dashboard lights. Courageous to allow Him to go to the core. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24. His grace.

Desperate, humbled, exposed = revival

## “Direction” 2 Timothy 3:5-9

A fundamental question of life: “What’s your direction?” One thing a father can do for a son --- point the way – 1 Cor. 11:1; 4:14-17

Discipleship not mainly about method, but *direction* --- what Paul wants to do for Timothy. So, repeated word in 1 & 2 Timothy:

Root/basic word in 3:8 --- “just as” = *tropos* = “a turn, direction, course, way  
– a way of life . . . *direction*”

### CONTRAST OF DIRECTIONS

***Those Paul is warning Timothy about --- misleaders***

Describes group in both letters – a form of word (prefix + *trepo*)

1 Tim. 1:6 (*ektrepo*) 5:15 (*extrepo*) 2 Tim. 2:18 (*anatrepo*) 4:4 (*ektrepo*)

Group now described in more detail in chapter 3 --- the *tropos* of Jannes/Jambres

Main characteristic of misleaders is that they have **turned away** from truth, even stood against or resisted (v. 8)

- A “new” or different direction
- “This is our direction, our thing” – something different than plain truth
- The subtlety of the “slice”

***Why Paul warns Timothy to TURN AWAY from these (apotrepo, 3:5)***

Also in 1 Tim. 6:20 --- suggests it can be alluring, or would not be mentioned

- Warning sandwiched between admonitions about truth (1:13-14; 2:15 >>>>> 3:10 ff)
- Let the truth of Jesus and His Word being my only, constant *direction* --- my orientation --- only ONE truth!!
- There is a spiritual battle and will be opposition to this --- accused of being “narrow”
- But His grace for this direction! He (the Truth) is pursuing us!

*Keep humbly, desperately seeking and responding to Jesus and the truth of  
His Word = direction = holiness*

### INFLUENCE

Important reasons Paul is telling Timothy --- must have been alluring or influential! Otherwise no need to mention

Strong descriptions in letter about their influence/misleading 2:16-18; 4:3-4; **3:6-7**

- “Take captive” = “make prisoner of war”
- “Creep” = put on, assume a part -- stealth, sneaking, infiltrate, deceive
- Same root word as Jude 4 (submarine) **WARNING:** truth replacement!!

All points to spiritual reality/dynamic --- spiritual war!

- Jannes/Jambres? Believed to be Pharaoh's magicians --- were able to do some of what Moses/Aaron did "by secret arts" (Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7) --- spiritual darkness and demonic activity
- Paul more explicit in 2:26, "snare of the devil" --- same conclusion as Jude

*There is a spiritual battle in the allure to something else besides Jesus and His Word! ABC strategy!*

But the gravity of truth! (1:13-14; 2:2; 3:10, 14)

- Spiritual leadership --- effect of Jesus on Timothy through Paul's life
- What Jesus can do through a surrendered person with Him and His Word as their ONE DIRECTION?
- Exponential and encouraging --- the need of our day!!

## **LONG ROAD**

But one more thing about this to encourage Timothy --- must first understand about those who mislead, like Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's magicians (Ex. 7-8)

- For a *while*, able to replicate: staff (7:11), Nile (7:22), frogs (8:7)
- Eventually, tricks could not produce: gnats (8:18), boils (9:11)

*What Paul is saying about those who mislead away from the truth*

- v. 5 "a form of godliness" = a creation of their own
- **v. 9** eventually will run out

It can seem easy to go for the immediate --- what stands out, popular, gains attention, seems to get immediate results, cool, what is being talked about

***But Jesus speaks of fruit that remains*** (John 15:16)

- Paul says will be tested and seen (1 Cor. 3:11-16)
- Robert Coleman: "Which generation?" (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

What Paul had been trying to tell Timothy all along, 2:4-6: soldier, athlete, farmer, long road, no shortcuts!

This direction in Jesus and His Word is a long term endeavor --- a lifetime and beyond, "a long obedience in the same direction"

But we already know this about HOLINESS: reality now + direction for a lifetime and eternity --- lasting fruit!!! Will show up even if I don't live to see it

Question for Timothy and us: willing to *go long*?

*"Jesus, be and shape my direction for the long way"*

Grace! He (the Truth) is pursuing us --- just going with Him

Remain humble, desperate, seeking

## **“The Facts of Holiness Life”**

2 Timothy 3:10-12

### **DEFINITE**

In contrast to the misleading that has been described in previous verses . . . “BUT YOU” --- there should be an obvious difference in our lives

Paul giving testimony here, encouraging Timothy --- the power of testimony  
Verses 10-11 Paul listing what Timothy has “followed” and seen first hand in Paul’s life (17-20 years)

A specific/concrete list --- each item preceded by definite article (“The”)

Takes it out of the realm of theory, concept, ideal, wishful thinking --- the very definite and specific of what Timothy has actually seen in his life --- REAL DEAL

*A testimony from death row that this is more than an ideal, but what Jesus can actually do in the life of someone in this lifetime*

This is the foundation of scriptural holiness:

- Yes, we are in process, as Paul was
- Sanctification is a process as well as a crisis
- But it can be a definite, a fact in our lives here and now --- to the point of being able to point others to it. Know anyone like that? Willing to be that?

### **CAREFULLY FOLLOWING**

This is at least part of God’s design and purpose for His holiness in us --- that others be invited and see that it’s possible!

Why Paul talks so much about Timothy following what has been given (1:13-14; 2:8; 3:14)

Why Paul highlights, affirms, encourages in 3:10 that Timothy has “carefully followed” = *parakoluthéo* --- *para* (alongside!) just like in 2:2

Picture of Paul taking Timothy with him and Timothy seeing/hearing/experiencing it through Paul’s life *alongside* of him

No wonder the variety of things with the definite article in vv. 10-11 that Timothy has seen/experienced/followed --- had been following Paul for 17-20 years and seen it in Paul’s life --- nothing hidden (1:3, 5)

But that’s where holiness is really seen and where discipleship really happens --- over time and in real life. And when that happens, two results:



1. Others can see (over time) that is really is possible --- more than just a “form”
2. Others can see that God does this in real people who are still in process over a lifetime—lets others know we’re real and OK to be in process  
= wisdom and inviting

Jesus can make holiness winsome --- so needed in our day! What wins others --- not perfect people (except in heart), but people seeking and being perfected

Being seen in me? Seeker? Winsome?

## **BRING THEM HOME**

But Paul wants to be very clear that this will not be easy! Consider Paul’s own experience in Galatia (Acts 13:50; 14:5, 19) that he references in v. 11

“Out of them all the Lord delivered me” --- the truth about deliverance

v. 12 = a fact of holiness living --- vivid language

Throughout letter preparing Timothy for this reality to expect --- a call that holiness sanctified people are to be bold and tough (being toughened): Jesus, Paul, early church, Hebrews 11, saints, martyrs, John Wesley, early holiness people

Because it’s a spiritual battle! Satan does not want tough, bold, sanctified holiness people, and will attempt to make wimps. Living out holiness and bringing others home (from behind enemy lines) is going to be a fight (our songs)

Tough, bold, sanctified people needed! Not hard-nosed or harsh --- just people who are willing to go through anything for His working in them and for winning others. Something winsome about people like that

And God’s amazing, sustaining grace in the lives of those willing --- like Paul. And see the effects in the life of Timothy!

Now inviting, calling Timothy to the same. Tough, bold, winsome sanctified people needed in his day. Lives that are inviting, and show it is possible!

And needed in our day! We’re in process. Not easy (Hebrews 12:5-11). Who would be willing? Will go through anything for the sake of His holiness in their lives ---- so that others can see it, be won, and brought home?

We are in process of sanctification --- perhaps even needing His “toughening grace”? His grace for us in it --- and His grace to others through it!

## **“Progress”**

### 2 Timothy 3:13-15

#### **WANDERING**

Humans seem to have a drive for “progress” --- exploration, tech, social issues. Paul warning Timothy about those who attempt to do so apart from the truth of God’s Word ---- key word in vv. 9, 13

*prokopto* = *pro* (before) + *kopto* (to cut or chop) = pioneers cutting a trail, to “trailblaze”

The mindset of our world as they attempt to “pioneer” or “trailblaze” a new path or way apart from Jesus Christ and the Word of God. Back to the “form of godliness” and trying to make our own way, “crafting” godliness

The temptation of Satan to Eve in Eden: *“Did God indeed say? You can blaze your own trail, make your own way, not be limited to what God has for you. You can PROGRESS.”* Why Paul refers to this as “evil” in v. 13. ANYTHING apart from Jesus Christ and His Word is evil, no matter how good it may seem. The results are always the same:

1. “They will *progress* no further (v. 9)” and “will grow worse and worse (v. 13).” This is opposite of what the world thinks. Anything apart from Jesus and the Word is regress instead of progress. Devolving instead of evolving. Further and further off course, no matter how good it seems.
2. “Being deceived (v. 13).” Lit. to wander, stray, roam (James 5:19; 2 Peter 2:15). Departing from a set path = no direction, LOST!! The condition of our world.
3. “Deceiving” others --- leading them astray (v. 13). Lost leading the lost. Why Paul says “evil men and imposters” (charlatans).

It all may seem like “good” direction, but it is not. Lost. Satan’s plan. Our world.

#### **STEWARDS OF TRUTH**

No wonder strong contrast v. 14: “BUT YOU!!!”

“REMAIN!!!” *meno* (present active imperative) --- John 15, etc. The opposite of venturing, wandering, etc.

Remain in what you have learned --- His path (not mine). Proverbs 2:8, 12-13, 20; 3:5-6) *“But how to know His path or truth with so many voices around us?”*

*Meno* in what you have “learned and BEEN ASSURED OF” (*pistoo*) = deeply persuaded, confirmed, guaranteed. Like Paul in 1:12. Remain in that!!

But how was Timothy so convinced? v. 14 *eidōs* = knowing from seeing!!

1. **From Paul!** (knowing) “from whom you have learned them v. 14).” *Para* again = “alongside.” Timothy knows so convincingly because of what he has seen in Paul’s life! A convincing life! Is mine?
2. **From grandma and mom!** (knowing) “that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures (v. 15).” Lois and Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5). The impact of a grandma and mom on his life! Timothy saw and knew Jesus and the reality of His Word in them his entire life. Convinced of truth through them!!!!

The power of the Word!!! Lois and Eunice just people like us, seeking and open to His Word in their lives. Jesus worked powerfully through them, and will with us!

A precious heritage of Jesus and His Word (1:5). What was given between Lois, Eunice, Timothy, and Paul. Now Timothy’s turn to pass on. REMAIN!!!! A precious heritage and treasure. Whose life will be convincing in our day?

## **HUMLITY**

But if Timothy was to pass this torch in his own life, he would have to receive what he had been given with **humility** and **gratitude**.

- From Paul (the “old man”)
- From his mom and grandma

Both are the opposite of what the world would tell a young man. “Blaze your own trail, be your own man, etc.”

But Timothy was a DEBTOR. To whom am I a debtor of the truth I have received? Am I proud and arrogant, or humble and grateful? Anyone I need to thank?

Humble and grateful people >>>>>>>> seekers and learners (2x in v. 14)

**Open, seeking, humble, surrendered is the posture and attitude of holiness people.** What Paul was in his own life. Now urging Timothy to the same. Remain! Keep humbly coming back to Jesus and His Word.

**AND THAT IS REAL PROGRESS!!!**

Key for us ---keep humbly coming back to Jesus and His Word = Revival

Earnest, open, humble seeking surrender allow for revival = the progress we need

- His working in us
- What wins and convinces others and moves us forward

Need progress in world? Church? Family? Me?  
Progress starts with me? Convincing!!!!

# “Power”

## 2 Timothy 3:15-17

### POWER OF THE WORD

Just as a human drive for progress, also for more power! A power-driven world. In life and ministry also --- what will I depend upon? What is my “power”?

Paul to Timothy: there is only one reliable sustaining power: THE WORD!

1. **The Word is able.** v. 15 “Holy Scriptures which **are able.**” Greek verb *dunamai*. Same concept as Hebrews 4:12.
  - A fundamental conviction to stand upon. We must get back to. Not my ability to communicate, but conviction that the Word is able.
  - Freedom and joy in this --- can just be thankful.
  - Pertinent for Timothy starting out. What if this simple conviction???
2. **Spiritual light** --- what is the Word able to do?
  - We know from Jesus that He sanctifies us through it (John 17:17, 19)
  - Paul here: “Make you wise for (*eis*) salvation”
    - Contrast to worldly “wisdom” of the misleading (arrogance)
    - There is a spiritual wisdom beyond what humanity can grasp or imagine (2 Corinthians 1-2)
    - God works through His Word to open us to this --- enlighten (Psalm 119:130; Ephesians 1:17-18)

*Want light in my life, family, church? The Word is able and sheds light! How we need this in our day!*

3. **In Christ Jesus** --- what will we see? Jesus! “Through faith which is in Christ Jesus”
  - Focus Greek grammar all on the person of Jesus. The great need of our time and always (early church and revivals of the past). There will be a spiritual battle over this.
  - He is also the instrument or means – *en* Christ Jesus
    - The supply of our faith (2:1) and salvation
    - The Word is able and powerful because it is HIS Word --- Him working and speaking through it!!

Why it’s so important for Timothy and why we must get back to Jesus and His Word >>>> revival. What is our power?

### FIRST IN LINE (Process of the Word)

Note all He will do in us through His Word (v. 16), and note tone of holiness

- Doctrine: teaching understanding
- Reproof: conviction, exposure!
- Correction: setting things straight, restoration
- Instruction in righteousness: chastening, behavioral change

Consider how all of this is needed in our lives and in our day --- all “fed” by the Word (“profitable” = like a dynamic source or river). The Word refreshes and changes us = revival.

But there is a central attitude and process in this:

1. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God”
  - “All Scripture” = the whole, not me picking and choosing.
  - “Inspiration” = God-breathed, right from Him
  - **Requires an attitude of humility and submission for the 4 things mentioned in v. 16** --- always a humble spirit
2. Another perspective on these 4 things (that I had not realized). Always thought they were instruction for Timothy about how to help others with the Word. **But these are for Timothy first of all!** (“in order that the man of God might be . . .). *“Timothy, you need these 4 things in your life first!”*

*God can work through me when I first allow Him to work in me.* Would I humbly submit myself to His Word (doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction). **Would I lead the way?** Process of revival and sanctification.

## **PRODUCT OF THE WORD**

What Jesus will do in the lives of people who will be in process and keep humbly submitting!

Again, begins with Timothy, admonishment and encouragement to Him, but then THROUGH him (2:2)

v. 17 “in order that the man of God”

- “may be” (present active subjunctive) = possibility of a continuous state
- “complete!” (*artios*) = complete, perfect of its kind, suitable, exactly fitted, right, faultless, NORMAL
- “thoroughly equipped” (*ekartidzo*) = verb form of *artios* + *ek* (“utterly”)
- “for EVERY good work”

**What an awesome picture of a Christian being sanctified and all that Jesus will do in the life of that person through His Word!**

We know we’re in process, but also the FACT and PROGRESS of what He can do. What people are looking for in our day? God’s Word says that people can be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work!

We can be what we ought to be . . . in Christ! We can have revival! Encouraging for us, and the world needs to see what Jesus can really do!

1. What’s my “power”? The Word is able! Will I trust?
2. Humbly submit and lead the way?

## “Sanctified Intensity”

2 Timothy 4:1-4

### INTENSITY

We all get intense about something (examples). Paul’s surprising intensity in 2 Timothy 4:1-4.

1. **“I charge you.”** (NLT “I solemnly urge you”). “To beg earnestly” or “implore thoroughly.” *diamarturomai* = to thoroughly testify --- often in Acts in connection with preaching. Paul “preaching” to Timothy about preaching, and testifying about his own experience. *“I can’t tell you strongly enough that this is where it’s at!”*
2. **“Before God and the Lord Jesus Christ . . .”** (“face to face,” also 1 Timothy 6:13). Incredible sense of accountability to God in what we preach, and how we receive it. Humility!!
3. **Two imperatives** – main focus. “PREACH the Word” and “BE READY in/out of season. (“to stand”). Intensity/urgency: *“You’ve got to preach the Word and stand in the truth at all times! Must!”* Main focus.
4. **Three more imperatives:** convince, rebuke, exhort

Ever feel like I get intense about the wrong things, and relaxed about what matters? What could happen if I would get back to what matters and be *sanctified intense* about what matters? PREACH the Word and STAND in the truth! 3 John 4.

Revival? He changes and redirects my passion, focus . . . and AWAKENS me to what matters!

Need for His stirring and awakening in my life, and in our day? Not human manufactured, driven, promoted, but what comes from only Him and His Word. *Will we seek revival? Get back to this?*

### THE TIMES IN WHICH WE LIVE

Especially imperative because of the time! Verses 3 and 4 the explanation of the urgency --- “For . . . a time will be.” Characteristics of these times (now?)

#### Against:

- Verse 3: “they will not endure sound doctrine”
  - “endure” = “put up with”
  - “sound doctrine” = “good, healthy teaching” (solid meat?) Dessert bar instead of solid food!
  - Truth not always easy to hear --- “He bids him come and die”
- Verse 4: “they will turn their ears away from the truth”
  - Double emphasis on “away”
  - “turn” --- root word “to twist about, like a wrestler trying to elude”
  - Spin move! Our day --- contortions and adversarial to truth

## For:

- Verse 4: “be turned aside TO fables”
  - *ektrepo* = direction away from, off road. Passive, being led away down a path
  - *muthos* = “myth, tales, stories” = anything but the Word!
- Verse 3: “heap up for themselves teachers” = “piles” of teachers (books, etc. “must read”).
  - “according to their own *desires*” (lust)
  - “having itching ears” – “tickled”? Connotations of pleasure, tied to lust

Note undercurrent of SELF in verse 3!!! The bottom line of what the times will be “for.” Self always our core issue (holiness message). The message of the world in our times: self. What are we to do?

## SANCTIFIED FOCUS/INTENSITY

A simple answer: Preach the Word and stand in the truth! (simplistic to the world) The answer for all times (“in season and out of season”). The reason for the intensity and imperative of this --- we must!! (Jude 3-4)

But something about this intensity that is different from the world’s intensity.

When it is HIS focus, passion, intensity in us, something different that only He can do in us. v. 2: “**with all longsuffering and teaching**”

- Echoes end of chapter 2. Holiness not a finger pointing, nor just pat on the back, but a hand extended. Jude 20-23; 2 Corinthians 5
- *makrothumia* = long hearted (1 Corinthians 13:4) --- “I’m with you ‘til the end.” Who He is and what He wants to be through us

A needed intensity, urgency in our day --- no compromise of the truth of the Word! But a **sanctified** intensity, passion, focus with His love in us! Like Paul demonstrates.

That kind of sanctified passion, focus, intensity needed in our day in every place: family, politics, sports, work, church, ministry.

Would we receive this and be in this process of sanctification? REVIVAL! Allow Him to change, redirect, narrow my focus . . . and stir and awaken to what matters.

His passion and focus in me with a hand extended. His hand extended to me right now.

## “Eternal Echoes”

2 Timothy 4:5-8

### **ETERNAL**

So impacted by Paul’s long view. Great need of my life.

Throughout this letter the air of eternity (1:9, 12), but now especially in “valedictory” in 4:1, 6-8. Eternal focus!

Paul had an eternal focus at the end because he had it throughout: Romans 8:18-23 (56-57 AD); Philippians 1:20-21 (62 AD). **We are becoming now what we will be at the end of our lives . . . and into eternity.**

- Eternal life now --- heaven a continuation. Holiness what we can become now.
- What Paul is trying to convey to Timothy: Becoming now, and have an eternal focus.

What a difference this would make in me! At least two results of eternal focus:

### **HARDSHIP** (an eternal perspective on)

Surprising and striking tone of hardship, battle, and death in this passage

**Hardship** --- throughout letter in 1:8, 12, 16; 2:3, 9-10, 3:12; now 4:5

- v. 7 describes things that are TOUGH --- fight, finish, keep
- v. 8 “laurels” to people in ancient culture who went through something grueling (war, race, etc.)
- Hard and tough!! (2:4-6)

**Battle** --- also more prominent in letters than realized --- 1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3-4, 26

- Now 4:7 at the end to describe life and ministry. “I have fought the good fight”
  - *agonidzomai* and *agon* = “agonize”! Jude: “to contend earnestly”
  - This is going to be a fight! (tough, sanctified Christians)

**Death** --- “the time of my departure is at hand (v. 6)”

- Description of death
- “already being poured out as a drink offering” --- sacrifice, pleasing aroma (Romans 12:1)

Hardship, battle, death!! Why surprised?

- Where he is writing from
- His holiness produced in us involves hardship, battle, death. Think back in our lives.

Paul knew about this long before Mamertine Prison. How could he do it????



**Jesus' eternal view in us makes a difference!** (2 Corinthians 4:7-12, 16-18 ff)  
*We are becoming now what we will be at the end*, and hardship is a part of that!  
What we can be becoming now in the hardship. The LONG game. Where do I  
need to receive that in my life?

## **ECHOES**

Eternal view also gives perspective on purpose. Paul's entire tone/purpose is  
Timothy in this letter --- discipleship, passing the torch. Now continues in chapter  
4:5-6 --- "But you . . . for I" --- personal and intimate

Note how much Paul repeats at end of letter some things said earlier:

- Suffering, persecutions, affliction (1:12, 18; 2:9; 3:11), admonishing same  
for Timothy (1:8; 2:3; 3:12) >>>>>> **now 4:5**
- Fighting, athletic imagery (2:3-6) >>>>>> **now 4:7**

*"Is there an echo in here?"*

Paul's life/message a constant echo! God's design for us: know Jesus, and Him  
known through us --- *our lives a constant echo of Him*, even past our lifetime

- Echo of Jesus through Paul in Timothy's life
- Remember echo of Jesus through people in our lives

God's plan and design for us: His eternal life in us, the *fragrance of Christ* (2  
Corinthians 14), an echo of Him. What sweet, meaningful, eternal purpose to our  
lives! Our "work" and "ministry"! (4:5)

Ever feel like "forever" days? Paul? Where eternal view comes clearer. Here and  
now is where I know Him and He is working in me for His eternal purpose. **Here  
and now is where the echo happens.** (echoes in hard, desolate places? valleys?)

Let Him work, respond to Him here and now in long days? He is creating an echo,  
His fragrance that will last past my lifetime. Our ministry! How sweet!

*"Thank you, Jesus for these days."* We can't lose.

We are becoming now what we will be at the end of our lives and into eternity.  
Receive His eternal view here and now? His holiness? Let Him create an echo  
that reverberates?

God's grace! Never too late! Can't lose!

## “Sweeter As the Years Go By”

2 Timothy 4:9-22

Overwhelmed with information at family reunion? Similar to reading 2 Timothy 4 and all names, stories, and background. A picture of Paul’s life and relationships. Impossible to detail it all, but a couple of first impressions:

1. Seeing a “becoming” process for Paul. A glimpse of years of growth and relationships. Jesus’ work in Paul (not what he used to be!). What His holiness does in people. Holiness people = growing people. Am I?
2. Outward man perishing (2 Corinthians 4:16) and “chipping away.” Seeing more and more of what is inside. What will that reveal in me? *We are becoming now what we will be . . .*

What are we seeing in Paul?

### **RELATIONSHIPS**

Overwhelming details about relationships in 4:10-14, 19-21. Each has a story, investment of relationship

Relationship/discipleship Paul’s constant focus in ministry: repeat visits, long stays, letters, sending other people

A discipleship “map” of Paul’s life and ministry? A pin for every place where he invested in someone? What would my “map” look like?

So important to Paul that he is still attentive in his final days, even in the midst of his own need. The priorities of life! “The only thing we can take to heaven with us is people.” Others! A holiness focus.

### **GOING DEEP**

Striking depth of relationships and intertwining of life.

#### **Longing for presence**

- “Be diligent to come to me quickly (v. 9) --- double emphasis
- “Luke is with me” (v. 11)
- “Get Mark and bring him with you” (v. 11)
- “Do your utmost to come before winter” (v. 21)

Reminiscent of 1 Thessalonians 2:17; 3:9-11; Philemon 12-13

#### **Dependency upon one another**

- No sense of shame or pride in “I need you here” or “I’m depending on you”
- “Come to me,” “Get Mark . . . he is useful to me,” etc.
- Not new to Paul --- Philippians 2:25; 4:16

- Body concept in 1 Corinthians 12:20-26
  - Jesus our Provider, Source, Vine, but how often through one another?
  - We need one another in the Body of Christ! Not independent
- Jesus Himself dependent:
  - Triune God
  - Depending on others as fully human (while being fully God)

*What we see in Paul not weakness or shortcoming, but God's design!*

**But makes us vulnerable --- risk of hurt!** Jesus' risk with disciples. The risk and cost for Paul expressed:

- People let him down, hurt him ("much harm," v. 14)
- "Forsaken" (verses 10, 16) *egkatalaipo* = *ek* (intense) + *katalaipo* ("forsake, abandon, leave in the lurch") = **"you really left me hanging"**
- Note pain in verse 16 --- possibly exaggeration (like 1:15)?

*The risk of grace!!!!*

## **HIS WAY**

But how?????? Anyone who has cared, gone deep, invested, poured out . . . and left hanging, can understand the question.

Only Jesus! His grace in us that is beyond anything we can do!

What we are seeing in Paul --- becoming clearer here at the end as the outside is chipping off.

- Jesus increasingly in and through Paul ---- sanctification!
- His holiness in us is what allows for relationship, evangelism, and discipleship

*His holiness makes us sweeter as the years go by*

I will go one of two directions in relationships and with people. We WILL be hurt, forsaken, let down, abandoned, left hanging sometime.

BITTER (Hebrews 12:14-15)

Hard, prickly, sour, mean

**OR**

SWEETER

More of Him, His holiness

His sweetness wins!!!

Which way I am going? What is coming through me, being revealed?

Let Him do His sweetening work in me? To bring as many people with us as we can. "Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness, stamp Thine own image . . ."

## Some of the background on some people Paul mentions in 2 Timothy 4

- Demas (v. 10) had been a close friend and fellow laborer of Paul (Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24).
- Crescens (v. 10) may have been one of the original 70 disciples according to Mark 10, and possibly the eventual bishop of Galatia, where Paul had planted the churches.
- Titus (v. 10) was the young pastor whom Paul mentored and to whom he wrote the letter.
- Luke (v. 11) was Paul's physician and companion during his missionary journeys and now in his imprisonment.
- Mark (v. 11) was otherwise known as John Mark, the one with whom Paul reconciled after the division over him in Acts 15, now one of his close brothers and fellow laborers (Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24)
- Tychicus (v. 12) was a man from Asia, one of four additional men that Paul mentored (Acts 20:4) and who accompanied Paul on his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey. Paul often mentions him as his messenger (Ephesians 6:21-22; Colossians 4:7; Titus 3:12) and Paul sends him to Ephesus to "stand in" so that Timothy could come to see Paul in Rome.
- Aquila and Priscilla (v. 19) were Paul's fellow tentmakers and partners in ministry in Corinth (Acts 18:2-3), whom Paul then left in Ephesus to help in the work there (Acts 18:18-26).
- Erastus (v. 20) was a city government official in Corinth (Romans 16:23) and helped Paul in ministry (Acts 19:22).
- Trophimus (v. 20) was another man from Asia who is mentioned as one of those four additional men that Paul was mentoring on his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey (Acts 20:4). He was also a part of the controversy when Paul was falsely accused of bringing a Gentile into the Temple in Acts 21:29.

"The believer feels no shame, as though he were still living too much in the flesh, when he yearns for the physical presence of other Christians. Man was created a body, the Son of God appears on earth in the body, he was raised in the body, in the sacrament the believer receives the Lord Christ in the body, and the resurrection of the dead will bring about the perfected fellowship of God's spiritual-physical creatures. The believer therefore lauds the Creator, the Redeemer, God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the bodily presence of a brother. . . . But if there is so much blessing and joy even in a single encounter of a brother with brother, how inexhaustible are the riches that open up for those who by God's will are privileged to live in the daily fellowship of life with other Christians!"

--- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*