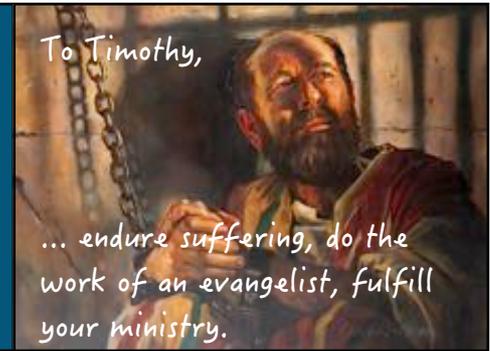


2 Timothy

Fulfill Your Ministry

Lesson 9



In the first nine verses of 2 Timothy chapter three, Paul says that terrible times will come in the last days. We saw that the last days simply mean the last period of time from the resurrection of Jesus until the Second Coming. These days will be marked with people who are misdirected in their love, attitudes, and actions. They are self-centred, hostile, and ungodly. We are thankful that Paul's letter didn't end there, but rather the last half of chapter three is filled with encouragement and challenge even in the face of persecution.

Overcoming Persecution 3:10-17

Living in the midst of the lifestyle prevalent in the "last days" is challenging. We are disheartened by the ungodly ways in which people conduct their lives. Paul doesn't pretend that Christians will be unaffected by the actions of wicked people. In fact he makes this promise in verse 12: *"Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."*

The word translated "all" in our English Bibles means exactly what it did in the original Greek language. It means the entirety of the sum, wholeness, or complete accounting. The Greek word *pantos* can be translated as each, every, any, and all. When Paul says that "all" can expect to be persecuted, he means "all."



Furthermore the two words "will be" are significant. It is not "might be," "could be," or "perhaps." It is true that not all Christians will be thrown to the lions like some of our first century brothers and sisters nor will all face martyrdom as many of our brothers and sisters face in various parts of our world today. We "may" face these persecutions in our country in our lifetime, but we may not. However, we **will** be persecuted.

Still, this is no cause for despair as Paul shows from his own life and from the hope and truth found in Scripture.

1. Why are Christians sometimes alarmed and surprised when they face persecution?

We are left to wonder about those Christians who say they have never faced persecution or suffering for Christ. Could it be that they are already worldly? Perhaps they gave up the fight before ever entering the battle.

2. Name some of the types of persecutions and sufferings for Christ that Christians living in Australia might face in the present age.

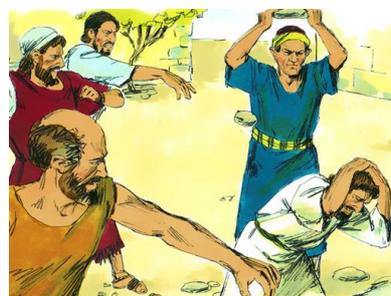
In verses 10 and 11 Paul gives a categorical listing of what his life had been since he became a Christian. Timothy knew all of these facts well because he knew Paul and had been his partner in evangelism. When Paul says, *“You have followed my teaching ...”* he is saying that Timothy was his disciple. He had watched Paul so that he might reproduce these characteristics of his teacher in his own life.

Paul then lists six characteristics about his teaching which Timothy learned by example: 1) Conduct; 2) Aim in life (or Purpose); 3) Faith; 4) Patience; 5) Love; and 6) Steadfastness.

3. Briefly describe the meaning of each of these six characteristics.

These six facts of Paul’s life stand in stark contrast to the lifestyle of non-Christians in the last days. While their love, attitudes, and actions were misdirected, Paul’s list shows the proper way to live as servants of Christ.

Paul says he was persecuted and suffered in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. In these cities he faced persecution, expulsion, and stoning. At other times he faced shipwrecks, beatings, and imprisonment. Paul is not calling attention to himself for praise, in fact he stresses that everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. In other words, *“Expect the same in your life.”*



4. What is the meaning of the word “endured” as used by Paul in verse 11?

Timothy witnessed many of Paul’s persecutions as a young man. These events must have made a permanent and vivid impression on his life. Timothy, along with all Christians, should expect persecution and suffering as long as we live in this world. Paul says in verse 13, *“evil people and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”* If you are looking for better days in the future, you need to look as far as the Second Coming and our eternal life with Christ.

5. How can we know that life in this world will not permanently improve?

In the midst of persecution and suffering Paul writes in verse 11 that *“the Lord rescued me.”* God may intervene and rescue a man physically as he did for Paul on many occasions, or God may strengthen a man in the midst of persecution, or God may welcome a saint to heaven when one is martyred for Christ as eventually happened to Paul. For every Christian, God has provided rescue from the penalty for sin.

The challenge and encouragement for Timothy is found in verses 14-17. First, is the exhortation: *“continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed.”* Keep on believing what you have learned. Truth does not change and while the false teachers brought many new things, the gospel as presented to Timothy was true, is true, and will always be true.

Second, Timothy could trust this exhortation because he knows the character of the ones from whom he had learned the Scripture. His earliest teachings came from his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. A faithful mother and grandmother who lived lives of integrity in the sight of God gave Timothy assurance of what he was taught. Paul then taught Timothy and became his father in the faith. Timothy knew and trusted that what Paul had taught him was true.



Third, Timothy knows the origin of what he had been taught. From childhood he had been taught the *“sacred writings”* which is what the Old Testament was called by Greek speaking Jews. Jewish parents were to teach their children the law of God from the time they were five years old. Timothy probably learned to read from the Scripture. It was a part of his life from as long as he could remember.

Fourth, Timothy knew the benefit of the Scriptures. They *“are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”* Through the Scriptures we learn of God the Creator, we learn of the entrance of sin into the world, and we read of God’s plan to redeem man leading to the death of Christ. Timothy then learned of the resurrection of Jesus and God’s plan for man’s salvation.

6. Why is salvation described as wise?

Salvation came not by reading the Scripture, but by the faith brought through the Scripture. Faith is more than learning facts. It is more than believing these facts to be true. Saving faith moves one to trust, commit, and obey the truths and commands found in the Bible.

Verses 16 and 17 should be well-known if not memorised by every Christian.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*

In verse 16 we again find the word “all.” The totality of Scripture is inspired by God. So with all the variety of false teachings floating around in the world, Timothy should be convinced of this fact: Every Scripture comes to us from God.

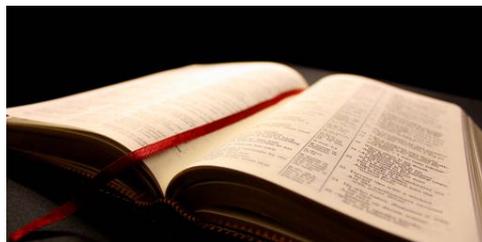
All Scripture includes all of the Old Testament which was all that had been written in Timothy’s earliest days as a Christian. Now Paul and other apostles were adding to the canon of Scripture as they are inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The phrase “breathed out by God” tells us clearly that the Bible is not a human derived document. Yes, God used men to pen these words, but only as they were guided by the Holy Spirit. Peter puts it this way in 2 Peter 1:21, *“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*

7. Describe the process of the inspiration of Scripture.

The Scripture has purpose for the church. It is profitable for:

1. Teaching -- There are lessons contained in Scripture that Christians must learn, believe, and practice.
2. Reproof -- Here Scripture refutes error and tells Christians those things they must not do.
3. Correction -- Here the idea is helping one stay on the right path and helping one get up when they fall.
4. Training in Righteousness -- The Bible teaches Christians the right way of living. Righteousness is living and doing right as God sees right. The word *“training”* tells us that there is a certain amount of spiritual discipline needed in order to live righteous lives.



The Scripture has benefit for the church.

1. That the Man of God may be Complete -- Completeness shows maturity, capability, and sufficiency. Through the Bible a Christian can learn everything he needs to grow into a mature and righteous man who is able to please God.
2. Equipped for Every Good Work -- The word translated “equipped” means *“completely outfitted, fully furnished, fully equipped, fully supplied.”* The Scripture has the ability to provide the knowledge and spiritual tools necessary to carry out any good work a Christian may be called to do.

Christians should expect persecution and suffering, but no matter how difficult life in this world becomes, we have the promise of salvation and the edifying, correcting, encouraging, strengthening, and truthful Word of God. How thankful we should be for the Scripture God has inspired to teach us, guide us, and equip us for service in his Kingdom.