

THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

2 Timothy 2:14-19

“Handling The Word Well”

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19:27

All right, well good morning. It's good to be here with all of you guys. So the stage is getting a little crowded up here when we put a big hot tub up here on the stage, but it's a good morning. You chose a good week to be at church this morning.

19:38

So we're excited about that in a few minutes, but until then, we're gonna open up to 2 Timothy chapter two. So I invite you guys to make your way to 2 Timothy chapter two. If you didn't bring a Bible, there should be one hiding underneath of your chair, maybe the one in front of you that you can grab and follow along.

19:54

We're also gonna have those verses on the screen in just a few minutes, but I look around the room and I see new faces and we wanna thank you for being here. I know baptism brings all kinds of special family and so we're thankful that you guys are here with us this morning, but we wanna try to just briefly catch you up on what we've got going on in our sermon series because you're coming in right in the middle of a really, really wonderful study that we're doing.

20:20

So we have been going through the books of 1 Timothy and Titus and now 2 Timothy and we've been looking at these, kind of these final letters from the apostle Paul to a couple of young pastors, 1 Timothy, 2nd, and Titus, right?

20:35

Hard to grasp onto those with the names of the books, but we have been in this book of 2 Timothy. This is Paul's last letter that he's going to write before he dies. And so as he is writing this letter, as he's writing this book that we've been studying, we see some themes that have kind of come up in this letter so far in 2 Timothy.

20:56

And so in chapter one that we studied a few weeks ago, Paul was encouraging young Timothy not to be ashamed of the gospel, not to be ashamed of Jesus. And he was telling him to be ready to suffer as people were coming against Paul, as people were coming against the cause of Jesus.

21:15

Timothy needed to be ready to stand in the face of persecution, but Paul encouraged Timothy that it was going to be worth it. But in the first half of 2 Timothy chapter two, Paul has been encouraging Timothy to entrust the gospel to faithful men and women who would be able to teach others that we need to pass this message down from generation to generation to generation.

21:39

But now in our passage this week, we're gonna see Paul start to encourage Timothy to handle the gospel well, to make sure that not only do we pass something along, but to make sure that we pass the right things along to the next generation.

21:54

And so we're gonna read 2 Timothy chapter two verses 14 through 19. You can read along in your copy as I read, then we'll go back and dig in a little bit.

22:04

So in 2 Timothy chapter two, starting in verse 14, the apostle Paul says, remind them of these things. Charge them before God, not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. And Timothy, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth, but avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness and their talk will spread like gangrene.

22:35

Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some, but God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal.

22:48

The Lord knows those who are His and let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. These are the words of the Lord. Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you that we can gather here together this morning in a comfortable space, God, that we can gather together with smiling friendly faces around us.

23:08

But God, most importantly, we thank you that we can gather together before your word. God, as we study, as we consider what you have to say to us this morning, we pray that you would help us to study well.

23:20

God, that we would do the work to diligently understand what you have for us this morning as Paul has encouraged Timothy in these words. And so God, we pray that you would use this time, that you would use your word to speak to us and to conform us more and more into the image of your son. So we give this time to you, we pray that you would use it for your glory. And it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

23:44

All right, well, as we dive in, we see a few different things, a couple of different warnings and commands come from Paul to Timothy. And the first one that we see in verse 14 is Paul tells Timothy, do not quarrel. Do not quarrel, he tells Timothy, remind them and charge them before God not to quarrel about words. Timothy is supposed to warn his church and to warn the Christians that are in his sphere of influence that this phrase quarreling about words, it's literally translated as word fighting.

24:18

He needs to warn them not to wander down this path. It's a dangerous path for him and for his church to wander down. Now, at first glance, word fighting seems so intellectual, right? If you've ever been in a philosophy class at college or maybe you've found yourself around the water cooler, just arguing about something that seems so intelligent and so important in a moment.

24:43

But then you look back on it and go, well, that was just silly argument, wasn't it? That was just a silly thing that we were just wrestling over. If you've ever attended a Bible college, I know that you know what I'm talking about, right?

24:55

Because as a young 18, 19 year old, I spent more than a few nights sitting around in a dorm arguing about things that none of us really knew or understood. But we sure thought we did, right? If you've ever been surrounded by this type of Christian intellectual, I think this message may even hit you differently as Paul is warning Timothy about this propensity to quarrel over words that Christians have sometimes.

25:20

There's many arguments inside of the Christian world that have very little practical impact, but at a seminary or in some of these spaces where people come and exist and just want to seem smarter than their neighbor, that we sit around and we fight about things and don't get me wrong.

25:40

I love those conversations at times and I think those conversations can be incredibly interesting to consider. And well, if this verse says this and if this verse says that, how can this all fit together?

25:52

But it's important for us. I think Paul is warning us to keep those conversations in their proper perspective because I think it's clear that on things that God is clear about, we must be clear about.

26:03

But also on things that God has left some space for us to read it and go, you know, I don't quite understand what this means. I don't quite know. And you know, we look and it's important for us to study as we're going to talk about in just a minute, but there are some things that God has left a little open -ended.

26:21

We don't know perfectly how everything is going to fit together in the last days when Jesus comes back. We know clearly that Jesus is coming back, but we don't know when that's going to happen. We don't know exactly what the events are of how that's going to happen, contrary to what some people on the Internet might want you to believe.

26:39

And on things that God has left open or unclear, it's important for us not to hold so dogmatically to those things, but to hold them openly, to remain charitable to our brothers and sisters in the church.

26:51

It's important for us to hold our disagreements in their proper place because Paul would never, never shy away from speaking with absolute clarity about absolute issues. If there are things that are absolute, God is absolutely clear about.

27:06

Well, Paul says we should be absolutely clear about, but he's warning us to keep those debates in proper perspective. I think anytime we find ourselves in one of these places where we may be tempted to quarrel about words or maybe in company that would be quarreling about something, I think we should ask these questions to ourselves, maybe even to the other people that are fighting about whatever it is, and be able to answer these two things.

27:34

The first question that I think we should ask is how does this impact my practical obedience as a Christian? Because there are a lot of things that we want to argue about and we go, well, what does that mean for me practically today?

27:46

Oh, no. Right? Anybody ever had that conversation before? What does that practically change in your life? I don't know. The second question for us to ask is, is the Bible absolutely clear on this or is it possible that good Bible -based arguments can be made for multiple views?

28:05

Because if there are good, clear understandings of what the Bible can be saying and it could be A or B, then we should be careful not to be so dogmatic about it. It has to be B and anyone that thinks A is stupid.

28:19

No, that's not how it works. We all want to understand accurately what the Bible says, but there are things, there are certain issues where we have to hold those properly because God hasn't given us absolute answers on those things.

28:34

If it's truly worth fighting over, the Bible will make it absolutely clear and it will make it a practical impact on our faith. It's important for us to keep our priorities in their proper perspective.

28:45

It's why we as a church have written our statement of beliefs the way that we have, because there are some things that are absolutely non-negotiable. If you are a Christian, if you believe in what the Bible says, these are the things that you believe, and we've written those, and we call those our absolutes.

29:03

And our statement of faith, those are the absolutes. Absolutes are absolutely essential elements of the Christian faith that cannot be disputed within Orthodox Christian faith. If you are a Christian, you will believe these things.

29:18

Those are the things that are worth fighting over. Those are things that we will not compromise on as Christians and as The Rock Community Church. We will not compromise on the doctrine of the Trinity, that God is three in one, three separate persons of the Godhead, but he is one God as the Bible communicates to us.

29:37

When you fully wrap your mind around that, feel free to come let me know, because I'd love to hear it explained just a little clearer. But it's one that we wrestle with, but it is absolutely true, and we will not compromise on that.

29:49

We also will not compromise on the deity of Jesus Christ. Jesus was absolutely God made flesh. If we compromise on that, we just say, no, he was just a really good man. He was a good teacher. Well then, the entire reason why we're here is null and void.

30:06

If Jesus was not God, Jesus went to a cross without the ability to pay the sin debt that we believe he went there to pay. I have no hope for forgiveness. If Jesus isn't God and Jesus didn't go and die on a cross to save me and to pay for my sin debt that I have earned, we've got a big problem.

30:27

If you don't believe that Jesus was God, you're not a Christian. We believe in salvation by faith alone and Jesus alone. There is no other way to get to heaven except through Jesus Christ. We believe in the perfect inspiration of the Bible, that every word that the Bible says is true.

30:45

There are no errors. There are no things that it just missed on. It is absolutely true, and on the topics that it speaks on, it is the absolute authority on any and all of those things. We are Bible people first and foremost.

31:00

We also will not negotiate. We will not compromise on the fact that Jesus is coming back one day, that he's going to come, that he's going to judge the living and the dead, and that there will be a day where all wrongs are made right, that all sin will be judged, that justice will be poured out on all the wrongdoing that has happened throughout human history.

31:21

Whether that's as God has poured out His wrath on His Son for those who have placed their faith in Jesus, or whether those who have not placed their faith in Jesus will receive their own justice as God pours out His wrath on their sin.

31:36

Those are things that we absolutely will not compromise on. We clearly state those, but there's other things in our belief statement where we kind of lower those down a level,

and we want to say, these are things that we believe the Bible to say, but we're a bit more open -handed with.

31:54

We understand that there's Christians out there, there's good people out there that might disagree with us on this issue or on that issue, where we certainly have Biblically based beliefs on many other things, and you're going to hear those taught at our church, but they're not absolutes.

32:11

It's not at the same level of questioning whether Jesus is God, or how we are saved, and things like that, and so we want to hold those beliefs as well, but we're willing to allow a little bit more disagreement and offer grace to those who disagree.

32:26

Areas like how we govern our church, whether we practice small group discipleship or big group Bible studies, whether we practice expository preaching or whether we preach more topically. Those are things that we certainly have beliefs about as a church, but we want to hold those in their proper perspective as well.

32:46

This idea is summarized well by a statement that was penned by Rupertus Maldinius in the early 17th century. This is actually quoted at the beginning of our statement of faith as well. He said, in essentials, unity, in the non -essentials, liberty, and in all things, charity.

33:05

That's the attitude that we want to hold these things in, that we want to hold the absolutes in their proper perspective. We will not compromise on the things that are absolutely essential, but also we want to extend grace in those spaces where we need to extend grace.

33:21

We want to receive all in love as in the essentials we need to be united. In the non - essentials, we want to give freedom and in all things, whether they're essential or non - essential, we should show love in the way that Jesus has told us to show love.

33:39

The world will know that we belong to Jesus by the way that we love one another. And so it's important for us not only to believe rightly but to act rightly as well. Paul warns Timothy and I think by extension he warns us in this first verse, do not quarrel about things that are not clear.

33:58

Second thing that we see in verse 15, Paul tells Timothy and Paul tells us to study hard. Study hard. Verse 15 he says, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

34:15

This is such an important verse for Christians. As we wrestle with this idea, as we put this into practice, this is one that if you fall asleep on me most of the time, make sure you wake your neighbor up and we're going to get this one, right?

34:28

I know somebody's out there, you know, just give them a little elbow. This one's one that we've all got to make sure we get, right? Paul tells Timothy, do your best to handle the word of truth in the right way.

34:40

Make sure you understand what the Bible has to say. There's different English translations. We know that the Bible wasn't written in English, right? So any beliefs that we've got about translation, they're all translations from the original Greek or Hebrew or Aramaic texts.

34:55

But translators have done their best to try to communicate what the original language was trying to drive home. And so different English speakers will use different words sometimes to try to describe an idea to us.

35:09

If we look at different translations, there's several ideas, several words that are used in this verse to help us understand what Paul is trying to tell Timothy. Our ESV translation that we read from, it says, do your best to present yourself to God as one who handles the word of truth correctly.

35:27

Other translations use words like work hard to understand what God's word says. And one says, study. Others say, be diligent. It gives us this idea that this is something that some effort has to be put into.

35:44

Make every effort. Do everything that you can. Make sure that we don't miss it on this. So what's the message here? What is Paul getting at? What's the point of all of this? Well, this example here, as we see in verse 15, it seems like there's a bit of a contradiction from something that if you were with us just a couple of weeks ago, you may remember me talking about.

36:08

Because in 2 Timothy chapter 2, at the beginning of this same chapter in verse 1, Paul says, you then, my child, talking to Timothy, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Paul told Timothy to be strengthened with a passive verb that means that someone, some force from the outside of Timothy was going to strengthen him.

36:29

It was a passive strengthening where Timothy was to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit that would come upon him, that would give him the strength to do what he needed to do. Paul's telling Timothy, Timothy, God will strengthen you in verse 1.

36:43

But now we get to verse 15, and the verb is a little bit different. He says in verse 15, do your best, work hard, study to present yourself to God as one who is approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, but who rightly handles the word of truth.

37:01

That verb in the original language, that word that's translated as do your best or work hard is a second person active verb. It's Paul looking at Timothy and saying, hey, do what you can do. Is that a contradiction?

37:15

In verse 1, he said, hey, God is going to strengthen you. In verse 15, Paul tells Timothy, do what you can to be strengthened. He's telling Timothy, get to work. Timothy must work hard and do his best to accurately grasp and understand and apply and handle the word of God accurately.

37:37

It's important for him to understand the true meaning of what the Bible says. There's effort that goes into that sometimes. I was thinking about this, and as Paul seems to be speaking very absolutely to Timothy here, I started to think about spaces where we accept failure in life.

37:55

If you play baseball, if you get a hit 30% of the time, you're pretty good. If you get a hit 35% of the time, you're probably going to the Hall of Fame one day. If you're in school and you get 70% of the questions right on the test, you're going to graduate one day.

38:12

We accept 30% failure on academic tests. You're going to pass the course. Paul is telling Timothy here, accept no failure when it comes to the Bible. Accept no failure when it comes to understanding and handling accurately what God has said.

38:31

God has given us an incredible blessing as we have the word of God written down and placed in our laps. Sitting underneath of your chair, there is a copy of God's inspired word that he has given to us. We are blessed to have the opportunity to open this book and hear from the God of the universe who spoke and the universe flew out into existence, who could speak and tell a storm stop it and it would stop.

38:59

That same God is the God who has given us what he wants us to know and has written it down for us in his word. Meanwhile, there's many in America who wake up on Sunday morning and have to dig around to find this because they don't know where it is since last Sunday because they didn't care where it was all week.

39:16

They have to dust the dust off of it and make sure it looks nice and pretty and used before we take it to church on Sunday morning. We have the Bible that's available to us. But Paul's telling Timothy, hey, work hard to know what this thing says.

39:33

If God has revealed who he is to us, if God has given us his perfect inspired word, get to work because there is some effort that is required that you should understand what he has to say. I think this is something that's important.

39:47

It's a responsibility for us to take seriously. See, it's important for us to allow the Bible to speak in our lives and then we adjust our beliefs, we adjust our actions, we adjust to the Bible, not the other way around.

40:00

But a lot of times it seems like other people look at the Bible and they want to change it to suit them. We must be careful not to try to force the Bible to fit into our preconceived notions. We don't come to the Bible looking for it to affirm what we already believe to be true.

40:18

The Bible is not a tool that we twist to fit our beliefs or our preconceived notions. The Bible is the absolute line that we measure ourselves against. The Bible is the correcting tool that shows us where we're right and shows us where we're wrong.

40:34

It's important for us to study, as Paul says in this verse, work hard, be diligent, do the work so that we can understand what God's word has to say to us. Some common examples of how people want to abuse the Bible and twist its meaning, I thought just a couple of these might be helpful because they're so common in today's world that we live in.

40:57

So I took a couple of examples from a man named Peter Adams who had written about this topic a little bit. The first thing that we see, the first danger that comes to when we approach the Bible is that we often will take it out of context.

41:10

One example that I like to use to illustrate this, it's an absurd example, but it's one that I think will prove a point. We were to read Zechariah 2:6. That's important we read from the proper translation, right?

41:22

In the King James Version, Zechariah 2:6 says, Ho Ho come forth and flee from the land of the north, sayeth the Lord. Did you guys know that the Bible talks about Santa Claus? Ho Ho and flee from the land of the north.

41:38

Obviously the Bible's not talking about Santa here, right? But if we take something and we pull it out of its context and we don't care what's going on around it, but we just take these short little eight words or twelve words or that little Bible verse of the day or we just get our faith from this like Twitter Christianity that exists in our world where we just pluck things out, bring them over here and make them say what we want them to say, that's really dangerous.

42:04

This is an absurd example of that, but it comically illustrates how the Bible can be ripped from its context and distorted to fit something if we just take it and drag it over here into another space and we'll use it to mean whatever we want it to mean.

42:22

To properly read the Bible is not to create a ransom note where you come over here and take this word, come over here and take this letter and this phrase and bring them all together and make them say whatever you want them to say.

42:33

To properly read the Bible, to properly study, to show yourself as someone who rightly handles the word of truth, it means that we have to understand what it's actually talking about. Other times people will moralize the Bible when they read through the Bible.

42:51

An example here that was given by Peter Adams in his book, he said that a pastor might take Philippians chapter three verses thirteen and fourteen and those verses say, one thing I do for getting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead I press on towards the goal.

43:10

And if a pastor were to take this and to moralize that passage someone could certainly take that and use it to speak on the topic of focusing on setting good goals for yourself in life. It's important to press hard to chase after our goals and to have a list of things that you want to achieve or not achieve.

43:27

But that's a statement that while it may or may not be a good thing for you to practice in your life, it's ripping this Bible verse from its original meaning to communicate something entirely foreign to what the original author was trying to communicate.

43:45

Couple of things, I stuck this in the slides, I want you to take your phone out and just take a picture of this or write this down because there's two important rules for us when we're trying to understand what the Bible has to say there's two steps and oftentimes people will get themselves in trouble because they forget step one and they just rush to step two.

44:02

We'll read the Bible and we'll go, oh what does this mean to me? Right? But we can't start with asking the question, what does this mean to me? It's important for us if we're going to interpret the Bible accurately.

44:14

The first question that we have to ask is what does this verse mean when the original author wrote it to its original recipients? There's times where we miss stuff in translation, things get lost, right?

44:26

There are Bible verses that say don't wear purple, women should not wear pearls. Now is that telling you women don't, anybody got pearls you're gonna try to hide and pretend like you're not wearing them this morning?

44:35

What was that talking about? No, there was a specific context, Paul was talking about a specific group of people in a specific way that people were addressing and how it communicated who they were, their character, their lifestyle to the people that were around them.

44:50

It wasn't just an issue of wearing little shiny rocks around your neck. We have to ask the question, what did it mean when the original author wrote it to the original recipient? But then we get to ask the second question which is how does that original meaning apply to me today?

45:06

We need to do that. It says wear this or don't wear that or dress this way or don't dress that way or save this or don't say that. People often want to skip over the original meaning and just go straight to what I think this means for me is, but without understanding the author's intent first, it's easy to misunderstand the application today.

45:29

This is a command for all of us to take incredibly seriously. Do you want to understand what the Bible has to say? I have to do the work to understand what it meant before we can understand how it applies.

45:46

Can I give you some encouragement at this point? I want you guys to know I'm just not that smart, right? And so if someone like me can pick up a few tools and a few skills and figure out how to study and to dig around a little bit in the Bible and figure out what has God communicated to us, what has God said?

46:07

That means you can do it. Now it is something that takes a little effort. It is something that might take a little bit of time to make sure that we do the work to handle the word of God rightly, but it's important for us to do the work so that we handle the Bible accurately because one day, one day we're going to stand before God and one day we're going to give an account of the things that we have done and not done, said and not said, that the things that we've stood for or not stood for in life.

46:37

And when we stand before God one day and have to explain our actions, I don't want to stand in front of God one day and say, well, I just didn't know. That's not a valid response. It's not a valid response for us to say, I didn't know because you know what God probably is going to say often to many people who stand in front of him one day and say, I didn't know.

46:57

Why didn't you know? Because I put it in my word. You had every opportunity to know, you just didn't pick it up and read it and study and do the work and put in the time to make sure that you understood what I had told you to do or not do, how to live or not live.

47:13

I didn't know it was in there. Isn't a good reason for us not to be obedient to what God has had to say. Paul warns Timothy, don't quarrel. He warns Timothy, study hard to make sure that you understand what God has said in his word.

47:28

Finally, he warns Timothy in verses 16 through 19, avoid babbling like the fools. Avoid babbling like the fools. Verses 16 through 19, Paul says, avoid irreverent babble for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness and their talk will spread like gangrene.

47:45

And among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They're upsetting the faith of some, but God's firm foundation stands bearing this seal.

47:59

The Lord knows those who are His and let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. You know, having instructed Timothy on the importance of working hard to accurately handle the Bible, Paul returns to the subject now of mishandling the Bible.

48:16

He says avoid empty chatter in the New American Standard. Avoid irreverent babble here in the ESV. He's continuing to warn Timothy about the dangers of inaccurately handling what the Bible has to say.

48:29

He's continuing this conversation about the fruitless arguments and speculation that were mentioned just in verse 14. He's warning Timothy, he's saying empty chatter is not putting the truth of God's word to good use the way that you're supposed to.

48:44

In verse 15, it tells us, study, work hard, and make sure that you handle the Word of God the right way. But then in verse 16, he warns us about using the Word of God the wrong way. For these empty chatterers, words become substitutes for actions.

49:01

When the Bible says, do something, and then we sit around and argue about how we should do it instead of doing it, that's disobedience. For us to sit around and argue about the right way to do something is not what God told us to do.

49:14

He said, do it. Right? I hear those chuckles. It's almost comical for us to think about, we're going to get a committee together and we're going to sit and have the best conversation in the world about how to accurately build this shed out back.

49:30

And we take a few years to research plans and a few more years to consider what supplies mean we might use. And we put all this time into it. And meanwhile, the lawnmower is sitting in the backyard resting because we never actually did what we were told to do.

49:46

Paul's telling Timothy, avoid allowing the empty chatter to creep in where we just sit around and argue about things instead of actually doing what God has told us to do. And an abundance of intellectual chatter produces clever but ultimately fruitless conversations.

50:06

A test for what takes place in our Bible studies. A question that I think we should ask when we leave a Bible study is to ask the question, has it moved us closer to God? Has it elevated our conversation in some way or has it elevated our conduct in some way?

50:22

Do we just feel smarter by sitting and talking about these big grand ideas but they never actually took root in our lives because God's Word is living and active and it works in our lives? Bible makes a difference if we allow it to do its work in us.

50:41

He continues on. He says that those who would follow after these conversations of empty chatter, he says that these false teachers, their talk will spread like gangrene. It's a picture that's thoroughly unpleasant, isn't it?

50:55

It's a lovely thought for you to sit and think about. I'd stuck some pictures. No, I'm kidding. It's not one we want to chase down, right? But it's serious. Paul's warning us, hey, this is something that will destroy you if it goes unchecked.

51:12

The two men mentioned in this passage, Hymenaeus and Philetus, they've abandoned the truth. They've abandoned what Paul had passed on to them and other true believers had passed on to them and so they're dangerously spreading lies within the church there in Ephesus.

51:28

Without getting too far into the specifics about their false teaching, it seems like they were telling other Christians, telling people in the church that the final resurrection, that day where Jesus comes back to judge the living and the dead, that final resurrection, they were telling people in the church that that had already happened, that it had already spiritually happened for all believers.

51:48

It was over. They claimed that everything was done. All the promises that God has promised for the future, all the end of time final revelations were now theirs to claim. And it was causing great confusion in the church because people are looking around as people are being persecuted.

52:07

Paul's struggling in life. All these difficult things are coming and it was upsetting their faith. It was causing them not to believe what Paul was communicating. It was causing others to pursue comfort and the tangible earthly blessings that they thought they deserved as, you know, if God has come back and set all things right, well then I deserve a bigger house.

52:29

I deserve more comfortable living. I deserve all these things in life. But those things aren't meant for this life. They're meant for the next. They were twisting what God had said. They were twisting the truth.

52:45

So in verse 19, Paul offers this subtle little image, this subtle little illusion back to something that had happened earlier in the Bible that's recorded back in the book of Numbers. He's pointing back to a story that talks about how things turn out for those who oppose God and His clearly communicated truth.

53:07

Verse 19, he says, Paul says, let God's firm foundation stand, bearing this seal. The Lord knows those who are His and let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. There's this little reference here in those quotes.

53:22

You see the quotes around it, right? So he's referencing back to something that was stated in another place in scripture. And this is a reference back to Numbers chapter 16. If you're not familiar with it, it's the story of a man named Korah and his rebellion against Moses and Aaron.

53:37

And Korah had led a group of Israelites to rebel against Moses and Aaron, and God had reassured Moses that he was going to deal with these rebels. Moses, I'm gonna take care of this. And in Numbers 16, Moses declares, the Lord knows those who are his.

53:56

So God warns Moses in Numbers 16, the other Israelites to get back to distance themselves from Korah, from his sinfulness, to separate themselves from the rebels who were opposing Moses. And then in Numbers 16, verses 20 through 21, God tells Moses and the Israelites, separate yourselves from them.

54:14

Make sure you're not among them. It was a loving warning because of what was about to happen next. Because after Moses addressed Korah and the rebels one last time, the ground opened up underneath of Korah and his family and consumed them like some sci-fi movie.

54:30

Then those who had aligned themselves with Korah, the Bible tells us that fire fell from heaven and consumed them and their families and all their possessions. Paul's pointing back to this story saying, those who oppose God will be dealt with the way that God chooses to.

54:47

Paul's warning us not to be like the empty talkers in Ephesus who, like Korah, knew what God had commanded but they just chose not to obey. Korah wasn't someone who was ignorant of what God had said. He chose not to obey what God had told him.

55:03

And as Paul is telling us here, God knows those who are his. God has given us everything that we need in his word but we have to work diligently. We have to work hard. We have to put in the time and put in the effort to know what the Bible has to say and to obey it at every turn.

55:22

Requires effort. We have to work hard. I love that translation. Work hard to understand what the Bible says so that one day when you stand before God, you won't have to be ashamed as someone who put forth shoddy work.

55:37

Work hard, do your best and stand before God proudly one day saying I did everything I possibly could. I worked hard. Those who belong to God, who are not swayed by the false teachers like the two that are mentioned here in our passage, they don't fall into these unproductive religious arguments.

55:59

They stand firm. They hold tightly to the Bible. They believe what the Bible has to say. They believe what it says and what it says is true. And they do their best to like verse 15 says, to present themselves to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed.

56:23

That means that we read the word of God. That means that we study it, not just at a topical level, scanning our eyes across the words but we understand what it means and sometimes that means putting in a little effort.

56:36

We meditate on it, we memorize it, we live it out, it makes a difference in our lives. We are Bible people. That's what Paul wants us to be. He's telling Timothy and he's telling us, be Bible people.

56:51

Be people who know what it says and be people who do what it says. So that's the call for us today. It's easy for us to come to church and to have someone, there's times, just total confession time for me.

57:10

There's times where at church, I feel like a toddler parent. I've had five of them at this point. We have to teach people how to feed themselves. As a parent with children, I have to teach people how to feed themselves.

57:25

I've got five little people that can feed themselves now. It would be really silly if I was taking my child to college one day and I still had to put a little bib around his neck and put the food in his mouth.

57:37

It's a skill that we have to learn as we grow up and mature. The problem is there's some Christians that sit in church every single Sunday with their mouth open that the pastor has to do. Here comes the airplane thing for us to put the food in your mouth.

57:54

Don't be an adolescent. Don't be a toddler who comes to church and sticks your mouth open and says, all right, feed me. Learn to feed yourself. Learn to grow up in your faith. Do what Paul says here.

58:07

Work hard, study, put in the time. If you don't know how, good, you can learn how. I'm not gonna do as good of a job as someone else would do. Good, you know what my toddlers did when they were learning to feed themselves?

58:21

They made giant mess after giant mess after giant mess. Anybody that's ever fed a child spaghetti for the first time, you know what I'm talking about, right? We know that it would be so much cleaner if I just put it in your mouth.

58:36

But part of growing up means that they have to learn to take care of it for themselves. Part of growing to maturity, part of being a healthy, well-adjusted adult is I know how to take the food and put it in my own mouth.

58:51

And part of being a well -adjusted, mature Christian is learning how to take the food and put it in your own mouth. You learn how to study God's word. You learn how to consider what God says to know what he has told you to do and how to do it.

59:08

Because for us to stand before God one day and say, I didn't know. Isn't a valid response. So like Paul says in verse 15, work hard. Put in the time, be diligent, study. Don't forget about baptism at 10:30.

59:28

We're gonna wrap up here in just a few minutes. You're gonna have a few minutes that you can go out, grab a donut, grab your coffee, grab your kids from the nursery or whatever you need to do, but make sure that you're back in here because we're gonna start our baptism service at 10:30.

59:42

Also our prayer team is gonna be down here right after the service is over. If you need prayer, they would love to pray with you. We also have our prayer wall back in the back hallway. Maybe you want to go out there and write your prayer request down.

59:54

You can put your name, you don't have to put your name. You can drop those in the box and our prayer team will pray for those as well. But at this point, I want to invite you, would you pray with me now?

01:00:06

God, we thank you for, God, for your revealed word that you have given to us. God, that you have told us the absolute truth that in speaking through your prophets, that in speaking through the authors that would pin these words that we've now collected and put into this single collection that we call the Bible.

01:00:38

God, we thank you that you have revealed yourself to us. God, we thank you that you have allowed us to know you, that you have allowed us to have the opportunity to hear the words of Almighty God written to us, read to us on a regular basis.

01:00:56

But God, we pray that as we have that available to us, God, we pray that we would be people who take responsibility for that. God, that with that great opportunity, we have a responsibility as well. We have the responsibility to consider, to read, to understand, to study and work hard, to understand what your word says to us.

01:01:21

So God, we pray that you would help us to be people of your book. God, that we would be people who align ourselves with everything that you have said. God, that we would be people who align ourselves in every way with your word because your word is truth.

01:01:40

So God, as we are reminded of things that I don't think this was one that we revealed new truth that no one has ever heard in this room before, but God, it's one that we get so lazy in from time to time.

01:01:54

God, help us to repent of our laziness, repent of our sinful attitudes towards your word, and God, help us to treasure it as the treasure that it is. God, help us to know it, forwards and back, inside and out.

01:02:10

God, help us to be people who would study, not just sit as a toddler with our mouth open and saying, someone feed me. God, we love you. We thank you for loving us. We thank you for Jesus. We thank you for your word.

01:02:26

It's in Jesus' name, we pray, amen.