

# THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

## 2 Timothy 2:20-26

### “Learning to Run”

10\_8\_2023

Speaker: Pastor Drew Hunsley

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24:54

And I wanna invite the rest of you that are sticking around in here and are also excited to be in your class to turn to 2 Timothy chapter two. 2 Timothy chapter two. We're gonna look at the last few verses in 2 Timothy 2. So if you've got your Bible, go ahead and make your way there. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one hiding underneath of your chair.

25:15

You can reach down and grab one from underneath of your seat or maybe the one in front of you. And while you guys are making your way there, I just want to kind of provide a brief little reminder of where we've been because what we're gonna be looking at this week in 2 Timothy chapter two, I think this is kind of a key theme that we've seen so far in this series because overall in the theme of what we've been talking about in this series, this Pure Church series as we've been going through Paul's letters to Timothy and to Titus.

25:47

And he's been focusing on this idea of how to do the Christian life correctly, learning how to do the Christian life the right way. And so there's all kinds of different things that he's talked about, but they all kind of seem to fit under this same heading, this idea of doing the Christian life correctly.

26:04

And you know, there's all kinds of areas where we have to grow, that we have to learn how to live rightly in order to walk this all out for Jesus. For us to have success in the Christian life, it's important for us, and Paul has reminded us, to know what we believe.

26:19

It's important for us to know the right things so that when false teachers come, we know also what the wrong things are. How would we know that something is off if we don't know what is right? It allows us to identify false teachers, like Paul has talked about several different times.

26:34

We also know that it's important for us to live in community. And first and second, Timothy and Titus have talked about how the church is supposed to encourage one another, how the church is supposed to be there for one another and be strong when your brother or sister is weak.

26:50

And then last week even, we had this other important essential topic as we talked about the idea of studying the word of God, knowing how to handle the word of God accurately, as Paul said last week in verse 15.

27:04

But this week what we're gonna look at, there's this one key idea that I think we have to learn if we're going to successfully live out the Christian life. And I'm sorry to some of you, I know we've got a few in the room that'll be excited about this, but for many this may not be an exciting statement, but this week we're going to learn to run.

27:22

We're gonna learn to run this week in church. So Paul is gonna focus our attention on this idea. In verse 20 and 21, he talks about the idea of being useful for God's work, being a useful vessels that God can use you in the way that he wants to use you.

27:37

But then there's these two kind of steps that we have to learn to take in order to do the Christian life well. He talks about them in verses 22 through 26 of our passage this week. And he's talking about these two ideas of running.

27:51

And the first one is we have to know when to flee. We have to know when to run away from things. We also have to know what to pursue and when to pursue. We have to know what not only we're going to run away from, but also we should be running towards God and towards the things that he invites us to run to.

28:08

So we wanna read our passage together this morning. So if you've got your Bible, I hope you're there at this point, you can also follow along on the screens if you'd like. But we're gonna read 2 Timothy chapter two verses 20 all the way down through 26.

28:21

And we're gonna go back and break them apart a little bit. Let's start in verse 20. Paul says to Timothy, now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay.

28:32

Some for honorable use and some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house and ready for every good work.

28:48

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish ignorant controversies. You know that they breed quarrels and the Lord's servant must not be

quarrelsome, but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

29:12

God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil after being captured by him to do his will. These are the words of the Lord.

29:24

Would you pray with me church? God, we thank you for your word. God, we thank you for the opportunity to gather here together. God, that we can collectively, as one body of believers, that we can humble ourselves before your word, and that we can hear from you this morning.

29:39

God, as we consider what Paul would have to say to Timothy and how that directly reaches out and speaks to us as well this morning, we pray that you would speak loudly, that we would hear from you today. God, we pray not only that we would understand intellectually, but God, that you would speak to our hearts, that you would cause us to take this truth and apply it in our lives. God, this is one that more than several other conversations that we might have, several other topics.

30:08

God, this is one that just finds its very root at the application that it makes in our lives. God, we pray that you would help us to not just hear and understand these things, but that God, we would be doers who act on these things. So we give this time to you, and we pray that you would use it for your glory. It's in Jesus' name, we pray, amen.

30:30

All right, well as we dive into our passage and start to break it apart a little bit, I think Paul does a wonderful job because in these first two verses of this passage that we're

looking at this week, Paul lays out a goal for us as a kind of summary statement of what he's been talking about over the last several verses.

30:47

Over the last several weeks, we've been studying through 2 Timothy and we've been working our way through chapter two and we've seen several of these topics kind of come together and converge on what we're looking at this week because over the last several weeks, Paul has been talking about how people are going to walk away from the truth and they're going to pursue other things.

31:07

They're going to chase after other things that interest them or appeal to them. There are even in the church there in Ephesus where Timothy is stationed, there are false teachers, these men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, that were called out last week.

31:23

These false teachers have been causing other people to stumble in their faith, causing other people to be confused or to be upset or perhaps to even walk away from the faith. And then last week, we also saw the significance of holding on tightly to the word of God.

31:39

You know, last week I said that simple statement were Bible people, right? We have to be people who love God's word, who know God's word and who hold tightly to the word of God, that we would be someone who rightly handles the word of truth, as Paul said in verse 15.

31:55

So Paul's warning this week, as he kind of continues on, as he's warning us, he says, don't just stand around and wait for the negative influences that are out there to impact you. There are certainly, I don't know anybody that's named Hymenaeus or Philetus, maybe you do, they're in your circle.

32:12

I don't know them exactly, I don't know them specifically, but there are certainly people like them that are in our lives. There are certainly influences like that. And so Paul is warning us, don't just stand around and wait for the negative influences to have their impact on you.

32:27

Telling us to put ourselves in position to be useful. And so he illustrates this with a principle here in these first two verses, in verses 20 and 21. In verse 20 he says that in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use and some for dishonorable.

32:48

So to illustrate this idea that he's been kind of building towards over the last several weeks, over the last several verses, he starts to talk about this picture of a house and their bowls and their jars and their glasses and the things that they've got, the utensils, that they've got to do normal household things.

33:07

Now in a large house in that day, they would have had different buckets and pitchers and jars, all these different things, and some would have been made of wood and clay. Those were the less special vessels.

33:18

They would have been used for dishonorable purposes, things like removing the trash from the house. They didn't have nice glad trash bags that you can tie up and they smell pretty. They had to take the trash out, right?

33:30

And so they would use these wooden or clay bowls or buckets or whatever to take that out. There are even some jars and buckets that would have been used for human waste, dishonorable use. But there would also be special vessels, special bowls and jars and glasses and things that were made of silver and gold.

33:51

They were used for honorable functions. They were used for noble functions. When you had company over, you're not pulling out the clay and the wood vessels, you're pulling out the gold and silver. You're pulling out the nice china, right?

34:03

We have these different vessels that are used for different purposes in a home. Paul is using this as an analogy, this analogy of a house and the containers that are found in a house as a metaphor for the church.

34:16

As he's been talking through 2 Timothy, he's been talking about how there are some who would lead people away from the truth. There are some who are full of evil and wickedness and lies and all these wrong things.

34:30

There's some like Hymenaeus and Philetus that are full of filth. They're considered dishonorable vessels as they twist and pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ to make it serve them and their needs and their desires.

34:45

There are others in the church, there are others that are found who hold tightly to the truth of Jesus, that are honorable vessels, that are doing it the right way and they possess great value as they carry the gospel of Jesus with them out into the world.

35:02

I want you to notice something as we're going through this passage, because Paul does not simply say that those dishonorable vessels are useless and to throw them out with the trash that they carry. Verse 21 talks about how a dishonorable vessel can be made into an honorable one.

35:18

What does it say in verse 21? It says, therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be, and it continues on. It says that he will be holy, that he will be useful to the master of the house, that he will be ready for every good work.

35:34

So cleansing our lives from the dishonorable, cleansing our lives from all the things that have no place in the life of a Christian, it'll make you an honorable vessel with some great usefulness. God can use any of us.

35:48

There's not good and bad, and God only looks at a few of us and says, well, you're useful, but the rest of you, I don't have any use for. He's saying that any of them can be honorable if they will cast out, if they will cleanse themselves, if they will set themselves apart from the things that they should not be doing.

36:06

Hymenaeus, Philetus, change your ways. Change your message. Change the things that you're celebrating, that you're standing for, and cleanse your life so that you can be used as an honorable vessel. This is a call for conscious, intentional cleansing of a person's life.

36:26

I think this is important for us to comment, to stop here for just a second, to acknowledge that this is not something that we do apart from God in our lives. This is not something that we just muscle down and try real hard, and I'm not going to do any of those things anymore, right?



36:42

Because if you've ever read the Bible, if you've ever lived more than about six minutes in this life, you'll realize that trying to do the right things and trying not to do the wrong things is something that we just simply aren't able to do on our own.

36:55

I see those nods, right? We struggle sometimes. We fall into the places where I don't want to do this. I want to do this, and we wrestle, and we fight. This willful cleansing, this intentionally changing the things that we find to be present in our lives.

37:15

This isn't something that we do apart from the work of God. Ephesians chapter 2, Romans chapter 11, over and over again, there's all kinds of places that we can talk about that the Bible says it is God who works in us, and God is working to empower us to be the people that He wants us to be.

37:33

Philippians chapter 2 actually talks about this balance of our work and how we should work hard as we talked about last week, and also how God is at work in us. In the same sentence, we don't even have a period in the middle of this idea.

37:47

In Philippians chapter 2, verses 12 and 13, Paul says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Sounds like a command for you to do something, right? In verse 13, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

38:04

God works in us to do His work, but we're also clearly told to work out our salvation. It's the same sentence. So how is it that God does the work and we do the work? Aren't those in conflict? Are those mutually exclusive things?

38:18

No. No, we might try to create a conflict here. We might try to create some confusion. So do we do the work or does God do the work? The answer to that question is yes, right? Yes, I heard that from a few of you.

38:32

So He continues now. He calls us to be useful for the Master, useful for whatever good work God would have for us in these first couple of verses. And then He continues in our passage in 22 through 26.

38:45

He continues with this great little collection of things. Now He doesn't cleanly sort it for us where we can say that the things we pursue is in this verse and then the things that we run away from is in this verse.

38:56

It's all just kind of mixed together, but we've got this great little collection of things and we see things that we run away from and we see things that we should run towards in these verses 22 through 26.

39:09

So we're going to break them apart and try a little bit. We're going to look first at the things that we should run away from. Paul's command to flee these things that he lists in verses 22 through 26.

39:20

Let's look at those verses again with the specific lens of looking for the things that he tells us to run away from. Verse 22, he says, flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

39:36

Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies, for you know that they breed quarrels and the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

39:50

God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil after being captured by him to do his will. When we get to verse 22, we started that little section that I just read, and there's a connecting word at the beginning.

40:06

There's this word, simple, small, and he says, so. It means that if we look at the command, the invitation that Paul gives us in verses 20 and 21, he tells us that we need to be holy. He tells us that we need to set aside the things that shouldn't be in our lives, that we should set ourselves apart as special, as holy, so that the Master can use us for whatever he wants to use us for.

40:32

And then, so, because of that command, now, he tells us to flee that which would make him unholy. Makes sense, right? And he tells us in this passage to flee from youthful passions. Then a verse later down in the passage, he says that we should flee foolish, ignorant controversies and this quarreling that seems to pop up from time to time.

40:54

Now, we discussed foolish controversies, this quarreling. We've discussed that topic actually multiple times during this series, so I'm not going to take more time to study it today. So if you want to hear more about that, maybe you missed that week.

41:09

So you can go back on our website and check the message from June the 11th. It's titled, It Could Be a Wonderful Life, and you can go back and check that and hear some conversation about a very similar conversation with Paul talking about avoiding foolish, ignorant controversies and quarreling.

41:28

You could also just listen to last week's message from October the 1st to hear some similar points kind of discussed. But this week, I want us to take a moment and talk about this idea of fleeing youthful passions.

41:40

Fleeing youthful passions. Now, the word that we've got translated here in our ESV, the word that's translated as passions, is a Greek word that simply means desire. It means things that we look at and say, I want that.

41:54

I deserve that. It refers to this human experience of longing for, of craving something. I need that. I have to fill this desire in my life. In fact, Paul talks at length about this word, this idea, this desire.

42:10

He talks about it at length in Romans chapter 7. We're not going to turn there and dig all into that. We need a mini -series to interject into the middle of this in order to take time to go consider what he has in Romans 7.

42:24

But while he's talking about desire in Romans, Paul is talking about the same idea. He quotes Exodus chapter 20. He quotes back from the Old Testament. Exodus chapter 20, that may ring a bell for a few of you.

42:37

That's where God gave Moses the 10 commandments, right? Where we have the 10 commandments recorded in the Old Testament. And this word, desire actually shows up in one of those commandments. Paul's understanding of this idea, this word, desire is defined by the 10th commandment.

42:54

Exodus chapter 20, verse 17. It says, you shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything else that is your neighbor's.

43:09

This idea of desiring something, it's that idea of coveting. It's that idea of looking at something that someone else has, something that doesn't belong to you and saying, I want that, I need that, I deserve that.

43:22

Why didn't God give me what I deserve? This verse is addressing our desires, not just our actions. You know, there's times where I think many of us, we lie to ourselves and we convince ourselves that there are times that I might want something, but if I don't act on it, that's not a problem, right?

43:42

I'm just looking, you can look but you can't touch something along those lines, right? Well, the reality is that Paul's saying here that our desires, our desires are not neutral. If we have a desire for something that is sinful, that is in fact sinful.

44:01

It's not merely adultery, stealing, killing, the acts of actually going and doing those things that is sinful. The desire for those things is also sinful. In fact, Jesus reinforced this principle if you're familiar with the Sermon on the Mount that we find in Matthew 5, 6, and 7, Jesus reinforced this principle in Matthew chapter 5.

44:23

He said, you've heard it said that you shall not murder. Well, I tell you that even if someone has anger in his heart, even if you hate someone in your heart, that's the same sin. It may not have taken action yet, but it's the same sin and that thought, that hatred that you have when it is fully grown, it's murder.

44:44

Same thing, he says lust when you have that lustful desire, that sexual desire in your heart and you look at someone and you say, I want that, I deserve that, I need that. Well, that lust in your heart is the same sin as adultery.

44:59

It's just not fully formed yet. That's the same thing. So Paul's solution to this, to this reality that desires, sinful desires are in fact sinful. He tells us in the book of Colossians, we're going to get a lot of Paul, we're kind of piecing all of this together.

45:18

So Paul in his letter to the Colossians, in Colossians in the first two chapters we see he talks about the gospel, he talks about what Jesus has done and made a way for us to know him. But then in Colossians chapter three and in three and four there's kind of this turning point because he starts to focus on, okay, so how do we live this out?

45:37

So what does the things that we believe to be true, what difference does it make in our lives? And so this pivot point that is Colossians chapter three verse one is the space where it starts to turn in that letter.

45:50

And he says in Colossians chapter three verses one and two, if you have been raised with Christ, if you are a Christian, if you belong to Jesus. He says seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

46:04

He says in verse two, set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. And he tells us if we're going to be successful at living the Christian life, we cannot fixate on things that are of this world.

46:18

We cannot fixate on the things that, you know, I want that, I need that, I deserve that, that needs to be, I need that because it's going to make me happy. That's dangerous. Paul tells them in Colossians chapter three to set your focus on godly things and to put aside these sinful desires that you have.

46:39

Because if you allow those things to just kind of sit quietly in the corner of your life, if we think that, no, no, no, that's not going to make any difference in my life. I just want those things. But that's just quietly in my own heart.

46:51

Those are just thoughts that I have. Those are just things that I know and nobody else knows. Well, the problem is that sin doesn't just sit quietly in the corner, does it? Those desires don't just sit quietly in the corner.

47:04

And so what starts with perhaps a, just a small thought grows. And what we thought we were just keeping in the corner as a cute little pet, that little kitten, isn't actually a kitten. It's a lion and it's going to grow and it's going to grow.

47:16

And one day it's going to eat your behind, right? We don't want to just let temptation just sit quietly in the corner because it doesn't ever just sit quietly in the corner. Paul's telling us to set our focus on godly things and to put aside these sinful desires that we have.

47:33

It's the reason why if we were to continue reading through Colossians, chapter three, as he says at the beginning of that chapter, set your mind on things that are of heaven, not on things that are of earth, not on worldly things.

47:46

He continues just a few verses later in that same chapter. He starts in verse five and he starts talking about all the ways that we need to put those sinful desires that we need to put them to death, that we need to eliminate them, that we need to get rid of those things.

48:00

They don't get to just sit quietly in the corner. We need to kill them. In fact, John Owen, the Puritan pastor from the 17th century, he had a great, excellent quote on this. He said, be killing sin or sin will be killing you.

48:17

Be killing sin or sin will be killing you. We think that we can just kind of politely keep sin in the corner. It doesn't stay in the corner. It doesn't stay in those little dark recesses in our life.

48:28

It grows. And if we don't kill it when it's small, it will kill you when it gets big. Romans 13 tells us this same idea. Paul says in Romans 13, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

48:48

Make no provision. Leave no opportunity. Don't leave the door cracked open. So if you know that this thought, that this show is going to cause you to have bad thoughts, don't



watch that show. If you know that going to this place is going to cause you to stumble in some way, don't go to that place.

49:03

If you know that hanging out with these people are going to cause you to struggle in some way, don't hang out with those people, right? We should not do things. We should not associate with people.

49:13

We should not go to places that are going to arouse them. We should not do things that are going to arouse evil desires in our hearts. We know it, right? The desires are already there. Any of us don't struggle with temptation.

49:24

You're a liar because we all struggle with temptation, right? We all have those moments where, you know, I want it. We're like the moth drawn to the light. I want it. I want it. I want it.

49:39

The desires are there. The question is whether we will provoke them through undisciplined conduct or whether we will have the self-control not to make provision for the flesh. You know, this, this idea is one that, that it's, it's really important for us to win this, but we win that.

50:04

Before we get to the point where we think we win it. What Paul's talking about here, Paul's talking about, he's saying, don't wander down that path because the closer we get to temptation, the more we think we can just kind of keep temptation as a little pet.

50:21

We start wandering down this road and we get ourselves in trouble, right? Anyone who has ever had an affair has said, I don't know how we got here, right? I don't know how this happened. Anyone who has ever gotten themselves in over their head and has fallen down this path, most of the time they go, it was just a little thing that turned into a little thing, that turned into a little thing.

50:44

If the line of sinfulness is over here, the problem is that many of us in life, we start trying to sneak over and we make little decisions where we think, well, temptation's not a problem. I'm not doing anything wrong here, right?

51:04

I'm just slowly working my way over, allowing things of the world to become more and more a part of my life, to allow that TV, that TV show is not that bad. And that music that I listen to, I know that it talks about lots of ungodly stuff, but that's not really gonna influence me.

51:22

And that, yeah, she's just a friend. It's just, it's no big deal. And we're slowly, slowly, slowly, allowing temptation to grow in our lives. And we're slowly, slowly, slowly, allowing these things to become more and more a part of our lives.

51:40

And then all of a sudden we fall over the line and we go, oh, how did I get here? How did this happen? No, it wasn't the one step that caused me to have a problem. It was the 40 steps that it took me to get here.

51:57

What Paul is saying here in this passage, he's saying we have to run. He's saying that we have to deal with temptation, that we have to deal with sin, and it's not by walking all the way over right next to it and then making sure that we don't take the one step.

52:12

He's saying flee. He's saying run away from it. He's saying run away from the temptation and run to the good things that God is saying we should have as a part of our life. And he's telling us to get as far away from temptation as possible.

52:27

And before I came to The Rock, before I started working here in Southern California, I was a youth pastor at a few different churches. And as the youth pastor, I always ended up being the person they got called when mistakes were made, right?

52:41

And so working with teenagers, there were more than a couple occasions where I had to sit in my living room or I had to sit in my office or in some place and we're sitting here and there's a young man and a young woman sitting there in front of me going, we don't know how we got here, but she's pregnant.

52:56

I don't know how we got here, but she might be pregnant. We never thought we would walk down this path. What do we do? I thought we were strong enough to stand for, to stand against temptation. We knew that we didn't want to do this.

53:13

And now what? The problem wasn't the last step. The problem was the fact that they didn't pursue holiness and they walked down that line and they walked down that line and they woke up love before it was time for that love to be woken up.

53:29

Because they allowed those thoughts, they allowed that desire, that craving to start to wake up. And you know what, 16 year olds in the back of a car don't have the ability to do? Say no at that moment, right?

53:43

You don't say no in that moment. You say no by never getting in the ballpark, by running towards God and by running over here and pursuing a holiness, instead of wandering and seeing how close can we get to temptation without stepping over the line?

54:00

They would always ask me the question, you know, where's the line? How far is too far? What are we allowed to do and what are we not allowed to do? Right? I would never answer that question because if you think that it's a temptation, if it's going to awaken some more temptation in you, don't do it.

54:17

Holding hands is too much for you, don't hold her hands. If kissing her is too much for you, don't kiss her. If spending time talking with her late at night is going to, then don't do that, right? It's easy for us to look at young love and use that as an example.

54:35

But we do that in our lives too, right? We allow those little pet thoughts to live in the back of our mind. We allow those little things to, you know, I didn't do anything bad, it's not really sin. But like Paul warns us in Romans 13, he says, make no provision for the flesh.

54:57

Don't create the opportunity. Don't give yourself the chance. What he would say is, run. Run, flee, escape. Flee these things as he's saying here. But he also in these verses says to pursue these things.

55:17

He mentions different things. Paul mentions in this passage, he's instructing Timothy to flee the negative influences, the negative temptations. But he also mentions positive running as well. He says pursue these things.

55:31

So let's read our passage one more time. And we want to look with the lens of looking for the positive things that Paul tells us to pursue in life. Says in verse 22, flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

55:52

Have nothing to do with foolish ignorant controversies. You know that they breed quarrels and the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but should be kind to everyone, able to teach patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

56:08

For God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth. They may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil after being captured by him to do his will. You know, the positive commands that we see in these verses, he says to pursue righteousness and faith and love and peace.

56:26

And he says just a verse or two later that the Lord's servant should be kind to everyone, that they should be able to teach, that they should be patient to endure evil, that they should be someone who corrects others with gentleness.

56:40

You know, this isn't an unfamiliar tactic of Paul. Paul often will use this put-off and put-on language. See, it's never enough for the Christian just to avoid doing certain things. Paul doesn't describe the Christian life as just the things that we are against.

56:59

He talks about the things that we don't do, the things that we stand against, but he also says that we should be known for the things that we're for as well. Here he calls Timothy to run away from temptation and to pursue these alternatives mentioned instead.

57:15

It's not just run away, it's run away from the bad and run to the better. He mentions a few different things, there's some commands. He tells Timothy to pursue righteousness. That's doing the right thing, that's living an ethical life, ethically being upright and pure.

57:33

Doing the right thing is pursuing righteousness. And he also tells Timothy to pursue faith. That's pretty straightforward, right? Having trust in God, knowing that God knows better than we do, and knowing that we can trust him and whatever it is that's going on, that's the faith that Paul is encouraging Timothy to have.

57:52

Timothy was also told to pursue love. He's told to love those that were commanded to love. What does the Bible have to say about who we love? Did it ever speak on that? A few times, right? A little bit.

58:07

He tells us that we're supposed to love one another, right? I think that it tells us in John 15 that the world will know that we belong to Jesus by the way that we love one another inside of the church.

58:19

The Bible also tells us Jesus commanded to love your enemies. Okay? Love them all, right? Love those that were called to love. Paul also tells Timothy to pursue peace. That is living at harmony with people as long as it's possible.

58:44

I think this deserves just a small note here because, right? 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus have talked several different times about how we have to stand for the truth. Paul tells Timothy, stand for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

58:56

Make sure that no one would teach wrongly about Jesus. Make sure that there is no compromise in the gospel. Timothy's been told to stand up and not to just agree to disagree on some things. Paul's been fairly clear about it.

59:13

There's times when peace is not okay. There's times where we can't just smile and not say, okay, that's good for you. I think Martin Luther summarizes this whole posture of pursuing peace. I think he does this well as he was standing before those that would one day kill him at the Diet of Worms.

59:33

He's on trial. His words were peace if possible, truth at all costs. Peace if possible, truth at all costs. I think that's the attitude for us to carry in things. Peace if possible, truth at all costs.

59:52

Several of these virtues, love, righteousness, peace, that are mentioned here, they actually show up in Galatians chapter five as well. They're in Galatians five in a list that we refer to as the fruit of the spirit.

01:00:04

Galatians five 22 and 23, it says that the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This is a list of things that we look at that list.

01:00:19

That is not a checklist for you to work on. What that is, is that is a list of things that God will do in you, that you will see these fruit develop in your life if you are living the life that God has called you to live.

01:00:33

If you are living the spirit -filled life, this is what the spirit does in you. He makes you more loving, makes you more peaceful, he makes you patient, he makes you faithful, all these things that are mentioned here.

01:00:45

It's important for us to remember, when Paul commands Timothy to pursue these things, he's not telling him to do it alone. Paul is telling Timothy to live out what the spirit of God is already doing in you. The spirit of God is at work in you, Timothy. We read these verses just a few minutes earlier, Philippians chapter two, right? It says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you.

01:01:12

Same sentence. Timothy's active pursuit of holiness is not at odds with God's working in his life. Timothy's effort to be holy, Timothy's effort to pursue the things that God would have him to be about and to avoid the things that God would have him to avoid.

01:01:29

That's not something that is separate from God's work in his life, it reveals the work of God in his life. It is evidence of the fact that God is working. I think this might be the first time that I've quoted someone other than Paul this morning, but James chapter two, he talks specifically about this, right?

01:01:48

James chapter two, it says that faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Someone will say, you have faith and I have works. When James challenges us, he says, show me your faith, apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

01:02:06



And he's saying, no, this isn't an either or situation. This isn't, I love God and I trust God, and I have faith, but it doesn't make any difference in my life. You know what that is? That's not faith.

01:02:23

Having a relationship with Jesus makes a difference. You know what someone who says, I'm gonna do it all and I can, I'm just gonna live exactly the way that God tells me to live. I'll do it on my own strength, I'll do it in my power.

01:02:37

You know what that person is? Full of it. They're a liar, right? You can't do it. It's not possible. Paul tells Timothy to pursue these things, but I love this, don't miss this. He tells Timothy to pursue these things along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

01:03:02

Yeah, this is beautiful. Timothy does not need to pursue these things. He doesn't need to do this. He doesn't do it alone. Anybody ever read the Bible and seen where it said, hey, just love your enemies.

01:03:18

Hey, just be fully faithful to your spouse at all times. Hey, be an honest person. Hey, don't ever do this, don't ever do that. Live this way. Anybody ever read that and go, I'm not gonna be successful for very long.

01:03:33

I'm just not strong enough to be able to do that. I have good news for you. God knew that. God knew that this was an uphill battle that we were going to fight. And you know what he did? He didn't just send us out to go figure it out for ourselves.

01:03:51

He gave us help. It's the reason why we're sitting in a room with a bunch of other people, because God has created his church and said, there's gonna be days when you can't do it. There's gonna be days when you get weak and you know what you need? You need somebody to be there to help you when you stumble. You need someone to be there to encourage you when life gets hard. You need somebody to be there. And sometimes it's gonna be a hug. Sometimes it's gonna be a hand up.

01:04:19

And sometimes it's gonna be a foot in your backside that you need to stop doing what you're doing, right? But we need someone else to do all those things. I don't bend that way, right? We don't just pursue God alone.

01:04:33

We pursue him with other believers. There's value in Christian community. Looking at this, thinking about this, one example, just one example of what the Bible has to say about Christian community, we studied it last year as we studied the book of Ecclesiastes, because Ecclesiastes chapter four just talks really beautifully about this.

01:04:54

In Ecclesiastes 4 it says that two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up.

01:05:08

Again, if two lie together they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him. There's value in having people there to have your back.

01:05:23

There's a reason why we send people out into the world with partners in certain professions. It's because they need somebody to have their back. The Christian life is

one of those professions. The Christian life is one we don't succeed by trying to do it alone.

01:05:39

We fail. Most of the time we fail pretty extravagantly. You know, to summarize this, I was thinking about this, you know, sometimes there's just things that get in my head. I don't like them being there, but they're there, so we just got to embrace it, right?

01:05:57

There's a song that my daughter loves in this Disney music playlist that we listen to sometimes in the car. It says, we're all in this together. High school musical, right? You guys all saw me to be a high school musical person, right?

01:06:11

We're all in this together. Well, I'm not a huge fan of the song, but it'll preach this morning, right? We need each other. We will not succeed in doing this alone. Paul knew it. Timothy knew it. And I hope that we know it too. Paul tells Timothy to pursue these things along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Finally, we're getting to the last couple of minutes of our message.

01:06:42

In verse 24, Paul tells Timothy not to be quarrelsome, but rather to be kind to everyone, able to teach, to patiently endure evil. It matters not only that Timothy contends for the faith, it also matters how he contends for the faith.

01:06:57

If he's a grumpy old curmudgeon that just has a sour face on all the time, you know what people aren't going to do? Look at him and say, I want to be like that guy. He's not going to convin-, that's not the old how to make friends and win people and influence.

01:07:12

I don't remember the name of the book exactly, right? That's not how we influence people. Proverbs 15 talks about that. The old "you catch more flies with honey" adage. Paul's telling Timothy, don't be quarrelsome.

01:07:31

Don't be someone who's just known for what they stand against. Be kind to everyone. Be able to teach. Be patient and enduring evil. Timothy is commanded to refute the false teachers. He's supposed to stand up against Hymenaeus and Philetus that are mentioned just a few verses earlier.

01:07:50

He has to protect the sheep that God has given him to take care of. But the way that he responds to the attackers is also potentially a way of persuading the attackers. Persuading the opponents. Timothy must communicate persuasively, to communicate the gospel, to communicate clearly the truth that God has revealed to us.

01:08:12

But the hope is that they might repent, that they might realize their error, that they might change their direction and decide to be cleansed from what is dishonorable like it talked about at the beginning.

01:08:25

I think the message for this week is an easy one to understand. This is not something that's difficult for us to squeeze in between our ears this morning. Fleeing from temptation and pursuing what God would have us to pursue, pursuing a life of holiness, pursuing the characteristics that God would have us to be about, they are both a part of the Christian life.

01:08:49

What we say no to is just as important as what we say yes to. When we say no to those hurtful, unprofitable desires in our lives, we can say yes to the better things. Well, it's easy for us to understand that. I think we all, nobody should be confused this morning

about run away from temptation, run to what God would have you do. Well, it's easy for us to understand. Sometimes it's really hard to live out, right?

01:09:18

This isn't one that's just a, yep, got it. Stash that one away. So the application for us is simple to say, but sometimes maybe difficult to apply. There's two questions I've got for you as we wrap this up.

01:09:32

First one is simply what should you be running away from in your life? Where have you made provision to snuggle up next to the line? So why, maybe I won't step over it. Maybe you plan on stepping over it.

01:09:49

Where have you made provision for the flesh that you need to run away from? What do you need to run away from in your life? And the second question is just the opposite. What should you be running towards in your life?

01:09:59

What do you need to put off and what do you need to put on? Our prayer team is gonna be down here right after the service. They would love to pray with you about whatever it is that you've got going on.

01:10:08

Our prayer wall, back in the back hallway as well. We would love to pray for you, but we also, in just the last few moments that we've got together, we wanna take communion together this morning. As a church family, we wanna remember the sacrifice of Jesus, and so we've got these tables set up at the front and the back, and we're gonna take communion together.

01:10:27

But before we do, I wanna remind you, perhaps inform some who, if this is your first time, or you haven't been here with us before, this moment in the service is for those who have given their lives to Jesus Christ.

01:10:41

For those who are in Christ, for those who have decided to follow Jesus. So we love that you're here, but if that's not you, if you have not given your life to Jesus and said, I believe in Jesus and I wanna follow him, I wanna invite you to watch this time, not participate in this time.

01:11:00

For those who are followers, disciples of Jesus, in just a moment, I'm gonna invite you to come and take the elements from the table and return to your seat, and I wanna encourage you to take a moment, to prepare your heart, to confess any known sin that might be present in your life, to ask God to use this moment to fill your soul, to remind you of the joy of your salvation, to stir your affections towards him as we remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us.

01:11:28

So I wanna read a small little section. It's a little invitation to communion from a book that I have called the Pastors Book, profound title, I know. And I'm gonna read from 1 Corinthians chapter 11 as well.

01:11:44

Our Lord Jesus gave thanks on the day that he instituted this sacrament. He broke the bread and he gave thanks. And as he was thankful at the Last Supper for the Passover, for God's provision for his people of a perfect lamb and the lamb's blood shed for their sins.

01:12:00

So now we give thanks for this, our perpetual Passover meal, for the ultimate lamb of God, the Lord Jesus, who shed his blood so that we, through faith, might claim it as our protection and as our provision.

01:12:15

Brothers and sisters, this is a day to give thanks. This is a time to give thanks. This is the meal at which we give thanks. To give thanks to Jesus, the lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world.

01:12:28

To give thanks to the Son of God, who feeds us even now through his supreme sacrifice. This morning, I wanna invite all who profess a sincere faith in Christ, all who are living according to his word with a clear conscience to join me in partaking of this Thanksgiving meal.

01:12:45

First Corinthians 11, Paul says, For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body, which is for you.

01:13:00

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, he also, after a supper, took the cup, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it and remembrance of me. So would you pray with me now, church?

01:13:15

God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for Jesus, and God, we thank you for this gift of communion. So we can intentionally, regularly stop and slow down and remember the sacrifice that Jesus made.

01:13:28

We can remember that we have been given opportunity to know the king of the universe, that we have been given opportunity to come boldly before you and know that you hear us, that not only do you hear us, not only do you accept us, but you have adopted us as your sons and your daughters because of the sacrifice of Jesus.

01:13:49

That when Jesus went to a cross, was wrongly convicted, was wrongly killed, as an innocent man, he paid a penalty that he did not deserve, so that guilty sinners like me could be forgiven even though we deserved the penalty.

01:14:08

God, we wanna thank you for Jesus, for his sacrifice. God, as we take of these elements in just a moment, we pray that you would use them to remind us of the goodness of salvation, that you would remind us of what an incredible blessing it is to be able to have Jesus as our substitute.

01:14:31

God, we pray that you would remind us of what an incredible blessing it is to be yours. Father, we thank you for Jesus and for his sacrifice. It's in his name we pray, amen. Take and eat.