

THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

2 Timothy 3:1-9

“Facing Perils as People of God”

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Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

15:55

Do you ever look at the news and wonder, what is going on in our country and in our world? Our passage is going to tell us what is going on right after we pray.

16:16

Will you pray with me, please? Father, we thank you for our prayer. What a gorgeous day you have made. Thank you for the weather outside. Thank you for the warmth of your love here inside your house.

16:29

We just thank you, Lord, for your word, because you tell us the truth so we can understand what's going on in our world and in our country and in our communities. And we can face it with faith. We can face it as people of God.

16:46

Please give us ears to hear, hearts to receive your truth. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Our passage, 2 Timothy, we're starting chapter 3. Only one more chapter to go after this. But we're in chapter 3 verses 1 to 9.

17:03

Paul is writing to Pastor Timothy to urge him to always anchor his confidence in the Word of God and to preach Jesus relentlessly in the face of rising persecution and rising opposition. Paul himself is in prison, where he will eventually be executed.

17:27

Why? For preaching the gospel. As Paul writes to Timothy about the dangers in their first century world, the Holy Spirit gives Paul foresight to also see the increasing perils that God's people will face in the future.

17:45

And that includes our 21st century. When Paul starts our passage today, when he starts chapter 3, he wants Timothy and he wants you and I to clearly understand what we're up against in the world. And I just need to let you know in advance, Paul does not sugarcoat it.

18:06

At the end of chapter 2, I'm sure you remember what we covered last week, but just in case. At the end of chapter 2, Paul had just told Timothy this. He said, the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

18:25

And now Paul writes this. Let's read our passage, chapter 3 verses 1 to 9. Paul starts with, but understand this. In the last days, there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness but denying its power.

19:01

Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins, and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

19:14

Just as Johnus and Jomber supposed Moses, so these men also opposed the truth. Men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

19:31

What did we just read? What we just read is a description of the human condition we see today. This is a photograph of what godlessness looks like in its many, many forms. This is God showing us the source of the chaos in our world.

19:56

I know you can't wait to dig into this list, so let's go. Verse one, Paul starts by saying, but, Timothy, be strong, be prepared, preach Christ, be patient, be gentle, but understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.

20:14

The last days refer to the time period from Jesus' first coming until he returns. So far, the last days are about 2,000 years long, and we are living in the last days, and Jesus could return at any moment.

20:30

When Paul says there will come times of difficulty, what does he mean by that? Are you gonna see some problems? The Greek word that we translate as difficulty, was used by the ancient Greeks to describe the savage nature of wild animals and the fierce conditions of raging storms at sea.

20:54

So knowing that, what Paul is saying is that these last days, we're going to see savage and fierce times. This Greek word also appears in the book of Matthew to describe two demon -possessed men. Let's turn to that, this is really interesting.

21:12

Matthew 8, 28, and when Jesus came to the other side, to the country of the Gatorans, two demon -possessed men met him coming out of the tombs. So fierce, that's our word difficult. So fierce that no one could pass that way.

21:28

So here's what we all need to understand. We're going to face terrible and terrifying times that will get worse and more frequent as the return of Jesus gets closer. The Word of God wants us to understand that.

21:46

Why will there be so much pain and peril? Why? Verse two, we get the answer. He writes, for or because, people will be, lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, and unholy.

22:07

Did you notice? Did you notice as Paul begins his list of the dangers we need to watch out for? He doesn't mention things like war, crime, disease. Does he? Instead, all his warnings are about the wicked ways of people.

22:29

Throughout the Bible, God reveals to us that we have a dangerous heart condition. Let's look at what the prophet Jeremiah said. Way back in the Old Testament, Jeremiah 19, verse nine, says that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick who can understand it.

22:50

Don't know if that's the right verse, is it? I think that's, anyway, let me read it to you. That's probably my mistake. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick who can understand it.

23:04

Jesus often talked about the depravity of the human heart, remember? Let's go to the book of Mark, the Gospel of Mark. In Mark 7:14, we read that Jesus called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand." Sounds like Paul, doesn't it?

23:24

Like Paul, Jesus wants us to understand the truth about what he's gonna say, the truth about our human heart. So let's stay in Mark 7, but go a little further to verses 21 and 22. Jesus said this, for within, from within, out of the heart of man come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness, all these evil things come from within and they defile a person.

23:58

Jesus said, Jesus's list sounds pretty similar to Paul's list, doesn't it? Paul's is a little longer, because he's a pastor. He's gotta say a little more, but this is a little bit longer. Let's go back and look at Paul's list again.

24:14

We'll look at verse two. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money. Pay attention to this, because there's a test coming. Lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, and unholy.

24:28

Okay, open book test. What is at the top of Paul's list of wickedness? Yeah, good. Lovers, people will be lovers of self, number one reason for the chaos in the world. Now Paul is not saying it's wrong to love ourselves.

24:50

The word of God tells us we were made in the image of God. That fact alone gives each and every person great wealth and value. The Bible also tells us we are so loved by God that he sacrificed his only son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

25:08

We are so precious to God that he died to save us so that we could live with him forever. Jesus told us how to love God and love ourselves. Remember, let's look, Matthew 22 verses 37 to 39. And Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God "with all your heart and with all your soul "and with all your mind." "This is the great and first commandment.

25:35

"And the second is like it. "You shall love your neighbor as yourselves.' We were created to love the Lord our God first and foremost with our entire being, body, soul, and mind. And then God also created us to have a healthy love for ourselves.

25:56

Why? So that we will then know how to love and care for others the way that we would love to be loved and cared for. But the word of God is telling us in these last days, people will love themselves with all their heart, soul, and mind.

26:14

And they will have little or no love for God or neighbor. Let's look at verse 2 again. Keep going through the list. After lovers of self comes lovers of money. The Bible makes it clear there's nothing wrong with having money.

26:31

There's nothing wrong with enjoying having money. The trouble comes when wealth and worldly success leads us away from the Lord. Jesus talked about this in the Sermon on the Mount. Let's look at chapter 6, verse 24.

26:46

Jesus said, no one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God in money. There's a big word in the dictionary.

27:05

Maybe you know it. It's a big word that describes lovers of money. Do you know it? The word is avaricious. Do you know that word? Avaricious. It's a good word. I don't know how to spell it, but it's written here.

27:16

Avaricious means you're materialistic, coveting, and greedy, you're money -grubbing. Avaricious people will continue to multiply in these last days. Back to verse 2. Finish our list in verse 2. After self -lovers of money, we have proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, and unholy.

27:44

Proud and arrogant people have an excessive or an exaggerated sense of their own importance, don't they? When Paul uses the word abusive, he means people will be unkind, rude, verbally, and physically cruel, and also blasphemous.

28:08

High, you see, high on Paul's list of wickedness in these last days is disobedience to parents. That seems sort of trivial, doesn't it, compared to the other evils on Paul's list? It's not trivial to God.

28:28

The Ten Commandments. Do you remember the Fifth Commandment? Honor your father and mother. The word honor means to revere them, prize them, and value them highly. But in these last days, we're going to see children of all ages that disrespect their parents' authority and also God's authority and pretty much all authority.

29:00

Paul says people will be ungrateful. Do you know what this word ungrateful means? It's a word you probably are familiar with. It means entitled. We don't have any entitled people in the world today, do we?

29:15

Entitled people believe they deserve special treatment, and they deserve everything they have so they have no gratitude to anyone. People in these last days will be unholy. The word unholy means people will have sinful, wicked, immoral, corrupt, and ungodly thoughts, motives, and actions.

29:40

It's a strong list. But wait, there's more. Verse four. Verse three. Sorry, verse three. We're not too far yet. We're just getting started. Verse three. Heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving, good.

30:01

Heartless people have no natural compassion for others, so they really and truly do not care who they hurt. They don't care. They don't feel anything. Unappeasable people cannot be satisfied and they cannot be soothed.

30:18

They are never happy because they can never have enough. And when they get mad, they cannot be calmed down because they have no grace. They have no forgiveness in their heart because all they have is rage and revenge.

30:34

Slandering people make false and malicious comments about others. Slandering seems to be pretty common today, doesn't it? But it's an abomination to God. Let's look at Proverbs chapter 6 verses 16 to 19.

30:55

The word of God says, there are six things the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him. Hottish eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed it as blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

31:25

In these last days, lying tongues and false witnesses will speak up a lot. So the truth, the truth will be harder to find or even recognize in these last days. Let's go back to verse three. Paul finishes with, after being heartless, unappeasable, and slanderous, people will be without self-control, brutal, not loving good.

31:55

People without self-control cannot restrain their emotions and their desires. They're like a car speeding down the road with no brakes. There's no telling what might happen, but whatever it is, it's not going to be good.

32:13

Brutal people are savage, cruel, sadistic, and inhuman. When Paul says not loving good, this can also be translated as people will despise good. They will actually hate those who are good in these last days.

32:31

For someone, think about this with me. For someone to actually hate good, they themselves have to be radically bad. So the word of God is telling us in these last days, there are gonna be some really bad people who are gonna do some really terrible things.

32:49

We need to understand that's how it will be. But also, verse four, people will be treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Treacherous people will throw you under the bus literally.

33:09

They are backstabbing and untrustworthy. Treacherous people make promises because they never intend to keep them, and whoever is foolish enough to trust them will regret it in the future. Reckless people are dangerous because they say and do things without thinking or caring about the consequences.

33:35

People who are swollen with conceit are full of themselves. They are bulging with vanity and arrogance. Paul says in the last days, people will be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. This is an ironic choice that wicked hearts make because this means you seek the temporary pleasures of the world, but you reject God, who is the only source of everlasting pleasure in the universe.

34:11

Let's look at Psalm 16:11 just for a moment because if you don't know Psalm 16, it's one of the 150 really good ones. David wrote, you make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy, fullness of joy, and at your right hand, our pleasures forevermore.

34:38

God created us to find our greatest pleasure in him today and forever, but as the return of Jesus gets closer, people will look for pleasure everywhere, except in the Lord. Lastly, Paul includes a description of false teachers and leaders and their followers from his day and also in ours.

35:04

He describes them in verse five as having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power that he says, avoid such people. False teachers, false prophets, cult leaders, and their devoted followers say and do things to look godly, but they do not have Christ in their heart so they have no power of God in their lives.

35:31

That's what Paul's telling us. They are devilishly deceptive because false teachers know how to talk and act like the following God, but they will lead you away from God. One commentary described false teaching like this, and I wanted to share it with you because it was just so good.

35:55

The worst forms of wickedness consist in perversions of the truth. Isn't that true? The worst forms of wickedness consist in perversions of the truth. Do you remember at the end of chapter two, Paul told Timothy to correct misguided sinners, even the really grumpy ones, with gentleness, with gentleness in the hope that God may open their eyes and some may repent and turn away from Satan's control and put their faith in Jesus.

36:31

Gentle, be gentle. But here in our passage, how does Paul tell Timothy to deal with the wicked false teachers? Let's put the verse back on the screen. It's an open book test. Avoid, avoid such people.

36:52

Don't cozy up to false teachers, avoid false teachers. This is the same word, same command Paul gave in chapter two when he told Timothy to avoid or have nothing to do with foolish and ignorant conversations.

37:05

Paul is urging Timothy to teach his congregation to recognize and reject those who create confusion by twisting and contorting the truth of God to lead people away from

wholehearted faith in Jesus. A.W. Tozer said this about the confusion created by false teachers, cult leaders, and their followers.

37:27

It'll be on the screen. He said, so skilled, think about this, this is really true. So skilled is error at imitating truth that the two are constantly being mistaken for each other. It takes a sharp eye these days to know which brother is Cain and which is Abel.

37:47

That's good, isn't it? People don't wear name tags to let us know they're a false teacher. So how do we recognize them? How do we identify them? The best way to recognize a lie is to know the truth, right?

38:10

Despite a counterfeit, you need to study, you need to know the real thing. This means we need to do what Pastor Drew told us to do a few weeks ago. We need to be Bible people. We need to be Bible people.

38:26

We need to open our Bible. We need to read what it says. We need to meditate, think about what God says. We need to study it, and then we need to obey what God says. But here's a big problem in these last days, because that's our topic, the last days.

38:50

Let's look ahead to chapter four of Timothy. Because in the last days, people, people are not going to be interested in studying the Word of God. In the last days, people will prefer to be spiritual rather than be biblical.

39:06

The Word of God is telling us in these last days, people will prefer to be spiritual rather than be biblical. Let's look at what Timothy said. We'll get to this in a few weeks. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth, and wander off into myths.

39:33

This is telling us something that we see in our day. In these last days, people will shop, are gonna shop around for teachers, are gonna shop for churches, looking for people to tell them what they wanna hear, instead of what they need to hear.

39:51

They will follow myths. What does that mean? This means people will follow the fabrications of people, the ideas of people rather than the truth of God. Let's go to verse six of our passage. Paul writes, for among them, for among, he's talking about false teachers, are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins, and led astray by various passions.

40:22

False teachers are subtle and cunning. They don't knock on the door. They creep into houses. The word creep literally means to slip in sideways, to enter stealthily, to sneak in. Now, maybe a few of you might have noticed that Paul calls out weak women.

40:49

Anybody notice that? Everybody did. In Paul's day, women primarily spent all of their time in the home. And in Paul's day, there were indecent false teachers that like to make house calls when the men were away at work.

41:11

So, the point Paul is making is this. False teachers are predators. They're not your friend. They're not your spiritual leader. They are predators. They know how to capture

weak men and weak women with lies that appeal to their guilt and appeal to their passions.

41:35

Next is a really painful description of the tragic reality of those who pursue myths, who follow the ideas and the opinions of people rather than the truth of God. Let's look at verse 7. This hurts. People that pursue myths, people that follow false teachers are always learning and never able to arrive at the knowledge of the truth.

42:04

That's terrible. That's heartbreaking. In these last days, many people will spend their lives looking for truth in all the wrong places. They will follow myths. They will follow ideas and spiritual trends.

42:29

They will follow false teaching and never find the saving truth of Jesus. Never. At RockCC, we preach the saving truth of Jesus and we teach the word of God line upon line, but not just to learn things about the Bible and learn about Jesus.

42:50

We do it to allow the truth of God to penetrate our hearts and convict our hearts so we can see the depth of our sin and we can see our need to repent and trust in Jesus alone to save us and then we can grow in our faith and grow in our obedience to God.

43:09

But there are people out there going to church too that are never coming to a knowledge of the truth. It breaks my heart. Paul finishes our passage by comparing false teachers to the evil sorcerers in Egypt who challenged Moses and lost.

43:33

Let's read the end of our passage. There's eight and nine. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also opposed the truth. Men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith, but they will not get very far for their folly will be plain to all as was that of those two men.

43:54

Who are Jannes and Jambres? They are not mentioned by name in the Old Testament, but they were very likely two of Pharaoh's sorcerers in Egypt. Now if you read the book of Exodus or seen the movie, then you know God sent Moses to Pharaoh to release the Jewish slaves and God gave Moses power to perform miracles to prove he was sent by the living God.

44:24

Now the first time Moses came before Pharaoh, he told his brother Aaron to take his staff and throw it down on the floor. And what happened to the staff? What did the staff do? Turn into a big ol' snake.

44:37

Great. Let's read what happens next because here's where Jannes and Jambres come in. Exodus 7 verses 11 to 12. Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers. That would be our boys Jannes and Jambres.

44:51

JJ, we'll call them. And they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. For each man cast down his staff and they became serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. So even though it was a little embarrassing for Jannes and Jambres, they lost their staffs, but even so they sort of held their own against Moses there, right?

45:18

So Moses sent, I mean, Pharaoh sent Moses away. But God sent Moses back to Pharaoh with the first of ten plagues to convince Pharaoh to let God's people go. Do you remember what the first plague was?

45:36

Water into blood, right? You knew that. You saw the movie. You saw Charlton Houston do that. We read in Exodus that Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded and as Pharaoh watched, Moses took that staff that had turned into a serpent and he struck the water of the Nile and all the water of the Nile turned to blood.

45:55

But the sorcerers could turn some water into blood too by their secret arts. So Pharaoh would not let God's people go. Second plague. You know what that one was? Frogs. Frogs. Second plague. This is interesting because the Egyptians actually worshipped a goddess of fertility who was represented in the form of a frog.

46:22

So it's sort of like God sense a humor. It goes, oh, you're like frogs, huh? God caused frogs to come out of the Nile and cover the land of Egypt. There were frogs in the fields, frogs in the roads, frogs in the towns, frogs in the houses, frogs in your bed, and frogs in the cooking bowls in the kitchen.

46:43

Frogs were everywhere. But the sorcerers, once again, Jannes and Jambres, they could make some frogs come out of the water too. So again, Pharaoh would not let God's people go. Third plague. Gnats or lice.

47:00

That's the third plague. Really pleasant. God turned all the dust of the land into gnats. And here's where Jannes and Jambres ran out of steam. Let's read what happened in Exodus chapter eight verses 18 to 19.

47:14

The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce nets. Always wondered what that looks like. Were they straining or they jumping around? Were they chanting? What were they doing? But whatever they were doing, it wasn't working.

47:24

But they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, this is the finger of God. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he would not listen to them as the Lord had said.

47:37

Now in all of Paul's letters, Paul usually points to the Pharisees as examples of false teachers. But in this case, he points to Jannes and Jambres. Maybe that's because Timothy was facing false teachers in Ephesus that either that pretended to have or actually really did have some occult powers.

47:58

Jesus told us this would happen. Remember Matthew 24 verses 24 to 25, our Lord said, For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders as to lead astray if possible, even the elect.

48:15

Then Jesus said, See, I've told you beforehand. False teachers have been dangerous since the church began. And they will only become more so as the return of Jesus gets closer. Let's look at verse eight one more time.

48:32

Paul comes back to them and says, Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men, the false teachers in Ephesus and the false teachers today also oppose the truth. Men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.

48:48

Paul is underscoring something important for us. We need to understand. Okay, this is why Paul says, avoid them. Paul's underscoring the fact that false teachers are not simply misguided sinners that need to hear the gospel.

49:02

No, false teachers are enemies of the gospel. They are corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. What does that mean? It means they have destroyed their mind by believing lies that have made them now incapable.

49:18

It's incapable. It's impossible for them to ever see the truth and believe in Jesus. And this word disqualified that Paul used was a Greek word. And in the ancient times, they would use this word to describe metal that they tested.

49:32

But the metal was so badly flawed, it had to be thrown away. It could not be saved. Verse nine, last last time for verse nine, but they the false teachers will not get very far. For their folly will be plain to all.

49:50

It was that as was that of those two men. Aren't you grateful for verse nine? You can bet Timothy was like, Oh, thank you for telling me this, Paul. Here we have God's comforting promise that he is in control.

50:13

And false teachers can do some stuff, but God will only allow them to go so far. And then they will fail. And false teachers cannot and will not stand for long against the Lord and his people can't be done.

50:30

Paul wrote these words about 2,000 years ago. And since then, Many false teachers have come and gone. And Jesus' church is still here. And Jesus' church is full of faith, and full of light, and full of life, because Jesus promised even the gates of hell will not prevail against His church.

50:56

OK, what are our takeaways? I have four. There's more. You can look for them. I'll give you four. First, first takeaway. From now on, every time we see in the news some further evidence of the wickedness and chaos in our world, we need to remember,

51:19

we must remember what God has told us to clearly understand that this is how the world will be as the return of Jesus gets closer. So please, let's not give into fear. It's heartbreaking. It's not that we're not going to feel terrible, but let's not give into fear.

51:39

Let's not give into despair. As people of God, let's pray. Let's stand strong in our faith. Let's be Bible people, and let's tell other people about Jesus while there's still time, because He is coming quickly.

51:55

Second takeaway is, again, we need to be Bible people, don't we? Why? So that we don't get pulled into the wicked ways of the world. Romans 12, verse 2 says, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good, and acceptable, and perfect.

52:21

We need to know God's word so we can know God's will and God's way for us. Here's the third takeaway. In these dark days, these are dark days, but in these dark days, this gives us the opportunity to let our light, to let the hope and light of Jesus shine even

brighter in our workplaces, in our schools, in our neighborhoods, on social media, please, on social media, and wherever we go.

52:54

Matthew 5, in the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus said this beautiful thing. Jesus said, you, you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but I'm a stand and it gives light to all in the house.

53:11

In the same way, let your light shine before others so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. We can do that. I know we can. We can do that. Okay, fourth, final takeaway.

53:29

We had a sobering passage this week, so we need some good news, don't we? How will God guide us and bless us in these last days? You know how? You need to come back next week for the rest of chapter three.

53:53

Our prayer team will be down front to pray with you at the end of this service. We also have a prayer wall out to the right. If you want to just write a request and leave it there, our prayer warriors will pray for you.

54:03

Let's pray together, please. Father, help us, please, understand what you've told us today. Hard to hear some of this, but we see it every day. Help us understand. We are living in the last days. And while we look forward, we will be praying together.

54:19

To your return, Jesus, we see a world of hurt. We see people who are turning away from you in every possible way and in unthinkable ways. Let us be sure to follow your ways, Lord. Let us follow your ways and not the ways of the world.

54:39

Let us not get sucked into going that way, to get that anger, to get the way of the world. Let us be Bible people. And let us be your light that you call us to be in this darkness. We should be even brighter because it's so dark.

54:54

Let people see the truth of Jesus in us. I pray that some might repent and be saved while there's still time. And Lord, our world today showed us, your word today just showed us this dark, evil and wicked, wicked world.

55:13

Thank you, God, that this world is not our home. Thank you. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. We love you. We thank you. And it's in your holy name, we pray. Amen.