

2 Timothy 3:1-16

Perilous Times & Precious Truth

2 Timothy 3:1 *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:*

A) Paul returns now to the subject of the last days.

B) 1 Tim.4:1 Last days men would depart from the faith!

C) What does Paul mean by the expression, “last days?” When did they begin?

1) The Last days applies to the entire period between the Death/ Resurrection / Ascension and 2nd coming of Christ

D) That entire time represents the last days!

But Jesus did give us a hint as to when it would be getting closer in Matthew 24

A) It was there that He likened the last days to Labor pains –

B) And we know that when a woman is getting closer to giving birth –

1) Her labor pains become more frequent and more intense.

C) See when Jesus talks about the Last days– and the Characteristics of it –

1) He describes events that have always occurred in the History of man. Wars / famines/ Violence etc.

D) But the difference is – in the last days – we will see those things occurring more –

1) They will be more frequent and more intense.

E) Well, Paul is going to give us a list of Characteristics of men in the last days

1) Characteristics that have always been – but in the last days- More intense about it.

It is interesting to note that the word Perilous is translated terrible –

A) This particular word appears only one other place in the New Testament (Matthew 8:28).

B) It is where Jesus met the two violent men who were possessed by demons in the region of Gadara.

C) They were wild, uncontrollable men who lived among the tombs.

1) The particular Greek word used to describe them is this word Perilous or terrible used in II Timothy 3:1.

D) These will be days where the demonic influence in people’s lives will be strong!

In 1988 evangelical philosopher and theologian Carl Henry made a stunning & prophetic prediction in his book, “*Twilight of a Great Civilization*”. He said that as America progressively loses its Judeo-Christian heritage, paganism would grow bolder.

What we saw in the last half of the 20th-century was a kind of benign humanism, but he predicted that by the start of the 21st-century, we would face a situation not unlike the first-century when the Christian faith confronted raw paganism— we will see humanism with its pretty face ripped off, revealing the angry monster underneath.

His words have come true, and are coming truer with every passing day.

Well, in v.1-5 Paul says that the last days will be marked by three misguided affections!

1. Men will be lovers of themselves.
2. Men will be lovers of money.
3. Men will be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

1 A total rejection of God’s heart and will.

V.2 For men will be lovers of themselves!

A) It is no accident that the first of these qualities will be *a life that is centered in self*.

B) Love of self is the basic sin, from which all others flow.

C) “The moment a man makes his own will the center of life, divine and human relationships are destroyed.

D) We have no problem loving ourselves

1) Picture – How did I look – tear it down

E) People / US/ Self / Me – Mirror on the cover
All the pages

When People reject God and put self on the throne they become unholy, ungrateful.

This leads #2 To a total moral collapse.

A) People become lovers of money, -
Unquenchable thirst for more! **Love of money
root of all kinds .. evil**

B) Boasters – arrogant – look at me

- 1) Proud- those who look down on others.
- 2) Blasphemers – who cares about God.
- 3) Disobedient to parents

C) Roman culture, cost you your life

- 1) Greek – written out of the will
- 2) Hebrew Stoned to death

D) Today Kids think nothing of it!

1) My dad put me thru the wall for being
disrespectful to my mom! She was tough too

E) Fear of God – didn't really grasp but I was
plenty afraid of my DAD

V.3 Unloving – Storge in the Greek – family love!

A) Parents and Children – We see the kind of
abuse that goes on today. **Child Abuse / sexual
abuse**

**B) Perilous times indications we are living in the
last days.**

**C) I remember reading about Ted Bundy – Mass
murderer. He had a jail house conversion {Dobson**

1) IN the interview he started sharing how it all
started for him w/ Pornography.

**D) He had a very warped view of sexuality and
love**

1) It escalated into these violent tendencies

**He was sharing about how his introduction to
Pornography was magazines**

A) He had to sneak to look at – Today – fears it is
so easy – piped right into your home – TV /
internet

B)It is so readily available – I am terrified that
there are a 1000 Ted Bundys in every
neighborhood.

**Finally #3 There is the total breakdown of society.
Unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control,
brutal, despisers of good,**

**Despise those who are good – those who stand for
Morality.**

Isaiah said woe to the nation that calls evil good
and good evil. Isaiah 5:20

**That is the postmodern society that we live in – No
absolutes**

A) Those who stand for morality get ridiculed and
are told they are not politically correct

**B) While those who want to practice every
abhorrent thing have all the rights – Woe to that
nation**

**4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure
rather than lovers of God.**

C) This attitude marks our current age. For example,
think of national advertising slogans recent years

- *Nothing is taboo*
- *Break all the rules.*
- *To know no boundaries.*
- *Relax: No rules here.*
- *Peel off inhibitions. Find your own road.*
- *Living without boundaries.*
- *Just do it.*

D) The message is the same:

- 1) You make your own rules.
- 2) You answer to no one.
- 3) You are the one that matters.
- 4) Your universe revolves around you.

E) Every man does that which is right in his own eyes, and woe to the person who dares to question his “lifestyle choices.”

People love pleasure. But it’s a love that leads only to the **“Been there, done that, now what?” mentality**, as they find they have to continually do something bigger, better, farther, faster, etc

But this is an attitude that will even infiltrate the Church! V.5 Having a form of godliness but denying its power, and from such people turn away!

A) The word “form” means “having the outward appearance” of godliness.

B) They look Christian or at least religious – they talk a spiritual kind of talk – But there is something missing

1) There is a dynamic that is in the life of a true believer that just isn’t there!

A married woman wrote this letter to Dear Abby to justify her adultery. She writes: “He’s also married. We meet once a week at a motel for three hours of heaven. My husband knows nothing about this, and neither does my lover’s wife. Sex with my husband is even better now, and it’s not as though I am denying my husband anything. I teach a class at church every week, but for some reason, **I feel no guilt.**”

C)It is no wonder that the world scoffs at the Church today: They don’t see much of a difference.

1) Christians commit adultery, Cheat on taxes, in their business

D) They will embrace a kind of postmodern religion that allows them to do anything, believe anything, endorse anything, live any way they choose as long as it makes them happy.

They will say things like, “We don’t need to be bound by the outdated rules of the Bible.

A) Those were written 2,000 years ago and don’t apply to us today.”

B) That’s not far-fetched. You can say things like that today and be elected a bishop in some denominations.

C) But the power of God is denied in their lives by not allowing THE WORD to have its way –

1) Not surrendered – not allowing THE WORD to govern their lives.

D) We don’t have to choose between pleasure and God. Serving God is the ultimate pleasure; Psalm 16:11 says, *At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

E) But we do have to choose between the love of pleasure and the love of God.

1) Living for God will give you many pleasures, but they only come as you love God first and refuse to love the pleasures themselves.

A British company has developed a product called "Spray-On Mud" so city dwellers can give their expensive 4x4 vehicles the appearance of having been off-road for a day of hunting or fishing without ever leaving town. The mud is even filtered to remove stones and debris that might scratch the paint. According to the company, sales are going well. There is something within each of us that values how we look on the outside more than who we are on the inside.

It causes some people to pad their résumés or embellish their memoirs. But it has no place in our lives as followers of Jesus.

Paul warned Timothy about people in the church who had a form of godliness but denied its power. "They will maintain a façade of ‘religion,’ but their conduct will deny its validity.

You must keep clear of people like this" (2 Tim. 3:5, Phillips).

Verses 1-5 Describe men in general in the last days – men will be

V.6-9 Paul describes the mentality of false ministers – Those who have a form of godliness but deny its power – this sort Read Verse 6-7

6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

A) Now don't get the idea here– that Paul is trying to pick on a certain type of woman

B) He is simply trying to show – who the false teacher seeks to target

Bb) Those who are lonely – vulnerable – those who are gullible. Struggling in sin!

C) They are going to prey on those type of people
1) Religious Hucksters -

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

Jannes and Jambres were the two magicians in Pharaoh's Court who withstood Moses – by duplicating the miracles that Moses did. PT Imitators

A) His Staff became a snake – so did theirs / He turned the Nile to blood so did they. Moses brought frogs – so did they {Dust to lice – this is finger

B) Their folly is in the fact that they did nothing to help Egypt but to only make matters worse {More frogs} more Blood More snakes

C) That's the way it always is with Satan's counterfeits because all he ever does is make things worse.

So it is true we are living in Perilous times where there is a growing rejection of God – Self love That has led to a great moral collapse That has led to a complete breakdown in our society.

But the message is not one of doom and gloom! See these indicators of the last days don't discourage me for a couple of reasons...

A) First, bad times are made for good people.

B) That is, when times get tough, good things start happening in our lives.

1) What takes the wrinkles out of the shirt I wear?

The heat and pressure of an iron.

C) What turns a lump of coal into a sparkling diamond? Heat and pressure.

1) So, too, I have noticed that the tougher the times— whether it be financially, spiritually, relationally—

D) The more wrinkles are smoothed out, the more the brilliant light of Jesus shines, the more people grow in their walk with God.

Second, Good people are made for bad times.

A) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were 3 kids who refused to bow the knee to Nebuchadnezzar's statue.

“Throw us into the fiery furnace,” they said. “If God chooses to deliver us, so be it. But if not, that's okay, too” (see Daniel 3:17, 18).

B) When were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego seen in this light? When times were dark.

C) The darker your campus or your office, the easier it will be for you to shine for Jesus Christ.

1) The more you stand out when you are living for Jesus !

D) The Darker it gets the more of an opportunity it will be for true lovers of Jesus to stand out!

1) Early Church in Persecution -

Paul closes the Chapter by giving us **THREE SURVIVAL STRATEGIES** for the perilous, difficult, dangerous days in which we live.

1. Follow Godly Examples Read Verses 10-13

A) This principle is based on the truth that we become like the people we associate with.

B) If we follow the ungodly, we will become like the ungodly.

1) If we follow the arrogant, we are likely to become arrogant.

C) If we follow those who follow Jesus, we are more likely to become like Jesus ourselves.

D) In this case, Paul uses himself as an example, and says in effect, **“Follow me as I follow Christ.”**

These are the marks of the godly people we should follow:

1. They have nothing to hide. **“You know my manner of life.”**
2. They teach the truth. **“You know my doctrine.”**
3. They practice what they preach. **“You know my faith, my love and my patience.”**
4. They aren't afraid of persecution. **“You know my sufferings and my persecution.”**

Paul reminded Timothy of the specific occasions of persecution which he endured. **What happened to Paul at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra:**

At Antioch, where Paul was kicked out of the city for preaching the gospel (Acts 13:50).

At Iconium, where Paul was almost executed by stoning (Acts 14:5).

At Lystra, where they actually did stone Paul and leave him for dead (Acts 14:19).

And out of them all the Lord delivered me: Paul remembered this as he sat in prison and waited for execution.

He knew that God was completely able to deliver him again, or that He might not.

Paul seemed at complete peace, leaving it in the Lord's hands. Persecution was not going to stop Paul from following hard after Jesus Christ.

I believe Paul thought the Rapture would happen either in his lifetime or shortly thereafter.

A) So do I. I believe the Rapture will happen in my lifetime.

B) There are people who would ridicule me for making such a statement:

“if Paul thought the Rapture would happen in his lifetime, and it didn't— Foolish to think it will happen in ours!

C) **Not at all. Throughout the history of the church, the greatest men and women of the faith have all lived their lives believing that the Lord's coming was nigh.**

D) **Luther/ Calvin/ CHS / Moody/ Finney / Torrey - Good company**

1 John 3:3 – Pure – He is pure

It has a great effect on how we live

A) **One's heart does not get troubled as easily.**

B) **One is not prone to sin and give into temptation – Produces a Purity.**

C) **If you want to live a zealous, exciting, fulfilling, pure Christian life, live it looking for the Lord's coming**

#1 Follow godly examples

2. Continue in what you have learned. V.14-15

The second strategy is extremely practical. Stay the course. Continue in the things that you have learned.

Friday: Mathews Grand Baby – Why

Saturday: 34 yrs Joyce Kenny Funeral – Why

There is a lot about God that I don't know or understand – Cling to what I do Know

A) **God is sovereign {His Promises are true**

B) **Timothy, hold on to what you know – What was entrusted when you were young.**

C) Continue in them, able to make you wise

3. Let the word of God make you complete! V.16-17

A) *Scripture is inspired.* Literally “All Scripture is God-breathed.” “All Scripture is breathed into by God.”

B) When you speak, your word is “you-breathed”- your breath, conditioned by your mind, pours forth in speech. 1) You breathe out your words.

C) Scripture is God breathed

2 Peter 1:20-21

20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. NASB

It has been given to us & is profitable for:

Doctrine: What is right

Reproof: What is not right

Correction: How to get right

For instruction in righteousness: How to stay right

Leaves us complete and equipped for every good work!

This is Paul's final answer to the “terrible times” that are coming in the last days.

Read the Word!

Know the Word!

Obey the Word!

Make God's word the foundation of your life.

A) Love it and believe it and obey it and follow it and then teach it to others.

B) That will make you strong and give you confidence when trouble comes your way.

C) Read today Psalm 119 – 176 verses that are a celebration of Scripture.

1) The Psalmist uses the 22 letters of the Hebrew Alphabet to form his outline -

D) By doing so – He is saying God's Word is everything from A to Z.

1) The Scriptures are life! All things that pertain to life and godliness – found in the Knowledge of Him

If we stand back and look at this passage as a whole, we can summarize it in a few key statements:

- 1) The world will get worse—Don't be surprised.
- 2) Tough times are coming—Don't be discouraged.
- 3) It's easier to stand strong if you don't stand alone.
- 4) Believers who build their lives on the Bible may be persecuted but they will never be defeated.

Build your life on the Word of God and you will be able to survive the coming hard times.

As a practical matter, there are some questions we should ask ourselves as we think about this passage:

- 1) How am I building God's Word into my life?
- 2) Do I submit to the Word of God even when I might disagree or dislike something that it says?
- 3) Am I willing to run all my opinions through the grid of Holy Scripture?