

SIGNS FOR OUR TIME 2 – DECEITFUL TEACHINGS
HARRINAY UNITED CHURCH – BAPTIST
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Text: 2 Timothy 3 10 – 4:5

Introduction:

In continuing the series 'signs for our time' we are going to talk about deceitful teachings today. Having warned Timothy about the imminent lawlessness and moral decadence that is coming, Paul now admonish Timothy on what he and the fellow Christians must do to remain faithful to God irrespective of what happens.

False teachers are around

Today: we move to 2 Timothy 3 10-4:5 which I titled deceitful teachings.

Paul starts this section by reminding Timothy that he has seen and understood Paul's doctrine, his way of life, and the purpose for his life, faith, longsuffering, love and perseverance.

He also reminds Timothy of the afflictions and persecutions in various places which are also recorded in Acts of the Apostles.

In essence Paul says he had been a faithful servant even though he had suffered a lot for the gospel. These are Christian characteristics and what I believe Paul is saying is that his life had been an open one that reflected the honour and glory of Jesus and laying good examples for people to see and follow. Paul is saying do as I do and he concluded that section by saying 'he who will live a godly life will be persecuted'. Are you ready for persecution and hardship? Then you are ready to live a godly life.

As for the false teachers who he called impostors will go from bad to worse, they deceive people and not knowing they too are being deceived.

You can only deceive people for a while and is always for a short time. Some people 'lie through their teeth' but lies never last only the truth will not burn even in fire.

The warning about false teachers and prophets dated back to Jesus in Matt.7:15, 24:11; 2 Peter 2:1; and 1 John 4:1.

Teach the word

Paul now moved on to encourage Timothy to continue to teach true doctrine and remain faithful to the scripture he had been taught by mum, grand mum and Paul which is holy and true and makes people wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Any other wisdom is worldly wisdom which is a lie and is from prince of darkness of this world.

The reason why Timothy must continue to teach the truth is to defeat Satan's lies and that can only be done by preaching the truth from scripture that is God's breathed which means God breathed his word into people and they wrote as they were instructed, hence it is correct, without error, dependable, holy and trustworthy.

Warren Wiersbe puts verse 16 rightly: The Holy Scriptures are profitable for *doctrine* (what is right), for *reproof* (what is not right), for *correction* (how to get right), and for *instruction in righteousness* (how to stay right). A Christian who studies the Bible and applies what he learns will grow in holiness and

avoid many pitfalls in this world and be complete because he has been thoroughly and properly equipped.

This means that anyone who studies the word and obey them will know what is right and what is not, he will stay in the right. The person who does these is a person of God.

I want to emphasise something here. Knowing is different from learning. Knowledge is having an insight into something whereas learning is 'a relatively permanent change in behaviour'. Therefore people may have knowledge without learning anything from what they know. But we will do well if our knowledge leads us to change our ways of lives to reflect the image of Christ the Word of God, then we would be true learners.

Preach the Word

Paul now reminds Timothy that they are accountable to God and will be judged and because of this he must preach the word when it is convenient or not. Preachers must stop making excuses instead of taking opportunities so also Christians. They must convince the doubters and the confused to be clear minded; they must rebuke the erring and wayward people to be honest and transparent and exhort those that are doing well so that they will continue to do better.

To quote an old rule of preachers, "He should afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted." If there is conviction but no remedy, we add to people's burdens. And if we encourage those who ought to be rebuked, we are assisting them to sin. Biblical preaching must be balanced. In order to do this one needs the anointing of the Holy Spirit so that he can preach with boldness, without fear or favour.

God's speaker must be patient as he preaches the Word. He will not always see the immediate results. Structural change is very easy to accomplish but behavioural changes take a very long time. Therefore a preacher may find that he will repeat the same thing many times before it sinks and have effects.

He must also be patient with those who oppose his preaching because there will always be someone or people in every congregation who will make every and any excuse why the preacher is not the right person or what is saying is the wrong thing. But with patience and grace they will be won over to God. This is the reason why Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:24 'and a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient.' NKJV

People will turn away from the truth

Above all else, he must preach true doctrine. He must not simply tell Bible stories, relate interesting illustrations, or read a verse and then forget it. True preaching is the explanation and application of Bible doctrine. Anything else is just religious or motivational speechmaking.

A time is coming and has come long time ago when people will not want to hear true doctrine and their ears will be itching for carnal things and they will gather those that will speak what they want but not necessarily what they need to hear.

The fact that a Church is small does not mean that the preacher is preaching falsehood or carnal things. It does not also mean that a preacher of large church is preaching the true doctrine. God knows who is doing his will and will judge all of us. People detest right preaching for several reasons.

1. The Bible is true and people do not want the truth but falsehood
2. The Bible challenges bad behaviour and people do not want to be challenged
3. The Bible condemns sins and people still want to live in their sins

4. The Bible shed light into people's lives but they want to live in darkness where they will be covered
5. The bible points people to salvation through Jesus Christ but Satan misleads people from salvation to condemnation.

Only on Friday, as I was listening to Premier Radio as a singer was being interviewed. He said he is praying for the days when there will be no more sermons or preaching but only singing songs which he calls 'worship'. This person of course got it wrong completely, equating singing songs only to worship and removing the Word from the Church and then nothing is left but entertainment. Yes only one person spoke his ignorance and myths out but only God knows how many people share this view. People have various excuses not to want to listen to the Word of God as I have said earlier but whatever excuse the Word of God stands and salvation comes through it, God cannot be wrong but we can change our attitude otherwise we'll be caught up in myths and become impervious or impenetrable which is dangerous.

Romans 10:14 'How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?' NKJV

No doubt, Paul's purpose was to honour and glorify God by doing His will and do the work He gave him and that was why he endured hardship and persecutions during the course of the work assigned to him and ensured that it was done. That is what we preachers first and then Christians must do so that we can honour and glorify God, doing His will by doing the work He has given us.

Godly people must suffer

However, doing God's work and His will brings suffering and persecution but is rewarding. They will not look for trouble or any of the hardship; Satan through his agents will bring it their way. If you are living right, this will come your way but God will see you through because you will overcome by the blood of the lamb and the testimony of your mouth. Some people have ignored this today and say that there is no hardship for Christians except those who have hidden and un-confessed sins. That is not true and Satan is behind it all.

My friends do not be deceived Jesus said we will have trouble in this world but we should be cheerful because He has overcome for us. We must be willing to suffer in whatever form for being Christians who are redeemed to do good. And will reward us both in this world and in glory.

Conclusion:

As Timothy is to be watchful and do the work of an evangelist, so also we must be watchful because the line between myths and truth is now fine as impostors have infiltrated the Church and are making impact in a big way. We must use every opportunity to promote salvation. This does not mean that every sermon must be evangelistic because other believers need solid food to grow mature but we must never lose the sight of what God can do with even the most unbelievable way and manner.

Therefore friends, be watchful and sign up for the truth. Do not be deceived we are very close to the last days.

God bless you.