

SIGNS FOR OUR TIME 4: REMAIN FAITHFUL

2 TIMOTHY 2:14- 26; PSALM 101:1-8

Introduction:

The books of Timothy (First and Second Timothy) were letters written by Paul to Timothy from prison in Rome. Timothy was Paul's spiritual son who Paul handed over the responsibility of continuing to build the church of God beyond Jerusalem after his death. Timothy was a young man then who was timid, physically weak and facing opposition and persecution (1 Tim 4:12; 2 Tim 1:6-7; 1 Tim 5:23).

Paul's first letter is about encouraging Timothy and Pastors today on how to build a strong church leadership and have spiritual impact on the lives of others.

Paul's second letter is about encouraging Timothy, pastors and all Christians today to uphold the faith through:

- the power of the Holy Spirit - 2Tim 1
- **Perseverance – 2Tim 2**
- Defence of the gospel – 2Tim 3
- Preaching the gospel – 2Tim 4

Underlying every aspect of Paul's encouragement is the emphasis on the importance of the **WORD OF GOD**.

2 TIMOTHY 2:14- 26:

In this portion of Paul's letter of encouragement to Timothy to persevere, he identified 5 undermining practices which Timothy and all Christians today must avoid in order to remain faithful:

- ❖ Quarrelling about words - is of no value and ruins those who listen 2:14
- ❖ Godless chatter - leads to more ungodly nature - 2:16
- ❖ False teaching - destroys the faith of some believers– 2:17-18
- ❖ Evil desires are becoming more socially acceptable than righteousness -2:22
- ❖ Foolish and stupid arguments - produces argument and quarrels - 2:23

These are also the signs for our time. Sometimes I'm concerned when Premier Radio gives precious airtime to other religion to air their views and debate on their belief and Christian faith ("Unbelievable"). I wonder whether such opportunity creates room for quarrelling about words, Godless chatter, false teaching and foolish and stupid arguments. You might have a different view.

The letter to Timothy is a letter to the church leaders and to all Christians today. It is a call to faithfulness in the word of God, a call to persevere in every circumstance. Paul used the analogy of the commitment and diligence of a good steward (2:1-2); soldier (2:3-4, 8-13), athlete (2:5), farmer (2: 6-7), Workman (2:14-18) and servant (2:23-26) to explain how Christians should remain faithful to the word of God.

What does it mean to remain faithful (2:14-22)?

To be faithful means that one is consistently trustworthy, loyal and diligent, especially to a person, promise or duty. It means commitment to a person, promise or duty regardless of the prevailing circumstances.

To remain faithful means that you are currently faithful and need to hold on to it till the end. Do you doubt your faith right now because of what is going on in your life? I want to encourage you "do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded" (Heb 10:35).

Paul puts it this way, "Be a good workman, one who does not need to be ashamed when God examines your work. **Know what his word says and means**" (2:15b NLB).

A good workman relies on his tools to build; measure and repair his works. In the same way a pastor, church leader/workers need the word of God to build others up; guard against falsehood; and to restore members who are weak or have fallen away through temptation, hardship or persecution etc.

To be faithful means that Timothy, pastors and all Christians today need to rely on the bible to find all that they need to persevere, preach the gospel and to practice their faith. So remain Faithful to the word of God.

It means **being a vessel of honour for God (2:20-21)**. Paul tells Timothy to be the kind of person Christ could use for noblest purposes –

A gold or silver in a house. Let us not settle for anything less than God's highest and best - Wood or clay in a house.

It means knowing when to **run from your enemy and when to stay and fight (2:22)**. People who run away from their situation are considered to be cowards. But sometimes removing yourself physically from temptation can be the most courageous thing to do. Do you have temptation that you find difficult to resist in your life? The bible tells us that the best solution is to physically remove yourself from the environment that stimulates the desire.

Paul said when you have removed yourself from the environment that stimulates the sinful desire make sure that you run after righteousness faith, love and peace (2:22b; Phil 4:8).

It means **avoiding foolish and stupid arguments with those that oppose your faith but gently tell them about the love and grace of God** with the hope that God will give them change of heart that leads them to know the truth. The truth that they have been the victim of the devil's trap and captivity so that they may be saved (2:23-26)

Why should you remain faithful?

1. God is Faithful to:

- 1.1. His word - Ps. 138:2:
- 1.2. Promises – Gen 9:14-15; Prov- 8:17; John 14:14; Heb: 13:5; Psalm 48:14; 1 John1:9

2. Jesus is faithful to:

- 2.1. God –Luke 22:42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."
- 2.2. Everyone – John 12:27 "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour".
- 2.3. Christians – John 14:16-17; Act 1:4-8; Act 2:1-4

3. It comes with reward:

Only those who are found faithful to the end will receive worthy reward (4:7 & 8). It is said "winners are not quitters". Jesus says in Matthew 24:13, "But he who endures to the end shall be saved." See also Matthew 28: 18

Conclusion

I want to conclude this message today by highlighting that this letter to Timothy was a personal letter. It is a personal letter to all church leaders and to all Christians today – you and me. So I want to make it personal. I want to start from the Pastor, the elder, the deacons and deaconesses, Sunday school teachers, ushers, cleaners to ask you how serious do you take your duties? Your faithfulness to the word of God in this generation will determine the continuation of a successful handover of true word of God to the next generation (2:2).

Why am I being personal about this today?

- The letter of Timothy is personal
- This message to you this morning is personal. It is about you
- Rev. 20:12-15 – tells us that there are *books* with our deeds written in them.
- Romans 14:12 tells us that each of us will give account of him/herself to God (there will be no lies because the book containing all our deeds will be opened at the same time).

So I say to you, remain faithful because only those who are found faithful to the end will receive worthy reward (4:7 & 8; Matthew 28:18). It is said “winners are not quitters”. Jesus says in Matthew 24:13, "But he who endures to the end shall be saved."

Remain faithful. “Be a good workman, one who does not need to be ashamed when God examines your work. Know what his word says and means” (2:15b NLB).

Do not be misled by false teachers. Prayerfully check out every teaching you receive and make sure that they are in line with the word of God.

Do not be distracted by quarrelling about words, engaging in Godless chatter or foolish and stupid arguments because it produces more arguments and quarrels. Practice Psalm 101

Prayer: “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it” (1 Thes 5:23 & 24)