

My first lesson here, at Pleasant Plains, we studied through the text of II Timothy 4:1-5 concerning the work of the preacher and evangelist. It is such a great text for any man to study so that he might know what the Lord expects of the person who dedicates their time and effort to the Kingdom, but have you ever wondered why that text falls where it does in the book of II Timothy? Why does Paul include it right near the end when it is such a valuable text? I'll suggest that he does this because he first has to issue a warning to Timothy that gives great weight to the importance of the preacher and his work. Paul not only gives a warning, but he also gives the solution to the trouble facing Timothy. Let's back up a chapter and consider the warning that Paul gives to Timothy concerning difficult times that were coming his way, and then let's consider some lessons that we can learn from Paul's warnings and solution.

I. Difficult times will come.

- A. Paul made a point to warn those that difficult times would be coming their way.
 - 1. Paul warned the Thessalonians that there would be a false teaching concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. **(II Thess. 2)**
 - 2. This was the 2nd time he had written to Timothy about difficulties that would be coming. **(I Timothy 4)**
- B. Paul says that the difficult times for Timothy would come in the last days.
 - 1. Last days, later times, or latter times are all used to simply describe something happening during the Christian dispensation. **(Heb. 1:1,2)**
 - 2. Because he is writing to Timothy in such a specific fashion, we can assume that Paul expects for these things to happen during the lifetime of Timothy.
 - 3. In **I Timothy 4** Paul says that "the Spirit" was the giver of warnings concerning this apostasy.
 - 4. Quite possible that Paul is writing about the same event in **I Timothy 4 & II Timothy 3**, but that is not conclusive. The descriptions of the details, however, are very similar.
- C. Paul says that these times will not last forever. **(v.9)**

II. Difficult people will be selfish and ungodly.

- A. These people will be focused on self and very self serving.
 - 1. Lovers of self. **(v.2)**
 - 2. Lovers of money, greedy. **(v.2)**
 - 3. Boastful, arrogant, and conceited. **(vv.2,3)**
 - 4. lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. **(v.3)**
- B. These difficult people will be wicked and God will be far from their minds.
 - 1. Disrespectful: revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and haters of good. **(vv.2,3)**
 - 2. Lack self control: brutal and reckless. **(vv.3,4)**
 - 3. Irreconcilable and treacherous. **(v. 3, 4)**
 - 4. They resist the truth. **(v.8)**

III. Difficult people will come from within the church.

- A. They have a form of godliness, but their godliness is only skin deep. **(v.5)**
- B. These people will find their way into the church and cause problems.
 - 1. "who enter into households and captivate" **(v.6)** Bloomfield- "they wind their way in", much like the serpent.
 - 2. They will seek out those who are weakest. "captivate weak women weighted down with sins, led on by various impulses." **(v.6)**
 - 3. They gladly teach those who just want to hear stories that will not lead to any knowledge of the truth. **(v.7)**
 - 4. Paul warned Timothy to not be taken away by such things. **(2:16)**

IV. Difficult times do not have to make difficult people.

- A. Paul says to avoid these people and don't be influenced by them! **(v.5)**
- B. Paul stood up in the face of difficult times. **(vv.10,11)**
 - 1. Paul suffered greatly at times. **(II Cor. 11:22ff)**
 - a) At Antioch **(Acts 13:50)**
 - b) At Iconium **(Acts 14:4,5)**
 - c) At Lystra **(Acts 14:14-20)**
 - 2. But the Lord rescued Paul!
- C. Those who strive to live godly will be persecuted. **(v.12)**
 - 1. Evil men and impostors will continue go grow worse and worse. **(v.13)**
 - 2. But the Lord rescued Paul!

V. Difficult times can be overcome with the Word of God.

- A. Paul encourages Timothy to continue in his faith in God. **(vv.14,15)**
 - 1. Timothy had been taught from age by his mother and grandmother. **(1:5)**
 - 2. Timothy knew that faith in Jesus Christ lead to salvation. **(v. 15)**
 - 3. Timothy had confidence in the gospel's power. **(Rom. 1:16)**
- B. The Word of God can equip the person facing difficult times with the tools to overcome. **(vv.16,17)**
 - 1. The Scriptures are given by God.
 - 2. They are profitable for all areas of life.
 - a) Teaching the truth of God.
 - b) Reproving and correcting sin.
 - c) Training people how to live righteously.
 - 3. Through holding to the Scriptures, a person can be fully equipped to face difficult times.
 - 4. The man of God will be lacking nothing for the battle against evil.

Why does Paul tell Timothy to preach the Word in chapter 4? Because he gives Timothy warnings of the difficult days ahead in chapter 3. Because of Paul's warnings, Timothy should grasp the all importance of his work as an evangelist. The word of God can overcome even the darkest of days. Friends, we are in some dark days, now. Evil continues to grow worse and worse. But the truth remains the same, and the Word of God is our weapon that cannot be overcome. If we will hold to God's word. If we will hold to the inspired Scriptures, then we will never be defeated because God will be pleased with our stand and our reward will be heaven for all eternity. May God help us all to stand with His Word through the most difficult of days that we may face.