

July 21, 2019

2 Timothy 2:14-26

DILIGENT

Introduction. The incredible call of leadership is that it involves giving yourself for the maturity of those you lead or disciple. This is difficult in that leaders must lead saints to not only desire truth but to be able to stand on their own in contending for the truth. Before Timothy is a massive test of dealing with false teaching and bringing saints to reflecting maturity (1 Timothy 1:3-4) and what is required to accomplish this is nothing short of diligence to the Word of God (v.15). This diligence is to be reflected in Timothy doing his utmost best, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, to finish the race set before him. His study of the Word is to be disciplined in order that he may be able to discern not only truth from error but also those who belong to the Lord and those who do not.

TWO GROUPS (2 Tim. 2:14-19). Within every church there are believers and unbelievers. This distinction is often described as the church *visible* reflecting all, saved and unsaved and the church *invisible*, reflecting those who genuinely profess and practice the faith. We see this distinction in Ephesus but Paul the two groups in which Paul is mentioning are false teachers and faithful believers. To do this Timothy, being diligent in the Word (2 Timothy 2:15), must *remind* the saints in Ephesus to remain faithful to living out the heart of the gospel and give no attention to *words* which have no eternal profit (2 Timothy 2:14; 2 Timothy; see 1 Timothy 1:4; 6:4). Paul, with regard to false teachers must avoid, not only them, but the foolishness of their teaching which only led to ruin (2 Timothy 2:16-18). There is a truth here that demands mentioning as we deal with these two groups within churches. False teaching is not always easy to discern since it often mixed with truth. Paul shows Timothy difference between truth and error is seen in its moral implications. False teaching inevitably produces moral departure increasing depravity (2 Timothy 2:16-18; 2 Timothy 4:13) while the gospel will always lead one to growing in holiness (2 Timothy 2:19; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

TWO VESSELS (2 Tim. 2:20-22). Paul has made it clear that *the Lord knows those who are his* (v19). This is an important statement because within the church there are two different vessels proclaiming to be speaking for the Lord but one is honorable and the other dishonorable (v.21). Paul uses the terms *gold and silver* with *wood and clay* to denote the character of the vessels (v20). The determination of who is useful (honorable) or worthless (dishonorable) to the Lord is not so in their words as much as in their behavior. This is an important point to consider since it is evident that men can preach truth and live false which would make them false teachers! If Timothy is to be of honorable use to the Lord he must not only teach truth (v15) he must give attention to who and what he flees and what he gives his focus to. He must separate himself from vices and persons who would nurture sinful infects in his character (v21, 22a) and give himself to godly virtues and believers that live in honor of the One whose house it is (v.22b).

TWO APPROACHES (2 Tim. 2:23-26). The deception in Ephesus must be dealt with and done so decisively (1 Timothy 1:3-5) but in doing so Timothy needed to give great care and caution to how he proceeded. There were two *possible* approaches he could take. First, he could deal with

them on their level. The problem with this is that it will only produce arguments and be a waste of kingdom time (2 Timothy 2:23). The other option before Timothy is to operate with gospel integrity. Paul has already informed Timothy of what is to flee and to pursue (2 Timothy 2:22). Now, in dealing with deceivers he needed to do so as the servant of the Lord, modeling the heart and life of Jesus (2 Timothy 2:24). Winning arguments is not our calling. Winning souls from the grip of the enemy is (2 Timothy 2:25-26). In our current political climate and in all of the challenges within the church we would all do well to remember the aim of our charge (1 Timothy 1:5) The best of ourselves and the priority of our time should be given to preserving the Body and defending the gospel against teachings and practices that undermine the glory of God.