

Teaching Your Timothy

2 Timothy 3:10-15

INTRODUCTION

- A. George Goldman & Danny Murphy.
1. Those are men whom you likely do not know & may never meet—Tammy doesn't really know George; he was the academic dean at International Bible College during my time there. I'd like to tell you a story about George & Danny.
 - a. When Danny was a small boy, he lived in Cincinnati, Ohio, and George preached for one of the congregations in town.
 - b. George drove the church bus & picked Danny up every Sunday. When Danny became of age, he obeyed the Gospel.
 2. Today, Danny preaches for the Rolling Hills congregation in my hometown—my brother Aaron's family worships with that congregation & that church oversees my dad's mission work.
 3. Danny's faithful service in the church all began because someone was willing to take him to worship, teach him, & train him in righteousness.
 - a. How many of the children who attended our VBS this past week may mature to faithful workers in the Lord's vineyard because you took time to teach, to load up your car, to act out skits, or help in the kitchen?
 - b. I cannot tell you how many times I've heard Basil Overton repeat his motto: "I love what I'm doing, because I don't know what I'm doing." Brother Overton's point was really quite simple: We do not know the lives we may be impacting because of our work.
 - c. Brother Dennis Jones would often tell us preaching students, "Gentlemen, we are changing the population of heaven." All the hard work you did this past week is "changing the population of heaven."
- B. This morning's text deals a great deal with the positive influence of proper teaching.
1. READ TEXT.
 2. It appears that Timothy was still in Ephesus when Paul wrote this Epistle.
 - a. That's significant, because false teaching was rampant in Ephesus.
 - 1) Paul begins 1 Timothy by saying, "As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine" (1 Tm 1:3).
 - 2) Paul concludes that Epistle with another warning against error: "O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called 'knowledge,' for by professing it some have swerved from the faith" (1 Tm 6:20-21).
 - b. The context of this passage is also false teaching.
 - 1) "Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith" (3:8).
 - 2) But, Paul contrasts the behavior of this false teachers with the behavior of Timothy.
 - a) He says, "You, however, have followed my teaching . . ." (v 10).
 - b) The false teachers lived one way, but the Apostle Paul expected his young protégé to live differently.

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3. In writing about the way Timothy was to live in contrast to the false teachers, Paul points backward to what Timothy had been taught.
 - a. This morning, we wish to think about what Timothy was taught, how he was taught it, & the purpose for which he was taught it.
 - b. Our aim this morning is to understand the vital work you teachers perform.

TEACHING'S PATTERN, vv 10-11

- A. "You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endure; yet from them all the Lord rescued me."
- B. Timothy had an example in Paul.
 1. Paul says, "You . . . have followed."
 - a. The Greek term "follow" was a technical term for the relation of a disciple to his teacher.
 - b. In Jewish society, education was not simply a matter of "book learning."
 - 1) Instead, pupils gathered around a "rabbi" who would teach them not just subjects, but the rabbi would teach them how to live.
 - 2) Paul was an example, a pattern, for the young Timothy.
 2. But, notice that among the list of attributes Timothy had followed Paul mentions "teaching" first.
 - a. Sure, Paul had taught Timothy the truth of God.
 - 1) Timothy accompanied Paul on some of his missionary endeavors.
 - a) When Paul came to Derbe and Lystra, we read, "Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek" (Acts 16:3).
 - b) While on those journeys, Timothy would have learned much truth as he heard Paul preach.
 - 2) Timothy was even with Paul when he wrote some of his Epistles; e.g., "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother" (2 Cor 1:1).
 - b. But, the teaching Timothy had received from Paul was not divorced from his character.
 - 1) Paul says that Timothy had followed his teaching, but he immediately follows "teaching" up with character traits such as "conduct," "faith," "patience," and "love."
 - 2) Paul did not live by the maxim, "Do what I say but not what I do."
- C. We, like Paul, must understand as we teach that the truth we teach matters greatly but so does the way we apply that truth to our lives.
 1. Jesus says, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so practice and observe whatever they tell you—but not what they do. For they preach, but do not practice" (Mt 23:2-3). We must never allow such words to be said of us!
 2. Former New York Governor Mario Cuomo said this, "I talk and talk and talk, and I haven't taught people in fifty years what my father taught by example in one week." What are we teaching by our example?

TEACHING'S PREVENTION, vv 12-13

- A. "Evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it."
- B. Evil individuals will continually worsen both "deceiving" and "being deceived."

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1. “Deception” has been a ploy of Satan since time began.
 - a. When Satan “lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44).
 - b. “Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14).
 - c. It’s no wonder that Satan deceives individuals.
 - 1) If he told you the truth—that continuing in his way will cause you to be damned forever—you would never follow him.
 - 2) Yet, as Satan deceives with all of his schemes & wiles, people are more than happy to follow him to their destruction.
2. Because of Satan, people have had the “wool pulled over their eyes” since time began.
 - a. About Eve, Paul writes, “The woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (1 Tm 2:14).
 - 1) All Satan had to do was inform Eve that by eating of the forbidden fruit she would be like God & leave out the curse that sin would bring, and Eve ate so very willingly.
 - 2) Man has struggled with sin ever since that day because of Satan’s deception.
 - b. Yet, in our text, Paul speaks of the deception of error.
 - 1) How many people in this world are good & sincere but **lost** because they have been deceived by some teacher doing Satan’s bidding?
 - 2) How many good people will be shocked to find themselves in hell because Satan had his servants so easily twist the Scriptures?
- C. The teaching Timothy had received would prevent his deception by false teachers: “But as for you, continue in what you have learned”
 1. The remedy for error is simple: KNOW THE TRUTH. Paul reminds Timothy that there is no cause for him to be carried away into error, for he knows & believes the truth.
 2. As you labored in VBS this past week, you nightly wrote God’s prescription for error: the truth.
 - a. You provided students with truth, not error, that they may not be deceived by the schemes of the devil.
 - b. Who knows what heartbreak might be prevented because you so diligently sowed truth in the hearts of children?

TEACHING’S PERSEVERANCE, v 14

- A. “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it.”
- B. Timothy could not stop paying careful attention to what he had learned, but he was to “continue in” it.
 1. The Greek term Paul uses for “continue” is literally “to abide.”
 - a. Yet, the term is in the present tense, indicating a continual abiding.
 - b. The truth Timothy had learned & firmly believed would be of little benefit if he stopped believing & using it.
 2. The Gospel is not to be learned & then discarded.
 - a. The old adage is: “If you don’t use it, you lose it.”
 - 1) There isn’t a one of us who doesn’t immediately recognize the truth of those words.
 - 2) Who among us hasn’t been helping a child with elementary school work, but had to go back & read through the book to make sure we accurately understood the subject? We knew it at one point, but we’d forgotten it.
 - 3) I’ve always personally struggled with math.
 - a) I hated the subject & always performed quite poorly in it. My high school courses

- allowed me to be finished with math my sophomore year & my college didn't require mathematic when I was there.
- b) I seldom use math, but when I do, I've got to pull out my calculator for even the most basic functions.
- b. But, the Gospel dare not be like that!
- 1) We must continue in the Gospel to stay away from error.
 - a) "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (Jn 15:7).
 - b) "Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father" (1 Jn 2:24).
 - 2) How many have we seen know & firmly believe the Gospel only to wander from it because they did not "continue in what [they] have learned and have firmly believed"?
 - a) How many once sat beside of us in a pew but were deceived by Satan & know live in some sin they themselves once considered "unthinkable"?
 - b) How many once faithful Christians have "made shipwreck of their faith" (1 Tm 1:19) because they did not continue in the Gospel & accepted error?
 - 3) Granted, what we did mostly this past week at VBS was "sow the seed."
 - a) We may never know how that seed sprouts in the hearts of the children whom we taught.
 - b) But, so many of you teachers who labor week after week see the seed take hold, sprout, & grow to maturity in your students. As you do so, you see your students "continue in what [they] have learned and firmly believed."

TEACHING'S PURPOSE, v 15

- A. "From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."
- B. In Jewish Palestine at the time of Paul, Jewish boys were instructed in the Scriptures beginning at the age of 5.
 - 1. This instruction in "the sacred writings" was commanded in the Old Testament.
 - a. "You shall teach [my commandments] to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (Deut 11:19).
 - b. "He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Ps 78:5-7).
 - 2. Timothy had a faithful mother & grandmother who carried out this commandment diligently: "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well" (2 Tm 1:5).
 - 3. In Paul's day, Jewish children were so well educated in the Scriptures that even pagans were amazed at how well they knew the Scriptures.
 - a. Could the same thing be said of us?
 - b. Could it be said that even those in error are amazed at how well our children know the Scriptures? Could even those who do not believe in anything at all be amazed at how well our children know the Scriptures?

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- C. The purpose of educating children in “the sacred writings,” however, is not so that others might be amazed at how well they know the truth. Rather, the purpose is that trained children might, through the Scriptures, be made “wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”
1. We did not just conclude a VBS in order to find a clever way to fill up our time. It wasn’t a cleverly-devised scheme to get more people here to increase the contribution.
 2. The purpose was to train young children in the Scriptures “which are able to make [them] wise for salvation.”
 - a. The Scriptures make one “wise for salvation” in that they witness to Jesus, the Source of salvation: “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me” (Jn 5:39).
 - b. The Scriptures make one “wise for salvation” in that they provide the imperishable seed by which one is born again: “You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God And this word is the good news that was preached to you” (1 Pt 1:23, 25).
 - c. The Scriptures make one “wise for salvation” in that they provide God’s way to have salvation: At Pentecost “those who received his word [i.e., the preaching of Peter] were baptized” (Acts 2:41).
 3. We may never know all the good you did this past week by sowing the seed of the Word of God!

CONCLUSION

- A. Never think that your labor in teaching is not worth the effort.
1. It has been said that “Teachers touch the future.” When the Word of God is your subject, you teachers do ***not*** touch the future; you touch ***ETERNITY!***
 2. “My dishes went unwashed today; And I didn’t even make the bed; I taught a class about Christ’s way At Vacation Bible School instead.

“That my housework was left undone; That I didn’t even sweep the stairs, In twenty years there’ll be not one Who remembers—or even cares.

“But, in future years, the whole wide world May look, and see, and know, That I have helped some boy or girl Toward a more Christ-like life to grow.”

- B. Oh, the good that is done through teaching the Gospel of Jesus!
1. Are you one who labors in teaching the word of God? Do you have a Timothy whom you teach?
 2. Has the Word of God been sowed in your heart, made you wise for salvation, & you stand ready to act on that wisdom this morning?