

## 2 Timothy 2:15-26

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Now as we continue our progress through 2 Timothy, we saw in the opening chapter and largely in the first part of chapter 2 that Paul is concerned that Timothy should remain faithful not merely to the message he has received but to himself as the apostle.

The apostle and what he stands for. And if we were to perhaps use a description for this second part of the chapter, we might say it is talking about the distinction, if not as yet the complete separation, but the distinguishing between the wheat and the chaff.

The wheat and the chaff both in terms of the doctrine that is being taught or believed and also the wheat and chaff in terms of those who claim to follow Christ and to be faithful to him and those who actually are.

There is a distinction. Weak and chaff, you see, that when they're mixed together they look so similar. Just as with the parable of the net that Jesus taught about. They're drawing so many fish to the land and then when they bring the net to the land they separate out between the good and the bad.

But the net itself draws good and bad alike. When it's under the surface of the water you can't see what you're bringing in. You can't see the distinction between the good fish or the bad fish or whatever. Likewise you can't see the wheat and the tares distinction while it's still under the soil.

[ 1 : 2 0 ] But as it grows up the distinction becomes clearer. And Paul's point in this latter half of chapter 2 is that not only will the doctrine become clearer as people try to live out according to what they believe, but as they do so those who belong to Christ will likewise be more visible as will those who don't.

To use Jesus' phrase, by their fruits ye shall know them. So Timothy then, to pick up from verse 15, is to study to show thyself approved unto God. Now we could take this the wrong way and say, you know, apply yourself to your books so that you will demonstrate to everybody.

Look, God has blessed me. Look, I'm really approved of God. Look how much I'm studying. Well, it's not really study in the intellectual sense. It's not apply yourself to your books, although that would be part of it.

You know, Timothy is told to, you know, I think it's in 1 Timothy to give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine and instruction and godliness and so on. And he's taught to do these things. So he is to apply himself to the study of the scriptures as well.

But that's not what it means here when it says study to show thyself approved. It means work at it. Work at the fact of, you know, giving a Christian witness, a Christian life, a Christian testimony goes against the grain of human nature.

[ 2 : 4 3 ] It goes against the grain of the flesh. And what the world and the flesh wants to do, the old nature, the old self wants to just float downstream. Grace and the work of God has to, as it were, swim upstream against the throne.

So work at it to show. And it's not in the sense of, hey, let everybody see. Look at me, everybody. Look at me. It's not in that sense, but rather to demonstrate that what you live out will be seen, will be seen by everybody.

The word that is translated is show thyself approved. In Romans 12, verse 1, it's the same word in Greek, but we read that verse. It's, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And again, you could say, look at me, here I am. I present myself a living sacrifice, or I show myself approved. It's not, again, in that sense. It's not so much on a stage in a shop window.

It's more, as you go about your life, what will people see? That which is on display, that which is seen, that which is public, that which they will recognize and they will pick up, that which is outwardly visible, which you show to the world, which you present your bodies as a living sacrifice. [ 4 : 09 ] And that's the word he has said, you present in Romans 12, verse 1, show thyself approved unto God. It is simply, live it at. That's what it means. Put it, you know, the outward face to the world so that they can see the consistency of what you believe, that God has approved your witness, your testimony.

Now, God is never going to approve something which is sinful. God is never going to apply his seal of blessing to something which his word has forbidden or condemned.

And that is something which, you know, the church in the world today really needs to take on board. You can have as many church services as you like, with as many corrupted clergy as you like, pronouncing blasphemously God's apparent blessing on something that he has called abomination. But it will never apply God's blessing to it, because God cannot affirm that which God himself has pronounced to be sinful.

Well, show thyself approved unto God. And if you're going to show that, if you're going to live it out, then it will be living out that which God himself has approved and affirmed in his word.

[ 5 : 24 ] A workman that needeth not to be ashamed. A workman needs not to be ashamed, not simply because he happens to be specially skilled at his particular craft, that he can work up a wonderful piece of work on a product or a particular sculpted thing, a blacksmith procedure, a fantastic piece of metal work, or somebody working with wood procedure, a fantastic cabinet maker.

Look at this table, darling. And he knocked it up in a short time, and the rest of the time he was just raising about. Because he's so gifted, but rather somebody who really works at it. Study to show thyself approved.

A workman that needeth not to be ashamed is not just one who is gifted and skilled, but one who labours at his task. One who is found faithful. Whenever the master appears, whenever he happens to turn up, he finds this workman faithfully doing what he's meant to be doing.

You know, if the overseer or the farmer comes down to the field halfway through the day, and there's his labour ploughing away with the horses or with the tractor or whatever, he doesn't say, come on, it's already ten o'clock in the morning, why haven't you finished the whole field yet? If he knows that field is going to take the whole day to plough, he's not going to give him a round because he hasn't finished it yet, if he comes and finds it actually working at it.

[ 6 : 48 ] That's all he's seeking, faithful, diligent work. He knows, by the end of the day, he will have finished it. But if he comes and finds it just sort of lazing about, you know, reading the paper or whatever, and there's the field not touched it, then he's going to have cause for grief with his particular servant or labourer.

But if he's working away diligently, the master's not saying, come on, why isn't this special? Why haven't you converted everybody in the world so far? You know, if you're working at it, then a workman needeth not to be ashamed.

Rightly dividing the word of truth. Now again, the sense here of rightly dividing is in the sense of a steward, as it were, a steward or a servant who's been entrusted with the distribution to the household of that with which they are to be fed.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 4, we get verse 1, let a man so account of us as of the ministers or servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Now when it talks about rightly dividing, as we say about the word of truth, the sense is of cutting straight, of cutting up into a right proportions, rightly dividing, cutting up.

[ 8 : 07 ] The sense is of the one who is in charge of the household cutting up and distributing to all the other servants or the household their food or their necessities or that which they have.

The one who is in charge supervising the distribution to the rest of the household. Making sure that everybody gets what they need and making sure that what they get is the right stuff.

It's no use, for example, if everybody's meant to be getting so much flour for which to make their bread, if what you actually give them is sawdust. That doesn't help. Nor does it help if one person gets a whole lot and others go hungry.

Rightly dividing means the right application to each one of that which is good quality. Rightly dividing the word of truth.

So the sense is here both that it has to be the word of truth as opposed to that which is false, that which is fake. You know, it's 52 Corinthians 2, verse 17 says, For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God.

[ 9 : 16 ] In other words, giving out sawdust instead of flour, instead of the real wheat, chaff instead of wheat. But as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.

That which we're giving out is the truth, that which is faithful, that which is right. Not as many which corrupt the word of God, but rather as those who are rightfully distributing the truth.

So the sense in defining is the cutting up and cutting straight is the sense in the original Greek.

Giving everybody their due portion, but not only giving the due portion, but giving the due portion of that which is the truth.

That which is the wheat as opposed to the chaff. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a canker.

Now, a word translated as canker can mean, you know, a worm that eats away, but the sense is, if you were to just change the K to a C, you've got the sense there of the cancer.

[ 10 : 23 ] Now, cancer eats away at the healthy cells. That's what it does. And its appetite is unstoppable. It is vorish. It will keep on and on eating and spreading, unless it is stopped, unless it is cut out.

So shun the profane and vain babblings, you know, or arguments about this abstruse point that isn't really of the essence of a thing. And this little discussion about genealogy, as Paul mentions elsewhere, or lesser things, sometimes as Christians, we can be terribly bad at that.

You know, with all the sincerity in the world, we can fall out over what are really comparatively minor points. Now, I know they don't seem like minor points to the individuals who hold these beliefs really, really, hardly and truly and faithfully, but in reality, they're not of the essence of faith.

You know, does it really matter, for example, whether somebody is plunged or sprinkled in baptism? Our Baptist brethren will say, yes, it does. They've defined the Christian church on that basis.

Well, it's important to them. Is it enough to divide the church? Personally, I would have said no.

Does it really matter how one distributes the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, whether it's little bits of bread or whether it's unleavened bread, you use it?

[ 11 : 46 ] Does it matter? It doesn't really matter. All these lesser points that, you know, are not of the substance of the faith, we can get distracted by them because for those to whom they are a big deal, the whole essence of faith can perhaps revolve around these points.

And if you don't have that part of the foundation, you think all the rest will crumble too. However, we have to focus on that which is the truth. And one reason for that is because there simply isn't time.

There simply isn't that. Souls are perishing. People are going into eternity every day in life. There simply isn't the time to get distracted and to exhaust to the nth degree.

supposing you win every argument that is going. Is that person then built up more in the faith? Are they stronger in Christ because you have exhausted every last detail of these sideline arguments?

Well, no, they're not. As I used the illustration before, I realised, apologies for repeating it again, no, stories told about the person who was giving a lecture about Christianity, one of these other alpha courses or Christianity Explore courses or whatever, and there was somebody in the crowd who was heckling.

[ 13 : 01 ] He was heckling, he was, oh, what about, you know, what about the famines in Ethiopia, what about the natural disasters and God was really a God of love, why would all these bad things happen and cancer in the world and disease and how could he, and so on.

And eventually the man stopped and he said, look, if I can answer every single one of your questions, will you become a Christian? And the guy said, well, no. He said, well, there's no point in my wasting time and answering you and arguing with you, just that, and he carried on with his talk.

It's like that, and I was, supposing you can't answer every single one of these abstrus little distractions, is it going to reach the heart of the problem which is that men and women need to be saved, men and women need to be converted and redeemed by Christ and by Christ alone.

These profane, these worldly, you know, ordinary of the world and vain, empty, meaningless, babblings, they will increase unto more ungodliness.

In other words, what is the fruit of them? Do those who follow them, do they become the more pure, the more faithful, the more sincere, the more diligent, the more godly? Now, their word will eat as doth a canker or cancer and the sense of the cancer as it will increase more and more as it says

there, the sense of the word there is of a military machine, an army going on before and if there's a river then they're engineers or they're pioneers, they'll build a bridge and the army marches over it. [14:28] If there's a forest in the way, they will chop it down and the army keeps on going through like a bulldozer clearing the way before the threatening military machine that comes behind it.

That's the sense of an increase unto more and godliness. Their word will eat as doth a canker.

Now, it would suggest to you that in our present day and age one of the big dangers, particularly in the church, is to use a broad term, brushed down, would be liberalism in the church.

Now, liberalism is not just oh, live and let live sort of thing. Liberalism is defined by unbelief of that which God has revealed. We're not talking about lesser points here or things that aren't an issue. We're talking about taking the authority of God's word at his word or not. To put it simply, a Christian is defined by what he or she believes about Christ.

A liberal Christian, so-called, is defined by how much of it he or she doesn't believe. And what you, what demonstrates so-called liberalism not to be of the Lord is its complete and total intolerance.

[15:43] It always demands more and more and more and more conformity to its revealed, desired way of doing things. It doesn't, in fact, live and let live.

It becomes less and less and less tolerant of those who may choose to adhere to what the word is actually revealed. It eats as does a cancer.

A canker eats away at the healthy body. Of whom is Hymenaeus and Phileus? Now, Hymenaeus, he came across in 1 Timothy in chapter 1 and verse 20.

Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. Now, the sense there is that Paul had overseen the excommunication of Hymenaeus and Alexander.

But yet, here now in 2 Timothy, Hymenaeus is back, apparently, which would suggest that having been disciplined by the church, he had then been readmitted, presumably after some kind of outward repentance or conformity.

[16:49] And here he is again causing trouble. Now, it could be that his trouble is sincere. You know, he says, concerning the truth of Erd, that could be Paul being gentle and charitable.

You know, they're making a mistake. But that mistake, saying that the resurrection is passed already, overthrows the faith of some. Now, nobody can doubt that much of what sometimes passes for unbelief or liberalism is sincerely held.

There are people who sincerely believe that the feeding of the 5,000 was not, in fact, Jesus miraculously multiplying the loaves and fishes. It was just when people saw the goodness and holiness and sanctity of Jesus and how ready he was to share what little he had.

Ah, well, they all took out their own sandwiches and all the stuff that they had anyway and miraculously there was enough for everybody. You know, when he was walking in water, there was obviously stepping stones or something underneath in the middle of the Sea of Galilee.

When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, the way they didn't actually part, they just paddled across a shallow bit, you know, in the reeds and rushes and so on and denial, denial, denial.

[18:00] And yet it is sincerely held and if people don't see folks rising from the dead like Lazarus did, they say, well, of course, that doesn't happen nowadays. It may have happened in Jesus, but it doesn't happen to us nowadays, you know, in Timothy and with Ephesus and another thing.

You know, people don't physically rise from the dead, which we must conclude that, you know, maybe Jesus did, but that was as far as the resurrection went. It's a single one-off event in its past and that's it.

So, you know, that's the resurrection. All that we should think in terms of is our spiritual renewal here in our earth. That's our kind of rising from the dead and we just do our best in this world and they say the resurrection is past and by saying this, they overthrow the faith of some because some people say, well, is that the truth?

My goodness, we never thought about it that way. We always thought the resurrection was, you know, that when you die, you rise, you go to heaven and then your body comes up again. At the last day, it's reunited your soul, which is exactly what scripture teaches and what the apostles taught but then some people's faith is overflowing by the people saying, oh, that's not what it is.

Oh, that doesn't mean this. And people, because they may like or have a respect for Hymenaeus or Phileadus or whatever, say, is that really so? Oh, didn't know that. We must be really ignorant because what we thought was, something else.

[ 19 : 22 ] They overthrow the faith of some. The chaff is in amongst the wheat and what is the fruit that it produces? If we were to go back to the example of liberalism, for example, in the church, where you have denial of God's word, where you have declension and Christians ceasing to hold fast and to believe and to be, you know, 100% for the Lord and his truth and his word and the need to be born again and the need for our lives to be conformed to Christ.

Where you don't have that, where you have, you say, oh, you just kind of do your best. Well, that's what the Bible says, but you know, we don't have to take that literally nowadays. Where that holds sway, what is the fruit that is seen?

Is it the fruit of the wheat having been planted beneath the soil or is it the chaff? You can plant the chaff under the soil as much as you like. Nothing will happen. These churches where the Bible is denied and where the truth is, you don't have to believe that anymore.

What is the fruit of such unbelief? Is it Bible, missionary-minded, forward-going churches or is it just quiet declension and death?

Nobody really believes anything. It just becomes a kind of social club. Well, we know the answer to that. Sadly, we also know that in our day and age, even churches where there is a strong adherence to God's word, there is also declension there.

[ 20 : 53 ] We can't say, oh look, where would we be growing if we're faithful? Where would we decline if we're unfaithful? Otherwise, well, we're pretty much in condemnation here if that's the case. But God's word is what we are to go by, overthrowing the faith of some.

I say, no, you don't have to believe that anymore. nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure having the seal. The Lord knoweth and there it is. What does we mean by foundation? Well, we'd be inclined to say foundation means the word of God. God's word is the church. The foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself, but remember that they didn't have a full set of New Testament scriptures.

of the apostles. The foundation is the church. Now, we might recoil from that and say, wait a minute, that sounds a bit Roman Catholic, you know, a bit the Pope and the church and the bishops and so on.

Well, he means the church in terms of the people of God, the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone as he says in Ephesians 2.20.

[ 22 : 00 ] The foundation which is the apostolic teaching. In 1 Timothy 3.15 we read, If I tarry long thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground, the word translated ground of the truth is the same as the word translated foundation here.

It is the church of God that Paul has in mind here. But by the church he doesn't mean the institution. He means the believing people of God, grounded upon the doctrine of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. The foundation of God standeth sure that which God has built that which he has grounded. He has planted his church and he has done.

It has this, it stands sure having this seal that the Lord knows who the wheat are and who the chaff are. The Lord knows them that are his. The Lord knows whom he has chosen and let everyone in the name of the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

In other words, continuing in sin is never going to be owned of God or blessed of God. Just because I'm a Christian doesn't mean I have to forsake this sin or that sin. I can still be myself. I can still do what I want and so on.

[ 23 : 18 ] If we are born again, we are transformed by the power of Christ. Transformed by his spirit, by his grace, by his work. By their fruits, you shall know that.

And this is what he means, you know, when it says, the Lord knoweth them that are his. We think of, for example, what it says in Matthew 7, verse 43, where Jesus says to the unfaithful, he says, departing me, ye that work iniquity, I never knew you.

In 1 Corinthians, chapter 8, verse 3, if any man love God, the same is known of him. It doesn't just mean, oh yeah, God knows about him, he recognises him.

It recognises in the sense of, he recognises him as his own. He knows him in that sense. Amos, in chapter 3, verses 1 and 2, hear this word that the Lord has spoken against your children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, you only have I known of all the families of the earth.

Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities. Now, if the Lord is saying that he only knows them, does that mean, oh, I never knew about the Babylonians, I made them, I created them, I never knew the Assyrians, I never knew the Egyptians, I never knew the Greeks or the Persians, and I only ever knew that Israel existed.

[ 24 : 43 ] I never knew about any of the others. That's not what he means at all. He means, I have known you. Means that you were mine. We were in a special, unique relationship I know, own, acknowledge you as mine.

And the Lord knows, acknowledges, is intimately connected with this. His bride of Christ, Adam, knew his wife Eve. They were one flesh in that sense.

God is, Christ is one with his people. The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let everyone that they must the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

if he is truly Christ's, then he will depart from iniquity. Contrast that with what Paul writes to Timothy chapter 3. Here, 2 Timothy chapter 3.

Listen also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, bolsters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fears, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heavy, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

[ 25 : 54 ] And we think, okay, fair enough, he's talking about the unbelieving world there. And then he says, having a form of godliness, but denying the power that of. In other words, that's the appalling truth he's talking about within the church.

Having a form, an outward profession of godliness, but denying the power that of. In other words, they are not transformed by it, they're not changed by it, they have a form of it, but they love their pleasures more than they love the Lord.

And this is what he's talking about here. Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. If we are born again, we are changed. We have become a new creature.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5, 17. The old has passed away, all things have become new. And it doesn't mean, of course, that your sins have miraculously melted away like snow of a dike.

They're still there. They'll still tempt you. They'll still have a grab at you. They'll still damage you. But as the grace of God grows more and more within your heart and life and spirit and soul, the old sin, the old self, starved of its source of supply and power, it withers and eventually dies.

[ 27 : 13 ] but for all of your life here, there's going to be a conflict. All of your life, there's going to be a battle. The spirit against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit just as Paul writes to the Galatians there.

But as the spirit gains in strength, so the flesh, the old self, is put more and more to death. It dies. It starts because it isn't being fed.

And the thing is that when we give in to sin, we probably tend to think that when we give in to a sin, that if there's going to be consequences, that those consequences will be directly related to the sin that we've given in with regard to, I don't know what your particular failings or particular weaknesses might be.

Everybody's different. But in a particular thing that we give in to, we tend to think, oh yeah, okay, so if God's going to punish me or slap me on the wrist for this particular sin, then the punishment I get or the things that will go wrong or the problems that will be will all be directly connected to this thing. Not necessarily. You know, if you happen to neglect, say, some aspect of a house or a building or a machine or whatever it may happen to be, then you may find that problems arise somewhere else.

[ 28 : 30 ] It may be, let's say, that you nick a slate off the roof and because the slate is off the roof, then water gets in. But because that water gets in, maybe the electric's malfunction.

Because the electric's malfunction, maybe your smoke alarm didn't go off. Because your smoke alarm didn't go off, something completely, several times removed, maybe what actually causes the problem all can be traced back to the particular thing that started.

Now, you and I, we think, oh, if I do this thing, if God's going to take issue with it, it'll be directly connected. It might be something completely otherwise. That you are weakened spiritually.

That you are attacked spiritually. And that you are less able to defend yourself spiritually because you've left the devil in a completely, seemingly unrelated sin or weakness.

You see, if you happen to be injured in a fight in one thing, let's see, your little finger gets injured. You think, well, that doesn't affect much my ability to fight back. But it may be because your little finger is injured, you can't hold your shield so well.

[ 29 : 37 ] Or maybe you can't fend off this attack or that attack. You see, it's all connected in. We can't say, well, I can afford to give in on this thing as long as I hold fast on the big thing.

You let the devil in by any means. You know, you let water into a boat by any particular little hole anywhere. And it will eventually fill up and sink.

We can't afford to let our guard down anywhere. Let everyone that nameeth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and earth and some to honour and some to dishonour.

If a man therefore purges himself from the east with dishonour, then he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meat for the master's use, and prepared for every good work. Now, if you've got a great big house, you know, like Bangtown Abbey or something like that, you know, what the master is using or drinking from will be the best of the best.

At his dinner table, there will be the best china, the best silver, the best drinking cups, and so on.

But what the servants may be emptying the latrines with may be completely different vessels made of earth or wood or pots or pans or whatever.

[ 30 : 51 ] What the servants eat of in the servants' quarters may be perfectly acceptable, but it will be less good than what the master uses. Just because something's for a lowly or dirty task doesn't mean it's not functional.

It may be necessary, it may be required, the jobs that are done with it may be perfectly honest jobs that need doing, but they're not something the master necessarily wants to have at his table.

So likewise, even the wicked, even that which is dishonorable in this world ends up being of service to God because at the end of the day when he separates the weak from the chaff, when he judges the world in righteousness, even the wicked, even that which is for condemnation, even that which is lost, even that which is condemned, will in the end glorify his perfect justice.

So even the vessels that may seem to be for unclean purposes or unclean use, yet they will service the master's overall household.

Even that which is unclean and sinful and horrendous in this world will eventually end up glorifying God when his perfect justice condemns it.

[ 32 : 10 ] But which kind of vessel do we want to be? Do we want to be that which is for honour or for dishonour? That which is of a master's use or that which is fit to be destroyed?

Flee. Also, youthful lusts. Now, Timothy is unlikely to be so affected because he's seen to be an abstemious youth, you know, abstains from a lot of things that maybe he doesn't need to abstain, but, you know, the devil can get in by any means.

Some things, you've just got to put distance between yourself and them. You know, when Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife, he didn't sit down and have a discussion about the morality and the sanctity of the marriage bond.

He just fled. He got out of there as fast as he could. Why does he need to flee? Because he knows if he stays any longer, he's going to give in. Now, the things for which we know ourselves particularly susceptible or vulnerable, those are the things that we must not go near.

Some people can afford to brazen them out. Some people are not tempted by particular things that may leave us just a shivering wreck. Some people can completely resist things which others just completely cave into.

[ 33 : 23 ] So we're all different. But some things we just need to avoid altogether. Just don't go there. Flee youthful lusts but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

The comma that is named after peace probably in translation shouldn't be there. It's not just peace and then with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. It's peace with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

So it's with the brothers and sisters in Christ. Faith and charity and peace with those who are the Lord's people is never going to be wrong. It's never going to be sinful. You never need to worry about that.

You know, in mixed company you may have to avoid any say lustful thoughts or inappropriate ideas but charity, love, brotherly, sisterly affection in the Lord will never be wrong.

Treating one another with honour will never be wrong. Behaving rightly towards one another, honouring one another will never be wrong. Faith will never be wrong.

[ 34 : 27 ] And let peace with them that call upon the Lord. out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions, just don't go there. Avoid that. Knowing that they tend to gender strikes.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle unto all men apt to teach in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves of God who will give them and give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

Now, what does all that mean? It means that if you're going to teach and instruct people, let the subject matter speak for itself. don't let them get involved with personalities, don't get involved with who can shout the loudest or who's cleverest with the words.

Don't let the truth speak for itself. Just express it in meekness and gentleness. If they knock you down, persevere. Don't be sidetracked. Just come back to the point again.

Come back to the point again. Come back to the point again. In meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves. Apt to teach means not just having the correct doctrinal truth.

[ 35 : 31 ] Not just having the right words in front of you. It's being able to present it meekly, quietly, faithfully, diligently in a right presentation.

Apt to teach you see, so often the devil will want to distract or decide issues or arguments about abstruse subject, lesser subject, take you off on a tangent, take you on a note, just keep coming back to the truth.

Just keep coming back to the truth, back to the truth, back to the truth. At the end of the day, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and we are sinners in need of salvation and Christ has come to save.

This is a faithful saying worthy of all that. of temptation in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. If God will give them repentance, God might save them, you don't know.

If he does, it won't be you that saves them, it won't be Timothy that saves them, it won't be me that saves them, it'll be God that grants them repentance. They may recover themselves. It's not in the sense of having the power to do it themselves, but out of the smear of the devil.

[ 36 : 35 ] Now this last couple of lines here we need to take care for. It says, who are taken captive by him at his will. We might read that and think, who are taken captive by the devil, at the devil's will.

No, it's not very clear in English, certainly, in the authorised version that we have to say. This is not the clearest verse. Because they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him.

That's not the devil. It's rather a reference to the previous verse. If God, then eventually will give them repentance to acknowledge the truth and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him, by God, at his will.

You think, wait a minute, you know, surely God is to give us liberty and not captivity. We're not meant to be captive to God. Well, you're not a captive to God when you're taken captive by God any more than the people and the animals in the ark.

We're captives. The alternative is perishing. You're safe inside the ark, but yes, you're confined, you're constricted, in a sense. In 2 Corinthians 10, we did it, verse 5, you know, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

[ 37 : 47 ] The casting down imaginations, every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

This is the sense of it, that we become, as it were, as Paul describes in the ark, the slaves of Christ. And it's not because we are bound in chains and isn't it negative and so on, but rather, we have a new owner because we are the slaves of Christ.

we are part of his family, we are owned by him, body and soul. That's the sense of it. Taken captive by him. Captured in the sense that, you know, when Abraham went to the slaughter of the kings, what did he do with all those who the kings had taken captive?

He captured them back so that they could be set free. They are taken captive by him so that they could be released into the true liberty. And to belong to Christ is the greatest liberty of all.

We are taken captive by him at his will. Jesus said, I will make you fishers of men. Now, when the net is dried and the fish are caught in it and they are brought to land, then you might say, oh, well, fish are going to die.

[ 39 : 01 ] Well, the fish, in the sense of being men and women, die for their old self. But they are free to the new life in Christ. We are taken captive by God, captured out of the hand of our old oppressor and set free to that ultimate liberty which is in Christ.

That new life which if we are going to live it, if we are soon to be living it, it will show whose we are and whom we serve.

Let us know.