

Guard the Gospel – 2 Timothy

2 Timothy 3:1-9

“Difficult Days” – July 7, 2019



Introduction

When we look at some of life's harsh realities, some people stick their head in the sand and pretend everything is good. Others look at how things are going, throw their hands in the air and slip into despair. The Christian response is different avoiding both naivety and despair. It is able to face life's challenges head on, grieve when appropriate yet not lose hope. Paul writes to encourage so he and his church know how to face the future and carry out their ministry in a way that continues to guard the gospel, even in difficult days.

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

Sermon Outline

- I. Understand the last days will be tough (3:1-5)
- II. Embrace a gospel hopefulness (3:6-9)

Read & Discuss

1. Read [2 Timothy 3:1-5](#)

The last days are the days between Jesus' first and second coming, which means, we live in the last days, *now* (see Acts 2:14-17, Hebrews 1:1-2, 1 Corinthians 10:11). There will be difficult seasons in the last days because of sin and Paul provides a hefty list in vv2-5. Bookending the list are four statements about love which show that our sin problem is a love problem. When we sin, we are *in that moment*, loving or trusting something more than God. Such sin is not just 'out there' in the world. Some have the appearance of godliness but deny its power (v5). As you read the list of vices Paul gives in vv2-5, are their sins you can identify in *your* life? How does understanding many of our own sins come as a result of our misdirected love: *love of self, love of money or love of pleasure rather than a love of God?*

Additional Reading: James 4:1-2, Proverbs 27:5-6

2. Read [2 Timothy 3:6-9](#)

One of the reasons Paul gives for avoiding the one who has the appearance of godliness but persistently denies its power is that within this group are some who want to spread false ideas they hold. Paul says they creep into houses, which means they are secretive: appearing to be upstanding but are preaching a dangerous message.

The reason some of the folks in Timothy's church were vulnerable to being duped is clear from Paul's description in vv6-7. Burdened by their sin, they were so desperate they were

open to anyone who offered a solution; led by their passions meant emotions were in the drivers' seat; always learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth, they were always checking out new ideas but failing to put a stake of conviction in the ground where Scripture is clear. What are ways we can grow such that we guard the gospel and avoid being 'captured' by false teaching? Though some false teachers oppose the truth, what is Paul's confidence about their future?

Additional Reading: Ephesians 4:12-14, Exodus 7:1-13

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

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***Next week's sermon text:** we turn to **2 Timothy 3:10-17** "The Word of God"