

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:8-15

I. Be sure people understand the gospel. (8-10) Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. First we need to understand the gospel Paul is referring to is the good news about Jesus which he is sharing with everyone he knows. His life is an example that you can imprison the messenger but you can't stop the message. That is why the church is growing in places of oppression. Paul says he is willing to endure persecution and trials if it means folks will get saved.

II. Remind folks of their new life. (11) It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: This should bring to our remembrance **Romans 6:4-5, 11, 23** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:.....Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.....For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. At salvation we are baptized into Christ body by the Holy Spirit. We are raised with a new life not an improved old one, we are a new creation. (2 Cor. 5:17) As believers we now have a choice about sin. When we decide sin is no longer acceptable in our lives the Holy Spirit empowers us to live according to the new me within. There is change that occurs; someone once said we consciously choose to be dead to sin until we no longer have to choose; it comes natural.

III. Be sure not to forget who's you are. (12-13) If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. Let's face it we don't really suffer much in this country. When I think of folks who suffer for Christ I think of the Apostles of Corrie Ten Boom, or missionaries in Muslim countries. The most we might suffer is giving up some of the things of the world so we can serve Jesus. We are warned not to deny him. Jesus wrote that if you deny me before men I will deny you before my Father in heaven. Jesus has promised us joy when we abide in Him, abundant life when we trust him and seek his will but He does not force us to believe it is true. God's word is true whether I believe it or not. God loves the sinner but He will judge the sin.. We can't vote on whether we believe it is true or that God has changed His mind but that does not change it. For God to ignore sin he would have to deny himself and we are told here that cannot happen.

IV. Make sure to rightly divide the word of truth. (14-16)

1. Make sure you major on the majors. (14; 16) Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers... But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. Make sure you concentrate on teaching life changing principles. Folks want to argue about things that are not relevant to salvation or even to sanctification. **Romans 14:17-19** For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. If we live according the commands in the Bible we will live a life acceptable to God and will not drive people away with our hypocrisy. In verse 19 we see the word edify; that means encourage; promote harmony. This is not saying ignore sin it is helping someone grow in areas where they have no experience.

2. We are commanded to understand the Bible must be properly interpreted. (15) Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. There are several important truths in this verse.

A. We must study the Bible to understand it. Isaiah 28:13 But the word of the LORD was unto them Precept upon precept, precept upon precept; Line upon line, line upon line; Here a little, and there a little; That they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, And snared, and taken. **Dr. McGee writes:** *Teaching is a slow, patient, and continuous work. This is the way that even spiritual truth is imparted. God does not impart it in a flash to a lazy and lethargic soul. As the people lapse into apostasy in any age, it becomes increasingly difficult to impart spiritual truth.... The Word of the Lord was given unto Israel precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, and there a little. It was the daily grind of getting into God's Word. What happened? Israel did not follow through. They fell backward; that is, they were in a backslidden state. I realize that this method is not very exciting, but line upon line and precept upon precept is the only way you are going to grow in the Christian life.* A Precept is a commandment, instruction, or order intended as an authoritative rule of action. Precepts are usually commands respecting moral conduct. A precept is not the same as a principle. A precept is a commandment or direction given as a rule of action or conduct. On the other hand, a principle is a primary truth from which other truths are derived.

B. We must walk the walk not just talk the talk. a workman that needeth not to be ashamed The teacher must take great care to teach the truth so that if Jesus returned they would not be ashamed of what they had taught. They also must be sure their life matches their testimony. **1 Peter 3:15-17** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. When people look at your life do you attract people so that they want what you have? Having a good conscience means you are not ashamed of the gospel but it also means that your life would not bring reproach to the name of Jesus. Our consciences are driven by the Holy Spirit.

C. Make sure you understand God's meaning before you say thus sayeth the Lord. rightly dividing the word of truth. For example in the Old Testament people were instructed to bring lambs to the Temple for sacrifices but Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. In the Old Testament God outlines how to treat slaves even to the point of calling them your property. Some folks used that as justification for slavery. The Bible is a practical book in it God addresses situations people deal with; it does not mean he approves of what is happening. One good rule to follow is if God calls an action sin in the Old Testament and calls it a sin in the New Testament it is a sin. Precepts upon precept, line upon lines which agree often are principles of truth. Fornication, lying and stealing are all forbidden precepts of moral conduct in Conscience, Human government, Law and under Grace. The principle is be ye Holy for I am Holy. Another common error is taking the Bible out of context. To me one of the most important distinctions understands the difference between Law and Grace. The Law says I must do or work to be justified before God. Grace says I am already justified before God through faith in Christ's shed blood and that the works I now do for God are accomplished in His power not mind.