

December 2025

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## MEDITATIONS IN JUDE December 2025

## MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 1: 15-17 (Part 1)

For Sunday, 7th December 2025

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PAUL is seeking to strengthen the faith of Timothy so that he may be a confident preacher of the word of salvation, and a faithful teacher. To do this he gives what he calls 'trustworthy sayings'. This is the first but he repeats two others in 1Timothy 3: 1 & 2 Timothy 2: 11, and also writing to Titus in Titus 3: 8. Let us meditate for a moment on the significance of this word 'trustworthy'.

In the first place, in using this word, Paul emphasises the fact that what he is affirming is true, absolutely true, and thus can be taken and believed with assurance and confidence, not only for oneself, but declaring also in preaching and teaching. The devil is always seeking to bring doubt and uncertainty to the faith of believers. Paul is seeking to assure Timothy, and all of us who read this epistle, that whatever Satan may imply, the gospel is the sure truth of God.

From this Paul is assuring Timothy that this saying which he affirms can be safely and confidently believed, and made the sure foundation of faith. Again the devil sows seeds of doubt and error against this wonderful gospel, which has done and does great damage to immortal souls. We have one great example of this error gaining power, and that is in the Roman Catholic Church,

where many additions and subtractions have been introduced to undermine this gospel of salvation.

Paul then nails this truth firmly by the fact that it is the truth which comes from God, through Jesus Christ.

Because of this trustworthiness Paul declares that it deserves full acceptance. This is to affirm that it can be accepted against all the suggestions brought forward by Satan to undermine it. This Gospel can be safely believed and accepted, and that there is no doubt about it, and also believed in its completeness and fullness. It is a saying which transcends all human wisdom because it is divine truth, and deserves all credibility.

Then the Gospel truth is stated. It is so simple and strait forward. This is the Gospel 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'.

Satan has introduced so many false ideas concerning the coming of Jesus into the world, where he has caused confusion, and played on the pride of human reason for their acceptance. There are so many variations of this error. Satan makes people believe that Jesus came simply as a teacher. To make this error stick, Satan undermines the truth of the nature of Christ, that he was one person with two natures – that he was God incarnate, fully human and fully God, the divine second person of the blessed Trinity. The testimony of Scripture throughout the New Testament, in many and various ways, concerning his miraculous birth, error has been introduced, which in one way or another causes people to doubt this glorious Gospel that 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners'.

Satan also brings doubts on this Gospel by rubbishing the testimony of Scripture to the truth about human nature, that we are all born fallen and corrupt and sinners in the sight of God. Not only the truth that all human beings continual do wrong and show

evil propensities, but the fact that all this evil is because we are corrupt at heart, that human beings love darkness rather than light, because their deeds our evil.

How people hate to be called sinners. Satan causes the pride of human reason to revolt against the Bible testimony to the truth about human nature. People are ready to confess that they are not perfect, but revolt against any idea that they are bad at heart. In succeeding in this deception Satan deceives people into believing they do need a Saviour, and that they can save themselves if they need saving. Satan then introduces the awful errors of reducing the purpose of God in giving His Well Beloved Son, to Jesus being simply a man who showed himself to be the best sort of man that ever could be.

The truth Satan seeks to deny and pervert is that we all need an almighty Saviour because we are all born in sin and fall short of the holy requirements of God from the moment we commence breathing, and are all under the sentence of God to suffer the eternal punishment of everlasting death in hell. We need an almighty divine Saviour whose saving is perfect, eternal and all-sufficient, and a sinless human being who makes eternal atonement for our sins, by taking our place before divine justice, and paying the whole and complete punishment for our sin and sinning, so that God may justly forgive and save us from the death and hell our sins deserve.

This is the wondrous gospel that Paul affirms that is trustworthy truth can be fully accepted and that in Jesus and faith in him there is eternal salvation. God in eternal love God gave his Son to save sinners.



## MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

### 1 Timothy 1: 15-17 (Part 2)

For Sunday, 14th December 2025

Neading these words as they are usual translated, quite correctly, I have often found myself saying, from my heart, this is not true, because there could not be such an awful sinner as I feel myself to be. In seeking to understand the idea Paul is expressing by the Greek word 'protos' the idea which Paul is seeking to express by this word is the idea that he is a leading example of being a sinner.

When we read the account of Paul's life before he met the risen Christ reigning in glory travelling to Damascus, there is no doubt that Paul, then called Saul, had great hatred for Christians and for Christ. He tells us his condition before he was converted clearly in Philippians 3: 4b-6. He was a Pharisee of the greatest, and hated Christ and Christians, and went out of his way to oppose the Gospel, and exterminate Christians. We find him watching the stoning of Stephen and agreeing that he deserved such an awful death. His journeying to Damascus was to annihilate, if he could, all Christians and put an end to the preaching of the Gospel. Before Christ met him he was a self-righteous Pharisee, breathed out threatening and slaughter against all who professed faith in Christ. He hated Christ and felt Him to be the worst sort of teacher that had ever been. When we hear this testimony to Paul before he was converted, it is plain that he was a leader in sinning and being a sinner. However Paul speaks of his life before he was converted simply to show that such a leading sinner was saved by faith in Jesus Christ, so that all sinners, however bad, can take this gospel of salvation to heart and believe unto eternal salvation.

There is much that we can learn from this testimony of the apostle. To grieve because of sin and sinfulness is a sign of true grace and proof that a soul is truly born again. The nearer a believer becomes to the Lord Jesus Christ, the more they feel their sin and sinfulness. In Christ we area new creation, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness, and fit for heaven and to enter the presence of God in prayer; but our old nature in this body has not changed in any way at all, and Satan is a master of reminding us of it. Satan also tempts us and we find we are prone to be overcome by our sinful nature, and be overcome by temptation. We also grieve that our love for God and our Lord Jesus is so weak, and our faith so poor, and our service for Jesus so weak. How can we not mourn over our sinfulness and sinning, even though we know that if we do sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.

Further our Lord Jesus makes clear that a true sign of grace and salvation is the we are poor in spirit because of our sinfulness, and that we a mourn in true repentance for our sins, and are meek feeling we fall short in glorifying God, and so hunger and thirst after righteous. These Jesus pronounces blessed in the opening of the Sermon on the Mount in what is known as the beatitudes. How can we ever fail to accept that we are sinners saved by grace. Because of this it is a sign of true saving grace that we are not offended if we are called sinners; whereas the one who is still in the world will and not saved is always angry if it is suggested that they are sinners in the sight of God. We know that we are debtors to mercy alone.

So Paul goes on in the next verse to say that he was saved after he had acted in a most reprehensible way before Christ met him and saved him, in order that in him, having been such a great blasphemer and sinner, all true repentant sinners may be sure that they may be saved also even though they have so very badly fallen short of the glory of God.

He goes on to say that his experience of God's dealing with him was a demonstration of the unlimited patience of God for all those who are granted grace to believe.

No wonder Paul ends in verse 17 with this wonderful expression of the glory of God – 'Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and forever. Amen'.

Surely, in this, Paul expresses the heart of true Christianity! How wonderful eternal God is to act towards sinners as he does. How wonderful it is that, in the gift of his Son, he has provided so great, perfect, all-sufficient salvation for us who are entirely unworthy of such blessing. How great and wonderful in the eternal God, that in such amazing grace, and at incredible cost, he has given his only well beloved Son so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Where true salvation is found such praise of God is found also. How can a recipient of such grace and blessedness not respond with similar praise.

# MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 1: 18-20

For Sunday, 21st December 2025

WE come now to the last three verses of this first chapter of Paul's letter to Timothy. Paul is speaking to Timothy personally, and so he is referring to things experienced by

Timothy, and perhaps this leaves us bewildered. We naturally desire to know about the prophecies which Paul is reminding Timothy of, and also past experiences, but in fact it is not necessary for us to know these past details of Timothy's life. We simple need to note that they occurred and what it meant to Timothy.

Plainly, Paul is referring to the commissioning of Timothy for his work as a minister. In the present this would encompass a genuine call by the Holy Spirit for ministry, and the commissioning in ordination to the ministry, which follows the searching of the church as to the genuineness of such a call.

As we read the account of the practices of the early church in consideration of the matter, we find that they had the practice of praying and laying on of the hands of the elders, for the this ministry. We see this in Acts 6: 6 in the setting apart of the deacons, such as Stephen and Phillip.

In the case of Timothy we are told a bit more about this commissioning in the case of Timothy in 1 Timothy 4: 14, where we read Paul saying to Timothy 'Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through the prophetic message when the body of the elders laid their hands on you.' This indicates that there was given to the elders, by the Holy Spirit, an insight to the gifts which were given to Timothy for his ministry.

There is a further piece of information which is left out in the NIV translation. In the Greek the words of verse 18 read like this 'This charge I commit to you, child or son, Timothy according to the preceding prophecies respecting you, in order that you might war by them a good warfare'. The information which the NIV seems to have left out is that Paul looked on Timothy as a special person, that is a spiritual son, and special fruit of his ministry.

The prophecies mentioned here plainly were that Timothy had been given special gifts by the Holy Spirit to equip him for the ministry he was called to perform.

Paul goes on to say that these gifts of the Spirit were to enable Timothy to engage in a good and perfect warfare in his ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ. The wording here is instructive of the nature of ministry, and the special ministry to which Timothy was called. It tells us that it was a warfare. When we enquire as to what is meant by this warfare, Scripture tells us it is a warfare against Satan and all the evil powers at his disposal to pervert and destroy the saving work of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The ministry of the church by its ministers is a warfare. The devil is active to destroy and harm the making known of the gospel and the work of the Spirit in calling sinners out of Satan's kingdom into the kingdom of Christ. The minister is not only called to preach the gospel, but also to help and strengthen souls against all the wiles of the d evil.

Paul is reminding Timothy about these prophecies given at his ordination in order that he may fight a good fight. In other words that his ministry may be according to the mind, will and purpose of Christ, and be successful in the purposes of God for his ministry. The idea of a 'good fight' suggests that the prophecies made concerning Timothy at his ordination would be a good fight and a winning fight, if Timothy engaged in his ministry according to the purposes and will of God made clear in the prophecies.

In the following words in verse 19 and 20 we see that the good fight would be a good fight if Timothy remained faithful to the truths and doctrines made clear to him in the prophecies he had received at his ordination. This is made clear in the words in verse 19 'holding the faith and a good conscience'. Remaining faithful to the doctrines of salvation is meant by 'holding the faith' and having a good conscience in the work of the ministry.

It is and has been the strategy of Satan from the very beginning to pervert the truth and true doctrine. The church has been engaged in the 'good fight' over the centuries. The essential importance of this preserving the truth of the doctrines taught in the Bible is seen that it causes shipwreck of the faith. To reject the doctrines taught in God's word, the Bible, is the cause of this disaster. This is why Paul acts so swiftly and firmly in the case of Hymenaeus and Alexander. Though such action may seem excessive to us, Paul knew differently. This wisdom of Paul has been proved when we look at the condition of the church today, where false doctrine is destroying the church. The warfare is not a good fight, and the church can be seen to be losing the fight. How we need to take to heart the experience of Timothy, who remained faithful to the truth and his ministry, thereby, was a good fight.

# MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 2: 1-2

For Sunday, 28th December 2025

N this opening of chapter two of this letter of Paul to Timothy, Paul impresses on Timothy the importance of prayer in the believer's life, and specially in the life of those who are called to be ministers and teachers in the church. It is characteristic of true believing faith that a person begins to pray. Before we become a true saved believer in Jesus Christ we may have said our prayers, and may have been diligent in such activity, but this is never real prayer. This is made clear in the case of the conversion of the Apostle Paul. As a Pharisee and very religious he had engaged in the practice of prayer, but it was only when he was saved in the

action of Jesus who visited him on his journey to persecute Christians in Damascus, that Paul began to pray, This is made so vividly clear in Acts 9 which describes the conversion of Paul. After meeting Jesus for conversion he had been blinded by the light of the glory of the risen Christ. He had to be guided into Damascus. Then the Holy Spirit spoke to a believer in Damascus called Ananias, and told him to go to the place where Paul had been left in order to heal him of his blindness. Ananias was naturally afraid to go near Paul because of the reason Paul had come to Damascus, but he was reassured that Paul was now a believer because the Holy Spirit told him these significant words in verse 11 'The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, **for he is praying**".

It is in the resurrection to new and real life which accompanies conversion and new birth, that a person begins naturally to talk to the Lord. However prayer is both very easy and also extremely difficult. It is also true that we need to be taught concerning the practice of prayer. We learn to pray more and more throughout our Christian lives. In this first verse of 1 Timothy chapter two Paul presents to Timothy an area in prayer that is often neglected, and even seen not to be worthwhile. Paul tells Timothy that he needs to pray for kings, and all those in authority, and tells Timothy why such prayer is so important. He tells Timothy the prayer for the powers that be is needed so that Christians may 'live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness'.

Paul prefaces this instruction by the words 'I urge you'. In this Paul expresses to Timothy how important such prayer is, and indicates that such prayer is often neglected because it is felt to be unnecessary and perhaps useless. However when we consider the condition of believers in so many places in the world who are suffering because of the persecution by authorities, we are able to appreciate how important such prayer is, even though in our own country we may not suffer in this way. We may also feel it is

useless to prayer for those in authority when we hear how corrupt such authority prove to be. Although Paul in particular mentions prayer for authorities, he also widens prayer by saying prayer should be for 'everyone'. This widens the practice of prayer beyond anything which perhaps we have included in our praying.

In this urging the importance of prayer Paul uses three different words as he does so. In my NIV translation these words are 'requests', 'prayers' and 'intercessions'. I have sought to meditate more deeply on these three words, and have tried in my very limited knowledge of New Testament Greek to enter more into what these three words are expressing in the nature and practice of prayer. The first word 'deiseis' is the idea of asking, entreaty and supplication. In the second word 'proseuxos' is the expression of addressing and speaking to God. In the third word 'enteuxeis' the idea is of conversation and asking.

From this very limited understanding it has been opened to me a nature of prayer that I have found helpful and a blessing. These words give me, at least, the image of prayer as entering the presence of God for communion, help and need. This something Satan seeks to destroy.

What is the nature of the believers relationship with God? Surely it is coming to God as our heavenly Father, where we know we will be welcome, and know that there is nothing too trivial or difficult to tell God about. We are given the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry 'Abba, Father'. Prayer is realising we a beloved by our heavenly Father, and this relationship has been opened to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, who through forgiveness and new life, has open this way into the holiest of all, by this relationship of son/daughter of God. In this realisation I feel and experience prayer as coming into the arms of my Father in heaven to be loved, and to whom I can speak of all things, even the deepest issues of life, because I know I I am loved, with an everlasting love,

and my heavenly Father knows all about me, even the worst things in my life.

Paul speaks of thanksgiving as being natural and essential, because this access to such a relationship is given in infinite grace, and can never be withdrawn because of the perfect work our dear beloved Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who ever lives to make intercession with the Father.

### **GOD'S WORD FROM HOSEA**

Number 26

## GOD FORESAKEN - GOD FORGOTTEN

"(3) They delight the king with their wickedness, the princes with their lies. (4) They are all adulterers, burning like an oven whose fire the baker need not stir from the kneading of the dough till it rises. (5) On the day of the festival of our king the princes become inflamed with wine, and he joins hands with the mockers. (6) Their hearts are like an oven; they approach him with intrigue. Their passion smoulders all night; in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire. (7) All of them are hot as an oven; they devour their rulers. All their kings fall, and none of them call on me. (8) Ephraim mixes with the nations; Ephraim is a flat cake not turned over. (9) Foreigners sap his strength, but he does not realise it. His hair is sprinkled with grey, but he does not notice. (10) Israel's arrogance testifies against him, but despite all this he does not return to the Lord his God or search for him."

Hosea 7: 3-10

HERE could not be a more dismal account of the state of Israel in the time of Hosea. Hosea describes a condition where the nation of Israel were given over to the lust of the flesh and the ways of the heathen all around them. As I have read through these verse several times the title I have given this sermon seemed to be what I am seeing in Hosea's account of the state of Israel for which he speaks in his prophesying. Not only was God totally forgotten and left out, but from the king downwards in their society, all were given over to satisfying their lusts, and deceit seemed to be the order of the day. Israel was so given over to intrigue and satisfying sinful desires of the flesh that there was no place for God left at all in all the thinking and action the people, and the king and the aristocracy.

#### ISRAEL'S CONDITION DESCRIBED.

In verses 3-7 Hosea describes the condition and behaviour of Israel. Then in verses 8-10 Hosea records how this has come about. It is right that we should look at these verses and realise how dreadful was the condition of the ten tribes at this time, who had split off from Judah and Benjamin at the time when the son of Solomon, king Rehoboam reigned, after Solomon had died.

Verses 3-7 describe the people given over entirely to selfishness, and indulging in the sins of the flesh with utter abandonment. They see what the king and the nobles liked and so they flattered them to get their own way, and follow the desires of the flesh that filled them. I think we can see from verse 4 that the passions of the flesh had taken over the society of Israel. When we read in verse 5 of the day of the festival, it is plain that any opportunity to satisfy the lusts of the flesh was grabbed with voracious passion. The thoughts of the people were filled with unrestrained desires of the flesh. It is plain that this expressed itself in sexual promiscuity, but this

is not the whole of it. It included lust for power, and wealth, and all that sinful humanity regards as the way of happiness and satisfaction. Drunkenness was plainly rampant, and it was given its full expression at every opportunity, such as festivals.

The picture is of total taking over of the desires of the flesh in any way that is thought to achieve the end desired.

What is seen as a result is that government became almost impossible, and this is illustrated that kings came and went as the forces of the people took over.

This is a picture of the result of the fall on man due to Adam's sin in eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam chose for all his progeny, that is the whole human race, to believe and so follow Satan rather than God. God created Adam and Eve perfectly holy. Her one purpose in life was to delight in God and live for him.

Satan came, first not to the man but to the woman. The woman taking the lead believed the lie of Satan that God was depriving her and Adam from greater glory, carried Adam with her, so that they both ate the fruit of the forbidden tree, and all the hateful character of Satan filled their hearts, and brought upon them shame and desires they had never known before. In the condition of Israel, as Hosea describes it, gives and exposes the result of this fall of humanity in Adam.

From that time this awful selfish lust is exposed. It is seen in Cain who murdered his brother Abel. Then we see Cain going and multiplying his condition of sinfulness, until in the days of Noah, only eight people, the family of Noah, still lived in obedience to God. At that time God judged humanity by the flood. However the sinfulness of human nature caused by Adam's sin to give himself to Satan's authority, continued to spread like a fire through humanity.

God chose a people, the family of Abraham, as his chosen people, but we see how the ravages of Satan through the sin of Adam effected drastically these chosen people. This is exposed in this condition of Israel, which Hosea graphically exposes.

God had promised, at the time of Adam's sin that he would provide an almighty deliver who would overcome Satan, and so all through this terrible degeneration in the life of Israel, always a faithful remnant was preserved by sovereign grace so the promised Saviour would come, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, made flesh as the Son of Man, in order to provide eternal redemption for sinners.

God kept his promise made in Genesis 3, and now in Jesus, the divine Saviour, we have the one who, in his life and death, and resurrection, has become the propitiation for the sins of all who put their trust in him, with a truly repentant heart.

Then when we come to verses 8-10, Hosea explains how this awful condition of Israel, which he speaks of as Ephraim, came about. Like Adam and Eve, they dabbled in the society of the heathen. This living with the heathen sapped their strength so that they were filled with the ways of the godless people around them, and more and more were overcome and filled with their life of following and satisfying the sinful desires of our fallen nature, and Satan began to rule over them.

I was brought up in the atmosphere where worldliness as it was called was perceived as dangerous, but the reason why it was, was never explained. This way of life was simply imposed, and worldliness as it was called was viewed as showing a state of heart that was hardly Christian. Following this teaching, and cutting out of the life these things became rather a work that gained favour from God. By this the Gospel of grace not works was clouded. It is plain that the pendulum has moved to far the

other direction. Still the exposition of the word of God in the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption is not taught, and so the wisdom of not seeking the things of the world, is lost. It is a terrible thing that the way of Israel, in playing with the ways and thoughts of the heathen in their day, is perhaps was is effecting the church, and Christians today.

### THE REASON FOR THIS SPIRITUAL DECLENSION.

There is these two expression in these verses before us which make this plain. In verse 7, the cry of God is 'and none of them calls on me'. Then in verse 10, speaking of Israel as a whole, Hosea says 'he (Israel, Ephraim) does not return to the Lord his God or search for him.

The ways of Israel, that is Ephraim, as described by Hosea, was that more and more God was shouldered out of the life and thinking of the people, and though they still outwardly performed the ways and sacrifices of God, it had merely become a form and a habit. The people more and more began to think that this outward performance of religion was truly living for God and obeying his commandments.

Such an attitude is at its core living by works, and seeking God's favour by works. We give honour and obedience in following the forms of true religion, and believe that this will earn us God's favour and blessing, and so it became common to think that the people of Israel were obeying God, even when they went after the ways of the heathen, and allowed their fallen human nature to take over their lives in practice.

The devil is a master of deception to make those who call themselves Christian believe that they are truly living as Christians, and that God embraces them with his acceptance and favour, when the reverse is the case.

#### APPLICATION.

As we read the prophets speaking concerning the spiritual declension in their day, we must not leave it there, thinking that we have read God's word, and in a measure have understood it, and that is all we need to do. If we do this we shall not be treating God's holy words rightly. We need to ask questions for ourselves and for the church today. Is the spirit of Israel at the time of Hosea crept into our own lives? Is this condition in Ephraim seen in the church visible, and even in those churches which claim to be believe in the Bible as the infallible word of God in all its wholeness.

As I have meditated on these questions, it has been made clear to me that the spiritual declension and unrighteousness found in Israel can be found in two sentences. At the end of verse 7 we read 'and none of them calls on me', and in the last sentence of verse 10 where we read 'he does not return to the Lord his God or search for him'. In these Scripture sentences seems to be to encapsulate the reason for this terrible godlessness that overtaken the whole nation of Israel.

What does the sentence from verse 7 open up to us? Surely it speaks of prayerlessness or lack of prayer. There is no suggestion in the terrible description of the sin which had overcome Israel that they had abandoned the practice of their religion. What these verses in Hosea make clear that he religion of Israel was simply nominal, and thinking that just carrying the practises was enough.

The problem in Israel was that they did not really pray – this is what is clear in the words 'and none of them call upon me'. It is a fact that when prayer is not at the centre of our worship, then there is surely spiritual decline and deadness. Where there is spiritual life and living for the Lord, there is a desire to pray and a longing to talk in prayer to the Lord.

If a individual Christian prays little, until prayer is done as a duty rather than expressing a desire to worship the Lord, praise and thank him, and bring to him our personal needs and that of others, then life has been ebbing out of spiritual life. I would say that the best time in the day for me is in the morning before I have engaged in anything else or even had my breakfast, I meditate of God's word and seek his Holy Spirit to open some thing for the blessing of my soul as I read my Bible, and then to pour our my heart before the Lord in worship and intercession, not just for myself, but for the many things and needs the Lord has laid upon my heart.

The same is true in any church fellowship. Is prayer and communion with the Lord at the heart of the life of the fellowship of that congregation. It does not matter how busy a church fellowship might be in all sorts of Christian activity, the bottom line is whether prayer is at the heart of that churches life. In my ministry I always felt that, on top of Sunday worship, the essential of the churches activity was the Bible Study and Prayer Meeting held each week. It always sadden me that the church could be packed on Sunday, but the weekly prayer meeting was very poorly attended.

Then when we turn to verse 10 which tells us what was endemic in the life of Israel in the words 'He (Israel, Ephraim) does not return to the Lord his God and search for him'. Surely this speaks of the centrality and purpose of God's word, the Bible. It is in the Bible that God speaks to his church, and to us as individual believers. If the Bible is not precious and at the centre of a church's life, surely this means that that congregation, that fellowship, is not returning to the Lord and God, or searching for him.

It is a sure sign of spiritual decline in the church and even spiritual death where the Bible is not at the centre of that congregation's life. When I hear the Bible spoken of as simply containing the word of God, and when I hear the preaching is hardly seeking to expound God's word, but the sermons are simply platitudes of empty social verities, then it seems to me that the preacher, and the church congregation are not seeking to return to the Lord or search for him to know him and his blessed company and fellowship.

od has spoken to his people in the Bible. If the Bible is not believed to be the infallible speaking of the Lord in truth and verity, and the whole Bible is accepted as God's word written, then it opens up the terrible vista of every person's beliefs and thoughts on what God is speaking can be a total jumble, and the image of God is different for each person. There is in this no sure word of God for the nourishment of our souls, and in the end there are more gods worshipped than all the idols of the Old Testament. Such thinking is surely the complaint here spoken by Hosea – 'The church and the people do not return to the Lord their God, and search for him.

These words of Hosea make me want to cry out to the Lord to bring back real prayer, and a right and true receiving of the Scriptures, for in this I hear Hosea saying, and God through Hosea, that this is the only way for the church to be revived, and the blessing of God to return to his church.

December 2025



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### **GOD'S MESSAGE IN 2 PETER**

Expository Sermons in the 2nd Epistle of Peter

### FURTHER DESCRIPTION

"These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. For they mouth empty, boastful words, and appealing to the lustful desires of the sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error."

2 Peter 2: 17-18

N these next verses Peter continues to speak very severely concerning the operation of false witnesses in the visible church. His words are extremely critical and condemning, and we may be tempted to feel that such words are unchristian, but this is not the case. Peter, as did the apostle Paul, new the great danger these false witnesses posed for the church, specially to the young and those who are young in the faith. This is plain from verse 20. The phrase in verse 20 'if they have escaped the corruption of the world' makes it clear that they were ones that had responded, in some way, to the Gospel by faith in the truth as it is in lesus, but had been effected by some error, and now were embracing this departure from the truth, and forcefully teaching it in the church. This sort of thing raised its ugly head even in the early church. Paul's writing to the Galatians was clearly because he was contending against teachers in the church who were promoting another Gospel, which he urgently wanted the Galatians to reject. Paul calls this teaching 'another gospel, that is a false Gospel. This is plain from Galatians 1: 6-10.

Both Peter and Paul saw how dangerous and how damaging is false teaching. He appreciated that it was taking people from Page 20

saving truth, to belief in error which damaged their souls, caused them to depart from the true Gospel, and put them on the road to damnation in Hell. Satan was and is virulent in his opposition to the truth, and from the very beginning of the church. Satan has been introducing his lies ever since, and the history of the church shows how powerful this deception has been, specially as we look at the darkness of the mediaeval church. No wonder both Peter and Paul spoke so strongly against false teachers in the words they used.

How vivid and apt are the pictures Peter uses in verse 17. The first one is 'These men are springs without water'. This false teaching purports to be where spiritual thirst can be quenched. It is like coming to a stream seeking water to quench our thirst, but when we come up to the stream, it is found to be dried up. The false teaching may at first appear to be something to add to the gospel, which when embraced actually increases spiritual health, because, but though it purports to extend the Gospel, actually destroys it. The trouble here is that the devil makes these errors so plausible that once embraced darkness descends on the mind and enslaves it, so that the truth is said to be foolish and wrong.

The next picture Peter gives here in order to press home the reality of the damage error causes when it is infiltrated in the church is 'mists driven by a storm'. This is a very vivid picture. It conjures up in the mind and imagination of being out on a ramble in mountainous country when fog comes down. The path ahead is reduced in visibility to perhaps a few yards, and there is great danger from obstacles in the way to stumble upon, and we are unable to see the way ahead, and so when we come to places where the pathway is divided, it is impossible to know which path to take.

These false teachers may feel they know, and are most earnest in promoting the system they are proclaiming; and their Page 21

teaching may promise such blessings, but this teaching will destroy saving truth, and leave people on the road to Hell. How dangerous it really is, because if embraced it will lead people down the 'broad way' which leads to destruction.

Peter goes on in the next phrase to speak clearly of what such false witnesses deserve, and also what God is preparing for them. Peter's words are 'Blackest darkness is reserved for them'. God is not blind to the action of false teachers, and he will eventually punish them, for leading people into the bondage of darkness. These false teachers, in this life, may appear to flourish and have the best life; and the life of the faithful to be full of difficulty, but the false teachers are on the broad way which leads to destruction, and are leading their followers to the same end. The broad way is the way to death. Jesus spoke of the Pharisees, who seemed to have everything in this life, but said that they have their reward in this life, and their eternal future will be blackest darkness, which is reserved for them in this life. In Psalm 73 the writer tells us that his feet had almost slipped, and his life was filled with darkness whereas the wicked were flourishing. Then in his suffering the Psalmist has his eyes opened. The wicked were flourishing but we read in verse 17 - 'Then I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destination'. This changed the whole perspective of the Psalmist, and he could say in the next verse of God's future for them 'Surely you place them on slippery ground, and cast them down to ruin'. The words of Jesus in Matthew 7: 13 and 14 are so true. The narrow way of difficulty leads to life. Satan hides this from those he deceives, and they go forward blind to their terrible future in eternity.

Peter speaks of the truth of these false witnesses. He says of them 'They mouth empty, boastful words and by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error'. Let us observe these words and seek the revelation of the Spirit of God to appreciate the fulness of them.

These false teachers disseminate their teaching and ideas by speech. They have the aid of the devil in the way best to spread their thoughts. They rely on the fallen reason which all humanity have still remaining after Adam was cast out of paradise. We who are faithful to the truth have our reason taken over by the Holy Spirit, and we are guided by the Spirit into all truth – the truth of God. In this blessing we are able to come to the Scriptures, the infallible and inerrant revelation of God, and by the Spirit distinguish the truth from false teaching.

The characteristic of those who are guided by Satan, who promote false teaching, is their confidence in their reason to decide what the truth is. This confidence is clear in the way they look down on those faithful to the Bible, and despise them. Peter tells us this confidence is expressed by boastful words. Their teaching comes over in the pride of their intellectual superiority where they make so clear that any other teaching which does not agree with theirs is foolishness.

Peter goes on to speak of these false teachers as appealing to 'the desires of sinful human nature'. We must pause at these words so that we may properly understand the meaning here of 'the desires of sinful human nature', for unless we do I believe we will be lost in puzzlement. These words naturally conjure up in our minds lust for sex, money, power and pleasure, and such like, which drive the majority of humanity, which has self at its centre – that is self and it desires drives all fallen unsaved humanity.

There is another most serious desire of the sinful nature which is to proudly rely on our reason, and whatever ideas and teaching which our reason rejects must be wrong, and so will be refused and cast out. Human reason can easily be described

as the worst sinful desire that we have. However our reason is a blessed gift from God and it is given to us to be a blessing so that we are able to live above the animals and think what is right or wrong, etc. What is not properly appreciated is that because of the action Adam in disobeying God, like all our faculties, our reason is infected by a virus which impairs our thinking, so that we are only able to think in terms of life here on earth, and where the things of God, and the truth of God, are missing. In this infected human reason, all human beings have our reason in order to make choices in life, but such choices are limited to the life in this world apart from God. It is only the born again believer whose reason is brought back under the new life of God, and so by the Holy Spirit guiding us, we are able to discern thinking that is of God and heavenly and comes from God.

The believer now is able to discern where thinking is from the desires of our sinful nature, and what is the thinking that comes from God. So by the new life we have, and guided by the Spirit of God, we do not live any more in the lustful desires of the sinful nature, but live by the pure desires of our new nature. In this spiritual life the pride of our reason is dethroned, and made subject to the wisdom of God, made clear in the revelation of God found in the infallible Scriptures.

Fallen human nature is only able to think in terms of this world, and so much of the Bible truth is rejected as unreasonable. By this the omnipotence of God is reduced to the level of sinful human possibility.

What believers do not appreciate is that the sinful nature, called the flesh, is still present and active in our bodies, and is not changed in any way. It is just as corrupt as it has always been. The bible makes clear this sinful nature can not be improved, and it is force the devil uses until we leave this world, and this sinful flesh remains to decay in the grave, and

is removed, with its sinfulness, from the saint in heaven, where we are given a new body like unto the resurrection body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul makes clear that this sinful nature can only be mortified, that is put to death. The way we are given to do this is by starvation. Paul goes on to tell us in Ephesians 4 that this starvation is by putting off the desires of the sinful flesh, and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4: 22 – 23). The old self is corrupted by its deceitful desires. In the new self we are made new in the attitude of our minds.

The devil appeals to this desire of the sinful human nature which remains in us, and so gives false witness a leverage which can be very powerful. By this it will seem to the tempted that the teaching of the false witnesses seems so plausible, and to add their teaching to the doctrines of God, will be a great improvement, when in reality they only destroy, and like yeast in bread, will spread to infect the our whole thinking until is shoulders out the truth.

How do we put on the new self? This is such an important question to ask. Their is a hymn where to chorus is wonderful on its own. It is -

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face:

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.

Here is the clue and the action we must take to mortify our sinful natures. We must look at Jesus and heavenly things. This is done by attending diligently on the means of grace given us, particularly in reading, meditating on the Word of God; also speaking much oto the Lord in the privilege we are given in prayer, where we have access into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus.

This attending on the means of grace is when we spend time in God's word, meditating and asking questions, believing that the Spirit will open our understanding. This must be no hurried thing, but rather we need to give quality time to it, believing that the Spirit of God will speak the truth and give us understanding of what we read, but also bless us with having the eyes of our mind opened in understanding which will fill our hearts with praise.

Then we must be a praying people. Hurried pray is of little value, and is dishonouring of God. Our prayers must time spent in praise and thanksgiving to God. By this we are filled with the wonder of the love and grace of God and we will experience lifting up into heavenly places with Christ which Paul tells is a reality. (Ephesians 2: 6).

False witnesses and their boastful teaching will be very powerful to those who are not dwelling much on the truth of God in his Holy Word, and who are not truly growing in the truth, but remain spiritually children. So Peter mentions those who are so vulnerable. At the end of verse 18 we read – 'they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error'.

Satan has infiltrated into the church many people who claim they are Christians but are not born again of the Spirit. Often many of us begin and live in this class from birth, or else by human decision. When we are first born again we are babies, even if in human terms we may be in old age, and we need to be fed and built up in our new life. Some seem to remain babies, and so are vulnerable to false teaching.

Babies grow when they are fed. The bread of life is Jesus, who by his Spirit in us who believe, feeds through the Bible. We need this bread served up to us in a palatable form, and God has given teachers and preachers to provide this for us. The

trouble today, in the United Kingdom at least, such preachers and teachers are very sparse in the visible church, where most of the churches in the visible church are taken up by false witnesses, which only provide inedible food, or even poisonous food, if believed and received, will poison the soul. If we are able we must find a church which is spiritually alive, and has true preachers and teachers. In such fellowship the young Christian, and indeed all Christians, are also able to thrive in the fellowship as the understanding of the many feed others. There are also good Bible Reading notes, which gives a passage to read and provides also some understanding of the truth in the passage. There is no use in hurried use of the means of grace. Quality time, when we are fresh, is essential. Otherwise we will not grow in spiritual maturity, and always remain more prone to spiritual weakness.

Satan is always watching to cause God's people to be deceived by false witnesses. Satan never rests. He knows where we are vulnerable, so it is important for our spiritual health to spend time with the Lord In his Word and by prayer. If we are to be successful we need to beware of anything that brings the world into our lives, and so occupies our thinking to the exclusion of the life which comes from. So Jesus says in Matthew 6: 19-21 'Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust destroys, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. All heavenly treasure in our minds and hearts are very vulnerable to Satan, if our spirituality is low.

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