

# 9/1/24 - 2 Tim. 2:20-22 - "Vessels Fit for Glory & Service"

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Date: 01 September 2024

Preacher: Brenton Beck

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you.

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Thank you. have you.

[ 80 : 59 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. I'm just kidding.

I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding. but, but, you know, man, Timothy to flee and pursue Christlikeness. What better way to flee and pursue as God would have in his life than while engaging his opponents with the gospel? This is the whole point and the context that is carrying us into the passage today. It's these expressions of youthful passions that Timothy is to flee from. And it will be tested when he heads back to Ephesus with Paul's letter in hand. It will be tested when his opposition faces, stands toe to toe, and how he's supposed to carry himself. A courtroom can turn heated very, very quickly. Very, very quickly. I watched Judge Judy, and that's real judging right there. It can turn quick, very heated, quickly. Once an argument is led away from the point of the subject, right? As people try to take things in sort of like other directions to distract from and go around certain topics, and here Paul is telling Timothy to be able to spot that and to call objection in his heart, to use his words wisely. He says, have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies. You know that they breed quarrels. You're human, Timothy. You're going to get mad. They're going to get mad. Y'all are going to be brawling before you know it. That's not how we do things, Timothy. Paul's concern is for Timothy's best interest and the interest of his opponents. We'll see that in verse 25 as well, that he be able to discern when enough is enough in a conversation and things are headed down a path of stupidity of this discernment period. Every Christian should be sensitive to it. A conversation that materializes in speculations and myths of theorizing of theorizing unknowns, elevating these third-level issues, if they're even an issue compared to the authority of God's Word, and elevating these things and going down that pathway, down this path of often stupidity. The hard evidence of which a Christian is to stand on is the written, solid, rock-hard Word of God alone. There's the foundation that we, as wise, discerning Christians, must stand upon. Myths have their place, maybe around a bonfire, if you want to talk about UFOs and alien life, whatever. But hey, when time counts, let's talk about Jesus. Amen?

[ 86 : 05 ] How many of us have exhausted ourselves in what seems to be hopeless efforts of persuasion with maybe people who don't believe what we believe? I got an amen with the hands. I don't know if that's...

We already had confession, but if that's what you need to do, that's fine. But thank you for your authenticity in that. How many of us have exhausted our resources, ourselves, or pouring out to others who seem to be... It just seems like it's hopeless. It's a hopeless effect of persuasion. In those conversations that we seem to be spending more time dissecting what other people believe, rather than inviting them to dissect what we believe.

Have you ever felt the temperature rising at times? Maybe behind the keyboard? Oh yeah, I'm going there. I can't be the only one that's probably written out this long paragraph that would just get them.

Just get them. And then deleted it. And then rewrite it again a couple hours later and just, gotta get them. Gotta get them. Gotta get them, right? Okay, I'm glad I'm not the only one here.

[ 87 : 26 ] As if we're going to solve all the world's problems and we're going to settle this dispute with our dissertation that no one's going to read in the comment section and change the world one keystroke at a time. No. Or maybe it's just simply a text message that you just get them with.

Friends, Paul is calling Timothy to discern the level of his engagement in the trenches of conversation.

And this is important to know in the passage. Sometimes upon reading you don't really see that. Paul isn't telling Timothy to flee from this conversation. So what's he telling them to flee from? Controversies. Just mythological analysis of truth that people try to bring into conversation and use it as their defense. He's saying, don't. It's nonsense. You're to proclaim Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ crucified. Let them chew on that for a little bit. Not every angle of an argument our opponent brings is worthy of our time.

In fact, no, it's not worthy of God's time. If time is a gift and time is limited and we spend more time trying to counter other people's beliefs rather than us presenting our beliefs and inviting them to see see what they think about that. Soon, what we find is that often when we go along those rabbit trails in arguments that we find ourselves unknowingly ensnared by the devil.

We're out to get them. And the devil says, ha, I got them. I silenced the gospel.

That Christian was more interested in defeating somebody else's arguments than presenting Jesus Christ. As Christians, everything we believe has objectiveness. It has consistency. It has credibility. [ 89 : 53 ] Do we believe that when we face opposition? Faithful Christians must be devoted to proclaiming the revelation of Jesus Christ. Stop debating man's speculations.

If you want, there's a time and place. Tonight, we're talking about the mark of the beast. I invite you to come to the Revelation Bible study tonight. It's going to be a doozy. But man, Paul never told Timothy to stop listening either. That's important as well. We have very passionate evangelists, apologists in the church body. Never stop listening. The best apologists are actually skilled listeners. Skilled listeners. From the very moment that words come out of an opponent's mouth, they are looking at them, analyzing them, looking from this angle, that angle, and listening. Not listening to respond, but listening to understand the underlying conviction, the presuppositions of those arguments. That's important to be skilled listeners and to be skilled listeners to identify when the devil is playing games in a conversation. And you call objection in your hearts and you reset the arguments. Amen.

The other exhortation, the other side of this exhortation, it continues with sort of a contrast in the second part. It's gentleness while facing opposition. He says, but. Love the but here. It just takes this argument. He's saying, don't do this. Don't fight. But instead, this is the practical nature of Paul's writing. I love it. He says, but to be kind to everyone. Able to teach.

Patiently enduring evil. Verse 25. Correcting his opponents with gentleness. That is a servant of God. Paul reinforces Timothy's trajectory of pursuit as it were in verse 22. As he's telling Timothy to flee this and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace. Well, only here, it is a pursuit that keeps the long game of argumentation in view. Paul is not saying to shut the conversation down, send that text, destroy their arguments. He's not saying to slap the hypocrite when he gets back to Ephesus. Paul's not saying pull that lever, the trap door of the pew and down to the sharks or the alligators. They go. Don't get any ideas, church.

No. Be kind to everyone. Able to teach. Look, patiently enduring.

[ 93 : 11 ] Patiently enduring what? Evil. Correcting opponents with gentleness.

Wow. Paul's not calling Timothy either to be gentle in our cultural sense of the definition of the word, of being weak or being passive, but rather to have self-controlled strength, right? Self-controlled strength. That when we look at a biblical view and a biblical snapshot of what gentleness is, it's, as it's known, it's strength under control. Have you not heard that? Strength under control.

And maybe after all, our gentle disposition might reveal our deeply rooted faith that God does truly know who are his and who are not, according to verse 19 of the context.

Maybe our gentleness and our gentleness and our self-control in the face of opposition might actually say that we believe in God, in the power of God to change a heart and to win a soul, not an argument.

Maybe after all, instruction, well, pastoral ministry in Timothy's life and the Christian life, for that matter, actually does play the long game in view. We might not actually draw Christians like Billy Graham's crusades and come forward and make the decision. We don't have the power to do that.

[ 95 : 05 ] We don't have the timeline, but God does. He's got the time. He's got the plan. But do we have the patience to gently endure? You see, when we lean into opponents, it's not about winning an argument.

It's about revealing Christ in our words, in our actions. Maybe you're not in Christ today. You're, you've probably heard the gospel, maybe.

That apart from Jesus Christ, you're destined to hell. Apart from Jesus Christ, there is no hope. There's no drug that you can take that can dull that reality.

You can't escape that reality from this life. And right now, what you have, through the revelation of the scriptures, is hope before you today.

And maybe you walked in apart from Christ, and now some things are starting to make sense that those preachers were actually loving you after all.

[ 96 : 22 ] Gently telling you, repent of your sin. Turn to the one true God. It's only love that would ever provoke somebody like me to proclaim that to a stranger.

Only love. It's the most unloving thing that I could ever do for an unbeliever to not tell them of the gospel. And tell them the warning signs.

If what the Bible says is true, which I'll die upon that truth. That it is true. The end will come. And at the end, if you do not have Jesus Christ as your advocate, by His blood being the payment and the ransom for your sin, there is no hope.

It's a gentle truth. I don't need to be jumping on top of this pulpit and shaking you to get you to figure that truth out. You need the Holy Spirit to grant you repentance as this passage says.

Maybe you're the believer today. And you see that jumping from the page. That God may grant you repentance to lead you to the knowledge of truth. Maybe it's not this Sunday that you'll be fully convinced of that.

[ 97 : 47 ] It might take next Sunday or the Sunday after. You might be tired from working a shift and barely able to stay awake. Well, it's okay. We'll be here next Sunday, Lord willing. And the same gentle truth will be proclaimed.

Or you can just believe right now. Today. Escape the snare of the devil. Quit playing games with this life. Time is not unlimited in this life.

You may feel invincible, but you are not invincible. And turn to repentance of your sin and to fall into the arms of Jesus Christ where no hand can pluck you from.

Come and believe by having faith in Jesus Christ. You see, church, what I'm saying today is considered hate speech.

You should see that gentleness doesn't censor truth. It's not passive to truth.

[ 98 : 50 ] It's actually very sensitive to awareness of other people needing the truth. And so we are gentle in our disposition. Gentleness doesn't censor truth.

But it is upon the plate of gentleness that truth is served. Timothy is called to return to Ephesus and to be gentle with opponents.

Being a Christian jerk is actually an oxymoron then. Can you be a Christian jerk and still be a Christian? No. I don't think so.

It takes discernment and it takes gentleness. What a witness and a representation of Jesus Christ. This is where the practicality has such depth and meaning. Because not only is gentleness a fruit of the Spirit for all Christians, it's not only a qualification for pastors, elders, overseers, according to his first letter to Timothy, but it is also an antidote for not pushing others further away from God, away from the truth.

And we as Snow Valley Church proclaim this truth without wavering because our opponent isn't a person. It's the devil.

[ 100 : 18 ] Our opponent isn't the person. The person is ensnared by the devil. It is important to remember that. We will not succeed in our gentle disposition unless we are aware vibrantly of that fact.

And theologically, our opponents are captured by the devil. The devil is habitually scheming. He's habitually clever, subtle purveyor of lies.

And Jesus came to crush the devil. Jesus came to crush the devil and institute the church. Not to deal with the devil.

That's not our fight. Regardless of what some Pentecostal preacher told you, it's not your fight. Your fight is to be fishers of men. Gentle.

Let God deal with that warfare and that fight. We are commissioned to go and make disciples. Don't take that personal with opposition.

[ 101 : 26 ] What a powerful reminder this morning. How many of us have jobs or careers that are surrounded in people? We got drama. We got opposition.

We got affirmation, opposition, all sorts. It's just a conglomeration. You might be a teacher at a high school. You might be a university professor at YSU.

You might be a worker at the rescue mission. You might be a doctor in the medical field or civil engineering. Or you might be a lawyer.

Whatever have you, as we navigate this increasingly hostile world that surrounds us, we remember that hostility must be met with gentleness.

Remember Jesus' words that if the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world is not after us.

[ 102 : 31 ] The world is after Jesus. And if the world is ensnared by the devil, then theologically the devil is out to get Jesus in his limited time on this earth.

We are servants upon this earth. Servants of God. Honorable youths. A gentleness that finds deep theological roots of Christ rooted as a model servant.

Wonder what that model looks like? You look to the almighty servant just as Isaiah 42 was prophesied about. Behold my servant. What's the servant look like?

Whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations.

He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street. A bruised reed, he will not break. And a faintly burning wick he will not quench.

[ 103 : 35 ] He will faithfully bring forth justice. Church, is that your God of whom we are called to emulate?

Is that your God? If so, we receive an invitation not only to flee youthful passions like we saw last week, but we avoid stupid arguments lest we find ourselves being more useful to the devil than to God.

You want the main point? Christlike devotion is grounded in gentleness, even in the face of hostile opposition. may we remember this.

Let's pray. Thank you.