

9/22/24 - 2 Tim. 3:6-9 - "Learning from History"

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[0 : 00] Today's text will be 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 6 through 9. But we will begin in verse 1 for context.

It also will be on the screen. But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unpleasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

Having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

But as Janus and Jebris opposed Moses, so these men also opposed the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.

But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

[1 : 37] This is the word of God. Thanks be to God. I'd like to tell you a story about a relationship between Sarah and a guy named Frank.

And so Sarah was a devout Christian and her faith unwavering in the face of life's challenges. However, she was also a seeker of knowledge, and she's always eager to learn about her faith and the world around her and how to live that out.

And one day, Sarah met a magnetic individual named Frank, who claimed to have profound insights into the Bible and mysteries of man and the universe.

And Frank was a smooth talker with a way of captivating Sarah's attention and making her feel special. And he offered to share his wisdom with her, and Sarah, eager to learn, agreed.

Frank began visiting Sarah regularly, spending hours discussing religious topics and sharing his unique interpretations of Scripture. And Sarah was impressed by his intelligence and eloquence, and she found herself drawn to his teachings.

[3 : 01] However, as time went on, Sarah began to notice that Frank's conversations were becoming increasingly focused on worldly matters, money, and personal desires.

And Frank seemed less interested in discussing spiritual matters, and more interested in indulging in his own pleasures. And Sarah became concerned, but she was hesitant to question Frank's motives.

She was afraid of being labeled as judgmental or lacking in faith. However, as Frank's influence over her grew stronger, Sarah even began to notice changes in her own behavior.

She found herself becoming more self-absorbed and less interested in serving others, and less focused on her relationship with God.

And one day, Sarah's pastor noticed the changes in her, and gently confronted her about her relationship with Frank. And Sarah was initially defensive, but as her pastor shared his concerns, she began to see the truth.

[4 : 22] Frank was not a spiritual guide. Frank was a false teacher, leading her astray. Frank was a spiritual guide, and Sarah realized that she had fallen victim of Frank's deception, blinding her to her own desire for knowledge and special approval.

And she sought forgiveness from God and recommitted after this moment of discovery, recommitted herself to the faith. And from that day forward, she was more cautious about who she trusted and more diligent to studying the Bible for herself alongside of her church family.

Now, unfortunately, church, with the rise of our current digital age, Frank's influence is just a picture of the growing influence in our lives.

Not through opening the door in our home, but through every purchase that we make in bookshelves and conferences and social media publications. This story reflects the warning in our passage today about false teachers who deceive people with their smooth words and empty promises, especially with their hidden agendas.

And Sarah's experience serves as a reminder of the importance of discerning truth from error and remaining grounded upon the truth of Scripture that we find in the foundational teaching in Scripture.

[5 : 54] And the passage serves as a warning to believers to be vigilant and discerning, and to avoid being deceived by these false teachers and to remain steadfast in the faith.

And I believe that by the end of our time today, as we unpack this passage within its context and consider its imperatives in our lives, it's a practical passage in Paul's writing.

I believe that we will see that those who do not learn of the devil's schemes of the past are vulnerable to his deception today.

So the sermon title today is Learning from History.

And we'll see this as Paul takes Timothy on a little journey down memory lane to a time in the Exodus with Moses.

[6 : 52] And I believe that it will be well equipping to us to pay attention to its commands and imperatives. So let's break this into two sections today.

And I'd like to do that in prayer as we proceed into those sections. Let's pray. Lord God, thank you for your word.

Something that we often take for granted or we're confused about or maybe even just not confident that we're even qualified to understand such a document.

And Father, what we have here is your breathing, active word that is sharper than a two-edged sword that we need to lean upon for all the answers, the rule of faith and the rule of life.

Help us to turn there and see its imperatives today in our own lives. And we pray this in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I know I didn't start with a funny story.

[7 : 56] It was a serious one. Bear with me. So the first section is titled, False Teaching Ministries Are Stealthy.

That's a cool word. Stealthy. Verse 6 continues sort of unpacking last week.

And it says in verse 6, thank you, Brother Lou, for reading in context. The passage today, he says in verse 6, for among them, who's them?

The false teachers. From them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions.

Always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of truth. So here we get that interaction of the story that we opened up with between Sarah and Frank.

[9 : 00] You opened up with Sarah. And we see something historic developing in the passage today.

The essence of the spread of false teaching wasn't from some podcast you got on Spotify. It was a little bit more tricky. They had to actually travel physically to place to place.

Very different from our day today. And so what occurred was a way of subtle and stealthy infiltration of households. And so this is more than likely a reference to the house churches in Ephesus.

It wasn't until 300 A.D. until you had your first church building established. And so there's an infiltration.

There's a creeping in the households. And it's interesting in the context that it was those who were most vulnerable being women who were most vulnerable.

[10 : 01] Now, you might be like, weak women? Man. Paul was a misogynist.

Weak women. Well, I got to hand it to you. I'm not going to turn this into an English lesson here. But what we have here in this text does not translate well from the Greek.

Okay? And I'm not about to take you through a Greek lesson. But I really want to. But what it seems like in English as an adjective that's describing a noun, like weak women, like an adjective, that's not the case in Greek.

It's a single word in Greek. And it's a noun. It's not an adjective. So what we have here is a type of woman. Not necessarily a weak woman.

It's a type of woman that is described in a single Greek word. And so this would be a type of woman who is sort of immature in her faith.

[11:02] Or maybe childish in maybe different regards. And so ones who are readily able to give themselves to subjective emotional experience and neglect the objective, intellectual, engaged truth of God's words and go for feelings.

And it's definitely those who are burdened by their sin who turn to not God's word for the answers of life, but to the words of man. Now, obviously, Paul isn't lumping all women into this category.

Nor is he saying that men are exempt from this. Because men, I would imagine that if you were to lay out and observe the minutes that y'all spend on podcasts or reading anything other than the Bible, it would be fairly disproportionate.

Men. Stealthy, though. Right? Stealthy. By him saying that it's these type of women of this day who are very prone to being deceived, it reminds us, it takes us back to the Garden of Eden.

Where the serpent tried to attract Eve to things outside of God's word. Did God really say this and that?

[12:32] And she even made her own conclusions. Well, it looked helpful. It looks desirable. It's pleasing. And so this was the problem.

This was the spread of false teaching in this day. And so just as the names that were mentioned last week, like Pope and Joyce Meyer and everything, and further qualified, I hope that supplemental document sort of like helped cue you into just the issue at hand.

The false teaching that goes around our day. And some other examples to help you understand where these are coming from to qualify that that I sent the day after.

Many of those false teachings, those false teachers devote themselves to Christians rediscovering the mysteries of the heart.

It's subjectivism, which is another ism. There's so many isms, right? And along the lines of all those spiritual unknowns that you can't necessarily know from Scripture, but you feel and experience.

[13:45] And this is similar to, I don't know if you're familiar with the 90s. It was pretty popular, the Bible code. You ever hear of the Bible code?

It's putting all these pieces together to find some hidden message in Scripture. And it's actually nonsense. And we are warned and directed by Paul today.

He can throw the Bible code out. And whatever else deviates from the clear teaching of Scripture, just as a word to Timothy, that we cannot allow ourselves to disproportionately be growing by the theories of men.

And we must bind ourselves wholly to God's word alone. That is our charge. That is our commission. That is our duty as Christians. As Charles Spurgeon said it, you would have imagined Charles Spurgeon saying something great.

He says, visit many good books, but live in the Bible. And we live in a culture where that is not happening and it is apparent.

[14:53] Because some of these Christian books are bestsellers. And it's sad. Paul takes Timothy back into history here to help him understand the situation that would be helpful to him.

And he commissioned, or that he commissioned Timothy to address in Ephesus this spread of false teaching. And I think he's making it known to Timothy that this is not new.

It's actually just a repackaging of the old. His situation in Ephesus is not unique. This is what happened. It's a deception as old as the Bible.

It started with Eve. And now it's happening with these women in this day. So he takes them back to the Exodus. In verse 8. He says, just as Janus and Jambres opposed Moses.

Moses was a figure, a leader of God's word. Right? Just as he was opposed. So these men also opposed the truth in Ephesus.

[15:57] And men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. And what Paul does in this illustration is to frame the futility of false teachers' enterprises and their ministries.

As they were in the days of Moses when magicians contested Moses' leadership and authority. And now the Exodus actual record doesn't mention these two names.

You can go back and look for them in Exodus 7. You won't find them. It's extra biblical reference. They would be something contextually that the audience would have understood then. But these are the magicians that confronted Moses in Exodus 7.12.

Where Moses throws down Aaron's staff and his rod and it became a snake. And so these magicians said, oh, we can do that.

And they throw down their rod and it became a snake. But Aaron's rod consumed their rod. One was superior over their rod.

[17 : 02] That was false. But more than that, in that illustration was the habitual pattern of opposition that these magicians caused upon Moses.

See, false teachers are corrupt in mind. They're disqualified in verse 8. This is a glimpse of the stealthiness of false teachers. Right?

Their message looks similar. You got the same staff. You got the same snake. Right? But with different meaning.

Different authority. In other words, false teaching commands sound like gods. But they actually enslave people into deception.

False teachers oppose the truth. Where's the truth? In the Bible. In church, some history is worth repeating.

[18 : 05] Let us not find ourselves being fooled by any person on earth whose message originates through emotions, through subjectivism. But anything.

Let us reject it if it originates anywhere other than the pages of Scripture. And the second section helps us to see a glimpse of God's sovereignty.

Where I titled, false teaching ministries will crumble. They will crumble. Everything will sort its way out in the end. In verse 9 it says that.

Here we receive the other side of the situation with those two opponents of Moses.

Their foolish ways and their schemes. Their deception. Their stealthiness. Doesn't go under the radar forever. It's made plain to all.

[19 : 11] It's made plain to all. Sending Timothy back to call a spade a spade. It will be made plain to all.

And so this serves a little bit of encouragement to us in our day to day. Because time is a false teacher's worst enemy. Time.

Why? Because over a course of a time period, patterns can be observed throughout a span of time. And the more time that passes by, the more things will be made plain to all.

And this is a similar footing that Paul gives to Timothy regarding the sovereignty of God that was back in chapter 2. Carmen preached that sermon. Chapter 2, verse 18 and 19 of those who belong to God.

And another situation, another illustration similar to Moses' day. Both situations are utterly depressing. In chapter 2 and chapter 3, verse 9 here.

[20 : 18] They're depressing. But God's mission is not close to crumbling on account of anyone's influence. God's mission will continue. And it will devour those who run a false message and a false ministry.

Praise God indeed. The progress of false teaching ends with those who heed the warnings and avoid them. Simple, right?

It's like biblically mandated cancel culture. You avoid them. You flee. You flee. We must rethink our metrics of biblical faithfulness then.

Our discerning hats have to be engaged that it's not just about quoting scripture that makes somebody sound. It's not just about using Christianese language that qualifies somebody as sound. It's not how many books are sold on the bookshelf. No. The metric of biblical faithfulness is weighed against the sound doctrine of scripture and obedience to it.

[21 : 32] And so according to the Bible, there is only one way to the Father that Pope Francis better find out sooner than later. According to the Bible, there is nothing good in us.

There is nothing good in us, regardless of what popular teachers sell in that lie today. According to the Bible, salvation is not your life improvement plan to be wealthy in this life.

According to the Bible, it's where God has sufficiently revealed all matters of life and faith.

Regardless of the tingling in your toes. Regardless of the dream that you have. According to the Bible is where we sufficiently receive the rule for life and the rule of faith.

And I am jumping for joy if you have found yourself here today looking for truth.

[22 : 31] Steel Valley Church is committed to having our Bibles open. Corporately and privately.

Maybe you're not in Christ today. And I got to encourage you, you don't need to look for any other book than the Bible to find hope.

The book reveals that there is a holy and a righteous God. That's revealed all about His nature through the pages of Scripture.

Who demands perfection from His creation. It's a book that reveals that humans are sinful and fallen creatures who have rebelled against God.

And are deserving of His judgment. It's a book that reveals that Jesus Christ is the only solution to humanity's sin problem.

Not in the problem of your bank account. This book reveals that He is both fully God and fully man. And His sacrificial death on the cross atone for our sins.

[23 : 41] It's a book that calls humanity to respond to God's grace through repentance and faith. Repentance involves turning away from sin and towards the living and the true God.

While faith is simply trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. The gospel message is of hope and reconciliation offering salvation to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

It is a message that transforms lives and brings individuals into a right relationship with God. You don't need a dream to find that. You need your Bible open.

Amen. And if you are not in Christ today, I pray that you are compelled by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit does a work in your heart through regeneration according to Scripture.

Long before you could ever expect it. And something begins to click. If that's you today, please don't leave this place without talking to me. I want to celebrate with you. And in that, no book can help supplement the truth outside of the canon of Scripture.

[24 : 52] Right? Not a single subjective experience can define what Scripture teaches. Scripture is all meat. No bones.

And here we must live. And here we must grow. And so, we have to, we must avoid false teaching, church. Life is too short to eat the meat and spit out the bones.

It's too short to let broken clocks become our guide. We need to pay attention to history in this, church. We need to. Don't open your door to false teachers and test everything.

Everything. If we don't, at a certain point, we may inventory our vertical relationship with God and sadly find an idol sitting in God's place.

As it were for Janice. For Janice and Jambres. As pastors here at Still Valley Church, we guide you away from that such discovery.

[25 : 56] We're committed to helping you be guided and shepherded. But just as it were for the pastor in Sarah's life that said, something's not right here.

We rally, united together, under the sound doctrine of Scripture. And yes, you might find that we don't play all those K-Love hits on the radio that get you clapping.

We may not promote all the same music that is popular around. We may not promote the best-selling Christian books. We may not entertain conferences. But it is for our good and for God's glory that we don't.

We are set apart. We are to fight the good fight as Paul commissions Timothy in his first letter. And what was the good fight? The good fight of sound doctrine.

And that fight still lasts today. So may we remember the slow, influential impact the devil will play in our lives. The devil loves to play the long game.

[26 : 58] He's been playing the long game for quite a long time. Right? And he is out to completely invert Jesus Christ's great commandments.

To love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. And the second, to love your neighbor as yourself. He's out to invert that for you to love yourself and disregard others.

Now, I must also swing to the other side of history as well. This is where context is helpful. Because Timothy did well in Ephesus.

Did you know that? Revelation actually makes it clear. Timothy did a good job in his writing in Revelation. In John's Revelation.

And it was so well that the culture of Christianity became so apparently obsessed with avoiding that they forgot the one who they sought.

[28 : 05] It was a mindless cutting away rather than turning and chasing. That's a problem.

The Apostle John penned the book of Revelation. He recorded these words to the same Ephesian church that Timothy is called to serve. He said, Yet I, the Lord, hold this against you.

You have forsaken your first love. You have forgotten the love that you had at first. Revelation 2 verse 4. May we not also become obsessed with avoiding, but obsessed with embracing Jesus.

That's biblical cancel culture. So the nature of avoidance is not because we turn away from something, but because we actually turn towards someone.

That's the nature of our avoidance as a church. It says with the psalmist in Psalm 143 verse 8, Let the morning light bring me word of your steadfast love.

[29 : 15] For I put my trust in you. Teach me the way I should go. For to you I lift up my soul. I lift up my soul. Thinking back to that opening story of Sarah seeking knowledge and being deceived by Frank.

I pray our pursuit of truth is so overwhelmingly toward the word that Frank is never even given an audience.

There's nothing that Frank can offer us because all we have is found in Scripture. And may we live and grow solely within the word of God and learn from history the consequences if we don't.

Amen? All right, let's pray.