

10/6/24 - 2 Tim. 3:14-15 - "God's Plan"

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[0 : 00] Our scripture reading today is found in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 14 and 15. For context, we'll begin at verse 10.

2 Timothy chapter 3, beginning at 10. You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, which persecutions I endured, yet from them all the Lord rescued me.

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you have learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

This is God's word. Thanks be to God. So as we're continuing through the series in 2 Timothy, we can't forget what time of season it is right now.

[1 : 38] It's fall, so we got some, you know, we got to clear the throat a little bit, maybe a little bit extra today. So I apologize in advance for that. But thinking about how this passage connects into our lives today, and reflecting upon my own life, I started to see things jump off the page and challenge me in my way of thinking, and I believe it will challenge you in your way of thinking as well.

Because sometimes we might be asked, what's God's plan for your life? What's God's plan for your life?

Simple question, right? Well, many of us who are barely able to get it through the day, you might say you're following your calling as a professional nap taker.

You're just completely removing yourself from the tense question altogether. Or you might be like me. I try to confuse as many people as possible, and sometimes myself.

I do it every week at 1030 on Sunday. But you might say, what's God's plan for your life? You might be somebody who's been walking through some time, and it seems like you're the cautionary tale to others.

[2 : 58] Or maybe you are your call in life, God's plan in your life is to find out how many existential crises a person can have in a single lifetime.

Or maybe you just say, well, you test how long you can pretend to know what you're doing in life, or maybe you think that God missed the memo altogether.

What's God's plan for your life? Some may attribute that question to things of which we do in life.

And it's almost there with that. But I'm going to try to help us reframe that question by the end of our time. It's similar to thinking about life as God's plan, being similarly to how we're living out our purpose, maybe our calling, or maybe our witness, the things that we do on this earth, especially relating to our vocations.

And the passage today offers us an alternative perspective of understanding God's plan for our lives.

[4 : 10] And guess what? It has nothing to do with what we do, but rather who we worship in this life. By the end of our time, it'll all come together.

And so while we may serve in several areas of vocation, God's plan isn't just limited to that, right?

You could be teachers. You could be a doctor. You could be once a doctor, now a teacher, or once a teacher, now a doctor, or a laborer, getting your hands all blistery and broken throughout the week.

But God's plan for us is to worship Him through our vocation, regardless of the particular vocation.

God's plan is something we take with us along the way. And how often our vocation encompasses from time to time our entire identity.

[5 : 09] Stay-at-home moms get stuck in this identity that that's who they are. But, well, it's not. That's not God's plan, full encompassing plan for somebody's life, relating just to vocation.

Similarly goes to maybe somebody who's an engineer out on a university. Maybe it's somebody who's teaching as a professor at YSU, or maybe high school students at Valley Christian.

The same is true. How often our vocation encompasses our identity. And the minute that we experience a change in life, we are sent into complete disarray as to question God's plan.

Because we've limited God's plan to our vocation. Okay, I'm getting a little psychological here. But stay with me. By the end of our time, I believe it will be clear.

If it's not, we can talk in house churches this week. What we'll see developed by the end of our time is simply the point that God's plan is a path of continual learning and believing, regardless of where He leads, regardless of vocation.

[6 : 22] God's plan is a path of continual learning and believing, regardless of where He leads. And so the sermon title today is simply God's plan. Voila.

You can tip me on the way out. And we're going to be looking at this in two separate sections. And I'm going to label them charges, because I believe that Paul is charging Timothy in this passage to pay attention, to do something.

And that's important to grasp here. And so I'd like to pray before we enter our time in breaking this passage up. And so I invite you to join me in prayer.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your Word, giving us something to help reshape and refine our perspectives in life, to bring us back to reality, to bring us to a place of seeing You, how You've revealed Yourself to us.

Help that revelation to be true today as we come encounter with the holy, living God through Your active Word. Help us to change us.

[7 : 47] Help us to encourage us. Help us to challenge us today. And we pray that You make all this so through the power of Your Holy Spirit working in us. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. So here we go. We go into two charges that Paul has for Timothy. And the first charge is continue to learn.

And we're going to see this through verse 14 all the way to the first part of 15. And it says, But as for you, continue in what you have learned, and I firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned, whom you learned it, acquainted with sacred writings. Last week, Paul encouraged Timothy to remain steadfast by recalling Timothy following Paul's life and doctrine, which unfolds in his behavior and even persecution.

The argument formed into a wake-up call by the end of our time last week to count the costs of what it means to follow Jesus Christ. It's a costly endeavor.

[9 : 21] Just as we read this morning, 2 Timothy 3.12 It says, Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, what? Will be persecuted.

And while evil people and imposters go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. And he says, But as for you, continue in what you have learned, whom you've learned it, acquainted with sacred writings.

And so, this is another contrast. Paul makes this additional contrast here, just like it was in the passage last week. And this contrast is fairly significant to the entire book to Timothy, the entire letter to Timothy.

It's significant because Paul will continue to expound on this but until chapter 4, verse 4, until he concludes the letter.

He's informing Timothy of something significant here. And we receive two aspects of how Timothy is to continue in what he has learned relating to the means of God's revelation and the source of God's revelation within this passage from 14 to 15a.

[10 : 43] And this makes us look upon childhood discipleship in sacred writings. In verse 14, we see the source of that revelation.

It's not of just made-up stories. It's not just of folklore or Lord of the Rings. I'm sure that's a struggle for many of us. No, it's not the Bible.

It's not inspired. I know it's tricky, but Lord of the Rings is not inspired. But it is sacred writings. This is the source of revelation. This may recall upon young Timothy's mind coming to faith and discovering that Jesus Christ fulfilled the sacrificial system of which his parents read to him from the Old Testament.

The New Testament wasn't around when he was a child. And so looking at the Old Testament, that Jesus was the Passover Lamb, that Jesus is the tabernacle and all the other messianic promises of the Old Testament, Timothy would have observed that it was faith that was the salvific principle for Abram, which found its fulfillment, its greatest fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

You see what Paul is telling Timothy to do? Continue in what you have learned. Continue in the Word of God.

[12 : 12] And what a reminder to never stop discovering Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, to keep learning. Not only that, not only do we see the emphasis being on sacred writings, the Old Testament, but we see in verse 15 there's a means of revelation.

Not just a source of revelation, but the means of revelation. What's that means? People. We can't help but notice the second reference to Timothy's childhood here.

The first reference was in chapter 1, verse 5, where we met Timothy's grandmother and Timothy's mother. Grandmother Lois and mother Eunice. And you see, God's plan for Timothy began long before he received the call to be a pastor.

Do you see that? God's plan for Timothy began long before he received a call to pastor of the church in Ephesus. Before it had anything to do with vocation.

Okay? God's plan unfolded as his family realized their central role was to teach Timothy the Bible. It's a charge.

[13 : 32] And I imagine it was probably the daily routine, night and day, sunup to sundown, to reinforce the great events and the passages of the Old Testament, the parting of the waters, the Israelites walking through without a scratch and God intervening, the walls of Jericho crumbling down, Gideon's army prevailing over the enemy.

Just a couple hundred of them. I would imagine that daily routine with Timothy through the Old Testament instructing Timothy on the Bible's precepts, the Bible's principles.

In other words, this is God's plan unfolding. Keep teaching. Keep being taught. And church, if you have kids, their vocation, their future, stands in the balance of how well you allow God's plan to work through you as well.

And now certainly, kids can, and they will be kids, especially boys. Amen to that. Amen. Got one in the house in agreement.

Now, kids will be kids. They will be kids. But it is a parent's calling to shepherd them into men and women. When you look at your child, you're looking at a young man and a young woman.

[15 : 15] It's a parent's call to do this so well that their kids might emulate it for their kids and their kids to their kids.

maybe you don't have kids. This applies to you as well because you got the sacred writings. All you need is a friend.

All you need is a friend. Maybe you don't have friends. Well, guess what? Time to make a friend. You can read with me. I'll be your friend. But it does not yield to age as well.

You might say, well, I've lived through this. I've learned all that I can learn. It doesn't yield to age, this plan of God. It's as if we've duped ourselves to think that we ever get to a retirement age of growth, maturity, and learning.

Spiritual maturity doesn't have a retirement age, at least on this side of history. So, the plan of God for Timothy is a path of continuous learning.

[16 : 35] You see, continue in the word of God through the people of God. But as for you, continue in what you have learned, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings.

Charge one, continue to learn. We get the second one, the second charge here, continue to believe. A couple other things stand in this short passage.

As for you, continue what you have learned, but have firmly believed. Firmly believed. And verse 15 continues, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

So, not only do we have the source of revelation, the means of revelation, but we have now the power of revelation. This supplies the world with wisdom for salvation.

In other words, Scripture is sufficient to provide all our understanding, special revelation through the Bible. This has nothing to do with our intellect, and it has everything to do with God's Spirit that illuminates the pages that He inspired.

[18 : 01] Every mark of a pen on paper was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and it is sufficient to guide our lives. And so, the Spirit's activity in our lives guides our learning.

It's powerful. Guides our learning, it empowers our believing, and the Spirit alone brings us wisdom by the power of God. The person of the Holy Spirit guides, transforms, prompts, convicts, and He intercedes for us to Jesus.

Continue in that, Timothy. Continue in that. of which you have firmly believed. Continue in the Word of God, through the people of God, by the power of God.

Not only do we see the power of revelation, we see the objective of revelation. This is supreme here. It's Jesus to make you wise for salvation, not by your own methods and measures, but through faith in Christ Jesus.

Scripture is given meaning through the coming of Jesus Christ, and Timothy saw that unfold, looking at sacred writings and then knowing Jesus, just as Scripture is given understanding through us by the Holy Spirit.

[19 : 24] You see, the Bible is no ordinary book. It's not Lord of the Rings. It's ultimate, superior, sufficient, authoritative.

It's the guide, it's the measure of all life and reality as we know it. It's no ordinary book. It's supernatural as it leads humanity to salvation.

How intriguing it is to think that 39 books of the Old Testament progressively led us to Jesus Christ. And having just completed an entire book in Acts, do you remember that series?

It wasn't long ago. How many speeches did we walk through? How many sermons did we unpack that were duty-bound speakers to point people to Jesus Christ from the Old Testament?

Pointing backwards to see Jesus' fulfillment then. Even Gentiles, as Carmen preached back in the day in Athens, as Paul preached to the Gentiles in Athens who didn't have the Old Testament.

[20 : 34] They didn't know who Abraham was. They could care less who Abraham was. But he still pointed to the Old Testament but started in Genesis with creation. Paul even writes to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 3, These scriptures were the Old Testament where Jesus is not mentioned once.

Paul's reference to Abraham's pattern in Galatians chapter 3, verse 6 is how people are saved. Grace alone through faith alone.

Right? All Old Testament. There is nothing that will hold Timothy. There is nothing that will hold us in the faith stronger than the revelation of Jesus Christ found between the bookends of the Bible.

Nothing. It provides historical context for the redemption story. It reveals fulfilled truths in the New Testament. It aids in comprehending the Old Testament.

It prevents misunderstandings of the New Testament and offers more complete understanding of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament informs our understanding, everything that we know about Jesus Christ.

[22 : 20] It's a foundation. And Paul's charge is to continue in the faith of Jesus Christ. His mission, which is to save the world.

His redemptive plan. And so continue in the Word of God, through the people of God, by the power of God, for the mission of God.

The plan of God for Timothy was to keep learning and keep believing. That's a hard reality.

Because where did Timothy's vocation lead him? Well, according to tradition, extra historical resources inform us that in Ephesus, the place he was supposed to take this letter, that Timothy was martyred around 97 A.D.

And you see his death was a consequence of continuing, a path of learning and believing. And he counted the cost, just as we talked about last week.

[23 : 34] So when people ask me if I know God's plan for my life, when people ask you if you know God's plan for your life, I think we can all say yes.

Yes, I know God's plan for my life. Continuous learning, continuous believing. And time and time again, God proves my inadequacies, pushes me to grow, and God's word holds the truth that I need to help me believe through this life.

If this is true for me, the same is true for you as it were for Timothy. This is God's plan for our lives. In that, it is not whether we will be pushing paper for a thankless boss.

Maybe some of you are future preachers. Well, it is not whether you work for a perfect boss like I do. It does not matter if you are blistering your hands throughout the week pulling wire or troubleshooting stuff.

It does not matter. What you do, we take God's plan with us along God's path. Continuous learning, continuous believing.

[24 : 58] Continue in the word of God through the people of God by the power of God for the mission of God. So God's plan is bigger.

It's more personal than just a vocation. You aren't just what you do. It's not your identity. It is our call, as it were for Timothy, to continue in a manner that learns through scripture, through teaching, or receiving teaching, being taught, and believing through God's spirits, according to God's truth, which is Jesus Christ.

God's plan is to continue in this manner, whether it is teaching students at a university or a high school, whether it's troubleshooting systems, whether it's caring for kids full-time, sun-up to sun-down, or caring for patients out at a hospital.

You see, God's plan is a path of continual learning and believing, regardless of where he leads. And it is an essential plan that focuses on him before anything else.

Amen? Let's pray.