

Sermon Notes – Being a Disciple of Christ

Opening Prayer

We take our text today from the book of 2 Timothy 3:10-17 (NKJV)

¹⁰ But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra— what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. ¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

This letter from the Apostle Paul to Timothy his son in Christ was written from prison comprises the final book he wrote before he was martyred...

We have evidence he knew his end was near. In 2 Timothy 4:6 we read:

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

Why is his circumstance relevant?

Well... Do you believe that last words are important? Imagine with me if you will that this were your last day.

What would you say to those closest to you?

I say this because I want you to realize the situation that Paul was in. He felt these words were very important.

In verse 10 he acknowledges Timothy's faithfulness to the life of a Disciple

In Verse 11 he provides three examples of persecution (Antioch, Iconium & Lystra) not because these were the only three places but because of Timothy's experience. He wanted the point to hit home.

Turn in our texts to Acts 14:8-19 (NKJV)

⁸ And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. ⁹ This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, ¹⁰ said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!"

And he leaped and walked.¹¹ Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!"¹² And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

¹³ Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.

¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out¹⁵ and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,¹⁶ who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.

¹⁷ Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."¹⁸ And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.¹⁹ Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead."

Paul is talking about how the Lord delivered him. This must have thrown Timothy for a bit when he read this. Paul is currently in Prison and the imagery Paul has just reminded Timothy of is of the Apostle Paul being stoned and left for dead...

In our workplaces and schools we may be persecuted and can and should expect persecution. In 2 Timothy 3:12 we read:

"¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."

You may be overlooked for a promotion. The devil is very good at manipulating persecution and it isn't always physical. Hitting your pocketbook or undermining your confidence are really good tools as well.

If your kids are following Jesus they may be persecuted and tormented, but they won't be getting stoned in high school.

We are even given the rather discouraging thought in Verse 13:

"¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived".

Lovely – So we are told it will get progressively worse.

How are we going to handle it when times get tough already knowing that they are going to get tougher. I am reminded of a quote from Mother Theresa "I know the Lord won't give me more than I can handle – I just wish he didn't trust me so much"

We are told in Isaiah 43:1,2 (KJV)

¹But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

²When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

And In 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV)

¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it".

There are many other examples of this in the Scripture and when you are afraid or discouraged, I encourage you to seek them out.

Storms will come into your life - as a Disciple of Christ it is inevitable.

Let's look what the Lord tells us about these storms. Turn to Mathew 7:24-27 (CEV)

²⁴ "Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock. ²⁵ The rain fell, the floods came, and the wind blew and beat against that house. It didn't fall because it was firmly set on bedrock. ²⁶ But everybody who hears these words of mine and doesn't put them into practice will be like a fool who built a house on sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, the floods came, and the wind blew and beat against that house. It fell and was completely destroyed."

What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? Let's examine what Paul says to Timothy and though the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to each one of us. These are not just Paul's words, remember that all scripture is written under the direction of the Holy Spirit and are God's word to us.

What is a Disciple? It is one who follows a Discipline. The Holy Spirit through the divinely inspired word of God has sent down the Discipline we are to follow as professing Christians. Remember last time I was here I spoke about Practicing what you believe? Today we will be discussing How using Timothy's example...

Our text tells us that Timothy Carefully followed the Apostles example in nine specifically identified areas:

1. Doctrine
2. Manner of Life
3. Purpose
4. Faith
5. Long Suffering
6. Love
7. Perseverance

8. Persecutions
9. Afflictions

Doctrine

Paul is Contrasting Timothy to those who were deceived by false prophets. He is truly saying: You are following what you have been taught – Don't stop.

A Disciple of Christ follows the way of the Lord.

Manner of Life

Paul is showing that Timothy as his Disciple didn't just say what Paul was saying he was living it. That is what a Disciple does – They live like the master, they follow his teachings.

Will you follow the teachings of the Master?

Purpose

There are many examples provided of Paul's purpose. Paul's heart was that he wanted the Gentiles converted. That's you and me folks; everyone who was not of Jewish descent. This doesn't exclude the Jewish; it expands the scope of vision.

In Acts 14:1-7 (CEV) we read:

"¹ The same thing happened in Iconium. Paul and Barnabas entered the Jewish synagogue and spoke as they had before. As a result, a huge number of Jews and Greeks believed. ² However, the Jews who rejected the faith stirred up the Gentiles, poisoning their minds against the brothers. ³ Nevertheless, Paul and Barnabas stayed there for quite some time, confidently speaking about the Lord. And the Lord confirmed the word about his grace by the signs and wonders he enabled them to perform. ⁴ The people of the city were divided—some siding with the Jews, others with the Lord's messengers. ⁵ Then some Gentiles and Jews, including their leaders, hatched a plot to mistreat and stone Paul and Barnabas. ⁶ When they learned of it, these two messengers fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding area, ⁷ where they continued to proclaim the good news."

It was for this vision to bring Christ to the Gentiles that Paul was stoned as we saw earlier. He saw this vision in Timothy's heart and wanted to nurture it.

Faith

Paul lived by faith we can see that as he went through persecution he kept his heart right and his eye on the prize. He believed in the Lord and his divine deliverance. Paul knew he could not do it on his own.

Turn with me to Philippians 4:13 Where Paul lays out where he gets his fortitude from.

"¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Where do we get our strength to carry on from?

Illustration of 9 lost children

Long Suffering

Patience is simply our patience with those around us. Timothy had many chances to observe this during Paul's persecution but still he was patient.

Director type personalities are people with drive – Not always the most patient.

Paul put on Christ. He tried to emulate the Master.

What did Christ say? Last time we go together I called it the Divine Suggestion because that is the way so many Christians view Jesus commandment:

Buy the way I am not near done yet so this is your opportunity to practice...

Love

Remember John 15:12

“¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

This is what a Disciple of Christ does. They are love others even those who despitefully use them or persecute them. Jesus taught us to show love in a practical and real way.

Remember it is his commandment, so it is your requirement.

Perseverance

This is holding on when problems and Trials arise in your life. This is keeping steadfast in your faith. This is anchoring yourself to Jesus so that when the storm comes you are not blown away. This is when you feel that the light at the end of the tunnel has been shut off due to budgetary constraints; you can look to a power source greater than yourself.

Persecutions

Persecution is the mental and sometimes even physical torment from a world that does not love God

Illustration of Beaten in bathroom. Someone once said to me that if you mind your own business they will mind theirs... just turn the other cheek. Don't be deceived just being a Christian is enough for this world to hate you. They hated and killed my saviour... but he got back up and was victorious; How could I do any less?

Just as a side bar – forgive me Sonny but we are going to take a little walk down memory lane - my brother hunted the guys that were persecuting me down and kicked the snot out of them.

Praise God, he has softened ... a little... over the years.

It's interesting how God uses people like Paul and your Pastor

- Paul used to persecute Christians as a strong believer in the Jewish faith.
- My brother Pastor Sonny used to put the fear of God into people who did bad things... Now that I think about it - only his approach has changed.

Afflictions

Affliction is what you experience when you are persecuted

Remember Paul almost being beaten to death for his faith. Sorry to rock your world; but there are some places in our world today where this can still happen. We are in a very blessed country and we should thank God every day for our freedom to worship.

And now for the unpopular part of today's message...

Are you ready?...

If you are not experiencing any negative feedback, disassociation from "the group" or opposition in your life as a result of your Christian walk... it may be that you are not showing enough of your Christianity. If this is you - You need to stand up and be counted.

Jesus himself said in Matthew 7:21-23 (NKJV)

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

And again Matthew 10:33 (NKJV)

"³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven."

Now that we have discussed what it means to be a Disciple of Christ let's look at what that wonderful Book we tote around is for...

In verses 14 and 15 of 2 Timothy we read:

"¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Paul is saying to Timothy keep it up, don't falter stay with the program and consult the Holy Scriptures you will find what you need there. That is what the Holy Spirit is telling each of us today. To know the mind of God, and to be in his will, we need his word.

Which brings us to verses 16 & 17

"¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

I would like to introduce two concepts here:

- 1) Inspiration
- 2) Plenary Inspiration

Warning History lesson Alert!!!

Inspiration

The word "*inspiration*" comes from the Latin noun "*inspiratio*" and from the verb "*inspirare*". "*Inspirare*" is a compound term resulting from the Latin prefix "*in*" (inside, into) and the verb "*spirare*" (to breathe). "*Inspirare*" meant originally "*to blow into*"

When Jerome (347-420 DC), as requested by Pope Damasus, translated the Greek text of the Holy Scripture to the language of the common people of Latium (the region of central western Italy in which the city of Rome is located), in the passage of the 2 Tim 3.16-17 he translated the Greek "*theopneustos*" as "*divinitus inspirata*" ("divinely breathed into"). (In English that passage reads: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God [*theopneustos*], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.")

Plenary Inspiration

Plenary Inspiration means that every word (not just the overarching ideas or concepts) is meaningfully chosen under the superintendence of God. So we can't just pick and choose what we want and throw away the rest...

Still with me?

God's word equips us for effective living as Disciples. It is Gods will for us; it is our handbook:

- It teaches us what is right (Teaching / Doctrine)
- How we are wrong (Reproof / Rebuking)
- How to get right (Correction)
- How to stay right (Instruction in righteousness)

Where are we at... let's Summarize:

At this point we have example of how to be a Disciple of Christ and we have the handbook for how to make each of the nine attributes we are shown operate in our lives. The scripture prepares us for the storms that we are told will come.

When we are needed to do God's work we have a "Sufficiency of Scripture" to sustain us. Just as the Apostle Paul and Timothy - we can be successful through Christ who strengthens us and provides us guidance in his Word.

As a final scripture let's look at what the Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 6:10-19 (CEV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and his powerful strength. ¹¹ Put on God's armour so that you can make a stand against the tricks of the devil. ¹² We aren't fighting against human enemies but against rulers, authorities, forces of cosmic darkness, and spiritual powers of evil in the heavens. ¹³ Therefore pick up the full armour of God so that you can stand your ground on the evil day and after you have done everything possible to still stand.

¹⁴ So stand with the belt of truth around your waist, justice as your breastplate, ¹⁵ and put shoes on your feet so that you are ready to spread the good news of peace. ¹⁶ Above all, carry the shield of faith so that you can extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word.

¹⁸ Offer prayers and petitions in the Spirit all the time. Stay alert by hanging in there and praying for all believers. ¹⁹ As for me, pray that when I open my mouth, I'll get a message that confidently makes this secret plan of the gospel known. ²⁰ I'm an ambassador in chains for the sake of the gospel. Pray so that the Lord will give me the confidence to say what I have to say.

CONCLUSION

Are you ready? Are you prepared to be a Disciple for Christ?

God can help us become the servant and Disciple for him that he wants us to be. All we have to do is learn from and follow his Word.

That's why that book you tote around is so important.

Let's pray – Holy Spirit, I pray that you will inspire each person here to read your word and understand what you are saying to them and breathing into their lives. Each Christian here belongs to you Lord and they want to do your work. Jesus I ask that you will give them the strength to carry out what you would have them do. Merciful Lord sustain them when the rough times come. Open the eyes of each heart Jesus so that they may see you and follow in your footsteps as your disciples.

And all the people said "Amen."