

ADRIAN ROGERS

# LEGACY

C O L L E C T I O N



## 2 TIMOTHY

These transcripts are taken straight from live audio recordings of Adrian Rogers during his tenure as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. As such some of the transcripts may contain stutters, stammers, transcription errors, and other authentic remarks as would be common in a live setting.

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# How to Take the Terror out of Terrorism

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: September 23, 2001**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 1:6**

*“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.”*

2 TIMOTHY 1:6

## Outline

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## Introduction

Praise the Lord. My heart is so full. Thank you, Laurie. That was just beautiful. Take God’s precious Word, find 2 Timothy chapter 1, and, in a moment, we’re going to begin reading in verse 6.

Newsweek put out an extra, along with the other news magazines, and, in reading it, I was captured by a particular part of it. And it says, “Attack on America: the Aftermath.” And then, the big headlines: “The Toll on Our Psyche.” That is, our mind, our state of mind. And I’m going to break into the middle of the article, but let me read, just a moment, here: “With the most devastating blow ever landed on U. S. soil, the terrorists did more than rack up a staggering death toll; they struck at the country’s very psyche,” as Los Angeles psychiatrist Calvin Frederick put it. “It is psychological warfare. The terrorists were clearly intent on more than a shocking body count. The target of terrorism is not the terrible number of deaths and injuries,” said Dr. Robert, Usana, chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the Uniform Services University School of Medicine, “It is to disrupt the rest of the nation by shredding our collective sense of security.” And then, this article goes on to say, “judging by the attacks’ immediate aftermath, the terrorists were wildly successful.” That is, what terrorism wants to do is to cause terror. It’s more than a war on our buildings, and our economy, or our people; it’s a war on our minds. And that’s what Satan has always done.

Now, before we even get to our text this morning, I was reminded of a passage in Isaiah that talks about the rise and fall of the ultimate terrorist—not Osama bin Laden, but the ultimate terrorist—who is Satan himself. And just put these verses in your margin—Isaiah chapter 14, verses 12 through 17. The prophet Isaiah looks at Satan’s rise and fall, and listen to what he says—Isaiah 14, verse 12: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground—now notice this next phrase—which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.” Consummate pride, arrogance, and rebellion: that’s what made the devil the devil. But now there’s a change. That’s his rise.

Here’s his fall, in verse 15: “Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit;”—now, listen to this—“they that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee...”—what does that mean?—“shall narrowly look upon thee”—they’re going to have to squint to see you. They’re going to narrowly look upon thee—“and consider thee, saying, is this the man that made the earth to tremble,”—that is, is this the one who struck terror—“that did shake kingdoms, that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof...” Is this the one who did that? Here is Satan, the highest of the high, brought to the lowest of the low. In the lowest hell, there he is, so low you have to kind of squint to see him. That’s him? That’s the one—the one who made the nations to tremble?

Friend, we need to get a perspective of things. We need to see things as they are. You see, Satan’s chief tool, the one who weakens the nations and makes the nations to tremble, is terror. As I told you before, the chief terrorist is Satan. “The thief comes but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” That’s what he comes to do. And the way he keeps his people in tow is with the spirit of fear.

For example, in Hebrews chapter 2—put this Scripture down; we haven’t gotten to a text yet, but Hebrews 2, verses 14 and 15: “Forasmuch, then, as the children—he’s talking about us, the children of God—are partakers of flesh and blood, He also...—now he’s talking about Jesus—He also Himself likewise took part of the same...”—that is, the great God stepped out of glory and robbed Himself in human flesh—“He likewise took part of the same—now, listen to this—that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death...”—how is that? Satan. The death of Jesus was the undoing of Satan’s kingdom—“that He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil”—now, listen to this next phrase. This is Hebrews 2:15—“and deliver them who, through fear of death—through fear of death—were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” If Satan can put these chains on you, he’s got you. You’re his slave. And what chains are these? The fear of death.

Now, God has commanded us—not suggested, but God has commanded us—in Philippians chapter 1 and verse 28—listen to it now—listen: “In nothing be terrified by your adversaries.” Did you hear that? Satan keeps you in bondage through fear. God has said clearly, “Don’t be terrified.”

Now, why would God command us not to be terrified, if it’s impossible for us not to be terrified? Again, what is the purpose of terror? What did Newsweek say? What does the Bible teach? The terrorists want to bring us into terror.

Now, when I heard what happened on September 11th, there were many emotions that came to my heart and mind. Like Niagara Falls, they just rushed upon me: bewilderment, shock, fear, anger, compassion, and many other emotions. You had them all. They just came like this, and you could hardly believe it. We were just stunned—stunned. Some of these emotions are good, some bad, some indifferent, some terrible, some forbidden. One emotion that is forbidden is terror. “Be not terrified.” That is what God said. We’re not to cooperate with the terrorists. If we cooperate with the terrorists, then he has won.

Now, to our text—2 Timothy chapter 1, beginning in verse 6. Paul is talking to young Timothy, and he says, “Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God—listen to this—hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God.” God has not given us the spirit of fear.

Now, I want to talk to you a little bit about the spirit of fear, because the spirit of fear is synonymous with terrorism. Now, God did not give us the spirit of fear. That came from the devil. There is another spirit, an unholy spirit, a filthy spirit; it is the spirit of fear. If that spirit’s in you, I can tell you, it did not come from God.

Now, I did not say God did not give us fear. It may surprise you to know that God has given us fear. Fear is a gift of God, and there’s nothing wrong with fear. Fear is productive, and fear is protective.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, a former President of the United States, said in a masterful speech to the nation, “There’s nothing to fear but fear itself.” Well, that’s a wonderful line; it’s just not true. There’s a lot to fear. I mean, lock your doors at night, and check your cholesterol. I mean, there are all kinds of things out there.

God has given us fear, healthy fear, to keep us alive, and to keep us safe. There are productive and there are protective fears. And then, the Bible also teaches the fear of the Lord. That’s not the spirit of fear; that’s the spirit of worship. Listen to what Jesus said, in Matthew 10, verse 28: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who destroys both body and soul in hell.”

A newspaper in our city, not The Commercial Appeal, but another one, kind of mocked at me one time, because I said from this pulpit something about the fear of God. It said, "I thought we were supposed to love God, not fear God."

*The one who fears God the most loves Him the best* The fear of God is but love on its knees. Proverbs 1:7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." No wonder this man didn't understand. The fear of the Lord—the beginning of knowledge. What is the fear of the Lord? It is to cause us to love that which is right and hate that which is evil.

The Bible says, in Proverbs chapter 8 and verse 13: "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride, and arrogance, and an evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." That's what God says. So if you fear God, "you're going to hate what I hate, and what I hate is evil, and pride, and arrogance, and the evil way." And when you fear the Lord, you'll fear these things.

You see, the fear of the Lord is a clean fear, not a filthy fear. Psalm 19, verse 9: "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever." When we fear God, when we come together with holy reverence, then God is blessed. Psalm 89, verse 7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."

I don't want any part of a church where the fear of God is not present. When we, with reverence and awe, stand in the presence of God, friend, God brings awe. God is awesome, not awful. He is awesome. And, therefore, we're to have this fear.

So, there are productive and protective fears. There are reverential fears. But what is the spirit of fear? There's a difference. The spirit of fear is terrorism. That's what Satan wants to infect us with, and affect us with, and keep us in bondage. It's very different. The fear of the Lord is holy. Normal fears are protective. Had you been on one of those hijacked airplanes and you saw a stewardess being killed before your eyes, would you have had fear? Nod your head. Of course you would. Would that be legitimate? Of course! That's the way God made us. And it would be foolish to say to a person on that airplane, "now, don't be afraid." I would have been afraid. And any thinking person would have been afraid. That's not the spirit of fear.

You see, fear like that is like a thunderstorm. Have you ever been in a thunderstorm where the zigzag lightning goes across the sky, and the wind howls, and the clouds roil, and the rains falls, and everything is shaking, and you huddle down? But then, it passes. The skies roll back, the blue appears, the birds sing, the sun shines. The storm is passed. That's what legitimate fear is like.

You know what the spirit of fear is like? The spirit of fear is like a front that just comes in and never moves through. It just stays there, with darkness and dreariness and coldness and clamminess, and it just stays and stays and stays like a lingering fog.

That's the spirit of fear. Not like a thunderstorm. It's more like a heavy fog that just stays over us, and takes all of the blue come back. That's what the devil wants to do to this nation.

And I read one day where Nelson Price said that the fog that covers seven city blocks, 100 feet high, only has enough water in it to fill one water glass. It's just disseminated out over a seven-block area, 100 feet high. That's more like the spirit of fear. It's this kind of fear that does the damage.

You say, "Well, Adrian, the reason why you don't know anything about fear is you don't have anything this moment to fear." Well, I have some things to fear, and so do you, and that's legitimate, but I want to remind you I didn't write the Scripture. I'm not the editor; I'm a newsboy.

All right now, this is God's Word, and God's Word says, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear." Who wrote this? The apostle Paul. To whom did he write it? To Timothy. From where did he write? Where was he? He was in the Mamartine prison. If you visit Rome, go across from the Roman Forum, and ask somebody to show you the Mamartine prison. And go down into that dark, filthy pit where the apostle Paul was there, abused, misused, neglected, threatened, waiting to be killed.

You don't find any fear in Paul; not the spirit of fear there. As a matter of fact, he's telling Timothy he was not yet in prison. "Timothy, I'm in prison. I know whom I have believed. And, Timothy, God has not given us the spirit of fear." Now, he's writing this from prison. He's not writing this from a pulpit, air-conditioned and upholstered. He's writing this from prison, and he says, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind." It's that spirit of fear that does the damage.

As a matter of fact, Jesus spoke of the last days, and how terrible they would be, and He said, in Luke 21, verse 26: "Men's hearts failing them for fear." I don't think that's metaphorical. I think that you can have a cardiac with fear, legitimate fear, but, continuing fear is even worse.

I did a little research. A well-known American internist, at a round-table discussion on psychosomatic medicine said this: "In spite of what they say, 90% of the chronic patients—listen—chronic patients who see today's physicians have one common symptom." These are the people who keep coming back and coming back and coming back—"one common symptom." Their trouble did not start with a cough or chest pains or hyperacidity. In 90% of the cases, the first symptom was fear—fear.

And I found a list, and some other reading, on what a spirit of fear can bring. Rapid heartbeat, missed heartbeats, swallowing difficulty, hyperventilation, shortness of breath, smothering sensations, weakness in your legs, blurred vision, nausea, diarrhea, sweating, chest pain discomfort, fear of going crazy or losing control, choking, dizziness, unsteady feelings or faintness, trembling or shaking, numbness, a tingling

sensations, flushes. What they mean by that is hot flashes or chills. That's the spirit of fear. Many times, it does more damage than the very thing we're afraid of. And that's what the terrorists want to do is to cripple America with a spirit of fear. And, friend, I want to serve notice. People in this congregation are not going to cooperate.

Now, it's one thing to say to a person, "in nothing to be terrified by your adversaries," but if God didn't tell us how not to be terrified, that wouldn't do much good, would it? So, what does Paul say here in this passage of Scripture? Paul gives us three ways that the Holy Spirit of God—the Holy Spirit, not the spirit of fear, but the Holy Spirit—helps us.

## **I. The Spirit Energizes Us with Power**

Number one: He energizes us with power. The Holy Spirit energizes us with power. Have you got it? "God hath...given us the spirit of power." Now, what is the spirit of power? That is the Holy Spirit. Luke 24, verse 49—Jesus said, "Behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you; but tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."

Now, the Spirit of God is the spirit of power, not physical strength. You don't have to have physical strength. What you need is the Lord Himself. Psalm 27, verse 1: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Now, that, friend, is Psalm 27, verse 1. That would be a good one for you to write out, teach your children, and put on your refrigerator door. We're talking about strength now. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Did you know, the man who can kneel before God can stand before anybody? "The Lord—the Lord—is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear?" That is, who compares to Him? "The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" God has given us the spirit of power.

Now, do you know why we get terrified? We get terrified because we feel weak and inferior. We feel that a greater force is coming against us than we have. But when you recognize that you are on the side of might, then that takes away the terror.

Here's a little boy who walks to school, and there are some bullies that pick on him. Every day, those bullies are taking his lunch money, shoving him down, throwing his books in the weeds, and so forth. The little boy is afraid to go to school because of these bullies. Then one day, his brother—the little guy is maybe 8 years old. He's got a brother who's 17 and plays football—his brother walks to school with him, or his daddy walks to school with him. He's not terrified now, because his brother's there, or his dad is there. I remember when I was going to school as a little kid, there was this other kid that always picked on me, terrorized me, picked at me, scared me to death, and I just trembled every time I had to go to school. And one day I had enough. I just turned around, and I told her, "you leave me alone!"

If you have somebody who's bigger than you, stronger than you, with you, then you're not terrified by your adversaries. So you can say, "The Lord is my strength—listen—the Lord is my strength." God has given us power, the spirit of power.

And Paul goes on to say in this passage here, in verses 9 through 12, "look," he said, "I'm not afraid to die." And he said, "I know Whom I have believed." He didn't say I know what I believed. He believed that, but he didn't say that. He didn't say, I know why I believe, and he had some good whys. He didn't say, I know in whom I have believed. There's no preposition between Paul and Christ. He said, "I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day." Friend, that's something.

Now, I want to tell you, folks, you can get the sermon notes today, but you're going to miss the message if you don't know Whom you believe. I mean, it's not Adrian. It's Jesus. You're going to have to get a bulldog grip on Him, and the Spirit of God—the Holy Spirit of God—will endue with power and strength and might, and greater is He that's in you than he that's in the world. "I know Whom I have believed."

Some of you—some of us—have jitters about the market, as we see the Dow Jones taking a nosedive. Those very jitters are what causes it. And then, sometimes, there's a stampede. Somebody says, "All that I've worked for, all that I've saved, my sweat, my tears, my labor—it's going down the tube," and you panic. Why would you panic? Why would you panic? Because that's where your confidence is. You need to know whom you believed. Put your confidence there.

I want to ask you a question: Which would you rather have—a warehouse full of stale bread, or a father who owns a bakery? "I know Whom I have believed." "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power." He energizes us with power.

## **II. The Spirit Enriches Us with Love**

Number two: He—the Holy Spirit—enriches us with love. Not only does He energize us, but He enriches us. He gives us the spirit of love. And love is a mighty force in overcoming terror.

Listen to me. If a terrorist can terrify you, he's won. If the terrorist—now, listen carefully—can make you hate him, he has won. Hello! If the terrorist can make you hate him, he has won. You say, "But he's our enemy." Yes! And what did Jesus say about our enemies? Love your what? Your enemies. Love your enemies.

Now, if the terrorists cannot make us afraid, and cannot make us hate, he's lost. But if we can love, then he is the one who has failed in what he does. You see, Jesus, when they were nailing Him to the cross, was not spitting vermin at those who were nailing Him to the cross. What was He doing? He was praying for them. "Father, forgive them, for they don't even know what they're doing."

I want to tell you, all of these terrorists, they don't know what they're doing. They are but tools in the hands of somebody else. They're blind. They're ignorant. Wicked, yes, but "we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, and powers...and spiritual wickedness in high places."

And the reason that we sometimes get terrified is we're all wrapped up in ourselves, we're so afraid of what's going to happen to us, and we forget to look out and begin to love others. If there was ever a time for us to have a mighty baptism of love, this is the time to show the love of the Lord Jesus. And the question is not, am I brave enough? The question is, do I love enough?

Let me tell you the difference between love and fear. Love looks for opportunities to give; fear is self-protecting. Love thinks no evil; fear sees nothing else. Love focuses on today; fear focuses on tomorrow. Love causes us to move toward other people; fear causes us to withdraw from others. Love is the sign of a trusting Christian; fear is the sign of doubt and a lack of love.

Now, not only are we to love other people—and I told you, you need to go find some of these people who are different than you are, of a different race, a different religion, especially if they're of Arab extract, or Muslim, and just move toward them in love—move toward them in love. What an opportunity to show the difference that Jesus makes!

I'm telling you, our faith is not built on fear. Our faith is built on love. And it's not a religion of the sword; it's a religion of love. But not only does love for others release us from terror, but God's mighty love for us. I used to read in the Scripture, in 1 John chapter 4 and verse 18, where the Bible says that perfect love casts out fear.

I said, "Well, thanks a lot. I don't do anything perfectly—especially love—so it looks like I'm bound to fear, because I don't have perfect love." But then, in reading the paraphrased Bible, the Living Bible, I got an insight that checks out with the Strong translation about this, and here's what it says—1 Timothy 4, verse 18: "We have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly." Hey, it's not my perfect love that casts out my fear; it is my understanding that God loves me perfectly. Boy, that's a hallelujah. Listen: "We have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly. His perfect love for us eliminates all dread." Now, thank God for that. God loves us. And fix your eyes on love, and let God love you, and begin to love others.

Now, I know what some of you are thinking. As a matter of fact, I've been preaching long enough that some people think Rogers is un-American, if he tells us to love our enemies. No, I just happen to be a Christian. I just happen to believe the Bible.

You say, "Well, shouldn't there be judgment?" Yes. "Revenge is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Hey, listen. One-half of one percent will never get by. God knows exactly what He's doing, and He will use the United States government to do it. And I'm

100% behind our President. I'm behind our military. I'm behind Dick Cheney. I'm behind Rumsfeld. I'm behind George W. Bush. I am behind Colin Powell. And I thank God for them. And let's give them a hand right now. And may they do their job. But we're going to do ours, which is to show love.

You say, "Well, I haven't got what it takes." Congratulations, you're almost there. When you understand you don't have what it takes, then you understand what the Bible means in Romans chapter 5, verse 5: "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." That's the Spirit that we need, the spirit of love. God enriches us with love. These things are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by his Spirit." Okay, so what He does now, He enriches us with love.

### **III. The Spirit Enlightens Us with a Sound Mind**

Now, thirdly—here's a third thing He does to take the terror out of terrorism: friend, He enlightens us with a sound mind. Now, remember our scripture again: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Now, when He says, "a sound mind," here, He's not talking about intellectualism. The word here for sound mind means, a disciplined mind, a mind that is under control, a mind that has discretion. It means a mind that cannot be stampeded. Terror wants to stampede us, but the Holy Spirit says, "gird up the loins of your mind."

Now, once you get stampeded, once you have terror, not only are you afraid of the original cause of the terror, but you're afraid of everything. Proverbs chapter 28 and verse 1 says, "The wicked flee when no man pursues." When you flee, and there's not anybody chasing you, you know what's wrong with you? You've got a spirit of fear—spirit of fear. You're just afraid of everything. And it just comes by our old corrupted nature.

The first words that man spoke after he sinned were these: "I was afraid—I was afraid." Afraid of God. Here's God walking in the garden, saying, "Adam. Where are you, Adam?" That wasn't the voice of a detective. That was the voice of a broken-hearted God. God was not pursuing him to punish him; God was wooing him to win him. "Adam. Adam." The wicked flee when no man pursues. You see, sometimes we need to get a sound mind.

Have you ever been a little boy and thought there was a monster in your room at night? I mean, you know, you're five, and you think there's a monster in the room. You open your eyes, and there he is, over there in the corner. He's awful. He's just waiting to pounce you. You cry. Your mama comes in and turns on the light. That's not a monster; it's your shirt you hung over the chair. But, in the dark, that's a monster, until the light comes. And you understand that so often this fear is unfounded.

When we were in seminary, we were staying in a house that was built up off the ground some, and on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. I pastored a little church there. Joyce called me one time when I was in school, and said, “Adrian, you need to get home.” I said, “Why?” She said, “I don’t know why. Something—something bad.” I said, “What?” She said, “There’s something under our house.” I said, “What?” She said, “Yes.” I said, “How do you know that?” She said, “It’s making a noise.” I said, “What is the noise?” She said, “Hard to explain.” I said, “Well, just, the best you can, tell me what the noise is.” “It’s just arooom—aroooom.” I said, “what?” She said, “Arooom.” I said, “Where is it?” “It’s under the house.” I said, “What part?” She said, “The whole house.”

I got home and went under that house. You know what was under that house? A sow hog, with an old, bony backbone. It was scratching its backbone on the floor joints—aroooom. It wasn’t pleasant to look at, or listen to, but that old hog wasn’t going to hurt her. Well, you know, once you get your fears out in the open, then it’s different. But you say, “But, Pastor, we’re not talking about hogs under the house. We’re not talking about shirts on the back of the chair. We’re talking about people who want to kill us and destroy us.” Yes, but we can’t be afraid of them.

Listen to what Charles Spurgeon said: “It is impossible that any ill should happen to the man who is loved of the Lord. The most crushing calamities can only shorten his journey and hasten him to his reward. Ill to him is no ill, but it is good in a mysterious form. Losses enrich him, sickness is his medicine, reproach his honor, and death his gain. No evil, in the strict sense of the word, can happen to him, for everything is overruled for good. Happy is he who is in such a case. He is secure where others are imperiled. He lives where others die.” Oh, thank God for that.

Listen, folks. Don’t you let the devil, don’t you let the terrorists, take your mind and run off with it. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of love and power, and a disciplined mind, a mind that is under control.

## **Conclusion**

Robert Louis Stevenson used to love to tell the story of a ship on a rockbound coast that was in great difficulty in roiling seas, and the sailors were afraid. And one man was working, a sailor, below the water line. He couldn’t stand it any longer. He left his job, went up to the control room where the captain was, and he saw the captain with his great strength and keen mind, wrestling to keep the ship from the rocks, and steering the ship safely on. The captain saw this sailor there cowering. The captain just turned a little bit and smiled at him, and went back to his job. That sailor left, and went back down, and said, “We’re safe. We’re all right.” The others said, “How do you know?” He said, “I’ve seen the face of the captain, and he smiled at me.”

Friend, you’d better see the face of Jesus. And you get the smile of our Lord, and I’m

telling you, more than that captain, Jesus is in control. There are only two places in the world where there's no hope. One is in hell, because, when you go to hell, you've lost hope. The other is in heaven. When you're in heaven, you don't need hope. Only two places where there is no hope. As long as there's God, there's hope, and we will in nothing be terrified by our adversaries. Say amen. Praise God.

But now all this is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and if you don't have Jesus, you don't have the Holy Spirit.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. And I want you today, if you've never done so, to make a league with the Lord, an alliance with the Almighty, a peace pact with the Prince of Peace. I want you to be saved. I want you to know Jesus Christ. Would you pray a prayer like this: O God, I am a sinner. And, friend, you are, and so am I, and so are all, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. O God, I'm a sinner and my sin deserves judgment. And it does. The wages of sin is death. The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die. But, God, I want mercy. And, friend, you may have it. The Bible says, the Lord is rich in mercy to all who call upon Him. Lord, I want mercy. I want you to forgive me, and cleanse me, and save me. Jesus, you died for me. You died to save me, and You promised to save me, if I would trust you. Tell Him: Lord Jesus, I do trust You. I trust You, right now, as my Lord and Savior. Come into my heart. Come in right now, Jesus. Forgive my sins. They're many. Cleanse me. Cleanse me, Jesus. Thank You. Take my sin, and put it in the grave of Your forgetfulness. Thank You, Jesus. Now, come in and take control. I yield my life over to You. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be, and help me, Jesus, never, never, never to be ashamed of You. For I've committed my life to You, and I know whom I have believed, and I'm persuaded that You're able to keep that which I have committed unto You. Thank You, Jesus. Now, Lord, give me the courage to make it public this morning. Would you pray that? Lord, give me the courage to make it public this morning, and not to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray. Amen.

# Three Keys of Confidence and Conquest

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: March 19, 2000**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 1:6–8**

*“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”*

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

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## Introduction

And I want you to take your Bibles tonight and turn to 2 Timothy chapter 1, and I want to give to you what I consider to be three keys of confidence and conquest.

Now, most of us are not living up to our abilities. We are not conquerors. And the reason we don't conquer, the reason we don't have conquest, so many times, is we don't have confidence. We have the opposite of confidence, which is fear. And the Bible teaches very plainly that God wants His people to live with confidence. Jesus said, “In nothing be terrified by your enemies.” If you've ever seen a preacher preach with fear in his eyes, it's a pitiful thing. If you've ever seen anybody try to serve God with a spirit of fear, it is a pathetic thing. And it's true in the natural and the secular world. It's especially true in the spiritual world.

Well, look, if you will, in 2 Timothy chapter 1, and beginning there in verse 6, Paul is talking to his young mentor, his preacher boy, whose name is Timothy, and he says, “Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.” Paul was a part of the ordination counsel, when young Timothy was ordained to the gospel. And he says to Timothy, “For God hath not given

us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.”

Now, we're going to stop reading there for the time being. But Ann Landers receives about ten thousand letters each month. That's a lot of letters. And she says nearly all of them deal with people who have problems. And somebody said, “Well, Ann, what is the major problem? Of all these letters that you get, what is the major problem?” What would you think it is? It's fear—it's fear. People are afraid of all kinds of things. They're afraid of losing their health; they're afraid of losing their wealth; they're afraid of losing their loved ones. People are afraid of life. And the devil keeps people in bondage, by fear. God wants us to be free from the spirit of fear. Now, when I say to be free from the spirit of fear, I don't mean that you're ever going to live without ever being afraid. You would not want to live without being afraid sometimes.

When I was a little boy, Roosevelt was the President of the United States. He said, I believe, in 1933, “There's nothing to fear but fear itself.” Well, that's a very good line, but, unfortunately, it's not true. There are a lot of things to fear. I mean, fear is a healthy thing. It keeps you alive, makes you look both ways before you cross the street. You ought to be afraid of rattlesnakes. You ought to be afraid of drunken drivers. You ought to be afraid of a lot of things. There is a certain fear that keeps you operating. And you might look very spiritual right now, but, if somebody were to light a firecracker under your seat, you would jump.

Years ago, Jim is not here tonight—I wish he were. But, years ago, down at Merritt Island, when we were just getting started working together, in 1964—you know, Jim likes to do the unusual, and things have changed a lot in music since 1964, I can tell you this—but Jim had the idea that he needed some cymbals in his choir. And so, I didn't know that he'd even gotten the cymbals. But he got two cymbals—big, brass cymbals about the size of two garbage can lids—and I didn't even know it was a part of the song. But right there in the middle of the song a man stepped out and he hit those cymbals together. And, friend, I thought lightening had struck inside the building. The funny part of it was there was a lady sitting out there in the congregation, and I watched her. It was a remarkable thing. She was an older lady. But without even flexing her knees, she rose up and came back down in her seat like this. I don't know how she did it. It was like levitation. She just went up and came back down frightened to death. Well, she was a godly lady, but, folks, if you think lightening has struck, you're going to have a certain amount of fear. There's nothing wrong with that. I told Jim in the next service—we were having double services—I said, “Jim, announce that before you do it.” “Oh,” he said, “no, that would ruin the effect.” And so, he had his effect that he wanted. Folks, there are certain things that are normal fears. God has given us those normal fears.

And then, there's some spiritual fear that we ought to have. Let me tell you what the Lord Jesus, the great teacher—the greatest teacher who ever lived—said, in Matthew chapter 10 and verse 28: “Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Even as I preached this morning, if you do not have a fear of meeting God with your sins uncleansed and unforgiven, you don't have a modicum of good sense. There is a fear that you ought to have, and that is the fear that you might die without having your sins forgiven and being made right with God.

And then, there's another fear that is a very healthy fear, and that's just what we call the fear of God. Proverbs chapter 1 and verse 7 says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.” That's the ABCs. Hey, folks, you won't learn much of anything, if you don't learn the fear of the Lord. It is the beginning of knowledge. And some people say, “Well, I don't believe in a religion built on fear.” We're not talking about a cringing dread of fear, not that at all. We're talking about a reverence for God. A wise man said, “He who fears God the most loves Him the best.” The fear of God is simply love on its knees.

Now, folks, I'm not afraid of God. I love Him with all of my heart. But I want to tell you there is, in my heart, the fear of God. And I hope there is in your heart the fear of God.

And do you know one way that you can tell whether or not you have the fear of God? How you feel about sin. Proverbs chapter 8, verse 13, says, “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride, and arrogancy...” If you fear the Lord, you're going to hate pride.

The other day, Joyce and I got in a little spat, and it was my fault. And the problem was my rotten pride. And I tried to prove her wrong, but I couldn't do it. And I had to go to her, and I had to say, “Sweetheart, I'm sorry—I'm sorry. I've asked God to forgive me, and I want you to forgive me.” And, of course, she did. She always does. It's good to have a wife like that. But you know what made me do that? The fear of God—the fear of God. When I looked at it, I said, “You know, Adrian, you're just full of pride—pride.” And God doesn't like that. And I love God, but I fear God. You know, the fear of God is not a dirty fear; it's a clean fear. Psalm 19, verse 9—the Bible says, “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever.” So, that's a reverence for God; not a dread of God, but just a reverence for God.

And so, there are normal fears. There's the fear of eternal hell that every person ought to have, until he or she gets saved. There's the respect and reverence for God, which is to hate evil, and to hate pride, and just to give God the worship that is due to His name. And, you know, in the assembly, when we come here, we laugh a lot, and that's fine. We sing some spirited songs, and that's fine. But God forbid that we should ever come into this place without the reverence of the Lord. Do you know what the Bible says? Psalm 89, verse 7: “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints”—

“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints.” There ought to be such a desire in our heart that we would not do anything to offend the Almighty. Now, I don’t mean that we have to be quiet and mousey, because the Bible tells us to praise God with a shout, with a timbrel, with all of these sorts of things. The Bible speaks even, you know, of dancing before the Lord. There’s nothing wrong with exuberant worship. Some people think that reverence means quietness. It can mean that. It might mean great shouting and exuberance. But, whatever we do, we must do with the fear of the Lord.

So when the Bible says here in this passage of Scripture that God has not given us the spirit of fear, we need to understand what He’s talking about. He’s not talking about normal fear. He’s not talking about the fear of hell. He’s not talking about reverence before Him, but something that is called the spirit of fear. It’s almost demonic. It is abnormal. Our word today for that would be phobia—phobia.

They’ve gone through the dictionary, and they found all kinds of fears that people have—from A to Z, various kinds of phobias. And you can tell by the description what it is. Acrophobia is what? It’s the fear of heights. Claustrophobia is the fear of being in closed places. Agoraphobia, just the opposite: it’s the fear of being out in an open place. Neophobia—a lot of Baptists have that. That’s fear of new things. We’ve never done it that way before. We used to have a dear saint in our church, and I loved her. She was just about a bubble off—not really level, just about a bubble off—but a dear lady, and I loved her with all of my heart. I did her funeral. I cried at the funeral. But, if we would ever sing a song like Jamie led us in tonight, you know, some of these praise songs, she’d be on the phone next day. “I don’t like those new songs.” Joyce told her one time, she said, “Every song was a new song the first time it was sung—every song, and the Bible says, ‘Sing unto the Lord a new song.’” And we do a lot of new things and different things. There are people whose favorite song is, “I Shall Not Be Moved.” They don’t want any kind of change at all. But, folks, we can’t fossilize, and we have to be geared to the times, and anchored to the Rock, all at the same time. There’s Neophobia. And then, there’s Pathophobia, fear of disease. Now, you ought to wash your hands, and you ought to eat well and exercise, but some people have such a fear of sickness they will not even go out in society. It’s phobic. It’s Pathophobia, a fear of disease. There’s photophobia. It’s a fear of light. Some people live in dark places, and won’t go out in the light. I know a fear that a lot of folks have: it’s ergophobia. Do you know what that is? Fear of work. Ergophobia. And then, the worst fear of all, I think, is phobofobia, which is the fear of fear. People are afraid they’re going to be afraid. These, and other kinds of numbing fears, senseless fears, are what the Bible calls the spirit of fear. And you don’t have to be a weak person to be afraid.

As I did a little research on this. I found out that some of the most notable people in history were people who still had certain fears. For example, Julius Caesar, who led his

mighty armies and his empire, was afraid of the sound of thunder. If it would thunder, he would want to get underground. This is the great Julius Caesar.

Peter the Great, the czar of Russia, would scarcely cross a bridge. He couldn't bear to be on a bridge. If he would just walk on a bridge, he would begin to tremble. That's Peter the Great. And people have these kinds of crazy fears.

When I played football, we had a boy named Ned, so I will not embarrass him by calling his last name. But Ned stood about that much taller than I. Ned was one of the greatest athletes I've ever known. He was head and shoulders above us, and he could just do anything. He made high school all-American when he was a sophomore; I mean, all American—just a great guy. Ned was big, a bruiser. He was a fullback. He'd go crashing through. We had a championship team, built primarily around Ned. One day, we all had to go for shots. They were inoculating us for something, and we're standing in line. And I looked there on the ground, and there was Ned. That little needle—he passed out, absolutely terrified. People—I mean, strong people—are terrified by different things.

#### **A. Fear Leads to Forgetfulness**

And fear can do all kinds of bad things to you. I'm talking about the spirit of fear. I'm not talking about normal fears. I'm talking about the spirit of fear. For example, the spirit of fear can just cause you to overlook so many, many blessings. Look, if you will, for example, in verse 5 in this chapter. We're in 2 Timothy chapter 1, and let's look in verse 6—Paul says, "Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." And then, notice he connects that verse with verse 7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear..." Now, he's saying, "Look, Timothy, stir up the gift that's in you, for God has not given you the spirit of fear."

Now, here's what happened. Timothy had had a great spiritual experience. He had a great spiritual heritage. But, but he has somehow blown past it. Somehow, he has forgotten what God has done for him, because he is now afraid. And I'm telling you what will happen to you. Fear can take all of the blue out of your sky, and lick all the red off your candy. I'm telling you, just being afraid. When you focus on fear, you focus on little else, and you forget all of the things that God has given you, and you just are blind to blessings, when you're afraid.

We took a trip to Switzerland, took a group of people. And we've been to Israel, and we stopped by Switzerland for a little R & R. And we had a bus, and we were driving through the most incredibly beautiful country you have ever seen—the snow-capped Alps. Every turn in the road was a postcard, a calendar picture—incredible. There were two young ladies sitting up at the front. Linda Glance, my secretary, was one of them, and another young lady was sitting beside her. The young lady sitting beside Linda did not see a thing because she had her eyes closed the whole time going through those

mountains. She was petrified. She was praying, “O God, don’t let us fall off this mountain. O God...” And she missed so much. And I’m not really making fun of her, but I’ll tell you, there’s something sad about people missing so much of life because of fear, I mean, unreasonable fear, that they fail to understand what all they have and they just forget these things. So Paul says, “Look, wherefore I put thee in remembrance.” Just underscore the word remembrance, and think of fear and forgetfulness.

Fear can cover your sky with clouds. Fear can cause you to fail to see so many blessings. Every one of us—every one of us—are standing knee deep in blessings, if we’ll just simply open our eyes.

### **B. Fear Leads to Failure**

But not only fear and forgetfulness—look: there’s fear and failure. Did you know that you will fail to do what you ought to do, if you’re filled with fear? Look in verse 8 of this same thing—Paul is telling Timothy, “Look, be not thou, therefore...—and the therefore again refers to the spirit of fear—Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner...”

Now, Paul was in prison, and Timothy was thinking, You know, I just may end up there too, if I open my mouth. But he says, “Look, Timothy, be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God.” Now, Timothy was afraid to take a stand for Jesus. And Paul says, “Timothy, don’t forget who God is, what He’s done for you. And, Timothy, don’t be ashamed of Jesus. Stand up. Be bold. Take a stand, because if you don’t, you’re going to fail.”

Now, there are a lot of you out there that God wants you to be a soul winner. Do you know why most Baptists are not soul winners? It’s not because they don’t love Jesus. It’s not because they don’t love lost souls. What’s the main thing that keeps us from winning souls? Fear—fear. We’re afraid that we’re going to make a mistake, or we’re afraid we’re going to offend somebody, or we’re afraid we’re going to be made to look foolish, and fear keeps us from witnessing. And, folks, I have to rebuke the spirit of fear. You say, “Well, Adrian, you’re a pro; you’re a professional.” I tell you, the devil will jump on me and try to shut my mouth when it comes time to witness.

Dr. Stephen Olford said, “A lot of Baptists are like an arctic river: frozen at the mouth.” We just have the spirit of fear. There are people, some of you out there, who could sing solos, but you’ll never sing a solo, not until you deal with the spirit of fear, because, when you get up, the spirit of fear will put his icy fingers on your throat and squeeze. There are some of you who could teach a class, or preach a sermon, or do something wonderful, but you won’t do it. It’s not that you don’t have the ability to do it; you’re just paralyzed with fear. And I know the experience.

When I first started speaking, man, when you stand up, your mind sits down. And it’s not that you don’t know; it’s not that you don’t have it, but it’s just fear. Have you heard

anybody say, “Well, I can’t speak in public”? Sometimes people, preacher boys, will come and stand up here, and they look around, and say, “How do you preach in front of so many people?” The same way you preach in front of six people. It’s the same thing. There’s no difference in preaching to ten people and preaching to ten thousand people. It’s exactly the same. The only thing different is what? The fear factor. That’s all. You say the same thing. You say it the same way. The only difference is when you’ve got more people, for whatever reason, I don’t know why, but it’s there. We are intimidated by fear, and it keeps us from doing what we ought to do. And Paul had to say to Timothy, “Timothy, don’t be afraid. Open your mouth. Don’t be afraid.”

Now, not only does fear cause the problem of forgetfulness, and you have to be put in remembrance of what God has done for you; not only does fear cause failure—and it really does cause failure; Job said, “The thing I feared is come upon me.” Fear is a self-fulfilling prophecy, just like you get behind somebody who’s afraid the next light is going to turn red, and, by the time they get there, it has. Have you ever been behind that guy? That’s just a self-fulfilling prophecy.

### **C. Fear Leads to Frailty**

And then, I’ll tell you what else fear does. Not only do you see fear and forgetfulness, and fear and failure, but fear and frailty. Fear will literally make you sick. Now, you don’t see it here in 2 Timothy, but if you went back to 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 13, you’d hear Paul saying this to Timothy—he says, “Drink not longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine oft infirmities.” You know that Timothy, he had chronic illness. And you know where his chronic illness got him? Right here. Almost all digestive problems are emotionally induced. Now, it may be into something else later on, but I’m just talking about the where it got started—where it got started. And here’s Timothy. Timothy was a good kid, loved God, but he’d forgotten God’s blessings. He was failing to witness, and he was often sick. And you can be sick because of fear.

Let me tell what a well-known American internist said. They were having a roundtable discussion on psychosomatic medicine, and this is what he said—not what a Baptist preacher said, what he said—he said, “In spite of what they say, 90% of the chronic patients who see today’s physicians have one common problem. Their trouble did not start with a cough, or a chest pain, or hyperacidity. In 90% of the cases, the first symptom was fear—the first symptom was fear.

Well, the Bible says, “God has not given us the spirit of fear.” So I want to wrap this up, but I want to give you three keys of confidence, how you can live tomorrow and every day with confidence and not with the spirit of fear. All right, here’s what I want you to see, what God has done for us.

## **I. God Endues Us with Power**

The first thing God has done is: God has endued us with power. Look, if you will, in verses 7 and 8—we're back here again at our text: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power." God endues us with power. The devil is the sinister minister of fear, but God is the giver of power. Now, that power comes from the Holy Spirit. Luke 24, verse 49, says—Jesus: "Behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." He endues us with power.

Now, why do we have fears? We have fear because we feel weak. We feel inadequate. If you're walking home from school and there's a bully who picks on you... And, by the way, I used to have a bully who picked on me when I was walking home from school. This kid was just always picking on me, picking on me, picking on me. I was scared to death—always this kid. Well, finally, I just got enough of it. I turned around. I told her to leave me alone. Suppose you're... Her name was Joyce.

Suppose that you've got this kid who's always picking on you, and then, one day, your daddy comes to walk home from school with you. You're not afraid now. You're not afraid. Why? Because your daddy's there. It doesn't matter about this bully kid. Your dad is there. Now, friend, when you're afraid, it's just because you feel inadequate. You feel that the enemy is bigger than you are. But what God does is, He gives you the Holy Spirit. He endues you with power.

I love Psalm 27 and verse 1 that says this—and listen to it: "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?—whom shall I fear?—The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" The man who can kneel before God can stand before any man. You need to spend some time with God if you have a spirit of fear. God will send the Holy Spirit, and God will endue you with a holy boldness.

And I felt God come upon in some situations sometimes where there was no way to explain it. But God gave me a boldness, and He gives me a boldness that is supernatural. And the first key to confidence is, He endues us with power. And what I would do, if I were you, if you have a spirit of fear, I would say, "Come, Holy Spirit of God, fill me until I am conscious of the presence of God," very much in the way a little boy would be walking home from school with his dad and a bully standing on the street corner. Now, that's the first thing our Lord does. God gives us power to face every foe, meet every demand, and endure every trial.

## **II. God Enriches Us with Love**

Now, here's the second key to confidence: not only does He endue us with power, but He enriches us with love. Look again, if you will, in verse 7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love..." Now, what does love have to do with fear?

How can love take away fear? Well, love is a great, great force in removing fear. And let me show you how it works.

Now, the Living Bible is a paraphrase. It is not a translation. You can get a lot of help from the Living Bible, if you'll read it as a paraphrase. Don't use it to proof text, because it's a paraphrase, but you can get a lot of insight from it. And, in 1 John 4, verse 18, in the Living Bible, it's beautiful. The King James, which I preach from and love, says—and I thank God for the translation—“perfect love casteth out fear.” Well, I used to read that, and I'd say, “Well, that's fine, but I've never done perfectly, but sin.” So, if I have to love God perfectly, no wonder I'm afraid, because I don't do anything perfect, and I don't think anybody here does, in that sense. And you read it, “perfect love casteth out fear.” But here is—and I've checked it out, and this is really what it means, and I thank God for the paraphrase of it—1 John 4, verse 18: “We have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly.” It's not my perfect love for Him that casts out fear; it's His perfect love for me that casts out fear. Listen to it again: “We have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly.” His perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what He might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what He might do to us; and shows us that we are not fully convinced that He really loves us.

Now, folks, wait before God. Wait before God until He endues you with power from on high. He gives you not the spirit of fear, but the spirit of power, who is the Holy Spirit. And then, He gives you the spirit of love, who is the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit will reveal to you God's love. The Book of Romans says, “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.” I want you, the next time you're afraid, to say to yourself, and not just say it as a little slogan, but say it and mean it: God loves me perfectly—God loves me perfectly. And I'll tell you what. Your love for God will cast our fear, even if it's not perfect. When you love God, you're going to find yourself doing some things that you might not do otherwise, just simply because you love God.

A mother has a little child, and that little child is perhaps attacked by a dog—a mother, a 110-pound mother, will jump on that dog, and try to strangle it. She wouldn't go near him otherwise. But it's her love for that child that gives her this overmastering, overruling thing against fear.

I was in a revival crusade one time In Florida. And we have some big bugs in Florida; I mean, some big ones. And we were in a meeting, and there was no air conditioning, and the door was open, and there were bugs and mosquitoes in there. But God was there in such a great way. And in the invitation, when souls were being saved, a big, ugly bug with big things coming out of his head like that—a big old guy about that long—was on the floor, and it was making an awful noise. How one bug could make so much noise I don't know. He was going, “MMMMM MMMMMMMM MMMMMMMM.” And everybody was looking at this bug. There was a teenager girl. She reached down with

her hand, picked that big, ugly bug up, and squeezed him to death—just like that. After the service, I went to her. I said, “I’ve never seen anything like that.” I said, “Aren’t you afraid of bugs?” She said, “I am deathly afraid of them,” but she said, “That bug was disturbing this service.” She got hold of it. Now, what is that? It was her love for God that just overmastered what would be a normal, natural fear.

I had a lady one time, I was going to baptize her. We were talking, and I could tell that she was looking all around, and there was something bothering her, and I said, “Pardon me. There’s something bothering you, isn’t there?” She said, “I am deathly afraid of water.” And I said, “I’m so sorry.” I said, “We’ll be careful; we’ll be gentle,” and I explained it to her, and I thought she was going to back out. And I said, “Do you want to be baptized?” “Oh,” she said, “I’ve thought about it. I’m afraid of water, but I’m not afraid of being baptized.” Now, what did she mean by that? She meant that her fear is going to have to take second place, because of her love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **III. God Enlightens Us with a Sound Mind**

Now, what does God do? What are the three keys of confidence? He endues us with power. Number two: He enriches us with love. And then, number three: He enlightens us with a sound mind.

Now, look at it again. He says here, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” Now, when he says a sound mind here, it doesn’t mean the ability to think logically. That’s fine, but that’s not what it means. The word here literally means discipline. It means self-control, or it means wise discretion. It means that you’re able to see things as they really are. You know, the Bible says, “The wicked flee when no man pursues.” We’re afraid of imaginary foes when our hearts are not right with God.

When I was a little boy, we had a pump house back behind our house on 38th Street in West Palm Beach. And we had some hedges out around that pump house, and there was an alley that ran down behind the pump house. And, after dark, sometime, I would have to take out garbage, because the garbage cans were out there behind the pump house on the alley. And I would go out there at nighttime, just a little guy, to carry out that garbage. And, somehow, when I would turn and go back to the house, I would have the idea there was somebody behind me. There was no one back there, but I’d run all the way to the house, scared to death. Why? I guess I must have been wicked. “The wicked flee when no one pursues.” We just get these ideas that things are going to happen. What the Holy Spirit of God does, when you’re filled with the Holy Spirit—not the spirit of fear—but when you’re filled with the Holy Spirit of God, He gives you a sound mind. You’re able to see things as they really are.

Zig Ziglar, who has spoken from this pulpit, said that fear—F-E-A-R—is False

Evidence Appearing Real. And so often that's what fear is. And we, we have all of these things that are not there. God enables us to see things clearly. He gives us a sound mind.

When you were a little boy, did you ever see things in your bedroom? This must be confession night tonight. You know, I'm talking about just being a little guy. And you call out, and ask Mama to come in there. She'd turn on the light. That wasn't a monster over there. It was just your clothes on the back of the chair. But when the light is on, you see things clearly, and you say, "Oh, I know what that is now." You go back to sleep. God the Holy Spirit just turns on the light. You can see things that you would not see. You have a sound mind. Your mind doesn't run away with you. It's a disciplined mind. You get hold of yourself. Now, if you will do this—if you will do this—I can tell you that you'll go through life enjoying things that other people are missing because fear has cut the sunshine out of their lives, and your memories and your blessings will come to you. You will attempt things that you would not ordinarily do because you'll not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And you will see clearly, as He endues you with power, as He enriches you with love, and as He enlightens you with a sound mind.

Now, you say, "Well, Adrian, I don't have what it takes." Well, let me tell you why Paul was so confident. Look, if you will, in verse 12. Now, Paul's in prison, but look at Paul in verse 12. He says, "For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I'm not ashamed..." Now, he uses the word here ashamed in the sense of being afraid. "...I'm not afraid; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." That's Paul secret. "I have committed everything to Jesus. I am not afraid. I know whom I have believed." Most people will quote this, if they don't have a Bible in front of them, and say, "I know in whom I have believed." That isn't what Paul said. Paul says, "I know whom I have believed." He didn't even have a preposition between him and Jesus. "I know Him, and I've committed unto Him, and I am not ashamed of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

## **Conclusion**

Tomorrow, you'll get up, and you'll go to work, or you'll go to school. And tomorrow has two handles: one called faith and one called fear. And you're going to take hold of tomorrow with one of those two handles. And I want you to know that God has not given you the spirit of fear. If you have a spirit of fear, it is a phobia from Satan, the sinister minister of fear. And you need to get on your face before you walk out of the house tomorrow, on your knees somewhere, and say, "O God, endue me with power, enrich me with love, enlighten me with a sound mind," and then go out and face the day.

Let's bow our heads together in prayer. Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You, Lord, for the promise that You have given to us: power and love and a sound mind. Now, while heads are bowed, if you're here tonight, having never received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and never made the wonderful and joyous discovery of having your sins forgiven, having a vital relationship with God through Christ, tonight, if you would like to receive Him into your heart as your personal Savior, I want to guide you in that decision. And I'm telling you tonight, on the authority of the Word of God, if you will, in repentance and faith, trust Jesus—repentance means just turning from sin to Him; faith means receiving Him with a childlike trust—He will forgive your sin. He will cleanse you. He will come into your life to give you a new nature. And, when you die, He'll take you to heaven. If you want that to happen, would you pray this prayer: Dear God, I need to be saved, and I want to be saved. I know that You want to save me, and so I ask You to do it. Jesus, You died to save me, and promised to save me, if I would trust You. I do trust You. Would you tell Him that? I do trust You. I do right now, this moment, with all of my heart. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Save me, Lord Jesus. Pray it from your heart. You don't have to use those exact words, but just give all you know of you to all you know of Him. Save me, Lord Jesus. And, if you trust Him to do it, and you can do that right now, pray this way: Lord, I trust You. I'm not looking for some visual sign. I don't ask for an emotional feeling. I just stand on Your Word, and You cannot lie. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for saving me. And now, give me the courage to make it public, and help me not to be afraid to make it public, for You've not given me the spirit of fear, but of love, and of power, and of a sound mind. In Your name I pray. Amen.

# How to Handle Your Fear

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Sermon Date: November 30, 1986**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 1:6–8, 12**

## Outline

Introduction

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## Introduction

**W**ell, amen. Take God's Word, please, and turn to 2 Timothy chapter 1, and in a moment, we're going to begin reading God's Word, beginning in verse 6. And if you didn't bring a Bible with you this morning, look there, in the pew racks before you, and in all likelihood, there's one, and turn to it. I believe you'll always get so much more out of a message if you have an open Bible in front of you—that is, if the preacher is preaching out of the Word of God.

And speaking of preaching to you out of the Word of God—let me talk to you a little bit about the newspapers, before I talk to you from this text. Ann Landers is someone who people write to with their problems. And not so long ago, Ann Landers reported that she gets more than 10,000 letters a month. Can you imagine? And all of them, or most of them, deal with problems. Do you know what the number one problem that people write to Ann Landers about is? She said, "I get more mail concerning this one problem than any other problem." Do you know what it is? Fear.

Fear. People are afraid. They are afraid of losing their wealth; they are afraid of losing their health; they are afraid of losing their friends; they are afraid of losing their family; they are afraid of what their foes might do to them; they are afraid of failure. They are afraid of this, and they are afraid of that. And so if you distill these things down, Ann Landers says that permeating most of the letters she gets is this problem of fear. I want to talk to you today about how to handle your fear—actually, not only how to handle your fear, but how to conquer fear. But I don't want to tell you what Ann Landers

has to say about it. I want to tell you about what God's Word has to say about overcoming fear, conquering fear, and facing fear with faith, and how to live a future free from the bondage of fear.

All right now, in 2 Timothy chapter 1, beginning in verse 6, I read these words—Paul was speaking to Timothy; he says: *“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God”* (2 Timothy 1:6–8). Now as we get into this message, let me talk to you a little bit about this bondage of fear. But before I really get into that, even, let me tell you that you have to be careful to analyze fear, because not all fear is bad. Some fear is good, and some fear is productive. And some fear is of God Himself.

Now in 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt said these immortal words: “We have nothing to fear but fear itself.” Now those are beautiful words, but I don't agree with them. There's a lot to fear besides fear. I would never teach my children that there is nothing to fear besides fear itself, as long as there are rattlesnakes, drunken drivers, rapists, muggers, and Memphis drivers. I would never teach them that there is nothing to fear but fear itself.

Fear is a productive, protective mechanism that God has put into all of us. And that kind of fear—there is nothing wrong with it. It is very vital. It is very good. It has been, and it is, an instinct that God has put into us to help protect us and preserve us. So when I'm talking about fear, I'm not talking about that kind of fear.

And then, there are other kinds of fear that you know. The Bible tells us—Jesus literally told us—to fear on one occasion. He said: *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matthew 10:28). And if you are not saved, then you've got something to be afraid of, and I'm not trying to talk you out of it. I wish that I could reinforce it today—that I could show you, dear friend, that if you're facing a future without God, then you've got a lot to be afraid of. Jesus said you ought to be afraid. Somebody said, “Well, I just don't believe in frightening people into religion.” *Well, I'd rather frighten you into Heaven than to lull you into Hell.* Jesus said: *“Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

And then, also, the Bible speaks of the fear of the Lord—that's a good fear. The Bible says, in the Book of Proverbs, that: *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom”* (Proverbs 9:10). That is, you don't have a modicum of sense unless you fear the Lord. Now to fear the Lord doesn't mean that you cringe before God—that's not the idea. The Bible word for *fear*, there, means “reverence.” You're to reverence the Lord.

You're to have a holy respect for God.

Now an electrician—he has to have a fear of electricity if he is going to have a lot of longevity on the job, right? That doesn't mean that he trembles every time he goes to work. But it does mean that he knows what's in those wires. And so he has a respect for that power. Now that's the idea of the fear of the Lord. There's no competition between fearing God and loving God. As a matter of fact, the man who fears God the most loves Him the best.

Do you know what? Let me give you a definition of the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is love on its knees. That's what it is—love on its knees. The Bible says that the fear of the Lord is clean. It is not a filthy fear; it's a good fear. It's a very productive fear. So we're not talking about that kind of fear. We're talking about something that the Bible calls, here, “a spirit of fear.” Look in verse 7: “*For God has not given us the spirit of fear*” (2 Timothy 1:7). This is a negative kind of a fear that we would call a *spirit of fear*. Today, I guess, we would call it a *phobia*; if we were psychologists and psychiatrists, then we would call it a *phobia*.

The dictionary lists about 700 different kinds of phobias, beginning with “A” and ending with “Z”—just phobias—fears of all kinds of things. *Acrophobia*: fear of high places. Some people—you just can't get them up in a high place. I mean, no matter if there is a guardrail or anything else—they just have an inordinate fear of high places. And *claustrophobia*: fear of closed places. Some people—if you get them in a room that's too small, without windows or doors—now, look, friend, they get very, very nervous, and after awhile, they just have to get out. Other people have just the opposite—they have a fear called *agoraphobia*, which is the fear of open places. If they are out in an open field, and there are no walls for anything to close them in, then they get frightened, and they get nervous. There are people who have an inordinate fear of getting sick: *pathophobia*. There is the fear of disease. We all ought to wash our hands, but you know, not all the time. And these people, they just have this fear of sickness. I know a fear that a lot of people have; some here are affected with it. It is called *ergophobia*—fear of work. Work never bothers me. I can just lie down beside it and sleep, but some people are afraid of work. And some people have a fear of light: *photophobia*—which is a fear of light. And I guess, the worst fear of all is *phobophobia*—fear of fear. Some people are afraid that they are going to be afraid, and so, they constantly stay afraid, because they are afraid that they are going to be afraid. It's a terrible thing, because it's a *catch-22* type of thing, and they can't get out of this fear of fear. You see, these are senseless fears. These are fears that are not productive fears. They are negative fears. They are what we would call a *spirit of fear*.

Now we laugh at some of these things. And some of the things that I mentioned are relatively harmless. Dear friend, there are other fears—the *spirit of fear*—that are not

just relatively harmless, but deeply damaging, destructive, and debilitating. The Bible speaks of the bondage of fear. And I want you to see the destructive power of the spirit of fear. And then, I want you to see the delivering power of the spirit of faith. I want you to see how God has set us free, and how faith can face fear and overcome it.

## **I. The Destructive Power of the Spirit of Fear**

All right now, think about the destructive power of fear—the destructive power of the spirit of fear. I want you to notice three basic things that fear will do to anybody here. I'm talking about a spirit of fear—not productive fear. I'm talking about destructive fear.

### **A. Fear and Forgetfulness**

For example, notice what I'm going to call fear and forgetfulness. Notice, in verse 6, the Apostle Paul says to Timothy: *"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands"* (2 Timothy 1:6). Now Timothy was a very gifted man—unusually equipped and anointed to do the work of God. He had a remarkable gift of God, but he failed to use it.

And why did he fail to use the gifts that he had? He'd forgotten. Now so, the Apostle Paul says: *"I put thee in remembrance"* (2 Timothy 1:6). "You've forgotten who you are. You have forgotten your heritage. You have forgotten what God has done for you and what God wants to do through you. Timothy, you're a very gifted man, but you've forgotten it." Now what caused him forget it was fear. You see—look, if you will, and see how verses 6 and 7 are connected. Now he says: *"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For"*—now, that little word *for* connects those two verses—*"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear"* (2 Timothy 1:6–7).

Now the idea is that fear had caused him to forget. When you focus on fear, then, that takes all of the blue out of the sky, and you don't see—you don't understand who you are or what you can do. And that fear just causes you to forget all of the blessings of God. Some of you are immensely gifted and tremendously blessed, but there is something that you are afraid of, and it has caused you to forget all of the blessings and the giftings of God in your life, because you have focused on your fears, rather than trusting in the Lord and focusing on the Lord.

Now Timothy, at this time, didn't have much to be afraid of. If anybody had anything to be afraid of, it was Paul, who wrote this. Do you know where Paul was when he wrote this? Paul was in prison. Now look in verse 8—he says: *"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner"* (2 Timothy 1:8). Now Paul was a prisoner of the Lord in a metaphorical sense, in that he was a bondsman to the Lord Jesus, but he was also a prisoner in the literal sense, in that he was in prison. Paul was

in prison when he wrote this—perhaps, waiting to be executed. But Paul was not afraid.

Notice in verse 12, Paul says: *“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I’ve committed unto him against that day”* (2 Timothy 1:12). Paul says, “I know whose I am. I know what I’ve committed to the Lord. I’m in prison. Yes, I’m in prison. It’s all right. It’s all right.” Paul had not forgotten who God is and how great God is. Now dear friend, Paul had his eyes focused on the Lord, and even though Paul was writing in prison, you could just feel the Breath of Heaven flowing through that prison.

And if you are afraid today, I want to tell you, dear friend, that your fear has developed because you’ve forgotten who God is and what God has done for you. Okay?

## **B. Fear and Failure**

Now let me move on and talk to you not only about fear and forgetfulness—verse 6, but also about fear and failure—verse 8. Notice in verse 8: *“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner”* (2 Timothy 4:8). Now what had happened to Timothy was that Timothy had failed to share Christ, and he’d failed to stand up for the Apostle Paul. Why? Paul was in prison, and Timothy was afraid of what might happen to himself. Fear had shut his mouth, and fear had paralyzed him. Did you know, dear friend, that when we ought to succeed, many of us fail for one reason: because we’ve listened to that sinister minister of fear—the devil, rather than listening to God; and, that fear has paralyzed us—no matter how gifted we are.

I heard of a man whose farm was failing; his wife needed an operation; the mortgage on the farm was due; the payment on the tractor was due; the tuition was due; and the banks wouldn’t loan him any money. He was an ordinary farmer. He decided that the only thing left for him to do was to rob a bank, and so he tried to get up his courage. Now remember, this wasn’t his profession. And so he was walking around the block, trying to get up his courage. He had it all figured out in his mind how he would do it. He had a bag for the teller to put the money in, and he had a gun to frighten the teller with. And he had a little speech memorized. And so he walked into the bank, and he got all confused, because he was frightened to death. And rather than giving the teller that bag to put the money in, he shoved the gun to the teller. And then, he took that loose bag, and he pointed it at her. And he said to her, “Don’t stick with me; this is a mess up.”

Now folks, fear will do that to you. There are a lot of people—and many of them are sitting in this congregation today—who have abilities that are unused, gifts that are buried, and gifts that are forgotten. And I’ll tell you why—because you are afraid.

Lisa sang so beautifully here this morning. She’s gifted of the Lord. There may be

another Lisa sitting out there who will never sing a solo because of fear. You stand up to sing, and the icy fingers of fear grip your throat. There may be some Bible teachers out there; there may be some preachers out there; there may be some gifted people out there; but your gifts will never be used—not because you cannot, but because you have been intimidated by fear.

In Matthew chapter 25, Jesus gave the parable of the talents, which included how he gave to everyone different talents. And then, there was one man who said, “I took your talent, Lord, and I hid it in the ground, because I was afraid” (Matthew 25:25). How much buried talent there may be sitting in my congregation this morning! But you’ll never succeed, because of fear, and you’re ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. I dare say that most of my people here who are saved want to be soul winners. Do you know the major thing that keeps people from witnessing? It is not that they don’t want to see people be saved. It is not that they don’t want to be used of God. Be honest—the major thing that shuts the mouth of most of us is fear. Is that right? Fear—fear of failure.

So many people are afraid that they are going to fail that they do fail. Have you ever gotten behind a person when you are driving who was afraid every light’s going to turn red, and by the time that they get there, it has? Have you ever been around people such as this? I mean, they just project their failures. They are just ready to fail, and therefore, they do fail. And like Job: *“The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me”* (Job 3:25). And it is a built-in fear; it just comes upon us, and we just project it onto ourselves.

Now you don’t have to be a weak person to be a fearful person. Strong people are, sometimes, very much afraid. I was reading about Julius Caesar. Julius Caesar, to whose ears the shouts of the enemy were music. Julius Caesar was afraid of thunder. And if it would thunder, he would want to get underground into a cave. He just would quake. Peter the Great—the great Czar of Russia, the great political and military leader—was afraid to cross a bridge. And he would put one foot onto a bridge and would begin to tremble. You see, ordinary people, in some areas of their lives, can be possessed by an extraordinary fear that will keep them from being what they ought to be.

I wonder if you’ve been neutralized by fear. I wonder if there are some of you businessmen who will never succeed in business because of fear. I wonder if there are not people here who have been shackled by the devil. The Bible speaks of those who, all their lifetime, are in bondage because of fear.

### C. Fear and Frailty

Now let me talk to you not only about fear and forgetfulness—where we just forget who we are and the giftedness of God; fear and failure—that makes us ashamed and afraid to do what we could do and ought to do; but also, about fear and frailty.

Did you know that fear can literally sicken us and weaken our bodies? Now you’re in

2 Timothy. Turn to 1 Timothy chapter 5, and look in verse 23—Paul says to Timothy: *“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities”* (1 Timothy 5:23). Here was a man who was sickly. Now was he afraid because he was sickly? Perhaps so. But I think it is more reasonable to say that he was sickly because he was afraid. I think that he had a fearful disposition. And I believe that a fearful disposition literally made him sick.

Let me tell you what a well-known American internist—a doctor—said at a roundtable discussion on psychosomatic medicine. He said this: *“In spite of what they say, 90% of the chronic patients who see today’s physicians have one common problem—their trouble did not start with a cough, chest pain, or hyperacidity. In 90% of the cases, the first symptom was fear.”* Fear. Some doctors tell us that an arthritic condition may be exacerbated—greatly enflamed—because of worry and fear. You can worry yourself sick.

Worry is a terrible thing. Jesus, speaking of the last days, said that one of the marks of the last days would be this: that men’s hearts would fail them for fear—congestive heart failure because of fear. People who are carrying a load of fear actually have heart failure and physical problems because of fear. Fear in your life is like sand in machinery. Faith in your life is like oil—it lubricates life. Fear will do the same thing to you that sand will do to machinery.

## **II. The Delivering Power of the Spirit of Faith**

So look—I’ve talked to you about the destructive power of the spirit of fear. Now let me talk to you a little bit about the delivering power of the spirit of faith. Now thank God that Paul doesn’t just tell us the problem, but he also gives us the answer. He’s giving Timothy the answer; but, when he is giving Timothy the answer, he is also giving you the answer. For he says in verse 7, *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”* (2 Timothy 1:7).

Now here are the three elements that you take and put in your life—these three things: power, love, and a sound mind—and you can have a future free from the bondage of fear. Now when I say “the bondage of fear,” I’m not saying a future free from fear. I wouldn’t want a future free from fear. I’m talking about productive fear. Productive fear is good.

Several years ago, our phone rang in the middle of the night. I answered the phone, and it was one of my son’s roommates in college—down in Waco, Texas. He said, *“Mister Rogers, isn’t David supposed to be coming back to school today?”* And I said, *“Yes, he left early this morning. He should have had plenty of time to be there by now.”* I would have thought he’d been there by eight or nine o’clock. It was after midnight. He said, *“Well, Mr. Rogers, I just thought I ought to let you know that he’s not here.”*

I got to thinking about that old rattletrap car he was driving. It was a dark, stormy night. You know all those things that go through a daddy's mind. I thought: Well, maybe he's had a blowout; maybe he's in a ditch; maybe he's been robbed; maybe he's been in a wreck; or maybe he's out of gas. What could've happened?

He said, "Mr. Rogers, you have any idea where he is?" I said, "No, son; I don't." I said, "Please call me in an hour and let me know if he's in." Early morning—he called back: "Mr. Rogers, he's not here." Hours before then, he should have been there! How are you going to find someone in hundreds of miles of road? What are you going to do? And I thought to myself, as I felt that spirit of fear come in: "Adrian, you preach to people. You told them not to be afraid. You've told them that God hasn't given them the spirit of fear, and you're afraid. Why doesn't your sermon work?" So I said, "Well, I'll preach it to myself again." It still didn't work—all that fear was there. I said, "Am I a hypocrite, or have I been preaching something that is not true? Why, why am I afraid right now?"

And I realized that particular fear, as I analyzed it, was a legitimate fear. God gave me a legitimate fear that says, "All right, do something—don't just go back to sleep, if there is anything you can do." Well, in that case, there was nothing that I could do or knew to do. I had to commit it to the Lord.

Do you know what had happened? The numbskull had gone to Dallas! And in Dallas, he had met somebody who was looking for directions, so he was driving all over Dallas trying to help this man find his way, figuring daddy wouldn't know whether he got there in time or not, so what daddy didn't know wouldn't hurt him. But daddy did know.

Now I'm not talking about the legitimate fear that will cause you, or motivate you, to do something that you ought to do to protect your loved ones and so forth. There is a difference, also, between fear and worry. I realized I'd begun to worry, and I said, "Lord, I can't do that. I just put that in your hands." And I did—I committed it to the Lord.

But I am talking to you about that nonproductive, negative spirit of fear. Do you know the difference between legitimate fear and the spirit of fear? Legitimate fear is like a thunderstorm: the lightning flashes; the thunder rolls; the water pours down; then, the storm passes, the clouds roll back, and the sun shines again. The spirit of fear is just like a constant darkness—a drizzle, a fog. You live in it. God has not given you that kind of spirit. That's not productive—that's negative; that's unreasonable. That does not help to make us what we ought to be.

#### **A. God Has Endued Us with Power**

Now dear friend, God gives us three things, and I want to give them to you, very quickly. They will enable you to have a future free from the bondage of fear. First of all, God has endued us with power. Now notice: "*God hath not given us the spirit of fear;*

*but of power*" (2 Timothy 5:7). Remember, Jesus said: "Ye [shall] be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). The power that he's talking about is the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

Now do you know why we are afraid when we are afraid? We're afraid that we do not have the resources to meet our enemy. I mean, if we have a foe that we feel is bigger than we are, then we are afraid. If I understand that I have greater strength than my foe, then there is no need for me to be afraid.

For example, when you were a little kid, if you walked home from school, and there was a bully who picked on you, then you might have been afraid to walk home from school. I remember that I used to have this kid who picked on me. This bully that picked on me made me afraid, and every day this bully followed me home from school, just picking on me and picking at me. I was scared to death. One day, I decided I'd had enough, and I turned around, and I told *her*, "You leave me alone."

In all seriousness, if you were walking home from school and there was somebody who was picking on you, but your daddy began walking home from school with you, then you would no longer be afraid. Because, greater is he that is with you than the guy who's picking on you.

Now listen: "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4)—"Greater is he that is in you." You see, if you have the spirit of fear, then it is because you have not focused on the Lord. You have forgotten the gift of God that is in you by the laying on of hands or by whatever means God has come upon you and gifted you.

So dear friends, remember that God has given us the spirit of power. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). That's the reason why the psalmist puts it this way, and I think this is such a beautiful psalm—in Psalm 27, and verse 1: "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" There's a lot of sense in that, isn't there? "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).

You see, God has given us the spirit of power—that is, the Lord is the strength of my life. Now the fear of God, therefore, removes all other fears. *The man who can kneel before God can stand before any man.* Okay?

Now first of all, on your check list: "Am I remembering God's power, shown to me? Do I know just how great my God is?" *You need to glimpse at your problems and gaze at your God.* The fear of man made Saul a coward. The fear of God made David a hero, when he went against Goliath.

## **B. God Enriches Us with the Spirit of Love**

Okay now, secondly, not only has God given us the spirit of power, but God has also given us the spirit of love. Love, also, is a mighty, mighty force to deal with fear. Now

how does love deal with fear? Well, the Bible tells us very clearly how love deals with fear, in 1 John chapter 4, and verse 18. Now in 1 John chapter 4, and verse 18, the Bible says: *“Perfect love casteth out fear”* (1 John 4:18).

Well, as I’ve told you before, that verse used to bother me. It didn’t help me much at all. I used to interpret that verse to mean that, if I loved God perfectly, then I wouldn’t be afraid. Then, I said, “Well, I don’t do anything perfectly, except sin, so how is that going to help me?” The Bible verse doesn’t mean that, if I love God perfectly, then I won’t be afraid. It literally means that I don’t have to be afraid, because God loves me perfectly.

Now let me give it to you in *The Living Bible*. Now remember, *The Living Bible* is a paraphrase, but here I think it amplifies beautifully what the Scripture says in 1 John chapter 4, verse 18: *“We have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly”* (1 John 4:18). Do you see it? We have no need for the fear of someone who loves us perfectly. His perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what He might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what He might do, and it proves that we are not fully convinced that He really loves us. Friend, when you see, on the one hand, God’s mighty power, and, on the other, God’s mighty love, then fears seem to melt away. Amen? When you see, on the one hand, God’s mighty power, and, on the other hand, God’s total love, then fear seems to melt away. God endues us with power. God enriches us with love.

Now I just rest in that love. I say, “Lord, no matter what happens to me, I know that I know that You love me. And because You love me, and because You are all powerful, *‘All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose’*” (Romans 8:28).

### **C. God Enlightens Us with a Sound Mind**

But there’s one other thing that is necessary—not only does God endue us with power, not only does God enrich us with love, but God also enlightens us with a sound mind. Because, God has not given us the spirit of fear, but, number one, a spirit of power; number two, one of love; and, number three, one of a sound mind. Now these words *sound mind* literally mean that God has given us discipline—or self-control, or a discerning spirit. “Wise discretion”—that’s what the words *sound mind* mean. You see, so many of the things we are afraid of we are afraid of not on the basis of reality, but because the deceiver has made us afraid.

The motivational speaker Zig Ziglar says, “Fear is often false evidence appearing real.” Indeed it is, and the devil, so many times, causes us to be afraid when there is nothing to be afraid of. You know, the Bible says: *“The wicked flee when no man pursueth”* (Proverbs 28:1).

Have you ever been out at night and just gotten the idea someone was behind you? I used to feel that way when I was a little boy. Mama would have me carry out the

garbage—way out to the back alley. It would be about eight o'clock at night, and it would be dark out there. And I had the idea, all the way back to the house, that somebody was chasing me. It may have been so, but I didn't have any real basis for that fear.

Now listen. God gives us a sound mind. That is this: We are able to take these things and to look at them in the clear light of God's Word. And many times, you have to take yourself by the nape of the neck and make yourself analyze these things. You see, we have to look past what might happen to us in the immediate moment and see that God is ultimately victorious. That's what Paul did, in 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 12—he says: *“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day”* (2 Timothy 1:12).

“Now Timothy, you're ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.” “I'm not ashamed.” “Why?” “Because, I know in whom I have believed. I am persuaded that He is able to keep me.” Now that's a sound mind, right? That's a sound mind. He wasn't blown away by all of these things that the devil was doing. Now he had a commitment—a faith in the Lord Jesus.

## Conclusion

I was reading about a Japanese soldier. During World War II, in 1944, when the tide began to turn, this soldier was living on the island of Guam. And when the tide began to turn, and he thought that the Japanese were going to lose, he deserted the Japanese army and holed up in a cave in the jungles of Guam. For 28 years, this soldier stayed in that cave, and he would only come out at night. He ate frogs; he ate rats; he ate shrimp that he could catch in puddles; and he ate wild fruit and anything he could get his hands on. And for 28 years, he lived as a prisoner of his fear. Well, the war ended, and we were driving Toyotas, watching Sonys, and taking vacations to Tokyo. And here's this guy, living down there in fear, because he doesn't know the war is over.

Hey, friend, I want to tell you that the war is over, and Jesus has won. Jesus has won, and it is finished. It's finished, and He's offered amnesty and forgiveness. We can all come home. The devil doesn't want you to know that. And so do you know the reason that a lot of people don't come to God? They are afraid of God. Now I'm not talking about a healthy fear of the Lord—they just think negatively about God. Friend, the war is over, Jesus is victor, and your sin has been paid for. And the devil doesn't want you to understand these things, but the Apostle Paul says: *“Nevertheless... I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day”* (2 Timothy 1:12). Have you committed everything to Him? Then, don't be afraid.

# A New Year Without Fear

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Sermon Date: January 3, 1982**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 1:6–12**

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## Introduction

Take your Bibles, please, now, and turn to 2 Timothy chapter 1—2 Timothy chapter 1—very exciting passage of Scripture that we have before us. We are using as a sermon subject this morning “A New Year Without Fear”—“A New Year Without Fear.” I want us to begin reading in verse 6—2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 6: *“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on...hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But...now [is] made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and...brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not*

*ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” (2 Timothy 1:6–12)*

We face a future. We face 1982, and the future has two handles: one handle is called fear, and the other handle is called faith. And, you can take hold of this new year with one of those two handles. I was interested to note as I did my Bible study this week that three hundred and sixty-five times, one time for every day of the year, God has said in His Word, “Fear not.” Isn’t that wonderful? We’ve got one “fear not” for every day that God is giving us in this new year. Three hundred and sixty-five times God has said in His precious Word, “Fear not. Be not afraid.” And so, we’re going to talk to you today about a future free from fear.

But, let me say as we introduce this that not all fear is bad. There is healthy fear and unhealthy fear, grounded fear and ungrounded fear, productive fear and nonproductive fear. I would not tell my children, for example, “There’s nothing to fear but fear itself” as long as there are drunken drivers, and rattlesnakes, and other things. If you live in Memphis, Tennessee, you’d better watch the traffic, amen? Here, you know... In the Bible, the Bible divides people between the quick and the dead, (Acts 10:42; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5) and that’s the same way it is here: either you’re quick or you’re dead. And, you just... There...there are a lot of things that...that we ought be afraid of. These are...these are self-preserving instincts that God has given us. And, normal fears—there’s nothing wrong with the shot of adrenalin that you feel when you’re in sudden danger. That is a gift of God. God gave that to you so that you can keep on living a little longer. So, that’s...that’s normal. There’s nothing wrong with that.

And then, indeed, we are to fear God—we are to fear God. Now, the fear of God is a very healthy thing. You know, Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, said in Proverbs chapter 1, verse 7: *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of [wisdom].”* (Proverbs 1:7) A man is void of even an ounce of wisdom if he doesn’t fear God. Now, that doesn’t mean that we cringe in the presence of God. That means that we have a reverence—a respect—for Almighty God. *The electrician doesn’t quake in the presence of electricity, but he’s very careful how he handles those wires. And, we have that respect—that reverence—for God.* The Bible says in Psalms 89, verse 7: *“God is greatly to be feared [and] the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.”* (Psalms 89:7) And so, we’re to reverence God. Those kinds of fears are good. They are healthy. They are productive. And, there’s nothing wrong with that.

But, when the Bible says here that *“God hath not given us the spirit of fear,”* (2 Timothy 1:7) he uses a word for fear that is only used in the negative sense, in the bad sense. A negative fear, a debilitating fear, a fear that drags you down, a fear that disturbs you, a fear that distresses you, and a fear that will ultimately destroy you does not come from God. Now today, we call those fears “phobias”—“phobias.” The

psychologist and the psychiatrist have listed seven hundred different phobias from A to Z. They start with A—acrophobia—end with Z—zoophobia. Acrophobia is a fear of high places. Zoophobia is a fear of animals. Put them together, you've got a fear of mountain goats. You know, we...we have all kinds of fears, and these are fears that are numbing fears, and they are not rooted in objectivity out there but subjectivity within us. That is, we are the cause of our own fears. And, I just list some of these phobias, and maybe you have one or more of these.

For example, we've already mentioned acrophobia, which is a fear of high places. Claustrophobia is a fear of closed places. There are some people who just cannot stand to be in a closed-in room. And then, over against that is agoraphobia—people who are afraid of wide-open spaces. They have to be inside of a closed room. Or, neophobia—these are people who are afraid of new things. Or, pathophobia—these are people who are afraid of disease. They're always afraid they're going to get sick; and so, they won't touch anything or handle anything because they have a pathophobia. Here's one I think a lot of people have: ergophobia, fear of work—ergophobia. You know anybody who has that? Well, there are some people who have that. And then, there's some people who have a tremendous fear—and I guess the worst fear of all is—phobophobia, the fear of fear. They're just afraid that they're going to be afraid, so they stay afraid all the time because they're afraid they're going to be afraid. And so, they have phobophobia—a fear of fear. And so, the psychologists have given all of these destructive, subjective fears names, and we call them “phobias.”

And, and, you don't have to be weak to have one of these phobias. As a matter of fact, the famous Dr. Samuel Johnson that we've read so much about had a phobia about entering a room with his left foot first. And, if he ever went into a room left-footed, he would stop, back out, and start again and go in with his right foot. He had also a phobia about death. He would not even allow death to be mentioned in his presence. And, Julius Caesar—the great Julius Caesar—had a fear of thunder, and if it thundered, he wished to be underground in a cave somewhere. He was just frightened of thunder. It's amazing the things that people are afraid of. Peter the Great, the Czar of Russia, had a phobia of bridges, and he would not cross a bridge unless he absolutely had to. And, if he crossed a bridge, he would start to tremble and cry the moment he would put his foot on a bridge. These are great men, intelligent men, but they had fears and phobias.

When I played football, we played football with a great big old boy that tall. He was The Incredible Hulk of his day. He was a baseball player, a trackman. He was a basketball player, an All-Southern football player, just a great guy. And, we went in one day in school. They were giving us shots. And, when he saw that little needle, out he went—just like that. I mean, just...old Ned just flaked out flat. He just fell down like a

dead man, and I was amazed. Here...here's this great big strong guy, but yet he had that fear of that little needle. It's amazing the things that people have fears about. And, I suppose all of us to some way, somehow, have some of these fears and these phobias, and they come out of us—they come out of us.

How were they put into us? Fear and sin are related—related. Do you know that Adam's first recorded words in the Bible after he had sinned are these: *"I was afraid"—"I was afraid...and I hid myself."* (Genesis 3:10) He had a theophobia. He had a fear of God, and it made him afraid of other things. Here was this fear that came within his heart. And, sin and fear are inseparably linked together.

Now, your phobia may have come from some childhood event that came into your life, or your fear may have come by some person who has put that fear in your mind. It may be because there's some guilt there that doesn't give you rest. But, whatever your fear is, I want to tell you that a mind, a heart, that has been corrupted by sin is the fertile soil in which these phobias, these godless fears, can rule and reign and sometimes destroy our lives. And so, today, as we're looking at a future free from fear—a new year without fear—I want us to study primarily two things here from 1 Timothy...or 2 Timothy chapter 1: first of all, I want us to see the destructive power of the spirit of fear; and then, secondly, I want us to see the dynamic power of the spirit of faith. All right, the destructive power of the spirit of fear and then the dynamic power of the spirit of faith.

## **I. The Destructive Power of the Spirit of Fear**

Now, what is the destructiveness of this spirit of fear? And actually, this spirit of fear makes me wonder if there's not a special demon of fear that the Bible calls "the spirit of fear." And, I want you to look at them.

### **A. Fear and Forgetfulness**

First of all, there is fear and forgetfulness. Look in verse 6. Now, verse 7 says, *"God hath not given us the spirit of fear."* (2 Timothy 1:7) But, look in verse 6. Paul is having to remind young Timothy of something he forgot: *"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."* (2 Timothy 1:6) Now, there were some things that Timothy had forgotten. If there was ever a man that was blessed of God, graced of God, it was young Timothy. He was raised in a Christian home. He had a Christian grandmother. He had a Christian mother. From a child he'd known the Holy Scriptures that were *"able to make [him] wise unto salvation."* (2 Timothy 3:15) He had a great mentor, a great teacher, who was the Apostle Paul, who was his father in the faith. And, he had had a wonderful ordination service, and there at his ordination service, the Apostle Paul had laid his hands on him and God the Holy Spirit had come upon him with great anointing and great power to enable him to

preach the gospel. What a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful, wonderfully blessed man Timothy was!

But, do you know what happened? He'd forgotten it—he'd forgotten it. Do you know why? He was focusing on fear. The Bible shows us that Timothy was a man who was given to fear. We might call him "timid Timothy." And, in another place, Paul was writing to the apostles, and he said, "Now, take care of Timothy. And, and, if he's with you, see to it that he doesn't have any fear." We just know that he was a man who was given to fear. He was a man with a fearful nature. And, these fears were not godly fears; they were not grounded fears. They were godless fears, ungrounded fears. They were not productive fears; they were unproductive fears. And, evidently, Timothy had so focused on his fear that he'd failed to see the blessings that Almighty God had given to him. And, do you know what? Do you know what? If you're not careful, the devil's going to do the same thing to you. You're going to get some numbing fear, some destructive fear, some debilitating fear, and you're going to be so focused on that that you're not going to be able to see all of the blessings of God that God has for you. That fear will become a dark cloud that will blot all of the blue out of your sky, and you will live in 1982 in a dungeon of doubt and despair and fear rather than enjoying the blessings of God.

This past summer, we had the joy, the privilege, to travel in the Swiss Alps with some dear friends. I don't believe there's any more beautiful scenery than that in all of the world. I just thank God for the joy, the privilege, that was mine to travel and see those things—those gorgeous mountains, those ravens, those waterfalls, those trees, those animals. It was fantastic. One particular day we took a journey up through a mountain pass. There were waterfalls and snow and all of these things. Oh, just beautiful! But, I noticed a couple of people on our bus kept their eyes closed half the time. Oh, I mean, they were petrified. You talk about...you talk about agoraphobia. I mean... Or, or, or, or, what's...what's the one for a high? Buddy, they had it. I mean, agoraphobia—they had it. I mean, when that bus had it get, you know, where it even looked like it got near the edge, and they're...they're just missing so much—just missing so much. So much to see, so much to enjoy, so many blessings—but sometimes we miss blessings in life because fear has closed our eyes, and we have to have an Apostle Paul say, "I want to put you in remembrance. I want you to stop focusing on this fear. There are some wonderful things, some glorious things." (2 Timothy 1:6) And, I want to tell you, dear friend, this day is chock-full of blessings, if you'll just open your eyes and look and stop focusing on fear and start putting your eyes upon the things of God.

The Apostle Paul is writing this scripture to Timothy from prison. You say, "Well, you don't know the troubles I've got." Paul was in prison, dear friend, but the breath of heaven is blowing through that prison as you read this book that the Apostle Paul has

written, because the Apostle Paul was not focusing on fear. His focus was one of faith.

## **B. Fear and Failure**

And so, the very first thing, as we think about the destructive power...the destructive power of sin—and of fear, rather—is fear and forgetfulness. The second thing I want you to see is fear and failure—fear and failure. Now, look in verse 8—in verse 8. In verse 7, Paul warns him about fear. And then, he says in verse 8: *“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner.”* (2 Timothy 1:8) Do you know what happened? Timothy wasn’t preaching the gospel like he ought to. He was failing in his God-given task. He, who was meant to be a herald of the gospel, had become ashamed of the testimony of our Lord and his Christ. He was paralyzed by fear.

You know, the Bible speaks of those who are in bondage because of fear. (Isaiah 14:3) And indeed, fear can put you into bondage. Indeed, fear can shackle you. And so, you do not witness as you ought. You do not sing as you ought. You do not preach as you ought. You do not teach as you ought. You do not live as you ought because your life is in bondage because of fear. There’s some of you who could sing—maybe not as well as Chuck Reynolds just sang, maybe better—but you’ll never sing because if you were to stand up and sing, the icy fingers of fear would get you and you’d not be able to sing. There’s some of you who ought to preach, but you’ll not preach. There’s some of you ought to teach, but you’ll not teach. There’s some of you who ought to witness, but when you go to witness, a yellow streak runs up and down your spine and your knees turn to water. Admit it—admit it. And, it is a spirit of fear that the devil has given to neutralize you. The devil knows he can never get you back. So, if he can’t get you back, what he’d like to do is do the same thing that he tried to do with this marvelously gifted young man named Timothy and to neutralize him with fear.

And, not only is there fear and forgetfulness; there is fear and failure. Here was a man who was failing to do what he ought to do. You see, listen. Listen to me now. When God saved you, God called you. And, when God called you, God equipped you. And, every one here has a spiritual gift—every one. Listen, every one of you have abilities, but fear will keep you from using those abilities.

Do you remember there in Matthew chapter 25 the story of...the parable of the talents, where that rich man is going away into a far country? And, he gave different ones different talents. And, he gave to one man some talents, and that man did what with them? He hid them in the ground. And, when the master came back, and he required an accounting of those talents, do you remember what that man said? Well, let me read it to you here from Matthew chapter 25, verse 25. He says, *“I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth.”* (Matthew 25:25) “Because of my fear, I hid my GodA given talent in the ground.” And, do you know what his master said to him? “You’re

a wicked servant. You're a slothful servant." (Matthew 25:26) "*I was afraid*"—"I was afraid." (Matthew 25:25) And, there's some of you gifted of God... All of you are gifted of God. There's not a person here without a spiritual gift if he knows the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you hidden that talent in the ground? Young Timothy was in danger of hiding his God-given talent to preach the gospel, the gift of God that was on him by the laying on of hands; and yet, he was ashamed of the testimony of our Lord and His Christ. Oh, the destructive power—the destructive power—of the spirit of fear! The destructive power of the spirit of fear!

### C. Fear and Frailty

But, not only fear and forgetfulness, not only fear and failure, but also fear and frailty. Do you know that this spirit of fear, I believe, had caused Timothy to be in poor health? Now, if you'll read 1 Timothy, the fifth chapter, there you'll find that Paul spoke to Timothy about his "*often infirmities*." (1 Timothy 5:23) He was a sickly soul, young Tim was, and he stayed sick, so that Paul had to speak to him about his "often infirmities"—the fact that he was so often sick. Now, what made him so sick? Paul said, "You're often sick." Well, I'll tell you, I believe, although I can't prove, I just believe that old Tim was sick because of his fears—I really do. Do you know what fear is? **Look, fear is sand in the machinery of life. Faith is oil in the machinery of life. Fear will do the same thing to you that sand will do to machinery. It just grinds away, grinds away, grinds away.** And, whether Timothy was sick because of his fear or because his fear made him sicker than he was anyway, I want to tell you one thing, ladies and gentlemen: it did him no good.

Dr. Jerome D. Frank of Johns Hopkins University said, and I quote, "Anxiety is crippling us until the human race is sick and needs a world psychiatrist." I want to tell you what Dr. S. I. McMillen said. And, by the way, you ought to get that little book called *None of These Diseases*. I believe our bookstore has it. It's a real blessing to you. Dr. McMillen, a Christian physician, said this: "About nine million Americans suffer from emotional and mental illness. As many hospital beds are filled by the mentally deranged as are filled by all medical and surgical patients combined. In fact," he says, "one out of every twenty Americans will have a psychotic disturbance severe enough to confine him to a hospital for the insane"—one out of twenty. That's something, friend. And, I believe that the root of it all is this thing called "a spirit of fear," and it is not of God. It roots in sin. It began in the Garden of Eden. And so, we see the destructive power of the spirit of fear. We see fear and forgetfulness, where we miss the blessings of God. We see fear and failure, where we fail to serve God as we ought. We see fear and frailty, where our bodies are mechanisms...are being destroyed by what the Bible calls "a spirit of fear"—"a spirit of fear."

## II. The Dynamic Power of the Spirit of Faith

Now, let's look at the other side. Let's look not only at the destructive power of the spirit of fear, but let's look at the dynamic power of the Spirit of faith. And, the Spirit of faith is the Holy Spirit. Look in verse 7: *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but"*—what has He given us? He has given us the Spirit—*"of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."* (2 Timothy 1:7) Do you know what God has given you on this threshold of a brand new year if you're a child of God? Do you know what God's Trinitarian blessing is to you? Power, love, a sound mind! Listen, He has endued you with power. He has enriched you with love. He has enlightened you with understanding. And, these are God's mighty weapons that God wants to use so that you can face your future free from fear and so that you can have a new year without fear. Now, let's look at them.

### A. He Has Endued Us with Power

First of all, let's look and see how we have been endued with power. Now, the Bible says, *"God hath...given us the spirit of...power."* (2 Timothy 1:7) That is the Holy Spirit. Let me give you a verse: Luke 24, verse 49. Jesus is speaking; He says, *"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you...tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."* (Luke 24:49) What was Jesus talking about? The Holy Spirit. Therefore, when Paul told Timothy, "God has given you the spirit of power," he doesn't mean, "Timothy, you have power in yourself as of yourself." It means that God's dear Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of power, He lives in you, and since He's in you and He's all-powerful, then why be afraid?

Do you know what makes us afraid? When we feel that we're weaker than our enemies. Say, when you went to school as a little child, was there somebody who picked on you? Was there ever a bully that picked on you—made you afraid to go to school? Somebody who was stronger than you? I remember when I was a little boy, this mean kid used to follow me home from school every day, and pick on me, and beat me up, and pick on me. I was so afraid. Finally, I just had enough. I turned around. I told her, "You leave me alone." Well, that didn't really happen, but anyway, many of us—many of us—have people who kind of pick on us.

Now look, let's, at that child that's going to school. He's got that person picking on him. Now, suppose that child goes to school, and this time a big brother, six-foot-one-inch, goes with him—do you think he's afraid then? Absolutely not. Or, a daddy goes with him. You see, because of who's with him, he's no longer afraid. Now, that's what the Apostle Paul is telling us: *"God [has] given us the spirit of...power."* (2 Timothy 1:7) God's almighty, omnipotent Spirit is with us. Jesus said, *"Lo, I am with you."* (Matthew 28:20) And, *"if God be for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31) And, what enemy is there that should make us quake when we realize that within us and upon us is God's

dear Holy Spirit? Then, we don't have to be afraid of men. That's what Jesus meant when He said in Matthew chapter 10, verse 28: *"And fear not them which [are able to] kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him [who] is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* (Matthew 10:28) That is fear of God. Don't fear any two-legged man whose breath is in his nostrils. Don't fear man, who just kills the body, because, you see, when he kills the body, he can't kill the soul. You can't die.

You know, the Bible speaks of those who all their lifetime are in bondage because of fear of death. (Hebrews 2:15) But, notice what Paul told Timothy now. Look, if you will, in verse 10: he speaks of the Savior, and he says, *"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ"*—now, watch this—*"who hath abolished death."* (2 Timothy 1:10) He just abolished it. Jesus said, *"[He that] liveth and believeth in me shall never die."* (John 11:26) They may kill the body, but they can't kill the soul. So, Paul says, "Look, Timothy, don't worry about it." You say, "That's easy for you to say, Brother Rogers." I'm not saying it; Paul's saying it. He was in prison—said, "Don't worry about it. God has abolished death." Hallelujah! It's abolished.

"Don't be afraid of those who kill the body—can't kill the soul. Fear Him who's able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28) If you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, then—then—you ought to be afraid. And then, that fear ought to bring you to the Lord because that kind of a fear is a productive fear that brings you in repentance and faith to know the Lord as your personal Savior. You see, listen to me, friend: *no man is ready to live as long as he's afraid to die—no man is ready to live so long as he's afraid to die.* But, when you are no longer afraid to die, for the very first time, you are ready to live. And so, Paul is saying, "Look, God has given us power. It's the Spirit of power, God's dear Holy Spirit in us—power to face every foe, power to meet every demand, power to endure every trial. God's Holy Spirit—His omnipotent Spirit—lives in us."

## **B. He Has Enriched Us with Love**

But, not only has He endowed us with power, but look—He has enriched us with love, because this verse says, *"God hath...given us the"*—*"not given us the spirit of fear"*—number one—*"but of power"*—number two—*"of love."* (2 Timothy 1:7) You say, "Well, Brother Rogers, what does love have to do with fear?" You think it would say that God gave us the Spirit of courage, but it doesn't say that. He gave us the Spirit of love. Did you know that there's no more dynamic force to overcoming fear than love?

### **1. His Love for Us Removes Fear**

As a matter of fact, our Bible says that *"perfect love"*—does what?—*"[casts] out fear."* (1 John 4:18) *"Perfect love [casts] out fear."* (1 John 4:18) But, it is so beautifully translated in another translation. Let me read to you 1 John 4:18 in a paraphrase. Listen to it—1 John 4:18: "We have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly." You see, it's not our

perfect love for God that casts out fear. It's God's perfect love for me that casts out fear. His perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what He might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear that He...of what He might do to us and shows that we are not fully convinced that we...that He really loves us.

You see, dear friend, His love... When you were a baby, did you have a security blanket or some teddy bear—something that you just had to hold on to? Or, how many of you have children who have security blankets? Some of ours did. One of them had a little blanket. As long as it had that blanket and that little fringe they could twitch under their nose, they're perfectly happy. But, you know, that old Linus, you know, in Peanuts—he's got his blanket. But, well, we never outgrow our need for a security blanket. Do you know what our security blanket is? The love of God. We're just wrapped up in His love. And, when God is there and we know that He loves us perfectly, why then should we be afraid? Oh, my dear friend, God is with us. And so, we can say in Psalms 27, verse 1: *"The LORD is my light and my salvation; [of] whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"* (Psalms 27:1) Hallelujah! His love for us... As we nestle in His bosom, as a child is safe in the arms of his father and no longer fears those things, then we can crawl up into God's lap and say, "God's love—His perfect love—cast out all fear."

## **2. Our Love for Him Removes Fear**

But, not only His love for us, but our love for Him also renews...removes fear. Did you know there's nothing that will neutralize fear like your love for another person? You watch how bold a mother will become when her children are threatened. A little old timid lady—you'd better watch out for her if you threaten her children. She's coming for you like a buzz saw. That's right. I read in the newspaper—I had to read it several times to make sure I was reading it correctly—where a little woman who weighed not much over one hundred pounds strangled to death, I believe it was, a German shepherd dog who threatened her child. She pounced on that dog and with her hands throttled it—a little woman. Man, I couldn't do that. Throttled a dog! Choked it to death! Where did she get that courage? Love gave it to her—love gave it to her. What causes a person who would never be a door-to-door salesman to witness for the Lord Jesus Christ? Love for the Lord Jesus Christ. I'll tell you, that kind of love casts out fear—when we say, "If God so loved us and that love is dwelling in our heart, dear friend, of whom shall I be afraid?" You see, His love for me and my love for Him—what a powerful force that is to overcoming fear! You see, the question is not really, am I brave enough? The question is, am I loved enough, and do I love enough?

I was talking to a lady. Now, you know, when I baptize people, we always have this little baptismal instruction period, and also, Brother Dale does. And, one of the questions that I almost always ask before I baptize people is this: Are you afraid of

water? You know, some people are afraid of water. I'm not talking about... It's just a phobia. They're afraid like, for example, of their head being placed under water. They're literally afraid of it. And, I saw this little lady. She looked to me between...to be between seventy and eighty. And, you know, people, when they get that age, they don't take to new things too easily. You know that, don't you? I'll guarantee it. They do not. And, I looked at her, and I was talking about being baptized. And, I could tell she was kind of fidgeting, and I asked her—I said, "Ma'am, are you afraid of water?" And, what she said so blessed my heart I've never forgotten; it's been several years ago. She said, "I am not afraid to be baptized." What a blessing that was to my heart. She didn't say she wasn't afraid of water, but she had such a love for the Lord Jesus Christ that it cast out that fear. "I am not afraid to be baptized," she said. And, that's what you see.

### **C. He Has Enlightened Us with Understanding**

Now, who is that Spirit of love? The Holy Spirit. The Bible says, "*The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.*" (Romans 5:5) And so, God has given us here... First of all, He has endued us with power. Then, He has enriched us with love. And then, He has enlightened us with understanding, for it says also that He "*hath...given us the spirit...of a sound mind.*" (2 Timothy 1:7) And, this word "sound mind" literally means a "disciplined mind," a mind that has discernment, a mind of self-control. That is, we're not going to become the devil's plaything. The devil is not going to be able to manipulate us with fears any more because God has given us a sound mind, a discerning mind, a controlled mind, where we can penetratingly see into those things, and see them for the false bogymen that they are, and see right through those things that we have no right and no need to be ashamed of. And, we're not going to be stampeded by the devil any more.

Many times we're afraid of things that we ought not to be afraid of. I think I told you in another message about an experience I had down in Florida when we were building a new Sunday School building down there. And, one evening after work, and everybody else had gone, I went over to walk through the building to take...to see what was happening—how far the builders had come along. And, I saw a room I'd never been in before, and I pushed the door open and went into that room. Now, they'd not put the doorknobs on that door, but they had put the door closer on it. And so, that door behind me went closed, and when it did, I realized it was like being in a cave. There were no windows in that room, and I was in the darkness. And so, I just kind of blinked around. I said, "Well, my eyes will get accustomed to the darkness." It was then that I saw him. There was another man in that room. Well, I thought, "Well, maybe he's a late worker." I said, "How are you?" He didn't answer. Then, the adrenalin started. I said, "What are you doing here?" He still didn't answer. I made a move, and he made a move. And then,

my heart was pumping. I thought, “Where is that door?” I couldn’t feel the handle, and I thought, “I’m in trouble.” And so, I said, “Answer me!” And, he didn’t answer. I said, “O God, I’ve got to have light.” I blinked my eyes a couple of times, and I saw him again. He was about this much higher than I was, about this much wider, and ugly—one of the ugliest men I’ve ever seen. “O,” I said, “Lord, help me!” And, I asked him one more time, “What are you doing in here?” He didn’t answer. I said, “Lord, I’ve got to have light.” I blinked my eyes again, and then I saw—it was me! I was looking in a mirror. There was a big mirror there. The guy wasn’t nearly so big and twice as ugly as I thought he was—just looking at myself in a mirror!

Listen, friend, do you know what fear is? Many times it is “False Evidence Appearing Real.” And, God has given us a Spirit of discernment. God has given us a sound mind. God turns the light on so we can see these things as they really are. That’s God’s wonderful gift to us. “God has not given us a spirit of fear. God has given us a Spirit of love, of power, and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7) God has endued us with power. God has enriched us with love. God has enlightened us with understanding. But, how does it become real? How do you get it into your life? Now, notice the Bible says, “God has given it.” (2 Timothy 1:7) Well, then, if God has given it, then that means it must be received. You know, sometimes we don’t receive all that God has given. Have you received God’s gift? I mean, are you letting God’s Holy Spirit deal in your heart and in your life?

### **1. Fleeing Is Not the Answer**

Now, many times we give such bad advice to people who are suffering fears. For example, sometimes we say, “Oh, man, just...if it bothers you, just get away from it.” We think to flee is the answer. You know, there are some things you just can’t flee. Have you ever read that scripture that says, “*The wicked flee when no man [pursues]*”? (Proverbs 28:1) When I was a little boy, my mother used to make me take the trash out—the garbage out. And, out in back of our house was a dark alley and a pump house, and the garbage cans were behind the pump house by the alley. And, if I would go out at nighttime, as a little fellow, and take the garbage out, I’d turn around and somehow I’d get the idea that there’d be someone behind me and run all the way back to the house. Do you ever do that? You just... You know, the wicked flee. I guess I was a pretty wicked little guy. “*The wicked flee when no man [pursues]*.” (Proverbs 28:1) The strange thing is that when you start to run, the fear builds—the fear builds. Of course, I was just a little fellow about seventeen years of age, but, you know, here you are just running back to the house. “*The wicked flee when no man [pursues]*.” (Proverbs 28:1) No, fleeing is not the answer. All that does is just incite your fear all the more.

### **2. Feeling Is Not the Answer**

Well, some people say, “Well, it’s not fleeing. It’s...it’s...it’s feeling. Just cheer up—just

cheer up.” That sounds so good. Tell a person who’s frightened to death, “Just cheer up. You’ll feel better.” Felix Lord Powell wrote a song, “Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit-Bag, and Smile, Smile, Smile.” He committed suicide. Yeah, pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag and just smile... No, it’s not by fleeing. It is not by feeling.

### **3. Forgetting Is Not the Answer**

Somebody else says, “Forget it.” Boy, that’s great advice for a person, isn’t it? “Just forget it.” You can’t forget it. And, if you put it out of your conscious mind, it’ll go down into your subconscious mind and show up as some neurosis, some physiological maladjustment. Oh, no, no, no, that’s not the way to overcome fear.

### **4. Fighting Is Not the Answer**

Someone else says, “Well, the way to overcome fear is just to fight it in the strength of your flesh.” And, the old devil who’s causing those fears just laughs at you because he knows that you’re no match for him.

### **5. Faith Is the Answer**

No, it’s not by fleeing. It’s not by feeling. It’s not by forgetting. It’s not by fighting. You must face your fear with faith—with faith.

Now, look to what Paul told Timothy. Look, look, look in 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 12. Paul is talking about the fact that he’s in prison, and he suffered, also. But, these things haven’t made him afraid. He says, “*For the which cause I also suffer these things*”—“Timothy, you’re not alone. Everybody’s got problems”—“*For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed*”—and that word *ashamed* means “I’m not terrified. I’m not...I’m not made frightened”—“*for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*” (2 Timothy 1:12) You see, what gave Paul his great confidence? His faith. “I know whom I have believed. I am not ashamed. I am not terrified. Oh, sure, I’ve got problems, but I tell you,” he says, “I have Jesus. And, I know that Jesus is greater than all of these things.” The Bible says in Psalms chapter 56, verse 3: “*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*” (Psalms 56:3) Do you remember what Jesus told those disciples who were afraid their ship was going to sink? In Mark chapter 4, verse 40, He says, “*Why [is it] ye [are] so fearful? how is it that [you] have no faith?*” (Mark 4:40)

## **Conclusion**

Oh friend, listen, the future has two handles: 1982 has a handle called fear and a handle called faith. “*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*” (Psalms 56:3) How does this Spirit of power come into my life? How does this Spirit of love come into my life? Where does this sound mind come from? From the Lord. When does it become mine?

When I do what Paul did: *“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”* (2 Timothy 1:12) Have you made your commitment? Have you? Why don’t you, this New Year’s, say, “All right, Lord, I’m going to believe in you. I’m going to commit my life to you, and I’m going to receive from you power, love, and a sound mind.”

I want every head bowed, every eye closed. Billy Graham once said, “The greatest fears are those fears of death, judgment, and eternity,” and Billy Graham was right—the greatest fears are the fears of death, judgment, and eternity. And, thank God, through the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, these fears are removed. While heads are bowed and eyes are closed, I wonder how many here today would say, “Brother Rogers, I have believed in Christ. I have committed my all to Him, and He has taken from me the fears of death, judgment, and eternity. And, I know that I know that I’m saved. I know that I know that I’m a child of God. And, if I should die today, I’d go to be with the Lord Jesus Christ.” While heads are bowed and eyes are closed, if you can give me that testimony, would you just slip up your hand for a moment? Hold it up so I can see it. “Yes, Brother Rogers, I know that I’m saved.” Thank you so much. That was many, but, of course, not all.

Now, if you couldn’t lift your hand just a moment ago, let me tell you, dear friend, the way to be able to do it the next time that happens is just to say, “Lord Jesus, I believe on you. I receive you, and I make my commitment to you.” I’m going to ask you to commit your life to Jesus. Just as the Apostle Paul committed his life to Jesus, I’m going to ask you to receive Him by faith today. I’m going to ask you to invite Him into your heart and to confess Him openly and publicly before men, and I’m going to ask you in just a moment to receive Him whom to receive is life eternal.

Let’s pray one more time. Lord Jesus, I pray today that many in this building will say an everlasting “yes” to you and that they will by faith receive you as their Lord and as their Savior. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

# Say Farewell to Fear

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: July 10, 1991**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 1:6–12**

**Sponsored by: Sponsor**

*“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”*

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

## Outline

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- A. Fear Can Cause Forgetfulness
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- I. God Endues Us with Power
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## Introduction

Would you take God’s Word and turn to 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy chapter 1 with me tonight. I want to talk to you a little bit about the subject of fear. And the title of our message tonight is, “Say Farewell to Fear.” Would you like to do that? Well, let’s see what God’s Word has to say about it.

Second Timothy chapter 1 and I begin reading in verse 6: “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

Now, from time to time, I read Ann Landers. I certainly don't agree with everything that dear Ann has to say, but you can learn much from reading a column like that. For example, you can learn what people are thinking. You can learn what peoples' problems are. They say that Ann Landers receives 10,000 letters a month. And, somebody asked Ann, "What one theme predominates those letters? If you just had to reduce it to one theme, what would it be?" Her answer was this: It's fear! People are afraid. One problem above all else is fear. And, they are afraid of losing their health, or afraid of losing their wealth, or afraid of losing one of their loved ones. Many of them are just afraid of life itself. And yet, a Christian ought not to be in bondage of fear.

Now let me say something about fear. When the Bible says, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear..." the Bible does not teach that we should never be afraid. If you don't know how to be afraid, I'm afraid for you. Being afraid is not a bad thing. Fear is a gift of God. And there are many fears that are wonderful and healthy and wholesome fears.

I think Theodore Roosevelt had a good line when he said in 1933, "There's nothing to fear but fear itself." That's a good line, but it's certainly not true. There are normal fears and productive fears. And don't ever tell people not to be afraid. For example, if you have children, teach them to fear automobiles when they cross the street. Teach them to fear rattlesnakes. Teach them to fear muggers and teach them, just as we had some folks the other night who were visiting our church. And, they said they were going to see Memphis. Brother Bob said, "Well, if you walk downtown at night time, be very careful where you go and look around." That was good advice, wasn't it? Sure was. Nothing wrong with that. That's normal and natural. God gives us certain instincts to protect us. And, if somebody lights a fire cracker under me right now, I'm going to jump. I mean, that's, there, there's nothing wrong with that. God built that into me.

And, let me tell you another fear that's a very wonderful fear. If you're not a Christian tonight, I hope you have this fear: Matthew chapter 10 and verse 28. The Lord Jesus said, "And fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." If you're not saved, you've got a good reason tonight to be afraid. And I would pray that that fear would be a motivation, an impulse, that would led you on tonight to say an everlasting yes to the Lord Jesus Christ and, have those fears assuaged by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus.

Not only are there normal fears, and not only is there the fear of hell that would urge us to get saved, but there's also the fear of God, which is a wonderful and productive fear. And it's not a part of the spirit of fear that Paul was talking about here, but, as a matter of fact, we're commanded to fear the Lord. We're told in Proverbs chapter 1, verse 7 that the, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. That's, you don't even begin to get started. You haven't even begun in your ABCs if you don't fear the

Lord. There's no contradiction between loving God and fearing God. As someone has well said, "He who fears God the most loves Him the best." I've often said that the fear of God is just love on its knees.

What does it mean to fear God? Well, the fear of God hates evil. Proverbs 8, verse 13: "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil..." Just as a doctor who hates disease, God hates evil. That's the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is a clean fear. The Bible says in Psalm 19, verse 9: "The fear of the Lord is clean..." But what Paul is talking about here is a filthy fear, an unproductive fear, a, dangerous fear. And it's called the spirit of fear.

When I talk to Bellevue's seniors here, when we had Senior Sunday and then we had the Agape Feast, I spoke to them some on this matter of fear. And I told them something that I want to share with you. It was a remarkable thing. I read it.

I want you to imagine seven city blocks. And I want you to imagine a fog one hundred feet high covering those seven city blocks. You got that in your mind? Ha. Do you know how much water is in that fog? Not enough to fill a drinking glass. And yet, seven city blocks, fog one hundred feet high, according to the statistic I read, you could take all of that water, squeeze it down, and put it in one drinking glass.

Now there is a spirit of fear that is like that fog that just seems to permeate some people. Now this fear is one of the most, non-productive, damaging things that it could possibly be. This fog, this spirit of fear, blots all of the blue out of your sky and, and you're not able to see the blessings and the goodness of God. When you focus on fear, you're really focused on very little else.

One of the times that we traveled in Europe, I had two very lovely ladies who went with us, both of them moderately young, and they sat up in the front of the bus. And we took a tour through the Swiss Alps. Oh, so beautiful, incomparably beautiful are the Swiss Alps. And that day was a day that, if you had set at master control, you could not mix a better day in my estimation. It was just absolutely perfect. And the Alps were there and the, the blue sky and the glaciers and the waterfalls and the firs and the wild deer and every – all of these things. But I watched this dear lady who had paid her money to go on that trip. She sat there with her eyes closed the whole time because of that winding mountain road. And, I really thought that she was going to rip the handles off of that seat there. And I felt so sorry for her because the fear that she had of those high places and the fear of that mountain road kept her from seeing everything that was so beautiful. Well, that only happened for a little while. And she got over that. And she had a good trip, anyway.

But there are some people who kind of go through life that way. They have what the Bible calls a spirit of fear. Now you say, "Well, Adrian, if you knew what I am facing, you'd have a spirit of fear also." Well, I might be afraid, but I wouldn't have the spirit of

fear, I hope. And I don't know what you're facing, and I don't know how bad it may be, but it's probably not as bad as the fellow who wrote this Scripture had to face when he wrote this Scripture.

The apostle Paul, who wrote this Scripture, was in prison waiting execution. Now tell me the size of your problem again. I mean, this was the one who said....I mean, not Adrian, not some person who doesn't know any problems. I've got some. But the man who wrote this to young Timothy was the apostle Paul. And he said to young Timothy, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear."

#### **A. Fear Can Cause Forgetfulness**

Now let me tell you what fear will do. Let me tell you why the damage of fear. Fear will cause you to forget the blessings of God. Now look, if you will, in chapter 1 and verse 6. Paul had to tell Timothy, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands, for..." Now he just connects verses 6 and 7. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear..." Now what he is saying is, "Paul, Timothy, the spirit of fear is connected with your forgetfulness. You have forgotten God's goodness to you. You have forgotten God's blessing to you because you have focused on fear and you focus on very little else." Fear can cause you to forget things that you ought to remember of God's goodness and God's blessing.

#### **B. Fear Can Cause Failure**

But not only for forgetfulness, but failure. Look, if you will, in verse 8, the verse that follows verse 7: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner..."

Now, evidently, Timothy not only had forgotten God's goodness to him, but he was afraid to testify. He was afraid to stand up for the Lord Jesus Christ. And the reason he was afraid to stand up for the Lord Jesus Christ is that he saw Paul was in prison. He knew what was about to happen to Paul and it paralyzed him. Unhealthy fear, the spirit of fear, will paralyze you. It brings bondage and keeps you from being the brave soldier for Jesus Christ that you ought to be.

There's some people in this congregation tonight who could teach a class, but you never will because of fear. There's some who could sing a solo, but you never will because of fear. There are some who could have a productive business, but you never will because of fear.

Do you remember that story in Matthew chapter 25, verse 25 where the Lord Jesus told about the man who gave talents to different ones? And, one man went and buried his talent in the ground. Do you remember that story? Nod your head. You remember? Okay. Good. Why did the man say that he'd buried his talent in the ground? He said, "I was afraid." That's why he did it. He just played it safe.

I mean, there are people who are just paralyzed by fear. Do you ever get behind a person who's afraid that every light is going to turn red before they get to it? And by time they do, it has. Now they just live life that way. The fear of failure causes so many people to forfeit in life. And Paul had to tell Timothy, a man who was gifted, a man who should have been a bold witness, "Don't be ashamed. God didn't give you that spirit of fear."

Now I want to say to you tonight, don't you let the sinister minister of fear, the devil, neutralize you and keep you from serving the Lord. And, don't let the icy fingers of fear hold you back.

### C. **Fear Can Cause Frailty**

Fear and forgetfulness, verse 6. Fear and failure, verse 8. And then, fear and frailty. Go back. You're in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy. Go back to 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy chapter 5 and look, if you will, in verse 23. Paul says to Timothy, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." Do you get the idea that Timothy had a nervous stomach? Here was a man who was jittery and it shows up primarily in the digestive tract. Here was a man who was often weak. And Paul has to write him and tell him, "God has not given us the spirit of fear." Fear in your life is like sand in machinery. As a matter of fact, fear often does men more damage than the thing they fear. The Lord Jesus said, "The last days, the days in which we live, men's hearts will be failing them because of fear." Men's hearts failing them because of fear—heart failure. Many people are living with congestive heart disease because they have not learned that a merry heart doth good like a medicine. And this fear is doing the same thing to you that it did to old Timothy so long ago.

As a matter of fact, I was reading that, ninety percent of the chronic patients (I'm talking about chronic patients) who seek today's physicians have one common problem. Their trouble did not start with a cough or with a chest pain or hyperacidity. In ninety percent of the cases, according to the source that I read, the first symptom was fear. Now this opinion was, one of a well-known American internist, and he expressed it at a roundtable discussion on psychosomatic medicine. And it's also the consensus of a growing number of doctors that fear hurts health.

I'm not talking about normal, good, productive fears that, you see, good fear is like a thundershower. Boy, it just comes. The, the thunder booms and the lightning flashes and the rain falls. You scurry to get out of the way. I mean, if somebody points a gun at you, the adrenalin's going to start to flow. It ought to flow. Getting ready for fight or flight. That's a gift of God. But the spirit of fear is like that fog. It, it just, it just permeates everything. That's not of God. We're going to see that is of the devil. Now that kind of fear can cause forgetfulness, it can cause failure, it can cause frailty. What do you do about it?

All right. It's a terrible thing to tell people not to be afraid. That just makes it worse sometime, because now they're afraid they're going to be afraid. Now it just gets worse. But the Bible doesn't do that to us. The Bible, when it tells us not to do something, tells us how not to do it. And, and look, if you will, again at this passage of Scripture. Go back, if you will, to 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy chapter 1 and, verse 7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear..." Man, we're talking about a spirit now, a phobia. "God hath not given us a phobia, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Now here's the way to say farewell to fear: Power, love, and a sound mind. All right. Now let's look at it.

How does this help you to say farewell to fear? I'm talking about the spirit of fear. I'm not talking about normal fear, healthy fear, the fear of God. I'm talking about this, deleterious fear that Paul is warning Timothy about. Well, what does God do? God gives us three things that help us to live free from fear.

## **I. God Endues Us with Power**

The very first thing He does, He endues us with power, verses 7 and 8: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel (now watch it) according to the power of God." God has endued us with power. What power is that? It's the power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 24, verse 49: "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." He endues us with power.

You see, the reason that people are, are fearful is they're infused with the sense of inadequacy. They feel inadequate. They feel weak. They feel inferior. And, therefore, they don't feel that they're a match for the things that are coming against them. A Christian is a person who is so walking in the Spirit, I mean, a Spirit-filled Christian, that he knows that there is within him a resource, a power, that is greater than all of those foes that come against him.

When, you were a child and walked to school, did you ever have a bully to pick on you, somebody that you were kind of afraid to walk to school because you're afraid, this bully would pick on you? I had a bully like that. I was just afraid to walk to school. Day after day this bully was after me. Finally, I got enough of it. I turned around and I told her, "You leave me alone!"

Seriously, if there is a bully that picks on a little boy, he's going to be afraid when he goes to school. But now, let me ask you this question: If daddy is walking him to school, is he afraid now? No! Why? Because he says, "My dad is here! My dad is bigger than that guy!" Right? "My dad is not going to let that guy jump on me."

Now, dear friend, God is that father, and He has endued us with power. And, and

when we, when we understand that the Lord is with us, truly with us. I don't mean just intellectually, but when we're so Spirit-filled that that is a reality in our lives, that's an incredible thing that comes against fear.

The Bible says in Psalm 27, verse 1, one of my favorite verses in all of the Bible, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Now, now I can just tell you this: That if you have the spirit of fear....I'm not talking about productive fear....but if you have the spirit of fear is because you've taken your eyes off God. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power...." He endues us with power. "The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?"

You see, the apostle Paul was not even afraid to die. You say, "Well, pastor, I've got problems." Well, look, if you will, in verses 9 and following. He speaks of the Lord, this power, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ (now listen to these words), who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." And so he says, he puts his suffering in perspective, verse 12: "For which cause I, I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed (that's another way of saying 'I, I'm not afraid'), for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he's able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." You see, Paul is not afraid to die.

Now the Bible teaches that Satan keeps people in bondage through the fear of death. But Paul is not afraid to die. I don't think he wanted to die, but he was not afraid to die. I don't think anybody is ready to live until they're no longer afraid to die. When you are not afraid to die, when you know that Jesus Christ has abolished death, then you can say, "I'm not ashamed. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He's able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." So what does God do to remove this spirit of fear? Number one: He endues us with power.

## **II. God Enriches Us with Love**

But number two: Not only does He endue us with power; He enriches us with love. Look again. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love..."

Now how does love overcome fear? It's one of the mightiest forces that we have to overcome the spirit of fear. Love is the believer's security blanket. Let me give you a verse, 1<sup>st</sup> John chapter 4 and verse 18. Many of you know it. "Perfect love casteth out fear...." Ha, I used to quote that when I was afraid, but it didn't, it never seemed to help me very much. "Perfect love casteth out fear..." And I'll tell you why it didn't help me

much. Because I said, “Well, yeah, if I love God perfectly, I wouldn’t be afraid. But I don’t love Him perfectly. The only thing I do perfectly is sin. So how, how is, how is, since I don’t love God perfectly, maybe that’s why I’m afraid.” But then, one day it dawned on me. And it dawned on me by reading a paraphrase of this in the Living Bible. And let me show you what the Living Bible, how the Living Bible paraphrases it and gives a correct interpretation. Listen to it, 1<sup>st</sup> John 4, verse 18 in the Living Bible. Now listen to it. “We have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly. No fear of someone who loves us perfectly.” Oh friend, His great power and His great love for you. It is His perfect love. Listen to it. “His perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what He might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what He might do to us and shows that we’re not fully convinced that He really loves us.” Let me read that again. It’s just rich. It’s wonderful. It’s not an exact translation; it’s a paraphrase, but it catches the meaning. “We have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly. His perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what He might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what He might do to us and shows that we’re not fully convinced that He really loves us.”

So what has, what does He do? Well, first of all, He endues us with power. Then He enriches us with love, His perfect love for us.

### **III. God Enlightens Us with a Sound Mind**

And then, the third thing He does: Not only does He endue us with power. Not only does He enrich us with love. But He enlightens us with a sound mind. Look again in verse 7: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” Now the word *sound mind* here doesn’t mean that you are a good thinker necessarily or that you’re intelligent. That’s not the idea. You may or may not be. But the word here *sound mind* literally means “discipline, self-control, wise discretion.” That is, God gives you a mind that is a disciplined mind, a mind that has self-control, a mind that does not get stampeded. It doesn’t run away by unfounded fear. I think a good verse that would illustrate that is this: “The wicked flee when no man pursues.” I mean, it’s unfounded. But he’s still afraid. Ha.

When I was a kid, we lived on 38<sup>th</sup> Street in West Palm Beach, and, there was an alley behind our house. And it was about, I’ll say seventy-five feet back from the back door to the alley. And the garbage cans were back behind the pump house. And sometime late at night, Mom would say, “Adrian, take out the garbage.” Now my brother and I, we were always kidding about gangsters and marauders and monsters and trying to see who could make the other one the most afraid. And, I can remember many a night going out to carry that garbage out and it would be dark, not a light out there, just as a little tike, and turning around and getting the idea someone was behind me. Now there wasn’t, but I ran all the way back to the house and got in and shut the door. Now,

what had happened when I first got that thought, then the fear would begin to build in me. And, you know, and if I started to run, that would really just compound the thing. That, nothing like that has ever happened to you. But, you know, that, that happened to me because I'm not as strong as you are and you're much wiser than I am. But, that's what fear does. Fear takes your mind and it stampedes it, and you flee when no man pursues. As I remind you, Zig Ziglar said that "fear, F-E-A-R, is false evidence appearing real." And, God gives us, through the Holy Spirit, a disciplined mind.

Now I'm a grown man, but I still have to take myself by the nape of the neck, put myself out there, and look at myself and talk to myself sometime, and say, "Adrian, here is, here are the facts. Here's what God says. Here's what the Word of God says. And here's the way that you ought to live." And I can find that fear reducing and going away.

## Conclusion

Now, folks, I just want to tell you tonight that if you will depend upon God and look to God, walk in the spirit, you'll find out that the Holy Spirit is the spirit of power, love, and discipline. Power, love, and discipline. That is the Holy Spirit who gives you the mind of Christ.

Now, when He speaks of the spirit of fear, who is the spirit of fear? The devil, the sinister minister of fear, the dirty devil, is the one who puts fear in your heart, a spirit of fear. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.

So, I want you, if you've never done so, to do what the apostle Paul did in verse 12. He says, "...I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed..." Have you believed Him tonight? "...and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him..." And that tells us what faith is. Believing is committing to Jesus Christ. It is not just intellectual; it is a commitment to Jesus Christ. And when you make that commitment, allow the Holy Spirit of God to fill you, then you can say, along with the psalmist in Psalm 27 and verse 1: "The Lord is my light and my salvation..." Because you have been saved. "...Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of Whom shall I be afraid?"

Someone has well said, "The future has two handles. One named fear and one named faith. You can take it by either handle." I hope you'll chose faith.

Let's bow together in prayer. Heads are bowed, eyes are closed. And if you've been letting the spirit of fear fog up your life and blot all the blue out of your sky, why don't you just ask the Lord tonight, "Lord God, give me a glimpse tonight of Your mighty power. Give me, dear Lord, tonight a fresh awareness of Your perfect love for me. And let the mind of Jesus be my mind. And, Lord, I know that You don't want me to be forgetful of Your blessings. I know, Lord, that You don't want me to be failing to do what I ought to do. And I know, Lord, that You don't want this fear to destroy my health."

Father, I just pray tonight if there are those in this building who are not saved, who don't know Jesus, that tonight, even tonight, they might believe on Him and commit to Jesus. In His wonderful name I pray, amen.

# Faithful in Bible Study

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** January 8, 1995

**Main Scripture Text:** 2 Timothy 2:15

*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

## Outline

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## Introduction

Take God’s Word and find 2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 15. In a moment, we will look at it. Let me tell you what happened to me. As a teenage boy, I sat in a church and heard a man preach the gospel. I was sitting by my father. When the invitation was given, my father went forward to give his heart to Jesus Christ. Conviction of the Holy Spirit struck my heart. I went forward also to give my heart to Jesus Christ, and I was as sincere as a young man could be. And, when I went forward, they filled out a form; and they stood me up in front of the church, and they said, “Aren’t we very grateful that Adrian Rogers has come forward tonight to give his heart to Jesus Christ?” And, the people said, “Amen,” and that was about it. And, I went out and endeavored to live the Christian life. And, I want you to know, as a young man, I struggled and I failed, and I struggled and I failed. And, I rode a spiritual rollercoaster: sometimes I was up, and sometimes I was down. Sometimes I wondered if I had been saved at all. But then,

slowly, I began to get into the Word of God. I began to study the Bible. I learned some truths, and when I learned some truth, that truth became something absolutely solid that I could stand on. And, my life was transformed, not by resolution, not by emotion, not by determination, but by the truth of God's Word.

Now, we want you, as a believer in Jesus Christ, and especially if you are a new Christian, to learn some factors of faithfulness that will help you to stand strong, to be a good Christian at home, to be a good member of this church, and to be a solid citizen in this world. And, the factor of faithfulness that comes number one is Bible study. I want you to look at God's Word and see what Paul said to Timothy. Second Timothy chapter 2, verse 15: "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" (2 Timothy 2:15) Now, that is God's command to you and to me through Paul and Timothy—that we're to "*study to shew [ourselves] approved unto God.*" (2 Timothy 2:15)

Do you want to live a holy life? Jesus said in John chapter 17, verse 17—as He prayed for us, He prayed, "*[Lord] sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*" (John 17:17) You want to be sanctified? You want to be holy? You want to be powerful in the Lord? You want to stop riding a spiritual rollercoaster? You want to stop walking around on eggshells and JELL-O? You want some spiritual steel and concrete beneath your feet? Then learn to be faithful in Bible study.

I want to give you today four things that I pray God the Holy Spirit will write upon your consciousness indelibly—that God the Holy Spirit will cause them just to be etched upon your soul—that will help you to know, understand, live by the Word of God. Now, we're talking about faithfulness in Bible study.

## **I. You Must Receive the Saving Author of the Bible**

Number one: If you were to understand the Bible, if you would know the Bible, if God's Word would be to you a bright, living reality, you must, number one, receive the saving author of the Bible.

### **A. Invite Jesus into Your Heart**

Now, God is the author of the Bible. And, in order to understand the Bible, you must receive the author of the Bible into your heart. Why is this? Because without Jesus Christ you are spiritually blind. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 14 that "*the natural man*"—that is, a naturally born man—"*receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because [they're] spiritually discerned.*" (1 Corinthians 2:14) If you've only been born once, you are a natural man born into the natural world and blind to the spiritual world. You will never truly understand the Bible. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 4 that Satan is "*the god of this world [and he has] blinded the minds of them [that] believe*

*not.*” (2 Corinthians 4:4) And, without Jesus Christ, the author of the Bible, in your heart, you will never understand the Bible. To try to help an unsaved man to truly understand the Bible would be like trying to teach a dog to understand opera. You just can’t do it. You don’t have the facility; you don’t have the ability to understand the Word of God.

¶ There’s a classic story that I’ve shared with you before about a young man who went to a college class. And, the professor was an infidel, and he tried to mock those students who believed in the Word of God. And, he let loose a diatribe against the Word of God. And then, he asked, “Is there anybody here now who says he believes the Bible is the Word of God?” And, even those Christians who were Christians seemed to be intimidated. But, one young man stood up in the back of the room and said, “Yes, sir.” He said, “I want you to know I believe the Bible is the Word of God.” The professor said, “Does it make sense to you?” He said, “Yes, sir, it does.” Professor said, “Well, young man, I want you to know I’ve read the Bible and it doesn’t make any sense to me.” And, the student said, “Sir, I don’t mean you any disrespect, but the Bible is God’s love letter to His children. If you’ve read it and don’t understand it, it’s because you’ve been reading someone else’s mail.”¶

Isn’t that true? You see, the Bible is God’s letter to us. And, in order to understand the Bible, you must know the God of the Bible. Now, an unsaved man can read the Bible and appreciate it for beautiful literature. It is beautiful literature. He might learn the history of the Bible. He might even agree with the moral precepts of the Bible. But, he will never know the deep meaning of God’s Word until he’s born again.

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. Nicodemus was a master in Israel; that is, he was a brilliant man. But, he couldn’t understand, and the reason he couldn’t understand is he had not been born again. Jesus said in John 3:3: “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see.*” (John 3:3) Nicodemus was a blind man. “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” (John 3:3) He just cannot. And so, therefore, if you were to understand the Bible, first of all, invite the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart, the saving author of the Bible. You must receive the saving author of the Bible. Have you got that?

## **B. Pray**

Now, once Christ is in your heart, then you begin to pray. Never come to Bible study without praying. In Psalm 119, there are three prayers that you need to pray before you begin your Bible study, once you know that Jesus Christ is in your heart. Put these verses down in your margin, and I want you to turn to them later on, or tomorrow morning, when you begin to study the Bible, or this afternoon. Psalm 119 and verse 12—here’s the first prayer: “*teach me thy statutes*”—“*teach me thy statutes.*” (Psalms 119:12) And, when you pray that, God begins to teach you. He becomes the teacher in

your heart. When you pray, “Lord, teach me thy statutes,” when you lay your intellectual pride in the dust and pray over the Word of God—now, remember that Christ must be in your heart, first of all—three things will happen. Here are the three things that will happen when you pray, “Lord, teach me thy statutes.”

### **1. Your Eyes Will Be Opened**

In Psalm 119 and verse 18: *“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”* (Psalms 119:18) That’s the first thing that will happen. Your eyes will be opened. God will help you to see things that you have never seen. I can tell when I am walking in the Spirit: when I’m reading the Word of God, there are truths that just jump up off the Bible into my heart.

### **2. Your Heart Will Be Stirred**

Number two: Not only will your eyes be opened, but your heart will be stirred. Put this verse down—Psalm 119, verse 36: *“Incline my heart unto thy testimonies.”* (Psalms 119:36) God opens your eyes. God inclines your heart. You see, you must see, and then your heart must be moved.

### **3. Your Mind Will Be Enlightened**

Your eyes will be opened; that’s number one. Your heart will be stirred; that’s number two. And then, your mind will be enlightened. Listen to Psalm 119, verse 73: *“give me understanding, that I may learn [your] commandments.”* (Psalms 119:73)

And so, you have the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart. You have received Him into your heart. God gives you a new heart. God gives you a new mind. Then, you come to the Word of God, and you say, “God, teach me your statutes.” And, when you do this, you pray, “Lord, open my eyes.” You pray, “Lord, stir my heart.” You pray, “Lord, quicken my mind.” Never fail to study the Bible that way. It’s unthinkable to me that I would sit down for a serious study of the Word of God without first of all asking the author of the Word of God to teach me.

¶ I read years ago about a man who had a mentor, a Bible teacher. He was a new Christian, and the mentor was teaching this younger Christian the Word of God. And, they were doing well. They would meet for Bible study, and the young neophyte Christian would have difficulty with the Word of God. And, he would come to his teacher, whose name was Harry, and he would say, “Harry, what does this mean?” or, “Harry, teach me that,” or, “Harry, what about this?” And, Harry would explain it to him because Harry had a walk with God, a real close walk with God. And, he taught the younger man. And, we need older people to teach younger people the Word of God, and that’s a very wonderful and legitimate thing. But, one time this man could not get to Harry. He had a problem in the Word of God. He couldn’t understand it. And, he labored over it, and he said to himself, “Boy, I wish Harry were here. I wish somehow Harry

were here because I need to understand this.” And, he went to God and said, “Lord, just somehow help me to get to Harry. I need to understand this.” And, the Lord said to him in his heart, “Why don’t you ask me to explain it to you? I’m the One who taught Harry.” And, you can ask God Himself to teach you the Word of God.†

## II. You Must Recognize the Sovereign Authority of the Bible

So, number one, here’s the first big heading: you must receive the saving author of the Bible. You must have Jesus Christ in your heart. Number two: You must recognize the sovereign authority of the Bible. Once you know the author, you must believe the authority of the Word of God. The Bible will never be a real book to you if you do not accept it as the sovereign authority of Almighty God.

The Bible is a literary miracle. Put this verse down—2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 16: “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God*”—“*all scripture is given by inspiration of God.*” (2 Timothy 3:16) And, the word *inspiration* that’s used here is used only one time—this one time—in the Bible. It’s *theopneustos*, and what it literally means is it is “God-breathed.” All Word is God-breathed, is given by inspiration of God. That literally means that it is God-breathed—not that God breathed into the Scriptures, but that God breathed the Scriptures themselves.

You say, “Why would you call the Scriptures ‘God-breathed’?” Well, what you’re hearing right now is my breath. There’s a diaphragm down here. There are lungs in here. My diaphragm and my ribcage are pressing against my lungs, and they’re sending air up my throat. That air is passing over my larynx and my voice box, and that air is being moved and articulated by my tongue, my teeth, and my lips. And, I’m making sounds, and what you’re really hearing right now is my breath. I am breathing out my words right now. Now, the Bible says that all scripture is the breath of God. When you read the Bible, you hear God speak. “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God.*” (2 Timothy 3:16) Now, it says, “all scripture,” not some scripture. That’s the reason we believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible. *Verbal* means “every word.” A verb is a word. *Plenary* means “full.” The Latin word *plenos* means “full.” So, theologians call it the “verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible.” That means all of the Bible is fully inspired. There’s no part of it that is not inspired.

As you pick up the Bible, you read phrases like this: “The word of God came unto me,” or, “The Lord said,” or, “God spake,” or, “Thus saith the Lord.” You read that 3,808 times—“God said,” “God said.” Now, either the Bible is the Word of God or it is the biggest bundle of lies the world has ever known. It is the Word of God, and you need to take it that way. Jesus Christ said in Matthew chapter 4, verse 4: “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*” (Matthew 4:4) The Word proceeds out of the mouth of God. You say, “Well, didn’t human people write

the Bible?” Yes, they wrote it, but they wrote it by divine inspiration. God Himself inspired the penman. “Well,” you say, “if God wrote it, why didn’t it all sound alike? Why do parts of it sound so different?” Because God used different people—just like our orchestra here today. We have different instruments in the orchestra.

† Suppose Carter Threlkeld, who sang for us today who is the orchestra director and, by the way, can play a number of instruments—if Carter picks up one instrument and plays it, and then he picks up another one and plays it, and then picks up another one and plays it, you would be able to tell the characteristics of those different instruments. A trumpet would sound like a trumpet, and a French horn like a French horn, and a cornet like a cornet, and an oboe like an oboe, or whatever, but there’s one author who’s playing all the instruments. And, you pick up this Bible, and you can say, “Yes, that’s Paul. Yes, that’s Matthew. Yes, that’s Moses, yes.” Those are the different authors of the Bible, but really, there’s one author who’s using all of those men as instruments in His hand—not mechanical dictation. God uses the fears, the desires, the aspirations, the experiences of all of those men, but over it all and through it all is divine inspiration.†

And so, you must accept the absolute authority of the Word of God, and your view of the Scripture must be the view that Jesus had. And, Jesus said in John chapter 10, verse 35: *“the scripture cannot be broken.”* (John 10:35)

Now, if you accept the absolute authority of the Bible, some will say you’re guilty of worshipping the Bible. Some of the liberals will call you a bibliolater; that is, you’ve made an idol of the Bible. And, they call that “bibliolatry”—just worshipping the Bible. Pay no attention to them. I’m telling you, if reading the Bible brings you closer to Jesus Christ and causes you to love Jesus Christ, unless you let the Bible stand between you and Jesus Christ, just pay no attention to them. That’s their problem. Love the Word of God!

And so, the Bible, interpreted by the Holy Spirit, is the final authority—not reason, not human reason, not your conscience. Your conscience is like a sundial. It operates according to the light that’s shone on it. So, your conscience can’t be your guide unless God guides your conscience. And so, it’s not human reason, not your conscience, not tradition, not emotion, but the Word of God.

### **III. You Must Resolve a Serious Analysis of the Bible**

Now, here’s a third thing. First of all, you must receive the saving author of the Bible. You must have the author of the Bible in your heart. Number two: You must believe the sovereign authority of the Word of God. No stutter, no stammer, no apology, the Bible is the Word of God. Number three: You must resolve a serious analysis of the Bible. The author, the authority, and the analysis of the Bible. It’s not enough to say that God is the

author of the Bible. It is not enough, therefore, to say that the Bible, therefore, is absolutely authoritative. You must learn to study and analyze the Bible. You must bring your mind to the Bible, though you lay your intellectual pride in the dust at the same time.

Put these scriptures down. First Timothy chapter 4, verse 13: Paul said, *“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine”*—*“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, [and] to doctrine.”* (1 Timothy 4:13) And then, again, the scripture that we began with—2 Timothy 2, verse 15: *“Study to shew [yourself] approved unto God.”* (2 Timothy 2:15) Now, what does that word *study* mean? I looked it up in a number of translations the other day. Let me tell you some of the ways that that word *study* is translated. One says, “Give diligence.” Another says, “Earnestly endeavor.” Another translation says, “Do your best.” Another says, “Try hard.” Another says, “Let it be your care.” Another says, “Aim first.” All of these are saying that you must have a burning desire for the Word of God. You must earnestly endeavor. You must *“study to shew [yourself] approved unto God.”* (2 Timothy 2:15)

Do you really want to know the Bible? Could you say with the psalmist in Psalm 119, verse 72: *“The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver”*? (Psalms 119:72) I mean, had you rather know the truth of God’s Word or be a multimillionaire? Answer that question in your heart, but don’t answer it out loud. Don’t tell me that you believe the Bible is the Word of God unless you have a desire to understand it. That’s contradictory.

I don’t want you to answer this question out loud, but I want to ask you this question: How many of you believe everything you read in the newspaper? “Well,” you say... And, if I were to ask for the hands to go up, I doubt that any would go up. But, I’d ask you a second question even more embarrassing: How many spend more time with the newspaper every day than you do with the Word of God? That’s an incriminating question. You spend more time with that which you don’t believe than that which you say you do believe. You spend more time with the bad news than you do with the good news. You say, “Yes, I know the author of the Bible. Yes, I believe the authority of the Bible, but I make no analysis of the Bible. I do not study the Bible.” You must, friend, open the Bible and do as the Apostle Paul said: *“give attendance to reading, to exhortation, [and] to doctrine.”* (1 Timothy 4:13) There’s no other way that you’re going to get it. If you’re looking for a cheap way, an easy way, a lazy way to understand the Bible, you’re not going to understand it.

Now, here at Bellevue Baptist Church, we have some ways to help you to grow in our Bible understanding—first of all, by Bible preaching and Bible teaching. When you come into this place, you go to our Fellowship Bible Classes, there’s a teacher who’s teaching the Bible. When you come into this auditorium, there is a preacher who is

preaching the Bible. And, God gives to the church pastors and teachers to help you to “grow in [the] grace, and...knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18) Another thing we provide for you is a bookstore and a library. Out here to my right is a wonderful—one of the finest—Christian bookstores in all of the world and one of the finest Christian libraries in all of the world. Are you familiar with our library and the bookstore? If not, then you need to learn about it. Another thing we provide for you is seminars, conferences, and training. We’re having seminars tonight, and you need to be in a seminar tonight. It is for you—a hands-on seminar beginning at 5:15 this evening to help you to learn how to be a good student of the Word of God.

Now, the Bible says here in our text that we started with that you’re to “rightly [divide] the word of truth,” (2 Timothy 2:15) and that word “rightly divide” literally means “to cut straight the Word of truth.” And, what it comes from is a practice in the Old Testament when an offering would be made to God, unless it was the whole burnt offering. Say it were a lamb, and it would be brought to the Lord—that lamb would be divided. The priest would take it, and he would divide it into thirds. One-third would be offered to God. One-third would be given back to the person who brought the offering, and one-third would be given to the priest. And, what he would do would be to rightly divide that lamb—cut it straight, as it was meant to be—so that everyone would get that part that belonged to him. Now, you need to do the Word of God the same way. You need to learn how to rightly divide the Word of God. Don’t bring your ignorance to the Word of God, but study the Bible.

For example, all of the Bible is for us, but not all of it is to us. Let me give you an example—1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 32: Paul says, “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:32) Did you know that everybody in the world is divided up into those three categories—the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God? And, Paul says, “Give none offence, neither to the Jews...the Gentiles, [or] the church of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:32) Now, as you pick up the Bible and begin to read the Bible, you need to understand, is this written to the Jew or is it written to the Gentile or is it written to the Church? Now, if you don’t understand that, you’re going to get all confused.

For example, you can go into the Old Testament and take the promises that belong to Israel and try to apply them to the Church. For example, the Old Testament Sabbath, Saturday, was given to Israel, not to the Church. It was given to Israel. God says, “It is a covenant between me and the children of Israel forever.” (Exodus 31:16) You read that. It’s not for you. The Old Testament Sabbath is Saturday. Sunday is the Lord’s Day. Sometimes people take the Old Testament truths that were meant for Israel and they try to apply them to the Church, and they get all confused in their Bible study. It is all for us, but it is not all to us. That doesn’t mean we’re not supposed to understand that or read

that. Of course we are, because in there, there are lessons that we can learn, rightly understood, that will apply to us, but we have to understand how to “*rightly [divide] the word of truth.*” (2 Timothy 2:15) You have to understand the difference between the Church and the kingdom. You have to understand the difference between law and grace. You have to cut it straight, and there’s no easy way to do that.

When you look at the Bible to analyze it, you need scrutinize it, you need to organize it, you need to summarize it. Here’s what you need to do. Let me give you three very common things, if you’ll just take these three things to help you to analyze the Bible.

#### **A. Read the Bible in Context**

First of all, the word *context*—just read it in its context. Don’t just do a “lucky dip.” Don’t just throw it open and begin to read and say, “It doesn’t make sense to me.” Why, if you read any book that way, it wouldn’t make sense to you. It is written systematically. Read it systemically. You can make the Bible say anything. Did you know the Bible says there is no God? Did you know that? The Bible says there is no God. That’s what the Bible says, but that’s only part of a verse: “*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*” (Psalms 14:1; 53:1) If I just take a part of a verse, I could prove there’s no God. I could say, “Here the Bible says there is no God,” because what I’ve done is taken a part of a verse; I’ve taken a text out of its context. And, it’s a pretext if we do it that way. So, first of all is the word *context*.

#### **B. Read the Bible with Common Sense**

Secondly, common sense. When you read the Bible, don’t check your brains at the door. Read poetry as poetry. Read prose as prose, prophecy as prophecy, promise as promise, parable as parable, and precept as precept. Now, understand these things. When the Bible speaks, sometimes it uses metaphors. It uses figures of speech. It uses symbolism. Sometimes people say to me, “Adrian, do you take the Bible symbolically or literally?” The answer to that is yes: I take it literally; that doesn’t do away with symbolism. For example, in the book of the Revelation, Satan is described as a red dragon with a tail that sweeps a third of the stars from heaven. That’s obviously a symbol. I mean, that’s not literally what Satan is; that’s what Satan is like. That’s symbolism. But, since there’s symbolism, does that mean I don’t believe there’s a literal devil? Of course there’s a literal devil. And so, symbolism doesn’t do away with a literal interpretation. *All you do is find out what the symbol stands for and then you literally believe it.* But, I’m saying there must be context. There must be common sense.

#### **C. Read the Bible with Concentration**

And then, there must be concentration. When you look at a passage of Scripture, think, read it through, think it clear, write it down, pray it in, live it out, and pass it on. Did you get that? Read it through, think it clear, write it down, pray it in, live it out, pass it on, and

it'll be yours. Now, if you don't do that, how do you expect to understand the Bible? Analyze the Word of God. There must be a serious analysis of the Word of God in its context, using common sense and concentration, with the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

#### **IV. You Must Respond with a Steadfast Application of the Bible**

Now, let me just go to the last thing of these four things. First of all, you must receive the saving author of the Bible. Secondly, you must recognize the sovereign authority of the Bible. Thirdly, you must resolve a serious analysis of the Bible. And, last of all, you must respond with a steadfast application of the Bible.

If you read and study the Bible and don't apply it, it'll backfire on you. Inspiration, apart from obedience, will cause the Word of God to sour on you like food that you eat and you do not digest and don't turn it into energy. You must put these things into practice. Listen to this—John 14, verse 21: *“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me”*—Jesus said—*“and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”* (John 14:21) That's John 14, verse 21. Jesus said, “If you have my commandments and you keep them...” To have them—that means to study, to receive them. All right? And then, keep them—that means to obey them. “Then,” He says, “you love me.” Don't sing “Oh, How I Love Jesus” if you're not receiving and keeping His commandments. *“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that [loves] me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father”*—now, if you want God the Father to love you, you have to love God the Son, and to love God the Son is to hear His commandments and keep them. Now, watch it—*“he it is that loveth me: and he [will] be loved of my Father”*—now, listen to this—*“and [I] will manifest myself to him.”* (John 14:21)

Many of you are saying, “Pastor Rogers, Jesus Christ is not real to me. I wish He were real to me. Why isn't God more real to me? Why is it that some people seem to be so happy in Jesus? Why is it that some people say that God is very real and dear and precious to them? He is not to me.” Well, now, listen: *“He that hath my commandments, and [keeps] them, [he's the one] that [loves] me: and he [will] be loved of my Father, and [I] will manifest myself to him.”* (John 14:21) Truth—if you don't hear anything that I say today, listen to this: Bible study gives you knowledge about God; obedience gives you knowledge of God. You can study the Bible and learn about God or you can obey the Bible and know God—you can study the Bible and learn about God, or you can obey the Bible and know God. Bible study gives knowledge about God; obedience gives knowledge of God. Listen to this verse again—John 14, verse 21: *“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”* (John 14:21)

## Conclusion

You must receive the saving author of the Bible. You must recognize the sovereign authority of the Bible. You must resolve a serious analysis of the Bible, and you must respond with a steadfast application of the Bible. Appropriate and act on the truths of God's Word, and I promise you that this Bible will become real to you. It will become a brand-new book to you. I want to tell you again, as a new Christian, I started out with a lot of sentiment, a lot of sincerity, a lot of resolve, and I floundered and floundered and floundered until I learned spiritual, Bible truth.

Now, we're here as a church to help you. We're here to help you. We're going to give you six factors of faithfulness. This is number one. But, it's simply not enough for you to come and listen to me preach. Fruit that you pick yourself is the sweetest. The flowers that you gather for yourself you enjoy the most. And, I'm hoping that in your church life and in your private life, you'll be faithful to the Word of God.

Bow your heads in prayer. Heads are bowed; eyes are closed. Have you received the author of the Bible into your heart? Have you? If not, you may today. If you would like to be saved, let me help you to be saved. To be saved means that every sin is forgiven. To be saved means that Jesus Christ lives in your heart to give you peace and power and purpose. To be saved means that you will not face the Final Judgment and be cast into hell. To be saved means that you go to heaven when you die, and to be saved means that you have heaven in your heart before you die. To be saved means that you are right with God—you have the joy of Jesus now, right now. If you'd like to be saved—I mean, truly saved, be a child of God—let me help you to pray and get it settled right now. I invite you to pray like this: "Dear God... Dear God"—just pray that prayer in your heart—"Dear God, I know that you love me, and I know that you want to save me. Jesus, I believe you're the Son of God. I believe you paid my sin debt with your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised you from the dead. You promised to save me if I would receive you into my heart. I do receive you right now. Come into my heart. Forgive my sin. Save me, Lord Jesus. Come in right now. I don't look for a sign. I don't ask for a feeling. I just receive you by faith. Come into my heart right now and be my Lord and Savior. I'm sick of my sin. I turn from my sin. I repent of my sin. I trust you, Jesus, as my Savior. I receive you as my Lord. Come into my heart. Begin now to make me the person you want me to be. And, Lord Jesus, I will make public what I have done. I'll not be ashamed of you. In your name I pray. Amen."✠

# A Reflection on an Election

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: November 8, 1998**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3**

**Sponsored by: Sponsor**

*“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.”*

2 TIMOTHY 3:14

## Outline

Introduction

- I. You Must Learn to Practice Separation
- II. You Must Prepare for Suffering
- III. You Must Pursue the Scriptures
  - A. For Endurance
  - B. For Evangelization
  - C. For Equipping

Conclusion

## Introduction

Take God’s Word and turn to 2 Timothy chapter 3, if you would, please.

And, while you’re turning, let me say that we have just been through an election here in the United States. And in every election there are some who come away bragging, there are some who come away dragging; there are some who are happy, there are some who are sad; and there are some who are enthused, there are some who are thoroughly dis-spirited. And I want to spend a few moments with you looking forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ. I have entitled the message tonight, “A Reflection on an Election.” And I want us to think a little bit about what has happened.

And, I think, so often we make a perilous mistake, and that is we pin our hopes on politics, politicians, rules, laws, and human government. Now we, as Christians, cannot disassociate ourselves from human government, for our Lord has taught us to, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s,” and our Caesar is the government of the people, for the people, and by the people; and, therefore, we must participate. But our Lord never taught us to put our trust in Caesar. Our Lord taught us to put our trust in God. “...render unto God the things that are God’s.”

And with that in mind, I want us to take a reflection on this election and just to bring things in focus again, not only for the Lord’s Supper, but for the rest of our lives. And I

want us to think about what we can expect from here on. And, ah, we don't have to guess about it. The Bible tells us in clear language in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 1: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." Now this word *perilous* is, is a very interesting word. It literally means dangerous. It's only used one other time in the Bible, and that's found in Matthew 8 and verse 28, where it describes a demoniac as exceeding fierce. So when the Bible says, perilous times, it means dangerous days. The last days or, ah, days that are exceedingly fierce. And, you might as well expect the world to be bad and expect the word to get worse. Now, that should not disillusion you. That should not frighten you. It should not alarm you. It certainly should not surprise you. That the world today is facing moral and spiritual, social, political and national and international darkness ought to encourage you, even though you don't like to see the darkness, because the Bible is being fulfilled exactly, precisely as God's Word has said. In the last days dangerous days will be here.

Now God wants His people, not only to survive, but to thrive. God wants us to endure, through these days in victory. So God has given us a handbook for survival. And I want you to see how God describes these days and then what God says we're to do in the light of these dangerous days in which we live.

Now notice how God describes the last days, and I'm going to read verses 2 through 4, and you're going to find out that in the last days men are going to be men of wicked behavior. Look, if you will, in verse 2. He says, "For men shall be lovers of their own selves..." And that prophecy is so fulfilled today. No longer do people ask, "What does the Bible say?" They ask, "What do I want to believe?" As a matter of fact, I saw a sign in front of a grocery store, and I'm sure that the owner of the grocery store meant well. But he said, "Attend the church of your choice Sunday." Well, that's good, and we do want people to be able to choose, but I would say, "Attend a church of God's choice." Now I'm not just playing with words. So many people think that they create the kind of a religion that they want and then they, they're looking for a religion that suits them. And so what has happened in America today is me-ology has been substituted for theology. And we have people living for self and self alone, as though Jesus Christ never lived, never died, never rose, and were not coming back again.

And then he says also in verse 2 that men are going to be covetous, covetous. It's the economy, stupid. Men are going to be covetous, living for what they can grab and not for what they can give. Now the Bible teaches we're to worship God, love people, and use things. But we have a generation today that ignores God, loves things, and uses people. Men are going to be covetous.

And then he says in verse 2 they're going to be boasters and proud. We have a generation today that is literally strutting to hell, swaggering in the face of God when we ought to be on our face before God. We are bragging about our human inventions.

I was listening to the news this past week where they said now they're doing some research with stem cells. They're going to be able to create human organs. And, you need liver; they'll build you a liver. You need a heart; they'll build you a heart. You need an esophagus; they can build an esophagus. This, but they say, "Well, where are we going to get these stem cells?" We're going to get them from aborted embryos, that's where we're going to get them. So we're going to have a little industry now out of dead babies. We are going now to manufacturer something that in some way to sustain life. I certainly am in favor of sustaining life, and I'm certainly in favor of medicine, not but some macabre method that's going to harvest cells from aborted babies. It's monstrous to think about that thing. But we boast about that. We strut. And the nations of the world are full of arrogance, marching to Armageddon.

Then he says, also, that in the last days, in verse 2, that men are going to be blasphemers. God's name, God's word are drug through the dust. You cannot watch television today without hearing God's name taken in vain. Unseemly, ungodly, lascivious language and por, profanity and pornography are intermingled. God's name is mixed with the slime and the smut of the sewer. And people have that piped into their living room, and they allow their children to sit and watch. Would you take a child, if there were a couple living next door in adulterous relationship, and say to the little child, "Mom and dad are going downtown, honey. Get a soap box, crawl up on that soap box, look through the bedroom window, and watch what's happening in that house and entertain yourself." Well, you say, "I wouldn't do that." No, you wouldn't, but you do that. You just simply have the box inside the house, and they sit there and watch this. Blasphemers taking God's name in vain. What used to amaze us now just simply amuses us.

And then he mentions, also, that in the last days, that people are going to be disobedient to parents. We have a generation today that does not understand authority outside the home or inside the home. And the parents are having difficulty because the very schools that they send their children to by law have taught the children that they have their own rights and that they don't have to do certain things that their parents may tell them to do or not to do. But contrary to parents' opinions and wishes, they may be taught, over parental objection, the acceptance of homosexuality, abortion, birth control, sexual indulgence, and relative morality. No wonder we have those who are disobedient to parents.

And then he goes on to say in verse 3 that in the last days people will be without natural affection. This word *natural affection* is a word that literally means family love. One of the most primeval instincts that any mother would have would be to protect her babies, not to kill her babies. But we have a generation today that thinks of children as a burden rather than a blessing. Without family love. And family loves speaks of the love

of a man for a woman, a heterosexual, not a homosexual relationship. But it is incredible that we live in a generation that not only allows, but celebrates sexual perversion.

Then he goes on to say in verse 3 that men are going to be truce breakers in the last days. We live in a generation today where a man's word means very little. A man can put his hand on a Bible and swear to uphold the laws of the land and perjure himself in a court, and people will say, "So what?" Truce breakers. A man's word means little, whether it's on a business contract, whether it's in a marriage contract, whether it is a treaty between nations, or whatever it is. People care little about taking an oath, a promise and breaking that promise.

And then he goes on to say in verse 3 that men are going to be incontinent. That simply means without control, fierce, despisers of those that are good. It is the good today that is despised. It is the ill, the evil, the wicked and the warped that is honored. And so, we have a generation today of young hoodlums and old hoodlums. And we're not able to build prisons big enough, fast enough to warehouse them. Well, that's a fulfillment of God's Word.

And then he goes on to say that these people are to be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. You see that in verse 4? Now let me make it very clear and very plain that there is really no contradiction between pleasure and loving God. The Bible says, "At thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." But the problem is that many are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. The truth of the matter is that our stadiums on Sunday afternoons are packed and overflowing with people watching behemoths move a zipped up bag of air up and down a pasture. Many of those people claim to be Christians. They will not be in church on Sunday night. As a matter of fact, they cannot be if they're in those places. But they're lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Our nightclubs are packed. Church, for the most part, are empty. It's been called a pleasure explosion. The Lord's Day, Sunday, is no longer called the Lord's Day. It's called the weekend. It's not the weekend. It's the first day of the week. And it wasn't made for Michelob; it was made for Jesus.

Now not only does he mention this wicked behavior, but he also mentions wrong beliefs that are going to be a mark of the last days. So in case you expect something else, you need to get your eyes open, because he says, concerning these people, in verse 5, they "...have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof: from such turn away." Now notice that they have a form of godliness, but they deny the power, the authority, thereof. "For of this sort are they which creep into houses [hm, creeps], and lead captive silly women laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts." Now, well, let's go on and read the whole passage. "Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also

resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.” Now he’s not talking about their behavior, but he’s talking about their beliefs. They are reprobate concerning the faith.

And I want you to see how God the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, telegraphed the last days and delineated the last days in such a marvelous way, for in the first place, he said there’s going to be formalism. Do you see that in verse 5? Formalism, having a form, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

So many people trudge to church from Sunday to Sunday in America today and go through ritual, incantations, ah, songs, sermons, and prayers, but they do not know the reality of Jesus Christ. It is culture without Calvary. It is form without force. It is formalism.

But then not only are, are their beliefs going to be rooted in formalism – that’s just only one section – on top of that is feminism. Now notice what he goes to say in verses 6 and 7: “For of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts.” Now what does he mean by the word *silly*? He doesn’t mean slap happy. This is old English. It literally, the idea in the Greek language means those who are easily led. And they are led away. I guess the closest thing we could say is the word gullible, women who are gullible. Not all women are gullible, but he’s talking about those who are gullible in the last days. That is, they’re going to be creatures of impulse. They are more susceptible to these sorts of things. And God has made a woman with a responsive nature. That’s not a liability; it’s an asset, but it is an asset that the devil would distort.

And so he says that they are, first of all, silly; that is, gullible. But then compound that when he says that they are “...laden with sins...” Now put gullible and guilty together. That is, they have this burden of sin, laden with sins. That means burdened with guilt. They have a disquietude in their heart.

But then notice, also, what he says, “...laden with sins and various lusts.” Now the word *various lusts*, it doesn’t necessarily mean sexual lust. The word *lust* in the Bible means deep desire. Now they, they, they are, they are unsatisfied. Put these three things together: gullible, guilty, and grasping. That’s what he’s saying they are. Gullible, a supersensitive nature easily led. Burden down with sin, looking for fulfillment, but they’re looking in the wrong way. And, therefore, you have militant feminism. I, as well as you, won’t to respect womanhood. Jesus Christ never diminished womanhood; He put womanhood on a pedestal, and a woman is to be respected, loved, adored, appreciated. Ah, but there is in the last days [watch it now,] there is formalism. There is feminism.

And then there is fanaticism. Notice again in verses 7 and 8. He says they’re “Ever learning, never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres

withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth..." Who were Jannes and Jambres? Jannes and Jambres were magicians who stood against Moses and with diabolical, ah, demonic power performed miracles and led many astray in that day. And in this last day we're going to see Satan come with counterfeit miracles. We're going to see Satan come with false beliefs and, and lead fanatics into all kinds of wild, strange, esoteric and mysterious religions.

Now Paul says, "Look. Their behavior is going to be wrong and their beliefs are going to be wrong." On the one hand, you'll have formalism. Over here you'll have feminism. Over here you'll have fanaticism. We're living, folks, in those last days.

Now what should we do? As we take the Lord's Supper tonight, we are looking forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ. And soon, and very soon, He's going to come, we believe. Let me mention three things that we must do and then we'll have the Lord's Supper together.

How do we prepare ourselves? How do we prepare these precious children? How do we prepare our teenagers? How do we not only survive, but thrive in these last days?

## **I. You Must Learn to Practice Separation**

Number one: You must learn to practice separation. Look again, if you will, in verse 5. He speaks of these who, "...have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof" from such turn away." Now you know what happens to so many people? Good people are going to bad churches. They need to get out. You say, "You're just trying to get them at Bellevue." No, I'm not! But I would that people would put their money, their influence, their prayers, their lives with Bible-preaching, Bible-believing churches. There are enough good people in bad churches could radically change things if they would line up with the truth. You need to practice separation. You need to turn away from these kind of people. The Bible teaches separation. That's an old-fashioned word you don't hear much any more. But, folks, listen to me. We're not to hobnob with the people of this world. Now we are to witness to them. We're to be making friends forever. But they are not the people that you hobnob with. They're not the people that you run with. Put these Scriptures down. Second Thessalonians 3, verse 14: "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Now he's not talking about those on the outside; he's talking about those who claim to be Christians on the inside, but he won't obey the word of God. Paul says, "Don't hobnob with him."

Romans 16, verse 17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Avoid them!

First Corinthians chapter 5, verse 11. Paul says, “But not I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.”

Where do we hear that anymore about some good, old-fashioned, biblical separation?

Second Corinthians chapter 6 says we’re not to be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”

Second John, verse 10 says, “If any come unto you and receive not, bring not this doctrine, the doctrine of Christ, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God’s speed.”

Now the problem comes in these last days that our children have to mix and mingle with those who have habits, ideas, beliefs, practices that are contrary to what we believe. Now we’re in the world. We’re not of the world. We have to learn, however, to practice separation. Sometimes it will be insulation by necessity and sometimes it will be isolation. But teach your children what I’m trying to teach my children and my grandchildren.

Young people, listen to me. Those of you who are junior high school and high school age, and these precious children over here. Take this chapter. Take those categories, those descriptions that I read about that he said are dangerous, dangerous days, and check those things off. And if there’s somebody who lives like this, believes like this, walks like this, stay away from them. Just simply stay away. Oh, yes, you can witness to them, but, but they’re not your companions. They certainly are not the kind of people you would date. Now you practice separation. This is all the more important in the last days.

Now not only is this separation to be negative; it’s also to be positive. You’re to be separated from and unto—unto. That is, Paul is saying, “Withdraw yourself from these,” but he’s also saying in verse 10: “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long suffering, charity, and patience.” That is, get your boys and girls, your men and women in a Bible Fellowship class. Get them in a Bible preaching church. Get them in the right atmosphere. This is the reason the Bible solemnly warns in Hebrews chapter 10, verse 25: “Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another [now listen], and so much the more as you see the day approaching.” The day he’s talking about is the day of Christ. As the day gets darker, as the times get worse, you need not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together. Do not forsake the church. Do not forsake the Sunday school. Do not forsake the family fellowship, the Bible Fellowship Class, as we call them now. We need one another. And we need in these last days to practice separation from and unto.

## II. You Must Prepare for Suffering

But not only do we need to practice separation; we need to prepare for suffering. Now I hate to tell you this, but look, if you will, in verses 10 through 12. Paul says, “But thou hast known, has fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience.” Well, Paul, if you live that way, you’ll stay out of trouble. Ha, ha. Notice verse 11: “Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch and Icon, Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.” Now I want to read verse 12 and see how many of you believe it. ‘Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.’ How many of you believe that verse, let me see your hand? Hm. Second question: Are you suffering persecution? If not, why not? Ha, you say, “Well, I’ve not had an opportunity to suffer persecution.” I want to tell you something, folks. I don’t mean they’re going to throw you in prison. I don’t mean that they’re going to burn you at the stake. But I’m going to tell you something. In today’s world, if you say, “I will live for Jesus Christ,” you’re going to know persecution. You’re gonna.

You may be left off the ball team. You may not be invited to the socials. You may be passed over for the advancement. You may be ridiculed, made fun of on the playground. You may get in, somebody may club you. I don’t know what’s going to happen to you. But I’ll tell you, either this is right or it’s wrong. I choose to believe it is right. Now, and what it, what it literally says is “All who will live godly...” What it means is, when you say, “Here I go. Like it or not, I’m going to go for Jesus.” Now when you do that, what happens is you distinguish yourself from the crowd, and, and the crowd does not like for you to distinguish yourself from the crowd because when you become different, and when you will not, when you’re not in favor of the lottery, when you will not laugh at the dirty jokes, when you will not be a part of some sort of a raffle in the organization where you work, where you will not, ah, get together with somebody else to connive to do the boss dirty, or whatever. When you just won’t do it, ah, folks, they’re going to treat you like some sort of a moral piranha. Now, it’s just, you need to prepare for this. It’s coming. And he’s talking in the last days. And so how do you prepare for it? Well, you practice separation. You prepare for suffering. You say, “Pastor, that’s not a happy thought.” Well, not necessarily bad. I mean, Jesus said, “When people persecute you for mine, my sake and the gospels, rejoice.” Thank God they can see the difference. A good question is this: If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” It’s not necessarily bad when you become a partaker of Christ’s suffering.

Now, you don’t go around with a Messiah complex and always bending over, saying, “Kick me.” Just live for God. There’ll be a lot of joys. There’s going to be some persecution, and it’s going to get worse. It’s going to get worse. The whipping boy in

today's society is the Bible-believing Christian. That's the whipping boy in today's society. Well, folks, God's word is wonderful because God's word has exactly, precisely predicted these things.

### **III. You Must Pursue the Scriptures**

Now, look, what do you do? You practice separation. You prepare for suffering. And here's the third thing, and we're going to have the Lord's Supper. You pursue the Scriptures. You've got to get a lock on the word of God. Now beginning in verse 13 – look at it. “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse...” Paul says, “Cheer up, it's going to get worse”—“...deceiving and being deceived.”

You know, there are some people used to believe they were, they called themselves post-millennialists, the world's going to get better and better and better and better. And, finally, we just Christianize the world and, and the world. Everybody is saved. And then, finally, we get the world good enough, cleaned up enough for Jesus to come. That's called post-millennialism, that Christ comes after the millennium. Post: after the millennium. You don't find much of them around anymore, many of them around anymore. Well, folks, anybody who reads the Bible can understand that post-millennial is a fond illusion.

And don't think that the gospel has failed, because the world's in a mess. The gospel has not failed. Listen carefully. If you don't hear anything else I have to tell you, the gospel is not given to save civilization from wreckage; it is given to save men from the wreckage of civilization. That's what the gospel is for – to save people from the wreckage of civilization. We're not of the world. We're in the world. Our purpose is to cause people out of, to call people out of the world and lead them to Jesus Christ because this present world system has the curse upon it. And so, Paul says, “Look. It's going to get worse and worse.”

So what do you do when it gets worse and worse? Well, continue here after verse 13: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures [Oh, thank God for these kiddies over here]. From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” He's not merely talking about salvation and going to heaven. He's talking about deliverance day by day. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 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.”

#### **A. For Endurance**

Now what he is saying is you just pursue the Scriptures. It's the Scriptures that will help

you to endure. Look in verse 14. He says, “Continue thou, continue thou....” Just remember who taught you, and stay with these things.

### B. **For Evangelization**

But not only are the Scriptures there to help you to endure, but they’re there not only for endurance, but for evangelization. Notice in verse 15. The Scriptures are able to make you wise unto salvation.

Now if you really believe that we may be living in the last days, you know the proof of that? It’s not whether you have a, a notebook full of notes about prophecy. You get your head out of the clouds of prophecy and get your feet on the pavement of soul winning ; I mean, to bring people to Jesus. That’s what it’s all about. Folks, if we believe, and we do believe, that this world is on a collision course with judgment, then what we’re going to be doing is taking the Scriptures. And the Scriptures are going to help us to endure. The Scriptures are going to help us to evangelize.

### C. **For Equipping**

And, last of all, the Scriptures are here not only for endurance and evangelization, but for equipping. Notice verse 17. He says, “That the man of God may be thoroughly furnished to all good works.” The word *thorough furnished* is a military metaphor. It speaks, it speaks of the soldier’s equipment. What army, what general would train his army and send them out without the weapons of warfare? What soldier would go into battle without his rifle, without his grenades, without his whatever it is that he needs to do combat with? Now, folks, listen to me. The Bible says that the word of God is given to you. It is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect [that means mature], thoroughly furnished [equipped] for every good work.” We’re in a battle. Don’t go into the battle unarmed. Learn the word of God and be ready.

## **Conclusion**

Now, having said all of that, what is my reflection on the election? Well, I’ll tell you what it is. Our King is in the heavens. We didn’t vote Him in, and nobody will vote Him out. And this is my Father’s world, and I refuse, I refuse to let my emotions be jerked around by any election. I’m putting my eyes on Jesus. I’m putting my trust in Jesus. And I’m going to sit down and have this Lord’s Supper, and I’m going to remember His death till He comes. Hallelujah and amen and amen!

# Living in Dangerous Days

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: April 23, 1995**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3**

*“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”*

2 TIMOTHY 3:1

## Outline

Introduction

- A. We Are Faced with Wicked Behavior
- B. We Are Faced with Wrong Beliefs
- I. We Must Practice Separation
- II. We Must Prepare for Suffering
- III. We Must Pursue the Word
  - C. For Enduring
  - D. For Evangelization
  - E. For Equipping

Conclusion

## Introduction

Take God’s Word, and open, if you will, to 2 Timothy chapter 3. When you found it, look up here. Three days after Easter we were absolutely, totally, numbingly shocked as the word began to go through our community, through our homes, through our schools, that the unthinkable had happened. A massive bomb exploding at a federal building in Oklahoma City had brought not only a building crashing down, but had brought some many lives, so many hopes, so much joy crashing down with it. And we began to think, what is happening in our world? And what is happening in America in the very heart land of America? And we began to ask, are we safe? Is anybody safe? Well, I want to talk to you about something tonight. The title of our Bible lesson is, Living in Dangerous Days.

Now, we ought not to be surprised at these days are as dangerous as they are. Look if you will as to what God’s Word says in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 1: This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. It doesn’t say they may come, they might come. They will come. This is the prophecy of the last days. Many of us believe we are living in the last days. The sands of time are running low in God’s hourglass. And our world is headed for judgment. And we believe indeed, that the world is not getting better

and better, contrary to the Pollyanna beliefs of many, but that the world is slowly sinking into ruin, debauchery, and marching on to judgment. And for those who are trying to save the world, all I can say is, you have a misplaced hope. This world, and I hope this doesn't bother you, because this message is not basically a negative message. But it is one that is going to bring you into reality. This world is headed for judgment. Somebody told Mark Twain, I'm afraid the world is coming to an end. He said, that's all right. We can get along without it. And indeed we can and indeed we will get along without this world system.

Learn this about the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you don't learn this, you're going to be frustrated. The gospel of Jesus Christ was never intended to save civilization from wreckage. The gospel of Jesus Christ is intended to save men from the wreckage of civilization. That's what we're here for—is to save people out of this world. And I believe we ought to do all that we can do to alleviate human hurt. I believe we ought to do all that we can do to bring peace and judgment and righteousness into this world. We ought to do that. But if that's all you do, you're rearranging the deck chairs on the titanic. This world is headed to judgment. In the last days, perilous times shall come.

Now I want you to look at the word perilous. That word perilous is used only one other time in the Bible which speaks of two men who were demon possessed, demonics we would call them. The word literally means exceeding fierce. That's the way it's translated in the gospels in Matthew 8, verse 28: exceeding fierce. We can read this: in the last days exceedingly fierce times will come. Another translation may simply be, dangerous. You see, this world that we're living in is facing moral, spiritual, social, political, national and international darkness. And we're holding our breath, waiting to see what will come next.

Now, don't think the gospel has failed, and don't think that something has gone wrong with the Bible when perilous times come. Frankly, if perilous times did not come, that would prove the Bible to be false. God says, in the last days, perilous times shall come. Does that mean that we're going around moaning and groaning and complaining? No. The darkest hour is just before the dawn. And for those of us who know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and those of us who understand Bible prophecy, we can say praise God, it's getting glorious dark. Because we know that the daystar is about to appear, the Lord Jesus.

Now, God wants His people to endure these last days. And God has given us a handbook for survival. For indeed, the Bible says, He that endures to the end shall be saved. That doesn't mean we're saved because we endure, but we endure because we're saved, because we know the Word of God. The Bible is a survival handbook. Now, I'm not one of these survivalists, in the sense of the word that we're hiding food in a cave. But I am a survivalist when it comes to getting through dangerous days,

according to the Word of God.

So, I want you to notice, not only the prophecy of these dangerous days, but the problems of these days. Let's see what God says they're going to be like, and see if it reminds you of today's newspaper. Look if you will in verse 2, For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

#### **A. We Are Faced with Wicked Behavior**

Now, there are going to be people of wicked behavior in the last days. And notice how he describes them: lovers of their own selves. This is the day of me-ism. People living for self, and self alone, as if Jesus Christ never lived and never died. The religion of today is me first. Then notice, he says, covetous. That is, people who are living for what they can grab and not for what they can give. The Bible teaches that we are to worship God. We are to love people and use things. But we love things, use people and ignore God. Covetous people. And then he says, boasters and proud. I think the most terrible thing about this world is that it's not on its face in humiliation before God. We weep with pride. We strut. We stick out our chests. We talk about our great nation, our great government. We boast about our great civilization while it's crumbling in around our heads. We're like lemmings, marching to the sea. Only we're just the nations are marching to Armageddon. Then he mentions in this litany, blasphemers. Never before has God and His Word been so blasphemed as it is in this day and in this age.

Now I know that there is a religious interest today. But friend, did you know that about the only thing safe for the comedians to mock anymore is God? Did you know that if you were to get on television and say a word denigrating somebody's race, why they would come down on you like a hammer? Racial jokes? No, no. Do you say, Pastor, you think there should be? No, no not at all. I think we ought to respect one another. And the humanity of all of us is inextricably interwoven and bound together. But here's the point: you may not denigrate a human being, but you can say anything about Almighty God, and nobody will say a word. Is that not true? Why? Why? Because we've exalted the human above the divine. And we say, Oh, don't say anything disparagingly about a human being. Blasphemers. God's name is drug through the muck and filth of this world.

George Will, who was a very intelligent man, columnist who said this—and I quote: And it is by now a scandal beyond irony that thanks to the energetic legislation of civil liberties fanatics, pornographers enjoy expansive first amendment protection while first graders in a nativity play are said to violate first amend- first amendment values. That's

what George Will said. We can give the pornographer carte blanche, but we dare not talk about our Lord and Savior.

Then he goes on to mention disobedient to parents. We have raised, in our world, a generation of young rebels who do not understand authority in the home, and therefore, there is no authority outside the home. I want to tell you something, folks: when I was a kid I would never have thought about sassing a teacher. I mean, I might have thought about it, but that's as far as it would go. And if by chance, I did lip off and that teacher applied the Board of Education to the seat of knowledge. I never would have thought about going, oh as a matter of fact, that did happen to me one time. I never would have thought about going home and tell my dad about it. We were down in the gymnasium shooting baskets. I was a junior high schooler. Mrs. Farrell, our physical education teacher, her first job of teaching, a beautiful blonde came down and said, boys, come on back up it's time for classes. We said, just a moment Mrs. Farrell, we're playing a game of horse. She said, boys, come up. We said, Mrs. Farrell, we're going to be finished in just a moment. She turned and left. I thought we'd won. But then I turned and looked in the door of that gymnasium was Mrs. McCulley. Mrs. McCulley was the original amazon. I mean, this lady was big. She was bigger than I am right now. I mean, I was a junior high schooler. She was over six feet tall. She had shoulders like a line backer, a godly woman. But she was the principle of that school. She stood in that doorway and she filled the whole doorway. She said, boys, Mrs. Farrell said to go upstairs. We said, yes, Mrs. McCulley. Set the ball down and when I walked through that door, I did not know what she had behind her back. She had baseball bat—I'm not kidding. A baseball bat, it had been planed down to make a paddle out of it. Still had the handle on it like you would hit a home run with and she did. But she had drilled holes in it. It was a lethal weapon. And I want you to know this: that when I walked through that door, I never saw that thing until she had already done her nefarious business. But she took that thing and lifted me through that door with it. Whack! Do you think I went home and told my dad? No siree, I didn't tell my dad. The ACLU never learned about it and nobody else learned about that brutality. But I want to tell you one thing folks, the next time Mrs. Farrell said, boys, come up. I went up! I went up.

But we today, we're a different generation—we're a different generation. The Bible says, we're going to have a group that does not respect authority, disobedient to parents. Let me tell you something. If they don't learn to respect authority in the home, they will not respect authority in the church or authority in the government. They will not respect God's authority. The Bible says, you withhold correction from a child, you are condemning him to hell, because he'll end up a rebel against Almighty God. Parents today, however, are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the very promiscuity that is tolerated by society and the secularism in our schools. In schools, children are being

desensitized to homosexuality, and abortion, and sexual indulgence, and values clarification, and relative morality. And yet, if we want to pray in schools they say, wait a minute. That might offend somebody. Well, I want to tell you there are thousands and millions, and Christian kids, who are being offended every day by the filth and the philosophies that are being espoused—disobedient to parents. The Bible is banned and filthy books are in. No wonder that 25%—1/4 of America's 15 year olds—have experimented with sex.

Then he goes on to say that the last days are going to be marked by people without natural affection. That's a very interesting word in the Greek language, without natural affection. Do you know what it literally means? Without family love. Today, mothers are taught that having children is a burden. Rearing those children is an imposition. And we've got teenage girls who are being told by your dads, take your daughters to work and show them what they ought to be doing rather than wasting their time being mothers and homemakers. Now, they don't say it that crudely, but that's the idea. As if to be a mother, to be a homemaker, to rear children, to stay at home is an absolute waste of time. Not a better occupation. Not a higher calling than the God given calling to raise children for our Lord Jesus Christ. Without natural affection. When mothers put their offspring to death in their own womb. When mothers have made the mother's womb the most dangerous place in America. That's without natural affection. When boys want to make love to boys, and women want to make love to women—that is without natural affection. Without family love. God says it's one of the marks of the last days.

And then, the next thing: he says, truce breakers. We have come to a day and an age when a man's word means literally nothing. Whether it's a marriage contract, a business contract, a church covenant, or a truce between nations. We are simply truce breakers. May God have mercy upon our throwaway marriages! We've invented something in the land today called a no fault divorce. That's incredible. May God have mercy on our throwaway marriages! Truce breakers.

And then, he mentions those who are incontinent. That is, out of control—fierce, despisers of those that are good. Have you noticed today that it's vogue to mock the policeman? Friend, it's time we begin to pray for and support and appreciate our policeman. I'm sick and tired of the policeman being put on trial. Our jails are filled with hoodlums. We've run out of space to warehouse them. Our crime rate is the disgrace of civilization. There are almost 200 known terrorist groups alive in the world today, and friend, they have sophisticated equipment. And everybody is talking about terrorism, but I'm going to say something else to you. The greatest terrorism today is being practiced against the unborn—and never forget it. That is terrorism. Court ruling in 1973 classified little babies in the mother's womb as nonpersons. That's exactly what Hitler did when

Hitler redefined person hood so that the Jews could be excluded from the protection of the law. Today, little babies have been reclassified as non-persons for the convenience of women. And I want to say that 97% of all abortions that take place in America take place simply for convenience. Abortion is being used as the nation's means of birth control.

Now, I'm well aware that people don't like it when a preacher preaches on abortion. It's a strange thing, however. If you ask a politician about abortion, he'll do the two-step. Here's what he'll say. You'll hear this over and over: I'm personally against it. I am personally against it, but that is a religious matter. It doesn't belong in politics. You'll hear that. But you let a preacher stand up and preach about abortion, and what will he say? Why doesn't he stay out of politics? Make up your mind. Whether it is a matter of politics or a matter of religion, makes no difference to me. It's wrong to kill babies. It's wrong! People need to speak out against it.

I've read that if you destroy the egg of a bald eagle, you're subject to a year in prison and \$5,000 fine. I want to ask a question? Is a baby eagle worth more than a human being? What kind of distorted values have we come to? In the last days, perilous times will come. And men will be men of wicked conduct. And it goes on to say, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. What's wrong in America today? Well, our stadiums are filled. Our theaters are filled. Our pleasure palaces are filled. Our nightclubs are packed. And many churches are half empty. And some have closed on Sunday night altogether. And this is an exception. Don't think it's like this everywhere. It is not. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

Now the Bible is not against pleasure. As a matter of fact, pleasure is a gift of God. Psalm 16, verse 11, says, Thou wilt show me the path of life. In thy presence is fullness of joy. At thy right hand are pleasures evermore. It's a thrill to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't get the idea that God is some sort of a Grinch and that every time God sees somebody having a good time, he moves in to break up the party. That's a slander against the character of God. But the problem with this generation is that they are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. No longer is Sunday the Lord's Day; it's the weekend. The stadiums are filled and the churches are forsaken.

### **B. We Are Faced with Wrong Beliefs**

But not only is there wrong behavior, there wicked behavior, but there is wrong beliefs. It's compounded. Notice if you will, in verse 6. For this sort—this is 2 Timothy 3, verse 6—For this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts. Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now what's he saying?

Well, he's saying there's going to be no form or religion, there's going to be no shortage of religion in the last days. People will talk about religion. They will have a form

of godliness, but they will deny the power thereof. And then he gives some examples. He gives examples, for example, of those who go from house to house making converts for their spurious religion. And it seems to be that women are right in the vortex of the whole thing. I want you to notice what he says about these women. Look again in verse 6. For of this sort are they which creep into houses—and by the way, liberals are creeps according to this—which creep into houses and lead captive silly women.

Now look at the word silly women. That means gullible. That's what the word silly means. It literally means weak willed. It doesn't mean necessarily, frivolous. But it has the idea of being a creature of impulse. And by the way, I think this speaks primarily of the, quote, liberated end of, quote, woman who doesn't want to be under the headship, and the direction, and the protection of her husband.

They are number one, gullible. Number two, they are guilty. Look if you will in this verse, silly women laden with sins. That means, they're burdened with guilt. Now look, here they are, gullible, guilty and now as he goes on to look, led away with divers lusts. The word lusts means, unfulfilled desire. They're grasping for something. They're seeking for something because their hearts are hungry. And here they are: gullible, guilty and grasping. Those are the ones that are sitting ducks, a perfect set up for the devil's disciples at their doorstep.

And then he mentions something else that we're facing in these last days. Look in verse 8: Now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. Now, you will find in this city and in America plenty of Jannes and Jambres who will stand against the kind of preaching I am doing tonight. There are always those who hate the truth and resist the truth. Who were Jannes and Jambres? Well, they were magicians and they opposed Moses who was a prophet and man of God by their false signs and spurious miracles. And they represent today new age religion. All of these kinds of things that are in the world today, humanism, new ageism, religious synchronism, false apostles and so called miracle workers and healers. And they stand against the truth and substitute their lives for God's truth.

Now, the scripture that I gave you speaks of the prophecy of the last days and it speaks of the problems of the last days. Now, we have a lot of moms and dads here tonight. What kind of protection do we have in the last days? Is God just simply going to tell us what the problem is? Perilous times are going to come. There's going to be wicked behavior and wrong beliefs and then just close the book? No! No! God has given us a plan and here's what you must do, three things. And I want you to see them.

## **I. We Must Practice Separation**

Number one, we must practice separation. Look in verse 5. Having a form of

godliness.... These people have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. Now underscore this phrase, from such turn away. Now we are to witness to the people of this world, but we're not to hobnob with them. The Bible says a companion of fools will be destroyed. Let me give you some scriptures—jot these down—2 Thessalonians 3, verse 14: And if any many obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him that he may be ashamed. If there is in this church a person living in egregious sin, don't just simply continue to fellowship with that brother. You are harming him and harming you. He is to be lovingly confronted and rebuked. Listen to Romans chapter 16 and verse 17. Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them. Avoid them. Listen to this scripture—1 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 11: But now I have written unto you not to keep company if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or a covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. From such turn away, he says. Second Corinthians chapter 6, verse 5, tells us that we are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. First John verse 10 says, If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine—that is, the doctrine of Christ—receive him not into your house. Neither bid him God speed. Now some people will call us snobbish. Some people will call us clannish. Some people will call us cliquish. But you better make up your mind in these last days that you are going to practice biblical separation. You need to understand who your children are with, who are they running with, who are they dating. Bring that boy, that girl, into the house. Let your house be wide open. Let them come in and mark up your carpets. Let them turn over your lamps. Let them raid your refrigerator. But you put them there where you can put your eyes upon them and see what your children have for their friends. The Bible says, withdraw yourself from these kinds of people. Young people, take this scripture that I just read to you. Listen to it, you guys in the in the choir tonight and you gals, if you know anybody like this: covetous, or lovers of them own selves, coveters, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof, from such turn away. Say, so long—so long, so long. Turn away from them. Get away from them. Treat them like they have a dangerous disease. I'm not saying that you can't witness to them. I'm not saying that you don't love them. I'm not saying that you are better than they are because you are what you are by the grace of God, but you can't make yourself sick to make them well. And you need to understand, friend, that you had better guard and guide your children in these last days and learn how to practice separation. And that is both negative and positive. And you better see to it that in your home there

is prayer, and Christian literature, and a good example, and the Ten Commandments on the wall. And you better see to it that Sissy and brother, Throckmorton and his sister, are in Sunday school every Sunday under a godly teacher who believes the Word of God. And if you're not attending a Bible-preaching church, and this is not the only one, but you need to get in a Bible-preaching church. Do you know what's wrong in America today? Good people are supporting bad churches. They say, well, I know I know that my denomination is not what it used to be and I know that my pastor is not like the kind of old-timey pastor we used to have, but Grandma is buried in the backyard of this church. Well, Grandma would get up and leave if she could—I guarantee it! From such, turn away. We need to get all of the good people behind the Word of God and the preaching of the Word of God and say we're going to stand for that which is right and that which is true in these last days. Practice separation. That's the first thing.

## **II. We Must Prepare for Suffering**

Here's the second thing: prepare for suffering. Oh well, it's true. Look, if you will now, in verses 10 and following. But thou hast fully known my doctrine—Paul is talking—manner of life, purpose, faith longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra: what persecutions I endured—now watch it, watch it—but out of them all the Lord delivered me. God did not come to get you out of trouble, but to guide you through trouble. And notice verse 12: Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Now I want to ask you a question: How many of you believe verse 12? Let me see your hand. Take them down. Now, don't lift your hand this time, but how many of you are suffering persecution? If you have not, if you do not, either this verse is a lie or you are not really living godly in Christ Jesus. Now notice what it says—it says, All who will live godly. That is, who are determined to live godly shall suffer persecution. You don't have to go out and bait it. You don't have to get a martyr complex. Just stand up for what is right, because you are twice born person in a world of once born people and you're going to find yourself going against the tide all the time. Because what we believe starts at a different source, it follows a different course and is headed to a different conclusion. You're going to suffer persecution.

Now, you say, you mean, Pastor, they're going to tie me to a rack and whip me? Probably not. We're too sophisticated for that. Do you know what the root word for persecute literally means here? It's a word that means to pursue, to watch, to spy on. Once you take a stand for Jesus; once you say, my course is set; once you say, my flag is hoisted high; once you say, I belong to the company of the redeemed; once you declare yourself out and out, 100%, every inch, every ounce, every nerve, every fiber for Jesus Christ, once you do that—you're a marked man. They will begin to pursue

you, persecute you. They'll look, they'll wait for the slightest let down, the finest flaw they can find and say, Aha! Aha! That's what they were doing to Jesus. They persecuted Jesus long before they put Him on the whipping post. You remember when Jesus and His disciples were going through the wheat fields and it was on the Sabbath day. And going through the wheat fields they stopped and rubbed some of that wheat in their hands to get the husk off and ate it. And the Pharisees said, Ah ha! They're threshing wheat on the Sabbath and they accused Him with it. I want to ask you a question. What were a bunch of Pharisees doing out in a wheat field anyway? They were following Jesus around. There they were, just trying to catch Him. And when this happens, up they pop, Aha! Kind of reminds you of Hee Haw, coming up out of out of the wheat field. There they are. Ha, we caught you. They'll pursue you. Just get ready for it. It's all right. It won't hurt you. It will make you better—give you something to offer up for Jesus. Give you a chance to suffer shame for His name. If you're looking for a cheap way, easy way, a lazy way to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in these last days, forget it. Practice separation, prepare for suffering. It's not bad. Thank God that they can tell the difference.

Somebody asked this question: if you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Thank God they can tell the difference. All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

### **III. We Must Pursue the Word**

Now here's the third thing you need to do in these dangerous days. Number one, number one folks, listen very carefully. What you need to do is practice separation. Number two, prepare for suffering. And number three, and I can't say this enough, pursue the Word. Look, if you will now, in verse 13. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

Now, Pastor Rogers, is it going to get worse? That's what this verse says. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse. You say, what's coming next? I don't know what's coming next? I'm just going to tell you it's going to get worse and worse. Cheer up, it's going to get worse. There's going to be all kinds of charlatans and cults and weird communities, like those Japanese people who have had enough potential poison gas to kill not millions, but billions of people. It's going to get worse and worse. But what do you do? You get in the Word of God. Look at it here, look at it. He says here, but evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But—circle the word but—But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and has been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation—that means deliverance—through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All

scripture is given by inspiration of god, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect—that means mature—thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

### **C. For Enduring**

Now why should you pursue the Word? Number one, for enduring, for enduring. Look at it here in this passage of Word. He teaches us here that we are to endure these things. Right even through all of this suffering we are going to endure. Verse 13: But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou, continue thou. And how do you continue? Remember the Word of God. Look verse 14: Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. I've been with you for 20, almost 23 years. Many of you have grown up, boys just like Tim who sang here tonight. May I be bold enough to ask you to remember me who has preached this to you? Remember. And remember what the Holy Spirit has told you. He said, remember what you've heard and been assured of. Because, if I just say it, and the Holy Spirit doesn't say amen, then that's not enough. But when the Holy Spirit says it, the man of God is preaching the Word of God, and gives you that assurance, remember it.

We had one of the young ladies of our church, went away to a liberal college. And she was given all this liberalism, this garbage. She came back and she told me this, she said, Pastor Rogers I almost went under. But, she said, there's something that kept me from doing it. She said, I remembered you and I remembered Jim Whitmire. And she said, I remembered what you taught me and I remembered how you lived, and I knew they were wrong and you were right. That's what the apostle Paul is saying, Hey, remember, when this comes, you get in the Words and remember what you've learned and been assured of. Knowing of whom thou hast learned them.

### **D. For Evangelization**

Now, the Words will help you to endure and the Words will help you to evangelize. Verse 15: And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. What are we to be doing in these dangerous days? Bringing people to Jesus. I wonder how many people in that federal building were saved? I know I watched the thing this afternoon on CNN. I watched that memorial service and I heard many words about, we'll meet these folks in heaven—not all of them, just those who were saved, just those who knew the Lord Jesus. All those little babies will go straight to heaven. But what do we do in the meanwhile while we're waiting for Jesus to come? We need to get our heads out of the clouds of prophecy and get our feet on the pavement of soul winning. And we need to stop sitting around feeling sorry for ourselves, licking our wounds and singing, Hold the

fort, for I am coming. We need to begin singing, Onward Christian soldiers. And take the Word of God as our battleaxe, and the Holy Spirit as our ally, and God Almighty as our commander-in-chief, and the great commission as our marching orders. And tell this world about Jesus who is mighty to save.

### **E. For Equipping**

Pursue the Word for enduring. Pursue the Word for evangelizing, and pursue the Word for equipping. Look in verses 16 and 17: All scripture is given by inspiration of God—that is, it's God breathed—and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. This is your handbook. God has given it to you. And when he says that, it is profitable that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished. Look at the word furnished there. That's a military metaphor. What God is saying is, I'm not going to send you into the battle unarmed. In the last days, ritual and emotion will not see you through. But all that you need to be thoroughly equipped is going to be found in the Word of God. And when you're saturated with the Word of God, motivated by the Spirit of God, activated to the work of God, God is going to use you in these last days. Jesus is coming. Our king is on His way. These are perilous days, exceeding fierce, but we need not be dismayed. We don't have to live forever on this earth. There's a land that fairer than day and by faith we can see it afar.

## **Conclusion**

One of my favorite stories is about a dad off who lived in New Jersey. He took his little girl and his little boy with him to the beach. They were going to have a wonderful day at the seashore. The girl was a little older than her brother. The dad was a strong swimmer and they were out there in the Atlantic Ocean swimming around. The father looked back at the shore and he realized that the shore was a much further than he had remembered, that there was a current and the current was moving them out away. And he looked there, he had two little children with him. And they didn't have any floatation. He was holding the little brother by and large and they're floating around. He realized he had done a very dangerous thing. He realized he was in peril. He didn't want to frighten the children, but he knew he had to make a decision, because every moment they were getting further and further from the shore. He had to make an awful decision. But he made it. He said to the little girl, sister, we've gotten along way from the shore and daddy believes he better take brother back to the shore. Now sister, remembered how daddy taught you to float? Sister, you can float for hours on your back. You remember how daddy taught you to float? I'm going to take brother to the shore. You turn over on your back and float, honey, then I'm going to take brother to the shore. And then sweetheart, Daddy's coming back for you. Don't you forget honey, don't worry. Daddy is coming back for you. Sweetheart, just relax and float on your back. And that man took

that little boy and with all of his energy and sheer exhaustion he finally made it back against those currents back to the shore, brought that little boy on the shore. And then he began to scream at the top of his voice, help me! Somebody help me, please! My daughter is out there somewhere. I don't even know where. We've got to find her. They put the boats in the water. Strong men came. They began to search and search that vast ocean where that little girl was out there all by herself. And finally they found her, calmly floating on her back. When that daddy got his arms around that little girl, he held her up so close. He hugged her and kissed her, and hugged her and kissed her and said, sweetheart, daddy is so proud of you. You are such a wonderful little girl. I am so proud of you. Do you know what she said to him? She said, daddy, you told me I could float as long as I wanted to. And daddy, you told me exactly what to do. And daddy, you told me you were coming back for me. And daddy, I was just doing what you told me to do until you got here. That's what I want to be able to say to Jesus when He comes. Lord, you said you were coming again and you told your people that we could make it. And, Lord, we can. We're going to obey you. And when you come again, we want to be doing exactly what you told us to do. Amen?

Even so, come Lord Jesus. Would you bow your heads in prayer. Father, I pray tonight for those in this building who may not be ready for Jesus to come and those who may not be ready for some tragedy like Oklahoma City. Lord, I pray that tonight, they might give their hearts to Jesus and be saved.

If you're not certain that you're saved, I want to help you get it settled right now. I want you to pray right now this kind of prayer. Dear God, I know that you love me. I know you want to save me. Jesus, I believe you're the Son of God. I believe you paid my sin debt with your blood on that cross. I believe that God raised you from the dead. I repent of my sin. I open my heart. I trust you as my Lord and Savior and Master. Thank you for saving me Lord Jesus. Thank you for forgiving my sin. Thank you for giving me a home in heaven. Thank you for living in my life right now. Begin now to make me the person you want me to be. And, Lord Jesus, help me never to be ashamed of you, because you died for me. Amen.

# These Issues We Face

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: February 4, 1990**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3:1**

*“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”*

2 TIMOTHY 3:1

## Outline

Introduction

I. Selfishness

II. Pornography

III. Promiscuity

IV. Radical Feminism

V. Crime and Violence

VI. Abortion

VII. Humanism

Conclusion

## Introduction

Would you take God's Word please and open to night to 2 Timothy chapter 3. Now, these are dangerous days in which we live. The Bible calls them in 2 Timothy 3 verse 1: *“perilous times.”* We might call them dangerous days. I believe with my heart and soul that the sands of time are running low for this generation. I believe that we are in the shadows of the end of an age. And, I believe that Jesus Christ is coming soon. Now, grant you I could be wrong. I am not a date setter. I've no right to set a date. And, yet I cannot deny the feeling of my heart. I've researched the Bible for a long time. I am an observer of the times. I am a student of the Word of God. And, I believe that God is about ready to step down out of Heaven and judge the wickedness of this old world.

Now, let me tell you dear friend, I am not out to try to save the world. Anybody who knows the Bible would not be so foolish as to try to save this world. This world is on a collision course with judgment and with disaster. Now, let me tell you what the purpose of the gospel is. The gospel is not intended to save civilization from wreckage, but the gospel is intended to save men from the wreckage of civilization. Now, the Bible is for snatching men. And, what the gospel is for is to snatch women, men, boys, and girls as brands from the burning and to let them know that this world is headed for judgment. But, bless God there is a new world coming.

We have a lot of social engineers today who are doing they're best to save this world. And, they remind me of people rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. What we need to do dear friend is to find out what our posture should be in these last days. And, I've said before, not only to survive, but to thrive, to be victorious, to get ready to go to heaven, and to take as many as we can with us. And, I believe that's what the Apostle Paul is talking about here in 2 Timothy 3.

God has laid on my heart a series of messages that are going to deal with contemporary issues. Issues that we're going to face in this last decade, in the close of this millennium, if our Lord tarries. Indeed we're already facing those issues. In the course of this message, I'll mention those issues, because this message is to give us just simply as overview of all of those issues. And, then on Sunday nights that follow we will take them one at a time. With the newspapers and the journals in one hand and the Bible in the other hand we will see what the Bible has to say about these contemporary issues. And, we will see these challenges—these things, these ideas, these philosophies, and these preachments that are seducing the American mind—to the cross.

Now, look again if you will 2 Timothy 3 verse 1: *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."* This word *perilous* is used only one other time in the New Testament. It's used in Matthew chapter 8:28 and it speaks of two demon possessed men and there it is called—I'm translating—exceeding fierce, exceeding fierce. And so, these are exceedingly fierce days. Now, I'm not a calamity howler, and I'm not just simply a picker of garbage, when I tell you that our world is facing moral, spiritual, social, political, national, and international darkness. Anybody who can pick up the newspaper can find out that nations are collapsing all around us. You say, "Well that's wonderful what is happening in the communist countries. We see the collapse of communism." Well, it gives us a window to preach the gospel. It give us in roads to preach the gospel, and well we ought to do it, but my dear friend, what you're seeing is the fore-gleam of the coming kingdom of the Anti-Christ. And, don't forget it!

This World, and all of these things that are happening quickly, are simply setting the stage for that globalism that one world leader—the Anti-Christ—that the Bible says will come and where is he gonna come from? Not from soviet Russia. He's going to come out of a reunified Roman Empire. He is going to come out of Europe. And, what you're having right now is the stage being set for that.

Now, we should not be surprised that all of these things shall come to pass. They certainly shouldn't cause us to panic. As I've told you before, there's no panic in heaven. They shouldn't cause us to panic. And, even if it gets dark for the child of God, it gets gloriously dark. Because you see dear friend, the morning star appears after the darkest hour of the night. And, we're waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ to come. Now,

this passage that is before us sets the stage for all of these Sunday evening messages that I am going to be bringing to you.

## I. Selfishness

Now, God tells us what dangerous days are. Look if you will, and see if you cannot find a description of the days in which we live in this pertinent and pregnant chapter that we're studying. Look for example, if you will, in 2 Timothy 3 verse 2. The Bible says, "*For men shall be lovers of their own selves.*" What is the tone of this age? No longer do we have those who are socially minded. No, we've gone beyond the hippies and we've gone beyond even the yuppies. Now what it is doing is cocooning. Which just simply means to turn inward, live for self, and self alone, as if Jesus Christ never lived. Somebody has described it *me-ism*. There's a lot of that around.

A very prominent feminine wrote this, and I quote, "We must destroy love." Can you imagine anyone saying that? "We must destroy love." And, here's what she says, "Love: An institution by definition, which is generally recognized as approval and acceptance. Love promotes vulnerability, dependence, possessiveness, susceptibility to pain, and prevents the full development of a woman's human potential by directing all her energies outward in the interest of others." Can you imagine a person saying that? We must destroy love. She says, "What you need to do is to forget about directing your energies outward; forget about such things as taking care of children, loving your husband, being a good citizen, doing unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Now, the Bible says that in the last Days there will be perilous times. And, Jesus said, "*And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold*" (Matthew 24:12). But, look again in God's Word in 2 Timothy 3 verse 2: not only "*Shall be lovers of their own selves,*" they will be "*covetous.*" Now, look around, what are people living for today? They're living for what they can grab and not for what they can give. The Bible teaches that we are to worship God, love people, and use things. But, what we do is ignore God, love things, and use people. He goes on to say that we're going to be in the last days, "*boasters, proud.*" We're continually boasting at our human greatness, of our human achievement, and like egomaniacs we are strutting to Hell thinking we are too good to be damned. Civilization is coming apart at the seams, it is a shamble, and yet we are marching head long to Armageddon. He goes on to say that men will be, "*blasphemers*" do you see that in verse 2?

## II. Pornography

I am ashamed to be an American sometimes, such as when I turn on the television. I wonder what those who visit our so called country—called God blessed America—must

think! The devil is piping both profanity and pornography into the living rooms of America. And, it seems as though an open sewer has broken in America and people are blaspheming the name of God. George Will, a conservative commentator that I like to listen to from time to time, said this, “And, it is by now a scandal beyond irony, that thanks to the energetic work of civil liberties fanatics, pornographers enjoy expansive First Amendment protection, while first graders in a nativity play are said to violate Amendment values, First Amendment.” What George Will was saying is that you can have what we had in the coliseum the other night—With that rock concert there, with its obscenities and blasphemies beyond description—And yet, boys and girls in school who want to have a nativity play are said to be out of bounds and out of order.

He goes on to say that in the last days that the children will be “*disobedient to parents.*” Now, it was hard for me to raise children when I was raising my children, but my heart goes out—and that’s one of the reasons I’m preaching this series of messages—to help parents to raise children today. We are raising a generation of children that do not understand authority inside or outside of the home.

An educator, Dr. Pierce, from Harvard, was lecturing 2,000 teachers in Denver and this is what he said. I want you to listen to it. He said, “Every child in America who enters school at the age of five is mentally ill because he comes to school with an allegiance toward our elected officials, toward our founding fathers, toward our institutions, toward the preservation of this form of government, patriotism, nationalism, and sovereignty. All of that proves that children are sick, because the truly well individual is one who has rejected all those things and is what I would call the true international child of the future.” “Well,” you say, “That was just some man from off the wall.” No, he’s from Harvard! “Well,” you say, “He was talking to the ill informed.” No, he was talking to 2,000 teachers. He was saying that when boys and girls come to school, with a love for parents, a fixed standard of right and wrong, when they believe in my country, when they believe in nationalism, and patriotism they are sick!

### **III. Promiscuity**

John Phillips, who is a wonderful student of the Word of God and a great commentator, gave us this insight. This what John Phillips said, “Even conscientious parents are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the rising tides of promiscuousness, tolerated by society with the secular values taught in public schools.” He went on to say “Schools across the country simply ignore parental objections with the liberal teaching of homosexuality, abortion, birth control, sexual indulgence, and relative morality. And, of course the teaching of the Bible is band from our classrooms. We can assign for reading and discussion any filthy book that comes off the press, we can study Carl Marx and George Barnard Shaw, we can invite witches, homosexuals, and anarchists into our

class rooms to air their ideas, but we must not teach the Bible, nor have token prayers, nor Scripture readings in our school.” And, then he asked this question. “Is it any wonder that one quarter of all American fifteen year olds and one tenth of all thirteen olds have already experimented with sex?”

Think of it! Twenty-five percent of all fifteen year olds. When I was in school there were a few kids who did certain things and everybody knew who those kids were and they talked about them. But, today my dear friend, there’s something that’s happening that is heart breaking. Then, he goes on to say in this passage of Scripture, that they are going to be “*Without natural affection.*” Do you see that in 2 Timothy 3 verse 3? Without natural affection. Now, what that word literally means is *without family love*, without family love.

As I was driving out of the parking lot this morning I had my radio on and it told about a murder that had been planned between a son, his father, and his mother. They were going to murder the son’s wife, their Daughter-in-law, because of the insurance that she had. And, they had planned to murder her. But, then according to the news report, they found out that the insurance was no longer in effect, so the parents turned around and murdered their son instead. Without natural affection!

#### **IV. Radical Feminism**

Another feminist said—Now, listen to this—She said, “Since marriage constitutes slavery for women, it is clear that the women’s movement must concentrate on attacking this institution. Freedom for women cannot be one without the abolition of marriage.”

You say, “Well pastor, there are a lot of feminists who believe in marriage.” Indeed they do and they would not agree with this woman. But, again this is the kind of thing that is in the woodwork of the society in which we live. There are many who think that and many of them are women. They think that having a family and rearing children is a burden and an imposition. And, then on top of that we have the homosexual movement. When the Bible says, without natural affection, it speaks of not having the family love that God expects people to have. A man for a woman, a woman for a man, one man for woman ’til death do them part.

He goes on to say, without natural affection, and then he says, “*trucebreakers.*” Now, these are the dangerous days in which we live, when men will be trucebreakers. That is, we have come to a day when a man’s word means nothing, whether it’s a business contract, a marriage contract, or a treaty between nations. May God have mercy on a nation that has thrown its away marriages. We have an incredible thing today called, a no-fault divorce. That’s a travesty. It’s a national tragedy. Forty percent of our marriages today in America—God blessed America—are ending in divorce. And,

many are living together without even the benefit of marriage. Trucebreakers.

## **V. Crime and Violence**

And, then go on and look at what he says, *“false accusers, incontinent”*—that is without self-control—*“fierce, despisers of those that are good.”* Our jails today are filled with hoodlums. We don’t have enough space to warehouse the criminals. When we broke ground for this building one of the mayors said, “I’m grateful that a church of this size is being built because we had better build some churches. Because we can’t build jails big enough and fast enough to take care of the people.

You see, the Bible teaches that today there is a form of fierceness and violence that’s uncontrollable. I was reading that there are at least 140 known terrorists groups alive today. Now, terrorist groups are not like they used to be. They are equipped today with the most sophisticated equipment. And, it will not be long before your life and my life will be in much graver danger than it is today because of international terrorism.

## **VI. Abortion**

And, I want to say while I’m on the subject of fierceness and terror that we’re already seeing terrorism practiced in America and thousands and millions are being slain. I am talking about the terror that is being performed on the unborn.

Now, I’m going to be bringing a message along with these other messages, on what the Bible has to say about abortion, I think the most tragic day in American history perhaps was in 1973, when little pre-born babies were given the status of non-persons. When Adolph Hitler wanted to eliminate the Jews, what he did was simply to have them classified as non-persons. What he did was to re-define personhood, so that the Jews could be excluded from the protection of the law. Now, that’s exactly what the humanists and the secularists have invaded us to do today. We have reclassified little babies as non-persons for the convenience of some women and men who want to do away with these little babies. And, tomorrow if it is a normal day in America, 4,500 little babies will be put to death.

I preached on abortion about a year or so ago to our church. And, I got a letter from a person who was irate that I would stand in the pulpit and preach on that subject. And, what she said was, “That is a political matter. And, you ought to keep politics out of the pulpit.” But, on the other hand, my dear friend, if you talk to a politician about abortion he will say that is a religious matter and you need to keep it out of politics. He’ll say, “You know, I personally am against abortion, but what a person does in his or her own life is not any of my business.” That would be like someone saying, “You know I am personally against exterminating the Jews, but somebody does in his own private gas chamber is none of my business.” And so, if we preachers stand up and talk about the

snuffing of the lives of these little babies, they'll say, "Stay out of politics." But, when the politician stands up, he'll say, "Hey that's a religious matter."

Well, friend you can call it political, or you call it religious, but the little babies are being killed. And, we need to stand up and we need to speak out. Did you know that ninety-seven percent of all these abortions take place for some form of convenience? Not to save the mother's life. Not for rape, not for incest! But, simply convenience. Abortion is becoming one of our nation's biggest means of birth control. We'll say more about that later on. But, here's what he says, that we are people who are fierce despisers of those that are good. The hero today is not the man of God, not the missionary, not the preacher, not the soul winner, not the godly, and not the momma who stays home and takes care of the kids. These are not the heroes of today's youth. They despise those that are good.

Now, notice in 2 Timothy 3 verse 4. He says that these people are "*Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*" Now, my dear friend, the Bible is not against pleasure, true pleasure. Thank God you don't have to choose between and pleasure. The Bible says in Psalm 16:11, speaking of God, "*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*" Friend, the way of Jesus is the way of genuine pleasure, but the problem comes when we have a society that loves pleasures more that they love God. Now, we have several thousands of persons here tonight in this worship service. But, even this is a fraction of our membership. Many of our people are home tonight. They could be here. But, they have a television program that they had rather watch. They had rather be in some other place than in the house of God. They are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

Our church has far more than most churches on Sunday night and Wednesday night and we don't boast at that. If you'll look around my dear friends, the resorts, the theaters, the stadiums, and the nightclubs are packed. It's what you might call a pleasure explosion. And, Sunday, today, has become a day to do almost anything but worship God. No longer do we call it the Lord's day, we simply call it the weekend. They are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Continue to read in 2 Timothy 3 verse 5: "*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.*" My dear friend there is no shortage of religion in America. Most Americans don't need religion. They need to turn from religion to a commitment to Jesus Christ. They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. It will be form without force. It will be religion without reality.

Religious participation of some form is at an all time high in America and so is our crime rate. Something is desperately wrong. Now, continue to read in 2 Timothy 3 verse 6, talking about this religion without reality, "*For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts*" or

different kinds of lusts. Now, what he's saying is this, that false religion will be the order of the day. Verses 6 and 7. Do you see the word *silly* that's used there? I looked it up in my Bible and what do you have? I have the New American Standard. It says *weak*, they are *weak women*. The word *silly* doesn't mean giddy, that's not the idea. But, it literally means *weak willed*. It has the idea of creatures of impulse. Susceptible to insinuation. What this refers to—I am convinced—is “liberated women” who have thrown off all authority from the Word of God and the headship perhaps of their husband, and they are living now by impulse. And, then he goes on to say, laden with sins. Do you see that? Actually the word *laden* with sins doesn't mean they're vile and sinful. That's not what it means. That may be true, but that's not what this means. It means that they have that heavy weight of sin.

Every person does, every man, woman, boy and girl in this world is laden with a burden of sin. That's what keeps the psychiatrists going and that's why we have so many sedatives sold. And, that's why there's so much alcohol consumed, because people are trying to forget, and they don't know what's wrong. But, there is this oppressive weight they have, they are laden with sin. And, then he goes on to describe them here, if you'll look at them, and you're going to see how they are sitting ducks for the devil.

Led away with diverse lusts. Now, what does that mean? Does that mean that they are sexually lusting after men? No, that isn't what it means. It means literally, diverse lusts, or all kinds of desires. Unfulfilled desires. Now, what you have, let me give you three words that begin with the letter *g*: *gullible*, *guilty* and *grasping*. Gullible: weak willed, ready to believe anything. They'll go down here and buy some magazine at the supermarket and Shirley McClain will talk to them about new Ageism. They'll pick it up and read it. Why? Because they have that culpability and they're looking for something to remove that guilt feeling that they have. And, on top of all of that, there's emptiness, there are these unfulfilled desires. And, this is what you have in the heart and mind of many today.

Now, on top of that you find in 2 Timothy 3 verses 7 a knowledge explosion. “*Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*” I've told you, facts may double or triple, knowledge will increase, but not truth! If it's new it's not true. My dear friend, we're to “*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” (Jude 1:3). Here is a generation Looking for some new thing, it's compounded even more. Look if you will in 2 Timothy 3 verse 8: “*Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.*” who were Jannes and Jambres? Jannes and Jambres were magicians who opposed Moses by imitating and mimicking His miracles.

Now, my dear friend, in the last days Satan is gonna come. You're gonna see more

miracles that you've ever seen, in these last days. Most of them will not be done by the power of god, but will be done by the darkness and the power of Satan. And, the Bible says you can look for an explosion of the occult miraculous. Even as it was in the day of Moses when Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses. And, they performed their miracles, and many are going to be swept up by these miracles. These my friends are dangerous days. Now, what have I given you a description of? Let me put it in a sentence and you'll see some of the subjects we're going to be dealing with on these Sunday nights.

## VII. Humanism

Humanism, new ageism, religious synchronism, the coming Anti-Christ, evolution, homosexuality, and the break-up of the home. These are the subjects that we're going to be dealing with. And, my dear friend, the Bible tells us that this is the dangerous Time, the fierce time in which we are to live. Now, thank God we don't have to face these days without hope. God tells us what we must do. He tells us first of all, that we must withdraw ourselves from these things. Look, if you will, in verse 5. He speaks of those who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, from such turn away.

People need to get out of liberal churches. They need to get out of churches that are not teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. They need to withdraw themselves from these kinds of places. You say, "Adrian do you think that your church is the only good church, the only true church?" No, God knows we're not what we ought to be. I'm telling you my dear friend, there are many wonderful Bible believing Christ honoring churches, but there are many that are not. And, if people are staying around, they say, well you know grandma's buried in the cemetery in the back yard. Friend, if grandma could, she'd get up and get out. I'll guarantee you and what you need to do is to do the same thing, and just simply saturate that place with your absence.

Listen dear friend, we are to witness to the people of this world, but we are not to hobb-nobb with them. Look if you will, as he says in 2 Thessalonians 3 verse 14: *"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him."* Romans 16 verse 17: *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."* 1 Corinthians 5 verse 11: *"But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."* 1 Timothy 6 verse 5 speaks of those who hold *"Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."* 2 John 1 verse 10: *"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."* Now, the Bible doesn't say that we have to put our arms

around other people and say, “Well, your ideas are just as good as ours.”

The Bible calls for a last day coming out. But, my dear friend, as I tried to preach this morning, it is not simply coming out, it is also going in. Those of you who are parents, you need to see to it that your children are in these kind of programs. You need to see to it that your children are in Sunday school. And, my dear friend, you need to see to it—if you’re young married people—you need to see to it above all, that you set the example by continual church attendance, and obey the Word of God.

The Bible says in Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 25: *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”* What Hebrews 10 verse 25 tells us is this, that the more we get, the closer we get to the second coming of Jesus Christ, the more you need the house of God. The more you need the people of God. We need to practice separation from the world and communication with the people of God. It’s not going to be very easy. My dear friends, you are going to suffering in this last days, but it won’t harm you if you have the Lord Jesus.

Look in 2 Timothy 3:10-12, Paul says concerning these days, *“But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”* How many believe verse 12. Let me see your hands. I hope you do, it’s in the Bible. Now, I’m not going to ask you the second question, but I might ask you this. How many of you are suffering persecution?

My dear friends, if you are not suffering persecution it’s because you are not living godly in Jesus Christ. Some people get the idea that if we live godly, we will escape persecution. No, you won’t. My dear friends, Jesus didn’t, Paul didn’t, and you won’t. You are a twice born person in a world of once born persons and you are going to be going against the tide all of the time. And, this world is not going to honor you if you truly live for the Lord Jesus Christ. It will break your neck if it can. Now, the Bible says all that are determined to live godly in Christ Jesus will. Now, Paul concludes this chapter by saying that we had better get hold of the truth. 2 Timothy 3 verse 13 he says, *“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”* You say, “Brother Rogers, is the world getting worse or better?” The answer is yes. Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But, God’s people as they get closer to the second coming of Jesus, I believe are getting brighter and brighter. I see, in spite of all of the litany of trouble that I have discussed tonight, I know more people who know and love the Lord Jesus, who believe the Bible, who are solid and square, in this day and age than I’ve ever known before in my life. The other night I went over to hear Phyllis Schlafly debate Sarah Weddington.

The lawyer who won Rowe vs. Wade and made it legal to put to death little babies. I listened to that debate. My heart was grieved when I saw some kids who were hearing and clapping for the idea that little pre-born babies ought to be put to death. But, I'll tell you I was encouraged when I saw so many bright faced intelligent looking young people, many of them members of our church, who were there to stand up for Christ and to stand up for that which is true.

But, my dear friend, you'd better know where you stand and what you stand for, because it is going to get worse and worse, and the devil will do his work by deceiving. There'll be all kinds of charlatans and it's going to get worse. What do you do? What do these young people do in this day and this age? What should you who are of the baby boomers, what should you do? What should those of us who are older than that do? Look in 2 Timothy 3 verse 14: *"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

## Conclusion

Remember what you've learned, my dear friend, don't doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light. Remember what you have learned. Remember it. Remember the Word of God and remember who you learned it from. I didn't get here yesterday. I've been here seventeen years preaching this book to you. Remember what you've learned. And, remember who you learned it from. I think I told you brother Jim, before of one of the young ladies who was a member of this church.

She was a member of our church, down there at Merritt Island, and then she moved up here. And, then she went to a denominational college. I could call the name of it, but I won't. She went to that denominational college that had an aura of religiosity, but she met some of these liberal professors who began to take this book, and take it apart, a piece at a time.

And, then she was told—now don't go back home to your home church and tell them all this. They wouldn't understand that—Here's the new way. Here's what we believe. Here's what modern scholarship has to say. And, she said, "They were the nicest people. Oh, they were so winsome." You know, the Bible talks of seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Some of these professors seduce students, just as a man might seduce a woman sexually, they seduce them spiritually. Seducing spirits. She said, "Oh, they were such nice people." And, she said, "I was almost drawn into this." And, then she told me this. And, I tell you it put joy in my heart. She said, "But pastor, I remembered you and I remembered Jim. Oh, she didn't say Jim, she said Mr. Whitmire. And, she said, "I remembered what you taught. I remembered how you lived. I knew

they were wrong. I knew they were wrong.”

Now, that's what the Apostle Paul is saying. He's saying don't you be blown around by this. Continue in the things, which thou hast learned, and assured of knowing of whom thou have learned them. Dear friend, God has given us the Word. And, everything that I'm going to be telling you in these Sunday nights going to come through the Word that God has given us, the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation. That is deliverance through faith in Jesus Christ. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. It's profitable for doctrine and that is to show us what's right. For reproof, that is to get us when we're wrong. And, for correction, that's to get us back right. For instruction in righteousness, that's to keep us right. That the man of God may be perfect. That means mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. My friend all that we need to live in these last days is right here. We need to be saturated with the Word of God and motivated by the Spirit of God and activated in the work of God. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

# Survival in the Last Days

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: February 9, 1986**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3:1–8**

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*“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”*

2 TIMOTHY 3:1

## Outline

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## Introduction

I want you to turn now to 2 Timothy chapter 3. If you did not bring a Bible with you this morning, look there in the pew rack and in all likelihood you'll find a Bible there. And turn with me please to 2 Timothy chapter 3. Just leave your Bibles open there, ah, in your lap, if you will, because we're going to be in that chapter today, 2 Timothy chapter 3. I'm told that a reporter stopped a pedestrian on the street and said, "I want to ask you a question. Do you know what are the two major problems in America today?" The pedestrian said, "I don't know and I don't care." The reporter said, "You have them both!" The two major problems, perhaps, in America today are ignorance and apathy. Now I want to talk to you today about something that you dare not be ignorant about and something that you dare not be careless about, and that is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, for the Bible teaches that Christ is coming back to this earth again. Just as literally, bodily, visible as He went away, Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth again. But it is not the Second Coming of Jesus, per say, that I want to talk about, but how you can prepare for His coming, how you can be ready for His coming, and how you can stick it out, how you can endure, how you can occupy until He comes, because, dear

friend, He is coming back. But these are dangerous days in which we're living. Look in the Scripture now with me. I'm in 2 Timothy chapter 3:1: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come..." Do you see that word perilous? It literally means dangerous or fierce. As a matter of fact, this word is translated only one other time in the Bible or given only one other time, talking about those two men who were filled with demons. And the Bible said of them, "They were exceeding fierce." So we could say these are exceedingly fierce days. These are great, dangerous days in which we're living. And then he goes to explain why. "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." Now here the Bible speaks of the last days, and I want you to notice with me primarily three things.

## **I. The Prophecy of the Last Days**

First of all, the prophecy of the last days. The Bible teaches there will be last days. That is, it is coming to an end, folks. Time and history will not go on as we have known it. There's coming a time when God will put the final period upon the final sentence upon the final paragraph upon the final page upon the final book of history, and it is coming to an end. And if you're living for this world and this world only, you are, of all people, most foolish. The Bible says this world, "...is passing away and the fashion thereof, but he that does the will of God shall abide forever." Christ is coming back. And those of us who know the word of God and people who are in tune with the Holy Spirit, I believe, have a deep feeling down deep in their hearts that the coming of Jesus Christ is imminent, that it is near, that God is writing in boxcar letters across the horizon, "Prepare to meet thy God." History is coming to a climax, and the Scripture with fiery finger is pointing to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. And one of these days soon I believe that God is going to step down out of heaven with His great ring of keys and say, "Gentlemen, it's closing time." We're about to come to the end of an age. Now the Bible prophesies that the age is coming to an end. The Bible calls it the last days. And then the Bible says that these days are going to be dangerous days and days in which we need to be warned, days in which we need to be prepared. Now, folks, a lot of people who believe in the social gospel don't understand the Bible. They talk about the social gospel. They talk about liberation theology. They talk about saving civilization. I want to tell you, dear friend, civilization will not be saved. And the Gospel was not intended to save civilization. And if you're trying to save civilization, you remind me of a person painting the decks of a sinking ship or perhaps rearranging the deck chairs on

the Titanic. Friend, this civilization is not going to be saved. Satan sails a sinking ship. He rules a doomed domain. This world is coming to an end. We are living, dear friend, in the last days. Now learn this about the Gospel: The Gospel is not here to save civilization from wreckage. The Gospel is here to save men from the wreckage of civilization. That's the Gospel. We are to be calling men out and getting people saved and getting people ready for eternity, for the Bible teaches it is all coming to an end. There are, what the Bible calls, the last days. Now I don't want to spend a lot of time on the last days, per say, the prophecy of the last days. Incidentally, somebody told Mark Twain that the world is coming to an end. He said, "Well, that's all right. We can get along without it."

## **II. The Problems of the Last Days**

And, indeed, we can because we look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. But notice with me, secondly, not only the prophecy of the last days, but the problems of the last days, because the Bible says these are dangerous days, exceeding fierce days. Now what are they going to be like?

### **A. Days of Wicked Conduct**

Well, they're going to be characterized, first of all, by men of wicked conduct. Look, if you will now, in verse 2: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves..." Does that remind you of anything today? We call this the "me" generation, "me-ism," look out for number one. People are living for self and self alone, as though Jesus Christ never lived, never died, never bathed this world with His blood. He goes on to say men will be, "...covetous..." Men are living today for what they can grab and not for what they can give. Common sense and the Bible teaches us that we're to worship God, love people, and use things. This generation has forgotten God, we use people, and love things. Men are covetous. And then he goes on to say, "...boasters and proud..." We boast and vaunt ourself of our civilization, our technology while we march headlong to Armageddon, and this world is sick and in trouble. But America is not on her knees. America is laughing her way and bragging her way to hell. Then the Bible goes on to say that the last days are going to be characterized by "...blasphemers..." Look around, listen. God's word and holy things are trampled through the dust. And to make matters worse, now we have pornography and profanity channeled and pipelined into the home via Channel television and many network programs. Things that used to amaze us now just simple amuse us, and we laugh and mock at holy things. And who today knows the Ten Commandments or, indeed, abides by God's holy word? Friend, I want to tell you that we have come to a sad day, a sad age in when our civil libertarians stand up and battle for the right of pornographers to spew their filth across this land, and yet, at the same time, little children are forbidden to have concerted prayer in our schools. May

God help us. Now he goes on to say, dear friend, that they will be "...disobedient to parents..." We have raised a generation of young people that do not know authority inside the home or outside the home. Now, dear friend, don't think that this just happened by chance. There is a system that is systemically seducing your children. Doctor Pierce of Harvard University addressed 2,000 teachers in Denver, Colorado, and this is what he said. Listen. You'll be amazed. "Every child in America who enters school at the age of 5 is mentally ill because he comes to school with allegiance toward our elected officials, toward our founding fathers, toward our institutions, toward the preservation of this form of government: patriotism, nationalism, sovereignty. All of that proves that children are sick, because the truly well individual is one who has rejected all those things and is what I would call the true international child of the future." Now I thank God for our public school teachers, and I thank God for those who are doing the very best they can under the system today. But, dear friend, it is becoming increasingly difficult for us to teach our young people at home or out of the home what they need to be and what they ought to be. John Phillips said this: "Even conscientious parents are finding it increasing difficult to cope with the rising tides of promiscuousness tolerated by society and with the secular values taught in public schools. Schools across the country simply ignore parental objections with the liberal teaching on homosexuality, abortion, birth control, sexual indulgence, and relative morality. And, of course, teaching the Bible is banned from our classrooms. We can assign for reading and discussing any filthy book that comes off the press. We can study Karl Marx and George Bernard Shaw. We can invite witches, homosexuals, and anarchists into our classrooms to air their ideas, but we must not teach the Bible or have even token prayers or Scripture reading in our schools." Then Dr. Phillips asks this question: "Is it any wonder that one quarter of all Americans, all of America's fifteen year olds and one tenth of all the thirteen year olds have already experimented with sex?" Children who are disobedient to parents. And then he goes on to say, "...without natural affection..." Now just give me your mind here for a moment. That word natural affection literally means family love. The last days are going to be marked by a lack of family love. Our women today have been told that having children is a burden and an imposition, and that it somehow keeps a woman from fulfillment. A leading feminist has said this: "We must destroy love, which is generally recognized as approval and acceptance. Love promotes vulnerability, dependence, possessiveness, susceptibility to pain, and prevents the full development of a woman's human potential by directing all her energies outward in the interest of others." Did you hear what she said? If you love, that keeps you from developing your human potential. And so they tell these women that we must destroy love. Now if that were just some statement off the wall, we could ignore it. But this is a leading feminist who has a big following. If this were somebody else who said that our children are

mentally sick at the age of 5, we could ignore it. But this is a Harvard professor speaking to educators. Another feminist, Sheila Chronin speaks for many when she writes, "Since marriage constitutes slavery for women, it is clear that the women's movement must concentrate on attacking this institution. Freedom for women cannot be won without the absolution of marriage." There is a war on the family. The Bible says that the last days are going to be marked by a disintegration of the homes, that people are going to be without family love. And then he goes on to say they will be, "...truce breakers..." A man's word means nothing today, whether it is a business contract, a treat between nations, or a marriage contract. Today, we have something that is ludicrous and would be laughable if it were not so sad. It is called a "no-fault divorce." Ladies and gentlemen, there is no such thing as a no-fault divorce. Divorce is a national tragedy. God says, "I hate divorce. I hate putting away." God says that one man is to be married to one woman until death do them part. But we have an epidemic of divorce in America today as our homes are broken up by those who break their marriage treaty. They are, indeed, truce breakers. May God forgive our throw-away marriages. And then God goes on to say that many are going to be "...incontinent..." That is, they have no self control. They don't even bother to get married. I've been amazed and shocked to read the surveys where so many of our people, a great majority of Americans, do not believe that sexual intercourse is a sin before marriage. I want to tell you, dear friend, the Bible says we are to flee fornication. The Bible teaches that you're to keep yourself for that one that you're to marry. And you are to be as pure as the driven snow when you come to the marriage altar. But we have a generation that has let go and let loose and anything goes. And then the Bible says that they're going to be "...fierce, despisers of those that are good." Think about it. Our jails today are filled and overrunning with young hoodlums. As a matter of fact, in the State of Tennessee we have run out of room to warehouse the criminals. Now that's what God said would happen in the last days. The crime rate is soaring, the disgrace of civilization. And I was studying recently and found that there are now 140 known terrorist groups in the world today. Terrorism. A hundred and forty organized groups. Perhaps more. And these are those who have sophisticated equipment. No longer do they depend just upon the gun or the hand grenade. Sophisticated networks of terrorism. It will not be long before we'll be seeing more and more terrorism here in the United States of America. And may God help this nation if we do not repent and turn back to God. People say, "Is God going to judge America?" Ladies and gentlemen, God is already judging America. What we're seeing today is the judgment of Almighty God upon a nation that has forgotten God. And you say, "Well now, wait a minute. What have we done?" Folks, the worst terrorism has already taken place in America, and that terrorism is terrorism against the little unborn children of America. God help us. God have mercy upon us when in 1973 a Supreme

Court gave little children the status of non-citizens. That is, they deserve no protection. Little pre-born children, little babies in their mother's womb do not deserve the protection of the law and the Constitution of the United States of America. That is, a person can take the life of that child and somehow, some way it's all right. I want to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that is exactly what happened in Nazi Germany when Mr. Hitler said that the Jews are not to be recognized as persons. They are *persona non grata*. They are not to be protected by the Constitution. Then that led to six million of them dying in the gas ovens. It is the same logic when we take away the rights of the little pre-born who cannot stand up for their own rights. I want to tell you, something rotten is in America. Something is wrong is in America. And with all of the function, uncton, emotion, and emphasis of my soul, I want to tell you it's wrong, it's wrong, it is wrong – do you hear me? – it is wrong. And, friend, somebody will hear me preach this way and do you know what he'll do? He'll say, "I wish you Baptist preachers would stay out of politics." And then, when the politician, you ask him, "Mr. Politician, what do you think about, ah, abortion?" Oh," he says, "that's a religious matter." When I talk about it, he calls it a political matter. When I try to get him to take a stand, he calls it a religious matter. I'll tell you the time will come when we'll dodge no longer when we stand before Almighty God. It is wrong to take the lives of little babies. No way can you fashion it. Let me tell you something, dear friend. Here in America, if you were to take the egg of a bald eagle and crush it, if they could catch you, they'd fine you \$5,000 and put you in jail for a year for crushing the egg of an eagle. They say, "Well, a little eagle is in there. Why, look what you've done." Listen, my dear friend. What is more precious; a little baby made in the image of God or a bald eagle? What a warped and distorted sense of values that we have in America today. People are without natural affection when little mothers put to death their babies. They're fierce when they slaughter the unborn. These are exceeding fierce days.

### **B. Days of Worldly Concern**

These, my friends, are dangerous days. And so we have days that I want to call days of wicked conduct. But not only days of wicked conduct; days of worldly concern. Look, if you will, now in, ah, verse 4. The Bible says these people will be "...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." Now we're not concerned today about what is right or wrong. We're concerned today about having a good time. Somebody has described our age as the "Pleasure Explosion."

Now I want to make it abundantly clear that the Bible is not against pleasure. Don't call us "Blue-nose Puritans." As a matter of fact, you don't have to choose between God and pleasure. As a matter of fact, the Bible says this in the book of Psalms, Psalm 16:11: "Thy wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." Amen? But what the Bible talks about is this: A

generation of people that have jettisoned God and have put pleasure on the throne of their life. Look around. Our resorts, our stadiums, our beaches, our ball parks, our theaters are filled and churches, many of them, are half-empty, especially on Sunday night. And now we call Sunday the weekend. No longer is it the Lord's Day. It's just simply the weekend. We are a pleasure-mad generation.

### C. **Days of Wrong Concepts**

Now, dear friend, the Bible says the last days are dangerous days. One, because of wicked conduct. Two, because of worldly concern. And three, because of wrong concepts. Continue to read verse 5. The Bible says they have a "...form of godliness..." Now it's not that we'll not have religion in that last days. As a matter of fact, we'll have a lot of religion in the last days. People are more religious. People are attending church today in some areas more than ever. "...having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. From such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." Men of wrong concepts. The devil is peddling his propaganda and his poison and people are believing it. And, again, I believe that the apostle Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, looked down the tunnel of time and saw the feminist movement that would come. And that's what he's talking about when he says, "....of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead, take captive silly women..." Do you know what the word silly means? It doesn't mean giddy. Silly is not the best translation. It means impressionable. It means leadable. It means if you were gullible, people who are gullible, they, these, these silly woman. And then he goes on to talk about them as being, ah, laden with sin. Now, ah, the word here does not mean that they are gross, immoral sinners. It means that they have a burden of guilt, as every man, every woman, every boy, every girl that has ever lived has that innate burden of guilt that he's not right with God, that he needs something else. Now when you take somebody who is gullible and somebody who is burdened down with sin, and then he goes on and says, "...and divers lusts." Again, do not think of the word lust as meaning sexual lust alone. It simply means strong desire, unmet need when a woman's deepest needs are not met. When a woman is under a burden of guilt, and when a woman is gullible, then the devil comes to say, "I'm going to liberate you," and he gives to her the false doctrines that is, really come out of Marxism and Communism, and she buys it hook, line, and sinker. Ours is a world of wrong concepts. And she is set up for the devil's disciples who are going door to door and are speaking from every microphone and pulpit, it seems, and platform across the land. Furthermore, he goes on to say something else. He says, "Even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses..." Who are Jannes and Jambres, anyway?

These were the magicians of Pharaoh's court who stood against Moses when Moses came to Pharaoh and performed a miracle in the power of God. These ungodly, devil-inspired missionaries from hell stood up and withstood Moses and they did it with supernatural power. They also caused their rods to turn to serpents. Whether it was a devilish counterfeit of a miracle or a devilish miracle, I know not, but I know it was used as a means of deception. And I know today, dear friend, that we're up against the unleashed powers of hell. And the devil has come down upon us, and he is performing the miraculous in the land in order to authenticate his horrible message. Now this is the day and age in which we're living. This is the reason the Bible calls them fierce days. Look at it. Wicked conduct. Worldly concerns. Wrong concepts. These are dangerous days. Now, thirdly, and finally, how are we going to survive in these last days? How are we going to make it in these last days?

### **III. Protection in the Last Days**

The apostle Paul tells us three things. And, and as I've talked about the prophecy of the last days and the problems of the last days, let me talk to you now about protection in these last days. Let me tell you three things that you can do not only to survive, but to thrive in these last days.

#### **D. You Must Practice Separation**

Number one: You must practice separation. Look, if you will, dear friend, in chapter 3:5. He speaks of these who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. Do you see the next phrase? "...from such turn away." Separate yourself from these kind of people. Now we are to witness to the world. We're to share Jesus Christ with the world. But we are not to hob-knob with apostates. The Bible says we are to turn away from them. This is not the only verse. I want to give you some verses. You jot them down. Second Thessalonians 3:14: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Listen to this: Romans 16:17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Listen to this: 1 Corinthians 5:11: "But now have I written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." Listen to this Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:5: "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." Second John 10, listen to it. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." You should treat these people as if they had a dangerous disease. Be careful, you may catch it. The Bible speaks of seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. And you young people, who are not yet married, and those of you who are

seeking your friends, you'd better take this Scripture as a standard, for when Jesus Christ saved you, He said you're not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. We are to practice separation. You're not smarter than God. God said, "From such turn away." If you don't you're going down in these last days. And separation is not only negative; it is positive. Not only separation from, but separation unto. You'd better choose the right crowd in these days. Listen to me. The Bible says in Hebrews 10:25 we are "...not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approach." Do you know what that means? It means in the last days you're not going to make it unless you're in church, in church. Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together. The closer we get to the end time the more we need one another. You need discernment. You needed that music. You needed that handshake. You need the fellowship. You need the prayer. You need me. I need you. We need one another. We're members one of another. And, friend, we need to be separated from this world and we need to be fellowshiping with one another, and so much the more as you see the day approach. Those of you young people who are looking for someone to marry. I'll tell you the way to find someone to marry. You be the right person in the right place. You're not going to meet that person in the singles' bar. You're going to meet them in a Sunday school class. Are you enrolled in Sunday school? Are you living for God? Are you in the fellowship of the church? I believe, ladies and gentlemen, that it's a sin not to attend church if you can attend church. If you're a member of a church, you ought to attend. And not just Sunday morning. I want to talk to some of you Sunday morning glories who bloom in the morning and fold up at night. You listen to me, folks. You ought to be here on Sunday night unless you're providentially hindered. And you ought to be here on Wednesday night. You say, "I don't read that in the Bible." Well, let me tell you something, folks. If you're a member of a church, and that church deems it wise to meet on Sunday night, then you ought to be here. If that church deems it wise to meet on Wednesday night, you ought to be here. Not because the Scripture says you ought to meet on Wednesday night or Sunday night, but that's when the body to which you belong meets. Now if you don't believe in that, if you don't think we ought to have a Sunday night service, then you ought to join a church that doesn't have a Sunday night service. If you don't believe we ought to have a prayer meeting, say, "I don't believe in prayer meeting. I don't want to be a part of a church that has a prayer meeting." But if you believe in it, then join it and get with it. That happens to be the program of the particular church that you belong to. This is the body of Christ and we're members one of another. I am telling you that the Bible says that we need to meet together. We need one another in these last days.

### **E. You Must Prepare for Suffering**

How important it is that we be a part of the family of God if we're going to survive. You practice separation. Number two: You prepare for suffering. Let me show you something, folks. Look right here in the word of God. Now he says in verse 10, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience." "Well, Pastor, if a man lives this way, he'll never have any trouble, huh?" Ha, ha. Read the next verse. "Persecutions, afflictions, which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but the Lord, but out of them all the Lord delivered me." Now notice verse 12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." In these last days, folks, you're not going to get out unbloodied. It cost to serve Jesus. It cost every day. It cost every step of the way to serve the Lord Jesus. If you're looking for a cheap way, an easy way, a lazy way to survive, you're not going to do it. The Bible says, "All that live godly in Christ Jesus (that will determines. Say I will, by the grace of God) they shall suffer persecution." Don't think this world will honor you if you serve God. This world will break your neck if it can. You are a twice-born man in a world of once-born men, and you're going to find yourself going against the tide all of the time. And the Bible says they're going to persecute you. Now to persecute here doesn't mean they're going to burn you at the stake. It literally means to pursue. That's what the, the root word means. They're going to watch you like a hawk. When you won't laugh at their cartoons, when you won't gamble for Coca-Colas, when you won't flirt in the office, when you won't cut a deal, when you stand for the Lord Jesus Christ, they're going to watch you. They're going to pursue you. They did Jesus. Remember when Jesus was out in the fields there on the Sabbath day, He and His disciples? And they took their hands and they threshed some wheat and they ate it. And the Pharisees, ha, they said, "Look, this man is, ah, threshing wheat on the Sabbath day." Now the ridiculous thing about that is what were a bunch of Pharisees doing out in the wheat field, anyway? They were following Jesus. They were snooping on Jesus. And right when He does this, they just rise up, just like Hee Haw (Ha, ha). Look. They, they see Him out there. "Look what He did." Friend, they'll watch you the same way. They're going to pursue you. They're going to persecute you. And you prepare for it. Get ready for it. Don't think it won't happen, and don't feel bad about it. Rejoice and be exceeding glad that they can see a difference in you.

### **F. You Must Pursue the Scriptures**

Now the third thing, dear friend. Not only must you practice separation, and not only must you prepare for suffering, but you'd better pursue the Scriptures. Let me show you what I'm talking about here. Paul is talking about how to survive, and he says here in verse 13, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Cheer up, it's going to get worse. "But continue thou in the things which thou

hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." Doctrine means what's right. For reproof means what's wrong. For correction means to get right. For instruction in righteousness means to stay right. "... that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

## Conclusion

How are you going to survive in the last days? Here is your handbook for survival, do you see it? That is your handbook for survival. God has given you this book for endurance, for evangelism, and for equipping, and you're not going to survive if you do not saturate yourself with the word of God. I wish I had more time for this point. I want you to get the tape and listen to the last message because I didn't have time this morning to develop it. But let me just say this to you, because we're about ready to close. A father was out swimming with his little girl and her smaller brother. They were having a wonderful time in the ocean. The father was quite a good swimmer. The little girl was a fairly good swimmer. The little boy had not yet learned how to swim. The father was not paying much attention, and he realized that the current and the tide had taken them further away than he meant to go. When he reached down for the bottom, the bottom wasn't there. He realized the little children were depending upon him, and he knew he did not have the strength to keep them both afloat. He had to make one of those terrible decisions. Which child shall I try to save first? He knew the little girl could swim some, so he said to her, "Honey, Daddy's going to have to take little brother back to the shore. Now I want you to stay here. And, honey, don't be afraid. I want you to turn over and float on your back. Remember how Daddy taught you to float? Turn over, darling, on your back and float. Honey, you can float for hours. It's no work at all. Just rest and float. Daddy's going to take brother to the shore and then, darling, Daddy's coming back for you." And that father, with a prayer in his heart and an urgency, ah, made his way to the shore with that little boy. His strength was almost gone when he got to the shore. But then he began to call to the others and say, "Help me. Please help me. My daughter is out there." Strong men plunged into the water. They looked and they searched and they looked and they searched. Finally, they found her. She was still floating on her back. The father picked her up in his arms and loved her and said, "Daddy is so proud of you. You did so good." She said, "Daddy, I only did what you told me to do. You told me, Daddy, that I could stay afloat, and I did. And, Daddy, you told me you were coming back and I knew you wouldn't lie. I knew you wouldn't lie." Friend, I want to tell you, Jesus is coming back. And when He comes, I want to be found doing

what He told me to do, just doing what He told me to do, because He said if I will obey Him, I can make it. I can survive. And I'll not do it apart from His instructions. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Every head bowed. Every eye closed. And while heads are bowed, and while eyes are closed, I want to ask you this question: Do you know Jesus Christ? Are you saved? Do you know that you know if you died right now you'd go to heaven? If you don't know it, dear friend, you can know it by receiving Christ. You don't get saved by joining a church. You don't get saved by being baptized. You get saved by trusting Christ. The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And if you would pray a prayer like this: "Dear God, I know You love me, and I know You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You, Jesus, right now with all of my heart. Once and for all I trust You, Jesus. Come into my heart. Forgive my sin. Save me, Jesus." And He will save you. You say, "Pastor, I can't remember all of that." Well, you don't have to pray all of that. You can just perhaps put it in a sentence and really mean it. You can just say, "Lord, save me. Lord, save me." Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. I just pray that today you'll trust Him.

# A Handbook for Family Survival

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: January 24, 1993**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3:1–17**

*“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”*

2 TIMOTHY 3:1

## Outline

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- A. Days of Evil Conduct
- B. Days of Worldly Concerns
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## Introduction

Second Timothy chapter 3 is our chapter tonight. It's one of the key chapters in all of the Bible. It's a chapter that we need to come to frequently. Tonight, the title of our message: “A Handbook for Family Survival.”

These are days when families are being pressed upon, attacked from every angle. Thank God, God is has left us with an instruction, not left us to flounder like a ship at sea on a dark and stormy night without a rudder, without a compass. But God has given us a handbook, a guidebook for survival. This chapter, I say, is one of the key chapters in the Word of God. It deals with the last days.

### A. Days of Evil Conduct

Look, if you will, in verse 1: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” You would agree that perilous times are now here. The Bible tells us that this world is headed for judgment, and the judgment is not merely the judgment that God brings upon it, but the judgment that men are bringing upon themselves. The word

perilous here is an interesting word. As a matter of fact, it's used here one time, and its only other use in the Bible is found in Matthew chapter 8 and verse 28. It speaks of two men who were demon possessed, and the Bible calls them there "exceedingly fierce." And so we could say that these are exceedingly fierce days in which we're living. These are days of demonic activity, very serious days. And our world is facing moral crisis, spiritual crisis, social crisis, political crisis, national crisis, international darkness. We look around and we see nations collapsing and a world gone wild. And if the doctors and sociologists are correct with the age plague, we are facing in the immediate future a devastating plague greater than any the other has ever known, including the great bubonic plagues, the black plague, all of these other things. It is getting dark. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."

Now that could, on the one hand, discourage you or, as I read this, it may encourage you because even though things seem to be out of control, they're not out of control to God. As a matter of fact, this passage of Scripture that I'm going to read to you shows me that God is in complete control—not that He has caused all of these things, but none of these things have escaped His notice, and that God has prophesied the days in which we live and made it abundantly clear what the last days will be. And, therefore, we do not need to panic. And if it is getting dark, as I've told you before, we can say, "Praise God, it is getting gloriously dark!" because when these things begin to come to pass, the Bible says, then look up, lift up your heads; your redemption draweth nigh.

Look at what the last days are going to be. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. Number one: For people shall be lovers of their own selves...." Our day, our age is people who are living for self and self alone. The theme for today is me-ism. As a matter of fact, a leading feminist actually was brazen enough to say this: "We must destroy love, and institution by definition which is generally recognized as approval and acceptance." Then she went on to say, "Love promotes vulnerability, dependence, possessiveness, susceptibility to pain, and prevents the full development of wimp, of woman's human potential by directing all her energies outward in the interest of others." And she said, "That's bad. We've got to do something about that. We, we've got to, teach people how not to love others, but to love themselves so they can succeed." Lovers of their own selves.

And then he says—look again, if you will—they shall be "covetous," verse 2. We have a generation of people who are living for what they can grab, nor for what they can give. Now the Bible teaches that we're to worship God, love people, and use things. Our generation has ignored God, loves things, and uses people. They're covetous.

And then he goes on to say, "...boasters and proud..." You would think that America would be on her face before God, but she's not. She's celebrating, laughing in the face of God. While civilization is a shamble, while we're marching headlong to Armageddon,

we're blaspheming, laughing, drinking, and above all, boasting about our great, great civilization.

And then this verse goes on to say that in the last days men will be “blasphemers.” God's Word and holy things are trampled through the dust. Pornography, profanity piped into the living rooms has become a feast for the eyes of little children. If you say anything that disparages somebody's race, you're in trouble, and you ought to be. If you say anything that disparages somebody's sexual gender, you're in trouble, and you ought to be. But if you laugh and mock at holy things, no trouble at all—you're a prude; absolutely no inhibition in this society against blasphemy, against taking the name of our great God in vain, mocking holy things.

George Will, who is an intellectual, has said, and I want to quote, “And it is by now a scandal beyond irony that thanks to the energetic allegation of civil liberties, fanatics, pornographers enjoy expansive First Amendment protection while first graders in a Nativity play are said to violate First Amendment values.” That is, a pornographer today can scream First Amendment to express himself in the vilest of things, but little boys and girls cannot even portray the birth of our Lord in the Christmas season.

And then this verse goes on to say that the generation of the last days will be a generation of those who are “...disobedient to parents...” We've raised a generation of young people that do not understand authority inside the home or outside the home. Dr. John Phillips will be here for our nationwide Bible Conference. Dr. John Phillips said this: “Even conscientious parents are finding it increasing difficult to cope with the rising tides of promiscuousness tolerated by society and with the secular values taught in public schools. Schools across the country simply ignore parental objections with the liberal teaching on homosexuality, abortion, birth control, sexual indulgence, and relative morality.” He goes on to say, “And, of course, teaching the Bible is banned from our classrooms. We can assign for reading and discussing any filthy book that comes off the press. We can study Karl Marx and George Bernard Shaw. We can invite witches, homosexuals, and anarchists into our classrooms to air their ideas. But we must not teach Bible, nor have token prayers, nor Scripture readings, in our schools. Is it any wonder,” he asked, “that one quarter of all America's 15-year olds and one tenth of all 13-year olds have experimented with sex?” Disobedient to parents.

And then he goes on to say “...without natural affection...” I told you this morning that means without family love—storge—without loving, parents without loving their children, their offspring. We have a generation that's up to its ears in filth and perversion. And mothers, who ought to be protecting and caring for their young, are actually having them put to death in their womb, and the womb has become the most unsafe place in America.

“Truce breakers,” he goes on to say. Our age is an age in which a man’s word now means nothing, whether it be a business contract, a marriage contract, or a treaty between nations. We have a generation today that’s come up with a, what it thinks is a splendid idea—a no-fault divorce. You talk about a contradiction in terms—a no-fault divorce. That is a tragedy and impossibility. And may God have mercy upon our throw-away marriages. One half of marriages in the United States end in divorce. It is our national shame. It is a tragedy. And it is compounded by the fact that many are living together today without even the benefit or the bother of getting married.

This verse goes on to say that in the last days men will be “...incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.” Our jails are filled with young hoodlums. We cannot build jails fast enough or big enough to warehouse the criminals. And, therefore, they’re being poured back out on the streets to rape and ruin again. Our crime rate is the disgrace of civilization. And here in Memphis, Tennessee, the center of the Bible belt, which of us would feel safe to walk down the streets of our city unattended at night in a so-called civilized city? And internationally there are 140 known terrorist groups alive in the world today and they are equipped with sophisticated equipment. And soon, and very soon, some of them will have atomic weaponry.

These are perilous days. And I want to underscore what I said today, this morning. The greatest terrorism is now being perpetrated against the unborn for the convenience of women. We have reclassified unborn babies as non-persons. Our politicians love to play word games. You ask a politician what he thinks about abortion, he says, “Well, I’m personally against it, but that’s not a political matter. That’s a religious matter. This is not the proper forum for that.” But when a preacher preaches against abortion, they say, “Why doesn’t he stay out of politics?” And so they bounce the ball back and forth across the net as the babies are dying.

## **B. Days of Worldly Concerns**

But not only do you see this kind of conduct, but look at the concerns of these people in verse 4. He says that they will be “Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” You say, “That’s the world!” No, he’s not talking about the world. Look. “Having a form of godliness...” That’s the church he’s describing in the last days. That’s the church—those who have a form of ungodliness, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

Now I want to say that you do not have to make a choice between loving God and true pleasure. That’s not the point. Don’t get the idea that God is a cosmic killjoy, and anytime He sees anybody having pleasure that He moves in to break up the game. Psalm 16:11, the psalmist rightly says, concerning to the Lord, “Thou wilt show me the path of life; and in thy presence is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasure forevermore.” God is not against pleasure. He’s not against joy. But there can only be

one God in your life. And many are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Our resorts, our theaters, our stadiums, our nightclubs are packed. Many of the members of this church are at some form of recreation tonight, rather than being in the house of God. There's one answer for that. They're lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. They had rather be at the movie house; they'd rather be at the ballgame; they'd rather be glued to the television set, than to be in the house of God. Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Sunday is no longer the Lord's Day. It has the inglorious title of "the weekend." Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness. Oh, these are people who say, 'Yes, I love Jesus. Oh yes, I believe the Bible.' They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. There is no power of godliness in their lives.

### C. Days of Ungodly Concepts

But not only does the Bible delineate their conduct and their concerns, but also their concepts. The last days are marked by people who have twisted concepts and philosophies. Look again in verses 5-8. They will have a, "...form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." And perhaps we've come here to the root of the matter because we behave as we behave because we believe as we believe.

Now, according to verse 5, there will be no shortage of religion in the last days. But according to verse 5, it will be a form of godliness without power. It will be form without force. It will be religion without reality. False religion will be the order of the day. Verses 6 and 7: "Ever learning, but not able to come to the knowledge of truth." And notice how it describes the feminine gender. Look at it in verse 6: "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts."

Now what does the word *silly* mean? Well, our word *silly* has the idea of being slaphappy, sort of a, I'd better be careful. Several things came to my mind, and the Lord said, "Don't say them." The word *silly* here means, "weak-willed"—weak-willed. It is the idea in the Greek language of being a creature of impulse, susceptible. By and large, these will be liberated women who refuse the headship of their husbands. That means they're open to believe the wrong thing. Silly means "gullible, gullible." And then he goes on to say, "...laden with sins..." That means they're carrying around a load of guilt. They don't know what to do with it. They don't know how to handle it. They're gullible and they're guilty. And then he goes on to say, "...and divers lusts." *Divers* means "various." *Lust* means "desires." Not sexual desire only, but any kind of an unfulfilled desire. Now

put those three together—gullible, guilty, and grasping—gullible, guilty, and grasping; a perfect setup for Satan. Those who have jettisoned the Word of God, those who don't know what to do with their sin, their unhappiness, their neurosis, and those who have unfulfilled desires and needs and wants; a sitting duck for those who come to knock at their door and lead them astray.

And then here's one of the most frightening parts of this. Look, if you will, in verses 7 and 8: "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." God primarily holds the man responsible.

Who were Jannes and Jambres? Well, they were magicians in Moses' time who withstood Moses and who opposed Moses. And when Moses, by the hand of God, performed miracles, Jannes and Jambres, by the power of the devil, performed false miracles, counterfeit miracles, to deceive many.

Now that's what makes these days all the more dangerous. We're living in a day of New Age miracles, humanism, New Ageism, religious syncretism, evolutionary thinking. Homosexuality has gone from a sin to a sickness to a socially accepted practice. All of this together is coming into peoples' minds and they have this, this search for spirituality that they're ever learning, never able to come to the knowledge of the truth and are deceived and blown away by counterfeit, demonic power, even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses. That's what we're facing today. And that's what God's Word said we would face.

Now what do we do? What do I do as a pastor? What do you do as a father, a mother, a grandparent? How do we teach our children? How do we face these demonic days that the Bible describes as exceedingly fierce? What do we do? Well, thank God, we're not left to flounder. God has shown us exactly, precisely what to do.

## **I. We Need to Practice Separation**

Number one: We must learn biblical separation. We must practice separation. Look in verse 5. It speaks of those who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. Now what does the Bible tell us to do? What does it say? From such do what? Turn away. Do you see it? Look, if you will, in verse 10: "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, and patience." We turn from some and we turn to others. Now you're to separate yourself from the people of this world. You say, "That brings a problem, Pastor Rogers. Sometimes you tell us we're to have unsaved friends so we can witness to them, then other times you tell us that we're to separate ourselves from them, and you give us a sense of moral ambivalence. We don't know whether we're doing right or whether we're doing wrong." This is a delicate balance, but one every believer can keep.

Let me talk to you about separation and what kind of separation we're talking about here. I'm going to give you about six verses. You may want to jot them down.

Second Thessalonians 3:14: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." You see it? Here's another one.

Romans 16:17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Now I'm going to give you another one.

First Corinthians 5:11: "But now have I written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." I want to give you another one.

First Timothy 6:5. It speaks of certain individuals, men who will be having, "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: with, from such withdraw thyself." Let me give you that verse again. "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." Here's another one—2 John 10: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."

Now did you catch the drift in all of those? He's not talking about the unsaved people of this world that we're to be kind to and friendly to and show love to that we might bring them to Christ. He's talking about these people who have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. He's talking about people who profess to be in the church, profess to know the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet are living double lives. Yes, we can love these people. Yes, we can witness to these people. Yes, we can spend time with these people if our purpose in loving them and spending time with them is the purpose of bringing them to repentance, bringing them to our Lord. But when we have people who are living in immorality, people who are living in apostasy, people who are doing wrong, and they know that they're doing wrong, and you know that they're doing wrong, and they know that you know, and yet you fellowship them and put your arms around them and act as though nothing is wrong, you're doing that person a grave disservice. And not only are you doing them a grave disservice, you're doing yourself a grave disservice, because rather than you blessing them, they are going to do something bad to you.

Now, friend, separation is necessary in these last days. You ought to treat people who are living lives of sexual immorality, people who are living lives of ungodliness, as you would treat people who have a dangerous disease. Be careful, you might catch something. Choose your friends according to the Scriptures. This is especially true

about you young people in your date life. In these last days, as always really, no teenager should consort with or date anyone that they would not marry if they fell in love with that individual. You date somebody that's not a Christian, not a believer, or a Christian who is not living as a Christian, a counterfeit Christian, and you fall in love with that individual, then what are you going to do? You marry them. You break God's law. You don't marry them you break your heart. You marry them and you'll break your heart. You find a person who is walking with God. Parents, it is all the more important in these days that you guard your children's company. Now peer pressure can be bad or it can be good. Your home ought to be wide open to your children and to their friends. Fill up the refrigerator with good things to eat. Let your children bring their friends home. Let your home be the most fun place in this city to be. You say, 'They're going to break my vase. They're going to spill something on the floor. They're going to empty the refrigerator.' You ought to be blessing God to that. Let them bring them on home. And watch them. Keep your eyes on them. Get to know them. Get to love them. Maybe you can counsel those kids and help them. But if there comes in to that group an unruly pothead, there comes into that group somebody who shoots off the lip, that comes into that group somebody wants to bring lascivious music or obscene film into that home and into that group, you say, "Son, there's the sidewalk. Get on it! Get on it!" Use peer pressure rather than complain about peer pressure. And above all, in these last days you see to it, as much as in you is possible, that your children are in the house of God and that you set the example and you obey the scripture in Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 25 that commands us, "Not to forsake the assembling our ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching." Have them in church. Set the example. What am I saying? I'm saying that in these last days you must practice biblical separation. Practice separation.

## **II. We Need to Prepare for Suffering**

Number two: Prepare for suffering. Look, if you will, in verses 10 and following. Paul says, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch and Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me." Now look in verse 12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

I wonder how many in this building believe verse 12—let me see your hand. Well, that looks like it's unanimous. Now I want to ask this question, but I don't want a show of hands. How many of you are suffering persecution? Don't show me your hand. But according to this verse, "All who will godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." That's what God's Word says.

Now, why are you not suffering persecution if you're not suffering persecution? Is it because people cannot see a difference in you? I mean, if you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? This doesn't mean they're going to put you in prison. This doesn't mean they're going to shoot you. This doesn't mean they're going to burn your house. The word persecution comes from a root word, which means "to pursue." It means that they're going to watch you, wanting to find fault with you, so that they can criticize you. You say, "Pastor Rogers, have you ever known persecution?" Well, just two times—when I'm awake or asleep. Do you think that any man of God can take a stand for that which is right and make everybody happy? Of course not! The way to escape persecution and criticism is to say nothing, do nothing, and be nothing. In these last days, in these last days we need to practice separation. We need to prepare for suffering.

Now, the Bible says, "...those who will live..." What does that mean—who will live godly in Christ Jesus? That means that's your desire. You make up your mind. Well, God that gave the apostle Paul this remarkable courage will give it to you. He says, "...what persecutions I endured, but out of them all the Lord delivered me." Some people think if they live godly they will escape persecution. Really, just the opposite is true. But you will be delivered and God will see you through. You need to prepare your children. Teach your children how to stand alone. Teach them how to be laughed at. Teach them to bear ridicule as a badge of honor. Teach them that the Lord is especially near and especially precious to them when they are laughed at and mocked for their faith. You'd better do it because they will be laughed at. They will be mocked if they will live godly in Christ Jesus. Practice separation. Prepare for suffering.

### **III. We Need to Pursue the Scripture**

Thirdly, pursue the Scripture. Now look, look in verses 13 and following: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." God says, "It's going to get worse. It's not going to get better." The world is not getting better. They will "wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 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."

#### **D. For Enduring**

Now why must you pursue the Scriptures? The Word of God is going to be your mainstay in these last days. May I give you a testimony? I was saved as a teenage boy.

What has kept me going, primarily, is not what I feel, but how, what I know. The Word of God has been my mainstay. It keeps me day by day. Now what does the Word of God do for you? Well, the Word of God helps you to endure. And, and look, if you will, again in verses 13 and following: 'Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou—that means endure—continue—don't quit—in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Now there will be all kinds of charlatans—verse 13—evil men, seducers. Your children will be systematically seduced. I'm not talking about sexually; I'm talking about spiritually by people who have been deceived and who will try to deceive your children.

Look, if you will, in 2 Timothy chapter 4, verses 3 and 4: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." Now who has the itching ears? The teacher? No! The hearers. They say, "Give me a teacher who will tickle my ears." "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." This is happening in our universities. It's happening in some of our Baptist schools. One of the young ladies out of this church went to one of these Baptist schools. And it breaks my heart to say this, and they're not all this way, but this one was. She got in a religion class. And the very kinds of things that I'm preaching tonight were ridiculed and lampooned in that class. And where I teach that man is created as a direct act of God, she was taught evolution. Where I teach that the Bible is the Word of God without error, she was taught that the Bible has error in it and that it is a book of religious instruction, but you have to be able to discern and shift through and compare the Bible to the finding of modern science and physiology and psychiatry and history and all of that. Where I taught that Jesus Christ is the only way to God, she was taught that Christianity is one of the world's great religions, one among many. And she said the teacher was very persuasive and very intelligent, very cultured and very friendly. She said, "I sat there in that class listening to that, wanting to believe it because I didn't want to be thought odd or different or ignorant or old-fashioned." Then she said, "You know what, Pastor?" She said, "I remembered you and I remembered Brother Whitmire." It's what she said. She said, "I looked at their lives and I looked at your life and I knew the way I needed to go." And I thank God for that. You see, this is, this is what he says in verse 14. Look at it. "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." That's so important. The Word of God is going to help you to endure.

These liberals, these people who do not believe the Bible, they're not soul winners. They're not church builders. They are parasites. They move into institutions built by Bible believers. Liberalism has no power to generate, just to dissipate. And that's what happens. So it is so very important that you have the Word of God, number one, for enduring.

#### **E. For Evangelizing**

Number two: For evangelizing. Look in verse 15: And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation..." Nobody can be saved apart from the Word of God. What are the marching orders for these days? Evangelism, winning people to Jesus Christ. The real proof as to whether or not you believe that we're in the last days is this: what are you doing to warn men to flee from the wrath to come? You can get in a class and ask people what they want to study. "Oh, we want to study prophecy. We want to study prophecy." And that's all right. You can study prophecy. But there are always those prophetic bugs who come around and they want to know the meaning of the third toe on the left foot of some beast in Revelation and they want to argue about it and discuss it. And that's fine. But listen to me. The real proof that you believe in Bible prophecy is this: what are you doing to warn men to flee from the wrath to come? You better get your head out of the clouds of prophecy and get your feet on the pavement of soul winning.

#### **F. For Equipping**

In these last days you need to pursue the Scripture, number one, to endure; number two, to evangelize; number three: that you'll be equipped. Look in verses 16 and 17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine—that's what's right—for reproof—that's what you need when you're wrong—for correction—that's how to get right again—for instruction in righteousness—that's how to stay right." Now this is a military metaphor here. We've been singing songs tonight about warfare, and the Bible says that you can be thoroughly furnished. That means that you can be armed. You're not to go into the battle unarmed. You need the Word of God to teach you what is right. You need to be saturated by the Word of God. You need to be motivated by the Spirit of God so you can be activated in the battle. And if you'll do this, not only will you survive, you'll thrive in these last days. And God help us to do it.

### **Conclusion**

Bow your heads in prayer. Father, this Word is, on the one hand, awesome and almost frightening. But yet, Lord, as we read it, we do not read it as something that is a note of discouragement, but we read victory all the way through it for those who will claim victory. And, Father, I pray that You will give us parents who will so equip their children,

ground them in the Word of God, surround them with proper friends and teachers, love them, Lord, and care for them and nurture them, that they will get through these perilous, dangerous, fierce times in which we live. Thank You, Lord, for this handbook of survival for the family.

# Wise Ways for Dangerous Days

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: February 19, 1984**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3:1–17**

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*“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”*

2 TIMOTHY 3:1

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## Introduction

Take your Bibles and turn to 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, the third chapter, 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy chapter 3. And if you did not bring a copy of God’s Word with you today, I want you to reach there in the pew right before you and there ought to be one there. Would you, ah, get you a copy of the Word of God and turn with me to 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy chapter 3, and we’re going to begin ready in verse 1.

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, every learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.”

I want to speak to you today on “Wise Ways for Dangerous Days.” Now in verse 1, the apostle says, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” Perilous times is just another way of saying dangerous days. As a matter of fact, this word, ah, *perilous* is a very interesting word. It’s only found one other time, as I understand, in the New Testament, and that’s in Matthew chapter 8 where it speaks of two men who were filled with demons, demoniacs. And the Bible says that they were terrorizing the neighborhood, and the Bible uses this same word to describe them, only there it is translated “exceedingly fierce.” So these are exceedingly fierce days, these are fierce days. Our world is forcing, is facing moral and spiritual and social and political and national and international chaos. And we’re seeing nations collapse in a world gone wild. These are dangerous days, folks. For further information, just consult any newspaper. These are perilous times. These are fierce moments. And God’s people must live in them. So I want to show you not only how to survive, but how to, how to thrive in these dangerous days.

When I was a youngster, I was a boy scout. And being a boy scout we had to learn a little bit about survival. We had to study survival techniques and what would happen if we got lost in the woods. Well, we had to learn how to find edible food and to dig up roots so we could eat those roots, and how to start a fire without matches, and how to keep our matches dry, and how to build a lean-to, and how to find our way out of the woods – just a guidebook for survival.

Well, God has given us here in the pages of His Word, in the Scripture that I’m about to read, a handbook for survival, because God wants you in these last days to be triumphant. And these, friends, are last days.

I was speaking this past week to the men’s luncheon, and God’s blessing those luncheons in a tremendous way. And I also spoke to the ladies luncheon this week. And I reminded them both of what is happening in the world today. And I want to remind you of the treacherous times in which we’re living, how the scene is set for the climax of all things.

There are some ancient prophecies that are being fulfilled before our very eyes, that have been fulfilled in this generation. For eighteen centuries plus the Bible had predicted and projected that there would be a regathering of the nation Israel in the last days. We have a prophecy that is millenniums old. And we’re seeing in these last days the regathering of God’s people as they’ve come back into the land of Israel. It’s an amazing thing. The Bible prophesied it clearly in such places as Ezekiel chapter 37. But men scoffed and men laughed, and they said it is an impossibility. But after May 14 and 15, 1948 they no longer said it was an impossibility, for God planted that little nation Israel back in the land, never again to be plucked up, according to the last chapter of the book of Amos. It was a military miracle. Six hundred and fifty-thousand Jews

surrounded by forty million Arabs. And yet, that nation survived as a fulfillment of prophecy. And there you see Israel planted back in her land in the last days as the Bible says that she would be.

And then, if you go from Ezekiel chapter 37 to Ezekiel chapter 38, you'll read where the Bible prophesied in the north is a great northern power that in the latter days is going to come down against the land of Israel to occupy the land of Israel. That northern power is Russia. And the Bible prophesied not only the return of Israel, but the rise of Soviet Russia. And Russia is going to meet her ultimate doom and demise on the mountain of Israel, according to Ezekiel chapter 38. But even now that old Russian bear is sniffing out new morsels to devour in the Middle East. And the Syrians, who are the friends of the Russians, are now making way for the Russians to come down into Emmanuel's land.

But not only do we see the return of Israel, not only do we see the rise of Russia, but we also see rumblings in the Orient. Did you know in the book of the Revelation the, the book of Revelation prophesies that in the last days there will come from that land beyond the River Euphrates to the east of Israel. That land beyond the Euphrates is what we call the Orient. There will come from the Orient, from those lands occupied by the Chinese, an army, a marching multitude of two hundred million soldiers. John the apostle wrote that in the book of the Revelation with the hand of faith and the eye of prophecy. When he wrote that, I want to remind you that there were not two hundred million people alive on planet Earth, all of them together. And yet, John the apostle spoke of an army of two hundred million. Was he wrong? I was reading in U. S. News and World Report not so very long ago where the Red Chinese were boasting of their army, and they said, "We have an armed militia," and they mentioned the number. Do you know how many they said in the U.S. News and World Report magazine, how many they said they had? Are you ready for this? Two hundred million, exactly what the book of Revelation said so long ago, that army from beyond the Euphrates.

And so you see the return of Israel. You see the rise of Russia. You see the rumblings in the Orient. And, by the way, Napoleon, when he saw the Chinese, said, "There lies a sleeping giant. Let him sleep, for if he awakens, he will shake the earth." He's been awakened, and nobody's going to put him back to sleep.

And then, on top of all of that, the Bible also prophesies that in the last days there is going to come a reunification of Europe in a loosely, ah, knitted federation of states – ten nations out of the old Roman Empire. And the Bible teaches in Daniel the second chapter and in Revelation the thirteenth chapter that out of this ten-nation confederacy shall come the world's final dictator, the antichrist, the beast, the man of sin, who's going to turn this entire world into a concentration camp with all of the inmates numbered. The antichrist coming out of the ten-nation federation. People laughed. They

scoffed. They ridiculed the idea that the old Roman Empire could be regathered into a ten-nation federation, but we've seen it happen in the last several years. There are now ten nations federated together in what we call the European Common Market, all of them having come out of the old Roman Empire.

And I'm telling you, the stage is set. And those of us who see what is happening right now in the Middle East, in the land of Lebanon, in Beirut, in Syria, in Saudi Arabia, in Israel, in Algeria and all of these things as we look, we know that the stage is set for Armageddon. And marching multitudes are marching, and we believe that Armageddon is about ready. The Lion of Judah is sharpening her claws. The Russian bear is sniffing out new morsels. The red dragon of China is blowing her breath. And the man of sin is about ready to step from behind the stage wings and on to the theater of human life. And I'm telling you, dear friend, there is an ominous feeling in the air for those who know history and those who know the Bible to tell us that we had better get ready. These are dangerous days. And if Armageddon is that close, how much closer is the rapture of the church? For if you know Bible prophecy, the church will be taken out before the battle of Armageddon. And how we ought to be ready. And how we ought to be living in these dangerous days. And how we need to learn from God's handbook of survival some wise ways for dangerous days.

Now, I want you to take the scripture that Paul wrote to Timothy, because Paul wrote this scripture to Timothy to show Timothy how he ought to live in those days, and how we ought to live in these days. He gave Timothy some wise ways for dangerous days.

## **I. Dangers of the Last Days**

Now, first of all, I want you to think of the dangers of the last days. And then, secondly, I would like for you to think of some directions for the last days. The dangers of the last days are three-fold. Look at them.

### **A. Fierce Conduct**

The very first I want to call fierce conduct. Begin in verse 2: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good. Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."

Now remember that the word *perilous* means fierce. These are days of fierce conduct. He says men shall be lovers of their own selves. The motto today is "Look out for number one." The way people live is for self and self alone, as though Jesus Christ never lived, never died, never rose again. The Bible says they're going to be covetous. That is, they're living for what they can grasp and not for what they can give. The Bible teaches that we're to worship God, love people, and use things. But we ignore God,

love things, and use people. We're covetous.

He goes on to say that men are going to be boasters and proud. And look around. We boast of human civilization. We stand on our big feet, stick out our big chest, stick our funny, puny fist in the face of God as if we know the answer to all things. We ought to have our face in the dust, weeping before God. But arrogantly we boast as we strut to hell.

And then the Bible says blasphemers. God's Word and holy things are made the butt of jokes. Bible-believing Christians are ridiculed. Holy truth is trampled. Today, it has become vogue to laugh about holy things, even in situational comedies on television. The devil knows what he can get somebody to laugh at, that person finds it difficult to think seriously about later on. And you show me what a generation laughs at and I'll tell you the moral condition, and any nation that laughs at holy things and profanes holy things is on its last legs, for the Bible says, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and every nation that forgetteth God."

The Bible goes on to say that they are going to be disobedient to parents. We, today, with child psychology and with behavioristic psychology and, ah, with humanism have raised a generation of children who do not understand authority inside the home or outside the home.

The Bible also says that in the last days there will be men who will be unholy and women who will be unholy, without natural affection. Look at it there in verse 3. Excuse me, verse 2. Ah, ah, verse 3: "Without natural affection..." Now, the word *natural affection* means family love. That means that God's plan for one man, for one woman to live together till death do them part. That's going to be jettisoned in the last days. What we have today is militant homosexuality – unnatural affection, without natural affection. Where did that come from? God's Word prophesied it. I couldn't, I cannot believe hardly the things that I hear and read today. And yet, I ought not to be surprised, for the Bible says, "As it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be in the coming of the Son of man." And the days of Lot were the days when Lot lived in Sodom. And Sodom was guilty of the sin of sodomy, and that's what we call homosexuality from the Bible. And for that reason God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone – dangerous days as it was in the days of Lot. Men will be without natural affection.

He goes on to say that they're going to be truce-breakers. Now the word *truce-breakers* literally means those who refuse to live peaceably with other people, those who are war mongers and those who cannot and will not keep their word. We've come to the day when a man's word means little. It, a contract, a business contract is merely a scrap of paper. A treaty between nations seems to be written in order to be broken. And what about a marriage license in a marriage contract? We see people come and stand at holy altars and pledge to love one another till death do them part. And then

they get rid of their wife, they get rid of their husband, they change mates as though they would change jobs or change automobiles or change places and locations. And we laughably, if it were not so sad, call it no-fault divorce. Friend, I want to tell you there's no such thing as a divorce without fault. Put it down big, plain, and straight. And that fault a holy God calls sin, for God says, "I hate divorce." It is a national tragedy, this day of throw-away marriages. And more than half of the marriages, or half of the marriages in America today, so-called Christian America, end in divorce. You say, "Are you saying there's no forgiveness?" Yes, there's forgiveness, but I am telling you it is, ladies and gentlemen, a national tragedy. And many are not even bothering to benefit themselves of marriage. They're living together like animals cohabitating. Marriage is holy before God. But the Bible says in the last days men will be that way.

He goes on to say, incontinent. Incontinent means without control. That is, they're out of control. They cannot be controlled and they do not control themselves.

Fierce, fierce. Our streets have become swamps in which the mosquitoes of hate and crime breed by the millions. Our jails are filled with hoodlums. We don't have enough room in the jails to warehouse the criminals.

I was listening on our local news station, one of them, this past week. They were doing a series of burglary and robbery. And the people who have been burglarized, the people who have been robbed were saying, "What we need to do is to arrest these people, swiftly adjudicate them, put them in prison, and give them a sentence, and keep them in there for a long time." The law officers and the judges were saying, "Yes, yes, we agree to that, but we don't have enough room in the jails." How are you going to keep them in jail when you don't have enough room in jail?" And if you put these in, you're going to have to let somebody else out. There's not enough room in the jails to even keep these people in the jails.

Now what did God say it would be like in the last days? Incontinent, fierce. And then He said, despisers of those that are good. Let me tell you what's happening in the last days, folks. It is the good that is being despised. We have a generation today that calls good bad and bad good. Do you remember when square used to be good – a square deal and a square meal? Today, a guy's a square if he lives by the Word of God. Today, everything is cool and lopsided. What I'm trying to say is these are people of fierce conduct. There are a hundred and forty terrorist groups in the world today, a hundred and forty small armies that are ready to bomb, to wound, to murder, to kidnap, to mutilate those who disagree with them. They're not little groups. They're big groups. They're armed with sophisticated weapons, and there are some who say that there are certain terrorist groups who now have the capability of producing atomic weapons. What is going to happen when some nation today is blackmailed by some terrorist group with an atomic weapon? That time may not be far off.

## B. **Frivolous Concerns**

Now, why are these dangerous days? Because we're facing, ladies and gentlemen, people of fierce conduct. But, secondly, we're, we're facing people of frivolous concerns. Look again, if you will, in verse 5. The Bible says, excuse me, verse 4: "They will be traitors, heady, high-minded (but now notice this), lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." You would think that with all of this trouble and with all of this heartache and with all of this tragedy and with all of this danger and with all of this ferocity that people would be on their face in prayer. You would think they would be on their knees in humiliation, but not so. We are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

Now, now I don't want to be misunderstood here. I don't want you to think that if you're a Christian, you can't have pleasure. As a matter of fact, the Bible teaches to the contrary. Let me give you a good verse to put down in your margin right here, and that's Psalm 16, verse 11: "For thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." Amen? Folks, listen. The joy, the pleasure, the excitement of serving the Lord Jesus, there's nothing that compare, can compare with it. And you're looking at a man who knows joy. You're listening to a man who experiences pleasure. But what does the Bible speak about of these in the last days? It says they shall be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. The fact is that they love pleasure more than they love God. Look around. Our resorts, our theaters, our campgrounds, our stadiums are packed and filled to capacities, and many churches across America are half-empty. We are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Somebody called it a pleasure explosion. And we are laughing and giggling and amusing ourselves right on to Armageddon and right on to hell. This, that's why these are dangerous days because of, of fierce conduct and because of, of, of frivolous concerns.

## C. **Faithless Concepts**

And then, that's compounded by faithless concepts. Continue to read, if you will, in verse 5. He speaks of those having a form of godliness, "...but denying the power thereof, for of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts."

Now get this plain. The last days are going to be days that are saturated with religion. Don't get the idea that in the last days men are going to turn from religion. They're not going to turn from religion. They're going, they're going to turn to religion. Never has there been a more religious generation than our generation, and never has religion caused more trouble than it's caused today.

I want to tell you, see what's happening in Ireland? You see what's happening in Beirut, you see what's happening in trouble spots across the world and you'll find out that there are religious overtones into most of the battles and most of the wars, and you

know it is true. I tell you, religion without Christ is one of the meanest things on the face of this earth. And most of the people in America don't need religion; they need to turn from religion to Jesus Christ. Christianity is not one more religion. It is a vital relationship with a person who is the Prince of Peace, that when He comes into our heart He gives us a clean conscience and peace with ourselves and peace with one another and causes us to love and not to war and not to hate. He's the Christ of love. But a world is torn by form without force and by religion without reality. Here is a world up to its ears in religion. And how does the devil spread his religion? Look at it in verse 6: "For this sort are they which creep into houses..."

That word *creep* is an interesting word to me. It tells me that liberals and cults are creeps. I didn't say that. Paul said it. "For, ah, this sort are they which creep into houses..." that is, they sneak in the side door. "...and lead captive silly women..." I'm glad Paul said that instead of me. What does that word *silly women* mean? We, well, the word doesn't mean giddy, but the word here means a, a person who is emotional in nature. It means, ah, creatures of impulse, more susceptible to suggestions, and there are those who are out from underneath the pastoral authority and those who are out from underneath the authority of their husband. The Bible calls them silly women. Today, we might call them liberated women.

And then he says they are laden with sins. Now what that means is that they are, ah, burdened down with guilt. You see, everybody who's been living as we have described the, the, the people who are living in the first four verses, these things have repercussions on the psyche. Down in our heart of hearts we know we're wrong. And you take a person who has an emotional nature, and you take a person who has a guilty complex or who, indeed, is guilty, laden with sins.

And then he goes on to say – look you will, in verse 6: "...led away with divers lusts." Now the word *lusts* here does not necessarily mean sexual desire, but it means unfulfilled desire. Here they are with needs, needs that are not being met. And no woman, no man, or anybody else is going to have his needs met without the Lord Jesus Christ. And here are these emotional creatures. The Bible calls them silly women. Here they are with this guilt complex, and here they are with these unfulfilled desires, and here comes the devil with his disciples, and here comes the devil with his lies, and they're like a sponge waiting to soak it up.

And then, on top of all of that, it is compounded by the fact that the devil has dark, devilish, unholy, supernatural power to convince them that his message is true. Look, if you will, please in verse 8: "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."

Now who on earth were Jannes and Jambres? Well, you remember that when Moses came before Pharaoh, he performed miracles. And there were some who

withstood Moses. They performed miracles also. They did it in the power of the devil. They were the magicians in Pharaoh's court. And tradition tells us that the names of these men were Jannes and Jambres. Now what does all of this mean? It means that the devil in the last days is going to have supernatural power to perform miracles, and many are going to be sucked down into the swirling sewers of cultism and false religion. What are the dangers of the last days? I'll tell you, fierce conduct, frivolous concept, or frivolous con, ah, ah, ah, frivolous, ah, ideas, and faithless concepts. Frivolous concerns and faithless concepts are going to sweep people right on down. Those are the dangers of the last days.

## **II. Directions for the Last Days**

Now what are some directions for the last days? Three things. And get ready for them. And I want you to get out a pencil and a piece of paper because I want you take some notes right now. You're not, not going to have to write much, but I want you to list some Scriptures down I want to give you.

I want to give you three things that are going to help you to survive in these days of fierce conduct, things that are going to help you to survive in these days of frivolous concerns and these days of faithless concepts.

### **A. We Must Prize Godly Companions**

Number one, number one: We must prize godly companions. Look, if you will, in verse 5: Chapter 3, verse 5. Paul warns against those who have a form of godliness; that is, a form without force or religion without reality, having a form of godliness, "...but denying the power thereof..." And then he makes a command. Are you ready for it? "...from such turn away." Now I want every young person to listen to me. I want you young married people to listen to me. You had better prize in these last days godly companions. If you keep company with the people of this world, you're going down. The Bible says, "A companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Now here are the verses I want you to jot down. Don't turn with, ah, in the Scripture to them; just jot them down. We don't have enough time to look them up. Second Thessalonians chapter 3, verse 14. I suggest you abbreviate Thessalonians, Thess. Period.

Second Thessalonians chapter 3, verse 14: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Now if there's a brother or sister who's not obeying the Word of God who claims to be a brother or sister, cut that person out of your company.

Again, Romans chapter 16, verse 17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause division and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." Avoid them. I didn't say that. God said that.

First Corinthians chapter 5, verse 11. Jot it down. “But now have I written unto you not to keep company; if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one know not to eat.” That is, just get away with him, ah, from him, from her. Don’t keep company. Don’t go to dinner with them. Don’t eat with them. First, ah, he’s not talking here about taking someone out to witness to them. He’s talking about fellowshiping with a person who says he’s a Christian and who is not living as God would have him live.

First Timothy chapter 6 and verse 5. He warns of, “... perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself.” It couldn’t be plainer.

Again, the Bible says in 2<sup>nd</sup> John verse 10: “If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine (that is, the doctrine of Christ), receive him not into your house and neither bid him God’s speed.”

Now what does all of this mean? Does it mean that we’re not to love sinners? Of course not. Christ was a friend of sinners. Does it mean we’re not to witness to the unsaved? Of course not. We are to witness to the unsaved. But it means that we are not to hob-knob with the children of the devil. “A companion of fools will be destroyed.” You show me the crowd you run with and I’ll show you the kind of a person you are, or you will soon become. You’re not smarter than God. And in these last days you need to get into a committed company of Christians and fellowship those Christians. The Bible says in Hebrews chapter 10, verse 25, we are “...not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching.” That means the closer you get to the end of time, the more you need the fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ.

And you, young married couples, you listen to me. You better get in a Sunday school class with some other Christian young marrieds and fellowship those people. And don’t have for your friends and the crowd that you run with these who sit around in these bars and these who keep that filthy literature in their home, and these who drink those cocktails, and these who sit around and tell filthy stories and talk about liquor and talk about materialism and talk about sex and talk about drugs and go to these, ah, perverse films. You saturate those people with your absence. Get away from them. That’s what the Word of God says. “...from such turn away.” You need in these last days godly friends. And God’s people need to stay together, ah, ah, need to cling together. We need to exhort one another, and so much the more.

And you, young people, in your date life, you’d better take this, these lists of Scriptures that I just gave you and use them for a guide in your date life. Should a Christian date an unsaved person? No! No! Why? You might fall in love with them. And

if you fall in love with them, you'll want to marry them. And if you marry them, you'll break God's heart. If you don't marry them, you'll break your heart. And if you marry them, you'll break your heart later on, because that unsaved person is a child of the devil. And if you marry a child of the devil, you're going to have a, the devil for your father-in-law. You talk about in-law problems. You're going to have them.

Now what I'm trying to say to you, dear friend, is that in the last days you need to prize godly companions. God has given you some friends to help you and to exhort you and to get you through these last days. Are you listening to what your pastor is saying? If I'm not preaching the Bible, I challenge you to come up and show me afterward. I've given it to you from the Word of God.

### B. **We Must Practice Godly Courage**

Number two: Not only should you prize godly companions, but, friend, you need to practice godly courage. Now let's get our Bibles again and look, if you will, in verse 3. And, by the way, Paul talks about the kind of a person you ought to be with when he says in verse 10, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, and patience."

But then look in verse 11: "Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but, out, out of them all the Lord delivered me."

"Now I thought, Brother Rogers, if you lived right, you weren't going to have any persecution." Huh, well, Paul lived right in verse 10 and, and, and in verse 11 he said persecutions and afflictions came his way. Now you'd better, dear friend, practice courage, because if you live for the Lord Jesus, persecutions and afflictions are going to come your way. Oh, you don't believe that, huh?

Well, let's look at verse 12. Now get ready. Let's look at verse 12: "Yea..." I want you to help me here in verse 12. "Yea..." And what's that next word? All. I can't hear you. All. Okay, good. "Yea and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus (what's the next word?) shall suffer persecution." Now who said that, me or Pa, Paul? All right, now all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Are you suffering persecution? If not, it's because you're not living godly in Christ Jesus. "All," Paul said, "who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." No ifs, ands, and buts about it. The servant is not better than his master. "If they persecuted me, they're going to persecute you," the Lord Jesus said.

Now, now that doesn't mean that they're going to tie you to the stake and burn you to death. That doesn't mean they're going to put you at the wall and shoot you. That doesn't mean that they're going to put you in jail. Or they may do that. But the word *persecute* really means to pursue. It comes from a root meaning to pursue. They're going to pursue you. They're going to haunt you. They're going to follow you. They're

going to, to, to trail you.

Remember Jesus, when He was walking through the wheat fields there and He was hungry on the Sabbath Day, He and His disciples took some heads of wheat? You know, and they, they rubbed the husks off and they took that wheat and they ate it. And the Pharisees said, "Ah, this man broke the Sabbath." That's kind of funny if you think about it. What were a bunch of Pharisees doing out in the wheat field, anyway? I mean, it's kind of like Hee-Haw. They pop up out of the cornfield, you know (laughter). And, ah, what are they doing out there? I see what you watch (laughter). You say, "Pastor, how did you know what it was?" All right. Ah, you, you know, here, here are these Pharisees out there in the corn field, and they pop up. What they'd been doing, they had been trailing Jesus. They had been dogging His footsteps trying to catch Him in something wrong. And they'll do the same thing to you. The Bible says, "All who will live godly..." That is, when you make up your mind to live for God, they're going to get on your trail, mister, and they're not going to let up. They will.

They watch Billy Graham like a hawk. They watch Jerry Falwell like a hawk. They watch me. They'll watch you in your office, or anybody else. "All who will live godly in Jesus Christ..." They will get on to you to pick you. And you'd better practice courage. You'd better practice courage.

You say, "Well, it's bad to be persecuted." No, it's good. Jesus said, "When men shall persecute you and revile and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name sake..." Do what? Go home and giggle all night. That's what He said. Well, He didn't say it that way. He said, "...rejoice and be exceeding glad." Hallelujah!

### C. **We Must Pursue Godly Concepts**

Now listen. In the last days, one third thing and I'll be finished. Not only had you better prize godly companions and practice godly courage, but you'd better pursue godly concepts. Oh, you say, "Well, my intellect going to keep me straight." Mister, that's foolish. Evil men are going to deceive. They're going to be deceived. But now, what's going to keep you? Look, look, look.

Verse 14: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a, a child thou hast known (underscore this next phrase) the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, wise unto deliverance, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be (mature) perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

God has given you a handbook for survival, and God has given you something for enduring. God has given you something for evangelizing. God has given you something for equipping. And it is the Word of God, the Word of God.

Let me tell you something. Look up here and let me tell you something. Do you know what keeps me straight? Do you know what keeps me going? The Word of God. the Word of God. You say, “Well, I thought God did.” Yes. How does He speak? Through His Word. Say, “Well, I thought Jesus did.” How does He speak? Through His Word. “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way; by taking heed thereto according to thy word. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”

Do you know the Bible? I’m telling you, sirs; I’m telling you, ladies, that unless you get some bedrock, you’re going to be deceived unless you have a plump-bob to know when everything else is crooked. God has given you this book as a guidebook, a handbook for survival in the last days. And if you would prize godly companions, if you will practice godly courage, if you will pursue godly concepts, if your life will be built upon the Word of God, when the winds blow and the waters fall and the floods rise, your life will stand, for it will be built upon the impregnable rock of God’s holy truth of God’s Scripture.

## **Conclusion**

Now Paul told Timothy, “Timothy, remember who you learned these things from” in verses 13 through 15. “Remember who taught you,” he said in verse 14, “when, when, when people try to pull you away and deceive you.”

I was speaking to a young lady. That young lady had been a member of my church down in Florida. And, ah, I was speaking to her. She went away to college. She went away to one, one of these so-called liberal colleges. It was a Baptist college. It breaks my heart to say so. But she had a professor and several professors there that taught religion. And he taught her that Moses didn’t write the Pentateuch; that it was sort of a paper and paste job put together by some priestly redactor in the latter century. He taught her that the New Testament was not the inspired Word of God, but more like a research paper that these people did, put together. And he ridiculed historicity and the scientific accuracy of the Word of God. And this young lady, as she talked to me, she said, “Pastor, I felt my feet slipping. That man was so educated. He was so suave. And he seemed to be so kind.” She said, “I felt that faith crumbling.” But she said, “You know what kept me, pastor?” She said, “I remembered you and what you taught.” But she said, “I also remember the life that you lived.” And she said, “I remembered Brother Whitmire and what he taught.” And she said, “I also remember the life that he lived. And I compared that with these other people, and I knew what was right.”

Now that’s what Paul is saying. He said, “Now you’ve heard the Word from a child. You’ve known it from your grandmother. You’ve known it from your mother. You’ve known it from me. And stay with it (noise). Stay with it. Don’t be blown about by every

wind of doctrine. Continue thou.”

I’m telling you, you’d better get God’s Word down there big and plain and strong because evil men and seducers are going to wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. And in these last days you need a handbook for survival. You need, you need, you need a working knowledge of the Word of God. And you need more than any preacher can give you on Sunday morning. You’d better get your quiet time with God. And I’m telling you, if you would prize godly companions, if you would practice godly courage, if you will pursue godly concepts, not only will you survive; you’ll thrive in these last days, and you’ll come through with banners unfurled, marching under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel. He’s coming soon. I love Him. I praise Him. Praise His name. Praise Him. Praise Him.

Let’s pray. Father, I pray that You will just bring the truth of this message home to our hearts, O God, O God. Help us that we’ll practice Your ways in these dangerous days, amen.

Now look up here. In just a few moments, this service will come to a conclusion. Look right here. No one moving. Don’t gather your books. Just look right here. In a few moments, it’ll, the service will be over. This is the most important part of the service. I’m going to ask that absolutely no one be moving about unless it is an emergency. I want to ask that you be in a spirit of prayer. In a moment, we’re going to sing an invitational hymn. And if you do not know that you know that your sins are forgiven, if you’re ab, if you’re not totally, absolutely certain that you’re saved and then going to heaven, we’d like to take an open Bible and lead you to Christ. You can be saved today, as millions around the world have been saved, by trusting Christ. I promise you on the authority of the Word of God, He will save you. He’ll forgive all of your sins. He’ll come into your heart to give you a new power. And one day when you die, He’ll take you home to heaven. If you’d like to receive Christ, if you’d like to be saved, a born-again Christian, when we rise and sing, I’m going to ask you to leave your seat and make your way down here to the front. Standing at the head of each of these aisles will be a man of God, a minister of our church, to receive all who come. He’ll be seated here on the front row.

# How to Have a Sure Word in Difficult Days

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: April 2, 2000**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3:12**

*“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”*  
2 TIMOTHY 3:12

## Outline

Introduction

- A. The Scriptures Are Necessary for Salvation
- B. The Scriptures Are Necessary for Sanctification
- C. The Scriptures Are Necessary for Service
- I. Faith Is Rooted in Evidence
- II. Faith Goes Beyond Evidence
- III. Faith Becomes Its Own Best Evidence

Conclusion

## Introduction

Would you take God’s Word and turn, please, to 2 Timothy chapter 3, and I want to speak to you tonight about how to have a sure word in difficult days.

I went through the channels last night on television. Very frankly, I was very distressed, from one filthy, vulgar innuendo—just to stay there a moment—from one thing to another. It was like wading through the sewer to find a teaspoonful of pure water. These are desperate days in which we live. On top of that, there are many people talking about spirituality, but who know very little about the Bible and reality. And these are dangerous days, days of apostasy. And I think that the scripture that we have tonight is very real and very applicable.

Chapter 3, verse 12: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” The *will* speaks of a determination; the *shall* speaks of the result. If you’re determined to live godly in Christ Jesus, no ifs, ands, and buts about it, you will be persecuted. And, if you’re not being persecuted, it says something about you, that you’re not really standing with Jesus, that you’re floating down the stream. You’ve not stopped to build a dam. But, if you will live godly in Christ Jesus, you will suffer persecution. And then, Paul says it’s going to get worse: “But evil men and seducers

shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” And we have been saturated with deception in these last days. But I thank God for verse 14 and the little three-letter word, but. In contradistinction to all of that, “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” And then, Paul says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, 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.”

Now, I’m so grateful for my immediate two predecessors here in this church, Dr. Pollard and Dr. Lee. One thing that was delivered to me when I came to this church 1972 was a church built solidly upon the Word of God. I did not have to argue, or there was no equivocation, stutter or stammer with Bellevue. Bellevue is a Bible church. I thank God for that. That’s the secret of this church. And, if you were to analyze Bellevue Baptist Church, and try to find out what makes this church the church that it is, it is the solid stand on the Word of God that Bellevue Baptist Church has. And I pray God, when we’re gone, somebody else will be here still saying, “The old book is true.”

Now, Dr. Lee paid a great tribute to the Bible, and I want to read it to you as I copied it down. He said, “The Bible is a book beyond all books, as a river is beyond a rivulet. The Bible is a book above all, and beyond all books, as the sun is above and beyond a candle in brightness. The Bible is above and beyond all books, as the wings of an eagle are above the wings of a sparrow in strength. It is supernatural in origin, eternal in duration, inexpressible in value, immeasurable in influence, infinite in scope, divine in authorship, human in penmanship, regenerative in power, infallible in authority, universal in interest, personal in application, inspired in totality. This is the book that has walked more paths, traveled more highways, and knocked at more doors, and spoken to more people in their mother tongue than any other book this world has ever known or ever will know.” That’s what Dr. Lee said about the Bible, and I want to say amen to that.

Now, I want you to look at several verses here with me in specificity about the Bible, beginning in verse 15. Paul said to Timothy that, “...from a child, thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Jesus Christ.” And then, Paul gives that great statement about the inspiration of the Scripture—and we’re going to look at it tonight: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, 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.”

Now, I want to speak to you just a little bit tonight about what the Scripture does, and

then I want to give you three reasons why I believe the Bible is the Word of God. And I pray God will write these upon your heart: why I put my faith in this book and have a sure word for a shaky day.

Now, first of all, he says, in verse 16, that, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God...” The Bible is inspired. The words, by inspiration of God, are translated by one Greek word, or one Greek word translates all of this. It’s the word *theopneustos*, and it means that all Scripture is God-breathed. All Scripture is the breath of God. I’ve told you this before: just as what you’re hearing right now is my breath. I’ve taken breath into my lungs. My diaphragm is pushing against my lungs and pushing that breath up out of my throat, over my larynx, over my tongue. My lips and teeth are taking that breath, and my vocal chords are making noise, and my lips and my teeth and my tongue are forming sounds that you hear. So what you’re really hearing right now is my breath—my breath.

Now, the Bible is the breath of God. It is *theopneustos*. It means it is God-breathed. Now, when we hear that—listen to me; it’s very important you understand this—that is, it says all Scripture is the breath of God. All Scripture is the Word of God. Matthew 4:4 says that, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Now, what does that tell us about divine inspiration?

Number one: it is not partial inspiration. We had a great war in the Southern Baptist Convention. It’s lasted for over 20 years over the Word of God. There were those in our Convention that said that the Bible was not the Word of God, but it contained the Word of God—very seductive. And they would say that the truth of the Bible is true. Well, the truth of a lawnmower manual is true. That’s a nonsensical statement. No! All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. We’re not talking about partial inspiration.

Nor are we talking about progressive inspiration. The liberals will tell you, for example, that the Old Testament is not as inspired as the New Testament, and so, that the Bible is more and more inspired as people got more and more light. No, no. You have progressive revelation, but not progressive inspiration. And I want to tell you that the third chapter of 1 Samuel is just as inspired as the third chapter of John. It’s all inspired. It may not be all as inspiring. I mean, if I want to get inspired, I wouldn’t sit down and read the begats. It would be like reading a Hebrew telephone directory. But it’s there. It’s there by divine inspiration.

What I’m trying to say is, it’s not partial inspiration, it is not progressive inspiration; it is plenary inspiration. You say, “Well, I’ve never heard that word.” It just simply means it’s all inspired. It means it’s fully inspired. “Not a jot nor a tittle will fall from the law till all be fulfilled.” That’s what Jesus said. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

And we speak of plenary, verbal inspiration. Some people will say, “Well, the thoughts are inspired, but not the words.” Friend, you can’t have thoughts without words

any more than you can have mathematics without numbers. No. The Bible is inspired. The Scriptures are inspired. And because they're inspired—verse 16—they are instructive, in verse 16.

Now, let me tell you what the Scripture is profitable for. You want me to tell you why what I'm saying tonight is so very important? Lookie here. The Scriptures are profitable for doctrine. Now, what is doctrine? A little boy said, "Doctorin' is what people need when they're sick." Well, it's a different word. Doctrine means teaching. The Bible is here to show you, number one, what is right. And then, he says they are profitable for reproof; that is, to show you what is not right. And then, they're here for correction; that is, to show you how to get right. And then, they're here for instruction in righteousness; how to stay right. The Bible gives you that which is right, it shows you what is not right, it tells you how to get right, and it tells you how to stay right. And you'll not do that unless you stay in the Word of God. The Scriptures are inspired. The Scriptures are instructive. And, therefore, the Scriptures are instrumental. And, in these few verses, Paul tells us what the Scriptures do.

#### **A. The Scriptures Are Necessary for Salvation**

Number one: The Scriptures are instrumental in salvation. In verse 15, Paul says to Timothy, "From a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation..." Now, if you want people to believe and be saved, you've got to give them something to believe. And that is the Word of God. And, if you don't go sow the Word, you're not going to have a crop. People are not saved by your testimony. They're not saved by your ideas. They're not saved by your philosophy. The Bible says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." Now, you can read it, you can quote it, but whatever you do, it is the Word of God that you must share with people in order for them to be saved. So the Bible is instrumental in salvation.

#### **B. The Scriptures Are Necessary for Sanctification**

And it's instrumental in sanctification. Paul says that he gives these Scriptures, "that the man of God may be perfect..." Now, that doesn't mean sinless. There's not a person here that is sinless. The word perfect, *teleos*, means mature. God wants us to grow up. You will never be a strong, mature Christian, until you get in the Word of God.

#### **C. The Scriptures Are Necessary for Service**

The Scriptures are necessary for salvation. They're necessary for sanctification. And they're necessary for service. He goes on to say, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." And the word here is the idea of a soldier's equipment when he's going into battle. God does not send you into battle unarmed, so He gives you the equipment for the battle, for service.

And so, all of these things being true, let me tell you how we have faith in the Word of God. I want to give you three reasons.

## **I. Faith Is Rooted in Evidence**

Number one: Our faith is rooted in evidence—our faith is rooted in evidence. Now, I must tell you that when I was a child, I was told the Bible is the Word of God, and I believed it, not because of evidence; I believed it because somebody told me so. And that's all right. That's good. That's the way Timothy was. From a child, he knew the Holy Scriptures. He was just told, as a child, believe the Bible. And that's the way most of us came to believe the Bible. Our mamas, our daddies, our Sunday school teachers, our pastors, our churches, somebody said, "That's the Word of God." We said, "Okay, that's the Word of God." But you're going to find out, as our boys and girls get out in school and other places, you get out in today's world, you're going to have to have some more reasons. Now, faith is rooted in evidence. Our faith is not blind faith. All true faith is rooted in evidence. Blind faith is really not faith at all. What some people call a leap in the dark is not faith at all; it is superstition. Real faith is rooted in evidence. Real faith is a union of revelation and trust in that revelation. Now, if somebody tells me to believe something, I say, "Why?" They say, "Just believe it." That's not good enough for me.

There's an old story of a man who was walking along a seaside cliff, and he fell over the edge, grabbed a limb as he was hanging there with his feet dangling, jagged rocks hundreds of feet below. It was nighttime. And he yelled, "Help! Is there anybody up there?" And a voice said, "Yes, I'm up here." He said, "Can you help me?" The voice said, "Yes, I can." He said, "What should I do?" The voice said, "Trust me. Let go of the limb." He said, "What?" The voice said, "Trust me. Let go of the limb." He said, "Is there anybody else up there?" I can appreciate that. Why should we, just by blind faith, do something, or believe something, that does not seem to make sense? Real faith is rooted in evidence.

Let me just give you some of the evidence that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Think, for example, of the historical evidence of the Bible. You know, the Bible gives us great, history stories. Are these things fables, or did they really happen? A great, great scholar was named Sir William Ramsey. He was from Aberdeen, Scotland. He was the most eminent authority in geography and history, and especially the history of Asia Minor. He had a speaking knowledge of the Bible. He had never really studied the Bible, but he was convinced that the Bible was a book of fables. And so, he described the Book of Acts—and, by the way, the Book of Acts was written by Luke, who traveled with Paul—and here's the way Sir William Ramsey described the Book of Acts. He said, "The Book of Acts is a highly imaginative and carefully colored account of primitive Christianity." Highly imaginative, carefully colored. That is, it's not really factual. It's a

story that the early Christians put together. And Sir William Ramsey, this eminent historian and student of Asian geography, went to the Middle East, with the intent to prove that Luke was wrong in his history. Sir William Ramsey went to Asia. He went to the Middle East. He made an intensive study. He came out of that study, and Sir William Ramsey wrote a book called, "The Beloved Physician." And, in that book, Sir William Ramsey said that Luke was one of the world's greatest historians. He completely reversed himself. He came over on the side of Christianity. He had impeccable confidence in Luke, and here's what he wrote. He said—and I quote: "I take the view that Luke's history is unsurpassed in regard to its trustworthiness. You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian and they will stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment." That's what this scholar said.

You know, sometimes, the scholars look casually at things. For example, they would say something like this: In Luke's Gospel, he tells about how when Jesus was born. And in Luke chapter 2, it says, "when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." Well, they look at this, and they say, "That can't be right, because they know that Jesus was born before the death of Herod." Remember, it was Herod that sent the wise men to find Him. And since Jesus was born before the death of Herod, He was really born—well, Herod died in 4 B.C., so Jesus had to be born sometime before 4 B.C. But they also had the historical records, and they knew that Cyrenius was governor of Syria between 8 and 10 A.D. So there's a conflict. So they said that Luke was a careless historian, if a historian at all. But here's what scholars like William Ramsey found out. He found an inscription that Cyrenius was governor twice, and the first time he was governor was in the time when Jesus was born. Now, that's the kind of scholarship that you'd find in the Book of Luke, by divine inspiration. I just want to say our faith is rooted in facts. This is one of numerous illustrations of the history of the Bible. But not only the history of the Bible; there's historical evidence. There's the scientific evidence of the Bible.

One little book that I have in my library—I think it's out of print now. It's called "None of These Diseases," by Dr. S. I. Macmillan, a medical doctor. And he talks about the medical laws that are found in the Pentateuch, the writings of Moses, and it's based around the fact that God told the Jews if they would follow these laws, that God would put none of these diseases upon them that He put upon the Egyptians. And then, Dr. Macmillan talks about what the Egyptians believed so far as medicine is concerned. And he refers to a book called, "The Papyrus Ebers." I referred to it before in this pulpit. It was a medical book, a compendium of the medical knowledge that the Egyptians had the same time Moses was here upon the earth, about 1,552 years before Christ. And I want to read to you some of the things that were found in "The Papyrus Ebers"—medical treatments. Some of them are very ludicrous.

Now, of course, the Egyptians were very wise. They did a lot of medical things. They

did brain surgery. We're still trying to figure out how they embalmed the dead and other things like that. But listen to this: To prevent the hair from turning grey, anoint it with the blood of a black cat which has been boiled in oil, or with the fat of a rattlesnake. I would suggest the blood of a black cat, very frankly.

Here's one for people who are losing hair: When it falls out, one remedy is to apply a mixture of six fats, namely those of the snake and the ibis. To strengthen it, anoint with the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey. That's Egyptian medicine.

Again, if you had splinters or cuts, they applied worm's blood and donkey dung. Can you imagine the donkey dung, that would be loaded with tetanus spores, and whatever?

Other drugs that were included, according to Dr. Macmillan, lizard's blood, swine's teeth, putrefied meat, moisture from pig's ears, donkey's hooves, excretion from animals, including humans and donkeys and antelopes and dogs, cats, and even flies. Can you imagine gathering fly excretion for a medicine?

Now, at the time that this book was written, or at the time when it was being used, Moses was in the University of Egypt. The Bible tells us that Moses was learned in all of the wisdom of the Egyptians. I'm so grateful that, when we pick up the Pentateuch and read what Moses wrote, we don't find any of these medical misconceptions, any of these foolish statements, in Moses' writings. As a matter of fact, in the Middle Ages, there was, in the 14th century, a great disaster that took place in Europe. It was called the plague. It was terrible. Sixty million people died. As a matter of fact, the plague took the lives of approximately one out of every four people. People were dying, actually dropping on the streets, and they didn't know how to control the plague. It was not the doctors that brought the plague under control. It was the church. And do you know how they stopped the Black Plague? They went to the Bible, and they found out what the Bible said in Leviticus chapter 13 and verse 46: "And all the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; outside the camp shall be his habitation." Now, that's what we call today quarantining. Well, that makes sense to us, but it didn't make sense to them. Friend, they did not know what a virus is. They did not know what a microbe is. They did not know the things that we know. This is before the day of microbiology. But Moses said, "These people that have a plague are to be quarantined." One historian said, "The laws against leprosy in Leviticus 13 may be regarded as the first model of sanitary legislation."

Dr. Macmillan gives another story in this little book that is a delightful book. He tells about what happened in 1840 in Vienna. The mothers who were pregnant would be given pelvic examinations by the doctors. And the doctors, in the same day that they would give an examination to an expectant mother, would sometimes do an autopsy. And they would come from the room where they would do an autopsy without scrubbing and go to do a pelvic examination. And the mothers were dying, of course, of infection

and they, one out of six, was dying. There was a doctor there, Dr. Simmilweiss. Dr. Simmilweiss got to watching, seeing these men come from the morgue to the examining room, and back and forth. Dr. Simmilweiss finally laid down the law, because he was in charge of a portion of that hospital in Vienna, Austria. Dr. Simmilweiss said, “No, you will not do that anymore. You will wash and scrub when you come from doing an autopsy.” And so, when they did that, the statistics went from one in six to one in eighty-four mothers died. But then, one day, eleven out of twelve died, and they found out that the doctors had been scrubbing when they were coming out of the morgue, but they were not scrubbing between examinations. And now, he said, “You will scrub between every examination.” And the account I read, and I’ve read this account in several places, some of the doctors rebelled. They said, “No, it’s too much washing, too much scrubbing.” And Dr. Simmilweiss was almost at the point of suicide, but he said, “No, you will do this.”

With that in mind, I want you to notice Numbers chapter 19. Just turn to it. Take your Bibles there, and let me show you what God’s Word says about that very thing. Numbers chapter 19, and let’s look in verse 14: This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. And for an unclean person they shall take the ashes of a burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put in to a vessel. And a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water and sprinkle it upon the tent and upon all the vessel, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone; or one slain, or one dead, or a grave. And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and he shall be clean at evening.”

Now, what is this? It’s really what Dr. Simmilweiss was saying in a different way. He says, “You’ve got to have running water. You’ve got to have repeated washings.” There needs to be a time interval without the disinfectants they would have in that day for the bacteria to die. Change your clothes. Don’t bring those spotted garments in there because you’re going to defile other people.

Now, what I’m talking about is this, friend: that when you take your Bible and look at it, historically or scientifically, you’re going to find that it is a remarkable book. I’m telling you that our faith is rooted in evidence. You think about the indestructibility of the Bible. The Bible says of itself, “The word of the Lord endures forever.”

I was reading about William Tyndale. We have Tyndale House Publishers today. William Tyndale began to translate the New Testament into English. When he did that,

he got so much persecution in England that he had to go to Germany to finish. When he'd finally finished translating the New Testament, putting it into English, at the same day that he was getting ready to have it printed, he spent all this time setting the type, vandals came in and wrecked it all, and he had to begin again this painstaking labor. And once he got the Word of God put into English, then he wanted to get it back into England. So he put it in barrels of flour and it was smuggled into England. And the Word of God began to flourish there. But, as a result of his work, the authorities came on him and Tyndale was arrested in 1536, and he was put to death. He was strangled and he was burned for translating the Bible into the common language, into the mother tongue. And Tyndale, as he was dying, prayed, and he said, "Lord, open the eyes of the King of England." God heard his prayer. And I have in my hand the King James Version of the Scriptures tonight. Now, this is a blessed book. And, I mean, men have paid for this book with their lives, and don't take it lightly.

I'm a little distressed at the way some people handle their Bibles. I see people toss their Bible on the floor, and put other books on it. You know, there's something about me, I just can't do that. If I look at my desk and there's another book stacked on the Bible, I take that book off. If the Bible is on the floor, I pick it up. Now, you can call that superstition, if you want to, but we need to treasure this book. This is a blessed book.

I'm telling you that our faith is rooted in evidence. What other book has stood the test of the ages? Men have laughed at the Bible, mocked it, scorned it, ridiculed it, burned it. There was a time in Scottish history when to own a Bible was a crime worthy of death.

You think of the reason that we put our faith in this book. I suppose the greatest proof of the inspiration of the Bible is its fulfilled prophecy. The enemies of Jesus Christ tell us that Jesus didn't really fulfill prophecy, that He and His followers only arranged it so it would like Jesus fulfilled prophecy. Well, let's you and I take that proposition that Jesus arranged it, and let's see what Jesus managed.

Well, He managed, first of all, to be born in Bethlehem. Did you manage where you were born? Matthew 5:2 says that He would be born, in Micah 5:2. And Matthew chapter 2 says, indeed, that He was.

And then, he arranged that Isaiah the prophet would record precise details of His birth and life 700 years before He was born—in Isaiah 7 and Isaiah 9, and Isaiah 53. Quite an arrangement, I would say.

And then, He arranged that Psalm 52 would describe His crucifixion, by the piercing of His hands and His feet, when crucifixion was not even a known form of capital punishment. The Romans brought in crucifixion. Stoning was the order of the day, when Psalm 22 was written. But Jesus, they said, arranged that.

Then, He arranged to be crucified between two thieves; one on His right hand and one of His left, to fulfill Isaiah 53, verses 9 to 12. And we read about that in Matthew

chapter 27.

Then, He arranged that Judas would betray Him for thirty pieces of silver, exactly what Zechariah had said, in Zechariah 11 and verse 12.

And now, here's the classic arrangement. He arranged that on the third day He'd walk out of that grave. I like that one. And He would be seen of 500 witnesses. Don't tell me it was a hallucination. If you're having a trial and 500 witnesses all say the same thing, and you say, "Well, they were just cooking up a story." No. Listen. Most of these paid with their lives for their testimony. Why? A man may tell a lie to get out of trouble, but few, if any, men will tell a lie to get into trouble. Liars and martyrs are not made of the same stuff. They stood up with the cost of their lives. And the Bible says all of this was done that the Scriptures or the prophets might be fulfilled—Matthew 26 and verse 56.

Now, I've said all that to say this: that faith is rooted in evidence. We don't have time to go on and on, but, believe me, I could.

## **II. Faith Goes Beyond Evidence**

Second point: Faith that is rooted in evidence goes beyond evidence. Faith is rooted in evidence. Faith goes beyond evidence. God will not prove anything to you. God gives you evidence—God gives you evidence. But there comes a time when you must go beyond evidence to faith. John 7, verse 16 is a great scripture. Jesus was talking to the doubters of His day, and He gave one of the most unqualified promises in all of the Bible. Jesus said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his who sent me." And then, Jesus said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Now, what that means, in plain English: if you surrender your will, God will reveal Himself to you. You see, faith is not an intellectual response to God. Now, I gave you some intellectual reasons, but faith goes beyond this. Faith is a moral response to God. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice..." If you want to know the truth, God will speak to you out of the Scriptures, and you will have a result that is called faith. Faith is not primarily an intellectual thing; it is primary a moral thing. The Bible says, "Beware, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief"—not an empty head, but an evil heart. A man said, "I have intellectual problems." No, you have an evil heart. You can believe, if you will. God will reveal Himself to the one who wants to understand. And, when my eye is right, it responds to light. When my ear is right, it responds to sound. When my heart is right, it responds to God. Faith is a moral response to God.

So, God is not going to prove Himself to you, but God will give you enough evidence to believe, and then, God will give you the Holy Spirit so that you can believe. Faith is rooted in evidence. Faith goes beyond evidence. It has to in order to be faith.

### III. Faith Becomes Its Own Best Evidence

Now, here's the third proposition. Faith is rooted in evidence. Faith goes beyond evidence. Proposition number three: Faith then becomes its own best evidence. Then you believe because you believe. Let me give you the scripture—Psalm 34, verse 8: "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

Now, you've heard me speak enough to know that I love mangoes. They're tropical fruit. If you're ever in Florida and want to get on your pastor's good side, then bring me some mangoes from Florida. Now, if you don't like mangoes, that makes me happy. There's more for me and less for you. It's bound to have been in the Garden of Eden. Now, many people are not familiar with mangoes. But suppose somebody brings to you a mango. And they're beautiful fruit. You could say it looks good. If you put it up to your nose and smell it, you would say it smells good. But you might say, "How do I know it is really good?" Well, somebody else might say, "I enjoy mangoes. They're wonderful." But now, wait a minute. It looks good, it smells good—that's evidence. Somebody else says, "I enjoy mangoes. They're wonderful." That's testimony. But he says, "Here, try." That's experience.

Now, listen. A Christian with an experience is never at the mercy of an infidel with an argument. "Taste and see that the LORD is good..."

You remember the story of the man who was born blind and Jesus healed him? And the Pharisees were there, and the rulers, and saying, "Who healed you? What were his credentials? Explain all of it." He couldn't explain it all, but he said, "One thing I know. Once I was blind and now I see." A believing man now has the evidence on the inside.

First John 2, verse 20: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things." The Holy One is the Holy Spirit.

First John 2, verse 27: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

Let me give you a testimony. God saved me in my middle teens. I had a passing interest in the Word of God. I was in high school, just sloughing off; playing ball, not studying. But then I got serious about study, made better grades in college than I did in high school. I made better grades in seminary than I did in college. As the work got harder, the grades got better, because I began to be interested in this book. Next year, next spring, I will have been ordained for 50 years—50 years. I've been studying this book, pouring over it. I stand before you to tell you that I am more convinced tonight that the Bible is the Word of God than I was when I started as a young preacher 50 years ago. I'm not finding hidden flaws. I'm finding hidden beauties. There's no way that you can explain the Bible apart from divine inspiration. Faith is rooted in evidence. Faith

goes beyond evidence. Faith then becomes its own best evidence. And, again, a Christian with a testimony is never at the mercy of an infidel with an argument.

## Conclusion

I've seen this book work so many times. I have preached the Bible enough to know that the Bible itself has power. The Bible is the book that built Bellevue, and it is the book that will keep Bellevue.

William Cowper was a man who lived many years ago, and he was a man that was given to fits of despondency. And he wrote these words, and I think many of us know them: "God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform." But, before he wrote those words, he was in despondency, and the depth of despair. He was suicidal. He lived in England. He decided he would throw himself into the Thames and drown. He called a taxi. Of course, it was a horse-drawn taxi in that day. And he said, "Take me to the Thames." And it was a foggy day, and the taxi driver got lost and couldn't find the river. Now, any London cabbie could find the Thames, but he couldn't find the river, and they ended back up at the same place they started. William Cowper was so despondent, he got a pistol, put it to his head to pull the trigger—the pistol misfired. Then he said, "I'll take poison." He took some poison and swallowed it down. It made him sick, but it didn't kill him. He didn't know what he was going to do. And so, there in his hotel, he's pacing back and forth, and his eyes fell on the Bible. He picked up the Bible and read it. The Bible pointed him to the Savior. He gave his heart to Jesus Christ, and later on, he wrote these words:

*God moves in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps on the sea and rides upon the storm.  
Ye fearful saints, take courage, the clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break with blessings on your head.*

And I want to say, if you're a fearful saint today, in these desperate days in which we live, get a bulldog grip on the Word of God, because, believe me, you're going to need it. And you parents, you had better start building Bible truth into your children. Now, where are they going to get it? They're not going to get it in school. They're not going to get it in Sunday school. "Wait a minute, pastor—not in Sunday school?" They'll get a taste. I'm grateful for our Sunday school. But think about it. If the average scholar is not here 40 out of 52 Sundays. Let's just give them 40; let's give them 40 Sundays. Now, after they sing the songs, after they talk about the ballgame, throw the spitballs, and do everything else, then let's say that out of those 40 Sundays, there's 30 minutes of pure Bible teaching. Well, how much is that? That's 20 hours a year—20 hours a year. You think they're going to get to know the Bible by 20 hours a year? Well, where are they going to get it? I'm telling you, folks, they're not going to get it from the newspapers.

They're not going to get it from MTV. They're not going to get it from sporting events. How are they going to learn the Bible? Moms and dads, you better get a lock on the truth, and you better start teaching your children, because you're going to ride off into the sunset, and they're going to be here in a crazy world. If it changes as much in the next 20 years as it has changed in the last 20 years, God help us. Think about your children. Think about your grandchildren.

“Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse...but continue thou in the things which you have learned,” and remember who you learned them from. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, 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.”

Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Father God, I pray that You will help us. Help me, Lord, to treasure the book, to learn the book, to obey it, to teach it, to preach it, and to share it. And help us all. Now, while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, if you're here tonight and you're not certain that you're saved, let me just put the Bible in a nutshell for you. The Bible has one hero. His name is Jesus. It has one central message from Genesis to Revelation, and it is this: that Jesus saves. And, if you'll put your faith in Him, He will save you. The Bible says sweetly, simply, surely, sublimely, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” And, if you're not absolutely certain that you're saved tonight, or absolutely certain that you're not saved, let me lead you in a prayer, and we'll get it settled. You pray this prayer: Dear God—pray it, pray it—Dear God, I am a sinner. I am lost. My sin deserves judgment, but I need and I want mercy. Jesus, You died to save me, and You promised to save me, if I would trust You. I do trust You, Jesus. Would you tell Him that, and right now trust Him? Don't just repeat the words. Just trust Him. Say, Lord, I trust You to save me. Don't look for a feeling now. Don't ask for a sign. Just trust Him. He will not lie. Lord, I just trust You to save me. Trust Him right now. All right, if you did that, pray this way: Lord, I just trust You to save me. Thank You for doing it. I stand on Your Word. You cannot lie. You are my Lord, my Savior, my Master, and my Friend. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be, and help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray. Amen.

# The Book of the Ages

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: July 17, 1988**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3:12–17**

**Sponsored by: Sponsor**

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,  
for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

## Outline

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## Introduction

And would you take our God’s Holy Word and turn with me please to 2 Timothy chapter 3, and we’re going to begin reading in a moment from God’s wonderful Word in verse 12. Now there is today a great battle for the Bible. And I want to tell you tonight why I love and why I believe the Bible to be the Word of God. The title of our message tonight is, “The Book of the Ages.” The Bible is not the book of the month nor the book of the year; it is, indeed, the book of the ages. And what a wonderful, wonderful book it is. When that great Christian, Sir Walter Scott, lay dying, he said to his nephew, “Bring me the Book.” There were thousands of books in Sir Walter Scott’s library. And perplexed, the nephew said, “Uncle Walter, which book?” He said, “There is but one book, the Bible. Bring me the Bible.” The saints and heroes of the ages have pillowed their heads on the promises of God’s Holy Word when they were passing through the chilly waters of death. The martyrs have held into their bosoms the Word of God as the creeping flames have come closer and closer. I have been studying the Bible now for forty years seriously. I’m not getting tired of it. I love it more. I wish my life could be longer that I could study it more. I wish I had more time in the day to study God’s Word more. I intend to study it more. But I want to say this: Number one: The thing that keeps me going is not primarily how I feel, but what I know, what I know. And what I know comes out of the Word of God. I want to say, secondly, that I am embarrassed that I know so

little of the Word of God. And when I get into the Word of God, its fathomless depths overwhelm me. One of these days I'm afraid that you folks are going to find out how little your pastor knows about the Word of God and say, "We need another one," because there's so much there. And I feel like a child waiting at the seashore only about ankle deep, and there's that vast ocean of knowledge out there. The Bible transcends the mind of natural man because it contains the mind of God, and no single intellect has ever plunged to the bottom of its great truths. Its depths are immeasurable. Its heights reach far beyond the highest pinnacle of human understanding. And even the brilliant, ah, apostle Paul with a mind like a vice and a great, huge IQ, and a magnificent education said this: "Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments, for His ways are past finding out, and who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counselor?" The great R. A. Torrey, whose books and works I've recommended to you before, said this of the Bible, "Many men of the strongest intellect, of marvelous power of penetration, of broadest culture have given a lifetime for the study of the Bible, and no man has ever really, who has ever really studied it ever dreamed of saying that he's gotten to the bottom of the book. New light is constantly breaking forth from the Word of God. The fact that it is proved itself unfathomable for these centuries is positive proof (are you listening?), is positive truth that in it, in the Bible, are hidden the infinite treasures of the wisdom of God." My dear friend, the deeper you search into this goldmine of blessed truth, the richer and deeper and wider and more precious becomes the vein of priceless gold that you find there in the Word of God. Let me tell you about this book. This book is so deep that the scholars can swim in it and never touch bottom and a little child can come and drink from it without fear of drowning. Thank God for the Word of God. Now I want you to hear what the apostle Paul had to say about the Word of God. I'm reading here in 2 Timothy 3:12. And here it begins with a warning. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Now, friend, if you don't know the Word of God, you are going to be a deceiver or be deceived or both. "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, 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." Now I said that the Bible is the book of the ages, and let me tell you why I say that.

## I. The Bible Is the Old-Time Book

First of all, it is the old-time book, the old-time book. Look in verse 16: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God...” That means that the Bible came from the heart, the mind of God in eternity past. Even before the Bible was put on paper, even before it was given by inspiration, the Bible says of itself, “Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.” God had the Bible in His heart and mind before He swung this planet into space. Now that verse says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God...” And there God uses a word that is used only one time in the Bible, one time in the New Testament. It is *theopneustos*, *theopneustos*. And what it literally means is God breathed. Now it doesn’t mean that God breathed into the Bible. It means that God breathed and Bible out of Himself. The Bible is the very breathe of God. Now what you’re hearing right now is my breath. You’re hearing the, the air that is being forced by my diaphragm, out of my lungs, up over my larynx, and through my vocal chords, formed and articulated by my lips and my teeth and my tongue, and I’m making sounds. And what is coming out of my mouth is my breath that is making words. That is, what I’m saying is Adrian breathed. Now the Bible says of itself that the Bible is *theopneustic*: it is God breathed. It is the word of God. Now that’s the reason we believe in what we call verbal, plenary inspiration because of that little word all. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God...” And when the Bible uses that little Greek word all, or the word that is translated from the Greek all, it means all in every part. That’s the reason Jesus said in Matthew 4:4: “...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.” It is all inspired of God, and a God of truth cannot inspire error. So we believe in verbal inspiration. The Latin word, *verba*, means word. And so we believe in word for word inspiration. Now there are people who tell us, “Well, God inspired the thoughts, but He didn’t inspire the words.” Well, how can you have thoughts without words? You can’t have thoughts without words anymore than you could have mathematics without numbers. And if you change the words, you may change the thought. And God says that every word of God is pure in the book of Proverbs, Proverbs 30:5. Jesus said in Matthew 4:4: “...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” On the original parchments every sentence, every word, every line, every point, every pen stroke, every jot, every tittle was placed there by the will and mind and purpose of God. It is the old-time book. Now people tell us, “But the Bible was written by human beings.” Indeed, the Bible was written by human beings, but God did not suspend their human facilities, but God overrode them so that there is no mistake. It is not mechanical dictation. God did not say, “Now, Jeremiah, take a letter,” and Jeremiah wrote it this way. And as you read the prophets, as you read the apostles, you see their prayers, you see their praises, you see their fears, you see their victories, you see their yearnings, you see their

individuality – all of that – but yet, while when you’re reading Peter, you can say, ‘That’s Peter.’ Or while you’re reading Paul, if you’re familiar with Paul, you can say, “That’s Paul.” And you get to know these people almost like friends. You read James and you say, “Yep, there’s old James again; hard-nosed.” And there’s a personality of all of these people. And you can tell the different personalities, but through it all is God. You say, “How can that be?” Well, let’s take a musician. And say this musician is adept at various instruments. He plays the piano. It sounds like a piano. He plays the trombone. It sounds like a trombone, the same man. Then he plays a trumpet. And then he may play, play a flute or a piccolo. Now he is playing himself, but each one of these instruments has its own characteristics, but it is the same man who is making the music. It is the same God who is taking all of these men with their various, ah, ah, proclivities and idiosyncrasies; these men who have their own, ah, different personalities, and yet God Himself has, has, ah, inspired these men. Now today, we have some who say, “Well, ah, anything that has a human characteristic to it cannot be perfect.” And we have some in our convention who say that because the Bible was written by human beings, it contains the flaws of human beings. But I want you to understand this: That God took a human being. His name was Jesus. And God brought a human being into this world who was absolutely perfect. It was a miracle. The virgin birth was a miracle. And the Bible is a miracle. As a matter of fact, God has given the same name to the Bible as He’s given to His Son. Both are called in the Bible the Word of God. In Revelation 19:13 God says, concerning His Son, the Lord Jesus, “...His name is called the Word of God.” The character of both are linked together. My dear friend, the Word of God and the God of the Word are so linked together that while they are not identical, they are inseparable. And the living Word believed the written word, and the written word honors the living Word. It is an old-time book. It transcends history. Before this world was put into place, the Bible was in the heart and mind of God. You say, “I don’t understand that.” I don’t understand it, either, but I believe what the Bible says, “Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.”

## **II. The Bible Is the New-Time Book**

But not only is the Bible an old-time book (verse 16), but also, dear friend, it is the new-time book. Now look in verse 14. God says to young Timothy, “Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.” Now what he is saying is this: “Timothy, the Scriptures that you have are centuries old, but they’re just as new and just as fresh for you today. Continue in the Word of God. Stay with the book. It is always fresh. It always will be.” Isn’t it amazing that here, ah, facing, ah, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, that you educated people, many of you with higher degrees, post-graduate degrees, many of us who have studied many years in

school, that we are here with the document many years old, thousands of years, ah, in age, and yet we find the truths of this book to be so relevant and so pertinent and so up-to-date. I almost feel a little snug when I read the newspapers, saying, you know, we just got a leg up on everybody. We know what's happening. We have the Word of God. We have an insight into what is happening. You see, it is the new-time book. It never gets old. The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:25: "The word of the Lord endureth forever..." The Bible says in Isaiah 40:8: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever." Sure, men laugh at the Bible. Sure, men scorn the Bible. Sure, men ignore the Bible. Sure, men burn the Bible. But the Bible remains! The former, great pastor of this church, Dr. Robert G. Lee, said as only he could say, "All of its enemies have not torn one hole in its holy vesture, nor stolen one flower from its wonderful garden, nor diluted one drop of honey from its abundant hive, nor broken one string of its thousand-stringed harp, nor drowned one sweet word in infidel ink." I like that. The Bible is timeless, ultimate, indestructible, infallible, eternal. It is the old-time book, but my dear friend, it is the new-time book.

### **III. The Bible Is the Any-Time Book**

Now here's a third thing I want you to learn. Because it is the old-time book, and because it is the new-time book, it is also the any-time book. Notice in verse 16 again. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect (that means mature, complete), thoroughly (or thoroughly, as some give it) furnished unto all good works." Now what he's saying is this: "Ah, Timothy, get ready for persecution." And what Paul told Timothy I think would doubly apply to us in this day and age. Back up again, if you will, to verse 12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." By the way, how many of you believe that verse? Let me see your hand. All right. Now take them down. How many of you who lifted your hand are suffering persecution? Don't lift your hand right now, but just answer the question. Now the Bible says if you will live godly in Christ Jesus, you'll suffer persecution. Now either the, this verse is not true or you're not living godly. Now listen. Let me tell you something, friend. All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. There's no way that you're going to get out unbloodied, unbent, unscathed in this world. Now you say, "Well, I, I haven't suffered any persecution." Well, it doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to be burned at the stake. The word *persecute* here literally has, the Greek word *persecute* literally has the meaning of being pursued, watched, so that they can find fault in you. I have people who pursue me night and day. They scrutinize my life. They hope, if they believed in prayer, they would pray that I would fall. They, on the job, they, they pray in their own way, perverted way that you will stumble, that you will

make a mistake. They pursue you. They watch you, hoping to find some stumble in you. Do you remember when the Lord Jesus was out there on the Sabbath Day walking through the wheat fields and, ah, they were hungry? And His disciples stopped and got some grains of wheat and they threshed that, those heads of that wheat in their hands like that and just got that, ah, grains of corn there and put that in their mouth, the kernels of wheat, and ate it. And the Pharisees said, "Aha, you're working on the Sabbath Day." And they, they, they began to, ah, to, ah, find fault with the Lord Jesus and said that Jesus had broken the Sabbath. Now the humorous thing about that to me is, what were a bunch of Pharisees doing out in the wheat fields anyway on the Sabbath Day? I mean, it, you know, here's Jesus walking through there and they stop and just get a handful of wheat, and up come the Pharisees. Kind of like Hee-Haw coming out....you know, ah, just right out of the corn field. There they are. And they say, "Aha, we saw what you did." They were pursuing Him. They were following Him, hoping to find fault in Him. Now, dear friend, when the Bible says "All who will live godly in Christ Jesus," what it means is that it means more than just a mild desire; that, that you determine that you're going to live for God. And if you do, if you do, you're going to have persecution. Now some people have mistakenly gotten the idea that if you really, really love God and live for God, you will escape persecution. You know, some people really believe that. If I really get right with God, I'll escape persecution. The Bible teaches just the opposite. "All who will live godly shall suffer persecution." Well, what do you do? Well, my dear friend, what you do is you take the any-time book that is the all-time book, and the new-time book – it must become the any-time book. And what he says here is everything that you need in this time of persecution you will find in the Scripture. For example, he says, "But evil men and seducers (verse 13) shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." But when you've got deceivers and evil people who are persecuting you, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." There'll be all kinds of charlatans and, and evil people, but he says, "Just, just stay with the Word of God." The Word of God is here to help you to endure persecution. And, and listen. Here's a wonderful thing here in verse 14. He says not only continue in the things which thou has learned and been assured of; that is, you got it from the Bible. The Holy Spirit of God confirmed it to your heart. But, also, there was a teacher, there was a preacher who taught you. Remember who taught you. Now when you get out in that office and somebody starts to ridicule the Word of God; you get in that college classroom and somebody starts to ridicule the Word of God; you get in that sorority or that fraternity and somebody starts to ridicule the Word of God, you compare their lifestyle to the lifestyle to the one who taught you. Just remember who taught you. Remember the one who brought you to Jesus Christ. We had a college girl who was a member of this church. She went off to a

college, and it breaks my heart to say it, but it was one of our Baptist colleges. And they began piece by piece to dismantle her belief in the Word of God very subtly. They didn't come out and just say it's not the Word of God. But they began to put those little doubts there and those little problems there. And she said to me as she sat in my living room and poured her heart out to me, she said, "Pastor, they were so suave and they were so nice and they were so intelligent." She said, "I felt my faith in the Bible weakening." But then she said, "I remembered you and I remembered Brother Whitmire." She was in our choir. She said, "I remembered the way you lived and the way you've been living, and I knew there was a difference in that man and you." That made, that was a blessing to my heart. Dear friend, ah, you think of those who love the Word of God and those who live by the Word of God. You see, listen. Liberals are not soul winners. Liberals do not really, indeed, have a burning passion for the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the any-time book. It is there for enduring. I'll tell you what else it's there for. It's there for evangelizing. Look in verse 15 now: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ." No one can be saved apart from the Word of God. And in these last days you need to be a soul winner. And the real test (you listen to your pastor now), the real test of what you believe about the Bible is not how much you know about prophesy or how much you know about theology. The real test is whether or not you're a soul winner, whether or not you're a soul winner. If you believe that this message is able to save people, to make people wise unto salvation, you're going to say it's going to be the any-time book. It's going to be here for enduring. It's going to be here for evangelizing. And it's going to be here for equipping. Look in verses 16 and 17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God; is profitable for doctrine (that's to teach what is right), for reproof (that's to show what is wrong), for correction (that's to get you back right again), for instruction in righteousness (that's to keep you right)..." Now that's what the Bible is here for. It is here to equip you. Now the Bible uses the term here – this is a military metaphor – that, that God is saying that, that it is profitable for doctrine, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished. It literally means that he may be armed. They don't put a soldier out on the battlefield without giving him an M1 or some grenades or whatever it is, and they teach him how to use it. Now what God is saying is, "I will not send you in these last days into the battle unarmed." You'll go down unless you have a weapon. Now, my dear friend, you need to be saturated with the Word of God; motivated by the Spirit of God; activated in the work of God. You need the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. And God says it is sufficient. Everything that you need in any situation for enduring, for evangelizing, for equipping – it is all right here. It is the any-time book.

#### **IV. The Bible Is the Every-Time Book**

Now let me say something else about this book. Not only is it the any-time book, but I want to say, dear friend, **it is also, therefore, the every-time book.** Look, if you will, in verse, chapter 4 now and read with me. “I charge thee therefore (now he’s talking about the Word of God – 2 Timothy 4:1), I charge thee therefore (on the basis of what he said about the Scripture) before God, and the Lord Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season (now watch), out of season; prove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come (and may I say the time is now here), when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” Now what he is saying is this: That the Word of God, anointed by the Holy Spirit of God, is the supreme authority in all matters. You’ll come to the last days when there will be the philosophers. There will come the agnostics. There will come the humanists. And you had better have an authority. It is not human reasoning. It is not conscience. It is not tradition. It is the authority of the Word of God. Now, folks, sometimes people accuse us of bibliolatry. That is, they say that we have a paper pope, we have a paper God, that we worship the Bible rather than worshipping the God of the Bible. That is absolute, asinine silliness. They ought to know better than that. But I want to tell you something, friend. Don’t ever get upset when somebody accuses you of worshipping the Bible if the Bible causes you to love and worship the Lord Jesus all of the more. Let me tell you what God says about the authority of His Word. In Psalm 138:2 is one of the most dynamic statements about the Bible in all of the Word of God, and this is what it says: “...thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.” Now you think of that. Friend, I don’t believe you can honor the Bible too much. “...thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.” A man and his word may be different, but God and His Word are so linked together. They are not identical, but they are inseparable. Jesus Christ was a Bible believer. If He is your Master, then the servant must be like his Lord. And Jesus said in John 10:35, “...the scripture can not be broken.”

#### **V. The Bible Is the End-Time Book**

Now that brings me to say one last thing about the Scripture. Not only is the Scripture the all-time book, and not only is it the new-time book, and not only is it the any-time, and not only is it the every-time book, but, my dear friend, it is the end-time book, and we are living in the end time. Notice again in chapter 4:3-4: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the

work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” Perilous times have come. The Bible says in the last days perilous times shall come. Friend, they’re here, they’re here. You think, I think often, I think often of my grandbabies. Now I used to think about my children, but thank God all of my children know Jesus. Every one of them are conservative, Bible believers; some of them more conservative than their daddy. They think I’m a raving liberal. Listen, I, I thank God they’re got a lock on the Word of God. And I look at my little grandbabies now and I say, “Dear God, what will the world be like ten years from now?” Have you thought about it? Ten years from now. Little Renae, she’s 7. What will it be like when she’s 17? Boy, I think about that, and I say, “Oh God, Oh God, help her to know Your Word.” That’s the only thing these kids are going to have to cling to is the Word of God. It’s the, it’s the end-time book. There was a father. He had two children, a little boy who was about 7 and a little girl who was about 12. They were all good swimmers. They were swimming on the seacoast off New Jersey in the summertime. They were having a wonderful time. And they got out a little further than they realized. And when the father looked up, he saw that they had drifted and the current was carrying them out to sea. He knew that he was a strong swimmer. The little boy was not as strong as the little girl. She was a fairly good swimmer. He knew he had to make a decision, for he feared for the lives of his children. So without trying to cause panic in the heart of that little girl, he said to her, “Sweetheart, we’re getting carried away from the shore. And what I’m going to do is I’m going to take brother to the shore and then I’m going to come back and get you.” Now he said, “Sweetheart, daddy has taught you how to float, and you’re a good swimmer, and you can float on your back for hours. And so, what I want you to do is just float and don’t be afraid. Just float. And daddy’s coming back.” And he took that little boy to the shore. And then at the top of his voice he cried for helpers. He said, “Please help me. Out there somewhere in that vast ocean is my daughter.” So they got the lifeboats. They got the lifeguards. They got the people and they began to go out there in that vast, vast ocean, up and down and up and down, to search a half an hour, an hour, two hours, three hours, almost four hours to search for that little girl. And, finally, they found her just floating on her back as calm as she could be. The father picked her up, hugged her to his bosom, and said, “Darling, daddy is so proud of you, so proud of you.” Well,” she said, “Daddy, you told me I could float on my back, and you taught me how. And you said that you would come back and get me, and I knew you would, and I was just doing what you told me to do.” Now, friend, that’s what I want to say to Jesus when He comes again. “Lord, You taught me how to live, and You told me I would survive if I would do what You told me to do. And, Lord, You said You’d come again and get me.” And when He comes, friend, I want to be found doing just what He said I’m to do.

## Conclusion

I don't know about you, but I love this book. It's the old-time book, but it's the new-time book. It's the any-time book. It's the every-time book. It's the end-time book. It's the Word of God. It's the book of the ages. Let's pray. Heads are bowed. The Bible has but one central message. It is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. My dear friend, if you're not saved, I want you to be saved. God wants you to be saved. Christ died that you might be saved. The Holy Spirit of God is drawing you to Christ. God the Father loves you. God the Son died for you. God the Holy Spirit is speaking to you and telling you that you need to be saved. You're not saved by joining a church or getting baptized, living a good life, keeping the Ten Commandments, or giving your money. None of these nor all of these can save you. What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. And Jesus shed His blood that you might be saved. And if tonight with all of your heart, like a little child, you trust Him and receive Him, number one, He will forgive your sin; number two, He will come into your heart; number three, He'll give you a new nature; number four, He'll give you strength to live for Him; and number five, when you die or when He comes, He'll take you to heaven to live eternally with Him. Father, I pray tonight for those who are not saved, that even tonight they might say an everlasting yes to Jesus Christ and be saved. Father, bind away the power of Satan and loose the power of Your Holy Spirit on this service in Jesus' dear name, amen.

# Why I Know the Bible is the Word of God

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: August 20, 1989**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3:12–18**

*“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”*  
2 TIMOTHY 3:12

## Outline

Introduction

- A. The Bible Is Inspired
- B. The Bible Is Instructive
- C. The Bible Is Instrumental
- I. The Fact Factor
- II. The Fulfilled Prophecy Factor
- III. The Faith Factor

Conclusion

## Introduction

Take God's Word please and open to 2 Timothy chapter 3. I was thinking about my own background and my love of the Holy Scriptures. And, I was asking myself, “Adrian, why do you believe the Bible is The Word of God?” And, I pondered on that subject. And, I said to myself, “Well, I believe The Word of God because I was told it was The Word of God.” I mean to begin my mama and my daddy told me the Bible was The Word of God. In our home we just had certain principles. Number one is that you never set another book on top of the Bible or never set anything else on top of the Bible. Or you never put the Bible on the floor. It was just a different book. It was The Word of God. And, as a child I didn't understand all of that but my parents did and I had respect for my parents. And, I just said, “Well, that is The Word of God.” I didn't know much about it, I didn't understand it, but I had a respect for it.

Later on I became a Christian. I got saved. I was born again. And, I began to study the Bible. And, I learned more and more about it. And, now I know it is The Word of God, but from a different perspective. I have other reasons now for believing that the Bible is The Word of God. And, I want to share those reasons with you in a moment. But, I want us to begin reading in 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 12. The Bible says, “Yea,

*and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). I have a question for you. Are you living godly in Christ Jesus? Well, a good test is are you getting any persecution? If you're not getting any persecution then you better check yourself out. Now, persecution doesn't mean that they're going to flog you or stone you. It might mean they'll laugh at you, overlook you, and put you down. It might mean they'll pats you up.*

But friend, you be an out and out Christian in this world, there is no way you're going to come out unscathed. Amen? That's what God's Word says. And, especially in the last days, because the Bible says, *“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13). Friend, that verse has climactic in this day. “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect—that means complete, mature—thoroughly furnished unto all good works. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears—now, it's not the teachers that have the itching ears. It's the hearers whose ears itch to hear something different.— And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Timothy 3:14–18; 4:4–5)*

One of the men that has graced our pulpit and blessed us is Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter, a saint in this day, if there ever was one. Dr. Baxter in one of his books said “the biggest division between Christians is no longer between one denomination and another, but between those who accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God and those who I don't.” No longer is the division between denominations. The battle today is over The Word of God. And, we're finding more and more those who believe in the full inspiration of The Word of God are being drawn together more and more in a fellowship across America. Now, in the Scripture that I've read, I have said three great truths about the Bible that I just want to lay as a groundwork before I tell you three reasons I believe the Bible to be The Word of God.

#### **A. The Bible Is Inspired**

What difference does it make? Well, first of all, the Bible tells us in verse 16 that it is an

inspired book. 2 Timothy 3 verse 16 says, *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God...”* (2 Timothy 3:16). Now, that word literally means that the Scripture is given by God's breath. It is the breath of God. Theopneustos means it is the literal breath of God. It is just as if my voice is my breath coming up from my diaphragm. My voice is coming out of my lungs and over my larynx. And, it is articulated by my tongue, lips, and teeth. You're hearing my breath, my words. The Scripture is The Word of God. It is as if God had a larynx and a tongue and lips. It is as if God Himself is speaking.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. So the Scriptures number one, are inspired. And, when we say they're inspired we don't mean partial inspiration because it says, *“all Scripture.”* We don't mean progressive inspiration. The Old Testament is as inspired as the New Testament. It may not be as inspiring, but it is as inspired. And, I want to tell you that 1 Samuel 3 is just as inspired as John 3. It's all just as inspired. And, so it's not partial inspiration, it's not progressive inspiration, but it's plenary inspiration. The word plenary means full. We believe in verbal, plenary inspiration. Verbal means, word by word, inspiration. You see, not just the thoughts are inspired. The very words are inspired. *You can't have thoughts without words any more than you could have mathematics without numbers.* Jesus said in Matthew 4 verse 4, *“...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4). So, when we say verbal inspiration, we mean that the words are inspired. When we say plenary inspiration, the word in Latin, plenus means full. Everything is inspired.

## **B. The Bible Is Instructive**

All of the Scripture—from Genesis to Revelation—is inspired. Every word is as God gave it. It is not as if someone may have mistranslated it. Every word is God inspired. So verse 16 tells us *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God...”* (2 Timothy 3:16). Verse 16 also tells us that the Scriptures are *“...for instruction in righteousness”* (2 Timothy 3:16) and that God gave them to us for a reason. Now, first of all, God gave us Scriptures to know what is right. The Bible also tells us that the scripture *“...is profitable for doctrine...”* (2 Timothy 3:16). Do you see that? The word doctrine means teaching, to know what is right. You've got to have something that says, “This is right and this is wrong.” There used to be a time when preachers would stand in the pulpit and say, “The Bible saith.” And, then they started to say, “The Church says.” And, now they just sort of scratch their head and say, “Well, it seems to me.” We're not interested in that. We want to know is there a word from God? The Scripture is profitable for doctrine to show us what's right. But, also the Scripture is profitable to show us what is wrong. Because it also says *“...for reproof...”* (2 Timothy 3:16). That is, the Bible tells us when we're wrong. Not only does it show what's right. It shows us what's wrong. But, then that's not

enough. It goes on to tell us how to get right when we are wrong, “...for correction...” (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is here to show us when we stray off course how to get back on course, how to get right. And then the Bible is here to tell us how to stay right, “...for instruction in righteousness...” (2 Timothy 3:16). So, what is the Bible for? It is instructive. The Bible shows us what's right, what's wrong, how to get right when we are wrong, and how to stay right when we are right. Now, that's what the Bible is here for.

### C. The Bible Is Instrumental

Not only is the Scripture inspired and not only is it instructive, but it is instrumental. Since it does these things, let me show you what it is instrumental to do. First of all, you're going to be saved through knowledge of the Scripture. Notice verse 15. “*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation...*” (2 Timothy 3:15) Nobody is ever apart from The Word of God. You can't be saved apart from The Word of God because The Word of God is the truth that saves you. You see, dear friend, when you want people saved—if you want them to believe—you've got to give them something to believe. And, so the Scriptures are for salvation. But, not only for salvation, they're also instrumental for sanctification. Look in verse 17. It says, “That the man of God may be perfect...” (2 Timothy 3:17). Now, the word perfect means mature. So the Scriptures are here not only to help you to be saved, but to help you “...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...” (2 Peter 3:18).

The measure of your growth is measured to great degree by your feeding on The Word of God. The Bible says in, “*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*” (1 Peter 2:2). They're instrumental for salvation, sanctification, and service. You want to serve the Lord? Now, he says, he gave us the Scripture, “*That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2 Timothy 3:17). Friend, the Bible is there to help you to serve God for service. The Bible becomes the preacher's battle axe, sword, and well. It is the thing that enabled Charles Wesley to write those mighty hymns. It is what impels all of us and instructs all of us and guides us as we serve the Lord. So, the Scriptures are inspired, instructive, and instrumental for salvation, sanctification, and service. Having said all of that we are not surprised at what Dr. Robert G. Lee—former pastor of this church—said about the Bible. He said, and I quote:

“The Bible is a book beyond all books, as a river is beyond a rivulet. The Bible is a book above and beyond all books, as the sun is above and beyond a candle in brightness. The Bible is above and beyond all books, as the wings of an eagle are above the wings of a sparrow in strength. It is supernatural in origin, eternal in duration, inexpressible in value, immeasurable in influence, infinite in scope, divine in authorship,

human in penmanship, regenerative in power, infallible in authority, universal in interest, personal in application, inspired in totality! This is the book that has walked more paths, traveled more highways, knocked at more doors, and spoken to more people in their mother tongue than any other book this world has ever known or ever will know.”

By the way a part of Dr. Lee's great tribute to the Bible has been inscribed on bronze out in the Lee Garden. It is over here to the south of our building, there has been a great bronze Bible. Many of you have seen it, especially if you're old time Bellevuers with Dr. Lee's great tribute to The Word of God. We have taken that bronze Bible and we are going to put it on the very portico of the brand new church out there at Canaan. And, everybody walking into the doors of that church—coming in the front door—will see that great bronze Bible with the tribute to The Word of God. And, they'll know as they're going into that building that here's a church that in history, practice, belief, and faith stands upon The Word of God. Now, having said all of that let me tell you the three reasons that I believe the Bible is The Word of God. I could give you many more. But these are the three basic reasons. I've tried to distill it into three principles.

## I. The Fact Factor

The very first principle I want to give you is what I want to call the fact principle, or the fact factor. You see, there are certain facts that cause me to believe the Bible is The Word of God. I don't believe the Bible is The Word of God by mere blind faith. As a matter of fact, I don't like the term blind faith. When somebody tells me to believe, the first question that comes in my mind is, Why should I believe? A little boy was asked, “What is faith?” And he said, “Well, that's belief in what you know ain't so.” No, that's not faith. Listen. Faith is rooted in evidence. Faith is rooted in facts. I don't have any confidence in just quote believing.

Many of you have heard the story of the boy who fell a cliff where many hundreds of feet below were the jagged rocks. He grabbed a limb on the way down. He was holding on, swinging, and suspended in mid air. It was too high to climb back up to the top and below was certain death. He began to yell at the top of his voice, “Help me! Is there anybody up there? Help me!” And, the voice came saying, “I'm here.” He said, “Help me!” He said, “Very well, let go of the limb.” He said, “Is anybody else up there?” I'm very much like him. Why should we just simply do something because someone says so, and says, “Just trust me?” Oh no, there needs to be some evidence before we can have some fact.

The Christian faith is rooted not in fable but in fact. And, when you believe the Bible it is not a leap into the dark, it is a step into the light. Now, let me give you some facts—just plain facts—as to why I believe the Bible is The Word of God. For example, there is historical fact. Turn with me to the book of Luke for a moment. Let's look in Luke chapter

1 verses 1 through 4. You're going to find out that Luke is a historical document. Dr. Luke, who was a medical doctor, wrote the book of Luke and he says in Luke 1 verse 1, *"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 3It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed"* (Luke 1:1-4). Now, Luke said, "Theophilus, you want to know about these things?" He said, "I, number one, am an eyewitness. Number two, I've had inspiration, knowledge from above, and I'm going to give you something that is absolutely certain."

Now, Luke claimed to be a historian. But, there was a man named Sir William Ramsey. Now, Sir William Ramsey was the professor of humanities at Aberdeen University in Scotland. He was reputed to be the most eminent authority on the geography and history of ancient Asia Minor. And, he read Luke's account of the book of Acts, the same Luke that wrote the Gospel of Luke. And, this is what Sir William Ramsey had to say about what Luke wrote. He said, "The book of Acts is a highly imaginative and carefully colored account of primitive Christianity." Can you hear the disdain in his voice? He says that Luke just got carried away with his imagination and he just colored the situation any way he wanted. That is, he was saying, "From my knowledge of history of Asia Minor, I have no respect, as a historian, for the book of Acts." But, Sir William Ramsey went to the Middle East with the avowed purpose of proving Dr. Luke wrong in his history. And, Sir William Ramsey made an intensive study. I'm talking to you about one of the world's most eminent scholars. And, when he finished, he wrote a book about Luke entitled "The Beloved Physician", in which he declared Luke to be one of the world's greatest historians. And, this is what he said after he took a more careful look, and I quote. He said, "I take the view that Luke's history is unsurpassed in regard to its trustworthiness. You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian's and they will stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment." Did you hear that? That's what Dr. Sir William Ramsey had to say. Let me give you an example of what he's talking about. For example, in Luke chapter 2 verses 1 and 2. It is the birth of Jesus. Don't turn to it. Let me just tell you this. The birth of Jesus was said to be when Cyrenius was the governor of Syria. That's what Luke tells us, when Cyrenus was the governor of Syria. And, yet the Bible teaches that Jesus was born before the death of Herod. And, Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. And, Cyrenius was governor in 8 A.D. through 10 A.D. So, they say, evidently, there's some problem there. But, as Sir William Ramsey continued to study he found out that Cyrenius was governor twice. The first time, when Jesus was born, and then he was governor again at

the time of Herod. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that? It it's a great thing.

But you see, those are the kind of things that somebody might read carelessly and say, "Well, the Bible is not the inspired Word of God." Again in the book of Daniel, there was a king whose name was Belshazzar. That was the king that saw the handwriting on the wall. You remember that story. And, there was a great feast. And, Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall that told that his kingdom was divided and given to the Medes and the Persians. People laughed at that idea and said, "Well, the book of Daniel was a fabrication because the last king of Babylon was not Belshazzar, but a man named Nabonidus." And, they had the ancient records of the Babylonians. And, they had the name Nabonidus. And, the record clearly showed that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon. But, they continued to dig. The spade of the archaeologist did his work, its work. And, one day they unearthed a cylinder. And, on that cylinder was a name. And, guess whose name was there. It was the name Belshazzar. And, as they continued, they read, they found more and more documents naming Belshazzar. And, finally the truth dawned on them. There was a king named Nabonidus, who was the last king of Babylon. But, he wasn't the only last king. Belshazzar was also the king. Nabonidus was the father of Belshazzar and they reigned together. They were co-regents. That explains when Daniel was told, "If you can read the handwriting on the wall," Belshazzar said, "I'll make you the third ruler in the kingdom." You see, he couldn't make him the second ruler. There were already two rulers. He had to be the third ruler.

Well, suppose that they never found the tablet or the cylinder with Belshazzar's name. Would that make the Bible any less true? No. You'd just be limited in your information. The Bible would still be true. But, what I'm trying to say to you, dear friend, as you study historical fact you find out that the Bible is a historically accurate instrument.

There was a man, Dr. Driver, who said that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Dr. Driver, the linguist said, "The reason that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch is that in the time when Moses was supposed to have been alive, men didn't know how to write. So how could Moses have written these books?" That's what Dr. Driver said, until in Northern Egypt they uncovered some tablets called the Tel El Amarna tablets. They studied about them when I was a kid before I got to Junior High School. They studied about the Tel El manna tablets. And, in these tablets were records of letters written on clay seals sent from people in Egypt to people in Palestine before Moses was born. Not only did they know how to write, they had a postal system. They were sending letters back and forth. Probably got there quicker than ours. They, dear friend, let the gainsayers mock at the Bible. I'm telling you, dear friend, there are the historical facts of the Bible. There are not only the historical facts; there are the scientific facts of the

Bible.

I when I used to teach the Discovery Class here for our new members, I used to tell them about the scientific facts of the Bible. And, one of the things that I enjoyed talking about was a medical book that has been discovered that goes all the way back to 1552 B.C. It's called the papyrus Ebers. And that is a compendium, a gathering together of the medical knowledge of ancient Egypt. Ancient Egypt had the dominant position of medicine in the ancient world. And, what the ancient Egyptians were able to do is astounding and incredible. And, people are still trying to figure out such things as how they embalmed the dead and did certain procedures and so forth. But, in this medical book, there are some ludicrous things that you read also. I'll give you some of the prescriptions in the papyrus Ebers. For example, to prevent the hair from turning grey you anoint it with the blood of a black cat which has been boiled in oil or with the fat of a rattlesnake. I suggest the blood of a black cat myself. Rattlesnake fat is hard to come by.

Now, here is a prescription, if you're losing your hair or if your hair's falling out then one remedy to fix it is to apply a mixture of six fats, namely those of the snake and the ibex. To strengthen it, you anoint it with the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey. Sounds like a good prescription, doesn't it? I've got one better than that. You can take alum and persimmon juice and rub it on your head. Now, it won't grow any hair, but it'll shrink your head to fit the hair you got.

Here is another. Here's another prescription in the papyrus Ebers. If you have a splinter that's embedded then you take worm's blood and donkey's dung and you put it on that splinter. Can you imagine the tetanus spores and things that would be in donkey's dung? Other drugs that they used were lizard's blood, swine's teeth, rotten meat, moisture from pig's ears, donkey's hooves, and even excretion from animal, including human beings, donkeys, antelopes, dogs, cats, and even flies. Fly excretion is hard to gather. But, you've got to have all of this.

Now listen. I want you to understand, dear friend. This was written by the sophisticated and learned ancient Egyptians. Now, put on top of that the fact that Moses studied in the University of Egypt. Did you know the Bible says, "*And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*" (Acts 7:22). He had the best education that money could buy because his adopted daddy—Pharaoh—said, "I want this boy to reign in my stead, gave him the best education." Aren't you glad that when you read the book of Genesis or Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and so forth? Aren't you glad you don't read anything about lizard's blood and donkey's dung and all of this kind of stuff as being these cures?

Listen, when you read the Bible, and when you read the Pentateuch, and when you read the sanitary code, and when you read the dietary code, you're going to find one of

the highest levels of scientific knowledge that you'll find even to this day. And, you'll not find one medical misconception in Moses' writings. As a matter of fact, Moses says things that are incredible, like, *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood..."* (Leviticus 17:11). This was before the day of hematology and microbiology. How did Moses know that this blood is a red river of life? *"...holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"* (2 Peter 1:21).

In the 14th century the Black Plague was the greatest human disaster that's ever come. An estimated 60 million people died in the Black Plague in Europe. But, let me tell you what brought the Black Plague to a close. It was the Church—not the doctors—that brought the plague under control. Finally, those leaders in the Church began to read The Word of God. In desperation they read Leviticus chapter 13 verse 46 and it spoke of someone who had a plague. And, it says, *"All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be"* (Leviticus 13:46). That's the principle that we use today when we put people in an isolation ward. That's the principle we use today when we quarantine people. But, friend they didn't understand germs. You couldn't have said, "He has a germ." They'd say, "What?" They couldn't say, "He has a virus, or he has." They didn't understand that. They taught these people so long ago that principle of isolation and quarantining.

In Vienna, Austria in 1840, mothers would go for pre natal examinations. And, after the doctor would examine the mother for a pre-natal premonition, one out of every six mothers would get sick and die. They couldn't understand this. Why are these mothers dying? There was a doctor whose name was Dr. Sennelweiss. Dr. Sermelweiss got to thinking about it. He noticed that these doctors would go first into the morgue. They would examine the cadavers—the corpses—of those that had died. Sometimes they would do an autopsy. And, then without even washing their hands they would come and examine these mothers with a pelvic examination. These mothers, of course, were being infected and they were dying. They didn't understand why.

But, Dr. Semmelweiss read the Bible. And, he read in the Bible where Moses made people wash their hands after contact with a dead body. And, so without even really completely knowing why, he was the head of the hospital. And, he said, "From now on, when you leave the morgue, you are to scrub. You're to wash your hands." As they began to wash their hands, dear friends, not one out of six died. But, listen from then on only 1 out of 84 died. They thought they'd hit on something. But, then suddenly 11 out of 12 died in a row. After having been examined by a doctor who had washed his hands, after having come from the morgue, but he did not wash his hands after examining one mother and then another. And, so then Dr. Seimmelweiss said, "You're to wash your hands after every examination."

Now, what doctor would not think of doing that today? The doctor is going to scrub to his elbows with an antiseptic. Well, you just take that all for granted. But, dear friend, let me tell you something. Turn with me to the book of Numbers chapter 19 in The Word of God. Numbers chapter 19, and see what God told Moses so long ago. I begin reading in verse 14. *“This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days”* (Numbers 19:14). That's to give time for the bacteria to die. *“And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean”* (Numbers 19:15). Any pot, anything that's open there is unclean. All right. *“And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself—Now, watch this—and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even”* (Numbers 19:16-19).

Now, there is some ritual in there and there's some religious teaching. But, I want you to listen also to the biological teaching here. The Bible says you're to use running water, not some stagnant pool running water. Repeated washing, there's to be a time interval to let the bacteria die. And, even a change of clothing. Now, folks, that's the same thing they do over here at the hospital right across the street. I'm trying to tell you, dear friend, that I believe the Bible to be The Word of God because of the historical fact. I believe the Bible to be The Word of God because of the scientific fact. I'll tell you another reason that I believe the Bible to be The Word of God and that is because of the fact of its indestructibility.

You see, the Bible is not the book of the month. It's the book of the age. No book has ever suffered as much persecution as the Bible. The Bible's been laughed at, scorned, and laws have been made against it. It's been burned. It's been treated as contraband. And, yet the Bible stands. John Wycliffe translated the Scriptures from Latin into English. It was against the wishes of his church. And, so following his death, he was preeminence by the archbishop of Canterbury. And, this is what the archbishop had to say about this man, John Wycliffe. He called him, and I quote, “that pestilent wretch of damnable memory, son of the old sea serpent, yea, the forerunner and disciple of the Anti-Christ, who as the who as the complement of his wickedness invented a new translation of the Scriptures into his mother tongue.” I'd say he didn't like him, wouldn't you?

Then later, in 1415, the Council of Constance condemned his writings. They took his bones, dug them up, and threw his bones into the fire. Then they took the ashes of his bones and they were thrown into the river that so that England could be rid of such a man. But, as someone has beautifully said, “The river carried his bones to the sea, and by the waves they lapped the shores of every continent, symbolic of the spread of the Bible to all lands.” Let me tell you about William Tyndale. William Tyndale began to translate the Bible into English. Due to opposition he went to Germany where he completed his translation and prepared to print it. After months in setting the type, he went to bed one night and was going to start printing the next day. But, that night vandals destroyed the type. Patiently, he had to reset it all. And, his printing was finished late in 1525. He wanted to get his Bibles out of Germany back into England so he smuggled the Bibles in. He put them in barrels of flour so that people could have the Bible in their mother tongue. As a result of this work, Tyndale was arrested. And, on October 6, 1536 he was strangled and burned. And, as he was in the flame, this is what Tyndale said. This was his dying prayer. He prayed this. “Lord, open the King of England's eyes.” And his prayer was answered with the publication of the King James Version of the Bible that I'm preaching from tonight.

You see, dear friend, there is the ever living quality of the Bible. The Bible is with us because the Bible itself says that, “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*” (Matthew 24:35). Not one jot or one tittle shall fail from the law till all is fulfilled. Marvelous fact that tells us that the Bible is The Word of God.

## **II. The Fulfilled Prophecy Factor**

Another fact is the fact of fulfilled prophecy. I could speak for weeks and months on the one subject of fulfilled prophecy. And, we could narrow the subject of prophecy just down to one person, the Lord Jesus Christ. And, as we've told you before, there are more than three hundred direct prophecies in the Old Testament that tell about the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no way—it is astronomically and phenomenally impossible—to explain the fulfillment of these prophecies—these facts—apart from divine inspiration. The critics say, “Well, Jesus Christ just arranged to have these prophecies fulfilled so he would look like the Messiah.” Do you think he arranged—he managed—to be born in Bethlehem? Do you think that he arranged for Isaiah—seven hundred years before he was born—to describe his virgin birth in Isaiah 7:9? And, do you think that he arranged for Isaiah to describe his death by crucifixion in Isaiah 53? Do you think the Lord Jesus simply arranged in Psalm 22 to have his death by crucifixion so described that it sounds as though one was standing at the foot of the cross? And, this was when crucifixion was not even a known form of execution. Do you think that Jesus arranged to be crucified between two thieves? Do you think that Jesus arranged for Judas to betray him with 30

pieces of silver? And, then do you think he arranged the classic arrangement that he was going to be crucified on the third day, he was going to come to life again, he was going appear to over five hundred and so convince them that they would gladly lay down their lives for that belief? Well, come to think of it, he did arrange it, 'cause he's God. But, he's the only one who ever arranged anything before he was ever born.

My dear friend, He didn't arrange it after His birth. He arranged it all before He was born. And, it is written in Holy Scripture. And, Matthew chapter 26 verse 56 says, *"But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled..."* (Matthew 26:56). Now, that's what I want to call just the fact factor. Just the fact factor.

### **III. The Faith Factor**

But, let me give you another factor. And these will be much briefer. The faith factor. That's the second reason, the faith factor. You see, dear friend, there's all of these facts, there are all of these facts, this objective evidence. But, faith is rooted in evidence, but it must go beyond evidence in order to be faith. And, so we need something that is beyond mere proof. God gives us the facts. But, then the Holy Spirit of God gives us something else. He speaks to our hearts, and he confirms these facts in our hearts. That's the reason Jesus said in John chapter 7 verse 17, *"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself"* (John 7:17). And, then he said in John chapter 10, *"My sheep hear my voice..."* (John 10:27) You see, God doesn't prove himself to us. But, he does give enough facts and then he gives us the Holy Spirit. He gives us enough evidence so that we can believe the evidence.

### **Conclusion**

Now, my friend, I by faith have heard God speak through this book. Maybe you haven't but I have. I have facts that tell me The Word of God is The Word of God. And, I have faith that tells me The Word of God is The Word of God because I'm his sheep and I have heard his voice. I don't know about you, but to me it's The Word of God. It is rooted in fact. It goes beyond fact to faith. Now, let me give you quickly the third reason. That wasn't so long and the third one will not be so long.

First of all there is the fact factor. Secondly, there is the fulfillment factor. And, thirdly there is the faith factor. When I have these facts and exercise that faith then I have proven in my heart that it is true because it becomes alive in me. And, the principles work and they transform my life and I am fulfilled. That's the reason the Bible says in Psalm 34:8 says, *"O taste and see that the LORD is good..."*

Now, suppose somebody has before us a luscious looking piece of fruit. It's fragrant and beautiful. It looks and smells good. Those are facts. I can tell it is fruit. I can tell that

it is fragrant. But, I don't know for certain that it's good. Now, suppose somebody else comes up and testifies that it is good, and says, "I ate some. It was delicious. It satisfied me. I'm getting more evidence now." But, oh, wait a moment. Suppose I take those facts, and suppose I take the faith in that person who's spoken to me, and then suppose I do this. Suppose I take a bite and I say, "Yes, it's wonderful." *"O taste and see that the LORD is good..."* (Psalm 34:8). You see, now I have the evidence inside of me. And, so faith is rooted in evidence. Faith goes beyond evidence. And, then faith becomes its own best evidence. I believe because I believe. I have now tasted. And, you can tell me, dear friend, when I'm eating apple pie, that there is no such thing as apple pie or that apple pie is not good. But, that's your problem, not mine. Now, listen friend. A Christian with an experience is never at the mercy of an infidel with an argument. Isn't that right? I mean, a man arguing against apple pie while you're eating it, you have the advantage on him. Now, my dear friend, what he's saying is, *"...taste and see that the LORD is good..."* (Psalm 34:8). Yes, there is the fact factor. There are facts, plain facts. There is the faith factor. Others have said it is The Word of God and the Holy Spirit tells us it is The Word of God. But, oh there is the fulfillment factor. We're like that man who was born blind who said, "Once I was blind, but now I see." When I'm talking about the fulfillment factor, let me give you some verses. 1 John 2 verse 20 says, *"But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things"* (1 John 2:20). That's the Holy Spirit. 1 John 2 verse 27 says, *"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him"* (1 John 2:27). That means that the Holy Spirit of God in your heart confirms that the Bible is The Word of God.

Let me give you a testimony. I was saved as a teenage boy. Right away I got a hunger for The Word of God. I have been preaching the Bible now for 37 years, loving it, praying over it, and proving it. I believed it was The Word of God when I began. And, I'm more convinced today than I ever was. I'm not finding hidden flaws. I am finding hidden beauties. Precious book. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Yes, I believe it. Yes, I love it. Yes, I stand on it. And, by God's grace, I'm going to preach it till my dying day.

# Why I Believe the Bible

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** October 5, 1980

**Main Scripture Text:** 2 Timothy 3:13–17

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

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## Introduction

Take your Bibles and be finding 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 13. I want to speak to you today on this subject: “Why I Believe the Bible”—“Why I Believe the Bible.” Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter that many of us love and appreciate has said, “In these last days, the great point of division among Christians”—and it’s a shame that there’s any division among Christians, amen? But, he said that—“the great point of division among Christians today is not primarily between one denomination and another, but the great point of division among Christians today is their attitude toward the Word of God”—“the Word of God”—“those that believe that the Bible is inerrant and those who do not believe in the inerrancy and the infallibility of the Word of God.” And, I think he’s very

incisive there, because I see today that there seems to be a division among God's people, regardless of denomination, over this particular book.

Now, I want to tell you today why I believe the Bible to be the inerrant, infallible Word of God, and I believe that Sidlow Baxter was quite right when he said that, because notice what Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3, verse 13: *“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect”*—that word *perfect* means “that he may be ‘full-grown’ and ‘mature’”—“*thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*” (2 Timothy 3:13–17) Now, dear friends, I just thank God for the Bible, and Paul has told Timothy that the Scriptures—and this is just by way of introduction—but the Scriptures are inspired, the Scriptures are instructive, and the Scriptures are instrumental.

#### **A. The Scriptures Are Inspired**

Now, he says there're inspired. Look at this again in verse 16: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”* (2 Timothy 3:16) That literally means that all scripture is God-breathed—that scripture is the breath of God. Right now, my breath is making my vocal cords vibrate, and what you're hearing are my words, as my diaphragm and lungs are pushing my breath through my larynx across my vocal cords and it's being articulated by my teeth and tongue and lips. And, you're hearing certain sounds, and those sounds are my words, my breath coming out of me. Now, the Bible says that the Scripture is the breath of God—the Scriptures are the out-breathing of God—and, therefore, they're inspired.

And, how are they inspired? Not partially inspired, as some would say—that the Bible contains the word of truth. No, dear friend, the Bible is the Word of Truth; it is the Word of God. Or, not progressively inspired, as some would say. Some would say, for example, that the New Testament is more inspired than the Old Testament—that there is progressive inspiration. Not so—not so. There is progressive revelation. The New Testament tells us more than the Old Testament tells us—progressive revelation, but not progressive inspiration. The Old Testament is just as much the Word of God as the New Testament. So, they are not partially inspired or progressively inspired; they are plenary inspired. You say, “What on earth does the word *plenary* mean?” We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scripture. That comes from the Latin word *plenus*, which means “full.” We believe in the full inspiration of the Scripture. We believe what Paul told

Timothy: “*All scripture*”—“*all scripture*”—“*is given by inspiration of God.*” (2 Timothy 3:16)

## **B. The Scriptures Are Instructive**

But, not only are the Scriptures inspired; they’re also instructive. I want you to look again at this passage of Scripture where Paul was talking to Timothy, and he says here in verse 16—excuse me. Yes, in verse 16: “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable*”—number one—“*for doctrine*”—number two—“*for reproof*”—number three—“*for correction*”—number four—“*for instruction in righteousness.*” (2 Timothy 3:16) What does that mean? What are the—what are the—Scriptures instructive about? Number one: Doctrine—that tells us what is right. Number two: For correction—that tells us... Excuse me, number two: For reproof—that tells us what is wrong. None of the scriptures here... Not only are the Scriptures here to tell us what is right (doctrine), but they’re here to tell us what is wrong (reproof). And then, they’re here for correction—that is, to help us to get right when we’re wrong. And then, they’re here for instruction in righteousness—that is, to help us stay right when we’re right. So, that’s what the Scriptures are for: the Scriptures are here to tell us what is right (doctrine), to tell us what is wrong (reproof), to help us to get right when we’re wrong (correction), and then to help us stay right when we’re right (instruction in righteousness). And so, the Scriptures are instructive.

## **C. The Scriptures Are Instrumental**

And then, also, the Scriptures are instrumental. What are they instrumental for?

### **1. For Salvation**

First of all, for salvation—look, if you will, in verse 15: “*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.*” (2 Timothy 3:15) There is no salvation apart from the Word of God. Why? Because there’s no faith apart from the Word of God, and without faith, it’s impossible to be saved. And, “*faith [comes from] hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” (Romans 10:17) Friend, “*the gospel of Christ...is the power of God unto salvation.*” (Romans 1:16) “*And...from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.*” (2 Timothy 3:15) So, they’re instrumental to salvation.

### **2. For Sanctification**

But, not only are they instrumental to salvation; they’re also instrumental to sanctification. Look in verse 17: “*That the man of God may be perfect.*” (2 Timothy 3:17) Now, what does this word *perfect* mean? It means “that it might be ‘full-grown,’ ‘sanctified,’ ‘strong in the Lord.’” Are you tired of being a ninety-seven-pound weakling spiritually and the devil kicking sand in your face? How would you—how would you—

like to be a full-grown, strong man, perfect and mature? How would you like to be sanctified? *“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”* (John 17:17)

### **3. For Service**

They, dear friend, are instrumental to salvation; they’re instrumental to sanctification, and they’re instrumental to service. Look again, if you will, in verse 17: *“That the man of God may be [mature, full-grown, sanctified,] thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* (2 Timothy 3:17) To serve the Lord, there’s no way you can serve the Lord—there’s no way that you can be a soldier in the King’s army; there’s no way you can be a builder in the King’s construction core—until, first of all, you have received the implements of war and the tools with which to work, and they’re found in the Word of God.

And so, these scriptures, dear friend, are so important for salvation, for sanctification, for service. Yes, thank God for the Scriptures. Dr. Robert G. Lee, who is now with our dear Lord Jesus in heaven—the beloved pastor of this church many years ago—said this about the Bible, and how wonderfully he said it: he said, “The Bible is supernatural in origin, eternal in duration, inexpressible in value, immeasurable in influence, infinite in scope, divine in authorship, human in penmanship, regenerative in power, infallible in authority, universal in interest, personal in application, and inspired in totality.” And, I say, amen! *“He being dead yet speaketh.”* (Hebrews 11:4) Thank God for Dr. Lee and for his great stand for the Word of God and for Dr. Pollard, our beloved Pastor Emeritus, and his stand for the Word of God. And, I want to tell you, dear friend, that Bellevue is a church built on the book, and that’s what makes Bellevue the distinctive church that it is—because there is power in the Word of God. And, how we thank God for it!

Now, I said today I was going to speak to you on this subject: why I believe the Bible is the Word of God. And, I want to give you a little three-point outline, and if you learn it, you’re going to learn something—not because I said it, but because it’s true no matter who says it. I want you to learn something about faith today. You see, I believe the Bible is the Word of God by faith, but what kind of faith? Three things I want to tell you about that kind of faith: First of all, real, true faith is rooted in evidence. Now, get that down: True faith is rooted in evidence. That’s point one. Point two: True faith goes beyond evidence. Point three: True faith is its own evidence. Have you got that? Faith is rooted in evidence; faith goes beyond evidence, and faith becomes its own best evidence.

### **I. Faith Is Rooted in Evidence**

Now, let’s go back to point number one: Faith is rooted in evidence. When God asks you to believe the Bible, He gives you some evidences for believing the Bible. It is not just blind faith. You know, if there’s anything that gets my goat, it’s for somebody to tell me something and say, “Believe it.” I say, “Why should I believe it?” They say, “Well,

just believe it.” “What do you mean ‘just believe it?’” That’s stupidity, friend. Why should you just believe anything? The Bible doesn’t teach blind faith. That’s not faith at all. Dear friend, real faith is rooted in fact, and real faith is a union of the revelation of that fact by the Holy Spirit of God and your trust in those facts. And, when God the Holy Spirit reveals to you certain facts and you put your faith in those facts, then that, my friend—or, you put your trust in those facts—then that is faith. *Faith without fact is fancy.*

I’ve told you before about the man in the apocryphal story who stepped off the ledge, and grabbed the limb as he was going over, and was there with his feet dangling, and was afraid he was going to fall to the rocks beneath and crush himself, and he, in despair, he cried out and said, “Help! Is there anybody there?” And, he heard a voice, and the voice said, “I’m here.” He said, “Help!” He said, “My son, let go of the limb.” He said, “Is there anybody else there?” Now, I’m akin to him. I mean, dear friend, before you just go trusting somebody or something, you better find out who it is and why you’re supposed to do it. I mean faith—real faith—is rooted in fact, and *faith that is not rooted in fact is not faith; it is fancy.*

All true faith is rooted in evidence. Now, when I say, “evidence,” I don’t mean human ingenuity, I don’t mean human rationality, I don’t mean that you’re going to figure God out, because, sir, you are not, and “[God] hast [hidden] these things from the wise and [the] prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” (Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21) And, Dr. E. Y. Mullins, talking about human rationality trying to find truth—this is what he said about that: he said, “It is a blind man in a pitch-dark room at midnight looking for a black cat that isn’t there,” and that’s what human rationality is apart from the Spirit of God. No, I’m not talking about that, but I am talking about God’s revealed truth and God’s evidences for believing what we believe. For example, why do I believe the Bible to be the Word of God?

### A. **Historical Evidence**

Well, there is historical evidence for believing the Bible to be the Word of God. Do you know who a great historian was? You may not think he was a great historian, may never have thought of him as a historian—but Dr. Luke, who wrote the book of Luke and the book of Acts. Turn to the book of Luke for a moment and see how Dr. Luke begins that book. Luke chapter 1—just see how Luke begins this book: he says, “*Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us*”—he’s saying that there have been many people, now, who have decided they’re going to write a history of Christianity—“*Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word*” *It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding*”—just

underscore that—“*perfect understanding of all things from the very first*”—it literally says, “from above.” He got that understanding from God. Some people say he did a research paper; I don’t think so. I believe the Holy Spirit gave him the things that he wrote down. He had perfect understanding from above—“*to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus*”—now, who was Theophilus? Well, he was just some man. I heard of somebody who named a little baby Theophilus one time. Said, “He’s the ‘Theophilus’ little baby I ever saw.” Well, anyway, this man is named Theophilus. He’s some fellow. And, Luke said, “Now Theophilus, I am writing you—I am writing you—in order...because I’ve got perfect understanding from above. God gave me an understanding, and I’m putting these things down. I’m gonna write you a history”—“*That thou mightest know the certainty*”—just underscore that—“*the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.*” (Luke 1:1–4) That is, “I’m gonna give it to you in order; I’m gonna give it to you right. I’ve got perfect understanding; I got it from above, and you can be certain about it.”

Well, there was a great scholar; his name was Sir William Ramsay, and Dr. William Ramsay was Professor of Humanities in Aberdeen University and College in Scotland. And, there was no man that knew more about the history of the Middle East and Asia Minor and the geography of those areas than Sir William Ramsay. He was a world-renowned scholar. And, William Ramsay read the book of Luke that Luke wrote, and he read the book of Acts that Luke wrote. And, he said that Luke was not a historian at all. This is what William Ramsay said about his writings: he said, “They were”—and I quote—“a highly imaginative and carefully colored account of primitive Christianity.” That is, that Luke, when he wrote these things, was using his imagination—“highly imaginative and carefully colored account.” In other words, not truth but a shade, with all sorts of interpretations from Dr. Luke.

As a matter of fact, Sir William Ramsay, this brilliant, scintillating scholar, who knew so much about the geography and the history of the Middle East, took a special trip from Scotland and England; he went to the Middle East for the purpose of disproving the things that Luke wrote. He stayed there. He studied. He looked. He watched. He traveled the same areas where Luke said that he traveled. He came back home, and he wrote a book; and he called it *The Beloved Position*. And, Ramsay had been converted over to Dr. Luke’s side, and he said—and I want you to see what he said, because I quote this great scholar: he said, “I take the view that Luke’s history is unsurpassed in regard to its trustworthiness. You may press the words of Luke into a degree beyond any other historians and they will stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment.” Now, here was a scholar—a scholar who went over there. And, he took the book of Luke and the book of Acts, and he said, “You can trust what Dr. Luke wrote.” And, I will remind you, before, he was a skeptic; he did not believe. He said Luke was using his

imagination. I'm just trying to tell you, dear friend, that there is historical evidence for believing the Bible is the Word of God.

The historians have moved heaven and earth to try to disprove the Bible. For example, way back in Daniel's time... You remember the story of the handwriting on the wall, where Daniel saw the handwriting on—excuse me, King Belshazzar—saw the handwriting on the wall in Daniel's time? And, he was having a great feast, and there, up there on the wall, were these words: "*MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.*" (Daniel 5:25) We kids used to say, "Mini-mini tickle the parson." And, those words were written up there on the wall, and they said, "You are weighed in the balances and found wanting." And, old Belshazzar couldn't read the handwriting on the wall, and he called in Daniel. And, Daniel read the handwriting on the wall, and the scholars—they laughed at that. They said, "That's not true. That's a fabrication. Somebody made that up"—"The book of Daniel is not written by a man named Daniel, and all of that." And why, Mister Scholar, would you say this? "Well," they said, "We have the history of the ancient Babylonians. And, we have all the inscriptions, and we have all of the carvings and all of the things that have been left over. And, we know that the last king of Babylon was not Belshazzar; we know that the last king of Babylon was a man named Nabonidus."

And so, it looked bad for the Bible and those who believed the Bible until one day an archeologist digging around over there in Babylon unearthed a cylinder, and on that cylinder, guess whose name was there? Sure enough, Belshazzar's. They found some more cylinders. They found some more things. They found out that the secular historian was right when they said that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon, but they were wrong when they said Belshazzar wasn't, because at this particular time, there were two kings, father and son: Nabonidus was the father; Belshazzar was the son, and there were co-regions. Now, you see, dear friend, it was true even before the scholars found that cylinder. As a matter of fact, that explains to us the fifth chapter of Daniel where Daniel said—or where the king said to Daniel (when Belshazzar said to Daniel): "If you can read the handwriting on the wall, I'll make you the third ruler in the kingdom." (Daniel 5:7) See, there were already two. Well, we wouldn't have known that, except the archaeologist had gone around and dug up that material. But friend, whether the archaeologist had confirmed it or not, it was still true—amen?—still true whether or not he'd confirmed it with his spade or not. You don't have to—you don't have to—get hung up on archeology, dear friend, as long as you got the Word of God. But, I'm just trying to tell you God is giving us some evidence.

Let me just tell you again the kind of historical evidence that I'm talking about. You know, for years, some of the scholars—men like Dr. Driver, who was a great linguist and a great historian—scoffed at the idea that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. We called those "the Pentateuch," meaning "five books": Genesis, Exodus,

Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—five books. And, Dr. Driver said—and incidentally, he was a PhD—he said Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible, the reason being men didn’t know how to write when Moses was alive on earth. They had no alphabet; they couldn’t have written. And remember, he was PhD, but in this case, PhD stood for “phenomenal dud,” because I want to tell you, he was wrong.

Later on, Dr. Petrie and some others in northern Egypt found some tablets—some clay tablets—and other things called the “Tell El-Amarna Tablets.” You remember studying about them in school? You don’t? All right, the Tell El-Amarna Tablets. And, on these tablets—these clay tablets—were letters from people written in Egypt to people in Palestine and people in Palestine back to Egypt—business transactions, land deals, and all this sort of thing. Not only did they know how to write; they had a post office. They were mailing letters back and forth—probably doing a better job than ours today, as they were sending those letters back and forth. Now, the point of the matter is that Dr. Driver was a scholar. He was a brilliant man. He had a lot of knowledge at his fingertips, but he was W-R-O-N-G—wrong! The Bible is right. And, I’m just trying to tell you the historical evidence of the Bible.

## **B. Scientific Evidence**

Our faith is rooted in evidence, but not only the historical evidence—think with me for a moment about the scientific evidence that our faith is rooted in. I thank God for the science of the Bible. Do you know, if you compare the laws of the Bible with the laws of other medical books of that day, it is astounding? I’m talking about the medical and scientific knowledge of this book. Now, it’s not a book of medicine; it’s not a book of science. But, when it speaks on those things, it is astounding.

In the year 1552, there was a volume printed—1552 BC, about a millennium and a half before Christ. The Egyptians took all of their medical knowledge and put it in a book called the “Papyrus Ebers.” And, this Papyrus Ebers was a book which was a compilation of the great medical knowledge of the Egyptians, and it was written when the Egyptians were the dominant leaders in medical knowledge of that day. And, they said some fine things in the Papyrus Ebers, but they also said some things that were very ludicrous.

Would you like to have some of the remedies that came from this medical volume? For example, is your hair turning grey? Well, here’s what Papyrus Ebers says that you can do about it: to keep your hair from turning grey, you anoint it with the blood of a black cat which has been boiled in oil or with the fat of a rattlesnake. I would suggest the blood of a black cat. But anyway, you get this, and that will keep your hair from turning grey. Well, we smiled at that, but let me give you another remedy. Here is one to

keep your hair from falling out, people who are loosing hair: when it falls out, one remedy is to apply a mixture of six fats—that is, F-A-T-S, fats—namely, those of the snake and the ibex. Now, I haven't seen an ibex for a long time. But, you take a snake or an ibex, and get his fat, rub it on your head. Now, to strengthen it, you want to really do a good job—you anoint it with the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey. Now, we laugh. I've got a better remedy than that. I tell my Discovery class you take persimmon juice and alum, and you rub that on your head. Now, it won't grow hair, but it'll shrink your head to fit the hair you got. Well, we laugh at these things—these remedies that were in this Papyrus Ebers. For splinters and things that were embedded in the skin, they said you take worm's blood and donkey dung, and you put it on splinters. Now, you imagine donkey dung loaded with tetanus spores and so forth. And, other drugs that they used were lizard's blood, and swine's teeth, and rotten meat, and moisture from pigs' ears, donkey hooves, and—listen to this—excretia from animals, including human beings, donkeys, antelopes, dogs, cats, and even fly excretia was used for medicine.

Well, we recoil at that. Aren't you glad you don't read anything about that in the Bible—I mean, using those kinds of medicines in the Bible? But see, the interesting thing is that Moses studied all of this. You see, the Bible says that "*Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.*" (Acts 7:22) Moses had a scholarship to the University of Egypt; it was paid for by Pharaoh himself, and he learned everything the Egyptians knew. Isn't it amazing? Because the Bible says, "*[He] was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.*" (Acts 7:22) Aren't you glad that you don't read anything about using donkey's dung for medicine in the Old Testament? Well, I am. I'm so glad that these misconceptions did not creep into the Word of God, as we would expect them to.

Now, let me tell you what happened, for example, in the Middle Ages when the Black Plague came to Europe—the Bubonic Plague. Did you know that it was the greatest disaster known to human beings, when the plague came to Europe? One out of four people died. Incidentally, the information I am giving you now I got from the book called *None of These Diseases* by Dr. S. I. McMillen—a wonderful little book. You ought to get it and read it—written by a medical doctor. And, he tells us that the plague came, and one out of four people died—one out of four. That means one, two, three—you're dead. One, two, three—you're dead. One, two, three—you're dead. And, that's the way it was, mister. You talk about a plague! It was terrible; it was horrible. Sixty million people died in the Black Plague. They tried everything they thought of—all of the reasons why the plague was coming and why people were dying. They did not know anything about communicable diseases. They did not know anything about microbiology, and germs, and these things. They didn't understand that.

But, you want me to tell you how finally the plague was stayed and stopped? It was not the doctors, but rather the Church that stopped the plague, because finally, they

found in the Word of God these instructions in Leviticus chapter 13 and verse 46. This was talking about a plague that had come upon the people back then, and in that particular case the plague was leprosy, not the Bubonic Plague. But, the principle was there, and listen to it—Leviticus 13, verse 46: *“All the days wherein the plague shall be [on] him”—or, “in him”—“he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; [outside] the camp shall his habitation be.”* (Leviticus 13:46) That is quarantining—“Set ‘em aside.” Now, we take quarantining for granted, but they didn’t back then, nor would you just by common knowledge. But, there was a revelation of the Word of God. It’s a shame that they did not know the Word of God sooner and come to these things.

Let me give you another example. In 1840 in Vienna, when Robert Strauss was doing his waltzes and so forth, and it was a time of great enlightenment in many ways, and they had their hospitals, in the hospitals of those days the women would come for their prenatal care, and they found out that one out of six mothers was dying—one out of every six was dying in childbirth, dying from infection. They didn’t know what was wrong. And then, there was a doctor there who began to observe this thing. He was in charge of the hospital: Dr. Semmelweis. And, Dr. Semmelweis watched, and he watched, and he watched. And finally, Dr. Semmelweis got the idea that there was some sort of infection that was being carried, because here’s what the doctors were doing: they were taking the dead mothers to the morgue, and they were doing autopsies on them; and then, when they would finish doing the autopsy, they’d wipe their hands on the back of their coat and go in and examine the live mother. And, Semmelweis watched this, and finally, because he was in charge of the hospital, he said, “From now on, nobody is to go from the autopsy room into the examining room without first of all thoroughly washing his hands.” How it went up! But, they did it. And, did you know that the mortality rate dropped from one to six to one to eighty-four just like that by the washing of hands?

But then, one day a doctor examined twelve women one after the other without washing his hands, because the only time they would wash the hands then was when they would come from the morgue. But, they would do an examination on one woman, not wash hands; do an examination and examination. And, he examined twelve women in a row; eleven of them died. Semmelweis said, “All right, from now on you’ll wash your hands between every examination, whether the patient is dead or alive.” And, what a howl went up! The doctors said, “We don’t have time to do all of this washing.” They rebelled against him. He finally left that hospital, finally ended up in a mental institution and died in the mental institution because he knew he was right.

But finally, medical knowledge has caught up. But, the interesting thing is, if you just turn to the book of Numbers with me for a moment... Turn to Numbers chapter 19, and I want you to see what’s tucked away here. And, I’m sure the Jews did not understand

why this was in the Bible, but look in Numbers 19, beginning in verse 14. Actually, we could back before that, but I think we can get the thought just going to verse 14: *“This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin”*—incidentally, that burnt heifer was a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, and God here is teaching, in the midst of this purification, a great spiritual lesson: *“without [the] shedding of blood is no remission [of sin].”* (Hebrews 9:22) And, here He’s teaching them that sin and death are related together, and so forth. But, I don’t want you to miss the train of what I’m trying to say—*“[by] the...heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel”*—notice: running water—*“And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon...the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even”* (Numbers 19:14–19) —or, “at sundown.”

Now, mixed in with this ceremonial law and mixed in with this great typology and prophecy of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is a law of purification that is showing a person how he can become antiseptic again once he has touched that which is unclean, once he’s touched that which is putrefaction and that which is corrupting. The Bible says that he uses running water. There is to be repeated washings. There is to be a time interval to allow the bacteria to die. And, not only is the body to be bathed, but the clothing is to be changed. Now, these people didn’t know anything about bacteria, but you just see all of this in the Word of God.

Listen, you want to be healthy? You want to live right? You go back to the Old Testament and find out what the dietary laws are in the Old Testament and live by them. I’m not trying to put you on the law, but I am trying to put you into health. You find out dietary laws. You find out how the dietary laws in that Old Testament match the very best of what we know today about diet. How did Moses know all of this? Not because he figured it out and certainly not because he learned it from the Papyrus Ebers or the schools of Egypt, *“but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* (2 Peter 1:21)

### **C. The Indestructibility of the Bible**

Now, there is the indestructibility of the Bible. This is another evidence that the Bible is

the Word of God. *It's not the book of the month; it is the book of the ages.* No book has ever had as much opposition as this book. Men have laughed at it. Men have scorned it. Men have abused it. Men have lied about it. Men have made laws against it. Men have burned it.

There was a time in Scottish history when to own a Bible was a crime worthy of death. John Wycliffe decided that he would translate the Scriptures from Latin into English, and he did translate the Bible so men could have it. But, following his death, he was so denounced by the Archbishop of Canterbury... As a matter of fact, here's what the Archbishop said about this man who translated the Bible into the mother tongue of the people: he called him "that pestilent wretch of damnable memory; son of the old sea serpent; yeah, the forerunner and disciple of the antichrist, who, as the complement of his wickedness, invented a new translation of the Scriptures into his mother tongue." And, as a result of that, they exhumed the body of Wycliffe and, in 1615, because of the Council of Constance had condemned him, they exhumed his body and they had his body and his bones and his Bible burned and cast into a river—because he had dared to translate the Bible into the mother tongue. But, as someone said, that river ran into the sea, and the sea into the ocean, and the waves of that sea bathed the shores of every continent, illustrating, thank God, the spread of the Word of God.

And, after Wycliffe there came Tyndale—Tyndale—who decided he was going to translate the New Testament into English. Why, he had so much opposition in England he fled to Germany, and there he translated the Scriptures and put them into English. And, just when he was ready to print his Bible—just the night before; he had all the type set—vandals came in and destroyed it all. Can you imagine? After the years of prayer and painstaking labor he just started it all over again. And, in 1525, he printed his Bibles, his New Testaments. How was he going to get them back into England? They started packing them in barrels of flour and shipping them in. But finally, the guards got onto this, and they would break open the barrels of flour and destroy the Bible. But, more Bibles and more Bibles came until finally England had the Word of God in her mother tongue.

But, they weren't satisfied. In 1536, they found this man of God. Tyndale was arrested, and he was strangled and then burned for putting the Word of God in the language that people could understand. And, do you know what his dying words were? Do you know what he said as he was dying? His dying words were a prayer, and this was his prayer: "Lord, Lord, open the eyes of the King of England." And, God heard his prayer, for I hold in my hand the King James Version of the Word of God. "Lord, open the eyes of the King of England." And, I tell you, dear friend, in spite of all the opposition that the Bible has had, in spite of those who have died for it, and in spite of the persecution and the laws against it, it is today the Word of God. For "the flower of the

field fadeth and the grass withers, but the Word of our God endureth forever.” (Isaiah 40:8) That’s a part of the evidence, my dear friend, that our faith is rooted in.

#### **D. The Evidence of Fulfilled Prophecy**

And, think of the evidence of fulfilled prophecy. I can give you many more evidences, but I just want to mention this. Did you know that there are over three hundred precise details that were prophesied about the Lord Jesus Christ? Now, prophecy covers many scopes—not only Christ, but many other persons, and nations, and events. But, just think of the prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know what the enemies of the Bible say? They cannot deny that these prophecies were fulfilled; and so, do you know what they say concerning the fulfillment of these prophecies? Do you know what they say how it happened? They say that Jesus Christ arranged for these prophecies to be fulfilled—that He arranged it. And, you know what? They’re right: He did arrange it. Let me tell you what He arranged.

##### **1. He Arranged to Be Born in Bethlehem**

First of all, He arranged for Himself to be born in Bethlehem. Pretty good arrangement? Where did you arrange to be born? He arranged for Himself to be born in Bethlehem, that it might be a fulfillment of the prophecy in Micah 5, verse 2. Then, He arranged that He would be born of a virgin, that it might fulfill Isaiah chapter 7 and verse 14.

##### **2. He Arranged to Be Crucified**

He also arranged ahead of time the way He would be crucified as was described in Psalm 22. And, Psalm 22 is written as though a person was standing at the very foot of the cross. And, it tells about them piercing His hands and His feet; it tells about them gambling for His garments. And, I want to tell you that Psalm 22 was written seven hundred years before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the form of execution—listen to me now—the form of execution known at that time was stoning. Nobody knew anything at all about crucifixion, and Jesus—yeah—He arranged that, too. He just arranged that that was written there in Psalm 22, that He would be crucified.

##### **3. He Arranged to Be Buried and to Rise on the Third Day**

Dear friend, I tell you the classic arrangement of all: He arranged that He would be buried and rise again the third day. Pretty good arrangement, huh? Yes, sir, He arranged that, and He fulfilled the scripture that said that He would rise on the third day. (Hosea 6:2) And, Matthew chapter 26, verse 56 says, *“But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.”* (Matthew 26:56) You can never make me believe—not in ten thousand years—that these scriptures could be fulfilled by chance. They were prearranged by the sovereign, omnipotent God, who is the author of this book.

Now, what I’m trying to tell you is why I believe the Bible. And, I can give you other

evidences, but I'm just trying to say that faith is rooted in evidence. Have you got that? Faith is rooted in evidence. It is not just blind faith; there are many infallible proofs.

## II. Faith Goes Beyond Evidence

But, wait a minute—faith goes beyond evidence. It has to, or it wouldn't be faith. Now, if you're one of these guys who says, "Prove it to me, and then I'll believe it," I'm sorry for you. I can give you evidence, but there comes a time when you must take a step of faith. And, God wants it that way, because, you see, faith is not an intellectual thing—not primarily. I don't mean to say that faith is contrary to reason; faith is just beyond reason. And, when you come to God, you don't come to God headfirst, for the Bible says, "[God has hidden] these things from the wise and [the] prudent, and [God has] revealed them unto babes." (Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21) And, God wants you to come by faith.

You must come by faith because faith, you see, is a moral response to God, not an intellectual response. It's a moral response. See, God has made you so that you will respond to Him morally, when your heart is right, like your eye responds to light and like your ear responds to sound. And, it is faith that pleases God and honors God. Now, Jesus said, "*My sheep hear my voice*"—"My sheep hear my voice." (John 10:27) That is, you recognize God's voice because there is in you that moral quality and that spiritual awakening that the Holy Spirit has put there.

Now, I've taken so much time on the first point I'll spend very little time on the second point. But listen, faith is rooted in evidence, but faith goes beyond evidence. I am not here to prove to you that the Bible is the Word of God. I am not here to prove to you that there is a God. I am not here to prove to you that Jesus is the Son of God. That's not the way God does business. I am here to give you evidences, but you, my dear friend, must take that step of faith. And, the Bible says, "*Without faith it is impossible to please him.*" (Hebrews 11:6) Faith is rooted in evidence, but faith goes beyond evidence—it must in order to be faith. Faith goes beyond evidence.

## III. Faith Becomes Its Own Best Evidence

Now, the third thing I want you to see (and the final thing) is that faith becomes, then, its own best evidence. Listen to this scripture—in Psalms 34 and verse 8: "*O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*" (Psalms 34:8) Isn't that sweet? Listen: "*taste and see that the LORD is good.*" (Psalms 34:8) Now friend, you'll never convince me that He's not while I'm tasting Him, amen? You see, a Christian with an experience is never at the mercy of an unbeliever with an argument. "*Taste and see that the LORD is good.*" (Psalms 34:8) "*He that believeth on the Son...hath the witness in himself.*" (1 John 5:10) I know because I know. I believe because I believe. My faith is

rooted in evidence. My faith has gone beyond evidence, and now my faith becomes its own best evidence.

Here is someone that comes with a luscious piece of fruit. They say, “Here’s a piece of fruit. It’s for you; I want you to have it.” “Is it good?” “Oh yes, it’s good.” “Does it taste good?” “Yes, it tastes good. I eat it; my children eat it. Look how healthy they are.” “Oh, it’s beautiful to look at. It’s very fragrant.” All right. Now look, that’s the evidence—that’s the evidence—what he says and what he shows me. All right, I go beyond that evidence, and I take a bite. Faith has gone beyond evidence now. But then, I say, “Man, that’s good.” Faith becomes its own best evidence.

Now listen, dear friend, faith is rooted in evidence. Faith goes beyond evidence. Faith becomes its own best evidence. *“Taste and see that the LORD is good.”* (Psalms 34:8) You see, there is that internal revelation; there is that witness in oneself when one believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, we say that seeing is believing. That’s what the world says. You take the whole carnal world, and they say, “Seeing is believing.” But, let me show you something here in John chapter 11 and verse 40. Turn to it—John chapter 11 and verse 40. Jesus is speaking: *“[And] Jesus [said to] her”*—this is to Martha; “Jesus said to Martha”—*“Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see...?”* (John 11:40) It’s not “seeing is believing.” Friend, believing is seeing. That’s what Jesus said: *“Said I not unto thee, that, if thou [shouldst] believe, thou shouldst see...?”* (John 11:40)

## Conclusion

Oh, dear friend, listen: faith becomes its own best evidence. It is when I believe that I see. It’s when I bite that I *“taste and see that the LORD is good.”* (Psalms 34:8) Faith is rooted in evidence. Thank God it’s not blind faith, and there’s a reason for believing all that we believe. Faith goes beyond evidence—it has to in order to be faith. *“[And] without faith it is impossible to please him.”* (Hebrews 11:6) And then, faith becomes its own best evidence. I tell you, the Bible says, *“He that believeth...hath the witness in himself.”* (1 John 5:10) In 1 John 2, verse 20: *“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things”—“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”* (1 John 2:20)

Friend, there’s something in me... You want me to tell you how I know the Bible is the Word of God? Brother, God’s Spirit just bears witness with my spirit that it is. That’s right. Jesus said, *“If any man [wills to] do [God’s] will, [he’ll] know...the doctrine, whether it be of God.”* (John 7:17) I want to do the will of God, and God has just spoken to my innermost being that the Bible is His Word. *“O taste and see that the LORD is good.”* (Psalms 34:8)

# Why I Believe the Bible to Be the Word of God

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** November 11, 1984

**Main Scripture Text:** 2 Timothy 3:14–17

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;”*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

## Outline

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## Introduction

I want you to take your Bibles please and turn with me to 2 Timothy chapter 3 and we'll begin our reading in verse 14. Paul is talking to young Timothy and he says, *“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 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”* (2 Timothy 3:14).

Why I believe the Bible. And, I want to tell you, friend, it is absolutely essential that you believe the Word of God if you're to know anything spiritually and if you're to have victory in your spiritual life. The thing that keeps me going is not primarily what I feel. Now, I thank God for feelings, but I'm a fellow who operates in a moderately narrowed

band. I don't get all that high and I don't get all that low, but the thing that keeps me going is not what I feel but what I know. It is the truth of God's Word. It is the principles, the promises, and the power of God's Word that sustains me, and keep me going. If you do not know God's Word, and beyond knowing God's Word, have that firm assurance that the Bible is indeed the inspired Word of God, you're going to be floundering around in your Christian life.

#### **A. The Scriptures Are Inspired**

These hath God married and no man shall part, dust on the Bible and drought in the heart. Now, Paul here is talking to Timothy about the Bible and He tells him several things about the Bible. First of all, he says that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God in verse 16. That literally means that all Scripture is the breath of God. You see, as I'm speaking to you right now what you're hearing is my breath. My diaphragm is forcing my breath up through my throat, and over my larynx and the voice box, and my tongue and my teeth and my lips, are taking the breath and making sounds, and noises out of that breath and what you're hearing right now is what I am breathing out. I'm breathing out these words. Now, that's the word the Bible uses to describe itself. All Scripture is God breathed. When the Bible speaks God speaks. That's what inspiration means. When the Bible speaks God speaks.

#### **B. The Scriptures Are Informative**

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, but not only are the Scriptures inspired, they're instructed. Verse 16 says they're profitable for doctrine. What is doctrine? That's to tell you what's right. Ask a little boy what doctrine is, he says, "That's what you need when you're sick." If you're sick that is good medicine, but actually the word "doctrine" means "teaching." The Scriptures are there to tell you what's right.

Then it goes on to say "For doctrine and for reproof." Not only does the Bible tell you what's right, it also tells you what's wrong. You see, God doesn't want us to make a mistake. He doesn't want us to go astray. So on one side he tells us what's right, on the other side he tells us what's wrong so we can walk the straight and narrow.

But he also says in verse 16 that it is necessary for correction—that is, when we get wrong, how to get back right. He shows us what's right. He shows us what's wrong and if we're wrong he tells us how to get right. And, then he says that it's profitable for instruction in righteousness. What's right, what's wrong, how to get right, and then how to stay right. How just to be instructed day by day. How am I supposed to live? What am I supposed to do? How am I supposed to feel? What shall I do with my sins? Where does power come from? Everything that I need to know, that is instruction and righteousness is there from the Word of God.

### **C. The Scriptures Are Instrumental**

So, the Scriptures are inspired, the Scriptures are informative, and then the Scriptures are instrumental. That is, they work powerfully in our lives. For example, look in verse 15. Paul told Timothy, “From a child you’ve known the Holy Scriptures that are able to make you wise unto salvation.” You are saved by the Word of God. It is the message of the Bible, the gospel that saves us, that makes us wise unto salvation. That’s the reason that every preacher must always preach the Word of God because The Word is the seed. We’re born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible by the Word of God. And so, the Scriptures are instrumental in salvation.

The Scriptures are instrumental in sanctification. Look in verse 17, “That the man of God may be perfect.” Now, that word “perfect” means “complete.” It means “mature.” It means “full-grown.” Do you want to be a little baby Christian or do you want to grow? *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”* (1 Peter 2:2). You’re going to be a pygmy Christian, you’re going to be baby Christian, and you’re going to be a weak emaciated Christian if you don’t grow with the Word of God. “That the man of God may be perfect,” mature. Not only are they necessary for salvation and sanctification but necessary for service.

“Thoroughly furnished,” he says in verse 17, “unto all good works.” Everything God wants you to do he furnished through his word. So, you’re completely, thoroughly through and through, furnished of the Bible. All that I need to know, all that I need to have, is revealed to me in God’s Word. How important is the Bible? But friend, the Bible may be inspired, the Bible may be informative, the Bible may be instrumental, but if I don’t believe it, what good is that going to do me? It’s the devil’s job to make people doubt the Word of God.

The very first thing the devil did in the Garden of Eden was to say, *“...Yea, hath God said...”* and to put a question mark on the Word of God (Genesis 3:1). Well, you need to have a rock-ribbed, ironclad assurance that the Bible is the Word of God.

### **I. Faith Is Rooted in Evidence**

Let me tell you why I believe the Bible to be the Word of God. Let me give you three things about faith and these are the foundations for our faith. Number one, faith is rooted in evidence. Have you got that? It’s worth writing down. Faith is rooted in evidence. Number two, faith goes beyond evidence. Number three, faith becomes its own best evidence. Let me develop that and you’ll have a blessing.

First of all, I want to say that faith is rooted in evidence. People sometimes accuse us Christians of practicing blind faith. Now, friend, blind faith is not faith at all. Don’t ever think that I’m asking you just to blindly believe something. If somebody tells me to believe something, first thing I want to know is why should I believe it. Amen. I mean,

why? The Christians faith is not blind faith. The Christian's faith is not a leap in the dark, it is a step in the light. You see, the Christian's faith is rooted in revelation. The Christian's faith is rooted in facts. The Christian's faith is rooted in evidence. God gives us evidence for believing what we believe. Notice I said evidence and not proof, there's a difference.

Sometimes somebody might come and say to you, "Prove there's a God." Don't let that intimidate you. If you were to say to me, "Adrian, prove there's a God." Do you know what I'd say to you? I can't. Does that shock you? I can't prove there's a God. Oh, I know there's a God, not that I have any doubt about it. I have no doubt whatsoever, but to prove it doesn't lie in the realm of proof.

For example, if anybody ever comes to you and says, "Prove there's a God." You just say, "Prove there is no God." Just prove there is no God. He can't prove there's no God any more than you can prove there is a God. How can the finite prove the infinite? How can the finite disprove the infinite? It doesn't lie in that realm you see. Well, he says, "You just believe there's a God," and I say, "That's right. And, you just believe there is no God, isn't that right?" Sure. You see, all people are believers. He believes there is no God. I believe there is a God. I'm a positive believer, and he's a negative believer. I, by faith, believe in God. He, by faith, believes there is no God. He says, "I don't think there's a God, I don't believe there's a God." At least now he's being honest. He hasn't proven there's no God.

But, what's the difference between the negative believer and the positive believer? Here's the difference, the positive believer has the evidence. You see, God has not just told us to believe without giving us evidence. And so, God has given us some evidence and that evidence is rooted in God's Word. Now, if you're going to know the God of The Word, you've got to know The Word of that God. And so, God has given us His Word and God has given us some evidences that the Bible is indeed the inspired, *infallible*, and inerrant Word from a God who cannot lie.

#### **A. The History of the Bible**

What are some evidences? Not proofs, but evidences, that the Bible is the Word of God? Because I've said that faith is rooted in evidence. Well, for example, there is the historical evidence that the Bible is the Word of God. The Bible is a history book. It tells stories. Now, are these stories true or are they not true? Did the things recorded in the Bible literally happen or did they not happen? Is this actual history or is this the figment of someone's imagination? Well, dear friend, the Bible is so historically accurate. That's one of the great evidences of its inspiration.

There was a man who lived a few years ago, Sir William Ramsey, one of the world's most brilliant intellects, and he was a noted scholar. He lived in Aberdeen, Scotland and he was a great historian and a great scholar of the history and geography of Asia Minor

and the Middle East. And, when this Middle East historian, this wizened, world-renowned man with more degrees than a thermometer studied the book of Acts, which is the history of the early church. He more or less ridiculed the book of Acts. He more or less laughed at the book of Acts. Here's what Sir William Ramsey said of the book of Acts. And, I want to describe it or at least I want to give it to you in his own words. He described the book of Acts as a highly imaginative and carefully colored account of primitive Christianity. Highly imaginative, that is, it's not rooted in facts, but it is rooted in imagination, that's what he was saying about the book of Acts. Carefully colored. That is, Luke just shaded his facts, he didn't tell you the truth, he just kind of shaped things and colored things to make it come out the way he wanted it to come out. And so, he said the book of Acts was not historically correct, and you can't trust the history of the book of Acts.

Now, remember this man was brilliant, a professor in Aberdeen, Scotland. But, do you know what he did? He made a mistake and it was a happy mistake and good mistake. He decided he would go to Asia Minor and there carefully investigate, and study the book of Acts, and do you know what happened? He had a transformation, one hundred and eighty degrees he was turned around. He wrote a book entitled *The Beloved Physician*. And, that book was about Doctor Luke who wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

And now, let me tell you what he said. After he studied minutely the works of the great historian Doctor Luke, who gave us the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. And, I'm quoting now, this dr. Ramsey said, and I want you to listen to him. "I take the view that Luke's history is unsurpassed in regard to its trustworthiness." Did you hear that? "I now take the view that Luke's history is unsurpassed in regard to its trustworthiness. You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian and they will stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment." Amazing! Here was a man who studied the facts and when he studied the facts he said that you could trust the history of God's Word.

You know historians, they love to study what they call profane or secular history and then to turn around and ridicule the Word of God. One thing they used to do a few years back, they ridiculed the book of Daniel because of the supposed errors in the book of Daniel. The book of Daniel tells of the Babylonian Empire and it tells that the last king in Babylon was a king named Belteshazzar. And, do you remember Belteshazzar was the one who saw the handwriting on the wall? Do you remember that?

So the historians said, "Well, that's obviously a fabrication. Obviously, this is not real history because we have the records of the ancient Babylonians and we know that the last king of Babylon was not a man named Belteshazzar at all, it was a man named Nabonidus. We have the archives, we have the records, and we have all of the artifacts.

Beltshazzar was no king, there was no king named Beltshazzar. Obviously, the Bible is a fake, obviously it is a fraud, the book of Daniel is not history.”

But, the spade of the archeologists continued to do its work and one day they turned up a clay tablet, a cylinder, and guess whose name was on it? Give you three guesses, and the first two don't count. Beltshazzar. And, you know what it said about Beltshazzar and other things that they uncovered? They found out that Beltshazzar was indeed the last king of Babylon, but so was Nabonidus. The truth of the matter is they were co-regents. There were two kings at the same time. Nabonidus was the father, Beltshazzar was the son, but Nabonidus didn't stay home. He loved to travel and he was a big game hunter and was often gone and so the Kingdom was in the charge of Beltshazzar.

Now, the secular, profane historian was quite correct when he said that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon, but he was quite wrong when he said that Beltshazzar wasn't the last king of Babylon. And you see, there are little minute confirmations of the Word of God. So in the chapter 5 of the book of Daniel, we understand a passage now that we might not have understood before. That, because Beltshazzar said to Daniel, if you can read the handwriting on the wall, I'll make you what? The third ruler in the Kingdom. You see, there were already two, Beltshazzar and Nabonidus. Now, suppose we'd not found that clay cylinder with Beltshazzar name on it. Would have that have meant the Bible was wrong? No, it would have just meant we didn't have enough evidence, isn't that right?

## **B. The Science of the Bible**

See, friend, be careful before you let some historian or someone tell you that the history of the Bible is not correct. Our faith is rooted in evidence. There's the historical evidence that the Bible is the Word of God. There's the scientific evidence that the Bible is the Word of God, and I wish I had time to deal with all of the scientific evidence that the Bible is the Word of God. So let me just quickly narrow and get into one little area there.

If you've not read the little book called none of these diseases, I hope you'll read it. It's written by a medical doctor, Doctor S. I. McMillan. Doctor McMillan has recorded a wonderful story in there that I'm going to try to share a little bit with you. He talks about the ancient Egyptians and the medical knowledge that the ancient Egyptians had about fifteen hundred years before Christ was born in the time when Moses was a lad and was growing up. The Egyptians had the dominant position in world medicine at that time. The Egyptians were no fools. When you see the things that the Egyptians were able to do and accomplish you're just overwhelmed at the intelligence of the ancient Egyptians, but they had their medical knowledge put in a book and we have that book. The papyrus ebers, Doctor McMillan tells about it. In the papyrus ebers you have there the medical knowledge of the ancient Egyptians and it's almost ludicrous, friends, it's

really kind of funny when you read some of the medicine that they recommended. Now, you might be interested in some of these prescriptions.

For example, if your hair is turning gray, pay attention, to prevent the hair from turning gray, anoint it with the blood of a black cat, which has been boiled in oil, or with the fat of a rattlesnake. Now, you be careful gathering that rattlesnake fat, all right? For people who are losing hair, when it falls out, apply a mixture of six fats, namely those of the snake and the ibex. I haven't seen an ibex in a long time, but you get some snake fat and ibex fat and then to strengthen it you anoint it with the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey. That's to keep your hair from falling out. If you had a splinter or a puncture, they recommended lizard's blood, worm's blood, and donkey's dung.

Can you imagine the spores, the tetanus spores and the microbes and the filth in donkey dung? As a matter of fact, they often used excreta for medicine—of human beings and donkeys, and antelopes, and dogs, and cats, and even flies—that was a part of their medicine. Another medicine they recommended was moisture from pig's ears, good medicine. Well, we laugh at that. Now, the interesting thing is do you know where Moses got his education?

Moses was educated in the university of Egypt. You see, Moses was the adopted son of Pharaoh and Pharaoh gave to Moses the best education that money could buy and the Bible says that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. He had the equivalency of a Ph.D. from the university of Egypt and if he was learned in all the wisdom of Egyptians, surely he studied this kind of knowledge. Aren't you glad that he didn't write any of this in the Bible? I mean, you would have expected what he learned in school to bleed over in what he wrote in the Bible, wouldn't you? Of course you would. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. I'm so glad we don't read anything about using moisture from pig's ears for medicine.

As a matter of fact, when you read the Bible and you read about the medicine of the Bible. And, you read the sanitary code of the Bible and you read the dietary code of the Bible, you're going to find out that modern medicine is just now catching up. You want to be healthy? You practice the dietary code of the Bible. Not because you're under legalism, just because you want to have a good strong body. As a matter of fact, do you know what they're telling us now? Science is just making a discovery. They used to talk down the health food faddists and all of that and now the scientists are begrudgingly coming along and the medical doctors are begrudgingly coming along, and saying, hey, you need to cut all that fat out of your diet, it might cause cancer, cut all that fat all of your diet, it might cause high cholesterol, and it might cause heart attacks. Friend, just go back and see what Moses had to say about cutting all that fat out of your diet. You just go read it right there in the Word of God.

Find out what the Bible has to say. Did you know in the fourteenth century Europe they had a plague called the black plague? It was terrible. It was horrible. Now, I know you've seen on television the horrible things that are happening in Ethiopia and that breaks your heart, it's so hard to even watch.

But, I want to tell you something worse than that happened in Europe in the fourteenth century—the black plague, where one out of every four people died. Can you imagine that? One out of every four. One two, three, dead. One two, three, dead. One two three, dead. One two, three, dead. One, two three, dead. They died and the physicians and the doctors were not able to stop it and they didn't know what to do. They didn't understand germs. They'd never seen a germ. They didn't know what a microbe was.

They didn't know anything about a communicable disease. Well, you say, "Everybody ought to know that." Why do you know it? Somebody taught you, you didn't figure it out. We stand on the shoulders of other people. They didn't know that, they didn't understand that, and they thought it was bad air, this thing, or that thing. They were trying, building fires and everything else to try to stop the plague. Imagine trying to stop the plague by building a fire.

And, do you know it was not the doctors, it was the church and the church leaders that finally stemmed the tide of the plague by going back to God's Word. Leviticus chapter 13 and verse 46: "*All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be*" (Leviticus 13:46). What did the Bible say to the man who was the leper, a man who had the plague of leprosy? They said, "...*put out of the camp...*" put him in isolation (Numbers 5:2). Quarantine him, quarantine him. And, when they begin to apply the knowledge that Moses had given, then and only then was the plague brought under control. One historian said, "The laws against leprosy in Leviticus 13 may be regarded as the first model of a sanitary legislation."

### **C. The Indestructibility of the Bible**

I've just talked in one little area. We could talk in many, many areas about the wonderful medical and scientific evidences that the Bible is the Word of God. Let me give you another evidence that the Bible is the Word of God and that is the indestructibility of this book. You see, this book is not just the book of the month, friend, it's the book of the ages. For isn't it an amazing thing? Here you are, an intelligent erudite, educated people listening to a halfway intelligent preacher, we're here in the twentieth century by television with electric lights, and we're studying this old book. Isn't that amazing? You tell me what other book is as up to date. Why, listen, it's more up to date than tomorrow's newspaper and a whole lot more accurate. Amen?

Wasn't that an amazing thing when they were questioning the President of the

United States the other day? And, the news reporter said to him, “Mr. President, we’d like your views on Armageddon.” Amazing, Armageddon, that’s a Bible fact and here they’re talking to the President of the most powerful nation on the face of the earth in the most enlightened educated time. And, after all of these years people are still wanting to know what your view of this book is. This Bible is such a living, powerful force.

William Tyndale wanted to get the Bible printed so the people could have it. Print it and put into the hands of the English-speaking people. And, they hounded him and they ran him out of England and William Tyndale went to Germany and there he began to set up the type to print the Bible so he’d get the Bible into the hands of the people. Laboriously—day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year—setting that type, setting that type. Not the way we set it today, not with that ease, but painstakingly, heartbreakingly so long to get the type set so people could have the Bible in their mother tongue. He finally finished the job and went to bed and that very night vandals came in and wrecked the printing press, destroyed the type, and ruined the whole thing. He had to start again from the bottom and to build it and to set the type again and he finally got it done. He printed those Bibles and in order to get them into England, he put them in barrels of flour and shipped them into England and the Word of God came to England.

They hated William Tyndale, some of the clerics and the leaders, they hated him so much that they strangled him to death. And, then not happy that they strangled him—that wasn’t enough—they burned him because he wanted a Bible for the people. And, as they were strangling Tyndale, he prayed, “Oh God, oh God, open the eyes of the king of England, God, open his eyes.” They killed him in 1536. In 1611, we received the King James Version of the Word of God. Amen. William Tyndale, a man who loved God’s Word, a man who died for God’s Word because the Word of God lives and abides forever. *“The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever”* (1 Peter 24–25). Hallelujah!

Friend, men have laughed at the Bible, men have scorned the Bible, men have made laws against the Bible, and men have ridiculed the Bible. There was a time in Scottish history when to own a Bible was a crime worthy of death, but the Word of God lives on and it is bright and vibrant and relevant today. That’s evidence that it is the Word of God.

#### **D. The Fulfilled Prophecy of the Bible**

Let me give you another evidence. I’m just telling you that faith is rooted in evidence. What about fulfilled prophecy? If we were to start today and talk about fulfilled prophecy—just the prophecy of the nations, what is happening in the nations of this world, what is happening on the world map, the last days, what we call the signs of the

times—why, we could take a Bible conference for several months and just talk on that one thing. But, let me just narrow the prophecies and let's just talk about the prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

Did you know that there are more than three hundred exact, minute prophecies concerning the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, enthronement, and second coming of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament? I'm not talking about the New Testament. I'm not talking about small prophecies or vague prophecies. I'm talking about hard, fast, substantial, clear prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. That these prophecies could have been fulfilled by chance is astronomically, listen to me now, astronomically impossible. Billions to one would be the chance that they would have been fulfilled by chance.

Do you know what the enemies of the Lord Jesus say about this? Here's the way they answer that. They say, "Well, He just arranged to have the prophecies fulfilled. He just rigged it so the prophecies would be fulfilled. Well, Brother Rogers, do you think He just arranged it for the prophecies to be fulfilled?" Yes, I do, before it ever happened, not afterward, but before. Before He ever came to this earth. Now, listen, I was born in West Palm Beach, Florida, but I didn't arrange it. Jesus arranged to be born in Bethlehem. Amen? Because the Bible says in Micah chapter 5 that our Lord would be born in Bethlehem and so He arranged it. But, I want to tell you that He supernaturally arranged it.

I'll tell you something else, He arranged for Isaiah seven hundred years before He was born to give a biography of His life in Isaiah chapter 53. You go home and get that Old Testament chapter of the Bible and read Isaiah chapter 53. You're going to find the amazing story, the entire biography of the Lord Jesus Christ before He was born, not after He was born, before He was born.

Go home today and read the twenty-second Psalm, an amazing Psalm, the twenty-second Psalm is a messianic Psalm. It is written about the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ and the twenty-second Psalm is written as a graphic description of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was written centuries before Jesus was born. And, let me tell you something else. In Psalm 22 the words that Jesus would say from the cross are prophesied. The words that His enemies would say when they ridiculed Him were prophesied. The very fact that they would gamble for His garments was prophesied.

But, here's one of the most amazing prophecies of all. In Psalm 22 it says, "...*they pierced my hands and my feet*" (Psalm 22:16). That's what happens when you crucify. There are nails through your hands and nails that go through your feet. But, this was written hundreds and hundreds of years before the Roman Empire. Crucifixion was the Roman way of capital punishment. The Jews at that time knew nothing of death by crucifixion. Do you know how the Jews executed people? Do you know what the

method of Jewish capital punishment was? It wasn't the electric chair, it wasn't the gas chamber, it wasn't crucifixion, it was stoning. They stoned people to death. If you've ever been there, you know they've got enough stones. They stone people to death.

But, crucifixion was a Roman form of execution and the Romans were very clever. There's no death as horrible, as painful, as ignominious as crucifixion, and you want to keep people in line, you show them a cross. But, I want to remind you that was a Roman form of execution and hundreds of years before the Roman Empire comes on the scene you read there in Psalm 22, "They pierced my hands and my feet."

Now, you explain that. Do you think Jesus arranged all of that? Do you think Jesus arranged the Roman Empire? Do you think Jesus arranged the cross? I do, but He arranged it before the fact, He arranged it while He was still in glory. Yes, He arranged it all, He arranged that He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver as Zechariah the prophet said. He arranged that He would be betrayed by Judas as the Bible says. He arranged that He would be buried in rich man's tomb. He arranged that He would be raised from the dead the third day and seen by five hundred people who were so convinced that they sat out to convince others that he was raised from the dead.

And, I want to tell you something, friend, these people with no hope of material gain became followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, so convinced were they that Jesus Christ came out of that grave. Many of them paid with their life's blood for their conviction that Jesus Christ was alive. Now, you're reasonable people. A man may live for a lie, but he will not knowingly die for one. These people died, sealed their testimony with their blood, so convinced were they that that grave was empty and that Jesus Christ came out of that grave. Over three hundred exact, precise prophecies in the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New Testament. Matthew chapter 26 verse 56: "*But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled...*" (Matthew 26:56).

## **II. Faith Goes Beyond Evidence**

Time has gone from me so let me just make the other two points very, very quickly. Listen to me. Faith is rooted in evidence. Faith goes beyond evidence, it has to, or it wouldn't be faith. Now, God is not going to prove Himself to you, but what God will do for you is this, God will reveal Himself to you. God will give you facts, God will give you evidence, and then God will give you faith to believe those facts. It must be by faith because faith is a moral response to the character of God and the Bible says in John chapter 7 verse 17: "*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God...*" (John 7:17).

Now, what does that mean? That means if you want to know whether these facts are true, if you want to know this evidence, then you can know it. God, on the one hand, gives you the facts, and then God, on the other hand, gives you the faith to believe

those facts. It is not blind faith, it is rooted in evidence, but nonetheless it is faith. God does not prove it to you, God shows it to you, and then from the inside God gives you His force.

You see, there is that objective revelation of God, but then there is that subjective inclination to believe the revelation. That's the reason Jesus said, "*My sheep hear my voice...*" (John 10:28). I don't know about you, but there's something in me that when I read this Bible it tells me it's the Word of God. Not just because of these facts that I've been giving you, but there is just the voice of God. God speaks in His book. Do you know what I'm talking about? Jesus said, "*...He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life...*" (John 5:24). This Bible is not like other books. You read other books, but this book reads you. And so, faith is rooted in evidence, but faith goes beyond evidence.

### **III. Faith Becomes Its Own Best Evidence**

Then I want to say the last thing and I'm hurrying. Faith then becomes its own best evidence. I believe because I believe. Let me give you a wonderful Scripture. Psalm 34 verse 8: "*O taste and see that the LORD is good...*" (Psalm 34:8). I want to find out about you people, find out how educated you are. How many of you have ever tasted a mango, let me see your hand? Oh, I pity the rest of you poor, denied people. You never had any mango. You don't know what mango is. Listen, folks, if you can't go to heaven, at least you ought to have a mango. I mean that's nectar, that's indescribably luscious fruit from Florida. I was weaned on mangos, wonderful.

Now suppose you've never had a mango and somebody comes with a mango and says, "That's a mango. It looks good and it's beautiful and it smells good. You ought to have some." Thus far it's just evidence. He says, "It's a mango," he says, "It's good, it smells good, it looks good, all of the rest of it, other people seem to be enjoying it, other people testify—that is all evidence."

But, there's something in you that impels you, you just feel drawn toward it, you go beyond that evidence and then you do something, you take a bite and now, folks, you've got the evidence on the inside. Amen? That's what the Scripture means when it says, "taste and see that the Lord is good," taste and see that the Lord is good.

### **Conclusion**

Now, you see, that the reason that a Christian with an experience is never at the mercy of an infidel with an argument, because he's got the evidence within him. And, one of the ways that I know that the Bible is God's Word is because the bright, living reality, the truth of the God of that Bible lives within my heart. Faith is rooted in evidence, faith goes beyond evidence, and faith becomes its own best evidence.

# How Do We Know the Bible Is True?

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Sermon Date: Merritt Island**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3:16**

## Outline

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## Introduction

**N**ow I want us to think tonight on the inspiration of the Scriptures. How do we know the Bible to be the Word of God? The Bible is under greater attack today than it has ever been in history, and is under attack from at least these directions. There is, first of all, the modernist preacher and the modernist theologian, who denies it, and who takes away from it, and who waters it down. Then, there is the atheist, who ridicules it, who negates it, who fights against it, and absolutely, ultimately denies it. And then, there is the cultist, who claims to believe it, but he takes the Scriptures, and he will wrest them to his own destruction, (2 Peter 3:16) and he twists the Scriptures, and misuses the Scripture, and abuses the Scripture, and takes it all out of context. These are enemies of the Word of God: the modernist, the atheist, the cultist.

But there's one more enemy of the Word of God—and this is the Baptist who says he believes it, but who never reads it, who never studies it, who never prays over it. There's enough dust on some Bibles in Baptist homes to write the word *damnation* with your finger.

*These hath God married, and no man shall part:  
Dust on the Bible and drought in the heart.*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Oh, listen. We are enemies of the Word of God if we do not study this book, and love it, and let it nourish our souls.

Why do I believe the Bible to be the Word of God? I want to give you three reasons. Number one: Faith is rooted in evidence. Number two: However, faith goes beyond evidence. Number three: Faith is its own best evidence. I want you to think again about these things. Faith is rooted in evidence. Number two: Faith goes beyond evidence. It would have to, in order to be faith; otherwise it would all be in the realm of proof. And then, thirdly, faith is its own best evidence. I believe, because I believe.

## **I. Faith Is Rooted in Evidence**

There are some evidences that the Bible is the Word of God—some good evidences. Some people will call them proofs. I prefer to call them evidences.

### **A. Internal Evidences**

First of all, there are the internal evidences, the evidences that don't lie on the surface but lie on the inside of the Bible. One of these evidences we might mention would be the uniqueness of the Bible. There's never been another book like the Bible. The Bible's not the book of the month, or the book of the year; it's the book of the ages, my dear friend. There's never been another book as unique as the Bible. If you were to take a thousand of the world's brainiest men and give them one million dollars apiece to do research with, they could never come up with a book like the Bible. Isn't that true? Anybody knows that. It would be impossible for them to come up with a book like the Bible. Do you think that all the ingenuity of this world could produce another twenty-third Psalm? Do you think that anybody could reproduce the four Gospels? No matter how much money you gave them, no matter how much research, the Bible is unique. It cannot be improved.

I remember reading a story one time about Mark Twain, who had a very important trip to take the next morning early, so he told his servant, "I want my horse to be ready. Here is the key to the stable. You hide the key in a certain place. Early in the morning, I'll get up and get the key. I must leave right on time." So Mark Twain arose from his bed, and went out to get on his horse and to take this journey. And he looked in the place where the key was supposed to have been, and there was no key. He looked up the servant, and asked him what had happened. And the servant said, "Well, I thought of a better place to hide it."

Oh, my friend, there are some things you can't improve on. And there are some things you're not supposed to tamper with. And one of them is the Word of God. I say that the Word of God is unique. Oh, it's so brief and yet so comprehensive. Did you know we have Ten Commandments in the Word of God? These Ten Commandments are so wonderful, so comprehensive, that it is absolutely impossible for anybody to write an eleventh commandment. You can't write an eleventh commandment. There's nothing that's not comprehended in these Ten Commandments, these simple statements. They are so brief that someone has recorded all of the Ten Commandments on the head of a pin, and yet man, in all of his laws, someone has estimated that man has in his history at least thirty-five million laws. If you'll write the Ten Commandments out by longhand, they would probably reach across your living room. But if you were to write these thirty-five million laws out, they would go around the world two times. And yet all of these laws are nothing but the Ten Commandments put in other forms. How beautiful, how sweet, how plain, power clear, how simple is the Word of God!

You know, men sometimes are awfully verbose and vociferous in their writing. You know, God told about the creation of the world, and how He created the world, and made the world, in 797 words in our English translation of the Bible—that's all! And yet I read the other day where there was a government order to reduce the price of cabbage seed, and it took 2,700 words to write this out—when God told about the creation of the heaven and the earth in 797 words. Someone has written a biography of Frederick the Great, and in this biography there are six thousand pages, twenty-one volumes. And yet in the average Bible the life of Jesus only takes ninety-nine pages, and it's told four times. And yet, how beautiful, how comprehensive, is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ! These are just simply internal evidences of the Word of God—that it lives forever. *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my [Word] shall not pass away."* (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33) The book, the Bible, is indestructible.

Benjamin Franklin, one time when he was the ambassador to France, was invited over in France to join a French atheistic literary society whose sole purpose was the extermination of the Bible. Benjamin Franklin joined this society. It was up to these people in this literary society to read works of prose and poetry that they had done. Benjamin Franklin took the book of Ruth and translated it from the English, in his own translation, into the French. And when it was his turn to read, he read the book of Ruth to this literary society. The men were awestricken. It was breathtakingly beautiful. The chairman of the literary society said, "Mr. Franklin, that is the most beautiful love story we've ever heard, we've ever thought about. We'd like to have your permission to put this in print and have it published from our literary society." He said, "It's already in print." They said, "Where?" He pulled out his Bible, and opened it to the book of Ruth,

and said, “Here it is.” And this was the sledgehammer blow that broke the back of this atheistic society, and gave France another chance among the nations of the world.

This book, the Bible, beautiful in expression, ultimate in simplicity—these are the internal evidences that the Bible is the Word of God. What a marvelous unity there is in the Bible as you study the Bible! The unity does not lie on the surface, but the unity lies beneath the surface. I told our new members class tonight, I’ve been studying the Bible carefully now for about fifteen years. I believe the Bible to be more the Word of God today than I ever did. Sometimes when you study something, the imperfections, the flaws, show up in it the more carefully you scrutinize it. But the more carefully you examine and scrutinize the Bible, the more beautiful and the more flawless it becomes.

Oh, what a marvelous unity there is to this book! Not one book, sixty-six books—thirty-nine in the Old Testament, twenty-seven in the New Testament—written over a period of at least fifteen hundred years, written by at least forty different authors, written in at least three different languages, written by men from all walks of life—shepherds, kings, herdsman, poets, prophets, preachers, statesmen. One man was a tax collector, another man a physician—over fifteen hundred years written—from all walks of life, many times who never knew the other man, or read what the other man had written, or had conversed with the other man at all. But yet, when these things are brought together, they don’t make sixty-six books. They make one book. That’s amazing!

Suppose we were to build here on Merritt Island a monument to the fifty states, out of different kinds of stone. Out of one state we would bring gypsum; out of another state we would bring coral; out of another state greystone, out of another state brownstone, and sandstone, and quartz, and granite; and all of these stones, some of them squares, some of them pyramids, some of them would be spheres, some of them would be cylinders; and we bring them all here. We’d ship them on the railroad cars and get them here to Merritt Island, and the workmen go to work, and they start putting these things together, and each stone fits into another. They all interlock. And there’s not one stone too many, not one stone too few. No stone needs to be shaved down. No stone is to be added to, or built up, but they all fit together. And the workmen stop. The stones are all used. There’s a beautiful, wonderful, lovely complete temple. What would you think? What would you say? Would you say that happened by chance that they all fitted together? Of course not! Any thinking man would say, “There’s only one way possible that could have happened. A master architect planned the whole thing from the beginning. It had to happen that way.”

Oh, when I see these sixty-six books, as they come together over fifteen hundred years, each one cut from its own peculiar quarry; but when they come together, they interlock, and fit into one beautiful temple of God’s truth that does not contradict itself

doctrinally, theologically, ethically, morally, or any other way, there is but one conclusion which thinking men can come to—and it is this: that “*holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” (1 Peter 1:21) “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God.*” (2 Timothy 3:16) And God Himself is the architect.

## **B. External Evidences**

These are the internal evidences. But there are certain external evidences that the Bible is the Word of God.

### **1. The Testimony of Science**

We can look at the testimony of science, and prove that the Bible is the Word of God. True science and the Bible are not in contradiction. They are handmaidens; they are Siamese twins. And while this book is not a book of science, it’s a book of religion, when it speaks of science, it is scientifically accurate. I want to commend to your reading a little book called *None of These Diseases*, by Dr. S. I. McMillen. It’s a delightful little volume. You will enjoy it. I recommend it to you. And especially if you’re a neurotic woman, I’d like for you to read it. Oh, what a wonderful little book is this little book by Dr. McMillen. He points out several things, and he goes on to mention that in antiquity there have been several medical volumes written, but one of the most famous is a volume that was written by the Egyptians that sums up all of the knowledge of the Egyptians, and this little volume is called the *Papyrus Ebers*. And this volume that tells all the medical knowledge of the Egyptians was written about 1,552 years before the Lord Jesus Christ was born—1552 BC is the date the scholars have put upon the *Papyrus Ebers*, this book of medical knowledge that the Egyptians had.

And I want to remind you that the Egyptians had reached a high state of civilization. The Egyptians were well-trained and very brilliant people for their time. They were the Egyptians that knew how to mummify bodies. They were the ones that built the great pyramids and so forth. But let me give you some of the medical knowledge that is contained in this book of the Egyptians you might be interested in. For example, here’s a little gem. To prevent the hair from turning gray,”—I know you’re interested. Listen—anooint it with the blood of a black calf that has been boiled in oil, or with the fat of a rattlesnake. Go down here to Eckerd’s and ask for some rattlesnake fat, and see what they’ll do to you. Oh, but this is the way that you can keep your hair from turning gray, according to the *Papyrus Ebers*.

Or for people who are losing their hair. One man said, “I know something that will stop falling hair.” I said, “What’s that?” He said, “The barber’s floor.” All right, for people who are losing their hair, when it falls out, one remedy, according to the *Papyrus Ebers*, is to apply a mixture of six fats: namely, those of the horse, the hippopotamus, the

crocodile, the cat, the snake, and the ibex, whatever that is. To strengthen it—that is, to strengthen your hair—anoint it with the tooth of a donkey crushed, and honey. That's some medicine, isn't it? That will strengthen your hair. I heard of another cure for baldness. It said, you take persimmon juice and alum, and mix them together, and rub it on your head. Now it really won't cure your baldness, but it will shrink your head to fit whatever hair you have.

And then, some more of these amazing bits of wisdom here. For an embedded splinter, you take worm's blood and ass's dung, and rub it on this sore. Of course, you know that these things would be embedded with tetanus spores and so forth. But this was the wisdom of the mighty Egyptians. According to Dr. McMillen, other drugs included lizards blood, swine's teeth, putrid meats, stinking fat, moisture from pigs ears, milk, goose grease, donkeys hooves, excretion from animals, including human beings, donkeys, antelopes, dogs, cats, and even flies.

Now, why did I mention all this? Because about the time the *Papyrus Ebers*, this great book of medical knowledge, was written, Moses, the man of God, was on the scene. And you know where Moses got his worldly education? In the University of Egypt. Moses was schooled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. This is what the Bible says, in Exodus 15, verse 26. (Exodus 15:26) Moses was a graduate of the Egyptian University. And there's no doubt whatsoever that Moses had learned all of these things in his studies in the Egyptian University. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And isn't it amazing, as we study the Pentateuch, that we do not find even one of these medical misconceptions in the writings of Moses? Isn't that amazing? Wouldn't you think that his worldly education would flow over? And wouldn't you think that you would find these things in his writings? But you do not find them. But rather, to the contrary, you find the finest laws of sanitation, the finest laws of health and hygiene, that modern science knows anything about. You'll find these things written in the books of Moses.

In the fourteenth century, the black plague was one of perhaps the greatest disasters that ever hit mankind, the greatest natural disaster ever recorded in human history. It is estimated that it took one out of every four lives in Europe. An estimated sixty million people died of the black plague. Can you imagine sixty million people? Can you imagine what it must have been like to live in this time? But they had no idea, no conception, of sanitation. They had no idea about microbes and germs and communicable diseases. They knew nothing of quarantine. They knew nothing of these things. And they were burying their dead, and others were getting sick, and it was a terrible, horrible thing. They called it the plague.

But I want you to know this: that it was the church and the Bible, and not science

and not physicians, that brought the plague under control. They finally discovered what God had said in Leviticus chapter 13, verse 46. I'd like for you to look at it for just a moment. God here is talking about the plague, and God says, "*All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.*" (Leviticus 13:46) God said, when there is a communicable disease, when there is a plague, when there is a strange mysterious malady in a person's body, separate them, quarantine them. And, finally, this thing and this thing alone was the thing that brought the halt to the plague.

Then we could go on and mention other things, but something else which was very interesting to me was in 1840 in Vienna, a cultured city, the city of many of the great musicians and so forth, they had a hospital there supposed to have been one of the finest hospitals in the world, but they found out that they were losing mothers who were bearing children. Of every mother who would bear a child, one out of six of those mothers would die. What a high mortality rate! And this was in the recent year of 1840, a little over one hundred years ago. One out of every six mothers who gave birth died as a result of it.

There was a physician there, Dr. Semmelweis, who studied the Bible, who had studied the Word of God, and he had come up with the idea that these physicians would go from the morgue and examine a corpse, and leave the morgue and would go to the maternity room, and examine a mother without washing their hands. Why, we just take it for granted that a doctor would do this. But they didn't. He said, "This must be the problem." And since he was the head of this hospital, he commanded that these doctors would begin to wash their hands. They said, "It's ridiculous. It's a waste of time washing, washing, washing." But when they instituted this, and started simply washing their hands—that's all: just washing their hands carefully after the examination of a corpse—the mortality rate dropped. No longer was it one in six; it was one in eighty-four—just by the washing of hands.

But then suddenly one day, even with the washing of hands after dealing with a corpse, suddenly eleven out of twelve patients died, just like that. Semmelweis studied and prayed and thought about it, and then he said, "From now on, we'll wash our hands after we examine each patient; not only the corpse to the patient, but patient to patient." This was too much. They rebelled against this man. He died in the insane asylum, because he knew he was right, and yet they would not listen to him.

But notice what the Bible had to say about it, in Numbers 19, verses 11 through 19: "*He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. Whosoever*

*toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him. This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:”—not just any water, but running water—“and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.” (Numbers 19:11–19)*

Now to the Jews this was all ceremonial. They'd never looked at a germ through a microscope. But notice the changing of the clothes, the washing of any open vessel, the use of running water, this time of purification, this time for sunlight and fresh air to do its work. God wrote this in the code of the Hebrews. God wrote this in the Pentateuch, centuries before modern science. It was the year 1511 before we ever knew even that the blood circulated in the body. But God knew all of these things. How did Moses know this? You would think that Moses would have been talking about worm's blood and moisture from a pig's ear. But he wasn't. He was talking about the finest code of sanitation that we know today.

## **2. The Testimony of Archaeology**

Oh, listen! There are evidences that the Bible is the Word of God—great evidences, internal evidences, external evidences that the Bible is the Word of God. There's the testimony of archaeology—not just of science, but of archaeology. The Bible said there was a city called Petra—the same word we get *petrified* from—the city of stone, a city built of solid rock. They laughed, but Burckhardt came upon that very city, and there were the mountains standing around like huge guards and sentinels to guard this city of stone. The Bible declares that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire and brimstone. People laughed at this, but they've gone to the Dead Sea, the site of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah, put down their grappling hooks in the place now covered over with water, and Lieutenant Lynch discovered there great masses of sulfur, which is nothing but brimstone, as God had said the city was destroyed with fire and brimstone.

### 3. The Testimony of Fulfilled Prophecy

I wanted to say more about the testimony of archaeology, but I'm going to leave the testimony of archaeology, and let me just mention the testimony of fulfilled prophecy. The external evidence that the Bible is the Word of God: the testimony of science, the testimony of archaeology, the testimony of fulfilled prophecy.

We can't mention all the prophecies, but just simply think of the prophecy concerning just one person: the Lord Jesus Christ, the only person ever born in this world whose ancestry, birth time, forerunner, birthplace, birth manner, infancy, manhood, teaching, character, career, preaching, reception, rejection, death, burial, resurrection, all of these things, were foretold before they ever happened, foretold in minutest detail. Do you think that happened by chance? If you do, you remind me of the man who took a course in ignorance and flunked it. Oh, listen! These things don't happen by chance—the testimony of fulfilled prophecy—and there are all kinds of little prophecies just tucked away in the Bible.

Look in Genesis 49 for just a moment. In Genesis 49, there is a prophecy concerning Zebulun. Now Jacob is dying, and he's prophesying what will happen to his family, and he's telling these things through the Spirit of the Lord, and among other things, he says, in Genesis 49, verse 13, "*Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships.*" (Genesis 49:13) Zebulun would be a haven for ships. Now Zebulun is that little portion of Palestine around Mt. Carmel, including the little bay of Haifa, and Zebulun there is in a very shallow, shallow place. A few very small fishing boats could come in and out. But God had prophesied that it would be a haven for ships, a place of commerce. And people laughed at this. They thought, "Poor old Jacob, he must be off his rocker." But, in the year 1933, the British government decided that they would build a seaport there in the land of Palestine. And for some reason they bypassed Jaffa, one of the finest natural ports in the world, and built one of the finest seaports there by dredging in this little place Zebulun, and it became a haven for ships. It took 3,800 years for this prophecy to be fulfilled. Isn't the Bible amazing? It is full of little prophecies that have been fulfilled minutely by the Word of God.

#### C. The Challenge of Evolution

Oh, somebody tells me, "But, Brother Rogers, don't forget about evolution. They've proven now that man descended from a monkey." Well, you ought to know your kinfolk better than I do, but none of mine swung by the tail. Some of them hung by the necks. What is this theory of evolution? According to Darwin, in *The Origin of the Species*, it is "the belief"—I'm quoting him, on page 153—"that all animals and plants are descended from some single primordial form." And this is the idea, generally, of the evolutionists:

that life just started with protozoa, and then from worms to fish, to amphibians, to reptiles, to birds, to mammals, and mammals to humans. This is the idea that man just moved on up the evolutionary scale. And some people believe this, but the Bible says, in the book of Genesis ten times, that living things bring forth “after their own kind.” What does this mean? There is no change from species to species. The Bible is against evolution.

Some people say, “Well, Brother Rogers, you can believe the Bible and believe evolution.” They just don’t know their Bible, or they don’t know evolution. You can’t believe both. And you’re going to have to make up your mind. But what is evolution? Remember this: that evolution is more of a philosophy than it is a science. The man who does not believe in God has to explain the existence of man and the world and everything else some way. And what is evolution? Evolution is an anesthetic that deadens the pain while atheism removes the religion. That’s what evolution is. It’s something to make it easier not to believe in God. If I can explain some way how things came along, then it’s a little easier for me not to believe in God. But evolution is dangerous.

### **1. The Danger Concerning the Scriptures**

Number one: It’s dangerous concerning the Scriptures. If you cannot trust the Scriptures to tell you from whence you have come, how can you trust the Scriptures to tell you where you’re going? Do you understand what I’m talking about? By the way, men are talking about the origin of the species, but they had better start thinking about the destiny of the species. Where you’ve come from is already settled, but where you’re going is still in your hands, mister.

### **2. The Danger Concerning Salvation**

Oh, but the danger concerning the Scriptures, and then the danger concerning salvation. If there’s evolution, then there was no Fall. No Fall, no need for redemption. No need for redemption, no need for the new birth.

### **3. The Danger Concerning Society**

And not only the danger concerning the Scriptures, and the danger concerning salvation, but also the danger concerning society, because, if you teach that people came from animals, before long they’ll start acting like animals. And this is exactly what we’re seeing today: that people in colleges and other places who now believe that they have descended from animals have said, “Well, since man is only an animal—sometimes a religious animal—what difference does it make?” This is what the communists believe. Crime, sadism, sexuality, atheism: all of these things are the result of this materialistic philosophy that says man evolved from animals. You teach them

they came from an animal, it won't be long before they start acting like one.

Let me say something right here—and I'll throw this in for free. I believe that, if Baptists want to teach their Baptist faith, they ought to build their own colleges and pay for them themselves, and not with federal money. I believe this. And I believe we ought to teach the Bible as the Word of God without any apologies. But I also believe that, if we have to build colleges with our money to teach what we believe, then that by the same token the atheist ought to have to build with his money his colleges to teach his atheism. It's just as fair. If I'm not going to infringe upon his rights, what right has he got to infringe upon my rights? And why should I have to pay the bill for some man to get up there and teach a godless, atheistic, insidious atheism? I say, it's fair, my dear friends—that he's teaching a negative religion. He's teaching a philosophy against the Bible. And if he's doing it, I demand equal time. Or let him build his own college. Amen? Thank you. That's for free—just while we are thinking on that subject.

Oh, don't you let some evolutionists back you into the corner and tell you that the Bible is not the Word of God. Oh, sure, he can ask you a few questions that you can't answer. But that's nothing. A five-year-old can ask anybody questions they can't answer. When they're five, they know all the questions. When they're eighteen, they know all the answers. When they get a little older, they find out they don't know either. Listen. There are some questions I'd like to ask Mr. Evolution. I'd like to ask him, for example, why isn't there at least one missing link? They talk about the missing link. There's not one record in history where one species has ever crossed over to another species—not one! Not even one! That's right. They talk about the missing link... the whole chain's missing. It's the silliest thing.

Now there's been mutation, but not transmutation. What I mean is you can have change within a species. I mean, you can take a grapefruit and make it a white grapefruit, and then a pink grapefruit, and maybe even a squirtless grapefruit after a while—but it's still a grapefruit. You can have an orange, and a seedless orange, and a pink orange, and a tangelo, and all of these things. But these are changes within a species. You'll never find a grapefruit becoming an apricot, or a watermelon, or a horse. That's right. God says these things bring forth "after their own kind." "Oh," they say, "well, we can demonstrate it. We can go into the laboratory, and we take drosophila, a little fruit fly, and the fruit flies, you know, they're real romantic, and they just multiply and multiply and multiply, and so therefore we could just look at these fruit flies, and by treating them with rays and so forth, we can change them. And look at all of the changes in the fruit flies!" But, my dear friend, the point is, when you get through, he's still a fruit fly. He may be a cross-eyed, lop-eared, nine-toed fruit fly, but he's still a fruit fly. He's not a June bug.

Why isn't there a missing link? In all of the millions of fossils, and the millions and millions and millions and millions and even more millions of fossils, why don't we find just one missing link? Not two, just one! That's all I want. There are none. All the fellows get together with their plaster of Paris and make all this stuff. But give us the missing link. We have fossils of everything else—good, clear, plain fossils. You see, this is the fabrication of the human mind.

Let me ask you another question. If a man evolved from lower forms, why aren't men still evolving? Why don't we have a living missing link? I've met some that I've wondered about. I mean, why don't people continue to evolve? Why have we suddenly stopped evolving? Why don't we have today piano players with fourteen fingers, or night watchman with eyes like saucers, or postmen with great big legs? I mean, why haven't we continued to evolve? And why don't we see a man coming along every now and then? Why aren't they still coming? Looks like we'd get one at least every two or three hundred years who would evolve. What stopped the process?

I'd like to ask him another question. With all of your evolution, where did original matter come from? What did you start with, when you started evolving? Where did that come from? "Oh," you say, "well, it started eons ago, when there was a whirling of gaseous matter that exploded off the sun." Well, where did the sun come from? Oh, listen, my dear friend. Behind it all is God. Without a Creator there can be no creation. And out of nothing, nothing comes. Anybody ought to know that.

Then I'd like to ask him another question. If we all started up from the amoeba, why do we still have amoebas? Why didn't they all evolve? Why did some evolve and others didn't evolve? Why is the amoeba still with us? I'd like to ask him another question. Which came first: the chicken or the egg? He can't even answer that. How could a chicken evolve that would lay eggs? When did they start laying eggs and stop evolving? Isn't it ridiculous what some people will swallow? They strain at a gnat and swallow a monkey.

Oh, listen! The Bible is the Word of God. And, you kids, remember this when they start talking about evolution. It is simply a theory. As I said, it is a philosophy, not a science. It is the anesthetic that deadens the pain while atheism removes the religion.

## **II. Faith Goes Beyond Evidence**

We could go on, but time is fleeing. I say I believe the Bible to be the Word of God because of the internal evidence and the external evidence. Faith is rooted in evidence, but faith goes beyond evidence. I will never prove to you that the Bible is the Word of God. Somebody says, "Prove the Bible to be the Word of God." I say, "Prove it's not." "Prove there's a God." "Prove there is." You can't do it. I can't do it. It doesn't lie in the

realm of proof; it lies in the realm of faith. The Bible says, *“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.”* (Hebrews 11:3)

Now there is evidence. It's not blind faith. Somebody says, “I believe there's an elephant in the backroom.” I say, “Well, I don't believe it.” They say, “Well, just have faith.” Well, that's stupidity, not faith. Why should I believe there's an elephant in the backroom? Now, if I've seen David Fields leading elephants around, and I know he's the elephant boy, and he has elephants, and likes elephants, and is kind of, you know, a little off, and David comes to me, and I know him to be properly honest, and he says to me, “Brother Rogers, there is an elephant in the backroom,” now it's a different matter. I've seen him with elephants. And I know he does some silly things. But I know he won't lie, see? And he says there's an elephant in the backroom: now this is different. I still haven't seen the elephant, but I believe it's there. That's faith. But it is faith that is rooted in evidence. Do you understand what I'm talking about? It's not blind faith. Don't just believe things just so you believe them.

There are some reasons to believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Faith is rooted in evidence. We talked about the evidence, but faith goes beyond evidence, or it wouldn't be faith. Now, if you want to know, you can know. But really you're not going to figure these things out in your head. If you want to know the truth, you can know it. Jesus made a solemn promise in John 7, verse 17. He said, *“If any man will to do [God's] will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.”* (John 7:17) What does that mean? That means that, if down in your heart you want to know, God will show you. God *“[hath] hid these things from the wise and prudent, and [He hath] revealed them unto babes.”* (Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21) If you'll put your intellectual pride in the dust, and say, “Speak to my heart, Lord Jesus,” He'll show you. He'll show you.

### **III. Faith Is Its Own Best Evidence**

Now, the third thing I want to say is, faith is its own best evidence. I believe because I believe. God's Spirit bears witness with my spirit that these things are true. Taste and see for yourself. *“Taste and see that the LORD is good.”* (Psalm 34:8) Oh, how sweet to trust in Jesus!

### **Conclusion**

Thank God for the Bible, God's immutable, infallible Word of God. *“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my [Word] shall never pass away.”* (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33)

# The Amazing Word of God, Part 1

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: September 10, 2003**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3:16**

**Sponsored by: Sponsor**

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,  
for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

## Outline

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B. Some Deny It

A. Some Distort It

B. Some Dissect It

A. Some Disregard It

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II. The Historical Accuracy of the Bible

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## Introduction

I've been asked by the staff to teach my class in this, ah, auditorium. I teach on, during, ah, this time on Wednesday nights when we have the, ah, network of teaching across the, ah, Disciple Life. I teach on a course, ah, what, entitled, "What Every Christian Ought to Know." Many of you have been through this course. And if you have, you're going to get it reinforced tonight. If you've never been in the course, I'm delighted to have you here. But we're going to be teaching on Wednesday nights, ah, during these forty days on, ah, "What Every Christian Ought to Know."

Tonight, we're going to be talking about how we know the Bible is the Word of God. Next Wednesday night, we're to, gonna be talking about how to be saved and know it. The next Wednesday night, if the Lord tarries, we're going to be talking about the eternal security of the believer. Then, we're going to be talking about what happens when a Christian sins. Then, we're going to be talking about, ah, believer's baptism, why and how. And we're going to be talking about things like this. These are basic, fundamental truths.

Now Micah sang, "I Believe in You, Lord Jesus." But why do we believe? What basis do we have? We have to have a word from God.

Find, if you will, 11 Timothy, ah, chapter 3 and verse 16. Here is a rudimentary, fundamental verse in the Word of God. Listen to it. Learn it. Write it upon your heart. Listen to it, church. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 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.”

You will never be any greater in your Christian life than your conviction concerning the Word of God. I’ve been a Christian now for more than half a century. What keeps me going is not how I feel. It is what I know; what I know that has come from the Word of God. The Bible is not the book-of-the-month. It is the book of the ages. Is outlived, out loved, out lifted, outreached, outranked all other books put together. There is no book like the Bible. We read the Bible, and the Bible reads us.

I was on an airplane. I went up to the front to get a newspaper. I met a man up there, well dressed, button-down collar, ah, a business suit on, and he was looking for a newspaper. And we got in a discussion. He said, “What kind of newspaper are you looking for?” I said, “I’m looking for a conservative newspaper.” I said, “What kind are you looking for?” He said, “I’m looking for a liberal newspaper.” And I said, ah, “What do you do?” He was a Washington lawyer. He said to me, “What do you do?” I said, “I’m a Baptist preacher.” And so we got in a little discussion. He said, “Well, what, ah, what kind of book, what do you read, anyway?” I said, “Well, I read books and journals and, ah, news magazines and newspapers, devotional books, but I am primarily a student of the Bible.” He said, “Well, do you speak to people?” I said, “All the time.” “A few?” I said, “No, a great many.” He said, “Well, if you don’t read any wider than that, how do you know what to speak about?” I said, “Well, mister, man only has three problems.” “Oh,” he said, “no, man has many more problems than that.” I said, “No, he only has three.” He said, “All right, what are they?” I said, “Sin, sorrow, and death.” “Oh,” he said, “there are more problems than that.” I said, “Well, you go think and see if you can give me a fourth problem.” I said, “There’s not a problem in the world that is not a subset of sin, sorrow, and death.” He said, “I don’t agree.” I said, “Well, think about it and come up with a fourth problem.” After a while, he came back to me, and said, “Man only has three problems - (laughter) sin, sorrow, and death.” That’s the only kind of problems there are in the world. Every other problem is a subset of one of those three problems. Now look up here. This is the only book in the world that has the answer to those three problems (amen). No other book has the answer to the problem of sin. No other book has the answer to the problem of sorrow. No other book has the answer to the problem of death except the Bible. We ought to be very grateful for the Bible.

#### A. **Some Despise It**

Now there’s a war against the Word of God today, and there are those who literally despise it. They hate the Bible. For whatever reasons, they would wish that the Bible

were obliterated.

**B. Some Deny It**

But not only those who despise it; there are those who deny it. They don't hate it; they just say, "I don't believe it. I don't believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God."

**A. Some Distort It**

There are others, like the cults, who don't despise it or deny it; they distort it. They, ah, they massacre the Bible with their interpretations. And there are plenty of those around. One of the ways that I know the Bible is the Word of God – it has stood up under so much shoddy preaching. Ha, ha. It has to be the Word of God.

**B. Some Dissect It**

Then there are those who don't distort it, but they dissect it. They come to the Bible like it is a math book rather than a love story, and they bring their minds to it and try and pick it apart piece by piece and pry out the treasures from the Word of God. And that cannot be done.

**A. Some Disregard It**

Then, I suppose, however, the greatest enemy of the Bible are people who call themselves Baptists who sit in our churches. Ah, they don't despise it. They don't deny it. They don't distort it. Ha, they just disregard it. Now they give lip service to the Bible, but they don't really study it.

I would not ask tonight for a show of hands as to how people in this room spend more time with the newspaper and television than they spend with the Word of God. Aha, that would be embarrassing. If I were to ask you, "How many of you believe everything you read in the newspaper?" none, except an imbecile, would raise his or her hand. If I were to ask you, "How many of you believe everything you read in the Bible to be true, ah, as God gave it?" you would lift your hand. But then, if I were to ask you, thirdly, "How many of you spend more time in the newspaper that you don't believe than you do in the Bible that you do believe?" ha, ha, you'd be embarrassed. Ah, we disregard the Bible to our own hurt. *These hath God married and no man shall part – dust on the Bible and drought in the heart.* You will not be any bigger, any better, any stronger than your belief in the, in, in the Word of God.

Why is it so important to understand the Bible is the Word of God? Your salvation depends upon it. Your salvation depends upon it. Your salvation is based on the gospel, and the gospel comes out of the Word of God. Apart from gospel truth, no one is saved. If you want somebody to be saved, you've got to give them something to believe. And what are you going to give them? The Word of God. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Your growth as a Christian depends upon the Word of

God. “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.” Your sanctification depends upon the Word of God. Jesus said, “Sanctify them with Thy truth: Thy word is truth.” Your assurance depends upon the Word of God. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.” Friend, I cannot tell you how important it is that you have a solid conviction that the Bible is the Word of God – distinct, different, better, higher, more glorious than any other book that was ever written.

Now I want to give you five reasons why I believe the Bible is the Word of God. And I pray God that He will write these five reasons indelibly upon your heart and so you can say with confidence, “I know the Bible is the Word of God.”

## **I. The Scientific Accuracy of the Bible**

I’m going to start with the first reason, which is where the Bible is so often attacked. I believe the Bible is the Word of God because of the scientific accuracy of the Bible. Now there are those who will tell you, “Well, of course, the Bible is not scientifically accurate because it was written thousands of years ago.” Now, before you say that, make certain that you know two things. Make certain that you know science, and make certain that you know the Word of God. You see, the Bible does not always agree with science, and for that I am infinitely glad that the Bible does not always agree with science.

If you’ve ever been to Paris, you most likely have visited the Louvre, that great, ah, library and art museum there in Central Paris. In the Louvre in Paris, in one section of books, there are three and one-half miles of books on science, three and half miles. That’s a lot of books. Almost every one of them obsolete because science is changing. Science does not stay fluid. What is called a scientific fact in one era is not in this era. As a matter of fact, in, ah, 1861, there was a French Academy of Science that wrote a little pamphlet, a little book. It was an anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Bible book, but it was a scientific book in that day. And they listed what they called fifty-one incontrovertible facts that prove the Bible scientifically wrong. Fifty-one scientific facts! Let me tell you the interesting thing about that. Today, more than a hundred years later, there is not a reputable scientist who believes one of those so-called fifty-one facts. Now aren’t you glad the Bible, therefore, did not agree with the science of that day? Had the Bible agreed with that science, then the Bible would have been wrong. You give the scientists enough time, perhaps they’ll catch up with the Bible.

When a scientist says a good word about the Bible, that doesn’t give him more faith in the Bible. Just a little more faith in the scientist. Ah, if you look at the Bible from a scientific point of view, it is, ah, miraculous what the Bible teaches about science.

For example, you and I take it for granted that the earth is suspended in space. This

celestial ball floats in space. Well, men didn't always know that. You would not know it unless somebody had taught you in a way that you could just sit here in this auditorium and figure that out. The ancient Egyptians, who were incredibly intelligent and had done great things in mathematics and science, who built the pyramids that were antiquities even in the time of Christ, they believed that the earth was supported on five pillars, five gigantic pillars that held up the earth. Well, if that's ridiculous, let me tell you about what the Greeks believed. The Greeks believed in their mythology that the earth was held on the back of a, of a giant whose name was Atlas. Have you ever seen a picture of a man with the world on his shoulders, that man named Atlas? And that's the supplicated Greeks. The ancient Hebrews, excuse me, Hindus in their sacred text believe that the earth stood on the backs of huge elephants. And when the elephant shook themselves, that was earthquakes. Well, somebody said, "But now, wait a minute, wait a minute. What are the elephants standing on?" "Oh," they said, "the elephants, they're on the back of a huge tortoise, a great big turtle." Then a thinker said, "But now, wait a minute. What's the turtle on?" They said, "Well, the turtle is on the back of a huge coiled serpent." "But now, wait a minute. What is the serpent on?" Not to worry. They had an answer. The serpent is swimming in a cosmic sea. So that's the science of that day.

Now we would expect to find, perhaps, some of that mythology in the Bible, but in Job chapter 26 and verse 7 we read this: "He (God) stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." "...hangeth the earth upon nothing." That's a great scientific fact, that the earth is there suspended in space. How did **Job** know that seven hundred and fifty years before the Lord Jesus Christ was born? Well, excuse me, how did Job know that - perhaps the oldest piece of literature, written literature, known to man, that God hangeth the earth upon nothing in Job 26, verse 7.

Now, you and I take it for granted. Not only is the earth floating in space, but we take it for granted that the earth is a sphere, that it's a globe that is a ball. Men didn't always know this. By observation, you would think that the earth is flat or relatively flat. Ha, there may still be some of you in the Flat-Earth Society, but most of us believe that the earth is round.

I remember as a little boy being enthralled with the idea of Columbus who was sailing, ah, west to find the East Indies. And they said, "Columbus, you'd better be careful. You may sail off the edge." That always concerned me because I wondered how, what kept the water from pouring over the edge of the earth. And, ah, I remember learning in grammar school, as you did, in 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue. It was not until that time that men, who had conjectured that the earth may be round, finally conceded that the earth is round. Of course, we have no difficulty with that today because our space ships from outer space can look back and take pictures of this blue planet—round, floating in space. But seven hundred and fifty years before the Lord

Jesus Christ was born, Isaiah said in Isaiah chapter 40 and verse 22: It is (God) that sitteth upon the circle of the earth..." And the word for circle that Isaiah used is not a circle like I would draw in plain geometry on a piece of paper. It's a word that means sphere or globe.

Now, you and I take it for granted that the stars are without number; that is, without human number, uncountable. There was a man who must have wearily rubbed his eyes when he laid down his pencil because he had made his charts. He had counted the stars. His name was Hipparchus. He was the noted astronomer of that day, and he had counted the stars, and there were one thousand and twenty-two stars. Science – a hundred and fifty years before Christ. Hipparchus counted the stars, and he said, "There are a thousand and twenty-two stars." Now that was science, and that was the science a hundred and fifty years before Christ.

But two hundred and fifty years later, another astronomer came along. And this astronomer, whose name was Ptolemy, decided he would check up on Hipparchus. And so, Ptolemy counted the stars. And he laughed, and he, he said, "Did Hipparchus say there were a thousand and twenty-two stars? Absurd! There are a thousand and twenty-six". So now we have upgraded science.

And it wasn't until about thirteen hundred years later that a young scientist and investor, Galileo, created his first crude telescope and turned it up to the heavens and gave a gasp. For beyond the stars that could be seen with the naked eye were more stars, and beyond those more stars, and beyond those more stars, and beyond those more stars, and millions and billions uncountable stars there in the canopy of space. And now with the giant Hubble telescope, men look out millions of light years and there are stars upon stars upon stars.

I was reading in a scientific journal where one astronomer said, "If you want to have some idea about how many stars there are in the universe, there are more stars in our known universe than there are grains of sand on all the seashores of all the earth." Did you catch that? Now, if that doesn't astound you, just go, go to my hometown of West Palm Beach, Florida. Cross the bridge. Go over to Palm Beach and get a city block and start counting the grains of sand. No, I'm not talking about in one locale, one city block. I'm talking about all the seashores of all of the earth. Well, kind of ludicrous, isn't it, with Hipparchus saying a thousand and twenty-two stars?

But what did Jeremiah say? In Jeremiah chapter 33 and verse 22, Jeremiah said, "The host of heaven cannot be numbered..." You can't count the stars. "The host of heaven cannot be numbered..." Now how did Jeremiah know that? How did Job know the earth is floating in space? Ah, how did Isaiah know that the earth is round? How did Jeremiah know that the stars can't be counted? I'll tell you how they knew. We already read it. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." God made all of that. God knows

all of that. These men didn't have modern astronomy, but they knew that.

Now let's move from astronomy. Let's move into the area of physiology and biology. Ah, you and I take it for granted that the blood in our body is a red river of life, that it is necessary for life. I took a course in human anatomy and physiology, and I had to learn all the things that the blood does. And to name a few, it carries food to the cells. It carries away waste from the cells. It carries energy to the cells. It fights disease. It maintains a constant temperature in the body. Those are just a few of the big things that the, that the earth, the, the, ah, blood does in the human body. But it was not until the year 1615 that a physician, William Harvey, discovered that the blood even circulates in the body. That's fairly recent, ah, times – that the blood circulates. Now we know with hematology and all of the study of this red river of life the incredible properties of the human blood. It is amazing. But men didn't know this, ah, until days of modern science and microbiology.

As a matter of fact, in relatively recent times when men would get sick, they would often attribute it to bad blood, and they would bleed people for all manner of ailments that had nothing to do with blood. That barber pole – that's not a piece of peppermint candy. That represents a bandage, because it was the barber who had the sharp instrument. And they would often take a sick person to the barber. He would cut them, and they would bleed blood into a basin with the hopes that it would make them well.

As a matter of fact, the father of our country, George Washington, got sick with a pulmonary disease. And, of all things, they bled him. He didn't get well. They bled him again. He still didn't get well. They bled him the third time, and they bled George Washington to death. That's the way the father of our country died. Today, they may have given him a blood transfusion. I think the politicians have tried to get even with us ever since that time and bleed us to death. Well, it is a shame that they did not know the Word of God. Leviticus chapter 17, verse 14, speaking of the blood, says, "For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof..." An incredible scientific statement that there is life in the blood.

One of the most interesting books that I have read is a book called, "None of These Diseases," written by a medical doctor, Dr. S. I. MacMillan. And Dr. MacMillan, ah, studied not only the scientific truths in the Word of God, particularly in what we call the Pentateuch, penta meaning five, the first five books of the Bible – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And Dr. MacMillan studied these because they were written by Moses. But Moses was educated in the University of Egypt. You know that Pharaoh paid his tuition. And the Bible tells us clearly and plainly that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

Well, the Egyptians, ah, had some, ah, some wonderful medicine. The Egyptians

were very, ah, wise people, and they've done, done things that our, our doctors are still studying, like how the Egyptians embalmed and some of those things – remarkable! The Egyptians did brain surgery, other things, back in the time of Moses. But there is a medical volume that the Egyptians wrote called the Papyrus Ebers. And in there is much of the medical knowledge of the Egyptians that was taught by the Egyptians, studied by the Egyptians in the time of Moses when Moses was growing up, and Moses learned this, ah, knowledge, most likely, if he knew all of the wisdom of the Egyptians. Let me tell you some of the ridiculous medical techniques in the Papyrus Ebers.

For example, ah, to prevent the hair from turning gray, anoint it with the blood of a black cat which has been boiled in oil or with the fat of a rattlesnake. Now I never knew that a rattlesnake had fat. Oh, you think that's ridiculous. For people who are losing your hair. When it falls out, one remedy is to apply a mixture of six fats, namely those of the horse, the hippotamus, the crocodile, the cat, the snake, and the eyebeex. So, if you're losing hair, there it is. And, ah, to strengthen it, anoint it with the tooth of a donkey that's been crushed in honey. Now I don't think that'll work, but if you're losing your hair, I do have a remedy for you. You can take persimmon juice and alum and rub that on your head. Now it won't grow you hair, but it'll shrink your head to fit the hair you've got (laughter). For splinters that were stuck in, here's what the Egyptians said. You take worms' blood and donkey dung. Can you imagine the tetanus spores that would be in donkey dung? And you would put that upon, ah, a splinter or something that would impale you or wound you. Other drugs that you might have during that time would be lizard's blood, pig's teeth, rotten meat, moisture from pig's ears, milk, goose grease, donkey hooves, and even excreta from animals, including human beings and donkeys and antelopes and dogs and cats and fly excreta. That would be hard to gather (laughter). Now, now, this, this is the medicine that these vaunted, intelligent Egyptians practiced, according to Papyrus Ebers. Aren't you glad, ladies and gentlemen, that you don't pick up the Bible and read any of that in the Bible? Now, remember, that was Moses. That's what Moses studied. You don't read that in the Bible. Aren't you glad that we don't read something about the earth on the back of a man named Atlas, or being supported by five pillars, or, or standing on the back of elephants, standing on the back of a tortoise, on the back of a snake in a cosmic sea? I'm glad we don't read that in the Bible.

Now, in, in the Middle Ages, in the Middle Ages, there came the Bubonic Plague. It was called the Back, the Black Plague in the fourteenth century. It was so devastating that one out of four people died. One, two, three, you're dead. One, two, three, you're dead. One, two, three, you're dead. Think about it. Devastated. They tried to do everything they could do to stop the Black Plague. They, they couldn't figure out, ah, what caused it. And everybody was frightened of the Black Plague. Estimated sixty

million people died. It was one of the greatest natural disasters in human history.

But it was the Word of God that brought it to a conclusion. Not the scientist, but the Word of God. Finally, somebody turned to the Book of Leviticus, chapter 13, verse 46: “All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.” That is, if he has the plague, quarantine him! Get him away! That’s what they do today with people with sores. That’s what they do today when people who have these communicable diseases. Now you, you’re put away. You’re quarantined. Well, now, now this was written way before the day of microbiology, way before the days when anybody had any idea what a germ is. Germs are invisible. They didn’t know what germs are.

In 1840 there was something that took place in, ah, the hospitals in Vienna. One out of every five expectant mothers was dying of infection. They would go in for pre-natal examinations and they would get infected. And the doctors were going from one examination room to the next examination room to the next examination room without washing their hands. And so one expectant mother would be infected, and the doctor would forthwith infect all of the others that he examined.

There was a doctor, Dr. Simmelvise, who got to watching that. He was the head of the hospital. He said, ah, “From now on, you are going to wash your hands, ah, before you examine.” As a matter of fact, the doctors in that day would go from the morgue and do an autopsy on a cadaver and, without washing their hands, would come in and do a pelvic examination on expectant mothers. And he said, “You will wash your hands when you leave the morgue before you go into make these examinations.” Well, when he did that, ah, after, after this, only one out of eighty-four died just by washing the hands when they came out of the morgue. But then, one time, ah, ah, eleven out of twelve died in a row, even after they’d washed their hands after they’d come out of the morgue. Simmelvise said, “Now you will wash your hands between every examination.” Oh, the doctors said, “We can’t do that. Why, that, that takes too much time.” They almost drove him insane, but he stood his ground. Now what doctor today would even begin to think about going from patient to patient without scrubbing or without changing to latex gloves?

Well, friend, ah, what does the Word of God say about all of this? Well, look, if you will, in, in Numbers chapter 19, verses 14 through 19: “This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.” That is, for the bacteria to die. And notice this: “And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, it is unclean. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.” Again, they had no idea about a germ. Don’t think you know about germs because you’re so smart. You can’t see them. You can’t taste them.

You can't feel them. But God says, "Don't contaminate people."

Well, I wish I had more time to talk about that. But I just want to say this is only the first reason. I can see you're not listening very fast, so we're not going to get through all this tonight, so you'll have to come back for part 2 the next Wednesday night. But we'll go as far as we can.

I'm just telling you the first reason that I believe the Bible is the Word of God is the one that is so often, ah, criticized for, and that is its scientific accuracy. There's not one scientific error in the Word of God if you understand true science and understand the Word of God. And you don't have to sit behind the thumb, the, the door, sucking your thumb, ashamed to stand up for Christ and the Bible.

## **II. The Historical Accuracy of the Bible**

Now, secondly, I believe the Bible is the Word of God not only because of its scientific accuracy, but because of its historical accuracy. Now the Bible is not primarily a book of science. A wise man has said, "It's, the Bible is not written to tell us how the heavens go. It's written to tell us how to go to heaven." I agree with that. But the God who wrote the Bible is the God of all science. And Jesus said, "If I've told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" But we can believe the earthly things of the Bible.

But not only is the Bible not a book of science; it is not a book of history, per say, but it is historically correct. And, ah, another wise man said, "The Bible, while it may not be a book of history, per say, it is His story. It is the story of God."

But people have lampooned the Bible because of its history. They've said, "Well, the Bible's not historically correct." A great, ah, scholar, Dr. S. R. Driver, was a man who studied the ancient languages, a brilliant scholar. He laughed at the idea that Moses even wrote the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch. He said it was impossible for Moses, if he lived in that time, to have written the Bible because men did not know how to write during that time. Ah, so, ah, writing was an art that was, ah, not known in Moses' day. But there was another man who, Dr. Petrie, and others, in Northern Egypt, came across some tablets. I studied about these in school many years ago – the Tel El Armarna Tablets. These were clay tablets that a woman uncovered when she was spading her garden in Northern Egypt. And what they were was, ah, messages stamped in the clay, letters in writing from people in, ah, Palestine to people in Egypt, and people in Egypt to people in Palestine, and they were business letters and correspondence. Not only did they know how to write; they had a post office, probably about as good as ours, sending letters back and forth. Now why, this man, Dr. S. R. Driver, was a brilliant man. He was just flat-out wrong. They did know how to write in the time of Moses. And as we've told you also, how could the Papyrus Ebers have been written had they not

known how to write?

Let me give you another historical ev, ah, illustration. Many of you have read the Book of Daniel. In the Book of Daniel, there's the story of the handwriting on the wall. Remember, Belshazzar had a feast with a thousand of his lords and ladies? And he was drinking from the vessels that had been carried away from the temple of God. And in the midst of this, ah, Bacchanalian feast, a gruesome hand begins to write on the wall. "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." It was Daniel who came in and read the handwriting on the wall and told the king, "That says that you've been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Your kingdom is coming to an end." But the point of the whole matter is this: That Belshazzar said to Daniel, "Daniel, if you can read the handwriting on the wall, I'll make you the third ruler in the kingdom." Now the historians laughed at that story. They said, "That's impossible. We know it's impossible because we have the historical records of the ancient Babylonians, and we know that the last king of Babylon before it fell was not a man named Belshazzar. It was a man named Nabonidus or Navbonidus," whichever way you prefer to pronounce it Nabonitus is the way I'll pronounce it. "Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon. And we have no record of any Belshazzar. This is obviously a pious fraud. Somebody wrote this story. It never happened. There was no handwriting on the wall. It never happened." And so they, they ridiculed the Bible...until one day the spade of the archeologist uncovered a cylinder. Guess whose name was on it? Belshazzar's name. And guess what they later discovered about Belshazzar? That Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, and that he and his father ruled together. Now the secular historian was quite correct when he said that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon, but he was quite wrong when he said that Belshazzar was not. They were co-regents. Nabonidus, according to more history, was a, ah, a big game hunter and a world traveler. And the kingdom was run not by Nabonidus, but by Belshazzar. Now you think with me. Doesn't it make more sense now that Nabonidus said to Daniel, "If you can read the handwriting on the wall, I'll make you (what?) the third ruler in the kingdom." See, there are already two. But now, question: Suppose they had not found the cylinder with Belshazzar's name on it? Would that have made the Bible any less true? Of course not. It would have been true without that so-called cyc, ah, ah, archeological evidence. It would make no difference. What I'm trying to say is that the Bible is historically true. You can, ah, bank on the record of the Word of God.

## Conclusion

So, ah, what I'm going to do tonight, I'm going to draw a line here in my notes, and, ah, we'll come back next Wednesday night and I'm going to talk to you about, ah, three more reasons why I know that the Bible is the Word of God. But there are some great questions in the Bible. One of those questions in the Bible is, how shall we escape if we

neglect so great salvation? I mean, if you turn from God's Word, there's no escape for you. Another great question is, what will you do with Jesus who is called the Christ? Isn't that a great question? And you will do something with Him. You will ignore Him or listen to Him. You will accept Him or reject Him. You will crown Him or crucify Him. But you will do something with Jesus. You say, "Well, I won't decide about Jesus." You just decided not to decide, which is a decision. Another great question in the Bible, what must I do to be saved? Thank God for the answer. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." How do I know? Not because I feel it. The Word of God tells me. Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. And I can tell you on the authority of the Word of God that if you will trust Jesus Christ, He will save you instantaneously. He'll be with you continually. And He'll keep you eternally. Amen? Bow your heads in prayer. Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you know tonight that you're saved, and you're certain of your salvation, would you begin to pray for others around about you who may not know that they're saved or may know that they're not saved? Sincerely pray now. You may know the person next to you. You may even be married to them. They may be on the church staff. They may be a deacon. But just pray for them. Say, "Lord, if this person next to me is not saved, help them tonight." Now I want to lead you in a prayer. And in this prayer tonight you can receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.

# The Amazing Word of God, Part 2

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: September 17, 2003**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3:16**

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*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,  
for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

## Outline

Introduction

- I. The Wonderful Unity of the Bible
- II. The Fulfilled Prophecy of the Bible
- III. The Ever-Living Quality of the Bible
- IV. The Transforming Power of the Bible

Conclusion

## Introduction

Take God's Word. Find 2 Timothy, if you would, chapter 3 and verse 16. What we are doing is studying together a series of lessons that I call Back to the Basics, what every Christian ought to know. And we began this, this, ah, past Wednesday night talking about how we know the Bible is the Word of God. Now the problem with last Wednesday night is you did not listen fast enough, so we still have some work to do on that first lesson. So we're going to do a little, ah, review, a recapitulation, and then we're going to finish that lesson on how we can know the Bible is the Word of God.

Now look at the Scripture, 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 16, and it is a key seminal Scripture on the Word of God. Listen to it. "All Scripture (not some), all is given by inspiration of God..." That means it is the breath of God. It doesn't mean that the Scriptures are breathed into. What that literally means, that word theo, theoneustic, means that the Scriptures are the breath of God. All Scripture is given by the breath of God.

What you're hearing right now is the breath of Adrian. You see, my lungs have air, and my diaphragm and my chest muscles are pushing that air up over through my esophagus, over my larynx, and my tongue and my teeth and my lips are...and, by the way, it's passing over my vocal chords that are vibrating. And then, my tongue, my teeth, and my lips are forming that into particular sounds. And so what you're hearing literally is the breath of Adrian.

Scripture is the breath of God. It is as true as if God Almighty stood in the pulpit and spoke those words. That's the reason Jesus said in Matthew 4:4: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word (now listen to this) that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

Now, when you read the Bible with that in mind, that what you're hearing is really the breath of God, the words of God, over and over and over again in the Bible the Bible calls itself the Word of God; literally thousands of times, the Word of God. So look at it again. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (that means what is true), for reproof (that is, ah, what is wrong), for correction (how to get right), for instruction in righteousness (how to stay right); that the man of God may be perfect (that word *perfect*, *teleos*, means mature. You want to be a full-grown Christian? "...that you may be mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." All good works.

Your Christian life depends upon your assurance that the Bible is the Word of God.

Your salvation depends upon your understanding the Word of God, for the Word of God is the gospel. If you want people to believe the gospel, you've got to give them the gospel to believe. And the gospel is the Word of God.

Your assurance comes from the Word of God.

How do I know I'm saved? Not because I feel it. Because I know what God has said. First John 5:13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life."

My growth depends upon the Word of God. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby." You come to me, and you say, "Pastor, I'm just so weak. I can hardly get out of bed." Say, "Good lord, have you been to see the doctor?" "Yes, but he doesn't seem to know what's wrong with me. I'm just so weak I can hardly move. And I, I just, I just don't have any strength." I say, "Well, what are you eating?" "Well, nothing. Oh, I, I, I come to, I eat once a week on Sunday mornings at eleven. That's all I eat." Poor thing. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby."

And then, the Bible speaks over there in Hebrews 5 about the meat of the Word. Your spiritual power depends upon your knowledge of the Word of God. There is awesome power in this Book.

The reason Bellevue Baptist Church is the church that it is, having come one hundred years in her history, is it has been a church that has been centered in the pulpit, and that pulpit has propounded and expounded the Word of God.

Ah, evangelism, all of it, goes back to the Word of God. Your usefulness. You cannot be shaky about the Word of God and be a great Christian. The Bible is not the Book-of-the-month. It is the Book of the ages.

Now I was in the process of giving you some reasons why I personally believe the

Bible is the Word of God. And, by the way, I believe that when I started preaching with all of my heart, and I believe it more now than I did then. How could that be if I believed it with all of my heart then? Well, I loved Joyce with all of my heart when we got married, and I still love her more now than I did then. Friend, I am telling you that, ah, you can be assured that the Bible is the Word of God.

Now the first reason I gave you last Wednesday night was we believe the Bible is the Word of God because of its scientific accuracy, because that's where it's attacked mostly, at its science. And we talked to you about the fact that before you say the Bible is not scientifically accurate, make certain that you know, number one, the Bible and, number two, that you know science.

One woman said she knew the Bible wasn't the Word of God because the Bible says that Adam and Eve ate an apple in the Garden of Eden, and apples don't grow in the Mesopotamian Valley where the Garden of Eden was. It, it, you know, that's superb ignorance. The Bible doesn't say anything about Adam and Eve eating an apple to begin with. Ah, the Bible doesn't mention the fruit on the tree, just the pair on the ground, ha (laughter). Ah, it's, it's amazing. It is amazing.

Make sure, number one, you know the Bible. Make sure, number two, that you know science. And we gave you some wonderful illustrations of the science of the Bible. We ss, talked about the astronomy of the Bible, how the Bible shows that the earth is suspended in space, how the Bible shows that the earth is round, how the Bible teaches, before the days of modern telescopes, that the stars are without number. We dealt with that. We won't redo that again.

We talked about not only the astronomy science, but we talked about the physiological science and the human body. We talked about, ah, how the Bible gives rules of health and hygiene, how the Bible discusses the power, life-giving elements in the human blood, and all of these things.

And then, we, we talked not only about, ah, the Bible and its scientific accuracy, but we talked about the Bible and its historical accuracy, how men for years doubted that, ah, Belshazzar ever existed, as the Book of Daniel tells that he existed, or how the people knew how to write in the days of Moses, and so forth, and we dealt with that. If you were not here last Wednesday night, you'll have to get the tape to get all of that. But we said that the Bible is historically accurate. And the spade of the archeologist has time and time again confirmed and affirmed the, ah, impeccability, the inerrancy of Scripture. So those are the first two reasons we gave – the scientific accuracy of the Bible and the historical proof or accuracy of the Word of God.

## **I. The Wonderful Unity of the Bible**

Now let me give you the third reason. This is all fresh material now. We're taking off. All,

all of that was by review. Did you remember any of that before? Okay. Thank you.

Now here's the third reason. I believe the Bible is the Word of God because of the wonderful unity of the Bible. Now the Bible is a Book that has a unified message from, ah, beginning to end. You say, "Well, that's not unusual." Well, now let me tell you something about the Bible. The Bible is one Book, but it is more than one Book; it is sixty-six Books – thirty-nine in the Old Testament, twenty-seven in the New Testament. And the Bible was written over a long period of time, over about sixteen hundred years. You think of that. The Bible was written by forty or more different authors. The Bible was written in about thirteen different countries. The Bible was written from people from all kinds of backgrounds. As you look at the various authors of the Bible, some were shepherds, some were kings, some were soldiers, some were priests, some were fishermen, some were scholars, some were historians, some were professional men, some were common laborers. What a plethora, what a, what a panoply, what a immense number of occupations and backgrounds make up the people, the forty different authors, who were the human penmen of the Bible. And these people who wrote the Bible wrote on at least three different continents. And they wrote in all kinds of places. Some of the Book of the Bible were written in prison, some were written in fields, some were written in deserts, some were written in caves, some were written in palaces, some were written on ships, some in homes. You could not get a greater variety of people and places. And, indeed, you could have a greater variety of languages, but you still had a great variety of languages of those who wrote the Bible. And not only that, but they wrote on all kinds of subjects and in different styles. Now take all of that. So you've got sixty-six Books written over sixteen hundred years and put them all together, they make one Book that has one story from Genesis right on through to the Book of the Revelation. Friend, it is amazing. It is a Book that does not contradict itself historically, scientifically, ethically, doctrinally. It is one Book. How can you explain that apart from divine inspiration? Dr. R. A. Torrey gave this illustration. I think it's a classis illustration.

Suppose we were to build somewhere in the United States. We'll say, build here in Memphis, Tennessee, a monument to honor all fifty-states of the United States. From my home state of, ah, Florida perhaps we'd have Carl stone. From Georgia, granite. From another state, marble. From another state, gypsum. From another state, gray stone, brownstone, all of the various kinds of stones. And let's suppose these stones are cut in the quarry and boxed and shipped to Memphis, Tennessee. They are different sizes, different shapes. Some are square. Some are cylindrical. Some are trapezoidal. Some are rectangular. Some have shapes for which there is no name. And some are shipped by rail. Some come by plane. Some come on boats and some by trucks. And these stones all come here to Memphis, Tennessee. And the workmen begin to uncrate

them and assemble. And they come together. Every piece begins to interlock. All of the hues and the colors begin to match. There's not one stone too many, not one stone too few. No stone needs to be built up, and no stone needs to be shaved down. And when it is finished, there is an incredibly beautiful temple, a monument. Let me ask you a question. Would you say that just happened, that just, just happenstance? No! If you're a thinking person, you would have to say that was not an accident. There had to be an architect who designed it and sent the specifications to the quarry for that to happen. Is that not right? Of course. I mean, do you, you don't, ah.....

Now, when you have the Bible, that it comes together from all of these backgrounds that I have described to you, and you put it between leather covers, no longer sixty-six Books, but one Book that has one theme, which is redemption. It has one hero, the Lord Jesus Christ. It has one villain who is the devil. It has one purpose, the glory of God. I've been studying this Book for more than a half a century seriously. I'm not finding hidden flaws. I'm finding hidden beauty. I'm finding things that are amazing. The Bible is a remarkable Book. It's like a coat where you pull a thread here and it wrinkles way up here over here somewhere. It is a, it is a seamless garment of truth. Why do I believe the Bible is the Word of God? Well, I believe the Bible is the Word of God because of its wonderful unity. Now that's the third reason. Okay. I'll say, "Got it." You say, "Got it." Got it? Okay.

## **II. The Fulfilled Prophecy of the Bible**

Now, ha, number four. Here's the fourth reason I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God: Because of the fulfilled prophecy of the Bible. Only God can prophesy. No one else, apart from God, knows the future – no one! The only future that you know is the future that God has revealed in His Word. All of these so-called psychics on television, I hope you don't call those pathetic people. Let me ask you a question. If they know the future, how come none of them win the lottery? (laughter) I read recently where ss, one of these networks went bankrupt. I wonder if they saw it coming? (laughter). Only God can prophesy.

Now God, in the Bible, has predicted thousands of events that have already come to pass and have been fulfilled and others that will be fulfilled. Therefore, you can take a child of God, lock him away, put him in a dungeon with a Bible and a candle, and he will know more about the future than all of the wise acers and the prognosticators put together apart from the Word of God.

If we wanted to spend time talking about fulfilled prophecy, we couldn't do it in a half an hour. We couldn't do it in a day. We couldn't do it in a week. We could not do it in a month. We could not do it in a year to do justice to the fulfilled prophecy in the Word of God.

If we were to take just one subject, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the focal point and the spirit of all prophecy, and look in the Old Testament, the prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, there are more than three hundred exact prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ that are in the Old Testament. Every one of them are absolutely correct.

Do you know what the naysayer says about the fulfilled prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ? And, by the way, the, the at, the, ah, the mathematical probability that only eight of these prophecies could have been fulfilled is so mathematically astounding that the ratio of chance, it comes up with a number that we don't have a number for in the human language. But I'm not talking about eight. I'm talking about, ah, three hundred plus prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Now how does the naysayer deal with that? He says, "Well, Jesus wanted people to think that He was the Messiah, so He just arranged to fulfill these prophecies." Well, let's see if that's true.

First of all, He arranged where He would be born. Pretty good arrangement, ha, ha. He, He arranged that He would be born in Bethlehem. Micah 5:2 says He would be. Matthew 2:1-5 says He was.

Number two: He "arranged" that He would be born of a virgin. Pretty good arrangement, huh? Ah, Isaiah chapter 7.

Moreover, He arranged that He would be crucified, and it was prophesied centuries before crucifixion was even known. If you read Psalm 22, Psalm 22 is written, and I remind you it was written by David hundreds of years before the Lord Jesus Christ was born here upon this earth. You read Psalm 22. Psalm 22 reads as if a person was standing at the foot of the cross. It talks about the piercing of His hands and His feet. It talks about the casting lots for His garments, the casting of lots for His garments. It talks about the words that people would say to Him as they scorned Him and mocked Him on the cross. It talks about the very words that Jesus Christ would utter from the cross before crucifixion was even known as a form of capital punishment. The Jews had stoning for capital punishment. And we read in Psalm 22, "...they pierced My hands and My feet. They cast lots for My garments." Yes, He arranged all of that, ha, ha, ha, yes, if you believe He just arranged it.

He, ah, also, as this arrangement, He persuaded two thieves to be crucified with Him, one on the right hand and one on the other as is prophesied in Isaiah chapter 53 and fulfilled in Matthew chapter 27.

Also, He arranged that Judas would betray Him for thirty pieces of silver, Zechariah 11:12. Fulfilled in Matthew 26, verse 15.

Now here's the classic arrangement. He arranged that after He was crucified He'd be raised again the third day. And that is prophesied in the Word of God that He would be raised again on the third day.

Now He arranged all of this. Well, the truth of the matter is He really did arrange it because He's God. And God caused all of this to come to pass in His infinite wisdom. But there's no way that it was humanly arranged. These prophecies were not fulfilled, for the most part, by the friends of Jesus, but by those enemies who had nothing to gain, who really hated Him and would not want to do anything that would attest to the fact that He was, indeed, what He was and who He was, the Son of God.

What does the Bible say about all of these prophecies? Well, I'll sum it up in Matthew chapter 26 and verse 56: "But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled..." That the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. No other Book knows the future, and no one knows the future except what God Himself reveals. One of the undeniable affirmations of the Word of God, fulfilled prophecy. If you had no other reason to believe that the Bible is the Word of God than fulfilled prophecy.

### **III. The Ever-Living Quality of the Bible**

So far I've talked about scientific accuracy. I've talked about historical truth. I've talked about wonderful unity. I've talked about the fulfilled prophecy of the Bible.

Now let me give you another reason that I believe the Bible is the Word of God, and it is the ever-living quality of the Bible. No Book has ever had as much opposition as the Bible. Men have laughed at it. Men have scorned it. Men have abused it. Men have misquoted it. Men have made laws against it. There was a time in Scottish history when even to own a Bible was a crime worthy of death.

Voltaire was a brilliant man. He was a French atheist. Voltaire took out after the Word of God. He lived, ah, about three hundred years ago. Voltaire said, "In my lifetime, fifty years from now, the Bible, the world will hear no more of the Bible." Quite a boast. "Fifty years from now, the world will hear no more of the Bible." Ha, ha. Well, Voltaire's been dead for about three hundred years. But in the very house where Voltaire made that statement the French Bible Society, the Geneva Bible Society, rather, ah, did a wonderful business distributing Bibles. They were stacked from floor to ceiling in Voltaire's house, ha, ha. Ah, friend, listen. Ah, there, there are a lot of people who've pronounced the death of the Bible, but the corpse has outlived the pallbearers. The Bible is, as I've said, not the Book-of-the-month. It is the Book of the ages.

Let me give you a verse, 1 Peter chapter 1, verses 24 and 25: "For all flesh is as grass..." Hey, folks, you're going to wither and so will I. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth forever..."

Now I've had my share of education. I went to school eight years past high school. I lived in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. But here I am, believing and sharing a Book that is millenniums old. Think about it. Think about it. Think about this Book that is alive and well in the 21<sup>st</sup>

Century, loved, revered, studied – an incredible Book.

One of the ways I know the Bible is the Word of God – it stood up under so much shoddy preaching, ha, ha. It's amazing! The Bible has longevity to it. Who else would go to a Book as old as the Bible and study it and carefully analyze it in a new and a modern age? It's, it's one of the great, great truths of the inspiration of the Scripture is the ever-living quality of the Bible. Now there are, there are those so-called theologians who want to re-examine the Bible today. As far as I'm concerned, I'd just as soon trust a group of blind men with some lightning bugs in a jug in a cave trying to examine the noonday sun, these people to examine the Word of God. As far as I'm concerned, we need to re-examine these so-called theologians. The word *theos* means God; *logos* means Word. They're supposed to believe the Word of God. Theologians – they're like Grape Nuts. They're neither grapes nor nuts (laughter). They don't know the theos. They don't believe the logos. Friend, the Bible is a Book that has survived the ages. You throw the Bible in the fiery furnace and it will come out without the smell of smoke in its clothes. The Bible survives. The Word of our God endures forever. The Bible is an indestructible Book.

#### **IV. The Transforming Power of the Bible**

Now let me give you another reason, and this will be, ah, the final reason. Not the only reason, just the final one here tonight that I believe the Bible is the Word of God. And, ah, that is the transforming power of the Bible, the transforming power of the Bible. The Bible, this Book, has incredible power. I mean, living power. The Bible says of itself in Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword..." The word *quick* literally means alive. It comes from the Greek word *zoion*. It's the word we get our word *zoology* from or *zoo* from. It speaks of living things. And quick and powerful. The word *powerful* comes from the Greek word *energes*. It's the word we get our word *energy* from. And what it literally means is the Bible is alive and it pulsates with power. You read other Books. Friend, this one reads you. I have preached the Bible long enough to know that it has power. Romans chapter 1 and verse 16, the apostle Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation..." And the word he used for power there is the Greek word *dunamis*, the word we get dynamite from. It is the, the dynamite of God is in this Book. You could not preach the Bible, as I have for as many years as I have, without understanding that there is power in the Word of God.

You know, when I preach, I look at you and you look at me. For some strange reason, I often say this, people sitting out there have the idea that maybe I don't see them. Well, you see me, don't you? (laughter). And I watch people. I try to look into the faces of people as I speak. And I, I know that sometimes there'll be a person who'll

come in. And maybe his wife has badgered him to come. And he'll come, and he'll check out the light bulbs and he'll look around. Who are these people? Look at the size of this place. Why, who's that? Who's that guy? And, you know, and, and, and, and they, they just kind of come to critique everything. Really, they're there pretty much against their will, but there. And they're not sure whether they believe what I'm preaching or not, but probably are pretty cynical and pretty critical. But they come and they listen, and they listen, and they listen, and the Bible begins to do its work. I'm not talking about my rhetoric. I'm talking about the Word of God itself. The Bible says of itself, "Is not my word like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

You can take a hammer and begin to tap a rock. You don't have to, you don't have to hit it with a great, heavy blow. Just keep tapping (tapping sound). The rock will split. The rock will split. I've seen it happen so many times. I've seen people come whose lives are transformed by the Word of God.

I know one of our finest members here in this church. I'll not call his name because I don't have permission to do that. Oh, he's such a wonderful man. He came to listen to me teach when we were down at the old church. He came to what I call then the Pastor's Discovery Class. I taught it on Sunday morning at 9:30. And, ah, he came and he went through the whole thing one time. I could tell he's sizing me up and everything. But he came back the next time. Went through it again. Begin to wonder, *Could this be true?* Went through it again. Went through it again. And, finally, he said, "Yes, I believe." He's one of our finest leaders in this church. Now what is that? That's the Word of God. That's the power of the Word of God.

What is, is there a secret to the ministry that God has given me the privilege of having? Yes, but it's an open secret. There's power in the Word of God. If you take this Book, pray over it, analyze it, organize it, illustrate it, and apply it, it will change lives. It will change lives. There is power in the Word of God. The Bible is saving to the sinner.

Billy Graham began. By the way, I, I knew Billy Graham. I have a picture of Billy Graham and myself when Billy was in his 30s. I remember when Billy Graham began to speak, and I heard him in, in the early 50s. Billy then was a flaming, young evangelist. Many times he'd wear these red ties, David. But if any of you ever remember Billy speaking in those days, Billy would say, "The Bible says. The Bible says." And he would stand behind the Word of God. "The Bible says." And that was his authority for preaching.

Billy Graham went to preach in England in a great arena there, the Haringey Arena. And this was unusual for an American evangelist to come to staid Britain to preach. And all of the newspaper were talking about this flamboyant evangelist. They had all kinds of stories about him and how he was a showman and a huckster and all of this. But Haringey Arena filled up to hear Billy Graham. It was, it was a big event in London.

Sitting way up there in the stadium in the stands were two men, and they were talking about the evangelist, whether or not he was a money-grubber, whether he was this or that, a huckster, or whatever. But Billy opened the Word of God and began to preach. One of these men was a medical doctor. And the medical doctor, when the invitation was given and Billy said, "Come to Christ," the medical doctor came, turned to this man who, the two of them had been critiquing and criticizing, and the medical doctor said to him, "I don't know about you, but I'm going down there to give my heart to Jesus Christ." And the man sitting next to him said, "And I'm going with you. And here's your billfold. I'm a pickpocket" (laughter). What changed those people? The Word of God. I've seen it happen so many times. I know that it is saving to the sinner.

I'll tell you something else. It is sweet to the saint. It is sweet to the saint. To delight in the Word of God. Ah, one man said, "I have no greater joy than to be in a nook with the Book." I have an inner witness in my heart that the Bible is the Word of God. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them." Saving to the sinner. Sweet to the saint.

Sufficient for the sufferer. You'd have to be a pastor to go in and out of the hospital to visit people, talk to people whose hearts are broken and crushed, sometimes with mental anguish, sometimes with great financial duress, sometimes with bodies that are wracked by pain. These people don't want to read from the Sears' catalog. They're not interested in a Book of science. They're not interested in some work by Tolstoy. They want a word from God. And I'm telling you that the sweet promises of the Word of God can soothe a wrinkled brow, can speak peace, give satisfaction to the thirsty soul. I've seen it happen so many times.

I'll tell you something else. The Word of God is sufficient for the scholar. I don't pretend to be the greatest scholar, but I've spent my life in this Book. I want to reiterate what I said a while back. I believe it when I started. I believe it more now. No one who has studied the Bible would even dare to say he's gotten to the bottom of the Book. You know a little fear I have in the back of my mind? I'm afraid some day, somewhere, somebody's going to find out how little I know about the Bible. I mean, I feel like I've just got my foot inside the door, and yet I've given my heart to this. Somebody said, "The Bible is like a pool. Shallow enough that a little child can come and get a drink of water without fear of drowning and so deep the scholars can swim in it and never touch bottom." The Bible transcends the mind of natural man because it contains the mind of God. Its depths are immeasurable. And you will never, ever, ever say, "I have mastered the Book."

## **Conclusion**

Thank God for the Bible. It is like a mountain whose peak reaches out of sight. It's like

an ocean whose depths no one can fathom. It is an endless song. It is a never-ending river of truth. I want you to believe that the Bible is the Word of God. And the Bible was written not primarily to tell you how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven. It is God's love letter.

Again, I remind you the Bible has but one theme, and that is redemption. One hero, Jesus. One villain, Satan. One purpose, the glory of God.

Bow your heads in prayer. And if you're not certain that you're saved, tonight is the night that you need to give your heart to Jesus. Now I realize we're in a Wednesday night prayer meeting. I realize that most, if not all of us here, are professing Christians. But the devil had just as soon send you to hell from the pew as he had the gutter. I'm going to ask that we all get quiet and no one stirring. And if you've never really received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, the Bible is God's love letter to you. And I promise you, on the authority of this Book, that He will save you tonight and He'll keep you saved if you'll trust Him. So I want to lead you in a little prayer. And in this prayer you can ask Christ to come into your heart. Would you pray this: "Dear God." Speak to Him. "Dear God, thank You for loving me. Thank You, Lord Jesus, that You died for me and shed Your blood and paid for my sin on the cross with Your blood. Thank You that You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You. I receive You into my life as my Lord and Savior and Master, and I turn my life over to You. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be. Save me, Lord Jesus." Did you ask Him? Then, pray this way: "Thank You for doing it. Now give me the courage to make it public. In Your name I pray, amen."

# The Tragedy of Spiritual Desertion

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: August 6, 1995**

**Main Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 4:1–11**

*“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.”*

2 TIMOTHY 4:10

## Outline

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## Introduction

Take your Bibles and turn to 2 Timothy chapter 4. And, while you’re turning, let me ask you this question: Do you know somebody who is a member of Bellevue Baptist Church who used to be active in this church and they’re not active any more and yet their name is still on the church roll? Do you know somebody who used to be an evangelist, or a pastor, or a deacon, or a soul winner who is not now serving the Lord—as a matter of fact, has turned his back on the Lord? Think about someone like that. If you know someone like that, I want you to get that person in your mind as we read the Word of God tonight. I want to talk to you tonight about “The Tragedy of Spiritual Desertion.”

Now, I’m reading from 2 Timothy chapter 4, beginning in verse 1, and I want to read

right on through verse 11: *“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world., and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”* (2 Timothy 4:1–11)

I want you to look at verse 10: *“Demas hath forsaken me.”* (2 Timothy 4:10) Now, Demas was one of the most notable Christians in the Bible. Demas was a companion, a consort, a helper of and with the Apostle Paul, a dear man of God, a gifted man of God, a useful man of God, but then he quit. He turned his back on the ministry. He turned his back on the Lord. He turned his back on the Apostle Paul. He deserted in the midst of the battle.

Now, Paul is writing this from prison. Perhaps even outside his prison cell he could hear the executioner sharpening his lethal ax. They’re about to take off Paul’s head. Paul’s in the Mamertine Prison there in Rome—a dark, filthy, slimy hole. He needs help. He needs comfort. He needs strength. He’s concerned about getting the gospel of Jesus Christ out around the world. And, there was a man who had been his helper, his comrade, his teammate. And now, the aged, old apostle in his time of need says, *“Demas is gone. He’s gone”*—*“Demas hath forsaken me”* (2 Timothy 4:10)—*“Demas has become a backslider.”*

And, I want this message tonight to be a warning to you because any of us are in danger of being a backslider. And, don’t think that you have arrived to such a degree that this is not a danger to you. If it happened to Demas, under the right conditions, it could happen to you. And, the Apostle Paul himself said in 1 Corinthians chapter 9 and verse 27: *“I keep under my body”*—that is, *“I keep my body in subjection”*—*“and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”* (1 Corinthians 9:27) That means a deserter, somebody that can’t be used any more for the Lord. The Apostle Paul said, *“I watch myself. I keep myself night and day. I keep my body, this physical frame, in subjection, lest I become a deserter.”*

Now, there are three or four things I want you to notice about Demas tonight, and I'll pray God that He'll write them upon your heart.

## I. The Work He Left

First of all, I want you to notice the very work that he left. He had been called to be an evangelist, a soul winner. Look, if you will, in verse 5: *"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."* (2 Timothy 4:5) Now, Demas was one who was an evangelist; he was a minister. He was a worker with the Apostle Paul.

Let me give you some scriptures. Just put these down in your margin. Philemon, verses 23 and 24—listen to this: Paul said, *"There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers."* (Philemon 1:23–24) Now, Paul is in prison, and he's writing again another letter, this time to Philemon. Paul had a way of getting in and out of prisons all the time. When he would go for a revival meeting, he didn't say, "What kind of hotels do you have?" he said, "What are the jails like there?" And, Paul's writing, and he's saying, "Look"—to Philemon, he says—"Demas was one of my fellow workers."

And again, you might put down "Colossians chapter 4 and verse 14." And, he's signing the letter, and he says, *"Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, [salute] you."* (Colossians 4:14) Demas was a key man. When the Apostle Paul is talking about his key men, he mentions Demas. Demas was to Paul, in a real sense, like Bob Sorrell is to me—a supporter, a helper, a confidant, a prayer warrior. And now, here's Paul in prison, and Demas is gone. He has forsaken him. He's a backslider. He's disobedient. He's a quitter. He's a slacker. He's a shirker. He has turned his back on the work of God. He left the work of God. That's the work he left.

## II. The World He Loved

Now, I want you to notice why he did it. Notice the world he loved. Look again, if you will: *"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."* (2 Timothy 4:10) Now, here's the reason he did it: he loved the world. Now, what does he mean by "the world"? He's not talking about the world of nature. God created that world, and Jesus loved the world of nature. Jesus said, *"Consider the lilies how they grow."* (Luke 12:27) He's not talking about the world of human beings. We're to love that world. *"For God so loved the world"*—that world of human beings—*"that he gave his only begotten Son."* (John 3:16) What's he talking about when he says, *"Demas [has] loved this present world"?* (2 Timothy 4:10) The word there for world is *cosmos*. It means "a system, an order, a philosophy." The Bible puts it this way in 1 John chapter 2, verse 15: we're told to *"love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world,*

*the love of the Father is not in him.*" (1 John 2:15) Again, he's not talking about Planet Earth—it's all right to love nature. He's not talking about people—you ought to love people. But, he's talking about a system, a cosmos.

### **A. The World's Prince**

It has a ruler, a prince. Did you know that this world has a prince—this world system? Listen to these scriptures. I have too many scriptures for you to turn to so jot them down. John 12, verses 31 and 32: Jesus, facing the cross, said, *"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."* (John 12:31–32) Who is the prince of this world? Well, he's Satan. John 14, verse 30: *"Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."* (John 14:30) He meant that the prince of this world, the devil, had nothing that he could accuse the Lord Jesus of. And, in John chapter 16 and verse 11, Jesus said that the Holy Spirit is coming to convince the world *"of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."* (John 16:11) And, the Apostle Paul said in 1 John chapter 5, verse 19: *"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."* (1 John 5:19) What that literally means is the entire world is in the bosom, in the lap, of the wicked one. There is a prince, a vile person, the mastermind behind this world system.

And, there is, friend, a great conspiracy. There is a mystery of iniquity. And Satan, the prince, has a number of underlings, demonic spirits, an intricate organization, a network of wickedness. Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 12 says, *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* (Ephesians 6:12) And so, there's a system out there; it has a prince, and that prince has a network of underlings who are doing his work. And, he's warring against this church, by the way, and against you as a Christian.

### **B. The World's Philosophy**

But, not only does the world have a prince; it has a philosophy. Now, it has an enticing network of ideas and values that have been skillfully woven together to entice you and to draw you away. Listen to these scriptures. First Corinthians 2, verse 12: *"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God."* (1 Corinthians 2:12) Do you see the antithesis there—"the spirit of the world" and "the spirit which is of God"? First Corinthians 3, verse 19: *"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."* (1 Corinthians 3:19) This world has an incredibly cunning system of wisdom, but Paul says, "It's all foolishness." First Corinthians 7, verse 31: *"for the fashion of this world passeth away."* (1 Corinthians 7:31) This world has a way of doing things, called *"the fashion of this world."* (1 Corinthians 7:31) Second Peter chapter 2 and verse 20 speaks of *"the pollutions of the world."* (2 Peter 2:20)

### C. The World's Purpose

Now, the world has a prince, and the world has a philosophy. And, the world has a purpose. This system has a purpose. And, what is this purpose? Well, it is a calculated plan, an unwavering purpose to come against Christ and His Word. There is a world system that is absolutely hostile to everything this church stands for and the things of God.

Listen to these scriptures. John 7, verse 7: Jesus said, *“The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.”* (John 7:7) The works of the world are evil, and Jesus said, *“The world hates me.”* Now, you see the tragedy: Demas loved the world system that hated our Savior. Listen to John 14, verse 17. Jesus says, speaking of the Holy Spirit, He says, *“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.”* (John 14:17) This world system is completely blind to what I’m talking about tonight. What I’m saying tonight the people of this world and the people in this world system do not understand. They cannot understand. *“The Spirit of truth...the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.”* (John 14:17)

John 15, verse 18: Jesus said, *“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.”* (John 15:18) Every so often, somebody will try to flatter me and say, *“Pastor Rogers, everybody just loves you.”* That is so foolish to say that. There are people in this world who literally hate me, and they will literally hate you if you take a clear and a bold stand for Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *“If the world hate you, [you] know that it hated me before it hated you.”* (John 15:18)

And, if you’re a sister, if you’re a friend, to this world that hated our Lord, do you know what the Bible calls you? An adulterer or an adulteress. I’m not talking about sexual physical adultery; I’m talking about spiritual adultery. James 4, verse 4: *“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?”*—the word *enmity* means “warfare”—*“whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”* (James 4:4) There is a system. It has a prince. It has a philosophy. It has a purpose, and that purpose is to come against God.

### D. The World's People

And, I’ll tell you what else it has: it has a people. There are a lot of people in the world system. Luke chapter 16 and verse 8: the Bible says, *“The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”* (Luke 16:8) So, Memphis is divided into two categories of people: the children of light and the children of this world. And, you need to understand that if you’re a child of God. Don’t expect this world to honor you. This world will break your neck if it can. We are twice-born men in a world of once-born men, and what we believe and how we act is completely contrary to the system of this world. *Our faith starts at a different source, follows a different course, ends at a*

*different conclusion.* And, because you're not of the world, you'll find yourself going against the tide all of the time.

### **E. The World's Pull**

Now, you think not only of the people of this world, but you think of the pull of this world. This world is constantly pulling on me, and it is constantly pulling on you. That's the reason the Apostle Paul said in Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"*—now, listen to this, next—*"And be not conformed to this world: but be...transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* (Romans 12:1–2)

Do you know what the Church is? The Church is a called-out body of people. The word *church* is the word that is translated "ekklesia." It's a translation of *ekklesia*, and the word *ekklesia* means "called out." When God saved us, He called us out of the world system. Listen to this—John 15, verse 19: *"If ye were [in] the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."* (John 15:19) Now, every so often we talk about a "worldly Christian." That's really a contradiction in terms. Billy Sunday used to say, "To talk about a worldly Christian would be about as foolish as to talk about a heavenly devil." We are not of this world. We have been called out of this world.

Now, we hear a lot of talk today about the separation of church and state. We need more preaching about the separation of church and world. God's people are not of this world. There is a system. Friend, it has a prince. It has a philosophy. It has a purpose. It has a people, and it has an incredible pull on the people of God. This world wants to take me and you and squeeze us into its mold, and you feel that pressure every place you go. We're not to be conformed, but we're to be transformed. (Romans 12:2) That's the reason the Apostle Paul gave us this warning, and I want you to listen to it because had Demas listened to it, he would never have fallen—1 John 2, verses 15 and following: *"Love not the world"*—now, why did Demas forsake Paul? *"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."* (2 Timothy 4:10) But now, here's what the Apostle Paul says—*"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"*—well, what does that mean, not to love the world? Well, thank God, he tells us—*"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh...the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."* (1 John 2:15–17)

Now, what was the work he left? He left the work, the companionship that he had with the Apostle Paul. He was in the inner circle. When Paul would write a letter and

give the greeting, the salutation or whatever, he would include Demas. But, why did he leave the work? Because of the world that he loved. He loved this present world.

### III. The Way He Lapsed

Now, here's the third thing I want you to consider with me: the way he lapsed. Why did he do this? I mean, what was it that caused him to fall, and how did he fall? Well, look again in verse 10, if you will. It says, "*Having loved this present world.*" (2 Timothy 4:10) "*Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.*" (2 Timothy 4:10) Now, the word *forsaken*—the language means something sudden. It happened just like that. But, "having loved" speaks of something that had gone on for a long time. Now, he loved the world—"having loved [the] world." (2 Timothy 4:10) Here's Demas loving the world, loving the world, loving the world, loving the world, and then he forsakes the Apostle Paul. "Having loved the world"—that's a process. "He forsook me"—that's a crisis.

Every now and then we'll see somebody that is in church. Maybe they serve as a deacon, maybe they serve on the staff, maybe they're an evangelist, maybe they're a pastor, maybe they're a missionary, and then suddenly they fall. And, we say, "What happened to him? What got into him? How could this happen? Look how far he fell." No. You don't know how low he was living. It didn't happen suddenly; it happened gradually, imperceptibly. I'm sure the Apostle Paul was not aware of what was happening in the heart and life of Demas because had he, he would have moved to do something about it, doubtless. I'm not sure about that, but I am sure of this: that he loved the world a long time before he forsook Paul.

Did you know that you can be in an environment like this and love the world? Did you know that you can be associated with godly people? Here was Demas. He was on the missionary trips with Paul. He was Paul's right-hand man. I mean, you wouldn't think that a man could be with someone like Paul and then fall in love with this world, would you? It wasn't Paul's fault. Paul was a godly man. Paul wrote two-thirds of the New Testament. And, here was a man, again, I want to say, as close to Paul as Bob Sorrell is to me, my associate pastor. And yet, here's Paul in prison, and he says, "Demas is gone. He's forsaken me." (2 Timothy 4:10)

Now, you don't need to repudiate prayer and Bible study in order to backslide; just neglect it. Your heart can grow cold in the middle of Christian service, in a good environment, in a church like this. You see, generally, a man is a backslider in heart before he becomes a backslider openly. There are some of you who may, tonight, be sitting in this church listening to me, and everybody thinks you're a wonderful, wonderful Christian worker, but you have a love for this world in your heart, and soon you may forsake the work of God. You see, a man is generally a backslider in his heart before

he's a backslider openly. Proverbs 14, verse 14: *"The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways"* (Proverbs 14:14)—"the backslider in heart."

Now, do you ever think about what's going to be put on your tombstone? I mean, when you die, what's the epitaph they're going to put there? Well, I really don't know what will be on my tombstone, but you know what I think I'd like is verse 7 right here: *"[I've] fought a good fight, I have finished my course, [I've] kept the faith."* (2 Timothy 4:7) You know, I don't care how far ahead you are in a race—if you quit running, you'll lose it. You know what my desire is, precious friend? It is to finish well—to keep the faith, to finish my course with the flags unfurled, the trumpets sounding, the torch still lit.

It's sad about Demas, isn't it? Demas was a man of God—loved God, served God. Perhaps this is one of the saddest verses in the Bible: *"Demas [has] forsaken me."* (2 Timothy 4:10) How did he do it? This world began to pull on old Demas.

† They asked a man who was in the Boston Marathon this question: he said, "What do you think about your chances of winning?" He said, "Winning? Man, I just want to finish!" Just finish—that's what I want to do. I want to finish.†

#### **IV. The Wealth He Lost**

Well, there's one other thing before we go I want you to notice: not only the work he left, and the world he loved, and the way he lapsed, but I want you to notice the wealth he lost. This is the sad thing. The Apostle Paul said in verses 7 and 8: *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me."* (2 Timothy 4:7–10) Do you see it? Do you see what Demas lost? When a man starts out to serve Jesus—a lady, a woman, a boy, a girl starts out to serve Jesus—and they quit, what do they lose? What is the cost?

##### **A. He Denied His Lord**

Well, number one: He denied his Lord. Every demon in hell began to laugh when Demas quit. Jesus, in the Gospels, told about a man who started out to build a tower and he couldn't finish. Jesus said, "The people laughed at him, said, 'This man started out, but he wasn't able to finish.'" (Luke 14:29–30) He denied his Lord.

##### **B. He Deserted His Friend**

He deserted his friend. You think of the poor old Apostle Paul there in that prison. If he ever needed Demas, he needed him then. I want to tell you something, friend: if I quit, if I backslide, if I leave the work, if I love this world, you know who'll get hurt? I'll get hurt. You know who else will get hurt? You'll get hurt. And, when you quit, I get hurt. *"[We're]*

*members one of another.*” (Ephesians 4:25) I mean, don’t tell me, “Adrian, it’s none of your business how I live.” Friend, it is my business how you live because we’re members of the same body; we belong to one another.

### **C. He Disgraced His Life**

And, when you quit, when you stop, you love this world, you deny your Lord, you desert your friends, you disgrace your life. What a disgrace. Here’s a man been dead almost two thousand years, and we’re standing up and saying he was a quitter. Is that what you want written about you? Is that what you want your children to think about? Is that what you want others to remember you for—you started out and you quit? And, if it’s not recorded in the Bible, I’ll guarantee you it’ll be recorded in heaven that you were a quitter, shirker; you started, but you left; you loved this present world.

Do you think he enjoyed the world? I’ll guarantee you he didn’t. He had too much of God in him to enjoy the world and too much of the world in him to enjoy God. You have to feel sorry for a man like that, don’t you? I’ve said before, *the most miserable man on the face of this earth is not a lost man but a saved man out of fellowship with God.*

### **D. He Dissipated His Reward**

He denied his Lord. He deserted his friend. He disgraced his life, and he dissipated his reward. What a sad day at the Judgment Seat of Christ for Demas! The Bible says, *“Hold...fast [that] thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”* (Revelation 3:11) I don’t know about you, but I want a crown. You say, “What do you want to wear a crown in heaven for?” I don’t. I want to put one at Jesus’ feet, and I want the soul winner’s crown. I want to be faithful. I want one day to stand before Him and hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” I want to say, “Lord, I fought a good fight. I kept the faith. I finished my course.” Demas lost his wealth, his spiritual reward.

## **Conclusion**

Now, let me just give you a bright thought, and I’ll be finished. Could Demas have come back? After he deserted, could he have come back? Well, read verses 10 and 11 again; look at it: *“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.”* (2 Timothy 4:10) Now, skip to verse 11: *“Only Luke is with me”—now, watch this—“Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”* (2 Timothy 4:11) Now, who was Mark? Mark was another deserter. Mark was one who had deserted the Apostle Paul on his first missionary journey. Mark was, I think, a mamma’s boy. He got out there, and it got hot and heavy; and Mark couldn’t take it, and Mark went home. He went back. Boy, I’m telling you, talk about being hacked! The Apostle Paul was hacked. I mean, he was angry—“spiritually indignant,” I’m sure he would say. Later on, when Paul and Barnabas got ready for another missionary journey, Barnabas said, “I’ll get

Mark,” and Paul said, “No, you won’t. I’m not going to take that guy with us. He’s a quitter.” He said, “I’m not going to have anything to do with him.” Barnabas said, “Well, give him another chance.” Paul said, “I’m not going to give him another chance.” So, Paul and Barnabas split, and Paul went off with Silas; Mark went off with Barnabas. That was twenty-five years, approximately, that had passed; and now, Paul says, “And, by the way, bring Mark, for he’s profitable unto me for the ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:11)

Don’t you like that? Don’t you like the fact that God is the God of a second chance? You know, it was Mark who wrote the Gospel of Mark. It was that quitter, that shirker, that slacker, that deserter, and God gave him another chance. Jacob got right with God at Bethel, and then he got away from God. But, the Bible records he went back to Bethel. Jonah ran away from the Lord when God called him to preach to Nineveh, but God gave Jonah another chance. Samson fell into deep sin, but God gave Samson another chance. Simon Peter cursed and swore and denied Jesus, but God gave him another opportunity and Peter was restored. The Bible says, *“If we confess our [sin], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:9) And, if you’re a deserter—you’re listening to me on the radio, maybe a deserter in this place—or if you have the love of the world in your heart and nobody knows it yet, I want to tell you, if you’ll confess it and forsake it, He’ll cleanse you and give you a fresh start.

Bow your heads in prayer. Heads are bowed, and eyes are closed. Do you love this world that crucified our Lord? Again, I’m not talking about the world of nature. I’m not talking about the world of people. I’m talking about this ungodly system that wants to squeeze you in. Have you been thinking about maybe giving up your service to Jesus? You need to renew your heart and your life right now to Christ.

Father, I pray that you’ll seal this message to our hearts. In the holy name of Jesus.

Now, ask God how this message applies to you tonight. Would you do that right now? Say, “Lord, what is there in this message that I need to learn tonight?” Maybe God is laying some backslider on your heart that you need to go after, or maybe God is telling you, you love this world and you need to repent. Or, maybe you’re a quitter, and you just happen to be here tonight but in your heart you know you have deserted God. You can come back, if you want to. John Mark did, and you can, too. What’s God saying to you?

Thank you, Lord, for your Word tonight. Amen.

Now, look up here. We’re going to sing an invitational hymn tonight. And, standing at the head of each of these aisles will be a minister to receive you. Tonight, if you would like to receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—I’m not talking about deserters tonight; I’m talking about those who’ve never been in the army before—if you’d like, tonight, to enlist in the Lord’s army, if you’d like to be saved, be a child of

God, a man, a woman, a boy, a girl who knows Jesus, if you'd like for your sin to be forgiven, heaven to be your home, and peace to be your legacy, I want you, when we stand tonight, to leave your seat and come forward. And, let your coming forward be your way of saying, "I am trusting Jesus—Him only and Him always—to save me."

"Well, pastor, if I come forward, what would I say when I get down there?" Just tell the minister that you want to be saved or that you're trusting Jesus. We want to go to a quieter place with you and, with just a few moments with an open Bible, show you clearly and plainly how to be saved and seal your decision in prayer. And, you can go home tonight a child of God, put your head on your pillow and know that if you died in your sleep, you'd go straight to heaven. You can be saved tonight.

Others of you tonight may need a church home. And, if you want to make Bellevue your church home, if you're saved and you believe as we believe, want to be a faithful, growing, fellowshipping member, I invite you to come and tell the minister that you want to place your membership here. And, he'll tell you how you may become a member.

Or, you may just have a prayer burden tonight, and you want somebody to pray for you. You come, and one of us will be so happy to pray with you, if you just have a need and say, "I need somebody to pray for me."

Let's stand together as we sing. You step out and come. 

# Worth It All

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** January 9, 1983

**Main Scripture Text:** 2 Timothy 4:6–8

*“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”*

2 TIMOTHY 4:7

## Outline

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Conclusion

## Introduction

I want you to take your Bibles tonight and turn to 2 Timothy chapter 4, and we begin reading in verse 6. And, really, the message tonight is sort of a continuation of the message this morning entitled “Turning Tears Into Telescopes.” Tonight, I want to speak on this subject: “Worth It All.”

You know, we sing another song, “It will be worth it all when we see Christ.” And I think that somehow encapsulates what Paul is saying here in this passage of Scripture in 2 Timothy chapter 4 and beginning in verse 6. Here’s what Paul says: *“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”* (2 Timothy 4:6–8)

Now, the time that Paul wrote this is about A.D. 68. The place, scholars believe, is the Mamertine Prison. Those of you who’ve gone to Rome, the city of Rome, know that right across from the Roman Forum, the ruins of that forum, is a prison called the

Mamertine Prison. And you can go into the narrow, rock-like confines of that prison, as I have done on several occasions, and somehow you just seem to sense that the same Holy Spirit that was there when old Paul was there still blesses visitors to that place today.

And if you think that prisons are bad today, I want to tell you that place where Paul was, was no *glamour slammer*. Paul was in a place that was about as big as, oh, I would say, not quite as far as from here to Jim, maybe two-thirds of that distance, a circular-type prison, a low ceiling, stone floors, stone walls, stone ceiling. The prisoners were let down through a hole in the ceiling—no sanitary facilities; no outside light; no running water; no air conditioning in the summertime; no heating in the wintertime; nothing but the groans of the dying, the complaints of the living; vermin and filth on the floor. And the old Apostle Paul is there. And he's an old man now. And it's at the close of his ministry. And he's looking back. He's taking inventory. And then, he's looking forward, and he is anticipating what is going to come. But Paul, when he does this, is not like so many when they look back and take inventory. For Paul, he did not have to say that youth was a blunder, and maturity was a struggle, and old age was a regret. You see, even though he's in prison, there's the fresh breath of heaven that's blowing through what he writes.

And there are three words that come to me as I look at this passage of Scripture. The first is the word *review*, for he's looking back. The second is the word *release*, for he's ready just to turn it all over to the Lord and to yield his life in martyrdom to the Lord. And then, the third word is the word *reward*, for he's anticipating what is about to come.

## **I. A Place of Review**

Now, first of all, I want you to notice the review of his life. I want you to notice what he says as he reviews his life. Look in verse 7 as he looks backward. He says, "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*" (2 Timothy 4:7)

### **A. Paul Fought as a Spiritual Soldier**

Now, Paul is saying, first of all, that he fought as a spiritual soldier. The Bible says—and Paul was speaking when he said—we are to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." (2 Timothy 2:3) And when God saved Paul, He didn't invite him to a frolic; He invited him to a fight. He didn't invite him to a cushion; He invited him to a cross. And Paul knew what it was to fight and to endure hardness. And as you study the life of Paul, you find out that his body had been scarred by the lictor's lash. You find out that his body had been perhaps emaciated by days of fasting. We find out that Paul fought with wild beasts. He fought with lions. He'd been shipwrecked a day and a night in the deep in the Mediterranean. Thirty-six hours he'd floated around there. He had endured

three shipwrecks. He had a long prison record. He had a 195 stripes laid on his back. He had been stoned and left for dead. And Paul could indeed say, *“I have fought a good fight.”*

He wasn't like some of these modern-day Christians. Already churches are beginning to think what are they going to do on Super Bowl Sunday if the game is played on Sunday night. I'll tell you what we're going to do: We're going to meet and have church, amen? “Faith of our fathers, holy faith! We will be true to thee till death”—except on Super Bowl Sunday. Oh, my dear friends, Paul knew what it was to pay a price to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's a verse of Scripture that is often taken out of context, but I want to put it in context—it's Numbers chapter 32 and verse 23. Here's what the Scripture says: *“But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.”* (Numbers 32:23) Now, what is the context of that passage of Scripture? Let me tell you what it is. God's chosen people were coming out of the land of Egypt. They had come through the wilderness. And they were now ready to occupy Canaan. But there were two tribes, the tribe of Reuben and the tribe of Gad, who did not want to leave the wilderness. They did not want to cross over Jordan. They did not want to go across to the West Bank. They just simply wanted to stay on the east side. They thought that they could scratch a living out of the soil there. And, really, they did not want to cross over. They said, “This is good enough for us. This land is fertile enough for us. And we are willing to stay on this side.”

Joshua said, “All right, you can stay on this side; but let me tell you this: When we get into that land, and the war begins, and the fight begins, you're going to have to lay down your hoes, and you're going to have to lay down your plows, and you're going to have to leave your homes, and you're going to have to come on over and fight with the rest of us. And if you will not do so, you've sinned against the Lord. And be sure your sin will find you out.”

Now, Reuben and Gad didn't want to cross Jordan, and they didn't want to fight. I want to tell you something, friend: There are some Baptists, and some Methodists, and some Presbyterians, while we're talking, who are content to stay on the wrong side of Jordan. They want all of the benefits, they want all of the blisses, of Christianity, but they're not willing to enter and to fight. They want to be comfortable on the wrong side of Jordan while the battle is going on. These kinds of people love Bible conferences, but they don't care much for door-to-door visitation. They talk much about the deeper life, but they never put on any armor. They don't handle the sword. They don't receive any stones. They don't expend any sweat, any blood, any tears. They may complain if the church is not growing; but if it depended upon them, it would not grow at all. There wouldn't even be a need to give an invitation if you depended upon these so-called

“deeper-life people.” And I’m not against the deeper life. But there are many who are “resting in Jesus,” but they’re really just simply rotting in Jesus, because they’re not doing anything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They’re on the wrong side of Jordan. No Christian has a right to be in peace when his brethren are at war. “If ye will not do so, you’ve sinned against the LORD. And be sure your sin will find you out.”

That redheaded Virginian Patrick Henry said, “I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!” That’s what some people believed in one age in our country. We’ve moved to a different generation who have stopped saying, “Give me liberty or give me death!” We have a generation a few years ago who just simply said, “Give me liberty!” But we moved away from that generation. We have a generation today who just simply say, “Give me!” They want to take, but they don’t want to give. They don’t understand that they are to be spiritual warriors.

*Must I be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
While others fought to win the prize,  
And sailed through bloody seas?*

...

*Sure I must fight if I would reign;  
Increase my courage, Lord.  
I’ll bear the toil, endure the pain,  
Supported by Thy Word.*

—ISAAC WATTS

Paul said, “I’ve fought a good fight.”

## **B. Paul Finished as a Spiritual Athlete**

The second thing I want you to notice: Not only did Paul fight as a spiritual warrior, but he finished as a spiritual athlete. Look again in verse 7: “*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course.*” (2 Timothy 4:7) Old Paul looked backward on the way that he’d come. When Paul got saved, when Paul met Jesus, the first thing Paul asked was, “*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*” (Acts 9:6) Have you ever asked that question? He didn’t say, “Lord, what will others have me to do?” He didn’t say, “Lord, what will you have others to do?” He said, “*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*” And the Lord took Paul and put him on a course. It was a straight course. And Paul stayed on it. God said to Paul, “I want you to be the apostle to the Gentiles.” And when Paul looked back on his life, he could say, “*I have finished my course.*”

Do you know the will of God for your life? Are you in the plan of God? Is there a purpose for your life? If not, find one and get at it. Most of the people in America are trying to be happy. Happiness is not something that you find by looking for it; happiness

is something that you stumble over. It's there automatically when you get on the course that God has given you and you stay on it.

I was reading a report the other day, an education report that said that people need three things to be happy. There are three things that do not give happiness that most people think will give happiness. One is security. The other is comfort. And the other is luxury. What people really need to be happy, according to this report, is a purpose and a meaning to their lives. And that purpose, that meaning to your life, is to find the course that the Lord Jesus Christ put you on, to get on it, and stay on it. Now it was a straight course that God gave to Paul, and Paul did not veer to the right nor to the left. He said, "*I have finished my course.*"

I found this much out about the devil. The devil does not primarily try to get you to go in the wrong direction. He doesn't try to turn you around. He's too clever for that. He just simply tries to sidetrack you. He's tried to sidetrack me all of my ministry to get me off on something else rather than the thing that God has called me to do—maybe to get me off fighting communism; maybe to get me off fighting liquor; maybe to get me off on the racial problem or anything else. But, dear friend, God has given me a commission, and that is to preach the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I'm not saying these other things are wrong. Sure, every time I get a chance, I'm going to pay my respects to liquor. And every time I get a chance, I'm going to pay my respects to racism. And every time I get a chance, I'm going to pay my respects to communism, and say what the Bible teaches on those subjects. But that is not the point. How easy it is for those of us to get sidetracked! And how easy it would be for this church to get sidetracked from the course that our Lord has given us! And the old Apostle Paul could look back, and he says, "I've fought a good fight, and I have finished my course."

Now I want to say something, dear friend—that the way to stay on course is to do what the writer of Hebrews says: to be "*looking unto Jesus,*" who is "*the author and finisher of our faith.*" (Hebrews 12:2) We're to run the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.

God knows I have faults. I know it more than anybody else, except the Lord. And I weep over my faults, and I pray over my faults, and I hate my faults. But I want to tell you this: For thirty years—and I give God the credit, and I give God the glory—I've been able to stay on course. And I'll tell you how I've stayed on course. I've looked to Jesus. I haven't looked to Nashville, Tennessee. I haven't looked to the deacons. I haven't looked to public opinion. And I've not considered what position I may have or may not have. I've just tried to look to Jesus and do what Jesus would have me do. And the Bible says we are to be looking unto Jesus. Nobody can stay on course who doesn't keep his eye on the goal.

### C. Paul Was Faithful as a Spiritual Steward

And the old Apostle Paul had fought as a soldier. The old Apostle Paul had finished as an athlete. And I'll tell you something else he had done: Not only had he fought as a soldier, and finished as an athlete; but he was faithful as a steward. Look again at what he says: *"I have kept the faith"*—*"I have kept the faith."* (2 Timothy 4:7) He did not deny the Word of God. He did not deny the lordship of Christ. He preached the whole counsel of God.

William Booth, who was the founder of the Salvation Army, said the chief danger of the twentieth century would be "religion without the Holy Ghost, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, and heaven without hell." And he was right, because in most pulpits across America that's what you're going to hear. And today, if any of us take a stand for the Word of God, and we do not vary, and we keep the faith, we will be accused of being narrow-minded and bigoted. Let it be! Let it be!

Norman Lear, now the television entrepreneur, who has written the salacious soap opera called "Soap," and who is the producer of "All in the Family" and some other what I would consider to be low-class and salacious forms of entertainment, has founded an organization called People for the American Way. It's an acronym, and it sounds so good. It's really, though, to criticize people like us who believe that there's only one way to heaven, and that is through Jesus Christ; who believe that sin is sin, and that homosexuality is wrong, and adultery is wrong, and drunkenness is wrong, and stealing is wrong, and we say so and won't back up. They say that's narrow-minded, and that we are people who are intolerant. Well, PAW they call it—People for the American Way. I want to suggest another organization. This one is called NAUSEA—National Apostates Uniting Socialist Ecumaniacs and Agnostics. Paul was faithful as a spiritual steward. He fought as a soldier. He finished as an athlete. And he was faithful as a steward. He reviews the past.

## II. A Place of Release

Now, not only did Paul come to a place of review, but he also came to a place of release. Look in verse 6. He says, *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."* (2 Timothy 4:6) Now, the word *departure* is a very interesting word. It literally means my "release"—"the time of my release is at hand." And as I studied this word *release*, I found out that it's a very rich word. It was used in Bible times for a number of significant things.

### A. Release Is a Prisoner's Word

For example, it was a prisoner's word. When a prisoner was let out of prison, when the bonds were taken from his hands and the shackles from his feet, and when he was

set free, they used this word *departure*. It meant a release from prison. And old Paul could see himself getting out of prison and going to glory, so he says, “*The time of my departure is at hand.*”

### **B. Release Is a Farmer’s Word**

But not only was it a prisoner’s word; it was also a farmer’s word. It was the word that was spoken of as the unyoking of the ox at the end of the day, when the old ox had been plowing in the field all day long and now it’s time for the yoke to be taken off his shoulders. And I’m sure that Paul, whose shoulders were stooped and worn with care, could see that Jesus now was about to take that yoke from his shoulders and give him that rest that he’d earned and say, “*Well done, thou good and faithful servant.*” (Matthew 25:21)

### **C. Release Is a Warrior’s Word**

But not only was it a prisoner’s word, and a farmer’s word; it was a warrior’s word. It spoke of the time when that warrior out on the battlefield was ready to go home from the battle. And it was the time when he would take up the tent pegs. It was the time when he would loosen the tent stakes when the battle is over and the warrior is going home. And old Paul is thinking when he’s writing this, “The time of my departure is at hand. Not only am I going to be set free from this prison; not only am I going to lay aside this yoke; but I’m going to pull up the tent pegs: I’m going home.”

### **D. Release Is a Seaman’s Word**

It was a seaman’s word. When a ship would be sailing out of a harbor, and the ropes and the moorings would be untied and the anchor would be weighed, and that ship would sail out of one harbor to arrive in another harbor, they used this same word, *departure, release*, as that ship was released and being set free. And old Paul is saying in his heart and in his mind, “I’m about to set sail. I’m sailing out of this harbor. But there’s another one that I’m coming to.”

### **E. Release Is a Philosopher’s Word**

And it was also a philosopher’s word. When a philosopher had some deep problem, some Gordian knot that he could not unravel, and then, finally, when he saw the answer, when the truth was unraveled before him, some knotty problem was made plain, they used this word. And I believe old Paul is saying, “Soon I’ll understand it all. Now I see through a glass darkly, but the time of my release, the time of my departure, is at hand. And I’m going to know as also I am known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12) Paul was there for a departure, and he was ready for it.

### III. A Place of Reward

Now, the third thing I want you to notice about old Paul as he comes to the end of his life and he looks back: There's a time of review as an athlete, as a warrior, as a steward. He looks at the present, and it's just a time of release to him. He's had a thrilling past. And he has a tranquil present. But now he looks toward the future, and he thinks of the reward that he's going to have. And look in verse 8: *"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* (2 Timothy 4:8)

Now, Paul was anticipating and looking forward to three things: first of all, a righteous crown; secondly, a redeemed company; and, thirdly, a reigning Christ. That's what he's saying in verse 8: *"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,"*—a righteous crown— *"which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day:"*—there is a reigning Christ—*"and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"*—a redeemed company. (2 Timothy 4:8) Paul is getting ready to go to heaven. And so he anticipates all of these wonderful things that I was trying to preach about this morning as we think about the consummation of our salvation. That's the reason the Apostle Paul could say that *"the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."* (Romans 8:18)

You want to use a little sanctified imagination with me right now? Imagine that you are there watching the old apostle. There he is in the Mamertine Prison. He signs the letter. He's waiting. Outside, perhaps, he can hear the executioner sharpening his lethal axe. He knows before long he's going to be beheaded. He hears a noise. The guards come. They extract Paul from that prison: "Come, Paul, it's time to go." And there he goes. See him? His old stooped shoulders, his torn cloak, his grey head. See that little scarred body? See those squinty eyes? There he goes, in my estimation, the greatest Christian that ever lived. He goes on toward the Tiber River that will drink his blood as his head is severed from his body.

And as he, that guard, walks alongside of him, the guard says to him, "Paul, are you singing? What is that noise you're making?" "Oh, just humming." "I don't think I've ever heard that song. What is it that you're singing?" "Oh, just a little chorus we learned at our church. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus." And they take the old apostle. They put his head on the executioner's block. "Paul, we always give our prisoners a chance to say one last statement. Do you have anything to say before the axe falls?" "Oh, yes, I do." "What is it?" "Jesus Christ is Lord"—"Jesus Christ is Lord." Down comes the axe. The head rolls off. The next scene is glory—to be absent from the body; to be present with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:8)

I don't know what happened that next instant, but I think I have an idea of what

happened. I believe that Paul looked into the face of his Savior and said, “Lord, I wasn’t big. Lord, I was ugly. Lord, I had a poor voice. Lord, I had a weak body. But, Lord, I fought a good fight. Lord, I finished my course. Lord, I kept the faith.” And I’m not certain, but I believe I know what Jesus said to him, also. I believe that Jesus said to him, “*Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*” (Matthew 25:21) And I believe the Lord Jesus placed on his head a crown of righteousness. And do you know what I believe Paul did that instant? He took it off and threw it at the feet of Jesus.

## **Conclusion**

And, friend, I want a crown not to wear—not at all; I want a crown to throw at the feet of the One who loved me so much that He died for me. And I want it said of me, “He fought a good fight. He finished his course. He kept the faith.” Friend, it’ll be worth it all when we see Jesus.