

2 Timothy 3:1, 12-15 This know also, that in the last days **perilous** [unravelling] **times shall come**...¹²*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*¹³*But evil men and seducers [impostors] shall wax [become] worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*¹⁴*But continue thou [Timothy] 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 [Timothy] hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

- I. Introduction: No matter what is happening around us (perilous times) we must be faithful to do what is right (punctual)
 - A. Farmers lives are governed by the crop they want to grow and the weather. When the spring comes, they must plant their crops regardless of what is happening in the news. During the harvest they must be in their fields picking the crop despite any other thing going on in society. They must be punctual or they will not reap their harvest.

Proverbs 20:4 *The sluggard [lazy man] will not plow by reason [because] of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.*
 - B. God wants us to be punctual like the farmer in our relationship with Him. Our times of prayer and Bible study are as important as the food that the farmers provide

Job 23:12 *Neither have I [Job] gone back from the commandment of his [God's] lips; I have esteemed [valued] the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.*

2 Timothy 4:2 [Timothy...] *Preach the word; be instant [prepared, ready] in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*
 - C. God will sometimes take up through challenging times in order to train us for an even more serious test of faith that He knows is coming. We need to accept the challenging times so that when things unravel (perilous times) we will be ready.
 - D. The perilous times will cause us to doubt God's goodness. This is normal, and many people in the Bible doubted: Apostle Thomas, John the Baptist, even the Apostle Peter.

II. Live a life of Courage

A. Courage in a day of difficulty “...*all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution...*”

1. Jesus told His followers that it would not be an easy life

Luke 9:23 *And he [Jesus] said to them [disciples] all, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”*

Luke 9:62 *And Jesus said unto him [a man who wanted to be Jesus’ disciple], No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back [to his old life], is fit for the kingdom of God.*

John 16:33 *These things I [Jesus] have spoken unto you [disciples], that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

2. The early church understood the cost and experienced persecution

Acts 14:22 *Confirming the souls of the disciples [Assuring the disciples of their salvation], and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

B. Courage in a day of deception: “...*evil men and seducers [impostors, false teachers] shall wax [become] worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*”

1. Satan and his disciples are very subtle in their deceptions. Words will be given different meanings. A child in the womb will be called a parasite or a “product of conception” in order to dehumanize him/her, so that abortion will be about the pregnant woman only, with no thought for the other life about to be extinguished.
2. The prime target for Satan’s deceit is Bible-believing churches. Many churches and whole denominations that once taught salvation only through Jesus’ blood now have a social gospel that doesn’t teach repentance or God’s wrath anymore. Emotional appeals are used frequently to draw people away from Jesus Christ, their first love.

1 Timothy 4:1 *Now the [Holy] Spirit speaketh expressly [tells us clearly], that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to [following the teaching of] seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

3. Satan has had much success in attacking the Biblical doctrine of inerrancy (there are no errors in the Bible). Many teachers are unwilling to humble their own pride and admit that every answer to man's problems can be found by following the Bible

Matthew 5:18 *For verily I [Jesus] say unto you [Jews listening to Jesus' teaching on a mountainside], Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law [even the smallest punctuation mark found in the Bible must be preserved, nothing can be changed], till all be fulfilled.*

Romans 3:4a *God forbid [that someone would teach that faith is not enough for salvation]: yea, **let God be true, but every man a liar...***

4. Individuals (apart from any church context) can justify open rebellion against God, such as infidelity or stealing, in their own minds. They have deceived themselves into thinking that God's clear instructions do not apply to them. People can even cite Bible verses to justify their sin to themselves.
5. False teachers in the early church would stir up trouble by saying that Jesus' return had already happened and that their local church was not included in that blessed event. Paul reminded them that there would be many who would reject Biblical faith before that event would happen.

2 Thessalonians 2:2-3a ***That ye be not soon shaken in mind** [you are not quickly alarmed], *or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand* [Christ's return has already happened]. **Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first...***

III. Live a life of Convictions "...*But continue [don't doubt] thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of...*"

A. Convictions of Doctrine

1. The Doctrine of the End Times: Perilous times make it easier to 'go along with the crowd.' The crowd will always move you away from Christ. We need to be punctual in perilous times.
2. The Doctrine of Universal Depravity: All people are sinners and need a Savior to restore their relationship with God
3. The Doctrine of the Local Church: God's people will gather together to worship and serve Him in various ways (praising, praying, teaching and learning, serving one another, witnessing, giving, and fellowshiping, etc.)

1 Timothy 3:15 *But if I tarry long [If my coming is delayed], that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to [should] behave thyself in the house of God, which is **the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.***

4. The Doctrine of Forgiveness: As God has forgiven me, I must learn to forgive others. No one has offended me as much as I have offended God. If He can forgive me, I must forgive others.
 5. The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: God will work in my life through the Holy Spirit, who sometimes convicts me when I'm wrong, and sometimes rejoices with me when I overcome some problem He's been working on with me.
 6. The Doctrine of the Word of God: 1 Timothy 4:16 *Take heed unto thyself* [Keep close watch on yourself, Timothy], **and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.**
 7. The Doctrine of Jesus Christ: 1 Timothy 1:15 *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I [Paul] am chief.***
- B. Convictions of Discipleship: "...*the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, **knowing of whom thou hast learned them...***:"
1. Be willing to set an example for others. God uses people along with His Word and His church to affect our lives:
 Philippians 3:17 **Brethren, be followers together of me** [Paul], *and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample* [follow the pattern of those who behave like the example you have seen in us].
 2 Thessalonians 3:9 *Not because we [Paul and those travelling with him] have not power [authority], but to **make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.***
 - 1 Corinthians 11:1 **Be ye followers of me** [Paul], **even as I also am of Christ.**
 2. Be willing to copy the example of others.
 2 Timothy 1:5 *When I [Paul] call to remembrance **the unfeigned** [sincere] **faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.***

IV. Live a life of Confidence: "...**thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**"

A. Confidence in God's Word

1. The Bible was penned by men, but was authored by the Holy Spirit. We can know OF God without the Bible (Romans 1:19-20), but we cannot KNOW God personally without the Bible

2 Peter 2:21 *For the prophecy [Bible] came not in old time by the will of man: but **holy men of God spake** [and recorded] **as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.***

2. The Bible is a living book.

Hebrews 4:12 *For **the word of God is quick** [alive], **and powerful**, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

3. Bible believers have a message of hope in difficult times. The world is more receptive when things are uncertain.

1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and **be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you** with meekness and fear.*

4. Many generations since that early church have been persecuted for their faith in salvation through faith only by grace only. The pilgrims came to the "New World" (North America) to escape persecution first in England, and then in Holland. They had no idea what waited for them when they got on that ship in Holland, but it must have been bad enough for them to take that risk.
5. In our day many places in the world, particularly communist and Muslim countries, people are arrested and executed for believing something other than what the government allows them to believe.
6. All of these are examples to us of people who have confidence in God's Word and its message of salvation

- B. Confidence in God's Work: The local church has been given the task of sharing this message with the world. We must be punctual in these perilous times

1 Corinthians 1:18 *For **the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness**; but unto **us which are saved it is the power of God**.*

- C. Confidence in the Gospel:

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation** to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

V. Conclusion

- A. Have courage during perilous times
- B. Have confidence when conditions look bleak. God can still perform miracles.
- C. Have confidence that, even if God's will is not what you want, God will bless you in a better way as you trust in Him.