

***Introduction...***

**2 Tim 3:12** Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, <sup>13</sup> while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. <sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it <sup>15</sup> and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Most of us are familiar with the phrase, “The honeymoon is over.” This is really a discouraging thing to hear, but we know what it is intending to communicate. It means that the excitement and the emotional high of being newly married has worn off. It doesn’t mean the two people aren’t married any longer, it doesn’t mean that they don’t love each other anymore; it just means that life has settled in and the reality of living with another imperfect person has made its presence known.

We even use this phrase to describe aspects of our life that have nothing to do with marriage. “The honeymoon is over,” could refer to the fact that the excitement we felt about the new car we purchased 6 months ago has worn off. When you first brought it home you couldn’t quit thinking about it. You cleaned it regularly, drove it more than you really needed to, bought weird new accessories for it; but now it’s just a car, sitting in the driveway and costing you money.

Whether it is a new car, a new phone, a new job or even a new relationship; we all know what it feels like for the excitement to wear off and for the “honeymoon phase” to come to an end. **This can happen in our walk with Christ as well. As a new believer everything about Christ is fresh and exciting.** Reading the Bible is like a new adventure every day. Going to church is more meaningful than it has ever been and the desire to learn the Bible and share it with others is strong. But as the years go by the emotion that accompanied your conversion begins to fade.

The excitement about coming to church, singing to God, hearing the Bible taught, and spending time with other Christians is subject to the same, “the honeymoon is over” mentality that plagues the rest of our life. When that happens, or now that it has happened, the temptation is to move on to something else, something new, something different. But in our text this morning the Apostle Paul encourages us to do the opposite.

***Transition...***

Paul is warning Timothy that the pattern of this world is for people to move on, to advance from one thing to another, from bad to worse. They will get bored with one form of sin and move on to another and the temptation will be for us to do the same thing. The temptation will be for us to move on from the faith, to move on from a sincere devotion to the gospel and the Word of God that marked the early days of our faith. To this temptation, Paul says,

**“But as for you, remain in what you have learned (v. 14)”**

**They will move on from one sin to another, but we must remain in the truth.**

This summer we’ve been studying the doctrine of Scripture and we have learned amazing things about this book. It is the very word of God, inspired by God, free from error, sufficient, authoritative, clear, necessary and true in all its parts. **In this final sermon of the series, my purpose in preaching is not to rehash all of the previous sermons, but to encourage you, to challenge you and to plead with you not to turn away from God’s Word but to continue in what you have learned.** It would be a waste to learn all about the Bible and in the end not grow in our love

for it, our appreciation of it, our consumption of it and our faithfulness to it. ***So this final sermon is a plea for all of us, all of you to Continue in the Word.***

***Sermon Focus...***

**I. Continue in what you have learned (V. 12-14)**

**2 Tim 3:12** Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, <sup>13</sup> while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. <sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it

**If you want to live a godly life of trusting and following Jesus, then you will face persecution. That's a pretty sober way to kick things off.** If you want to live for Jesus it is not going to be easy, in fact, it is going to cost you. Jesus warned us about this... (**John 15:18-21**). He was persecuted for what He said and for how He lived; so, His followers can expect in some degree to face the same thing that He faced.

But, our natural human instinct is to avoid persecution and, in some cases, it might be the right thing to do. Fleeing political persecution and/or ethnic persecution is a fact of life for many people all over the world. **But there is a type of persecution that most of us should not only expect but we should also refuse to abandon the way of life that brings it about. The persecution that Paul is talking about here is the direct result of our desire as believers to live like Jesus.**

When a person comes to faith in Christ it is not simply the result of them changing their mind, it is more so a result of the Holy Spirit changing their heart. The Spirit of God changes our heart and opens our spiritual eyes so that we see the truth of our sin and long for the forgiveness of Jesus. The Bible calls this being born-again and it turns our whole life upside-down. It makes us want to turn from our sin. It causes us to want to put aside the life we once lived chasing sin and we grow in our desire to live a godly life that honors and obeys Jesus.

Now, there are other people who haven't been changed the same way we have. The evil people and imposters, as Paul refers to them here, simply continue on in their sin. Their hearts haven't been changed, their minds haven't been changed and therefore their lives don't change. They avoid the persecution that believers face, because they continue to live in the ways of the world, going from bad to worse.

But let's notice the contrast between the Christian and the non-Christian in this passage by looking at the verbs. The non-Christians ***go on***, this word means that they advance and make progress. In what? In sin and deception. They move on from where they are now but the end result is worse than where they started.

But the Christian is to ***continue or better yet, to remain***. Paul tells Timothy, and us by the way, to stay right where you are. He doesn't want us to abandon our gospel hope, nor the desire to live a godly life. He wants us to hold on to our trust in God's Word and not let it go, even in the face of persecution.

Paul knows that Timothy's life is anything but easy. He is a young pastor, surrounded by false teachers and enduring serious harassment from unbelievers. **But so is Paul. Paul is in Rome about to die at Nero's hand. Many of his friends have abandoned him** and he is writing this letter to Timothy, urging him not to abandon the faith but to stay rooted in it.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it

In Timothy's case, he learned the Scriptures from his grandmother and mother.

**1:5** I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

**Paul is pulling out the grandma card and that is not a bad thing at all. Did you know that** it is God's design for the faith to be handed down from one generation to the next? He even instructs us as Christian parents to raise our children to know and trust the Lord. In other words, we are to teach our children a Biblical view of the world, we teach them to trust the Bible and to believe the gospel. It is God's plan and design for our natural family to play the major role in our faith.

Yes, I know that our cultural sensibilities mock such a thing. In the name of progress, our culture teaches us to question what we were taught as children and encourages us to abandon our upbringing in order to discover our true identity. Young people in our culture are taught to question every authority except their own, which is both inconsistent and foolish.

Even within the church, we have been led to believe that the most important thing is the most contemporary thing and anything remotely traditional is wrong. The church has become enamored with novelty and in the name of progress many have moved on from faithfulness to Scripture because it smacks of being too old-fashioned. **But, God wants us to hold fast to the truth that we have been taught.**

Maybe you didn't learn the gospel from your parents because not everyone is blessed to grow up in a Christian family and healthy church. But somewhere along the way you were taught the Word of God. Maybe it was a Sunday school teacher, a youth minister, a pastor or a coach. Maybe you had a neighbor that invited you to church or a boss who encouraged you to take Sunday off and go to church.

None of those people were perfect but they were faithful. They didn't know everything, but they weren't morons either. They were kind, patient, knowledgeable and they were faithful to share the truth with you. Don't abandon that truth. ***Continue in what you have learned and believed.***

Don't abandon the faith of your childhood simply because some professor told you the Bible wasn't true. Don't turn away from the gospel because some modern author made fun of you for believing it. Don't move on from the Scriptures because you too are grasping for something new. ***Continue in what you have learned and believed.***

John Piper was once asked, "Why did you conclude that inerrancy was true?" He surprised everyone when he responded, "Because my momma told me it was true." What an amazingly Biblical answer. He believed the Bible was true and he continued to study it, believe it and follow it, in part, because his mother told him that it was true.

Now there are many more reasons for us to stay committed to the Word of God and we have been learning those reasons all summer, but I also want you to be encouraged to stay faithful to the good things your mother, father, grandmother and other imperfect but faithful teachers have taught you. ***Continue in what you have learned.***

**II. Consider where it will lead you (v. 15)**

from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

**The sacred writings, the Scriptures, which Timothy had been acquainted with since childhood, are able to make us wise leading us to salvation from our sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.** This is the outcome of our devotion to God's Word; wisdom from God that leads us to eternal life with Jesus as Savior, Lord and King.

Being faithful to the Bible will not make us cool in the eyes of the world. Being faithful to the Scriptures will not make the world rush to our doors, at least not in a good way. But coolness and popularity have never been the goal of the Christian life. We want to know Christ and to be saved; the Bible leads us to this end.

**How does it do this?** The Bible doesn't simply tell us what we want to hear, it tells us what we need to hear. The purpose of Scripture is not ultimately to make you smart, successful, powerful, or relevant. The purpose of the Scripture is not to make you feel good about yourself and help you to live your best life now. The purpose of Scripture is to reveal the truth about God and man, sin and judgment, grace and forgiveness.

The purpose of Scripture is to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ.

**But why can it be trusted? 2 Tim 3:16,** "All Scripture is breathed out by God..." This book is the Word of God. Our Creator has spoken to us and He still speaks to us. His word is without error, unchanging, complete, sufficient and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. And the chief domain of knowledge to which it speaks is the salvation of men.

**The Bible reveals to us the story of all things.** It reveals that we are not the product of time and chance; but are the unique creation of the Triune God. We are creatures fashioned in time and space by our divine and eternal Creator. He gave us life, He sustains our life, and He watches over our lives as both a generous provider and a just judge.

Oh, and He is holy while we are rebellious and sinful. We have sinned against our Creator and we continue to sin against Him. **We sin when** we break the law of God. **We sin when** we fail to acknowledge the glory of God. **We sin when** we fail to cherish the love of God, fail to appreciate the goodness of God, **when we fail** to obey the word of God. **We sin** in word and in deed. **We sin in omission and in commission, and unless something changes we will be judged for our sin.**

But God, because of the great love that He has for us, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be born of a virgin, to live a perfectly sinless life, to teach us the truth about our own hearts, and then to die in our place so that by His sacrifice our guilt would be washed away. He was raised from the dead appearing to His disciples and several hundred other people as well.

He calls us to embrace Him as the Savior we need. He calls us to turn from our lifestyle of sin to follow him. He calls us to live a godly life and not to turn from the Word that He has given us. He promises that if we trust in Him we will have eternal life. The word of God is able to make us wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

***Continue in what you have learned and Understand where it will lead you.***

***Conclusion...***

When we started this series on the doctrine of Scripture we kicked it off by looking at Psalm 119 and we have been reading that Psalm together ever since. It is a song of love about the Word of God and my goal in starting this series with a love poem about the Word of God was to try and stir our emotions about the Bible. We have God's Word in our hands. We can trust every word on every page. We can read and hear God's voice every time we open it.

We know these things to be true, because we know the doctrine of Scripture. But the reason most of us struggle to read the Word and apply it to our lives, is not the result of insufficient doctrine. It's most likely the result of our hearts being cold to it. We don't get excited about the Word the way we once did. We aren't longing to know it and apply it the way we once were.

In this passage, Paul is urging Timothy to stand firm in the faith despite the persecution he is experiencing, but for many of us the temptation is not so much about persecution as it is about the way we feel. For some of us the honeymoon phase of our faith has been over for a long time. We just don't get excited about reading and studying the Bible anymore. We haven't stopped believing the gospel, but we aren't allowing the Word of God to impact our daily lives the way it once did.

We need the doctrine in our head to warm the devotion of our hearts and fuel a renewed commitment to God's Word. It's not enough for us to say we are a people of the book, we need to be a people of the book.

Maybe you need some help. I have provided a reading plan that will take you through the entire New Testament in two months. You can pick that up on your way out.

Maybe you need to be challenged. Select a book you don't understand that well (Isaiah, Ezekiel, Revelation) and spend the next month reading, studying, and journaling through that book.

Maybe you need some accountability. Find a friend, a sibling, a spouse, a co-worker, or some other acquaintance and commit to reading the Bible then meeting up in some way to discuss it.

Let's strive to be Christians who know, love and are actively committed to the Word of God. Let the words of **Psalm 119** be our prayer as we close.

172 My tongue will sing of your word,

for all your commandments are right.

173 Let your hand be ready to help me,

for I have chosen your precepts.

174 I long for your salvation, O Lord,

and your law is my delight.

175 Let my soul live and praise you,

and let your rules help me.