

**Thursday, June 29, 2023 • 2Timothy 2:23–26**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What is Timothy to avoid (v23)? What do such disputes generate? Whose slave is Timothy (v24)? What mustn't someone in his station do? How, instead, should he relate to others? What has he been put in place as one qualified to do? What character trait does such teaching require? What manner must accompany his correcting (v25)? Of whom? In Whom is he hoping? That He would give what to whom? For what is this repentance a prerequisite? When they come to know the truth, what will happen to them (v26)? When they come to their senses, by whom will they realize that they have been ensnared? What else will the devil have done to them? Captive to do what?*

**When mustn't a minister or Christian argue, and why mustn't he be argumentative when he does?** 2Timothy 2:23–26 looks forward to the second serial reading of in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these four verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **a minister is a slave, put in place to teach opponents who are willing to hear it, in hope that God will grant them the repentance necessary to know and escape the Satanic danger that they are in.**

**There are times when a minister or Christian shouldn't argue at all.** v23 refers to "foolish and ignorant disputes." There is a sort of person, a sort of arguing, that is nothing but battling. When a fool or ignoramus cannot even consider what you say, but only comes back with the same arguments or attacks, then the only thing that arguing with him can do is produce strife. But producing strife is neither the minister's duty nor hope. Proverbs (Pr 26:4) and the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus (Mt 7:6) also warn all Christians generally, not just ministers, about this. For the rest of this devotional, if you substituted the word "Christian" for "minister," you would be making a fine application of the passage in light of these other texts.

**Even when a minister does argue, he is not to be argumentative.** Our passage forbids quarreling. It commands being gentle, not just when it is easy but especially when it is not: "be gentle to all." It commands patience. It commands humility, even and especially in the midst of correction. And there are three reasons why: the station of the minister, the hope of the minister, and the task of the minister.

**The station of the minister is that of a slave.** This is a more literal translation of his identity at the beginning of v24 and makes quite plain why he would not be quarrelsome, impatient, or proud.

The mustn't be quarrelsome because it is above his station, above his paygrade. The Lord Jesus will have His own quarrel with His enemies and defeat them at the last day. But He has sent out not Lords but slaves as those whom He currently employs in the retrieval of sinners.

The minister mustn't be impatient, because he is on assignment. The Lord has put particular people under his charge and into his way to teach them the truth about God, man, sin, Christ, salvation, etc. What else is he going to do? Whether or not the task is difficult and long, it is his task.

The minister mustn't be proud, because his station is lowly. He is a slave of the Lord, inviting captives of the devil to come to a new Master. For a minister to act proudly would be completely inconsistent with what he himself is, and what is inviting others to be.

**The hope of the minister is the mercy and power of God.** "if God perhaps will grant them repentance." Ministers do not "win" theological arguments because they have so excellently proven their point, because the thing that the opponent needs in order to "know the truth" is not that they would hear new arguments but that they would have a new heart. And so it depends upon the mercy of God, Who loves to give repentance. And it depends upon the power of God, Who is able to give even repentance. Why would a minister speak or act as if his superiority of knowledge or force of zeal can bring about the desired result? The result rests entirely upon the mercy and power of the God Who has appointed him a task and may be pleased to employ the minister in this exercise of God's mercy and God's power.

**The task of the minister is releasing ensnared people from captivity.** This is not something that is done rashly or by force. The opponent is ensnared in a trap, and force of movement is simply an effective way of making things worse. They need to realize the truth, come to their senses, see their captivity. The real opponent is not the sinner in the snare, but the devil whose snare it is! Even when they lash out from within their ensnared captivity, it is really the devil's will that they are doing. Apologetics/evangelism/discipleship is a rescue mission. It ought to be done with sympathy rather than spite, and carefulness rather than brashness. This, too, is the task of Christians when they address one another. The goal of Mt 18:15 and following is to gain the brother. The goal of Gal 6:1 is to help a man whose trespass has captured him. Clear sight to remove the speck from a brother's eye (Mt 7:5) is obtained by the humility of developing that skill on oneself in the first place (Mt 7:3–4). May the Lord make us better slaves in His service, that we might be more useful as He employs us in granting repentance to others!

What are some foolish and ignorant disputes that you have had? Whom have you been trying to help, with whom you could use more of this humility? Who should be an example to you of what that looks like?

*Sample prayer: Lord, we are so thankful that You are merciful and powerful to grant repentance to many who oppose You! And we thank You that, in that work, You even employ us as Your slaves. Forgive us for how often we have forgotten that everything good that we have is by grace. Forgive us for when we have been quarrelsome, harsh, impatient, and proud. Forgive us for when we have failed to care for those who are ensnared by the devil. Remove our guilt, kill our remaining sin, conform us to Christ, and make us useful in His service, we ask, in Christ's Name, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP24 "The Earth and the Riches" or TPH466 "My Faith Looks Up to Thee"**

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Second Timothy 2 versus 23 through 26. These are God's words. But if but avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, Knowing that they generate strife. And the servant of the lord must not quarrel. But be gentle tall. Able to teach patient. In humility correcting, those who are in opposition. If god, perhaps will grant them repentance.

So that they may know the truth. And that they may come to their senses. And escape the snare of the devil. Having been taken captive by him. To do his well. So far, the Reading of gods inspired and inertward.

The instructions in these four verses are, especially for The minister of the gospel or the elder of the church. But they are useful for us. For instance, the proverbs tell us not to answer a fool. According to his folly left. We've become like him. But also to answer a fool according to his folly.

Last tbin in his own eyes. And so the question becomes, how do you recognize If you are letting the fool. Draw you down into his folly. Uh, versus When you are helping someone, To just doesn't understand. Or. Using. The truth to expose the fall in such a way. As that the person has an opportunity.

To humble himself. And the lord jesus tells us not to cast pearls before swine. In the same context in which he is telling us that Uh, we should seek to help our brother.

And so, how do we know? Well, there's some help for that here. This is a void foolish and ignorant disputes knowing that they generate strife. So, there's a certain kind of person or a person who has taken a certain kind of posture. That is. Not inquisitive. But combative. Um, Not.

Someone who is having difficulty. Uh, well they may say i'm having a hard time. Uh, a lot of people say things that aren't the actual case about themselves, Um, i have a hard time understanding how blah blah blah blah. Is often the statement of someone who says I am rejecting.

A particular truth. And i'm using this language to do it. There is a person who Is not open. And we'll find out. What why they're not open in? The subsequent versus it is because what they need is repentance. They don't have merely. A closed mind, they have a closed mind because they have a hard heart.

And, They have our heart. Because, They are in bondage to the devil. They are literally the captives. Of the devil. So, it's important to Uh, recognize a certain type of arguing and just refuse it. Rejected avoidant. The slave of the lord. Let's do loss there in verse 24 slave.

Must not quarrel. You're in a situation of someone in the way they are a reasoning. The only.

The only kind of response. That is available at the time. Is quarreling. You just join. Don't the slave of the lord must not quarrel. It is above his station to be quarrel to quarrel or to be quarrelsome. Here's a slave. The master is the one who would do the quarreling?

And if someone has a quarrel with the truth, they will have a quarrel with the lord Jesus and that's dreadful Uh, but a quarrel with you is not the same thing. And it doesn't communicate to them. The actual trouble that they are in. By having a quarrel with Jesus.

But it helps if we remember our station, That we are a slave of a master. Who has appointed to us our office?

Not. For quarreling, with his enemies. But for instructing and teaching those. To whom. He is giving new heart. Open mind. That they may be given repentance to whom he is giving repentance. Whom he is saving. And so, This is the, this is the way for A minister of the gospel.

That he is a slave on assignment from his master and his master's current business. Is not the quarrel. But the recovery and the delivery. Of sinners of enemies. When he's done doing that. His business will be the quarrel. And the quarrel will be very short and devastating. To all who have not been redeemed.

And there's an important analogy for you guys. For instance, when you do Matthew 18, you have a brother who's caught in a fault. The goal is the recovery of your brother doing. Matthew 18 doesn't look like haha. I caught you in a fault. You're wrong. And if you don't yield to me now, I'm going to get other people including mom and dad to come gang up on you, and you are going to get your discipline.

It's not map to 18 at all. Matthew 18 is finding a brother who has been caught in something. He's trapped, he's like got clamps around part of his life, his heart has done, whatever. And you want to recover him? And you're hoping God gives him a soft heart and The way that you address him in the first place.

Should have as its tone as its manner as it's attitude. I'm hoping God gives you a soft heart. Not. I know you're a hard-hearted pig and I'm showing you Okay, so you can see the, the parallel. Between instruction from a brotherly standpoint. To the instruction that's given for ministers here.

So, the side of the lord must not quarrel, that's The quarreling is above his station. But he should be gentle to all. Able to teach app to teach or qualified to teach even. Um, He has been taken by the lord as a slave, in this particular assignment. Uh, because Uh, the lord intends to use him.

Many schoolmasters for instance, were slaves. Because of the level of their education, their ability. In pedagogy pedagogy is Um, The study of how to teach. Had a train. And, The minister should. Should have skill than that, so there's gentleness. And their skill. And there's patience. And all of this is exercised in humility verse 25.

Ah, that's The, that's proper to the station or the Of a slave. The status of a slave isn't humility. Correcting those who are in opposition. Doesn't have to come with force. His master, has the force. His master has the power. And humility correcting, those who are in opposition. If God perhaps, Will grant them repentance.

There's the first indicator of what they really need. They really need to conversion, don't they? Or in the case of someone who is just Clinging to a false doctrine, even though they are. An actual Christian, but this is an area in their life. In which Satan has a foothold.

As we'll see quite literally foot hold In verse 26. And some people they are stuck on an error. So much that what they need most is not Good reasoning. They need God to give them repentance in this area of their life. We all in our Christian lives, have An ongoing need of repenting.

What are we going to do tomorrow? Christian pinky. Repent, and believe the gospel. Their brain. Christian, brain, whatever. The cartoon doesn't matter. What are we going to do today? Repent, and believe the gospel. What are we going to do tomorrow? Repentant believe the what are we going to do next week, repent, and believe the gospel.

There are some people that they need to be granted repentance. From a false doctrine that by which Satan has laid, hold of them. And so, since it is the teaching, That we hope that God will use to grant repentance. We don't have to. Argue in a manner or with a force, or with Passion.

As if our manner or our force or our passion. Is going to convince. Even. Super excellent reasoning. Isn't going to convince why? Because there are errors that people get caught in that what they need is, a work of God to grant to change of heart, a change of mind, a change of attitude, On the order of conversion.

The the word for repentance is literally the The word for change and the word for mind. And that means a a complete reversal of Of attitude posture. Accountants disposition. Um, Towards the idea. So that's the first reason. Is because of what they need. The second reason to be humble and gentle.

And patient. Um with some with the right kind of person remember this is not the combat person. The combative person he already said at the beginning, just don't talk to that. But even the one you talk to He's saying have this gentleness have this patience. Have this humility. With them.

The first reason is because the left they need. The second reason is because of the the trouble they're in. And that they make. They regret perhaps God will grant them repentance so that they may know the truth. So just another truth. They need repentance and then verse 26. And that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil.

Having been taken captive by him. To do his will. Do you know what? A snarest Sophia. It's a kind of trap. Sometimes with strings or ropes. And sometimes with metal claws, Or metal. Clasps, or Something like that. At the idea was That when the person stepped on the trap, the trap would close around them.

Work grab them. That's a snare. And the Picture. Here is that the devil uses certain errors of theology? To get a foothold literally, hold on to someone's foot. And they are caught. And usually, these traps, the more, you struggle, the tighter it gets, and the more trapped you get.

Which a lot of people's theological errors work that way. And so, To let someone to help someone out of a track. They need gentleness and patience and carefulness. As you work the right way. Struggling. Impatience hastiness will just get them caught more. And they're in a very precarious situation, not just because of Uh, how there ever works that it is a trap.

But, The fruit of their error. That it may it might spread to others, it might lead to ungodly living. Now, there are lots of things. Um, That might be this to do, his will. Talking about the devil. That they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil having been taken captive by him.

To do his will. And so we should have pity all in the person. That we are talking to. That just can't understand. And they can't understand because they have a

hard heart. So if they need is repentance. And if they don't repent, they're just going to get themselves more and more caught and tracked, and become more and more unwittingly uncertain unintentionally.

Serving the devil by their falsehood, by their theological error. And here we are. Hasn't been taken by god's mercy, not by any of anything from us to be his slave to do his work. And there's the picture of The one who knows? He's a slave of god? On mission.

Uh, gently patiently, instructing, those whom the lord may take to be his his slaves to And who don't even know. That they are caught in a trap in the satan. Has a foothold on them. And, Despite, Um, Their awareness of it or not. They are being, they've been taken captive by the devil to do as well.

And so there's great sympathy and gentleness and patience. And skill here. That is commanded of the minister of the gospel. And as we've already described making reference to Matthew 18, On the same is true in other places as well. This is one of the reasons why You take the log out of your own eye.

Is so that you can gain humility and skill. In your own personal log removal. So that when you come to help your brother with the spec, You can bring you that humility in that skill. To bear in that situation as well. Well, let's pray that the lord would give us the attitude of the ability that we need.

For these things.

Our father in heaven. Pray that you would help us to be grateful. For when you Release us from the snare of the devil. And we would be thankful, and that we would be humble. So that when you give us opportunities and our various calling, whether An elder, a minister with a congregation.

Their parent with a child or a brother sibling? That we would bring the humility and skill that you have given us. Into the situation and that you lord, would grant the repentance. That is necessary. For them to be able to know the truth. And that they might be delivered from the snare that the air caught in.

Lord wherever we are still caught and snares ourselves. Have mercy on us. God, give us the Repentance. To be able to know the truth. Get us out. That we might not unwittingly. Uh, do the will of the devil. In one situation or another. Grant these things, we ask in jesus name, Amen.