

“In Opposition to the Truth”
2 Timothy 2:24-25
(Preached at Trinity – July 17, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we've seen, in these final verses of Chapter 2 Paul is telling Timothy that the servant used of the Master must continually be in teaching mode, patiently teaching those who are in opposition to the truth. And while this particular portion applies primarily to pastors, in a more general sense it applies to all Christians—to each of you.
All who "call on the Lord from a pure heart." – Verse 22
All who strive to be "useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" – Verse 21
All Christians are teachers. All proclaim the truth to those who oppose it. We must do so with meekness and gentleness – and always with the desire that they might be saved. But so many are not saved.
 2. In these verses Paul gives two reasons why a man will not and cannot come to Christ.
 - A. The lost man will not come to Christ because of his opposition to the truth.
 - B. The lost man will not come to Christ because he is caught in the snare of the devil where he is held captive to do the devil's will.
 3. This morning I want us to examine first of these two great hindrances to lost humanity coming to Christ – His great opposition to truth.
It's my prayer that as we know more about the condition of lost mankind, we might be able to more effectively minister to him.
And also, if you have never received Christ as your Savior, that you might better understand yourself and of your great need for God's grace.
- I. The text pictures a man actively engaged in opposing the truth –
Verse 25 – "those who are in opposition"
- A. They have placed themselves in opposition.
2 Timothy 4:3-4 NAU - "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."
2 Timothy 3:8 NAU - "Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these *men* also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith."
 1. The word is only found here but refers to standing in strong opposition.
 2. To what are they in opposition of? This whole epistle as well as 1 Timothy has as its focus false teachers and false doctrine, but here Paul has in mind opposition to the truth with regard to salvation. He speaks of being held captive by Satan and the need of repentance.

- B. **In Verse 25** Paul describes coming to “the knowledge of the truth”
In Verse 26 he describes it as “coming to their senses”
1. The problem is not only a failure to embrace the truth but also an understanding of what the truth is. They are lacking in knowledge. Something is wrong with their thinking.
 2. Paul wasn’t talking about natural understanding
 - a. The lost man is able to gain great natural knowledge
 - the computer operating system that has literally changed the world was developed by a man that does not profess Christ.
 - the smart phone was developed by a man who did not profess Christ.
 - men have risen to occupy the highest office in our land without knowing Christ
 - we continually trust our lives to surgeons, pilots, and architects who do not know Christ.
 - all of us have sat under teachers in school who do not know Christ.
 - b. But in our fallen condition the knowledge Paul is describing is beyond our comprehension.
 3. The lost man even has the capability of learning much about the Bible. He can learn all the facts, dates, and theological principles.
 ** But the lost man has no ability to properly process this knowledge spiritually. He lacks spiritual understanding.
 4. All of the knowledge known to man will not draw him to God.
2 Timothy 3:7 NAU - "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."
 5. The lost man suppresses spiritual truth
Romans 1:18 NAU - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,"

Let’s look more particularly at lost humanity’s opposition to truth . . .

- II. First of all, they oppose the truth about God
- A. The lost person denies the truth about God – in essence they create God after their own image
Romans 1:25 NAU - "For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever."
1. They create a God who is all love - without judgement.
 2. They create a God who accepts all people as they are, denying the demand for repentance. This is why we have homosexual churches.
 3. They create a God who allows people to come to Him in many ways – Buddhism, Islam, Catholic, Protestant, Judaism
 Christianity is a narrow way – Through Christ and Him alone

4. For the lost man truth is based upon what can be experienced.
 - Instead of seeing truth as universal, absolute, and enduring it becomes what is true for them – it becomes approximate and subjective.
 - If it is true for them then it must be true.
 - For them, God is found within private experience which each individual must interpret for himself
 5. The lost are not ultimately concerned about what the Bible teaches. They are more interested in human wisdom and traditions - through these things they suppress the truth.
- B. Because they deny the truth of God, He has given them over to a reprobate mind that continues growing darker and darker.
- Romans 1:28 NAU** - "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,"
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 NAU** - "with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, ¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."
1. In an act of judicial judgment, God often takes away even the knowledge they have.

LBC 5”6 – “As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous judge, for former sin doth blind and harden; from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had,¹⁹ and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.”
 2. Left to themselves they will never have a right understanding about God or right thoughts towards God. They will never rightly seek Him or desire Him.

God must grant them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth
- III. Second of all, lost humanity opposes the truth about themselves
- A. The truth about humanity is a humiliating truth – it is the point most often softened by people trying to make the Gospel more palatable to the sinner.
1. The Gospel shows us that there is no natural goodness in men

Romans 3:10-12 NAU - "as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; ¹¹ There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; ¹² All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."

2. The Gospel presents us as alienated from God and under His just condemnation
Ephesians 2:1-3 NAU - "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."
 3. The outcome Paul is hoping for here is that "God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,"
 The acknowledgement of sin and sorrow over it.
- B. Men naturally try to soften these truths.
1. Some teach that men are naturally good – Pelagian/Armenian
 2. Some deny the wrath of God and the reality of hell – Jehovah's Witnesses.
 3. Some boast of their own sovereignty – That we have the ability to choose to come to Christ anytime we feel like it.
 4. The bottom line is, men do not turn to Christ in repentance because they don't see themselves in need of repentance. Good people do not need a Savior.
- C. Lost men are blind to their ignorance, blind to their blindness. They actually think they are wise and informed.
Romans 1:21-22 NAU - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,"
1. This has been the case of lost humanity from the beginning – they put forth foolish plans and ideas that only serve to further their condemnation.
Genesis 6:5 NAU - "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
 (The flood did not cure the evil imaginations of men)
 The Bible continually gives us examples of these evil imaginations and the foolishness of men's hearts.
Genesis 11:4 NAU - "And they said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *will reach* into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."
 2. This is the type wisdom that brings the lost man to justify his sin and try to find carnal solutions for the consequences of sin, solutions void of repentance.
 3. They see themselves as enlightened, open-minded, non-judgmental and forgiving and viciously oppose any who disagree with them
- D. Left to themselves they will continue in this blind ignorance
 God must grant them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth

- IV. How are we to deal with those who have set themselves in opposition to the truth?
- A. We must instruct them – **V.25** – literally we are to correct them.
The Greek word is *παλιδεύω* which is the same word often translated “chasten”
1. We must use the only means God has given to deal with them
The Word of God –
2 Timothy 3:16-4:1 NAU - "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. "
2 Timothy 4:2 NAU - "preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."
 2. It is the preaching of the Word that God will use to save their souls
 3. Our two most powerful weapons in an ungodly world are preaching and prayer
- B. We must beware of allowing a lost man to gain position in the church
1. Paul warns us to beware of the disease of false doctrine – **V.17**
Paul has sent Timothy to Ephesus to oppose the false teachers—
1 Timothy 1:3 NAU - "As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,"
 2. They must always be opposed – although they will often try to hide behind the cloak of unity, or love.
 3. Pastors must always expose their false doctrines.
They must “Preach the Word” as they keep a watchful eye over the flock.
 - a. It demands careful study and careful attention to the hearts of men.
Titus 1:9 NAU - "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."
Robert Yarbrough writes: “Pastors who neglect their calling to ambitious study and effective instruction may be creating their own enemies by their malpractice.”¹
 - b. But Paul maintains that as much as possible, it must be done with gentleness and humility.
"with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition"
- C. We must remember our dependence upon God in evangelism.
Only God can illuminate the mind of a lost person that they might know the truth.
And only God can grant repentance to the saving of the soul.
"if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth"
Repentance is a gift of God’s grace
Faith is a gift of God’s grace

¹ Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, ed. D. A. Carson, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; London: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2018), 399.

Conclusion – A word to the lost person:

1. The Bible teaches that you are guilty before God. He is holy and must punish sin.
This is the truth.
2. The Bible teaches us that salvation is of the Lord – He must grant repentance.
This too is the truth
3. The Bible also teaches us that God commands all men to repent.
Acts 17:30 tells us that God commands all men everywhere to repent.
4. If you have any interest at all in your soul seek Christ.
Jesus says,
Matthew 11:28 NAU - "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."
John 6:37 NAU - "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."
5. There is life in Christ. He will not turn away sinners who turn away from their opposition to follow Him. Turn to Him today.