

2 Timothy 3:10-13

Instructions to Timothy
Guiding, Growing, Guarding!



...While Evil Men Prosper!



As you know, if you have been following this sermon series, Paul – the writer of 1st & 2nd Timothy, has returned again and again to the topic of false teachers. They had been like a locust plague in the churches everywhere, and Paul wanted them dealt with by Timothy and the other church leaders in Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, Rome, and in churches all over Eurasia. No more coddling! He didn't want church leaders to be mean about it or to lose the character of Christ in dealing with as seen in [2:24-26], but he wanted them to be handled firmly and with directness! He directed that they should be given the opportunity to repent, and if unwilling, out they go! They can continue their damage from without, if they want, but at least, not from within! He wants them labeled. Labeling is often sinful judgmentalism in action. *We see a plethora of labeling in secular society. In fact, it has taken on characteristics that seem almost cultic in nature. It seems like there is a lemming-like reactions from a full third of the people, with another 10-20 percent hovering on the fringes of, .. what you know I call, .. "the new righteousness movement". The press call it "social justice" movement. It actually reminds me of what I read about the youthful communist movement in Russian and elsewhere in the world when I was a kid. The zealousness of the new righteousness movement today parallels what I read about – the labeling, the shaming, the vitriol and hatred, the extreme judgmentalism, the redefining of terms (extremism, male/female, racism), the bending of the truth, the silent hand signaling to identify each other and symbols, the agenda-driven causes that bind them so tightly together in oneness of purpose! It's weird to see that here in the USA, in what was once a bastion of freedom! It shakes a person up to see the depth of anger and judgmentalism – and that it has lynch mob qualities to it! It hurts to be unjustly labeled as an anti-earth because I don't own and electric car or a solar panel, and do not plan on it until I absolutely have no choice. It hurts to be labeled a **hater** by people who hate deeper than anyone I have ever seen hate before! It's especially hard to be labeled a **white supremacist** simply because I was born a Caucasian, or a **homophobe**, because I disagree with the gay agenda. Then there is the manipulation and intimidation tactics they use, especially with their latest endeavor - the wildly successful sexual grooming that is going on in our public schools by people that I consider to be pedophiles and perverts! That's hard to bear in any sort of a Christ-like manner! In fact, I'm not sure Jesus Himself would have done too well with controlling his temper against these folks - especially if they were carrying on like they do now, back in His time.



Paul is really good at describing these types in Romans 1 and in the beginning of this same chapter 3 of 2nd Timothy, and he certainly does not go easy on them in his descriptions. They are utterly anti-Christ, and deadly to Christians who, historically, they have a track record of always hating, opposing, and finding diabolical ways to persecute!

In the church, unbelievably, this was also happening from within. Of course it was happening in a different way, but it was having a far greater effect against the church and its cohesiveness, its unity, and it was especially working against the ability of its leaders, the apostles, and the pastors they had appointed, to lead! Without effective leadership, any organization is just kind of dead in the water – like a sailboat without wind! Everything needs cohesive leadership – **everything** – or it will be a directionless organization and begin to lose ground. A disorganized organization has got major problems and it will fail in whatever its mission is! But mainly, these inside trouble-makers were doing terrible things to others in the church! They were taking the leadership of Jesus away from them and exchanging it with their own influence, even domination – if they could gain that kind of control over their targeted people/victims! I can't think of anything worse than with a man or a woman is getting their kicks from playing God in the lives of other people. They may be cynical enough to know what they are doing - but usually that is not the case, and they are just delusional people who have a vicious Alpha wolf complex! So Paul wants these people and those under their influence ID-ed, **labeled**, and, we can safely assume, refused entry into the gatherings of the church. He is even willing to take this to the extreme of taking the protection of Jesus off of them and giving them into the hands of Satan until they are so beat up by him that they are ready to humble themselves, repent, and renounce their rebellious spirit and destructive ways! This best-case scenario was a highly unlikely outcome – highly, **highly** unlikely – but it still had to be attempted!



So Paul talks about himself next. In contrast to the false teachers/trouble-makers, he had a long track record of faithful service to Christ, of poverty (proving he wasn't in it for the money), and of suffering for Christ. None of his detractors could claim this – the ones who railed that he had no legitimate claim on apostleship. So, even though he did not need to, he reminds Timothy of what happened to him in **Antioch** (Acts 13:50-51), **Iconium** (Acts 14:1-7), and **Lystra** (Acts 14:19)

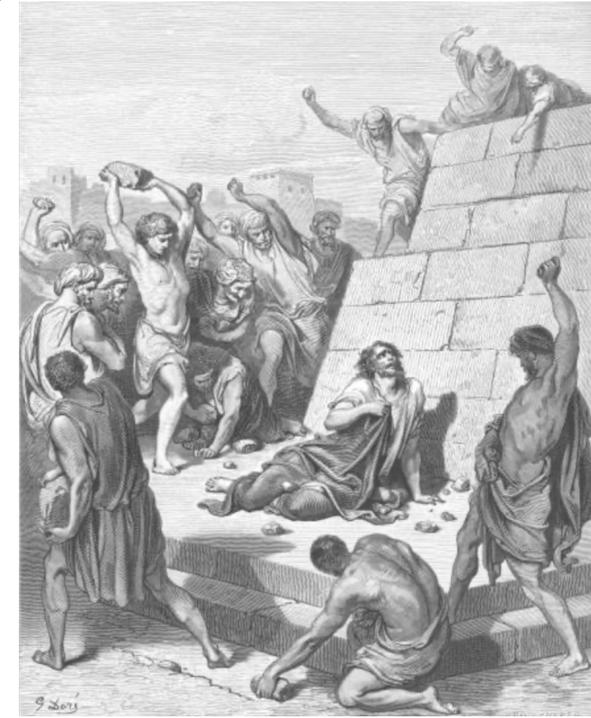
[Acts 13:46 – 14:25]

Amazingly, after His stoning in Lystra, Paul snuck back into town *shortly after his stoning* to strengthen the churches in that area! Then left, then came back!

Timothy was from Lystra originally, and had been a sometimes-traveling-companion with Paul's entourage [Acts 16:1-3]. He had seen with his own eyes some of the events that Paul was referring to in 2 Tim. 3:10,11. We also read here in 14, that Paul had actually performed, or saw to it that, Timothy was, so that Timothy could speak to the Jews about Jesus, without being summarily dismissed for *not* being circumcised!

Yet, says Paul, throughout that dangerous mission, God had always rescued him!

He goes on to proclaim that true followers of Christ, such as himself and the other apostles, Timothy himself, and all the others who bravely stood up for Christ and who promoted the gospel of Jesus Christ, would inevitably be persecuted for their faith and for their unflinching stand on refusing to be silenced! In a world in which promoting an unsanctioned religion was forbidden almost everywhere, it was an unbelievably courageous stand to take! Also, in a world where morality was as malleable as warm butter - to say that morality is fixed and does not change with society's whims was like poking society in the behind with a sharp stick! It made everyone mad – outraged, in fact! Yet, such an unwavering and unyielding stand was why the church continued to grow everywhere there was a church, even despite its problems with false teachers and false doctrines.



Today, we have hundreds, maybe thousands of churches across America that think that to attract young converts to Christ, the church needs to compromise and incorporate the new social justice warrior mentality – which in many ways is literally the opposite of the Judea-Christian ethic – well, that’s just a wrong as wrong could possibly be! Historically, compromise with the culture has never worked to promote the gospel, but it has worked to kill faith and to kill whole churches, and sicken whole denominations – mainly because it is right there on page #1 of Satan’s playbook! But the truth is that those that are inclined to truly investigate the validity of the gospel are people that have been in the culture, are sick to death of its consequences in their life, and the repercussions of promises the world has not kept and are instead looking for a refreshing change from that chaos and hypocrisy – looking for something the **doesn’t** change, something that is real and bedrock solid! Something that means enough to stick up for even under threat and real persecution!



In the meantime the false teachers prosper. They are the ones quoted by the media – held up as edgy religious heroes! They are the “cool” Christians, keeping the church relevant in difficult times! No – not even close! Paul says that while he is being persecuted, the false teachers are prospering. There are more of them, not less, and they seemed to live charmed lives. They are not the ones being sent to prison. Even the secular authorities knew the difference, and they left the false ones alone! The false ones weren’t going to let themselves suffer for the truth! They would just cave and say whatever their interrogators wanted them to say, and then get let go. The real Christians, on the other hand, would tell their persecutors only what they knew **God** wanted them to say -- and they stayed in prison!

God had rescued Paul many times before when it seemed there was no hope. This time, Paul had been forewarned, that for whatever reason, God was not going to rescue him this time. He was going to die at the hands of Nero, the Insane. It was a miserable, lonely ending, but it was victorious one! He stayed true to the end!

What about us? What about me? What about you? Christ is the solid rock! Are you securely, immovably attached?

[Philippians 1:21]