

January 2, 2022 (New Years) - David Vinyard

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- [0 : 0 0] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Good morning.
- Sounds like I'm on. This thing about Bud Manila, I always remember what he told me when my own grandfather passed. One of those things you just for some reason remember it. You know, people say things and they stick.
- And I think he was paying my grandpa a compliment, but he said, he said, if you can count on one hand the number of people that would stop what they're doing to come help you. He said, you're doing all right.
- Almost like a life quote, you know. And he was saying my grandpa was one of those guys. It was a good thing, but he also challenged me. He said, be one of those people. I was like, yeah, that's a pretty good thought.
- So anyway, sorry for your loss, but I did enjoy knowing Bud and knowing, you know, the times that he was around and family, friends, and all that. A lot of camping stories, a lot of funny stories.
- [0 : 5 5] And think back fondly. But good morning and welcome to 2022. Here we are. For most people, the new year is a time to refocus, take stock.
- Am I coming through too hot or is that okay still? That's all right? All right. There's talk of new year's resolutions. You know, maybe you have a financial milestone. Maybe you have a fitness goal.
- Maybe you want to improve your cooking or your golf game. So it's that sort of thing that we think of when we think of the new year. But this morning I thought maybe I would pose a different scenario.
- And here it is. What if this new year, what if at the start of tomorrow, you received an insight or an update about your end? Imagine hearing that 2022 would be your last new year.
- Now, I'm not talking like Final Destination stuff and you get, you know, these weird things happening. But, and not necessarily specifically when, but just, hey, this is the last January.
- [2 : 0 2] How would that change your resolutions? What would you do? What would you say? Who would you spend your time talking to? It's an interesting concept, isn't it?
- Well, in seeking God's direction for today's message, and I was thinking a long ways out, what would be something great to share? God, give me something truthful, obviously, but relevant and important for the new year.
- And he kind of led me to this scenario from the Bible, and I'll explain here in a second. I was studying the book of Acts in my own personal study. We had wrapped up our Roman study in the mornings here.
- And it occurred to me, thinking about that, that the Apostle Paul faced a similar scenario. As the one that I just described.

It's, you know, Paul, this is the Paul that we all know. God, in Acts 9, says this is my chosen instrument to the Gentiles. God used him to build doctrines and inspire churches and witness to folks all across the new, you know, the outside world.

[3 : 09] Right, much in the New Testament. But at a certain point in his life, it became very obvious to Paul that his time was up. And that he was not going to see another new year. So to speak, right?

In 2 Timothy chapter 4, he says, For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race.

I have kept the faith. So I was thinking about that. I was thinking about the new year. I was thinking about, man, it's been a challenging couple years. But how interesting to have that perspective from Paul, for one.

And two, facing his last days, would it be neat? Would it be curious to find out what did he do? How did he respond to that sort of scenario? And thankfully for us, and our study today, and the time that we have here in the next 25 minutes or so, he wrote it down.

He recorded this. God preserved it through history for us in the letter of 2 Timothy. And it's unique because it's Paul's most pressing, most urgent, and useful insights and guidance.

[4 : 16] And not just in the Daily Wire or the newspaper, right? It was to someone he cared so much about. Someone that he calls a son. In the beginning of 2 Timothy, and obviously that's what we're going to be looking at today.

If you have your Bibles or your phones, you want to open up to 2 Timothy. We'll be studying there today. But he says, To Timothy, a beloved son, without ceasing, I remember you in my prayers. So I want to share with you this morning, from 2 Timothy, a letter from Paul, knowing his days were just about up, thinking about what would you give your son?

What would you give your daughter? What would you give someone you cared so much about to continue on without you? And by extension, right, there's relevancy for us because Paul was inspiring and writing scripture.

divinely inspired and preserved through time. So I wanted to set that frame. I'm excited about this message. There's a lot there. But let's pray, and then we'll dig in. God, thank you for today.

Thank you for your word. Thank you that we have a chance to come together as believers here and meet in this room. We can worship you. We can look to you for guidance. And we seek your truth here this morning through the message.

[5 : 28] And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So, before we even read, I want to start with a challenge. If you guys are up for a challenge. In the next week, or give or take, I'd like to challenge you all to read the full letter.

All of 2 Timothy. It's not that you probably haven't read it before. There's going to be a lot of familiar verses. But start to finish, try and read it at least once. It's not that long. Maybe with a spouse or a friend.

There's just so much in there. There's so much substance and there's so much helpful, useful insights that I really just want to give you that challenge in addition to everything else you're trying to do in the new year.

Try and get through it. It's really, really good. Words from a guy at the end of his life to his dearest son. Now, I know Paul wasn't Timothy's biological father, right? I don't want to stretch that too far.

But he's definitely more of a father figure. And being a parent and a mentor is kind of a funny thing, isn't it? I know there's a lot of parents in here and by extension grandparents and things like that.

- [6 : 31] My son Benjamin has this new thing he likes to tell me. I told Jeff this the other week. He likes to say that I'm number two. No context. Just smile and say, dad has number two.
- And I can't figure out if it's like a potty reference or if it's, you know, there's a lot of ways to take that. All of them are hurtful, but it's okay. You know, and that's parenting.
- And my other son Isaac, he's got his own stuff. And Amy will laugh at this, but, you know, he takes tremendous joy in my physical pain. And if I step on a sharply manufactured hot wheel or something, I mean, he lights up.
- It's just the best moment. The other day we were playing hockey in the basement. Two on one, boys versus me. And I took my eye off the ball for one second, you know.
- Isaac got me with the wrist shot, low and away. And, whew, I dropped. Right between the legs. And, you know, it's funny. A lot of pain in that instant in my memory.
- [7 : 30] But, you know, I hear as I'm on the ground, you know, fetal position, I'm listening. And Isaac shouts, high five, Benji. We got daddy and the peeps.
- And it's like, you know, I'm like, these are my sons. These are my offspring, you know, expressing triumph and wonderful union.
- It's nice that they came together over that. But, you know, being a parent is a funny thing. It changes you. We care deeply for these monsters, you know, despite even when it hurts.
- And so, I kind of use that funny example to say, you know, we love our sons. We love our children. We want to help. We want to aid. We want to prepare them. And it's really in that same passion that we get this entire letter from Paul to Timothy, writing from that point of concern.
- And he says things like this. I've got a quick survey that we'll run through. But 2 Timothy 1, he says, Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.
- [8 : 39] This is verse 8 to 10. Which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.
- So Paul thought it was urgent, important enough to affirm the simplicity of a pure gospel to Timothy again. If you look at verse 13 in that same chapter 1, he says, Hold fast to the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, and faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.
- Here's another one, chapter 1, verse 14. He says, Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
- And you read this, and I hope you do take me up on that challenge, but there's urgency there. There's precision. There's something for Timothy to focus on right away. In chapter 2, verse 24, here's another highlight.
- He says, A servant of the Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility, correcting those in opposition.
- [9 : 45] If God perhaps will grant some of them repentance, so that they may know the truth, come to their senses, and escape the snares of the devil. It's interesting.
- You wonder, what did Paul know of the devil? What did he know of that sort of thing? I came across an interesting story in Scripture. Actually, I shared it with Jacob before he left for his trip. There's a really interesting encounter, if you get around to reading Acts 19, but Paul is back in Ephesus.
- And as he was casting out demons and healing the sick, this story is kind of neat. These other guys see what he's doing, and they're religious people, but they're not believers. And they're like, that's pretty neat.

I think I'll try that. And so they do. And they approach this demon-possessed guy. I don't know if it's up there. Yeah. And so the evil spirit answers them and says, Jesus, I know.

And Paul, I recognize. But who are you? Saying this to the Jewish guys that were trying to be like Paul without having Christ. And if you read the end, he beats the tar out of him.

[10 : 49] And so that's not the point of the story. The point of the story is just to say, the demons knew Paul by name. And so here in his letter to Timothy, in his final words to his dearest son, he reminds him about the spiritual warfare that's out there.

Things that are lurking about and the snares of the devil. How about this one in verse 6 and 7? Paul says, Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of hands.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and love and a sound mind. If I had to pick one theme for the new year, if I had to settle on one thing to just keep in the forefront of my mind, I think that would definitely be on the list.

And if you believe, I just want to say this in case it's missed, but if you believe that Christ gave his life to pay the debt of your sins for eternity, if you believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus as God's son and your savior, Paul says to Timothy, God has not given us a spirit of fear.

So if you find yourself fearful today, if 2022 has you nervous, you might ask, where's the fear coming from? Because Paul writes, and the Bible tells us as believers, if you have the truth, if you have salvation, we have a spirit of power and love from God.

[12 : 17] And being saved, knowing the truth, we have capacity for soundness of mind. That's important. So I hope that encourages you. I hope those words are helpful. And please, like I said, as you get around to it, you'll enjoy the whole letter.

With the time we have left, though, I do want to hone in, because it's too much to pick off in just one week, right? So looking at 2 Timothy, looking at Paul's final note, and praying, God, how do I even, how do I drum this down into something that's good for a message, right?

It came to two things. Two strategic points that Paul writes about to Timothy in the second half of this letter. And it really starts in chapter three. So if you do have your Bibles open, you can flip forward to that.

But he does narrow in the focus here, and I'm really, really encouraged by what he lays out and how it fits with our new year. So I do want to share this. But that's the focus of today's message.

We get these two key insights from Paul to Timothy as he wraps up his life. The first one is this. It's a warning and an indication of the last days.

[13 : 24] That's number one. The second is this. How should Timothy navigate through them? It's a lot. It's a lot in 17 minutes, but we'll get there.

But if Paul thought it was that important to capture in the middle of his last letter to his dearest son, shouldn't we take note? Shouldn't we consider the urgency if Paul wrote about it that far back for Timothy living then?

Shouldn't we consider it now? That's the premise. So let's look at this. I'm going to read a little bit from chapter three, and we'll go back through those two points. So he writes, But know this, this is verse one of chapter three, that in the last days perilous times will come.

For men will be lovers of themselves. They'll be covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power, and from such people turn away.

For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captive of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

[14 : 44] Now as Janice and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith, and they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, and theirs also was.

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, it's a long list, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and Lystra.

What persecutions I endured, and out of all of them the Lord delivered me. Yes, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution, but evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, but you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you've learned them, and that from childhood you have known the scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

Let's pause there for a minute. But, there is a lot to get through in that. A lot of, you guys probably heard some verses like, oh yeah, I remember that verse. Oh yeah, I remember that verse. You know, sort of a really good list of memory verses that you probably circled somewhere at one point in time.

But Paul calls immediate attention to the last days. He says, know this. And the first indication, if you picked up on it, it's a familiar one. You're probably like, yeah, I've heard that before. We see this outlined in Romans.

[16 : 13] We see it back in Genesis 6, right before God destroyed the world with water. It says, the Lord looked and saw that the wickedness of man was great and that every intent of his heart was evil continually. And so it happens just about every time God is about to intersect history, but it says this.

Paul describes it as perilous times. Men will become perilous. And it's really indicating that a sin will reach a height of measure. Perilous is the same word used to describe the demon-possession man at the tomb, if you want another word reference there.

But he describes and discloses this to Timothy as an urge. He says, the last days will offer a world increasingly degenerate in sin. And you think about where Timothy was at most of his time, right?

In and around Ephesus. You think about that being a commerce city. You think about a lot of wealthy, very diverse, a lot of stuff going on.

You know, I bet that city looked pretty progressive. I bet it looked pretty ahead of the times. I bet they had solved for a lot of life's challenges with technology, kind of like what we experience today. But even if that sort of masked the realities of sin and death for a moment, he says, know this, Timothy, the heart of man will grow more perilous.

[17 : 28] And he writes in that, not that he didn't know, but just so that he was not surprised as he sees that. Not discouraged, but ready for it.

So, first part of this, the last days will witness a godless society of people who have given up loving God and have fallen into a love affair with themselves. The second takes it a step further.

If you look at chapter 3, it's actually kind of specifically around verse 13. He says, evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Perhaps those same from verse 5 where it says, having a form of godliness but denying its power. So, in other words, Timothy, it's not just the sin. Yes, it's the sin. Yes, it's the state of man.

But get this, in the last days, the evil and vile will be disguised as teachers and leaders. Much like the Pharisees in Jesus' day and Paul's day, they might appear well-meaning, they might appear religious, but their intentions will be perverse.

[18 : 33] So, Paul says to Timothy, look, as the last days approach, these evil men and seducers, they'll be there. They'll be taking advantage of the gullible, as it says in verse 6.

They will prey on the sin and the guilt of those who might seek the truth and meet that with deception. People always learning but never finding the truth in verse 7. So, there's a checkpoint.

There's a question to ask. You know, do we look around and do we see deceptions and seducers? Do we see the gullible being led astray by lies and false promises? If we do, Paul says, that's number two.

He kind of offers an example of these guys. Jonathan Jambres, I don't know if you've ever heard of those guys before. It really sounds like a good reggae band name for something. But, he says, as these resisted Moses, or as they resisted Moses, so do these resist the truth.

Think about that for a minute. It's presumed that these are the guys alongside Pharaoh when God brought Moses before him. They literally saw the miracles that God worked.

[19 : 42] And they explained it away as a gimmick. So, they witnessed the truth and they sold a lie. These were smart guys.

These were crafty guys, skilled guys, right? If they could do that. But they were corrupt and they were intent on deceiving. That's how Paul describes this for Timothy. This is what they're going to be like.

So, Paul's first strategic theme here in chapter three, he says, there's a caution of the last days. Here's what to see. Here's what to know. Perilous times. Mankind's sin will reach a height of measure.

Deceivers and seducers will become more and more prevalent. And three, this is sort of the most discouraging one in my opinion. He gives this warning and awareness that it will actually spill over into the church.

If you look ahead to chapter four, I know we didn't read it the first time through, but he does say this in verse three and four. He says, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. And after their own lusts, they shall heap up to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables.

[20 : 58] And as I study that, I see the they, and this is from other parts of scriptures too, referring to those inside the fold, you know, receivers of Timothy's words as a teacher. So not only will the world be poisoned by this infection of sin, not only will mankind be plagued with deceivers and seducers, but sadly, in and around the church, the preservation of the truth will fall away, will fall off.

And it's so important to Paul that he just, he hits Timothy with that again at the end of his life. Now I want to articulate this right, because I know you're thinking, well, are these people losing their salvation?

The answer is no. He's not indicating that the church will altogether be lost and lose that, but rather, just as Paul saw as he planted churches and then looked back on those churches and said, what are you doing?

What's happening here? Right? It will be that and more as different groups within the fold will fall after these false notions and societal pressures and things of that sort.

And that's the third indicator of the last days. The church will struggle to keep the truth and sound doctrine and its teaching. And they will gravitate towards these vain and empty things.

[22 : 16] Paul wrote this to Timothy back in his first letter. If you look in 1 Timothy 4, he says, the Spirit clearly says that in the latter times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

Wow. Such things come through hypocritical liars whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods.

Etc. How sad when we find that that's the state of those who would claim to be believers or potentially be believers.

Falling away in confusion. And only God knows the heart of each man as we know. But what a sad warning of the last days. And I don't want to stand here on New Year's or the day after and predict that we're here.

I don't want to say we're just about up. I don't want to discourage anybody in the room today. But it's important that we think about these things. And it's important that we think about what Paul writes and what the Spirit gives to Paul to declare to Timothy and by extension us.

[23 : 22] Because it is challenging. You look around and you do see some of these things taking root. You see a lot of these things in and around the society that we live in and across the world. Unfortunately, I don't think sound doctrine is the banner over the church right now.

The big C church. The corporate church. I think they're struggling there. I think this church is really good about that and wanting to preserve the truth and doctrines.

And I think that's so important. But anyway, you don't have to agree with me on that. Those timing things are my opinions. But I'm thankful that Paul's words to Timothy don't end there.

What I mean by that is he does give this warning and these indications of the last days. But he pivots and instead focuses from that onto Timothy.

Here's what you should do. Here's how you should operate and govern yourself in light of that. And that's our final point is the time we have left. I just want to share some of the things that he affirms and that I think are very useful for us as we start the new year.

[24 : 28] The first really comes from chapter 3 in the verse 10 section if you flip back to that. What does he say to Timothy? He describes the times and then he says, You have carefully followed my doctrine, my manner of life, my purpose, my faith, and the list goes on and on.

He says, Out of all of them the Lord delivered me. You skip down to verse 14. He says, But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of knowing from whom you have learned them and that from your childhood you have known the scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation.

What's his first emphasis? What does Paul say? This is what it needs to be, Timothy. Follow my doctrine. Follow my manner of life. The gospel.

Emulate this faith, this love for others, and the purpose. I didn't read it, but if you look at verse 16 and 17, it's a fairly popular verse, you know, talking about reading and studying.

It says, Carefully, and to continue in these things. He says, Timothy, I've spent years teaching and imparting truth and wisdom to you. You've seen me suffer.

[25 : 35] You've seen this play out. But you've got to keep it going. You've got to continue onwards. Even when everyone else is following fables and corrupt doctrines, you've got to stick it.

So that's our first imperative. Cling to the doctrines and the teachings and the manner of life that God has outlined for us as the body of Christ. That's a very broad item, but it's worth taking note of.

The second is this. Paul says to Timothy, I charge you therefore in chapter 4, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing in his kingdom, preach the word.

Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with patience and long-suffering. Timothy was a preacher, right?

He was a leader in the church. Not everyone has that exact same role, but we all have ministries. And so essentially what Paul is saying to Timothy there in a roundabout, more general way, is be diligent in your ministry.

[26 : 40] Don't let the perils of the last days derail your efforts here, what God has placed in front of you. And I get that. I mean, I relate to that. I was just talking to my mom about this the other day.

There's plenty of weeks where I wake up and I'm like, I just don't, I don't feel like doing it. I don't feel like going to church necessarily. I don't feel like going out to Bibles today. It's just, it wears on you, you know?

And Paul's recognizing that. He says, Timothy, the temptation is real. You've seen this, but be diligent. Look at the end of verse 5 when he says that. He says, do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry.

Not only must you cling to the doctrines and purpose as a true believer, but carry all that forward in your labor, Timothy. Paul writes to the Corinthian church in 2 Corinthians.

Speaking of his own life as a believer, he says this, but in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God. Just talking about, you know, telling himself the same things. Thinking himself, look at the word choice in 2 Timothy 4, by the way.

[27 : 44] I love this. Convince, meaning others may not agree with you. Rebuke, others are flat out wrong. Exhort, inspire others to act and move.

And with patience, it's going to take more than one time. Anybody here like a little conflict? A little confrontation? Sickos, yeah. But no, I jokingly say that.

Don't be surprised if part of your ministry, part of your efforts, part of your holding to sound doctrine encounters a little resistance, encounters a little confrontation. So what's all this coming to?

What has Paul urged, how does Paul urge Timothy to live? Number one, keep sound doctrine, pattern ourselves after the faith and love and purposes of Paul.

Number two, fulfill our ministry, be diligent in the work that God has put before us. Finally, this last component, he says in chapter 4, verse 5, be watchful and endure.

[28 : 54] He says, but you be watchful in all things, enduring afflictions. He writes to the Thessalonian church something similar. He says in 1 Thessalonians 5, 6, therefore let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

Peter says this as a contemporary of Paul. He says, but with the end of all things at hand, be sober and watchful unto prayer. That word that keeps coming up, it literally means watchful to be calm and collected in spirit.

This is interesting too. He uses the same word again in a fairly popular verse that you'll see on Bible bookmarks and all these things. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

I was going to ask you, Jacob, coming from Africa, if you had come across a wild lion. I have not. Yeah. I can't say for sure, but calm doesn't sound like a natural response.

You know, calm and collected. If you said fear and panic with a side order of incontinence, I would say yes. But my guess is calm and collected is a trained response.

[30 : 10] It's practiced. It's readied. Right? That's how we must be. Watchful. Intentionally prepared. That's what he's indicating there.

And that's the third and final charge to Timothy. Be watchful in the last days. Reinforcing the need. You know, as if expecting a lion. Actively keeping that soundness of mind.

Even as mankind is deceiving and being deceived. Even despite the false hopes and lies that are just continually coming through. You know, we're watching a society and a people who are seeking relief from the guilt of sin in any form other than Christ.

and there are false leaders and deceivers who are happy to provide those things. Paul urges Timothy and by extension to us living in 22 be watchful of that and endure.

In Ephesians 5 this is I think actually one of the other guys shared this a couple weeks ago but Ephesians 5 verse 15 to 17 says this See that you walk circumspectly not as fools but as wise redeeming the time because the days were evil.

[31 : 28] Be ye not unwise but understanding the will of the Lord. These last three verses are just a couple more that I thought from the letter that will entice you to get in and read the whole thing yourself but Paul says this to Timothy earlier on he says You my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

He says later on in that same chapter You must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ and then later Consider what I say May the Lord give you understanding in all things.

And I think that's the note that we close on I think that you know taking all of that I know that's a ton of scripture I know that's a lot to try and even think about a whole letter in one Sunday but thinking about that thinking about putting yourself in that frame of reference right what if you found out that this was your last year what if this was if that was the mindset and if it was you know we see that scenario for Paul and we see him lay out these most important truths to someone he cares so much about with urgency as the musicians come up and we think about starting off this new year right you know consider those indications of the last days consider what Paul called out consider what that means for you consider what that means for your job for your families and don't be surprised when you see it and as Paul offers this encouragement to Timothy knowing that he's about to bounce as we start the new year keep to sound doctrine work to fulfill your ministries and be watchful

I think that's what it boils down to I hope that's encouraging not discouraging but I've been chewing on this for a couple months and it has been it has been a little fun and scary at the same time but it's it's so fantastic that we have this in scripture this whole letter very timely very helpful and it's closing prayer God thank you for today thank you for your truth thank you that as it says in 2 Timothy we have a spirit of boldness we're not been given a spirit of fear and that we have the truth and that we have the capacity to love as you've loved us and that we have soundness we can pursue soundness of mind through knowing your scriptures thank you for that God thank you for this new year I pray that every person in this room every person that's a member of this church and every person that's in your family would take those things and own those things and really pursue those things in 2022 myself included thank you for those things in Jesus name we pray

Amen