

# Hold Fast the Word of Truth

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     And from the beginning. I love the Lord because my voice and prayer she did hear. I, while I live, will call on him who bowed to me his ear.
- Of death accords and sorrow stood about me compass round. The pains of hell too cold on me, my grief and trouble found. Upon the name of God the Lord then did I call and say, Deliver thou my soul, O Lord, I do thee humbly pray.
- God, merciful and righteous is, yea, gracious is our Lord. God saves the meek, I was brought low, he did me help afford. O thou, my soul, do thou return unto thy quiet rest.
- For largely, lo, the Lord to thee, whose bounty hath expressed. For my distressed soul from death, delivered was by thee. Thou didst my mourning eyes from tears, my feet from falling free.
- These verses of Psalm 116, from the beginning. I love the Lord because my voice and prayer he did hear. I love the Lord because my voice and prayer he did hear.
- [ 1 : 2 8 ]     I find I live well, but all of them who longed to me is here.
- Oof, yet the course and sorrow stood about me, I love the Lord because my heart was born.
- I love the Lord because my heart was born. The days of hell to call on me, I dream that travel found.
- I love the Lord because my heart was born. I love the Lord because my heart was born. I love the Lord because my heart was born. I love the Lord because my heart was born. I love the Lord because my heart was born.
- Father manufactured extraterrestrial. I love the Lord since my heart was born.
- [ 2 : 5 2 ]     O land righteous is it, gracious is our Lord.
- O tis the meek I was called, though he did me help before.
- O thou, my soul, do thou return unto thy quiet rest.
- For march me, O the Lord, to thee and something unexpressed.
- For my distresses so compare till ever was by thee.
- [ 4 : 1 1 ]     Thou didst my pouring eyes of tears shining the falling ring the Lord.
- Let us join. Let us join in prayer. O Lord our God, as we come before you, we pray that you would bless us together around your word.
- We give thanks for the word, that it is a living word. The only living and true word. It speaks to us of life through Christ.
- It reminds us of many things, even our own our own deadness of spirit when we are out of the way. When we are disobedient and negligent and forgetful.
- And the many things that we are guilty of by nature. And even when we embrace the life of faith, we want to fall back into ways that are not glorifying to your name.

- [ 5 : 35 ] We would pray your blessing upon your word this evening as we read it and as we hear it read. And as we think upon what it has to say to us.
- We pray that we would be taught from it. As your people are meant to be when they are under the sound of your word.
- Your people are taught of the Lord. So bless us together. Bless all we seek to bring before you by way of concern and burden.
- We pray for our nation, especially as it engages in the ongoing pandemic. We give thanks for any progress that has been made.
- And all the ways in which we see that there are benefits accruing to us that we are undeserving of the least of them. We confess that we do not acknowledge your goodness to us in these things as we do not acknowledge it as we ought in other things.
- [ 6 : 51 ] We pray for our nation as it goes on in other matters. We recognize that in all things that we have forgotten God.
- We have forgotten to conduct ourselves in the light of your word. That we are rebellious by nature and that is manifestly seen in the way that we conduct ourselves in the world.
- So we pray for forgiveness, for the spirit of repentance, for the windows of heaven to be poured, opened out.
- And that the blessings of God would be poured out upon us. Not because we have any right to expect them. But we plead them nevertheless in the name of Christ. And we would ask that you would remember your people in particular.
- Remembering them in all their different and varying needs. Especially those of our number who are unwell. We think of some who are undergoing treatments for various illnesses.
- [ 8 : 02 ] Some in their homes, some in hospitals, some being cared for in the frailty of old age. We pray that you would undertake for them. And hear the petitions of your people as they are offered on their behalf.
- We confess that you are the great physician. And that if we are needing healing, that's where we must come. We pray that you would teach us that truth.
- And that we would learn what it is to submit ourselves to God in all our ways. We pray for the preaching of the word to that end.
- That you would engage with us through those that you have called in the first instance to be your servants. To be emissaries.
- To be ambassadors. To be those that go out with the word of truth. That you may quicken them and empower them and stimulate them and create in them a burning seal for the souls of the lost.
- [ 9 : 07 ] We remember in your presence the many who are indifferent as to their own spiritual condition. On the very brink of eternity. And not realising what awaits them.
- Your word teaches us the awful reality of what a Christless eternity involves. And we pray that you would teach every one of your people even that truth.
- That we may not in any way treat with disdain. Or treat with anything other than an appreciative spirit.
- What your truth is saying. All of your word is your word to us. We cannot overlook any part of it. We cannot pretend that it is not saying what it is saying.
- Because you are telling us these things for our good. For your own glory. So hear us we pray. Bless the world in which we live. Bless our own nation, our islands here.

[ 10 : 08 ] Bless those who live within. There are many who have come to live with us in these corners. And we give thanks for them.

And we pray that they would be influenced for the good of their soul. That even having little or no contact with gospel matter up until now in their lives.

That they might find themselves meeting with and asking themselves questions concerning the needs of their soul. Asking hard questions that can only be answered in one way.

So continue to watch over your people here in this world. Remember the nations of the earth. Especially these places that we hear of that are in need. We pray for the Yemen.

And we pray for the parts of the world that are constantly at war. Even a civil war. And we remember these nations.

[ 11 : 12 ] Think of Ethiopia. That are once again fearful of famine. The effects of it. We do live in ignorance of a great many of these things.

Even though it's presented to us briefly through our news bulletins. We have so little understanding of these things. So grant to us the spirit that would be kindly disposed to these places.

And that we would have a desire to see not only good being done by others. But that we ourselves would form part of that.

We pray that you would continue with us now. This evening hour. And that you would bless all who wait upon you. Wherever they may be. And visit the sick, visit the grieving and the sorrowful.

Especially those that you have touched in exceedingly difficult ways. And we pray that you would uphold and sustain all such.

[ 12 : 18 ] Go before us now. Watching over each one. Cleansing from sin in Jesus name. Amen. We are going to hear God's word as we have it in the second epistle of Paul to Timothy.

And we are reading from chapter 1. 2 Timothy chapter 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus.

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son. Grace, mercy and peace. From God the Father and Christ Jesus, our Lord. I thank God, whom I served from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.

Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy. When I call to remembrance the infinite faith that is in thee, which first dwelt in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, I am persuaded that in thee also.

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stood up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind.

[ 13 : 45 ] Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner. But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God, who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling.

Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles, for the which cause I also suffer these things. Nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against our day.

Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me, of whom are Phagellus and Hermogenes. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Enesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.

[ 15 : 19 ] But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day, and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

And so on. May the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word and to his name be the praise.

I'd like us now to turn very briefly to words that we read here, particularly the words of verse 13. Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

For a long time now we have been living under the shadow of Covid-19.

This world pandemic has left its mark upon our generation. And even though we believe that there is positive science that can allow us a measure of optimism, there are still questions that are in the back of our mind concerning what the future may hold.

[ 16 : 57 ] We don't know much about the science of this disease. But we do know that mutations are occurring regularly.

And these mutations are difficult to deal with. And that has left a measure of uncertainty in the life of everyone in the planning that they are making for their lives, both short term and long term, not just in the workplace but at home.

And in their personal relationships where families are concerned and marriage and so on.

But within the life of the church, questions also arise as to how this pandemic has affected us.

Very often we come across in the sphere of politics some situation arising and wrongs have occurred and questions are asked.

[ 18 : 26 ] And culpability is endeavour to be established one way or the other. And usually the task that is taken by those at fault is that they would say that there are lessons to be learned.

And of course that is quite true whether these lessons are learned or not. And it is just an easy cop out.

But if we ask ourselves the question as Christians, as church members, what lessons have we learned from this situation with regard to our Christian faith?

How has our faith fared over the past year? Has it prospered or has it perished?

Has it come into its own or has this particular providence exposed its deficiencies? These questions and many more questions that every one of us need to ask ourselves.

[ 19 : 45 ] Now the letter we are looking at today is considered to be the Apostle Paul's last letter. It is written from a prison in Rome very shortly before his death.

As this is to be Paul's last word, so he recognises the opportunity has to be grasped to say what needs to be said.

Because the opportunity will not be his for much longer. He will not be able to continue his ministry. He will not be able to instruct and encourage the people of God.

And in this particular case, he is not able to plan much further ahead with regard to preparing his protege, his disciple, to take up the mantle and follow after him.

Andrew Samson has a very graphic image of the situation that Paul is in. And of course the situation that Timothy, his disciple, his young son in the faith is concerned.

[ 21 : 13 ] Timothy, he says, finds himself like a vulnerable young sapling, standing alone in a clearing after a hurricane has felled the mighty oaks that once stood at its side.

Paul, his mentor, is imprisoned, awaiting execution. Timothy is a very strong, young, apprehensive and weak in body, with the awareness that all his training alongside the towering figure of the apostle has been leading him to this point.

We are thankful that when lockdown came upon us, that we had access to the gospel message. Every one of us could read our Bibles.

Many could watch or listen to the gospel preached live. Others could listen to recorded services.

There is ample written material that every one of us, if we chose, could avail ourselves of. However, I do not believe that any of these things could be anything other than second best.

[ 22 : 43 ] For the simple reason that the church of Christ is a living entity. And God has purposed that for its well-being, as well as his glory, that this church should meet together physically.

The writer to the Hebrews states, Let us hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering. For he is faithful, that promise.

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and the good works. Not forsaking assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another.

And so much the more as ye see the day approaching. We know that Timothy was being prepared.

Not to assimilate the doctrines that Paul had disclosed to him and taught to him as a cerebral activity.

[ 23 : 53 ] But in order that Timothy would, in his own time and when the opportunity arose, would go out and disseminate to others the same truth.

Propagate the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. The words that we have read in the epistle to the Hebrews, reminds us that the believer is not a solitary being.

Instead, as A. W. Pink comments, the chief design of our consideration for one another is to provoke or stir up unto the performance of duties.

To strengthen, seal, to influence affections, to excite unto godly living. All of these things are not things that we are engaged in as individuals privately, but things that we engage in with others or for the good of others.

We are called upon to watch over one another with a view to steadfastness in the faith and fruitfulness in our lives.

[ 25 : 12 ] Herein is the connection with the words of our text. Aware of his imminent death and the relative youth of Timothy, who would be left to bear onerous responsibilities without the support of his father in the faith, he needed to listen to solemn words of counsel which would stand him in good stead.

So what does Paul do? First of all, he encourages Timothy to adhere to the teachings of the scripture.

These are sound words, Paul says. These are trustworthy words. And you can be sure that the source is reliable.

The second thing is how is he to deal with this world? He is to hold them fast in faith and in love.

Paul says that he is to hold fast the form of sound words.

- [ 26 : 29 ] Of course, he is in the first instance concerned with the gospel. This was Paul's own calling to preach the gospel.

In verse 11, we read, Whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles.

The content of the gospel is also identified. In verse 10, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

In verse 11, he describes the Saviour as appearing, and in his appearing, who has abolished death. And not only has he abolished death, he has brought, as we read, life and immortality to light through the gospel.

The nature and the purpose of the appearance is not only revealed, but proclaimed. Timothy was given the task to communicate that gospel.

- [ 27 : 44 ] That gospel, as the preacher John Stott summarizes, that offers life, through life, abundant life, eternal life, both here and in the hereafter.

It is that church to which Timothy is sent, that must be face to face with the Christ of the gospel.

It is that Christ that must be proclaimed, as Paul proclaimed, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. The words of the gospel are sound words.

In the original tongues, we often find an emphasis that is meant to be conveyed in the order the words are placed in. Here, the emphasis is on the sound or healthy teaching already sketched out by Paul in the teaching that he had given to Timothy.

Paul himself is not ashamed of the gospel. So he says. He confirms that by sharing it with others and passing it on to Timothy, so that he can follow in his footsteps.

- [ 29 : 06 ] If there was a problem with the gospel, he would be loath to dispense it in the way that he does. Michael Bentley cites the words of the apostle as he writes in his first letter to the Corinthians.

The well-known chapter that deals with the resurrection of Christ. But before he gets into the matter of the bodily resurrection of Christ, he refers to this.

The well-known chapter, the gospel of Christ. The well-known chapter begins the chapter. Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand, by which also you are saved, if we keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scripture, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scripture, that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

After that he was seen of the gospel. After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remains unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James, then of all the apostles, and last of all he was seen of me also as of one born out of due time.

- [ 30 : 47 ] An outline of the message of the gospel that Paul himself came to experience by way of effect or influence, and also the driving force for his own ministry.

There is an outline of the message that captivated Paul himself, and that he delighted in sharing with others. Those of us who are Bible believers, we trust in God's word.

Not part of it, but all of it. And we are meant to hold it fast. We are persuaded, and we are aware, and we are taught that there are enemies of the gospel who dismiss this word out of hand.

You are wary of these enemies, but you know who they are by the stance that they take, because they are dismissive of the word in its entirety.

But there are others who pick and choose what they want to believe, and they are perhaps even more dangerous. If a cook or baker was preparing a meal, or cake, it would be considered bad for them, to say the least, to radically alter the ingredients.

[ 32 : 20 ] If they did, it would become something different to what it was meant to be, whether it was edible or not. That may be a poor example.

Because none of the word of God can be ignored. It can't be altered. It can't be added to in any way. Hold fast, he says.

Know that good thing. In verse 14. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

Paul himself has believed in the scripture to the saving of his soul. He cannot want anyone else to have less than he has.

What do we understand by the words, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus? The ESV has the word, in the faith and love.

[ 33 : 27 ] Principal Clement Graham explains the words to mean this, as we are in Christ as the author and finisher of our faith.

Let me quote his words. In him, faith and love are not abstract graces or distant ideals, but of the very essence of the life that is in perfect accord and fellowship with the Father.

The worthy proclaiming of the Saviour involves us in the faith and love of which he is the author and finisher.

We cannot genuinely write the word or invite men to believe the word that is written and encourage them to trust in a Saviour in whom we do not ourselves confide.

We cannot hold up to admiration, love which in our own hearts goes unrequited. The elicitation of biblical doctrine is never an exclusively intellectual exercise aimed at formal correctness of notions.

[ 34 : 52 ] It is always a stimulation of the heart's affections. That means that whatever the world would have us do, it is not something we do in a closet.

It is not something we do at a desk. It is not something we do in our homes exclusively. It is something that compels us to put this world into practical use, a practical application.

We need the help of God at every stage as preachers and hearers alike. In verse 14, as we saw, he has told us to keep it by the Holy Ghost that dwells in us.

As one divine reminds us, there is always the temptation, and it is not a modern phenomenon by any means, to make the scripture more acceptable to the generation we live in.

That will never do. Remind yourselves of what Paul says. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.

[ 36 : 13 ] The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.

Who is the source of the word, if not the Spirit? The world will treat as foolish what the world is saying, because they cannot appreciate it for what it is.

God entrusts his ministers as Paul did Timothy, with the defence of the truth, only with the help of its author.

Matthew Henry writes, we must hold fast to Christ as the author, as the object, and the end of his word.

It must be, he says, that faith and love which has an eye to Christ, which has this always in view, to glorify Christ, and to be glorified with Christ.

[ 37 : 25 ] I recently took note of the words of the renowned Bishop Ryle. And this is what he wrote.

The word, you may know a great deal about Christ, by a kind of head knowledge. You may know who he was, and where he was born, and what he did.

His miracles, his sayings, his prophecies, and his ordinance. How he lived, how he suffered, and how he died. But, unless you know the power of Christ's cross by experience, unless you know and feel within that the blood shed on that cross has washed away your own particular sins, and unless you are willing to confess that your salvation depends entirely upon the work that Christ did upon the cross, Christ will profit you nothing.

And if you do know, by experience, that Christ, that knowledge is a driver to your proclamation of the truth concerning him, in your own life, and the desire to share it with others.

May God, in his grace, impress these thoughts upon our heart. Let us pray. O Lord our God, we pray that you would remind us of the wonderful relationship that existed between these two men.

[ 39 : 08 ] And servants, call to witness to your word. The apostle destined to enter into eternity shortly.

But he was concerned with the world that he was leaving behind. That that gospel that had changed his life so dramatically, would touch lives and change lives just as surely though he went.

We pray your blessing upon your word to that end. That people, men and women, be they young or old, would come to know this Christ for themselves.

And that the sound words of the gospel would be heard in our day and generation to the saving of souls.

Bless us, each one, cleanse from sin. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all now and always. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

[ 40 : 13 ] I will pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.