

# Words & Workers

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[ 0 : 00 ] 2 Timothy 2, verse 14 Their teaching will spread like gangrene Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus Who have departed from the truth They say that the resurrection has already taken place And they destroy the faith of some Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm Sealed with this inscription The Lord knows who are His And everyone who confesses the name of the Lord

Must turn away from wickedness In a large house there are articles Not only of gold and silver But also of wood and clay Some are for special purposes And some for common use Those who cleanse themselves from the latter Will be instruments for special purposes Made holy, useful to the Master And prepared to do any good work Flee the evil desires of youth And pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace Along with those who call on the Lord Out of a pure heart Don't have anything to do with foolish or stupid arguments Because you know they produce quarrels And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome But must be kind to everyone Able to teach Not resentful Opponents must be gently instructed In the hope that God will grant them repentance Leading them to a knowledge of the truth

And that they will come to their senses And escape from the trap of the devil Who has taken them captive to do his will Amen We choose to go to the moon We choose to go to the moon We choose to go to the moon In this decade and do the other things Not because they are easy But because they are hard Because that goal Will serve to organise And measure the best Of our energies and skills Because that challenge is one That we're willing to accept One we are unwilling to postpone And one we intend to win And the others too On the 25th of May 1961 President Kennedy stood before Congress And declared his intention Of landing a man on the moon

Before the decade was out In September 1962 He gave that speech at Rice University That you just watched a part of And then in July 1969 Neil Armstrong took this picture Of Buzz Aldrin Words make a difference don't they Words can have a profound impact On a nation Words can have a profound impact On our lives The words Will you marry me Can change the course of your life And words can have a more negative impact too Can't they I think on the other hand That it would be a rare person Who reaches their teenage years Still believing That sticks and stones May break my bones But words will never hurt me Words have tremendous power Whether for good or for ill And in this section That we're looking at Of Paul's letter to Timothy Here we find lots of different words We find empty words We find good words We find dangerous words

And we find confident words So Paul here is shifting From speaking about How Timothy is meant to conduct himself Kind of in the context Of a non-Christian world To now thinking about How he should conduct himself In the context of false teaching Within the church How he is to respond To those who don't speak The truth about God Who speak wrong words So we're focusing on verses 14 to 19 today Which contrasts good workers With bad workers And good words With bad words If you're writing down headings We're going to start with Empty words Then good words Dangerous words And finally confident words So verse 14 Timothy is to remind God's people Not to quarrel about words See the church at Ephesus Has been infected By a group of people Among whom Hymenaeus and Philetus

[ 5 : 08 ] Verse 17 Are presumably The ringleaders That's been infected By this group of people Who like to dispute Dispute about words They like to split hairs Argue over trivialities And Paul says Timothy should not stoop To their level Timothy's time Indeed the time Of all of God's people The time is far too precious To be caught up With this kind of Irrelevant nonsense For the majority Of whatever these people Are teaching We don't really know What it is That they were actually Proclaiming And we shouldn't really care Timothy is instructed Not to engage Why?

Because it is a waste Of time It does not produce Anything useful Paul says When he says it It ruins those who listen It's possible He means They're going to believe Something incorrect But at this point I think it's more That he means It is a waste Of their time It ruins them By wasting their time There's a big difference Isn't there?

A big difference Between the kind of words That can launch A space program And the kind of words That never really amount To anything at all And that's true On a smaller scale As well If you're not President of the United States You can pretty much Say whatever you like It's unlikely That you will initiate A decade long project That costs billions of dollars But there's still That question On that That smaller scale Of our own lives Still the question Are you speaking Words of significance? Or are you Just wasting time? Are you all bark And no bite? Now these words Are certainly A caution To preachers Certainly a caution To ensure That we don't get Sidetracked Into the little details Of meanings of words And find things And miss the big point That's being made We can't afford To miss the wood For the trees And sometimes I know I need To rein in My inclination To wander off Into the obscure Musings About Greek And Hebrew words And sometimes I do a better job Of that Than I do On other times It's a caution For preachers But it is not Only a caution For preachers Is it?

Timothy Timothy The leader Of this church Timothy Is supposed to Remind God's people About these things That's what Paul says He's supposed to Warn everyone Not to quarrel About words And actually This is a danger For all of us Isn't it?

[ 7 : 38 ] A danger That we get Sidetracked Into the little things The details The minutiae And miss The more important Now that doesn't mean It's wrong To want to understand Things correctly I'm always very happy When somebody asks me After the service To clarify What I meant By something that I said Or when somebody Wants to dig more Into what something In this passage That we're studying Means That's a good thing It's good To want to understand It's particularly good To want to understand God's word But It's also possible To get sidetracked By that It's also possible To use that As a smoke screen To get stuck In picking apart The little details And miss What God is actually Trying to say to us The question is What do you Come away from The Bible Thinking about We should come away From God's word Saying Wow What an amazing God Not Hmm What an interesting Choice of words

We should Finish a sermon Saying I need to say Sorry to God For my behaviour This week Not Hmm I wonder Which of the Different names For God We're using here We should Open God's word When we wake In the mornings And close it Thinking How will this Change how I Treat my children Today How will this Affect my Interactions with My colleagues Later on Should be thinking That not Well why did Matthew phrase it This way But Luke Phrases it That way We might go Through that Kind of a question To get there But we need to End up At the bigger Point Not quibbling Over words But understanding The intended Meaning If we're quibbling Over words It is of no value And it will ruin us Some words Are empty Timothy on the other hand Timothy should be different Timothy's words

Should be good words Timothy Verse 15 Tells us Will be able To present himself To God On the last day As one who is Approved As an unashamed Workman He'll be able To present himself That way If his words Are good words If he treats God's word Correctly See if his opponents Are all talk Then Timothy Is not to be like that Timothy is to be a worker He's to labour At the task That is presented to him He's to look forward To the day When he will stand Approved And unashamed Now admittedly Timothy's primary means Of working Is going to be Through words His task Is to teach Is to proclaim God's truth But his words Need to be Markedly Different words To those Of his opponents This is not To be empty Rhetoric This is not Idle chit-chat These are words Of significance Words With an impact Why is that?

Well because Timothy's words Must be words About the word Of truth His responsibility Is to handle God's words Accurately Now what does That look like?

What does it look like To handle God's words Accurately? I suppose that Depends on your Role Doesn't it? If you're a Bible translator Then rightly Handling the word Of truth Means Rendering it Accurately And intelligibly In your target Language So that those Who speak That language Can know What it says That's what It looks like To handle The word Of truth Rightly As a Bible Translator And if you're A preacher Then rightly Handling the word Of truth Has to surely Include Doing your Utmost To make sure That the meaning Of the word Is plain And the implications Of the word Are clear But most of you Are in neither Of those categories Are you?

[ 11 : 36 ] And yet I suggest That you are not Off the hook here I suggest that Each of us Is obliged To correctly Handle the word Of truth In our own Context And correctly Handling the word Of truth Has to mean That you've Done with it What it's Designed for Or perhaps Even better That you've Allowed it To do to you What it's Designed for Now you haven't Correctly handled A meal If you've Just sat And looked At it Have you?

You also Haven't correctly Handled the word Of truth If you've Only heard it You haven't Even correctly Handled the word Of truth If you've Only Understood it Now you and I Have only Correctly handled The word Of truth If we have Been changed By it If we are Transformed If our lives Are different Tomorrow Because of What we read Today If you think Kennedy's words Had a big impact Well wait till You see what An impact God's words Can have On this world And on your Own life Timothy Timothy Must speak Good Words About the Word Of truth Verse 16 Paul returns To the empty Words of Timothy's Opponents To what He there In verse 16 Characterises as Godless chatter Or irreverent Babble But it quickly Becomes apparent That their words Actually are going Beyond being Empty They are

Dangerous Verse 16 Says that These dangerous People who Are kind of Characterised Encapsulated By their Ringleaders By Hymenaeus And Philetus Verse 16 Says these Dangerous people Are making Progress Paul says So you could Imagine a Spectrum That goes Across And these Guys are saying We're making Progress We're walking Along And Paul Says Alright Yeah you're Making Progress But the Spectrum That you're Moving Along Is the Spectrum Of Godliness And the Direction You're Heading Is towards Ungodliness You are Becoming Less Godly Not more Godly There's a Danger isn't There that we Think change Is always Good There's a Risk that we Think as Long as it's Called Progress It must be A good Thing But Paul Is very Clear Progress Can be

A very Very Dangerous Thing Sometimes People talk About being On the Right side Of history Don't They Well Coming Later In time Doesn't Always Make it Better They are Progressing By becoming Less And less Godly And in Verse 17 The picture If anything Gets worse Their teaching Spreads Like Gangrene It's not Only Themselves They're Harming But like Gangrene Their teaching Slowly Eats away At anything That is Healthy Anything That is Good They're Poisoning The whole Body Others In the Church In Ephesus Are being Led astray By this Dangerous Teaching That the Resurrection Has already Taken Place Says Verse 18 The idea Here Seems to Be a Kind of Spiritualizing Of the Idea of Resurrection To saying That the Resurrection Exists But only In a Kind of In a Spiritual

Life A Resurrection That is Therefore In the Past Has already Taken Place For those Who Believe Now Paul Talks In such Terms About Resurrection Elsewhere In his Writings This is A valid Kind of Resurrection To talk About Resurrection But the Problem Is It Can't Be The Totality It Can't Be Everything That We Believe About Resurrection No That Era Has A Massive Impact On How We View Jesus Own Resurrection And It Has A Massive Impact On The Significance Of His Resurrection For Our Future Standing Our Hope For Eternity And That Affects How We View Our Current Relationship To Jesus It Affects How We Behave In This Life It Affects How We Regard The Creation Around Us Our Understanding Of The Nature Of Resurrection Has A Big Impact If We Deny The Possibility Of Resurrection If We Say People Just Don't Come Back To Life Don't Be So Stupid Or If We Spiritualize Away

[ 16 : 08 ] That Resurrection Into Near Meaninglessness It Has A Big Impact Our Attitude To It Is Of Great Significance In Fact Paul Views This As So Central That To Deny The Reality Of Physical Resurrection Is To Destroy The Faith Of Those Who Follow In Such An Understanding Strikes At The Heart Of The Faith They Departed From The Truth Well Well Again The Preachers Of This Warning About Dangerous Words Is Clear Timothy And Those Who Follow On After Timothy They Must Not Speak This Kind Of Teaching That Hymenaeus And Philetus Are Teaching And Indeed Teachers Are Obligated To Warn Others Against Those Who Similarly Depart From The Truth The Application To Others Possibly Less Clear But Here's The Thing If

False Teaching Is Spreading Within The Congregation If Somebody Is Standing Around After Church On A Sunday Morning When We're There In The Mawson Hall Somebody Standing There And Teaching People Things That Are Not True Or We're Gathering In Our Connect Groups On A Wednesday Or Thursday Night And Somebody Is Explaining An Understanding Of A Passage That Simply Is Not What That Passage Is Saying If Somebody Is Proclaiming Something Within The Congregation That Is Not True If That's Happening Locally Well Then I As The Minister Of The

Church Have A Reasonable Fighting Chance Of Spotting That Happening Of Correcting The Person In Question And Of Warning Others And So On And So Forth In That Context I Can Do What Timothy Is Being Charged To Do Here But What About When That False Teaching Is Spreading Online What About When People Especially At The Moment Are Kind Of Turning Any Which Way Finding New Sources Of Teaching Maybe Because Their Own Congregation Hasn't Been Able To Put Anything Online Or Because You're Looking For More That's Good But There's A Danger Isn't There Because False Teaching That's Spreading Out There Somewhere Incorrect And Dangerous Understandings That Are Being Proclaimed And Are Piped Directly Into Your Minister Whether That's Me Or Normally Somebody Else Your Minister Can Only Get So Far In Warning You About That Source Of False Teaching Maybe I Can Warn You About Some Of The Higher Profile Instances I Can Advise You To Keep Well Away From Joel Osteen And Creflo Dollar And So On And So Forth But There's Countless More Who I Have Never Heard Of And Never Will So Them Explicitly Well Then You Will Need To Guard Yourself Won't You You Will Have To Keep Asking Yourself As You Take Anything In You Will Have To Keep Asking Is This Person Correctly Handling The Word Of Truth Are They Proclaiming Something That Matches Up With What I'm Reading Here In My Bible Myself Don't Listen To Somebody Talking To You On Your TV Without Your Bible Open In Front Of You Are They Proclaiming Truth Are They Correctly Handling The Word Of God Or Are They Proclaiming Something That Is Dangerous That Is Liable To Destroy My Faith If I Follow After Them Folks There Are Empty Words There Are Good Words And There Are Dangerous Words And If We Stop There At The End Of Verse 18 Then We're Ending On A Pretty Somber Note Aren't We But Happily Verse 19 Strikes A More Upbeat Note In Verse 19 We Find Confident Words Here

They Are Nevertheless God's Solid Foundation Stands Firm Sealed With This Inscription The Lord Knows Those Who Are His And Everyone Who Confesses The Name Of The Lord Must Turn Away From Wickedness Folks There's Tremendous Reassurance There In Those Words Isn't There There's Great Confidence To Be Had Here That No Matter How Successful Hymenaeus And Philetus And Their Latter-day Successors Might Be Still Timothy Can Be Encouraged Paul Is Encouraged God God God God mapa about the church as the foundation. The church established on the bedrock of God's unchanging, predestining, electing love. The church that is governed by the cornerstone who is Christ. The church is an established foundation. Nothing is going to shake her because the true church consists of those who belong to Christ. God has placed his seal on this foundation. He knows who are his.

[ 21 : 27 ] Nothing can cause him to doubt his choice. Nothing can make him second-guess himself. Nothing can prompt him to reject those whom he has chosen. Here in verse 19 you've got these kind of two seals and the text of the first is a quotation from Numbers 16 verse 5 which you can go read the account later if you like. But what's happening there back in the Old Testament, back in Numbers 16, it is kind of a similar situation. A bunch of people there have risen up in rebellion against Moses and have led others astray along with them.

But God will not be deceived. God isn't confused about the truth. God doesn't know, doesn't, God isn't uncertain about who's on his side and who isn't. No, God knows those who are his. Jesus said similarly, I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me. Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep. My sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. The sad episode from Numbers 16, that episode of Korah's rebellion in the wilderness, it did not devastate the congregation of Israel. And false teaching will not devastate the church at Ephesus. And it will not devastate God's church today and it need not devastate you. The second seal here is probably a reference to a later verse in Numbers 16.

In verse 26, when the means of God identifying those who were his, the means of that identification was to call on them to separate themselves from Korah and his henchmen and their rebellion.

[ 23 : 23 ] God knows those who are his and those who are his will listen to his voice. They will be obedient to his word. We will turn away from our wickedness. So no matter how many empty words are around us, we can disregard those. We can listen to the good words and turn away from the dangerous words.

And all of that because we rest secure knowing these confident words. I pray that the Lord who knows those who are his knows you this morning. Amen.