

AM 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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[0 : 0 0] This morning is from Galatians. Galatians chapter 1, verses 6 to 11. Galatians chapter 1, verses 6 to 11.

This is a chapter that some of us looked at together before. But it fits quite aptly with the main theme, which is going to be from Timothy this morning.

So Paul is writing to the church at Galatia, chapter 1, starting at verse 6. I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in grace of Christ, and are turning to a different gospel. Not that there is another one, but that there are some who troubled you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel, contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be cursed.

[1 : 1 7] For I am now seeking the approval of man or of God. Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. Thanks be to God for his reading.

And the second reading is this morning from 2 Timothy. 2 Timothy 3, and we'll read the whole chapter. 2 Timothy, chapter 3, starting at verse 1 to the end of the chapter.

2 Timothy 3, verse 1.

3 Timothy 4, verse 1.

[3 : 1 1] 4, verse 1.

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra.

which persecutions I endured, yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and imposters will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.

[4 : 5 5] That the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. Thanks be to God for the reading of his holy word. In his name be the glory and the praise forever. Amen.

Let's come to study God's word. Let's just bow our heads briefly in prayer. Father, as we come to study your word together, may the words of my mouth, the thoughts of our hearts and minds, be acceptable in your sights.

These things we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Redeemer. Amen. Amen. Amen.

any of it. That he would fulfil everything that scripture had told us about him. There's one gospel. Our faith is in Christ as our saviour and through him we have eternal life if we repent of our sins and believe in him. The gospel is a simple message.

[6 : 3 3] But it's a message which we so often look to distort. It's the whole point of Paul's message to the Galatians. But it's not a one-off problem.

Paul touches on it time and again. But we also see in our main text this morning it's going to be in verse 16 and 17 all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.

that the man of God may be competent and equipped for every good work. Now if we have Christ as our example in life he shows us the importance of knowing scripture.

If you think of Jesus himself in Matthew 4 he uses scripture to defend himself against the temptations of Satan. He is baptized by John the Baptist and he then goes into the wilderness. And during the time in the wilderness he is tempted by Satan. Three times he is tempted and three times he rebukes Satan for his attempted temptations.

[7 : 50] And each time he answers Satan with scripture. we think of the first time he has been there forty days he is hungry so Satan says you are the son of man you can do anything turn these stones into bread and you can eat.

And Jesus is quick to remind him that man won't live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. So Jesus if he uses scripture to defend him in times of temptation with all his power and his glory how much more do we as mortal men need to know the scriptures that we can protect ourselves in times of temptation.

So today 2 Timothy 16 17 may seem unfashionable to the world that all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching but it is also important for the Christian to know the gospel to know the scriptures and be able to use it in an appropriate way to teach others and also to defend himself in times of temptations.

The background to this morning's message most folk who know me know that I'm a bit of a technophobe I'd rather use pen and paper and I'd rather listen to radio or the violets.

But at times I do sort of venture into the modern world and I was listening to a podcast and it was a podcast that was done by Alistair Campbell and another politician I can't remember but also they were interviewing the Archbishop of Canterbury at the time Justin Welby and basically it came to the point about it was asked how can the church or Archbishop Welby's church agree to certain things while scripture seems to teach something else and basically Archbishop Welby put it down to the fact that there had been prayerful consideration and the wise people of the church had decided that this was their interpretation of what scripture was really meaning and I felt that I in several occasions even here had preached or not preached but had mentioned verses 16 and 17 all scripture is breathed out by

[10 : 44] God and profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be competent and equipped for every good work now if every part of scripture was breathed out by God then we cannot be the ones who interpret it and we cannot pick and choose the bits that we wish to use we have to accept scripture in all of its content and believe it all has a purpose for teaching for rebuking for training and for reproof if we go the other way it seems that all things can be tolerated provided it's done in love provided it's done in the best interests of man but I would say that man's desires are secondary to the teachings of the gospel we must preach

God's word and we must preach it without change as Paul says any change to the gospel is no gospel at all it's false teaching Paul had an urgency to prevent the distortion of the gospel he had an urgency to ensure that nothing was added to it the circumcision party came along and they weren't denying what Paul had taught but they're saying it wasn't enough there had to be a bit more there was bits that man had to do to earn his salvation and he had to do certain acts and fulfil certain laws but also we must protect it against those who wish to omit parts of it because it doesn't fit with society's teachings and society's ideas Paul had preached the perfect redeeming gospel of Christ crucified on the cross that he would bear their sins their wrongdoings and he would pay the penalty for that and if they accepted him as their saviour they would be clothed in his righteousness and through him have eternal life but the gospel was being twisted it was being distorted and he could not tolerate it any longer the very gospel of

Christ was in peril and Paul was making a stand to ensure true teachings is there any real difference between Paul 2000 years ago and us today I would say no the gospel is still under attack the gospel is still subject to being interpreted for man for his own desires rather than for man's salvation so let's look at the passage in 2 Timothy 3 in 2 Timothy 3 Paul prepares us that these events are the same and that these times will be difficult we think right at the very start in verse 1 but understand this that in the last days there will come times of difficulty and we also find how man's heart will be turned from what

God had created and desired there will be hard times and people will turn and twist the natural things that God had created God had created us to give him praise and glory to praise his name

and give thanks to him but what do we find that people will become lovers of self lovers of money proud arrogant and abusive if Paul was talking 2000 years ago about the people in his society how true is this of people today people are lovers of self and lovers of money we only need to think of the world that surrounds us and the news that we read on a daily basis about how we need this how we need that how we need to gain such and such and how it's about our own self promotion rather than

God verse 5 even tells us that such people will have the appearance of godliness but deny its power so it's not just political leaders it's not just the marketing industry who are going to give us this false message but it will come even from within our own churches those who appear to be reading a godlike life but it will deny the power of the gospel because it will have distorted the gospel it will deny its power and try and weaken it because if you distort the gospel and if you preach a false gospel then you will lead people away from Christ as their saviour and God as their heavenly father and Paul is clear in the stand that we must take we must avoid such people but that doesn't mean that we retract into our four walls within the church it doesn't mean that we keep ourselves to ourselves and have nothing to do with anyone else but it does mean that we must take a stand against false teachings times have moved on but the story is unchanged from the time of [17:08] Paul the Pharisees if we think when Jesus himself was teaching claimed that they knew God but Jesus responded to them in John 5 verses 37 and 38 by saying the father who sent me has himself borne witness about me his voice you have never heard his form you have never seen and you do not have his word abiding in you for you do not believe the one whom he has sent so though they knew of God the Pharisees did not know God personally because they had rejected the son of God they had rejected the one that Jesus sent as his redeemer that God sent as his redeemer and if we don't know scripture if we don't know God's word can we really come to know God can we know him personally and have a growing relationship with him and if we don't know

Jesus personally can we know God I'll say to that know if we don't know have a personal relationship with Jesus as our saviour we cannot know God on a personal level anyone who says they know God but rejects Christ as a redeemer is preaching a false gospel they are preaching the wrong gospel anyone who says that they know God but rejects the teachings of his word is preaching a false gospel we can't pick and choose the bits we wish to teach we can't pick and choose the bits we wish to follow even if they call themselves Christians even if they look to have all the formalities of the church it's a distorted gospel that they preach and it's not a gospel which we can support again

Jesus points out in Matthew 7 21 not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but the one who does the will of my father who is in heaven they may use God's name they may claim to represent him but if they never know him personally they can't proclaim him to others so we reiterate in 2 Timothy 3 at the very beginning man has put himself before God man has changed the natural order of things he places himself first and God second or even kicks God out of the picture altogether man is now looking to place himself as arbitrator of the gospel quite often you may have heard me use the phrase that scripture is the word of

God but often now people wish to say that scripture contains the word of God now that may seem like a very little change there isn't a great deal of difference there but there is actually a great deal of difference and one we are saying that scripture is the word of God it's definite that there is nothing that can be discussed there is nothing that's got to be worked out it's clear that all scripture is from God and all scripture is therefore profitable for teaching whereas if we say that scripture contains the word of God we're saying that scripture has to be interpreted what bit of it is containing the word of God what bit of it has really got a message for us today and what bit of it was really for 2000 years ago in the society that

Paul was living in scripture is the word of God verse 16 is quite clear all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and for training in righteousness it's not the willies pick and mix where we can pick out the sweets that we want and leave the rest behind in Timothy we see the fallenness of man the twisted order of things man and then God not only has it corrupted the gospel message they have reversed it they have put themselves before God in verse 5 is clear we need to avoid such people and such teachings it's often said that the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing for a false gospel to progress all that is required is for the

[22 : 39] Christian to remain silent for the Christian to hear the declaration of that false gospel and do nothing we have to stay apart from these false teachers so that we do not share it in the perforation of their teaching but we also have to challenge that false teachings when it comes we have to speak out against false teachers and we see in verses 8 and 9 how false teachers will try and imitate the men of God Paul says just as Janus and Jamberez opposed Moses so these men also opposed the truth men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith but they will not get very far for their folly will be plain to all as was that of these two men now in

Exodus of course we have Moses and Aaron looking to appear before the Pharaoh to free and appealing to him to free the Israelites and a number of things are done by Moses and Aaron and the magicians of the Pharaoh's court try and imitate them so for example Aaron is told to throw down his rod and it turns into a snake the magicians of the court throw down their rods and they turn into a snake of course Aaron snake then eats up the others they turn the water into blood and so the magicians of the court do the same but the magicians of the court can only use their own power and trickery and eventually it runs out so as eventually they are unable to do the work that Aaron does and similarly we see today there will be those who will try and imitate the work of the church try and imitate the gospel that is preached

Satan himself is an imitator he's counterfeit he offers us what is not real in these days of religious leaders will also have a counterfeit faith they promote a lie and they resist the truth of God's word that all God's word is appropriate for us today and all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for man's teaching verse 10 and 11 tell us how we must follow those that are true and the preacher we see sorry Paul as we look at Paul's life we see how a true preacher's life will be above reproach how it will be open to scrutiny and to challenge he says you however have followed my teaching my conduct my aim in life my faith my patience my love my steadfastness my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch at Iconium at Glystra which persecutions

I endured yet for them all the Lord rescued me so we see that the one who preaches the gospel life must be open to scrutiny it's not hidden away you see that it treats true doctrine in line with scripture so if we look at what Paul teaches and we then look at the scripture we see that the two go together there's no dichotomy and most of all he practices what he preaches so the life that he leads fits with the message that he preaches it's not that he says one thing and lives another but the two of them will go together in harmony also Paul tells us that the true believer will be willing to suffer for Christ verse 12 indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ

Jesus will be persecuted that persecution will vary depending on who you are and where you live in some places in this world it will still mean times of physical danger times of torture and perhaps times of death to us in the west it may simply mean being mocked and ridiculed by friends and family but there will be challenges there will be difficulties and there will be persecution but Paul finishes in a positive note in verses 13 to 17 that we should continue in God's word and in God's word alone it is the only way to defeat Satan's lies is with God's truth with his word remember back to Jesus himself and his temptations in Matthew 4 so we have to teach our children verses 14 and 15 remind

[28 : 39] Timothy of how he himself learnt his faith but as for you continue in what you have learned and you have firmly believed knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus so we have to teach our children from their mother's knee about the truth of the gospel and about the truth of salvation that it comes through Christ alone and only through him as our saviour can we have eternal life we have to teach it as a parent as a grandparent and as part of the wider church and fathers don't think that you got off lightly either it's responsibility to the whole church to males and to females to ensure that we teach that scripture can lead to eternal life but remember scripture leads us to salvation it is not saved by the knowledge of scripture in the last part in verse 15 he says which is able to make you wise for salvation through faith in

Christ Jesus we aren't saved by scripture but we are given the knowledge of salvation through scripture again Jesus says you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and in it sorry it is they that they bear witness about me yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life so Jesus again is speaking to the Pharisees Pharisees of course are studying the law they know the scriptures but they don't know Christ personally they know the scriptures they can recite the scriptures they can tell you the teachings of Moses but what the

scriptures do is they point to Christ as our saviour but it's only by accepting Christ that we come to faith and only through faith do we have eternal life think about it even

Satan knows scripture even those who preach a false gospel know scripture but we need to know Christ as our saviour we need to know that through him alone is salvation salvation comes by trusting in Christ alone who is revealed in scripture Timothy himself was raised in scripture but it's only when Paul led him to Christ and explained the scriptures that he was saved we think of Paul Paul was a Pharisee he'd studied the law he'd trained under Gamaliel and yet he was unsaved he was a persecutor of the church it's not until he's on the road to Damascus that he's a personal relationship and a personal experience of Christ and comes to know Christ as his saviour all scripture is for the good of man all scripture is

God's word and is inspired by God and all scripture is God's word and is for man's benefit Paul finishes in that positive note that all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and for training in righteousness and that's a doctrine that we have to protect in this day and age it's easy to go over the way of society to put man first to go after money and the things of this world God but we have a different challenge we have to protect the doctrine of scripture and it's truth in all things it's our guide in all things we don't pick and choose the bits we wish to follow it's a doctrine that's under attack and has been under attack from day one think of Satan when he first tempts Eve what does he do well he's actually quite sleek right he's sly he does not go out and contradict what God had said but raises doubts in Genesis 3 verse 1 it says now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made he said to the woman did God actually say you should not eat of any tree in the garden so he doesn't contradict what God has said what he does is he plants the seed of doubt he raises doubt within our minds and allows that to grow in that doubt then leads to our actions it's that doubt that leads to the sin so whatever the Bible says about itself about man and God and how we should live is true because it is breathed out by

[34 : 46] God and if it's a true record it's a record of God's greatness God's love and God's desire to know us personally it's also a message of our fealty and our weaknesses of our errors and our rebellion against God it points to the fact that we need Christ as our saviour that we cannot earn our salvation through anything that we do because our weaknesses are such that no matter how high we climb that ladder at some point we're going to fall off so scripture is good for four things for teaching for reproof for correction and training reproof is to rebuke our wrongdoings to call us back to the right way correction to set us on the right path it literally means to set us upright and if anybody's read one of my favourite books pilgrim's progress we know that as

Christian goes towards the cross he's bowed down with the weight of sin but as he approaches the foot of the cross the burden is removed from his shoulders it rolls down the hill into the empty tomb and Christian is able to stand upright once more so it's good for correction it allows us to stand upright because once more we can stand knowing God is our heavenly father because we've accepted Christ as our saviour as well as those two negatives there's also two positives teaching and instruction and those two things reinforce each other as we've mentioned before it's about teaching from childhood it's not waiting until somebody is of an age of understanding it's about teaching from a childhood so that they naturally grow in their knowledge as their abilities develop and it's about instruction think about instruction it's that idea of training you think of going to learn to drive a car you go to a driving instructor someone who will train you so you might already have the academic knowledge but now it's about learning some of the practical things of life so instruction is so that we may become more Christ like each day because when we become a

Christian that's not the end of the journey that is only the start now we have to grow in our knowledge of Christ and following his example in verse 17 that we may be complete our salvation may be complete and that we can carry out every good work which God requires of us Timothy was a man of God and like any Christian is a person of God and like all men of God mentioned in scripture we're not at the point of belief the finished article we have to put aside our old life and we have to grow in our new life and our knowledge of Christ and how to be guided so when we preach the gospel we must preach the whole gospel when we read scripture we have to accept all scripture as a meaning for our lives we must look to

Christ and his example and how he held the importance of scripture for ensuring that he stayed in the right relationship with God let's bow our heads in prayer